

U.S.S. MONTICELLO (LSD-35)

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(Unclassified upon removal of enclosure (14))

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N.I.F.*

03 APR 1984

From: Commanding Officer, USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09B9)

Subj: OPNAV Report 5750.1; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A

- Encl: (1) Command History, 1968  
(2) Biography of Robert F. STANTON, Capt, USN  
(3) Picture of Robert F. STANTON, Capt, USN  
(4) Biography of James A. HOMYAK, Capt, USN  
(5) Picture of James A. HOMYAK, Capt, USN  
(6) Change-of-Command Ceremony  
(7) Picture of Change-of-Command Ceremony  
(8) Officer Directory as of 31 December 1968  
(9) Enlisted Roster as of 1 January 1969  
(10) Visit by Vice Admiral J. V. SMITH, USN, COMPHIBPAC  
(11) SECNAV msg 181730Z JAN 68  
(12) "Excellence in Supply" Award (Blue "E")  
(13) COMPHIBPAC msg 100314Z APR 68  
(14) MONTICELLO msg 311735Z AUG 68  
(15) COMPHIBRON NINE msg 070941Z DEC 68

*NIF  
03 APR 1984*

1. Enclosures (1) through (15) are submitted in accordance with reference (a).

*James A. Homyak*  
JAMES A. HOMYAK

Copy to:

CINCPACFLT (w/o encls (3), (5), (7), (9), (10))

COMPHIBPAC (w/o encls (3), (5), (7), (9), (10))

COMPHIBRON NINE (w/o encls (3), (5), (7), (9), (10))

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS DURING 1968

1 JAN - 18 FEB           Restricted Availability Period

24 FEB - 10 APR         Turn-around Cruise to DaNang, RVN

23 APR - 1 MAY          Participation in Fleet Exercise BEAGLE LEASH

20 MAY - 15 JUN         Period of Interim Refresher Training and Amphibious  
Refresher Training

1 AUG 68 - 1969         Deployment to Western Pacific

27-29 AUG               Relief of USS THOMASTON (LSD-28) as a member of  
Amphibious Ready Group BRAVO

1 SEP                    Collision with USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10)

12 OCT                   Change of Command in Subic Bay, P. I.

10 NOV                   Secondary Control Ship for Operation DARING ENDEAVOR

17 NOV                   Unofficial visit of Vice Admiral J. V. SMITH, USN,  
COMPHIBPAC, to MONTICELLO

## NARRATIVE HISTORY OF USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35)

1 January - 31 December 1968

### 1. Command Organization and Relations.

Captain Robert F. STANTON, USN, commanded USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35) from the beginning of 1968 until 12 October when he was relieved by Captain James A. HOMYAK, USN, in Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines.

MONTICELLO is under the administrative command of Commander Amphibious Squadron NINE, and while deployed to the Western Pacific was under the operational control of Commander, U. S. SEVENTH Fleet, operating as a unit of Amphibious Force, SEVENTH Fleet (TF 76) and Amphibious Ready Group BRAVO (TG 76.5). MONTICELLO is homeported in San Diego, California.

The ship's basic mission is to provide transportation, amphibious mobility and logistic support to embarked Marine detachments. The ship has a capacity of 301 Marines, including officers and men, and has a large well-deck, mezzanine deck, and super deck area to transport trucks, jeeps, amphibious tracked vehicles, and has a helo deck to provide vertical mobility.

During the year, various Marine and Naval organizations were attached to MONTICELLO. During operations from 27 August to 31 December, units of Marine Battalion Landing Team 2/7 were embarked, as were boats and boat crews of Assault Craft Unit I - Detachment BRAVO. Beachmaster Unit One, WESTPAC Detachment Bravo 6 was embarked from 27 August until 6 November. Beachmaster Unit One WESTPAC Detachment Bravo 7 relieved Detachment Bravo 6 and remained embarked for the remainder of the year.

### 2. Ship's Operations.

1968 began with MONTICELLO berthed at the U. S. Naval Station, San Diego, California. The first seven weeks of the year were spent in a restricted availability status, during which repairs and alterations were performed.

National Steel and Shipbuilding Company of San Diego was awarded the bid to perform most of the major work. Significant items included complete overhaul of the port and starboard cranes, boiler repairs, weight-testing of all davits, boat booms, accommodation ladders, cleats and bitts, and the installation of a CREON communication system.

A letter was received on 18 January from the Secretary of the Navy awarding MONTICELLO the Meritorious Unit Commendation for operations carried out in the Western Pacific from 18 June to 4 August 1967 while in Ready Group BRAVO.

During 19-23 February, MONTICELLO participated with other ships of Amphibious Squadron NINE in various drills and exercises off the Silver Strand in California.

On Saturday, 24 February, MONTICELLO received orders from COMPHIBPAC to load boats and Marine equipment and supplies and take them to DaNang, RVN. The crew, when faced with a multitude of details which suddenly presented themselves, reacted quickly and efficiently. MONTICELLO departed San Diego on 26 February steaming at full speed. She refueled from an oiler 50 miles north of Hawaii, made a five hour fuel stop in Guam, and arrived in DaNang on 16 March, making the entire journey in only eighteen days.

After offloading the cargo, MONTICELLO steamed toward Yokosuka, Japan, arriving there on 21 March for six days. MONTICELLO began her homeward journey on 27 March, stopped over in Pearl Harbor for two days on the way and arrived in San Diego on 10 April. The ship departed 27 April to participate in fleet exercise Operation BEAGLE LEASH, off the coast of Southern California. This was the largest naval exercise ever to be held in the Eastern Pacific; Canadian ships participated as well. The exercise ended with a massive amphibious landing at Camp Pendleton during which MONTICELLO was secondary control ship.

MONTICELLO commenced a series of independent ship's exercises on 6 May, among which was a shore bombardment for which a grade of "OUTSTANDING" was achieved.

On 13 May, a week of thorough administrative inspections was conducted. A highlight was the award to the Supply Department of COMPHIBPAC's "Blue E" for excellence. The Engineering Department received a qualitative grade of "outstanding" for its administrative readiness.

From 20 May until 15 June MONTICELLO conducted Interim Refresher Training and Amphibious Refresher Training. Almost daily the crew went to General Quarters or Condition 1-A for four weeks. Several ship-to-shore landings were conducted to give the boat control team and deck force necessary experience.

During the six-week pre-deployment period beginning 15 June, MONTICELLO became the temporary flagship of Commander Amphibious Squadron NINE. The squadron's pennant was hoisted on 3 July 1968 as Capt. J. L. LOWENTROUT, USN, and his staff moved aboard. MONTICELLO began its eighth deployment to the Western Pacific on 1 August.

Leaving San Diego in company with MONTICELLO were USS WEISS (LPR-135), USS MONTROSE (LPA-212), USS SEMINOLE (LKA-104) and USS OAK HILL (LSD-7). MONTICELLO was flagship for a Convoy Commodore. During the transit to Pearl Harbor, the five ships conducted daily drills and exercises as they steamed in convoy formation. Upon arrival in Pearl Harbor (9 August), Commander Amphibious Squadron NINE departed MONTICELLO.

MONTICELLO steamed independently from Pearl Harbor on 11 August and arrived in DaNang, RVN, on 24 August. After offloading cargo transported from San Diego, MONTICELLO steamed to Subic Bay, P. I., arriving there on 27 August.

During 27-29 August, MONTICELLO relieved USS THOMASTON (LSD-28) and backloaded elements of Battalion Landing Team 2/7, Assault Craft Unit I and BMU I Detachment Bravo 6. MONTICELLO as a member of Amphibious Ready Group BRAVO was now under the operational control of CTG 76.5. At this time, ARG BRAVO was commanded by Capt A. L. BATTSON Jr., the new Amphibious Squadron NINE commander. Other ships in the Ready Group were the flagship USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10), USS MERRICK (LKA-97) and USS OGDEN (LPD-5).

On the morning of 30 August, MONTICELLO in company with TRIPOLI departed Subic Bay for DaNang, RVN. At 0017 (local time) 1 September, during a corpen movement in column formation, MONTICELLO collided with USS TRIPOLI. There were no personnel injuries, and both ships sustained only minor damage.

Upon arrival off the coast of RVN, near DaNang, MONTICELLO and other units of ARG BRAVO commenced support of elements of BLT 2/7 ashore.

During this period weekly logistic runs were made to DaNang. Whenever possible, a party was held at China Beach for the liberty section of the day. Daily mail and personnel were transferred to and from DaNang by helicopter from TRIPOLI. Daily inter- and intra-ship exercises were conducted by the Ready Group.

On 4 October MONTICELLO departed DaNang enroute to Subic Bay in company with USS TRIPOLI, USS OGDEN and USS MERRICK, soon to be relieved by USS SEMINOLE (LKA-104). On 12 October Capt Robert F. STANTON was relieved by Capt James A. HOMYAK as Commanding Officer of MONTICELLO. All hands witnessed this colorful change-of-command ceremony on the ship's helo deck.

After the upkeep period, ARG BRAVO steamed to Kaohsiung, Taiwan, arriving on 21 October for five days' rest and relaxation. The Ready Group returned to DaNang, RVN, on 31 October.

On 5 November, MONTICELLO commenced backloading various elements of BLT 2/7 in preparation for an amphibious operation south of DaNang. During the backload BMU-1 Detachment Bravo 6 was relieved by BMU-1 Detachment Bravo 7.

At 0600, 10 November, with MONTICELLO acting as Secondary Control Ship, Operation DARING ENDEAVOR was launched, commencing with an amphibious landing one mile south of the Cui Dai River in Quang Nam province. DARING ENDEAVOR was successfully completed in one week and on 17 November BLT 2/7 was backloaded.

On 17 November Vice Admiral J. V. SMITH, USN, COMPHIBPAC, while touring the Western Pacific, paid an informal visit to MONTICELLO.

MONTICELLO and the other units of the Ready Group returned to an operational area off DaNang and began supporting Operation SWIFT MOVE III until 6 December, when ARG BRAVO departed for a five-day visit to Hong Kong, B.C.C. Departing this liberty port on 13 December, the Ready Group returned to Subic Bay for a period of maintenance and upkeep. Enroute to Subic Bay, MONTICELLO conducted an economy run. On the morning of 15

December the Ready Group conducted gunnery exercises using air targets towed by pilots from NAS, Cubi Point, P. I.

After a well-needed 12-day upkeep period, the Ready Group departed Subic Bay, again conducting gunnery exercises.

MONTICELLO arrived off the coast of DaNang on 29 December and remained there for the remainder of 1968.

As of 31 December 1968, MONTICELLO carried 20 officers and 248 enlisted personnel. By the end of 1968, 1,983 helicopter landings had been recorded; 371 of these were in 1968 alone.