



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS PONCE (LPD-15)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS PONCE (LPD 15)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), Naval Historical Center,
Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC 20374-5060

Subj: ANNUAL COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Chronology of Events
(2) Historical Narrative

1. In accordance with reference (a), the annual command history for USS PONCE (LPD 15) for calendar year 1996 is hereby submitted.

a. Command Mission. USS 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.

b. Command composition and organization.

(1) PONCE is homeported in Norfolk, Virginia, and is assigned to Amphibious Group Two, commanded by RADM Wirt R. Fladd, USN.

(2) The ship's crew consists of 26 officers and 333 enlisted men. The ship's organization is as follows:

Commanding Officer:	CAPT Leon F. Mahoney
Executive Officer:	LCDR R. G. Anderson
Command Master Chief:	YNCM (SW/AW) Gary D. Rogers
Chief Engineer:	LT [REDACTED]
Operations Officer:	LCDR [REDACTED]
First Lieutenant:	LCDR [REDACTED]
Supply Officer:	LT [REDACTED]
Air Officer:	LT [REDACTED]
Chaplain:	LT [REDACTED]
Medical Officer:	LT [REDACTED]
Dental Officer:	LT [REDACTED]
Navigator:	LT [REDACTED]

c. Chronology. Enclosure (1) is a chronology of the events and milestones reached during 1996.

d. Narrative. Enclosure (2) is an historical narrative of significant events in 1996.

W. V. SCARDINA JR.

USS PONCE (LPD 15)
CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

10 Jan 96 Underway from Norfolk, conducted LCAC Operations.
Conducted Nixie Optest.

11 Jan 96 Conducted small boat operations and Stream Nixie.

22 Jan 96 PCO Guam embarked

23 Jan 96 CART II

24 Jan 96 CART Team Embarks

29 Jan 96 SITE 300 Installation

01 Feb 96 Supply Corps Officer student tour

02 Feb 96 PCO/PCHENG Tour

05 Feb 96 AMMO Onload Yorktown

12 Feb 96 TSTA I ETG Va Capes

20 Feb 96 TSTA I FTG Va Capes/CART II CSTG

06 Mar 96 TCAT

16 Mar 96 Amphibious Ball

18 Mar 96 MOGAS Inspection

19 Mar 96 CNSL Dental Assist Visit

22 Mar 96 CPG2 Commander's Conference

25 Mar 96 TSTA I CSTG

01 Apr 96 TSTA II ETG (ECERT)

22 Apr 96 Semi-Annual PRT

22 Apr 96 MOGAS Inspection

25 Apr 96 Quality Of Life Inspection

01 May 96 OHSAT

03 May 96 PURPLE STAR (CJTFFEX 95-3)

20 May 96 TSTA II CSTG

21 May 96 Explosive Safety Inspection

Encl (1)

28 May 96 LFORM onload/TSTA III
 03 Jun 96 SESI
 11 Jun 96 CORTRAMID/NJROTC Embark
 18 Jun 96 Final Evaluation Period
 23 Jun 96 Semi-Annual PRT
 29 Jun 96 Enroute Halifax
 01 Jul 96 Port Visit Halifax
 08 Jul 96 IMAV/Target/CSRR I/ASRR
 22 Jul 96 Industrial Hygiene Survey
 01 Aug 96 Depart Norfolk Transit to Simba station ISO
 OPERATION ASSURED RESPONSE
 08 Aug 96 RAS W/USNS Patuxent
 23 Aug 96 Return Norfolk from OPERATION ASSURED RESPONSE
 04 Sep 96 IMAV
 11 Sep 96 Host Ship for Ukrainian Frigate "Getman
 Sagajdachnuj" and Great Amphibious Assault Ship
 "K. Olshanskij"
 16 Sep 96 CMS Assist Visit/PMS Assist Visit
 17 Sep 96 Ammo Top-Off
 18 Sep 96 Electronic FCA Certification
 23 Sep 96 Semi-Annual PRT
 25 Sep 96 TACAN Certification
 30 Sep 96 PMS Assist Visit
 01 Oct 96 Hull Inspection
 02 Oct 96 TYCOMEX
 03 Oct 96 NATO Secret Inspection
 21 Oct 96 INSURV
 28 Oct 96 Ammo Top-Off, Yorktown, VA

30 Oct 96 Assume Ready Duty ARG
18 Nov 96 TARGET/CSRR Phase I
04 Dec 96 Christmas Party held on Spirit of Norfolk
05 Dec 96 Change of Command CDR W. V. Scardina JR. relieves
 CAPT L. F. Mahoney
13 Dec 96 PMINT 97-2
15 Dec 96 SPS-67 Install
18 Dec 96 Commence Holiday Leave Upkeep

USS PONCE (LPD 15)
Historical Narrative

Following a highly productive industrial level availability, PONCE began workups for her thirteenth Mediterranean deployment, while successfully completing all inter-deployment training milestones. In April 1996, PONCE was the first steam powered ship to undergo, and successfully complete, the Navy's revised Engineering Certification program. In May 1996, PONCE participated in the Joint Task Force Exercise, Exercise Purple Star.

On 10 June 1996, with just one week notice, PONCE was called upon to support OPERATION ASSURED RESPONSE off the coast of Monrovia, Liberia. PONCE sailed with over 1100 sailors and marines, 6 helicopters, and an assortment of naval support element equipment and craft, replacing an LPH and an LSD on station. For the duration of OPERATION ASSURED RESPONSE, PONCE was assigned as the sole naval afloat asset in support of the USMC SPMAGTF. While meeting the ASSURED RESPONSE commitment, PONCE conducted a search and rescue mission in rendering assistance to a freighter in distress, directly contributing to life saving efforts of injured crew members in the stricken vessel.

PONCE is completing a year in which she won all command departmental operational excellence awards, along with the Battle Efficiency "E". Throughout, PONCE displayed the professionalism and adherence to the highest standards of excellence which highlights her nickname "The Proud Lion."