



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35)
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MAR 16 1984

From: Commanding Officer, USS MONTICELLO (LSD 35)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, D. C. 20374

Subj: Command History Fiscal Year 1983; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12

Encl: (1) USS MONTICELLO (LSD 35) Command History 1983

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


J. A. HOUGH

Copy to:
COMNAVSURFPAC (Code 021)

USS MONTICELLO (LSD 35)
COMMAND HISTORY
1983

As 1983 commenced, USS MONTICELLO (LSD 35) was inport making preparations for decommissioning and transfer to the inactive ship facility for storage. At the same time MONTICELLO was preparing to depart with Amphibious Squadron THREE, for deployment to the Western Pacific. COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC informed MONTICELLO on 27 January that a final decision on decommissioning had not yet been made.

MONTICELLO entered an "S" availability alongside the USS AJAX (AR 6) on 2 February which continued until 15 March 1983. Major repairs were undertaken on main feed pumps and forced draft blowers. The availability also provided time to effect general ship wide repairs and habitability improvements to the crew berthing compartments.

On 7 February, MONTICELLO was informed that she would remain on active duty status for FY 83 and FY 84 and that a decision on decommissioning would be made in FY 84. The decision was also made to assign MONTICELLO to Amphibious Squadron SEVEN effective 1 March.

With the assignment to PHIBRON 7, MONTICELLO began gearing up for KERNEL BLITZ 83-2 scheduled for late March off Camp Pendleton, CA. Repairs to the main feed pumps were delayed and prevented MONTICELLO from getting underway for that exercise.

With repairs made to the main feed pumps, and additional repairs accomplished on the forced draft blowers, MONTICELLO conducted sea trials on 11 April with overall satisfactory results, however two of the four feed pumps did not test satisfactory. She once again got underway on 13 April, this time for San Francisco. Upon arrival, training became the order of the day, with a majority of the crew attending fire fighting school at Treasure Island. SUPSHIP San Francisco technical experts examined the after feed pumps, which were not performing satisfactorily while inport San Francisco. While enroute back to San Diego, MONTICELLO made a brief stop at Seal Beach, CA to onload ammunition.

MONTICELLO, on arrival in San Diego, entered a restricted availability on 29 April. The availability would last from 29 April until final repairs and completion of sea trails on 22 July. All four feed pumps were overhauled by civilian contractors.

While inport for availability, the crew of the MONTICELLO undertook a special project of love and learning and in a formal ceremony on 9 June became the proud "adopted parents" to 385 children from John A. Otis Elementary School located in National City, CA. MONTICELLO was the fourth ship in the Pacific Fleet to undertake this project known as the "Adopt a school" program.

The month of July began with preliminary sea trials and Naval Gunfire Support Qualifications off San Clemente Island from 5 - 8 July. Upon arrival inport San Diego on 8 July, MONTICELLO began once again to gear up for a

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deployment to the Western Pacific. The Amphibious Squadron SEVEN staff began the phase with the ISIC Command Inspection. The inspection, conducted 11 - 15 July, yielded outstanding results. Final sea trials were conducted for the main feed pumps on 21 - 22 July. The crew of the MONTICELLO brought their ship into port with pride, beaming at the prospects of the upcoming deployment. While conducting a COMANVSURFPAC material training team engineering assist visit the rebuilt forced draft blowers were found to be out of specs and MONTICELLO entered yet another restricted availability. Those prospects, however, were short lived, for the word came down in early August that MONTICELLO would not be making the deployment. The decommissioning preparation that had started in 1982 had caused the transfer of many experienced MONTICELLO sailors. The order that MONTICELLO remain on active duty status had replaced these crew members with a number of inexperienced sailors. Although the ship would be essentially materially ready for deployment, the crew needed the benefit of a training cycle for amphibious operations. To meet such a need, MONTICELLO was transferred to Amphibious Squadron FIVE, effective 1 September, to begin a pre-deployment amphibious training cycle.

As preparations were being made to conduct a Training Readiness Evaluation in late August, MONTICELLO also began preparing for a change of command that had not been expected until January 1984. On 23 September, Commander D. L. WEIHERELL, USN was relieved by Commander J. A. HOUGH, USN as Commanding Officer, USS MONTICELLO.

After repairing a casualty to the main circulating pump, which had been causing problems since 13 September, and had caused a two week postponement of Refresher Training, MONTICELLO got underway on 17 October. For the next two weeks Engineering, Weapon, Damage Control and Shiphandling exercises were integral parts of each day's activities. The training accomplished during the Interim Refresher Training period proved to be invaluable for all hands.

Two days after returning to San Diego, MONTICELLO was once again underway for a week of Independent Steaming Exercises/Engineering Casualty Control drills in the Southern California operating area. After that it was time to return to port to continue preparations for Amphibious Refresher Training and begin an "A" availability with the USS SAMUEL GOMPERS (AD 37).

After nine days, MONTICELLO was underway on 14 November for Amphibious Refresher Training - the second phase of the pre-deployment training. For the next eight days MONTICELLO proved herself once again with repeated Amphibious Landings on the beaches at Camp Pendleton, CA. and the Silver Strand. Once again the training which was accomplished proved to be invaluable.

With Refresher Training and Amphibious Refresher Training completed, MONTICELLO's crew took a well deserved four day break to celebrate Thanksgiving, and to make final preparations for the ISIC OPPE (Operational Propulsion Plant Examination) which was to begin 28 November.

Emergent engineering casualties precluded OPPE from taking place on schedule. While repairs were being made, MONTICELLO readied herself for third phase of her training - KERNEL USHER 84-1.

Between the dates of 6 - 13 December, MONTICELLO together with elements of Amphibious Squadron FIVE, got underway for exercise KERNEL BLITZ 84-1. Steaming in the Southern California operating areas, MONTICELLO participated in the "rescue" of marines posing as civilians from San Clemente Island and in an Amphibious Assault Exercise on the beaches of Camp Pendleton, CA. Before returning to San Diego on 13 December, MONTICELLO completed her last major hurdle before deployment when the OPPE, which had been scheduled for late November was finally completed.

With all of the major elements of the training cycle completed, MONTICELLO ended 1983 by entering an "S" availability with the USS SAMUEL GOMPERS (AD 37) and beginning the well deserved POM (Pre-Overseas Movement) leave and upkeep period for the crew.