



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS PONCE (LPD - 15)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS PONCE (LPD 15)
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Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (3) are submitted.

D T Sherrange
D. T. SHERRANGE

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

USS PONCE (LPD 15) is commanded by Captain Daniel T. Sherrange, United States Navy, and is homeported in Norfolk, Virginia. USS PONCE'S immediate unit commander is RADM L.F. Picotte, Commander Amphibious Group Two.

PONCE'S mission as an amphibious transport dock is to embark United States Marine Corps and Navy support elements and, by both water and airborne means, conduct amphibious landings to obtain beach heads, prosecute further operations ashore or deny areas or facilities to the enemy.

PONCE'S crew consists of 29 officers (including one U.S. Marine Corps Combat Cargo Officer) 25 Chief Petty Officers and 341 enlisted personnel with a multitude of skills to execute the multi-mission role of a major amphibious ship.

Chronology 1992

01 Jan - 22 Jan	Holiday Leave and Upkeep Norfolk, VA
06 Jan - 27 Jan	IMAV SIMA Norfolk
27 Jan - 31 Jan	ILR Offload
28 Jan - 02 Feb	Upkeep Inport Norfolk
31 Jan	Safety Standdown
03 Feb	Fast Cruise
04 Feb	U/W for Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown
04 Feb - 07 Feb	Ammunition Offload - NWS Yorktown
07 Feb	Return to Norfolk
07 Feb - 12 Feb	Upkeep Inport Norfolk
10 Feb - 11 Feb	F-76 Defueling
12 Feb	Transit to Metro Machine Shipyards, Norfolk, Virginia. Begin DPMA/Begin ILR.
12 Feb - 28 Feb	DPMA
12 Feb	Begin Concurrent IMAV with SIMA Norfolk
18 Feb - 20 Feb	Crew Move off
25 Feb	Enter Drydock
01 Mar - 14 Mar	Naval Reserve Center Nashville, TN Reservists Onboard
01 Mar - 31 Mar	DPMA
27 Mar	Retirement Ceremony for LT Gary Strothman
01 Apr - 30 Apr	DPMA
14 Apr	Undocking
20 Apr	Ship's Reefers Back in Operation
01 May - 31 May	DPMA

04 May - 22 May	Fleet Optical Scanning Ammunition Marking System Installation
11 May	Fuel Ship
13 May	Machinery Space Turnover
01 Jun - 30 Jun	CORTRAMID '92 Midshipmen Summer Training Cruise
01 Jun - 10 Jun	DPMA
02 Jun	Conclude Concurrent IMA with SIMA Norfolk
03 Jun	Dock trials
04 Jun - 07 Jun	ILR Backload
05 Jun	Fast Cruise
06 Jun	PONCE/Metro Machine HarborFest '92 Celebration/ Motorwhale Boat race
08 Jun - 09 Jun	U/W from Metro Machine Shipyards for Post DPMA Sea Trials
09 Jun	Completed Sea Trials, No Major Discrepancies Anchor Lynnhaven for Small Boat Transfer
09 Jun	Complete Combat Systems Testing
10 Jun	Complete DPMA
10 Jun - 12 Jun	Underway, Independant Steaming VACAPES OPAREA
11 Jun	CORTRAMID '92 U/W Training with USS KAUFFMAN (FFG-59). Conducted Leapfrogs, Highline Transfer and famfires. PONCE awarded "CORTRAMID '92 Surface Warrior of the Week."
12 Jun	Arrive Norfolk VA
12 Jun - 15 Jun	Upkeep Inport Norfolk
16 Jun - 19 Jun	Dependents Cruise. Ammunition Onload G-2 Anchorage Norfolk, VA
19 Jun - 21 Jun	Upkeep Inport Norfolk

22 Jun	U/W from Norfolk
22 Jun - 26 Jun	Independant Steaming VACAPES OPAREA. Conducted TACAN Certification, Engineering Material Assessment Team. Conducted CIWS and 25mm PACFIRES. Launched CHAFF Training Rounds. Hosted Scientists to Sea and Guests of the Navy.
27 Jun - 26 Jul	Upkeep Inport Norfolk
29 Jun - 20 Jul	IMA SIMA Norfolk
06 Jul - 08 Jul	Violent Crime Avoidance and Prevention Briefs
06 Jul	Commence Shipboard Crane Improvement Program. Commence 3" 50 cal Gun Removal. Commence Well Deck Overhead Refurbishment.
10 Jul	Flight Deck Resurfaced
27 Jul	U/W from Norfolk in Support of JSOC Operations.
27 Jul - 31 Jul	Boy Scout Troop 22 from Hope Arkansas Embarked. Guests of the Navy Embarked.
31 Jul	Arrive Norfolk, VA
01 Aug - 04 Aug	Upkeep Inport Norfolk VA
05 Aug - 14 Aug	U/W from Norfolk for IRET/LTT in VACAPES OPAREA
08 Aug	Conducted Shipwide Sexual Harassment Standdown
09 Aug	Anchor Lynnhaven Anchorage. Steel Beach Picnic
11 Aug	CIWS/25mm Chaingun PACFIRE. NIXIE Stream
14 Aug	Arrive Norfolk, VA
15 Aug - 23 Aug	Upkeep/ Pre OPPE Inport Norfolk, VA
18 Aug - 19 Aug	Training Readiness Evaluation for PHIBREFTRA

18 Aug LFORM Onload

24 Aug U/W from Norfolk, VA for OPPE

24 Aug - 26 Aug OPPE. Scored Good Overall

26 Aug Arrive Norfolk, VA

26 Aug - 28 Aug Upkeep, Inport Norfolk, VA

29 Aug U/W from Norfolk, VA in Support of Hurricane Andrew Relief for South Florida. Commander Amphibious Squadron Six, CAPT R.C. Williams III, Shifts his Flag to PONCE as Commander Task Force 28, the Navy Component Commander for Hurricane Andrew Relief.

29 Aug - 31 Aug Enroute Port of Miami, FL

31 Aug Arrive Dodge Island Terminal, Port of Miami, FL. Commence Offload of ACU-2, BMU-2 and PHIB CB Equipment.

01 Sep PONCE Crewmembers Commence Relief Efforts Redland 6 Middle School. Assisted Seabees in establishing a field base of operations and assisted local Residents in their clean up efforts.

02 Sep - 13 Sep PONCE's Crew Repairs and Restores Homestead Sr. High School. PONCE's Crew assists the Federal Emergency Management Agency locating citizens in need of information on Federal Disaster Aid. PONCE Air Department supports Helicopter Support Squadron Eight Det Five in their on going aerial relief of the storm damaged area.

14 Sep Homestead Sr. High School Opens.

15 Sep Backload ACU-2, BMU-2 and PHIB CB Equipment

16 Sep U/W from Port of Miami, FL

16 Sep - 18 Sep Enroute Norfolk, VA

18 Sep	Arrive Norfolk, VA
19 Sep - 30 Sep	Upkeep Inport Norfolk, VA
01 Oct - 11 Nov	U/W for Couter Drug Operations. Embark HSL-34 Det 2 (2 SH-2 Helicopters) and HC-8 Det 5 (2 CH-46 Helicopters).
05 Oct	Arrive Roosevelt Roads, PR. Embark Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment.
05 Oct - 07 Oct	Inport Roosevelt Roads, PR for refueling and operations briefs
07 Oct	U/W from Roosevelt Roads PR. Chop to CTG 4.1
07 Oct - 10 Oct	U/W for Counter Drug Operations
10 Oct	Arrive Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. PONCE hosts FLT Deck Reception for VIPS.
10 Oct - 13 Oct	Inport Santo Domingo
12 Oct	Dedication and Wreath laying ceremony at the Faro-A-Colon Lighthouse
13 Oct	U/W from Santo Domingo, DR
13 Oct - 15 Oct	U/W for Counter Drug Operations
16 Oct	Arrive Roosevelt Roads, PR for BSF/Operations meeting
17 Oct	U/W from Roosevelt Roads, PR
17 Oct - 02 Nov	U/W for Counter Drug Operations
02 Nov	Outchop CTG 4.1/ Chop to COMPHIBRON SIX
02 Nov	USCG LDET Departs to NSRR via Helo
02 Nov - 05 Nov	Enroute Norfolk, VA
06 Nov	Arrive Norfolk, VA
06 Nov - 06 Dec	Upkeep Inport Norfolk, VA
09 Nov - 15 Nov	COMPHIBRON SIX Embarked
13 Nov - 04 Dec	IMAV with SIMA Norfolk, VA

NARRATIVE 1992

USS PONCE (LPD 15) is the newest and last of a class of amphibious transport dock ships operating in today's Navy. Her continuous service to the fleet has earned the "Proud Lion" the reputation as "The Best LPD in the Atlantic."

The arrival of 1992 found PONCE pierside at Norfolk Naval Base with a large percentage of the ship's crew enjoying holiday leave and the ship undergoing a Repair Availability with SIMA, Norfolk. PONCE spent the remainder of January undergoing an Integrated Logistics Review (ILR) off load in preparation for the upcoming shipyard period.

On 03 February, PONCE held a "Fast Cruise" and was underway 04 February for Naval Weapons Station Yorktown for Ammunition off load. On 07 February, PONCE returned to Norfolk, was defueled and on 12 February transited to Metro Machine Shipyard, Norfolk, Virginia to begin a four month Docked Phased Maintenance Availability Period. All power and services to PONCE were disconnected and on 18 February PONCE's crew moved into an adjacent YRBM.

PONCE entered the drydock at Metro Machine on 25 February. During this complex and compressed availability period several major jobs were completed: JP-5 fuel tanks were Inspected, Repaired and Preserved; Ballast tanks and Associated Piping were Inspected, Repaired and Preserved; Ship's Hull, Shafts, Screws and Rudders were cleaned, Inspected and Preserved; Both Anchors and Chains were removed, sandblasted, inspected, preserved and reinstalled; Sea chests were inspected and repaired; Well deck water barrier was repaired; NR 1 and NR 2 Boilers were opened, firesides and watersides cleaned, and tubes repaired and installed; NR 1 and NR 2 soot blowers, Air register assembly, Safety shut-off devices and boiler safety valves were inspected, repaired and reinstalled; NR 1 and NR 2 Boiler Control Systems were calibrated and tested and the Boiler Blow System was replaced; NR 1 and NR 2 HP and LP Turbines were inspected and repaired; Propeller shafts and thrust bearings were inspected and the propellers cleaned and balanced; All main steam piping was hydro tested; Various Engineering Pumps and motors were reworked or replaced; NR 1 and NR 2 Boiler stacks were repaired; All SSTGs were inspected and repaired; NR 1 Emergency diesel was repaired; Transducer assembly was replaced on the fathometer; New 21MC system was installed; F-76, JP-5 and Mogas Tank Level Indicating Systems were repaired or installed; Various Communications Equipment was repaired and installed; Flight Deck flood lights were replaced; Various Ballast Piping was inspected and replaced; Potable water system was inspected and repaired; Hotel steam

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system was inspected and repaired; Steering Gear Assembly was reworked; Cargo doors were repaired; 16K ton Elevator was upgraded; Port and Starboard Anchor Windlasses hydraulic systems were inspected and repaired; Boat Davit winch and motor was repaired; Upper and lower stern gate hydraulic systems were repaired; Well deck planking was replaced; Upper and lower vehicle ramp air systems were inspected and repaired; Helicopter hanger door system was repaired; CHT tanks were inspected, cleaned and preserved; Accommodation Ladder alterations were made; New Hull Zincs were installed; New convection ovens were installed in the galley; new laundry presses were installed and both MK 15 CIWS mounts were replaced.

In addition to shipyard work being performed by Metro Machine, PONCE's ship's company completed the rehabilitation of Deck and Admin Berthings and the preservation and painting of the main mast.

On 14 April the ship was undocked and moved to Metro Machine's Pier Four. On 11 May, the ship was refueled and on 13 May the shipyard work in the Engineering spaces was completed and the spaces were officially turned back over to PONCE's crew.

By early June, PONCE had completed Dock trials and the Integrated Logistics Review Backload and was ready to get underway again. On 05 June PONCE completed a Fast Cruise and on 08 June PONCE was underway from Metro Machine Shipyards for Sea Trials. On 09 June, PONCE anchored at Lynnhaven Anchorage and transferred the Metro Machine shipriders to shore via small boat. On 10 June, with sea trials complete and no major discrepancies identified, PONCE officially completed the four month Docked Phased Maintenance Availability, safely and on schedule.

The month of June saw PONCE underway in the VACAPES operating area conducting at-sea training and certifications while hosting visitors from the Scientists at Sea, and Guests of the Navy program and Midshipmen for the CORTRAMID '92 Summer training cruise. On 10 June, PONCE received 24 Midshipmen via LCU in the vicinity of Lynnhaven anchorage and 11 June, in support of CORTRAMID '92, PONCE conducted underway training with the USS KAUFFMAN (FFG 59). PONCE conducted Leapfrog drills, highline transfers, MK 15 CIWS and 25mm Chaingun pacfires, helping the Midshipmen get a taste of the Amphibious side of Surface Warfare. PONCE was awarded the "CORTRAMID '92 Surface Warrior of the Week" award for the ship's efforts during this midshipmen training period.

On 16 June, PONCE hosted a dependents cruise in the VACAPES operating area and then anchored in Golf-2 anchorage in Norfolk and unloaded ammunition. PONCE returned pierside to Norfolk Naval Base on 19 June and spent the remainder of June and most of July undergoing a Repair Availability with SIMA Norfolk. During this availability, both 3in 50 cal Gun mounts were removed, the Well deck overhead was refurbished, and the flight deck was resurfaced.

On 27 July, PONCE embarked 10 scouts from Boy Scout Troop 22 from Hope Arkansas, and five participants in the Guests of the Navy program and got underway to conduct shipboard training and Joint Special Operations Capability Exercises in the VACAPES operating area.

PONCE returned to Norfolk on 31 July and was underway on 05 August for IRFT and Limited Team Training in the VACAPES operating area. During this training period, PONCE conducted shipboard drills including MK 15 CIWS and 25mm Chaingun Pacfires in addition to SLQ-25 NIXIE streaming and engineering drills. On 14 August, PONCE arrived at Norfolk Naval Base and began a pre-Operational Propulsion Plant Examination upkeep period.

On 24 August, PONCE got underway from Norfolk Naval Base for the Operational Propulsion Plant Examination. PONCE scored a grade of "Good" overall on the examination, earning the ship a two year certification and returned to Norfolk on 26 August.

On 27 August PONCE was placed on a 24 hour standby alert for possible Hurricane Andrew Relief tasking. On 28 August, Commander Amphibious Squadron Six, Captain Richard C. Williams III, shifted his flag to Ponce as Commander Task Force 28. Ponce got underway 0800 (local) 29 August and anchored at Lynnhaven anchorage embarking detachments from Assault Craft Unit Two, Amphibious Construction Battalion Two Det Golf, Beach Masters Unit Two and two CH-46 helicopters from Heli6copter Support Squadron Eight Det Five. Arriving at the Port of Miami on 31 August, Ponce immediately offloaded the embarked equipment and assault craft assets. These included: one communications van, six utility trailers, five portable generators (from 1500 to 60000 watts), two sets of high intensity flood light rigs, ten 400 gallon water trailers, two dump trucks, eight 5-ton trucks, one 1200 gallon fuel truck, two 25 ton D-8 bulldozers, four front end loaders, one road grader, three pickups, eleven "HMMWV" all-terrain vehicles, one ambulance and various logistic and support equipment to support the embarked personnel. Ponce sailors and embarked teams aggressively coordinated the offload and worked through the night to ensure embarked equipment and units were ready to deploy for relief efforts.

Ponce crew members began their relief efforts on 01 September. The ship deployed a 100 man relief team into five school buses and departed their Dodge Island staging area, heading for Southern Dade County for clean-up operations. The group began work at Redland Six middle school, located a few miles west of Homestead, Fl., helping the Seabees establish a field base of operations there. Once this task was completed, the group assisted neighboring residents in their own clean up efforts. Equipped with chain saws and the spirit to make a difference, the group set to work clearing over 40 fallen Palm and Cyprus trees which had made the neighborhood nearly impossible for the residents, many of whom were retired to clean up. For several hours the crew worked clearing trees and scattered vegetation from homes and yards. The team even rescued a horse trapped in a fallen barn.

On 02 September, six buses left PONCE for Homestead Senior High School. The school had served as an evacuation center during the Hurricane and received heavy damage during the storm. Most of the roof had been ripped off and the interior had received extensive water damage. From 02 September through 13 September, PONCE crew members removed over 200,000 sq ft of storm soaked carpeting and ceiling tiles, dewatered the school, cleaned and disinfected the interior and assisted in repairing its roof. On September 14, the school opened for the 1992-1993 school year on time.

"Homestead High School was, by far, the biggest school clean up project in South Dade County in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew." said Mr. Al Palacio, Coordinator of Division Facilities Operations South Satellite for the Dade County School System. "This is the second largest school in Dade county and my most optimistic estimate after assessing the damage, was that, with a lot of hard work, we could possibly have 50% of the classrooms and all of the common use areas ready by 14 September. Words could not describe what your team did. It was truly Navy to the Rescue! Thanks to PONCE's effort, we are 100% ready for the school to open."

On 14 September, in a ceremony before the assembled student body of Homestead Senior High School, Captain C.P. Vion presented Mr. Percy Oliver with a plaque and a framed photo of PONCE while Mr. Oliver presented Captain Vion and the assembled PONCE Sailors with an appreciation certificate.

In addition to providing relief and rebuilding efforts at Homestead Senior high school, PONCE crewmembers performed several other relief tasks. PONCE sailors assisted the Federal Emergency Management Agency, canvassing residents in the Perrine City area

to find personnel in need of information on Federal Disaster Aid. In the eleven days PONCE's F.E.M.A. team was deployed, over 1,000 applications for disaster relief were received due to the direct interaction between PONCE personnel and the civilian homeowners. For over ten days PONCE's Air Department maintained a ready deck for refueling in support of Cargo Transfer Flight operations, hot pumping nearly 1,000 barrels of JP-5 to the CH-46 helicopters of HC-8 Det 5.

PONCE concluded relief operations on 15 September having contributed over 10,000 man hours to the relief work in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew.

On 16 September, PONCE got underway from the Port of Miami and arrived in Norfolk, VA on 18 September.

On 01 October, PONCE got underway for Counter Drug Operations in the Caribbean, embarking 2 SH-2 Helicopters from HSL-34 and 2 CH-46 Helicopters from HC-8 Det 5. After a brief stop for fuel and operations brief in Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, where PONCE embarked a US Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment, PONCE inchooped to Commander Task Group 4.1 and commenced counter drug operations.

On 10 October, PONCE arrived at Santa Domingo, Dominican Republic to participate in the celebration of the 500th Anniversary of Christopher Columbus' discovery of the Americas. During the three day visit to the "City of the Merengue," the crew hosted tours of the ship, attended a Catholic Mass given by Pope John Paul II and participated in a wreath laying ceremony at the final resting place of Christopher Columbus, the ten story Faro-a-Colon Light House.

Within hours after the ship's arrival, PONCE transformed the flight deck into a gala open-air ballroom as Captain C.P. Vion and U.S. Ambassador Robert S. Pastorino jointly hosted over 500 V.I.P. Dominicans and other guests of the Diplomatic Community of Santo Domingo. Guests included representatives from the Presidential Palace, Dominican Republic Armed Forces and National Police, the Quincentenary Commission, the American Embassy and representatives from the National Congress of American Women, led by U.S. Ambassador Holland Coors.

On 12 October, Captain C.P. Vion and Ambassador Robert S. Rastorino, as official representatives of the United States, layed a wreath at the foot of Columbus Tomb and officially dedicated the ten story Faro-A-Colon Lighthouse. Upon completion

of the ceremony, the two men, along with the all-officer honor guard from Ponce, were given the first public tour of the lighthouse and its museum.

On 13 October, Ponce got underway from Santo Domingo and the remainder of October was spent on station in the Caribbean conducting Counter Drug Operations. On 02 November, Ponce out chopped from Commander Task Group 4.1 and in chopped to Commander Amphibious Squadron Six. Ponce's U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment debarked to NSRR via helicopter on 02 November and PONCE arrived in Norfolk, VA on 06 November.

The remainder of November was spent in a Repair Availability with SIMA, Norfolk. During this period several major jobs were accomplished: the Aircraft launch and Recovery service change was installed; OTCIXS was installed and the STBD 25mm Chaingun platform was installed. During this period PONCE also completed an aviation assist visit, Diesel Inspection, and Naval Safety Center survey. PONCE also completed Combat Systems Readiness review and Auxiliary Systems Readiness Review.

On 07 December PONCE got underway with evaluators from Naval Amphibious School Little Creek for Amphibious Limited Team Training. During this underway period PONCE conducted true amphibious warfare training, fully exercising the entire crew in all facets of amphibious operations. The crew practiced wet operations, boat control and ship to shore movement with assault craft from ACU-2 and ACU-4. In addition, CH-53 deck landing qualifications were conducted. During this underway period, PONCE's engineering Department was evaluated by the Performance Monitoring Team (PMT) and Assessment of Equipment Condition Team (AEC). On 10 December, PONCE returned to Norfolk and on 15 December, upon the decommissioning of Amphibious Squadron Twelve, PONCE was reassigned to Commander Amphibious Group TWO. PONCE spent the remainder of December in port Norfolk for Holiday leave and upkeep. On 31 December, RADM Tobin, Commander Naval Base Norfolk, awarded PONCE with First Place in the Decorama '92 for Best Small Amphibious Ship.