

U.S.S. MONTICELLO (LSD-35)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35)

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1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.


J. J. FLYNN

Copy to:
CINCPACFLT
COMPHIBPAC
COMPHIBRON THREE

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35)

The USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35) bears the name of the famous historic home of Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence and third President of the United States. She is the third U.S. warship to bear that name.

The armament, troop and equipment load capacity and speed make her a top performer in the Amphibious Force. Capable of a multitude of amphibious tasks, this ship's inherent versatility and efficiency cause her to be very much in demand by the Fleet, Army, Marine Corps and Military Sea Transportation Service.

The keel of the LSD-35 was laid at Ingalls Shipbuilding Corporation, Pascagoula, Mississippi, on June 6, 1955. She was launched on 10 August 1956 and commissioned on 29 March 1957.

After outfitting, MONTICELLO trained at Norfolk, Virginia and sailed for the West Coast via the Panama Canal, arriving in San Diego on 29 May 1957. She joined the Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet, and commenced her shake-down training. MONTICELLO was assigned to Amphibious Squadron FIVE and remained part of that squadron until the summer of 1966.

As a member of Amphibious Squadron FIVE, MONTICELLO continually performed a prime role in the conduct and development of amphibious warfare, and took part in numerous major amphibious operations, serving as Primary Control Ship in most of them.

During the early part of 1962, MONTICELLO operated as a unit of Joint Task Force EIGHT in support of Operation "DOMINIC" and as the Flagship during Operation "SWORDFISH", the test of an anti-submarine nuclear weapon.

On 23 January 1964, MONTICELLO departed San Diego for duty with the SEVENTH Fleet, serving as a member of the Amphibious ready group. In August, after receiving orders to return to the United States, MONTICELLO was extended on station for an additional two months, providing extra strength and mobility to the SEVENTH Fleet during the Tonkin Gulf incidents.

MONTICELLO's role in the training exercise "SILVER LANCE" resulted in another unexpected deployment to WESTPAC when, loaded with U.S. Marines from Hawaii. She was ordered to deliver them and their equipment to Okinawa. She returned to San Diego on 23 May 1965.

MONTICELLO deployed again to WESTPAC on 25 August 1965, a month earlier than expected. It was a cruise during which she made a vital and timely contribution to our nation's war effort in Vietnam. Frequent stops were made at Chu Lai to deliver Marines and their equipment, and at DaNang to off-load missiles. Throughout the next few months she actively participated in several newsworthy amphibious operations while serving with the U.S. SEVENTH Fleet Amphibious Ready Group. Among these were the DAGGER THROUGHST raids, Operation "HARVEST MOON", and Operation "DOUBLE EAGLE", the largest amphibious landing since the Korean War. MONTICELLO returned to San Diego in April of 1966.

In July of 1966, the ship was transferred to Amphibious Squadron EINE as part of the Amphibious Force Pacific Fleet re-organization and served briefly as flagship for the Squadron. An extensive yard overhaul at Todd Shipyard, San Pedro, California from July through October 1966 readied her for another period of deployment in WESTPAC.

On 1 February 1967 she was deployed for another lengthy period of operations with the U.S. SEVENTH Fleet in Southeast Asia. During this deployment MONTICELLO acted as Primary Control Ship during Operation "BEACH HILL", and participated in Operation "HILLTOP VIII" in Okinawa and Operation "BEACON STAR", "BEACON TORCH", "BEAVER TRACK", and "KANGAROO KICK" just south of the Cua Viet River in South Vietnam.

On 6 September 1967 at DaNang, MONTICELLO was relieved in the Ready Group by USS TORTUGA (LSD-26). After a five-day visit to Hong Kong and 6 days in Yokosuka, Japan, the ship departed for home via Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, arriving in San Diego on 15 October 1967.

After a month of leave and upkeep, MONTICELLO participated in Operation "BLUE LOTUS", the largest Fleet exercise held in the Pacific since 1965. "BLUE LOTUS" was climaxed with a full scale Marine amphibious landing at Camp Pendleton, California.

The next three months in-port were highlighted by a letter received on 18 January 1968 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.

On 24 February MONTICELLO received orders to take boats and Marine equipment and supplies to South Vietnam. Less than two days later MONTICELLO departed San Diego on this assignment. After a short stop-over for fuel in Guam, she arrived in DaNang to off-load her cargo on 16 March and then proceeded to Yokosuka for several days, arriving in San Diego again in mid-April.

MONTICELLO participated in Operation "BEAGLE LEASH" off the Southeast California coast in the latter part of April. This was followed by a week of thorough administrative inspections, the highlight of which was COMPHIBPAC's "BLUE E" award for excellence in Supply. Two weeks of interim Refresher training and two weeks of Amphibious Training followed. After this MONTICELLO entered port to begin a six week in-port period of preparation for overseas movement.

1 August 1968 marked the beginning of a new deployment to the Western Pacific. Leaving San Diego in company with MONTICELLO were USS WFISS (APD135), USS MONTROSE (APA-212), USS OAK HILL LSD-7) and USS SEMINOLE (AKA-104). MONTICELLO was Flagship for a Convoy Commander and the formation arrived in Pearl Harbor on 9 August. MONTICELLO continued her cruise westward independently and relieved USS THOMASTON (LSD-28), thereby joining USS TRIPOLI (LPH-10) and USS OGDEN (LPD-5) as members of Amphibious Ready Group BRAVO.

The majority of the ensuing six month period was spent in the vicinity of DaNang in support of Marine Battalions 2/7 and 3/26 ashore. Operations included "SWIFT PLAY" "DARING ENDEAVOR" and "SWIFT MOVE". On 13 January 1969, BOLD MARINER, the largest amphibious landing since Inchon Korea, was launched involving 15 Naval vessels and 9,000 marines. During this four week operation, MONTICELLO played a vital role in logistics and the repair of equipment and boats.

MONTICELLO was relieved by USS ALAMO (LSD-33) on 24 February 1969.

On the final leg of the cruise ~~homeward~~ MONTICELLO acted as Officer in Tactical Command for a formation of six ships, including four destroyers and USS OGDEN. During the transit, MONTICELLO was called upon to refuel the fletcher-class destroyer USS WALLER (DD-466). Over 60,000 gallons of fuel oil were successfully transferred to the WALLER in this, the first operation of this type by MONTICELLO.

Subsequent to arrival CONUS in March, MONTICELLO began intensive preparation for her regular overhaul. On 17 June 1969 MONTICELLO departed San Diego Harbor for Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington. Sixty dependents were embarked for this four day cruise which allowed wives and children to see their Sailors at work and made it possible for many families to be together during the extensive three month overhaul which modernized MONTICELLO communications plant, and prepared her engineering plant for forthcoming operations.

On 4 October 1969, MONTICELLO departed Puget Sound Naval Shipyard to commence four weeks Refresher training and two week Amphibious training on arrival San Diego. MONTICELLO then participated in Operation "BLUE LOTUS". Upon completion MONTICELLO entered port for the holidays and several weeks preparation for her Seventh WESTPAC deployment since January 1964.

MONTICELLO sailed in company with USS ANCHORAGE (LSD-36) on 31 January 1970 to begin the ninth deployment since MONTICELLO was commissioned. On 7 February, MONTICELLO detached from formation to assist the distressed Japanese fishing vessel Kayo Mura in the Northwestern Hawaiian Island chain. On 9 February after the Coast Guard relieved MONTICELLO of rescue operations, the ship proceeded to WESTPAC arriving in Subic Bay, R.P. on 28 February.

The next five months were spent making frequent lifts of marine equipment with operational stops at Vung Tau, Com Ranh Bay, DaNang and An Thoi. Brief upkeep periods were held in Sasebo, Japan and Subic Bay and a 6 day R & R period in Hong Kong was enjoyed by all commencing on 23 May.

From 3-12 June, MONTICELLO conducted beach surveys off the Island of Mindoro R.P. with men of the Philippine Underwater Ordinance Unit and U.S. Navy U.D.T. embarked.

On 13 July, MONTICELLO off loaded USMC equipment and personnel at Okinawa and on 25 July, while enroute Guam, MONTICELLO rescued the 25-man crew of the Korean merchant vessel Dai Young which had run aground on Royal Captain Shoal off Palawan Island, R.P.

During July and August, MONTICELLO made lifts of equipment at Vung Tau, Qui Nhon and Banang, PVM.

On 6 September, MONTICELLO loaded cut elements of Marine Embark Unit VIII as part of Operation "KEYSTONE ROBIN" and departed for Camp Pendleton, California via Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. After the offload of USMC equipment and personnel at Pendleton on 23 September, MONTICELLO quickly steamed south toward San Diego, arriving at 2200 that evening.

MONTICELLO received the Navy Unit Commendation on 22 December for participation on Operation "BOLD MARINER" conducted in Viet Nam from 12 January through 9 February 1969. On 8 February 1971 MONTICELLO began making preparations for her tenth deployment. She stopped in Port Hueneme, California to load "SEA BEES" and their equipment for a communication station on Diego Garcia, a toll in the Indian Ocean.

Before arriving, MONTICELLO made stops in Sydney, Australia her first time there and in Fremantle, Australia, the first time a U.S. Naval ship had been there in two years. On 20 March, the MONTICELLO arrived at Diego Garcia to off-load their equipment which was being used to build a joint United Kingdom/U.S. Naval communication station.

After a 5 day stay MONTICELLO departed making a short stop in Singapore for fuel and then proceeded to Vung Tay to pick up a desalinization barge for transit back to the states. Before returning home on the 26th of June, MONTICELLO made port calls on Hong Kong and Pearl Harbor and Helo, Hawaii.

For the next 2 and a half months, MONTICELLO remained in port conducting local training operations. From 8-17 September 1971 she participated in operation "ROPEVAL 3-71" Ropeval, a readiness and operational evaluation, consisted of 40 ships, 23 aircraft squadrons, and an amphibious fleet marine force was embarked with a full scale amphibious assault at Camp Pendleton, California.

In October MONTICELLO was off once again to deliver supplies and equipment to Diego Garcia. On 3 October 1971, MONTICELLO made an 8 hour stop in Pearl Harbor to pick up a bookmobile for delivery to Nuku alofa, Tongatapu on 11 October. Before arriving in Diego Garcia on 5 November, MONTICELLO once again made port visits to Sydney and Fremantle, Australia.

Retrograde for shipment to the states was loaded 18 November 1971 in Yung Tau, Vietnam after which the MONTICELLO made a 5 day visit to Hong Kong on 22 November. On 1 December 1971 a 5 day stop was made at the repair facilities in Yokosuka Japan, before returning to San Diego on 20 December 1971.

After a month of leave and upkeep, MONTICELLO went through an exhausting month of inspection to prepare for a 3 1/2 month overhaul period. During the yard period the ship received extensive work to her helo deck and to her habitability especially in berthing compartments. In late June, MONTICELLO departed the ship yard to commence 4 weeks refresher training and two weeks of Amphibious training. Upon completion MONTICELLO entered port for several weeks preparation for her eleventh WESTPAC deployment since January 1963.

MONTICELLO sailed in company with USS SAN BERNADINO on 21 September 1972 to Okinawa where they loaded marines and equipment. On the 11th, 23rd and 24th, MONTICELLO along with SAN BERNADINO, NEW ORLEANS, and JUNEAU conducted their first amphibious assault, training at Zambales in Subic Bay. Philippines.

For the next month MONTICELLO operated with the NEW ORLEANS, OGDEN, and SAN BERNADINO as part of Amphibious Readiness Group-ALFA in the Gulf of Tonkin. After an extensive upkeep period in Subic from 20-6 December 1972 MONTICELLO was detached from the ARG to conduct special operations in the Gulf. When the two week operation was completed, she joined the rest of the ARG for a 5 day visit of Hong Kong for the Christmas holidays.

On 6 January 1973 MONTICELLO departed Subic Bay with the rest of the ARG for another 2 week period in the Gulf. On 25 January, MONTICELLO left Singapore a day earlier than expected because of the cease fire in Vietnam. The ARG returned to Subic where the NEW ORLEANS and OGDEN were detached and the MONTICELLO was assigned to ARG-BRAVO, along with the TULARE, FRESNO, RACINE, and SAN BERNARDINO. After a two week line period from 4-15 February MONTICELLO once again visited Kaohsiung. All ships regrouped on the 26th and returned to Subic to conduct another Zambales exercise in preparation for "GOLDEN DRAGON-73".

From 1-13 March MONTICELLO went through an extensive upkeep in Subic and then proceeded to Hong Kong for 5 days of R & R beginning 15 March. After a short detour to Subic for repairs, MONTICELLO regrouped with the ARG and the USS BLUE RIDGE in preparation for "GOLDEN DRAGON". MONTICELLO off-loaded BLT 3/4 and on-loaded elements from Marine BLT 2/4. At this time she was relieved in the ARG by the USS THOMASTON.

For eight days MONTICELLO, along with BLUE RIDGE, TULARE, FRESNO, SAN BERNADINO, and RACINE, operated with a Korean Task group of ships and marines for amphibious assault training in Korea. During the exercise the MONTICELLO acted as the primary control ship. The joint exercise tested new concepts in Amphibious Warfare.

Upon completion, MONTICELLO off-loaded her marines in Okinawa and became flag-ship for COMPHIBRON THREE. After short stops in Subic and Pearl Harbor to pick up retrograde for return to the states, MONTICELLO arrived in San Diego, 1 May 1973.

After a seven week in-port period, MONTICELLO made a CNO-sponsored 4 day port visit to Anchorage, Alaska. Embarked were members from BMU, UDT, Marines and 47 midshipmen. While enroute a joint air defense exercise was conducted with aircraft from the 43rd Tactical Fighter Squadron at Elmendorf H.F.B. and USS ORLECK (DD886). During the July holidays in Anchorage, over 12,500 citizens of that city visited the ship. MONTICELLO returned to San Diego the 15th of July, after a two day visit to San Francisco.

On 24 August 1973, the Commanding Officer, Commander Bruce A. TAGER, USN, was relieved by Commander John J. FLYNN, USN. Commander FLYNN is the second Commanding Officer of the grade of Commander to command MONTICELLO. Predecessors were of the grade of Captain.

MONTICELLO was again underway 1 September for participation in RIMPAC-73, the largest Pacific Fleet exercise since the Korean War. Units of the Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, and United States navies participated in this combined exercise. Numerous phases of Naval Warfare were conducted with MONTICELLO conducting an Amphibious raid at Barking Sands, Kauai. She returned to San Diego on 28 September 1973.

To highlight the end of the year, a letter was received from the Secretary of the Navy awarding MONTICELLO its second Meritorious Unit Citation for operations carried out in the Western Pacific from 1 October 1972 to 15 April 1973. The ship also received COMPHIBPAC's "BLUE E" award for excellence in Supply.

Following an inport period during the holidays, MONTICELLO began the new year with several local evolutions. During the later part of February and the beginning of March, MONTICELLO was engaged with refresher training exercises. With REFTRA completed MONTICELLO participated in an Amphibious exercise nicknamed "BELL CANNON" from 15 -23 April 1974. Acting as the primary control ship, MONTICELLO successfully coordinated all ship-to-shore activities off the shores of Camp Pendleton, California.

MONTICELLO departed San Diego on 24 May 1974 for a six-month deployment to WESTPAC. Transiting to Hawaii with Amphibious Squadron THREE, MONTICELLO visited Pearl Harbor for one day and then proceeded independently for Guam, Mariannas Islands as a member of Amphibious Ready Group Alfa and a unit of the SEVENTH Fleet.

Following a six-day provisioning and turnover, MONTICELLO continued northward to the small island of Tinian, Mariannas Islands and engaged herself in a one-ship exercise "QUICK JAB" from 21-26 June 1974. During the exercise MONTICELLO directed a large civic action program on the island, lending her marine and navy assets of equipment and men to clear beach areas and complete a long list of general repair work to local government buildings. Prior to her departure, MONTICELLO launched an amphibious raid with personnel tanks and marines on one of Tinian's northern beaches while a group of embarked Tinian officials observed.

Following several visits to WESTPAC liberty ports, MONTICELLO again fulfilled her primary control ship role of the Philippines Island of Panay as part of a joint United States Navy and Republic of Philippines exercise, "PAGASA THREE," 21-31 August 1974. A squadron civic action program was initiated on the island with MONTICELLO providing material and personnel to lend a hand.

Prior to her return to San Diego, MONTICELLO painted a blue hashmark under the present BLUE "E" award for 1973. For the second straight year MONTICELLO had received the squadron's excellence award in supply matters and also placed second in the United States Navy for medium-sized ships in the annual Captain NEY Memorial Award competition.

Returning to her homeport of San Diego on 24 November 1974, MONTICELLO rejoined the THIRD Fleet and remained inport San Diego for the rest of the year.