



**DECLASSIFIED A L**

C O M M A N D   H I S T O R Y

O F

U S S   P O N C H A T O U L A

A O   1 4 8

1 JANUARY 1967 - 31 DECEMBER 1967

REPRODUCED FROM  
NAVY HISTORICAL CENTER  
PUBLICATIONS  
1967

**DECLASSIFIED A L**

Command History

OPNAV Report 5750-1

**DECLASSIFIED** L

PART ONE

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS

REPRODUCED FROM THE  
NAVY HISTORICAL CENTER  
PUBLICATIONS BRANCH

**DECLASSIFIED** L

DECLASSIFIED

1 JAN Moored Sasebo, Japan, undergoing mid-deployment maintenance.

12 JAN Underway for operations in the South China Sea.

14 JAN Replenished USS EVERSOLE (DD 789), first underway replenishment of the year, 272nd underway replenishment since 1966-67 WESTPAC cruise began in September.

19 JAN Replenished USS EPPERSON (DD 719), 300th underway replenishment of 1966-67 WESTPAC cruise.

26 JAN Returned to Subic Bay, R.P.I.

30 JAN Underway for local operations.

01 FEB Returned to Subic Bay, R.P.I.

05 FEB Underway for operations in the South China Sea.

17 FEB Returned to Subic Bay, R.P.I.

23 FEB Underway for operations in the South China Sea.

02 MAR Returned to Subic Bay, R.P.I.

05 MAR Underway for Singapore, B.C.C.

09 MAR Arrived Singapore, B.C.C.

14 MAR Underway for operations in the South China Sea. Dipped below the Equator at 105° 05' East.

18 MAR Recovered Lt. (b) (6) [REDACTED], USN, (b) (6) [REDACTED], from Gulf of Tonkin. General Mess received Honorable Mention in annual NEY Award competition.

22 MAR Replenished USS COLLETT (DD 730), 400th underway replenishment of 1966-67 WESTPAC cruise.

26 MAR Returned to Subic Bay, R.P.I.

31 MAR Underway for operations in the South China Sea.

DECLASSIFIED

02 APR Replenished USS ENTERPRISE (CVA(N) 65), 426th underway replenishment of 1966-67 WESTPAC cruise, breaking previous record of 425 underway replenishments in one cruise held by USS CALIENTE (AO 53).

07 APR Replenished USS BLUE (DD 744), 464th underway replenishment, 503rd ship alongside, and last "unrep" of 1966-67 WESTPAC cruise.

10 APR Returned to Subic Bay, R.P.I.

11 APR Underway for Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

17 APR "Chopped" to the First Fleet.

21 APR Replenished USS HORNET (CVS 12) and twelve destroyers.

24 APR Arrived Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

1 MAY First to contribute to Navy Relief during annual drive.

20 MAY Conducted 1,147 visitors on a thirty minute tour of the ship during Armed Forces Day Open House.

25 MAY Replenished USS CANBERRA (CAG 2), assisted in evacuation of Crville Harrington from University of Hawaii research vessel TERITU off Palmyra Island.

27 MAY Returned to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

6 JUN Underway for local operations.

8 JUN Returned to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

14 JUN Underway for local operations, returned same day.

18 JUN Underway for rendezvous with USS PLATTE (AO 24) to take on PLATTE's cargo after PLATTE suffered major damage during a collision.

21 JUN Returned to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, after rendezvous with USS PLATTE (AO 24).

14 JUL Underway for local operations.

DECLASSIFIED

17 JUL Ruptured one tube in Number One Boiler damaging 134 others.

20 JUL Returned to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

25 JUL Underway for rendezvous with PHIBRON 11.

26 JUL Number One Boiler on the line, repairs completed.

30 JUL Returned to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, after replenishing PHIBRON 11.

1 AUG Pursuant to EUPERS Orders #023363 of 27 December 1966, Captain William M. A. Greene, USN, relieved Captain Howard E. Greer, USN, as Commanding Officer, USS PONCHATOULA (AO 148).

7 AUG Underway for local operations.

12 AUG Returned to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

22 AUG Underway for local operations, returned following day.

5 SEP Underway for local operations, anchored in Lahaina Roads, Maui, Hawaii, during nights of 5-6 and 6-7 September.

7 SEP Returned to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

11 SEP Commenced Underway Training conducted by Fleet Training Group, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

20 SEP Collided with USS HISSEM (DER 400) during practice underway replenishment, damage negligible.

22 SEP Concluded underway training with the completion of the final battle problem.

28 SEP Pre-Deployment Inspection conducted for Commander Service Squadron Five by USS GENESEE (AOG 8).

29 SEP Administrative Inspection conducted for Commander Service Forces Pacific Fleet by USS GENESEE (AOG 8).

30 SEP Personnel, Upper and Lower Decks Inspection conducted by Chief of Staff, COMSERVPAC, completion of Administrative Inspection.

16 OCT Underway for local operations, returned following day.

TOP SECRET

1 NOV Underway for operations with the United States Seventh Fleet enroute to Subic Bay, R.P.I.

8 NOV "Chopped" to Seventh Fleet.

14 NOV Arrived Subic Bay, R.P.I.

15 NOV Underway for operations in the South China Sea.

19 NOV Replenished USCGC GRESHAM (WHEC 387), first underway replenishment of 1967-68 WESTPAC cruise.

22 NOV Replenished USS DUPONT (DD 941), first PONCHATOULA replenishment using probe fuel fittings.

23 NOV Replenished USS CORAL SEA (CVA 43), detected discoloration of JP-5 due to micro-biological growth in bottom of three of four JP-5 tanks.

29 NOV Returned to Subic Bay, R.P.I.

10 DEC Underway for operations in the South China Sea after off loading all JP-5, cleaning tanks, and reloading JP-5.

20 DEC Returned to Subic Bay, R.P.I.

22 DEC Underway for operations in the South China Sea.

27 DEC Replenished USS RANGER (CVA 61), 93rd underway replenishment of 1967-68 WESTPAC cruise, last underway replenishment of the year.

29 DEC Arrived Hong Kong, B.C.C.

31 DEC Anchored Hong Kong, B.C.C.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

Command History

OPNAV Report 5750-1

DECLASSIFIED

PART TWO

BASIC NARRATIVE

APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
BY THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
ON 08-14-2010

DECLASSIFIED



1. COMMAND ORGANIZATION AND RELATIONS.

DECLASSIFIED

On 1 August 1967, Captain William M. A. Greene, USN, relieved Captain Howard E. Greer, USN, as Commanding Officer of the USS PONCHATOUA (AO 148). (Annex A)

PONCHATOUA is homeported at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. One of the Navy's largest fleet oilers, the ship is designed for the rapid transfer of petroleum products at sea to forces operating at high speeds and at great distances from their bases. The ship carries, in addition to her own fuel, nearly eight million gallons of ship and aviation fuel for delivery to the fleet. While engaged in operations in the South China Sea, PONCHATOUA also delivers drums of petroleum products, bottled gasses, mail, movies, and large quantities of fleet freight.

At the conclusion of 1967, the ship was manned by 14 officers and 292 enlisted men. (Annex B)

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

2. OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1 January 1967 found PONCHATOUA moored in Sasebo, Japan, undergoing her mid-deployment upkeep. On 12 January, PONCHATOUA got underway for operations in the South China Sea. And, on 14 January, PONCHATOUA conducted her first underway replenishment of the year (her 272nd underway replenishment since the 1966-67 WESTPAC cruise began in September) with the USS EVERSOLE (DD 789).

Between 14 January and 2 March, the ship carried fuel, mail, and some supplies from Subic Bay Naval Base in the Philippine Islands to Naval units operating in the South China Sea off the coast of Vietnam. On 5 March, PONCHATOUA got underway for a five day visit to Singapore, B.C.C. After departing Singapore the morning of 14 March, the ship dipped below the Equator at 105° 05' East to initiate over 200 pollywogs into the Realm of Neptunus Rex.

Returning to operations in the Gulf of Tonkin 18 March, PONCHATOUA rescued downed pilot, (b) (6), Lieutenant, U.S. Navy, from a rarely traveled part of the South China Sea. (Annex C)

downed pilot  
←

During the remainder of the 1966-67 WESTPAC deployment, the ship continued carrying fuel from Subic Bay to Naval units operating off Vietnam.

On 2 April, PONCHATOUA replenished the USS ENTERPRISE (CVA(N) 65), her 426th underway replenishment of the 1966-67 WESTPAC cruise, breaking the previous record of 425 underway replenishments in one cruise held by USS CALIENTE (AO 53). PONCHATOUA departed Subic Bay for Pearl Harbor on 11 April 1967. (Annex D)

Replenishing the USS HORNET (CVS 12) and twelve destroyers enroute to Hawaii, PONCHATOUA arrived home on 24 April with an unprecedented 477 underway replenishments in her hat. After thirty days rest, relaxation,

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

and much needed upkeep, the ship got underway for local operations. On 25 May, PONCHATOUA replenished the USS CANBERRA (CAG 2), assisting in the evacuation of Orville Harrington from the University of Hawaii research vessel TERITU off Polmyra Island. PONCHATOUA returned with Mr. Harrington to Pearl Harbor on 27 May. (Annex E)

PONCHATOUA continued conducting local operations until she again deployed to WESTPAC on 1 November 1967. On 17 June she took on 46,947 barrels of NSFO and 24,186 barrels of JP-5 from the USS PLATTE (AO 24) after PLATTE suffered major damage during a collision at sea. On 27 July, after working round the clock for eight days to complete repairs to Number One Boiler when a tube ruptured in the generating tank damaging 134 other tubes, PONCHATOUA replenished the six ships comprising PHIBRON 11, enabling the amphibious force to continue on to WESTPAC without stopping in Pearl Harbor for needed fuel. (Annex F). Operations 5-7 September included a visit to Lahaina on Maui, Hawaii.

PONCHATOUA commenced underway training conducted by the Fleet Training Group, Pearl Harbor, on 11 September. On 20 September the USS HISSEM (DER 400) collided with PONCHATOUA during a practice underway replenishment. Damage was negligible. (Annex G) PONCHATOUA concluded underway training with a final battle problem on 22 September. (Annex H) During the 28th, 29th, and 30th of that month, the USS GENESEE (AOG 8) conducted a Pre-Deployment and Administrative Inspection of the ship. (Annex I)

On 1 November 1967 PONCHATOUA got underway for the Western Pacific and operations with the United States Seventh Fleet. Arriving in Subic Bay at 1713 on 14 November, the ship received orders (Annex J) to load out and get underway within 24 hours, if possible, to take the place of

DECLASSIFIED

the USS NECHES (AO 47) which had just suffered a C-7A bomber casualty. At 1702, on 15 November, PONCHATOULA departed Subic Bay for operations with Naval units off Vietnam. On 19 November, she conducted her first underway replenishment of the 1967-68 WESTPAC deployment with the USCGC GRESHAM (WHEC 387), and on 22 November the ship conducted her first replenishment using the new probe fueling fittings with the USS DUPONT (DD 941).

During the 23 November underway replenishment with USS CORAL SEA (CVA 63), doubt was expressed concerning the acceptability of the JP-5 onboard for aircraft use. Both PONCHATOULA and CORAL SEA tested samples of the fuel independently, and again jointly. Some samples of JP-5 passed the tests and some did not. Not willing to deliver possibly substandard JP-5 to the pilots flying over North Vietnam, the ship alerted the Force Commander, the Fleet Commander and others in the chain of command to a possibly widespread problem and returned to Subic Bay to offload the bad fuel, clean tanks, and reload acceptable JP-5. (Annex K)

The ship moored in Subic Bay on 29 November and again got underway for operations in the Tonkin Gulf on 10 December. On 20 December, she arrived in Subic Bay for a normal three day period to reload. PONCHATOULA again returned to the Gulf of Tonkin and on 27 December refueled the USS RANGER (CVA 61), her 93rd underway replenishment of the 1967-68 WESTPAC cruise and her last "unrep" of the year.

PONCHATOULA then headed for Hong Kong, B.C.C., arriving on 29 December, where she remained anchored over the New Year.

CONFIDENTIAL

3. SPECIAL TOPICS

DECLASSIFIED

a. Operational Statistics

Miles Steamed	49,459
Ships Replenished	365
NSFO Transferred	833,977 barrels
JP-5 Transferred	247,090 barrels
AVCAS Transferred	22,497 barrels
Total Fuel Transferred	1,103,564 barrels

b. Community Relations

Always willing to take on all challengers, "Poncho's" softball team has played a small, but important, role in improving civic relations in the Pearl Harbor community. Events such as a 36 to 6 defeat of the officers' and chiefs' makeshift team in June and participation in the Hawaiian District Tournament in August provided many afternoons of entertainment for family and friends.

On Armed Forces Day, PONCHARVULA played host to an almost overwhelming 1,147 visitors. Each guest was given a welcome aboard pamphlet (Annex L) and a thirty minute tour of the ship.

In December, the first of some fine publicity due to the efforts of Signalman First Class (b) (6) appeared in Navy News Magazine (Annex M). Stories of PO (b) (6) claim to the sharpest signal bridge in the Pacific later appeared in several other Navy oriented publications. (The claim was finally substantiated when Seventh Fleet Flagship NEWPORT NEWS came alongside, and Rear Admiral Sheldon Kinney personally signaled "Your signal bridge looks great.")

c. Awards, Commendations, and special Congratulatory Messages.

In March, PONCHARVULA's general mess received honorable mention in the

DECLASSIFIED

annual Ney Award competition within the Service Force, Pacific Fleet.

In April, PONCHATOULA received a letter of award from Rear Admiral F. E. Janney, Commander Service Group Three, plauditing the fine service PONCHATOULA tries to provide throughout the year. (Annex N)

d. Notable Records or "Firsts"

On 1 May, the ship received a personal message of appreciation from Vice Admiral W. R. Smedberg, President, Navy Relief Society, for being the first to contribute in the 1967 Drive. (Annex O)

Earlier, during the 1966-67 WESTPAC cruise, PONCHATOULA conducted a record 464 underway replenishments during one deployment. The old record of 425 was held by the USS CALIENTE (AO 53). Other noteworthy statistics included 139 ships alongside in one month, 86 during one period on the line and every U. S. Navy ship in the Gulf of Tonkin in one 24 hour period. (Annex P)

CONFIDENTIAL

U. S. S. PONCHATOULA (AO-148)  
FLEET POST OFFICE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

AOL48:01:FJG:gg  
5750  
Ser: *C18*

30 MAR 1967

**DECLASSIFIED**  
CONFIDENTIAL (Unclassified) upon removal of Enclosure (1)

From: Commanding Officer, USS PONCHATOULA (AO 148)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09B9)

Subj: Command History

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12

Encl: (1) Command History of USS PONCHATOULA (AO 148), 1 January -  
31 December 1966

1. In compliance with reference (a), Enclosure (1) is forwarded herewith.

*H. E. Greiner*  
H. E. GRENER

Copy to:  
COMSERVPAC

**DECLASSIFIED**  
CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

C O M M A N D   H I S T O R Y

O F

U S S   P O N C H A T O U L A

(A O 1 4 8)

1 JANUARY 1966 - 31 DECEMBER 1966

DOWNGRADED AT 8 YEAR  
INTERVALS; DECLASSIFIED AFTER  
12 YEARS. DOD DIR 6200.10

DECLASSIFIED



Command History

CPNAV Report 5750-1

CONFIDENTIAL

PART ONE

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF HIGHLIGHTS

DOWNGRADED AT 2 YEAR  
INTERVALS: DECLASSIFIED AFTER  
12 YEARS. DOD DIR 5005.10

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- 1 JAN 66 At sea, conducting routine operations with USS RANGER (CVA 61) and USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA 31).
- 14 FEB Commenced INSURV Inspection.
- 18 FEB Completed INSURV Inspection.
- 18 MAR Commenced shipyard overhaul, Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- 6 APR Entered Drydock, Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.
- 25-29 APR PONCHATOULA acts as host ship for the Chilean training ship, B. E. ESMERALDA.
- 18 MAY Left Drydock.
- 1 JUL Completed first dock trial during overhaul.
- 18 JUL Completed shipyard overhaul.
- 5 AUG Pre-Deployment Inspection conducted for Commander Service Squadron Five by USS ELKHORN (AOG 7).
- 8 AUG Commenced Underway Training conducted by Fleet Training Group, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- 15 AUG Pursuant to BUPERS Orders #130398, Captain Howard E. GREER, USN, relieved Captain Frank N. QUINN, USN, as Commanding Officer, USS PONCHATOULA.
- 27 AUG Concluded underway training with the completion of the final battle problem.
- 6 SEP Underway for operations with the United States SEVENTH Fleet. Enroute to Subic Bay, R.P.
- 13 SEP PONCHATOULA comes under the operational control of COMSEVENTHFLT.
- 19 SEP Arrive Subic Bay, R.P.
- 28 SEP Underway for operations in the South China Sea.
- 15 OCT Arrive Subic Bay, R.P.

DOWNGRADED ONE YEAR  
INTERVALS, DECLASSIFIED AFTER  
12 YEARS. DOD DIR 5800.10

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

**DECLASSIFIED**

- 19 OCT Commodore A. T. NICHOLSON, USN, comes aboard as  
Commander, Mobile Support Group BRAVO.
- 22 OCT Underway for operations in the South China Sea.
- 25 OCT Replenishment of USS ORISKANY (CVA 34), PONCHATOUILA's  
100th underway replenishment since her deployment in  
September.
- 26 OCT Miss Martha Raye and her troupe arrive on board for  
a concert and depart the same day.
- 27 OCT Miss Martha Raye and her troupe return for a second  
concert and transportation to Da Nang.
- 28 OCT Miss Martha Raye and her troupe depart the ship.
- 2 NOV Arrive Subic Bay, R.P.
- 4 NOV Underway, enroute to Manila, R.P. for port visit. Arrive same day.
- 7 NOV Underway for operations in the South China Sea.
- 21 NOV Arrive Subic Bay, R.P.
- 23 NOV Underway, enroute to Hong Kong, B.C.C.
- 25 NOV Arrive Hong Kong, B.C.C.
- 29 NOV Commodore L. GRABOWSKY, USN, arrives on board as  
Commander, Underway Replenishment Group Two, relieving  
Commodore A. T. NICHOLSON, USN.
- 2 DEC Underway for operations in the South China Sea.
- 5 DEC Replenishment of USS INGERSOL (DD-652), PONCHATOUILA's  
200th underway replenishment since her deployment in  
September.
- 14 DEC Arrive Subic Bay, R.P.
- 15 DEC Commodore L. GRABOWSKY, USN, departs the ship.

DOWNGRADED 1 YEAR  
INTERVALS, DECLASSIFIED PER  
12 YEARS. 1001 DIR 5200.10

**DECLASSIFIED**

DECLASSIFIED

19 DEC Underway for operations in the South China Sea.  
25 DEC Enroute to Sasebo, Japan.  
29 DEC Arrive Sasebo, Japan for mid-deployment upkeep period.  
31 DEC 66 Moored, Sasebo, Japan.

DOWNGRADED 1 YEAR  
INTERVALS: 12 MONTHS AFTER  
12 YEARS. DOWNGR. 2019

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PART TWO

BASIC NARRATIVE

DOWNGRADED AT 7 YEAR  
INTERVALS UNLESS INDICATED AFTER  
12 MONTHS, 000 112 200 10

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED

1. Command Organization and Relations.

On 15 August 1966, Captain Howard E. GREER, USN, relieved Captain Frank N. QUINN, USN, as Commanding Officer of the USS PONCHATOUOLA (AO 148). (For details of the ceremony, consult Annex A.)

PONCHATOUOLA is homeported at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. One of the Navy's largest fleet oilers, the ship is designed for the rapid transfer of petroleum products at sea to forces operating at high speeds and at great distances from their bases. The ship carries, in addition to her own fuel, nearly eight million gallons of ship and aviation fuel for delivery to the fleet. While engaged in operations in the South China Sea, PONCHATOUOLA also delivers drums of petroleum products, bottled gasses, mail, movies and large quantities of fleet freight.

At the conclusion of 1966, the ship was manned by 14 officers and 309 enlisted men. (For details on the ship's complement, consult Annex B.)

2. Operations and Activities.

1 January 1966 found PONCHATOUOLA at sea conducting routine operations with the USS RANGER (CVA 61) and the USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA 31). Returning to Pearl Harbor on the 8th of January, the ship engaged in local operations for the next month. Between the 14th and 18th of February, the ship underwent an INSURV Inspection in preparation for the upcoming overhaul in March. (For details of the INSURV Inspection, consult Annex C.)

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR  
INTERVALS; DECLASSIFIED AFTER  
12 YEARS. 100-111-1000

DECLASSIFIED

**TOP SECRET**

The ship was again at sea between the 2nd and 7th of March cleaning tanks prior to entering the shipyard.

The major shipyard overhaul officially commenced on the 18th of March at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

PONCHATOUA entered drydock on the 6th of April.

The square-rigged Chilean Training Ship, B. E. ESMERALDA, entered Pearl Harbor on the 25th of April, and PONCHATOUA acted as host-ship for her officers and crew until her departure on April 29. Activities included a party aboard ESMERALDA for PONCHATOUA's officers and invited guests from the Naval Base, a party at the Makalapa Officer's Club given by PONCHATOUA, and many unofficial visits and tours.

Vacating drydock on May 18, the ship returned to the shipyard piers for the completion of the overhaul. Dock trials were held on 1 July and the ship put to sea for the first time on July 13 for one day of local operations and testing. The overhaul officially terminated on 18 July. (For a summary of engineering overhaul details, consult Annex D.)

The USS ELKHORN (AOG 7) conducted a predeployment inspection of PONCHATOUA for Commander, Service Squadron Five on 5 August. An overall grade of excellent was assigned. (A copy of the inspection report is included as Annex E.) On 8 August, the ship commenced underway training under the auspices of the Fleet Training Group, Pearl Harbor and on 27 August, PONCHATOUA successfully completed

DOWNGRADED AT 5 YEAR  
INTERVALS; DECLASSIFIED AFTER  
12 YEARS. DOD IIR 139010

**DECLASSIFIED**

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

the final battle problem and concluded underway training. An over-all grade of GOOD was assigned. (A copy of the Fleet Training Group Report is included as Annex F.)

On September 6th, the ship got underway for the Western Pacific and operations with the United States Seventh Fleet. Arriving in Subic Bay, R.P. on 19 September, PONCHATOULA loaded deck cargo, received final briefings and made last minute preparations for service with the Seventh Fleet. She departed Subic Bay on 28 September, enroute to the Gulf of Tonkin.

During the ship's first period of operations off the coast of Vietnam, 6.82 million gallons of Navy Special Fuel Oil, 1.9 million gallons of jet and diesel fuel and 210, 571 gallons of aviation gasoline were transferred to 86 Seventh Fleet Ships. This record was accomplished in 13 days of round-the-clock operations.

Returning to Subic Bay on 15 October, the ship loaded cargo and left for line operations on the 22nd, serving as flagship for Commodore A. T. NICHOLSON, Commander Mobile Support Group Bravo. PONCHATOULA celebrated the replenishment of her 100th ship during the deployment on 25 October with the refueling of the USS ORISKANY (CVA 34). The following morning, PONCHATOULA witnessed the ORISKANY fire from a distance of about five miles, but was not called upon to render assistance.

On the afternoon of 26 October, Miss Martha Raye and her troupe, consisting of Luis Gary and Mike Bryan, arrived via helicopter to

DOWNGRADED  
IN ACCORDANCE WITH  
12854-108-101

~~DECLASSIFIED~~



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

entertain the ship's personnel. Miss Raye had time for one enthusiastically received performance before departing for another ship late that day, but she returned on the 27th for a second show. She spent the night aboard and left PONCHATOULA on the morning of the 28th in the Da Nang area.

PONCHATOULA returned to Subic Bay on 2 November, and after a two day period of loading cargo and other stores, she left for a port visit to Manila, arriving on 4 November. The three days in Manila were spent sightseeing and relaxing. Weighing anchor on the 7th, the ship was again enroute to the South China Sea and further operations in the Vietnam area.

Returning to Subic Bay on 21 November, the ship's record stood at 186 ships replenished and over 23 million gallons of petroleum products transferred. PONCHATOULA loaded cargo and stores and got underway on the 23rd, enroute to Hong Kong, B.C.C., and arrived in Hong Kong Harbor on November 25 for a seven day visit. The majority of the time was devoted to tours and shopping, but 24 ship's personnel donated blood to the Hong Kong Chapter of the International Red Cross. During the visit, Commodore Leon GRABOWSKY, Commander Underway Replenishment Group Two relieved Commodore A. T. NICHOLSON and PONCHATOULA became his flagship.

The ship returned to the Vietnam area early in December, departing Hong Kong on 2 December and refueling her 200th ship on 5 December, the USS INGERSOLL (DD-652). December 14th through 19th was spent in

DOWNGRADED AT 5 YEAR  
INTERVALS; DECLASSIFIED AFTER  
12 YEARS. DOD DD FORM 13

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED

Subic Bay preparing for another operational tour in the South China Sea. Commodore GRABOWSKY departed the ship during this time. Operations off Vietnam were concluded on 25 December and the ship headed for Sasebo, Japan for a mid-deployment upkeep period. Arriving on the 29th, PONCHATOUULA moored to the repair facility where she remained on 31 December 1966.

3. Special Topics.

a. Operational Statistics:

Miles Steamed	30,925
Ships Replenished	289
NSFO Transferred	27,130,908 gallons
JP-5 Transferred	7,796,502 gallons
AVGAS Transferred	704,466 gallons
Fresh Water Transferred	11,000 gallons
Fleet Freight Transferred	85.7 short tons

b. Performance of Material and Weapons Systems:

(1) Engineering

PONCHATOUULA's engineering plant was in poor condition prior to the shipyard overhaul. Consumption of feed water was high resulting in both evaporators being used for feed water production a large percentage of the time. Fresh water production was necessarily low. A salting problem also existed in the feed water system. The main engine turbines were in need of overhaul and turbine blading was missing or worn.

DOWNGRADED AT 2 YEAR  
INTERVALS; DECLASSIFIED AFTER  
12 YEARS, UNLESS OTHERWISE  
NOTED

DECLASSIFIED

**DECLASSIFIED**

All auxiliary machinery and winches were in need of overhaul. After completion of the yard overhaul, the performance of the plant improved immeasurably. Engineering was free of CASREPTS as of 31 December and no refueling commitments were missed due to engineering breakdowns.

(2) Weapons

Six new three inch 50 twin rapid fire mounts were installed aboard the ship during the overhaul. The fire control systems were also reworked by the shipyard. Initial difficulties were encountered in aligning the mounts properly. Severe problems were also discovered with the Mark 56 fire control system and many CASREPTS had to be submitted during the year resulting in considerable down-time for the weapons system. (A list of weapons CASREPTS is included as Annex G.) In addition, a critical shortage of trained personnel hampered efforts to bring the system into proper working order. (For details on personnel manning levels, consult Annex B.)

(3) Supply

The performance of Supply equipments during the year was excellent. New ovens, mixers and coppers were installed in the galley during the overhaul and their performance has been more than satisfactory. The laundry received brand new equipment during the overhaul. The four new presses have been outstanding. Although the operation suffered a loss of flexibility through the loss of its two small capacity driers and

DOWNGRADED AT 5 YEAR  
INTERVALS; DECLASSIFIED AFTER  
12 YEARS. 000 000 520 00

**DECLASSIFIED**

DECLASSIFIED

the subsequent installation of a single larger unit, the performance of the new machine has been satisfactory. The separate washer and extractor units were replaced by a combination unit. Problems were anticipated initially due to the nature of the punched-card control system and the dependence of the unit upon simultaneous supplies of compressed air, steam, water and electricity for operation. These fears proved to be unfounded during the year, however, and the unit has given little trouble.

(4) Operations

When PONCHATOUILA entered the yard for overhaul, the communications gear aboard provided the minimum amount of support to the ship. All outgoing traffic at that time went out CW, and off-line encryption was necessary for classified traffic. The only on-line system on the ship was the JASON Fleet Broadcast, capable of copying one broadcast. An experimental communications system was installed by the yard to rectify the situation. Under the new system, the receivers are in one area and the crypto gear is in another. The only way that the two can be connected is through the main patch panel. This enables the ship to maintain a much higher level of security in secure TTY than is maintained in radio central. It also means that if need be, the off-line room could be turned into a top secret space. The biggest disadvantage is the distance to be covered if a frequency drops. In addition, it is, at times, harder to

DOWN GRADED AT 8 YEAR  
INTERVALS - DECLASSIFIED AFTER  
12 YEARS - (DD FORM 1300)

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED  
DATE 05/10/2011

maintain close frequency tolerances causing the gear to drop synchronization occasionally. The CREON multi-channel fleet broadcast system was installed during the overhaul. The CREON system enhanced the ship's communications ability and equipped her for the role of SERVPAC flagship. The ORESTES system was also added to the communications system. This system was a great convenience and has cut the work of the crypto board to almost nothing. The ship has also speeded up delivery of messages as well as facilitating checking into task group nets and setting up rendezvous. The reliability of the system has been excellent. Other major equipment changes consist of the installation of three WRT-2, two SRC-20, one WRT-1, and one WRC-1 as well as the installation of two WRR-2, one R-1051 and one SRR-19 receivers.

c. Major Conversions and Alterations:

(1) Engineering

(For overhaul details, consult Annex D.)

(2) Communications

(Details of the communications alterations are included in paragraph 3(b)(4) above.)

d. Communications

The amount of traffic that the ship is now able to handle with the present communications gear is sharply increased from that feasible before overhaul. Many of the in-between steps have been eliminated, especially in outgoing traffic. More traffic can now be handled faster by radio central. The current outgoing load while deployed

DOWNGRADED AT 5 YEAR  
INTERVALS FROM 1967  
12 YEARS FROM 1979

DECLASSIFIED

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

is approximately 200 messages per month. During the time CTG 73.5 was embarked, this figure rose to approximately 350 without exceeding the maximum capabilities of the various systems. The increased amount of traffic would be almost impossible to handle without on-line equipment since it would mean that the crypto board would be working 24 hours per day with a heavy backlog at all times. Incoming traffic has risen steadily, due mainly to the increased traffic on the broadcast. Covering GRIT only, the ship would be checking about 15,000 messages per month. Copying GRIT, GALL and GASW, the ship has upped that figure to approximately 30,000 or more. Total capabilities are now 60,000 or more per month, figuring on full saturation on all broadcasts. If this were to happen, it is probable that the ship would be issued cards for two additional broadcasts, coming up to the maximum of six broadcasts.

e. Supply and Logistics

The effectiveness of supply material inventory control was greatly enhanced by SOAP being conducted concurrently with the ship's overhaul. The new equipments installed in the galley and laundry improved the quality of work in the area of subsistence and ship's service. No major support problems were encountered after deployment to WESTPAC in September with the exception of the availability of laundry supplies and the shipping delays on items crucially needed to repair essential equipments. Provisions, ship's store stock and other repair parts were, for the most part, readily available.

DOWNGRADED AT 5 YEAR  
INTERVALS UNLESS SHOWN AFTER  
12 YEARS FROM DATE

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

CONFIDENTIAL

f. Community Relations and Civic Action

Community relations and civic action were confined primarily to continued support of the Hemophilia Foundation of Hawaii through blood donations and other blood donation projects when the opportunity arose. (For blood donation statistics and details, consult Annex H.) In addition the ship published a monthly newsletter/familygram during the months the ship was deployed. The publication was extremely well received and caused the receipt of many letters by the command. Time limitations due to short in-port periods precluded the initiation of more elaborate projects.

g. Awards, Commendations and Special Congratulatory Messages

PONCHATOUA distinguished herself in the annual NEY award competition during 1966 by winning the small mess nomination for Service Force Pacific Ships. Two special congratulatory messages were also received for her service as Flagship while in the Vietnam area. (For copies of the messages, consult Annex I.)

h. Notable Records or Firsts

Although PONCHATOUA did not break any official records, her performance in WESTPAC is worthy of note. During the month of October, for example, she replenished 127 ships, a mark beaten only by the USS SACRAMENTO (AOE-1). On a continuing basis, the ship has provided solid support to ships operating in the Vietnam area, often offering services more regularly expected from AKS's and AF's. Many crucial repair parts and vitally needed and much appreciated provisions items have been transferred to requesting ships.

DOWNGRADED BY YEAR  
INTERVAL PERIOD AND DATE  
12 YEARS FROM 01/19/10

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

PART THREE

LESSONS LEARNED, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CLASSIFIED BY 10428  
EXEMPT FROM AUTOMATIC  
DOWNGRADING AND  
DECLASSIFICATION

DECLASSIFIED



~~DECLASSIFIED~~

The lessons learned in calendar year 1966 centered around the two major evolutions of the ship, namely overhaul and deployment to the United States Seventh Fleet.

The overhaul was conducted at the Naval Shipyard, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. It became apparent early in the planning stage that it would be a full time assignment for all PONCHATOUULA personnel to assist and monitor the overhaul. Both the work done by shipyard personnel and subcontractors in Honolulu required constant surveillance and detailed inspection. A large percentage of such work had to be rejected until discrepancies were corrected. Almost all winch and a high percentage of valve rework was unsatisfactory and had to be redone completely by Honolulu subcontractors. The price paid by PONCHATOUULA was neglect of maintenance and other ship's force functions in order to assure a thorough and effective overhaul. This was accomplished, and even though some important systems were not overhauled due to shortage of funds, PONCHATOUULA came out of overhaul on time on 18 July in outstanding material condition. The degree of supervision and close inspection required to be done by PONCHATOUULA personnel was indeed a lesson learned.

After an abbreviated refresher training program, PONCHATOUULA headed west on 6 September to join the Seventh Fleet. No fuel had been transferred to another ship since January and only a handful of personnel on deck had ever witnessed an underway replenishment. The lessons learned started in earnest on 28 September when PONCHATOUULA, equipped with borrowed portions of most required operation orders, sailed for Point Yankee from Subic Bay. There is a definite need for an arrival folder to be provided newly arrived

DOWNGRADED BY SP-6 JAC/ML  
INTERVALS FOR DECLASSIFICATION: 12 YEARS  
DATE OF REVIEW: 10/11/01

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ships. We also learned that ships to be serviced varied widely in their physical characteristics and their mode of operation. It was necessary for us to be able to rig high lines and Burton rigs both forward and amidships. Ships alongside varied in station keeping markedly fore and aft as well as abeam. We found that "valve twisters" were in existence in PONCHA TOULA, requiring additional indoctrination about the possible consequences of their experimentation. While bringing a forced draft blower to fourth speed with inexperienced personnel on the switchboard, we suffered a complete loss of load in restricted waters. No damage was done, but we were lucky. We also had an oil spill at Sasebo while loading at Yokosi pier which is in the heart of the Pearl beds.

We have discovered multiple ways of improving rigs and increasing flexibility. An AO in Seventh Fleet serves as an AK, AF and major fleet post office, so ingenuity is required. Most of all, we were to learn that we could handle any workload assigned. A record was set for most replenishments during one circuit on the line, 86, and the record for most replenishments during a deployment will be broken easily. There were no problems too large; however, the gradual reduction in the tempo of operations which lowered our replenishment day on the line to 2 or 3 ships and increased our days in Olongapo became our greatest problem and the most difficult one to explain to young, active men who came to work, came to win.

DOWNGRADED AT 8 YEAR  
INTERVALS, DECLASSIFIED AFTER  
12 YEARS. DOD USE ONLY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~