

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

Subj: Annual Command History OPNAV Symbol 5750-1

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B
(b) CNO ltr ser 09BH/2138 of 17 Jul 1979

Encl: (1) Annual Command History for 1978

1. In accordance with reference (a) and in response to reference (b), enclosure (1) is forwarded.


ANDREW J. CONKLIN

COMMAND HISTORY
1978

USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35) began the year of 1978 inport San Diego, California with her crew enjoying the holiday season with families and friends, preparing for a very busy year ahead.

MONTICELLO got underway for local operations 9 January. Participating in PHIBLEX off the coast of California, the ship pulled back into San Diego Naval Station 14 January. The next eight days were busy ones as the crew readied for the first major amphibious exercise of 1978 - READIEX 78/2.

READIEX 78/2 commenced 23 January and included helo-ops and ship-to-shore movement of troops with MONTICELLO acting as Secondary Control Ship (SCS). READIEX 78/2 ended 2 February as MONTICELLO pulled back into the Naval Station at San Diego.

MONTICELLO was scheduled to deploy in mid-March on a Western Pacific (WESTPAC) deployment with Amphibious Squadron THREE, but an unusual assignment awaited her instead. The ship was administratively reassigned to the operational control of Amphibious Squadron ONE, then directed to offer assistance and repair support at the tiny island atoll of Eniwetok, located in the Marshall Island chain.

On 13 March, MONTICELLO was underway for one day to conduct engineering tests. Back inport San Diego for three days, the ship was then ready to begin her six-week, 5,000 mile deployment to Eniwetok atoll on 17 March.

On 21 March, both officers and crew took the day off to celebrate MONTICELLO's 21st birthday as the ship steamed toward the Hawaiian Islands.

MONTICELLO arrived in Pearl Harbor on 25 March to load stores, supplies and equipment bound for Eniwetok. On 27 March MONTICELLO departed Hawaii and set a course for Kwajelien, the first stop on MONTICELLO's mission.

Arriving at Kwajelien 2 April, MONTICELLO's crew enjoyed an afternoon of liberty before getting underway for her final destination, Eniwetok, the morning of 4 April, arriving at the tiny atoll 5 April.

While anchored inside the blue-water atoll of Eniwetok, MONTICELLO converted its well-deck into a "floating garage" to repair the landing craft used by Department of the Interior crews for the environmental clean-up of the island. Eniwetok was used in the atomic testing program over twenty year ago. Work on the landing craft was completed ahead of schedule and on 12 April MONTICELLO weighed anchor for Kwajelien, then departed for Pearl Harbor once again.

MONTICELLO arrived in Pearl Harbor 20 April to load stores for the return to CONUS and her homeport of San Diego. On 24 April MONTICELLO finally set sail for the familiar shores of Southern California, and within one week pulled back into San Diego Naval Station.

The better part of May was spent in port San Diego, as everyone's attention turned once more to the upcoming WESTPAC deployment. Several engineering drills and shipboard inspections were scheduled and conducted for the upcoming summer months to test the soundness, reliability and seaworthiness of MONTICELLO; namely, OPPE, MTT and an annual PMS inspection.

From 10 July until 21 July MONTICELLO participated in VARSITY KLEENEX 78, the second major amphibious exercise of 1978 consisting of PHIBRON ONE ships.

On 23 August MONTICELLO went back out to sea for engineering drills. On the morning of 24 August, she pulled into the San Diego Naval Station just long enough to pick-up dependents of shipboard personnel for a day-long dependent's cruise through the harbor, then anchored off the golden beaches of Coronado. The dependents enjoyed a barbeque dinner on the mezzanine deck of MONTICELLO, and were returned to the Naval Station later that afternoon. Once again, MONTICELLO turned around and headed out to sea for more drills and engineering tests, returning to San Diego on 25 August.

Underway on her 7 1/2 month WESTPAC deployment 31 August, the ship participated in a Guest of the Navy cruise by allowing several California businessmen, community leaders and professional members to ride the ship to Pearl Harbor.

MONTICELLO pulled into Pearl Harbor for its last time during 1978 on 7 September. The next four days were busy ones, bringing on stores, supplies and equipment slated for transit. MONTICELLO departed Pearl Harbor 11 September en route Eniwetok atoll, where her task group, PHIBRON ONE, would relieve the returning PHIBRON THREE.

Arriving at Eniwetok 19 September, MONTICELLO was underway 20 September for the Phillipines Islands. However, engineering casualties aboard another ship of the squadron required MONTICELLO to alter her schedule and render support as a guide ship to Guam.

MONTICELLO arrived in Guam on 25 September. During the week moored there, the crew enjoyed the warm, sunny beaches and the recreational facilities, exploring the island and meeting new friends. Following a seven day upkeep for voyage repairs, MONTICELLO departed Guam 1 October en route Subic Bay.

After arriving in Subic Bay 5 October, it was underway again on 6 October to evade hurricane Nina. The ship pulled back into Subic Bay 12 October. Hurricane Rita caused another sortie from Subic Bay on 26 October after a three week upkeep.

MONTICELLO departed the Phillipine Islands 3 November for Pusan, Korea for an enjoyable port visit from 8 to 12 November, then departing to participate in TEAM SPIRIT 78; a three week amphibious exercise with the Republic of Korea Navy and Marine units.

On 27 November MONTICELLO made a short port visit to the small town of San Fernando in the Phillipines, and then steamed to Subic Bay for upkeep. 1978 ended during the Christmas holiday season amid the hustle and bustle of Hong Kong.