

and was asking for me to be trained for the job instead of a new recruit. But for now all I could do was keep checking with the guys in Personnel and hope for the best.

Our in port period also included the date of March 29, 1972 which was the end of the 16th formal U.S. military campaign of the Vietnam War. This battle campaign ran from Dec. 1, 1972 to March 29, 1972 and was called, "Consolidation II". Service during this campaign entitled me to wear a second bronze campaign star on the ribbon portion my Vietnam Service Medal.



CONSOLIDATION II CAMPAIGN - The U.S. continued to reduce its ground presence in South Vietnam during late 1971 and early 1972, but American air and naval attacks increased while both sides exchanged peace proposals.

STARS  AND STRIPES.

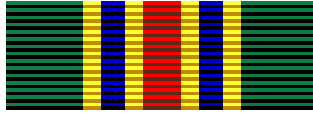
Attention: US. GIs Still Fighting in Viet

WASHINGTON (UPI)—2-13-72 Some troops in Vietnam are concerned because their families think they no longer are in combat and are leading a quiet life of relaxation. The confusion began Aug. 4 when President Nixon and Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird announced that the combat role of American ground troops had ended. The President said, "American forces in Vietnam today . . . are in defensive positions. We are frankly just defending the areas in which we have responsibility and there are less of them."

Responding to gripes from the field, the Army is trying to make it clear to parents, wives and girlfriends that many of their men still fire at the Communists and are fired on in return. The Army wants to make clear that while the Vietnamese army ROW handles offensive operations, American troops there still see fighting. "Our

troops are not seeking trouble," he said. "But good security is not provided by ducking down behind a fortification or hiding in a pillbox. To achieve security we must patrol vigorously

I was also awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation Ribbon for service on board the USS Oklahoma City (CLG-5) from transfer aboard date of November 10, 1971 to March 31, 1972.



CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting the
MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION to

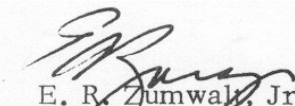
USS OKLAHOMA CITY (CLG-5)

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For meritorious service from 26 November 1968 to 1 March 1972, while participating in combat operations in Southeast Asia. Through the continuous exercise of professionalism, USS OKLAHOMA CITY maintained the highest level of readiness and proficiency, which enabled her to serve superbly as flagship for Commander, United States SEVENTH Fleet. Her smartness and exemplary conduct greatly assisted the embarked Fleet Commander in his diplomatic role and enhanced the American image in the Western Pacific. Moreover, OKLAHOMA CITY provided exceptionally accurate naval gunfire support to friendly forces and greatly improved the art of anti-air warfare in the Tonkin Gulf. The superb performance of the officers and men of USS OKLAHOMA CITY throughout this period contributed significantly to the achievement of United States objectives in Southeast Asia and was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

For the Secretary,


E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.
Admiral, United States Navy
Chief of Naval Operations

March 15, 1972

The 7th Fleet celebrates its 29th anniversary but it was just another day at the office for the enlisted men. That's right, chip and paint, chip and paint.

By JOC BILL REED
USS OKLAHOMA CITY
(PAO) --- The largest, most powerful fleet in the world marks its 29th anniversary March 15, but for the 67,000 Navymen and Marines assigned to the U.S. Seventh Fleet, the day will pass with little notice. At twenty-nine, the Fleet is older than the average age of the men who man her 92 ships and 600 aircraft.

For many of these men, the anniversary will be observed on a routine working day at sea with watches, meals, care of machinery and rigging ... just one more day before the next port call.

As in any large organization, individual worth in the Seventh Fleet is sometimes overshadowed by composite efforts. The Fleet normally is referred to in terms of firepower, missions flown, logistics, contingencies and the capabilities of ultra-modern men-of-war. Little mention is given to the men who by choice, or simply to fulfill an obligation, do their part in support of several distinct U.S. purposes and policies in the Western Pacific.

These include upholding longstanding U.S. treaty commitments with Asian allies, ensuring that sealanes remain

open for the economic pipeline between the U.S. and the Orient, and keeping a sharp eye on the burgeoning Soviet Fleet and its widespread operations throughout the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean.

Vice Admiral William P. Mack, Commander Seventh Fleet, embarked in his flagship, the guided missile cruiser USS Oklahoma City, is responsible for an operating area of 30 million square miles, almost one-fifth of the Earth's surface. This area ranges from the Bering Sea in the North, to Antarctica in the South, and from Guam to the Indian Ocean. The Seventh Fleet operating area recently was extended to include over half the Indian Ocean, an increase in area amounting to twice the size of the Mediterranean Sea.

Recent months have witnessed a reduction in several Seventh Fleet operations due largely to the success of the Vietnamization program. Air strikes from carriers continue to be the last major element of the fleet still engaged in war activity, while destroyers limit their bombardment to supporting allies along the Republic of Vietnam coastline. With the continued progress of the Vietnamization program, even this level of Fleet participation in the war will eventually diminish.

During the Tet offensive in February 1968, the arm of the

fleet reached farther and more powerfully than at any other time during the war. The fleet then was comprised of some 240 ships — five of them aircraft carriers — and more than 85,000 men and officers.

Carrier-based planes, operating from three carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin, hammered daily at North Vietnam's supply trails and storage areas. Amphibious borne fleet marines engaged in land, punishing assaults against the enemy in South Vietnam almost weekly. Cruisers and destroyers roamed the South and North Vietnam coastlines, bombarding strategic sites and firing on infiltrating barges and junks.

The Seventh Fleet was established in 1943 two months after the fall of Guadalcanal to U.S. soldiers and Marines. It officially gained its title when Admiral C. W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, redesignated Vice Admiral A. S. Carpenter, then Commander Southwest Pacific Force, Commander Seventh Fleet. The Southwest Pacific Force had been the naval component of General Douglas MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area Command, and the

Seventh Fleet continued to operate under MacArthur.

After the war, the fleet continued operations in the Western Pacific, patrolling the waters off the coast of China and providing naval support to occupation forces in Japan.

The Fleet entered the Korean War in June 1950, following President Truman's directive to support South Korean forces in operations south of the 38th parallel. The directive also authorized U.S. forces in the Far East to prevent a communist attack on Taiwan and its offshore islands.

In 1954 and again in 1958, the Seventh Fleet's presence in the Taiwan Strait provided the principle leverage in deterring Communist Chinese aggression on Quemoy and Matsu.

During the 1950's, the Seventh Fleet also participated in several humanitarian evacuations. The largest, most significant occurred in late 1954 after the Geneva Conference partitioned Vietnam. Fleet transports, landing craft and other ships moved over 293,000 North Vietnamese refugees from Haiphong to South Vietnam ... at their request.

Though the Seventh Fleet is not as large today as in previous years, its mission remains the same: to provide a bulwark of seaborne defense against threats to free nations in the Western Pacific, and to promote friendship between the United States and these nations. During its 29 years of operation, the fleet has become an integral and dependable part of the Western Pacific community.

For a man, 29 is the prime of life. At 29 a ship is "over the hill," but the dedication, enthusiasm and vitality of men of the Seventh Fleet, for over a quarter of a century, has kept the veteran men-of-war in the peak of condition. In the final analysis, ships and aircraft are held together not by hot rivets, but by cool headed crews.

And so, as the U.S. Seventh Fleet passes its 29th year, there will be little fanfare in this vast domain of water.

Out here there are not enough bands, not enough ticker tape to honor the 87,000 men who go about their daily routine, perhaps unaware that it is anything more than a typical "Navy day."

Somebody should bake a cake.

March 30, 1972 NVA Eastertide attack on Quang Tri begins. Quang Tri Province was South Vietnam's northern most province and was a major battle ground for the opposing forces during the Vietnam War. The First Battle of Quảng Trị resulted in the first major victory for the North Vietnamese Army during the Nguyen Hue Offensive of 1972.

As South Vietnamese soldiers were gradually replacing their American counterparts, North Vietnam's General Văn Tiến Dũng was preparing to engage three of his divisions in the province. The battle for Quảng Trị began with preparatory artillery barrages on the key areas of the province. Meanwhile, infantry assaults supported by tanks overran outposts and firebases. The lightning speed of Communist attacks on those positions delivered a great shock to the soldiers of the ARVN, who were largely unprepared for the onslaught.

STARS AND STRIPES

AN AUTHORIZED UNOFFICIAL PUBLICATION
FOR THE U.S. ARMED FORCES OF THE PACIFIC COMMAND
Vol. 28, No. 92 Sunday, April 2, 1972

S. VIETS LOSE 2 BASES IN HEAVY RED ATTACKS

SAIGON (AP) — A swelling North Vietnamese onslaught in the far north drove South Vietnamese from two more bases Friday in the heaviest fighting there in four years. Field reports said a third base also may have been abandoned. One base was given up Thursday in the first day of enemy attacks on bases along the demilitarized zone. The air war also heated up as a North Vietnamese MIG21 was shot down and the United States lost its second computerized four-engine gunship in two days and one of the Air Force's biggest rescue helicopters. New U.S. air raids were launched inside North Vietnam after a nearly two-week lull and American jets attacked enemy gun positions in the southern half of the DMZ. Hundreds of South Vietnamese troops and some American forces, at the option of local field commanders, were ordered on heightened alert after intelligence reports that the Communist command was planning to broaden its attacks countrywide.



April 2, 1972 In response to the Eastertide Offensive, President Nixon authorizes the U.S. 7th Fleet to target NVA troops massed around the Demilitarized Zone with air strikes and naval gunfire.

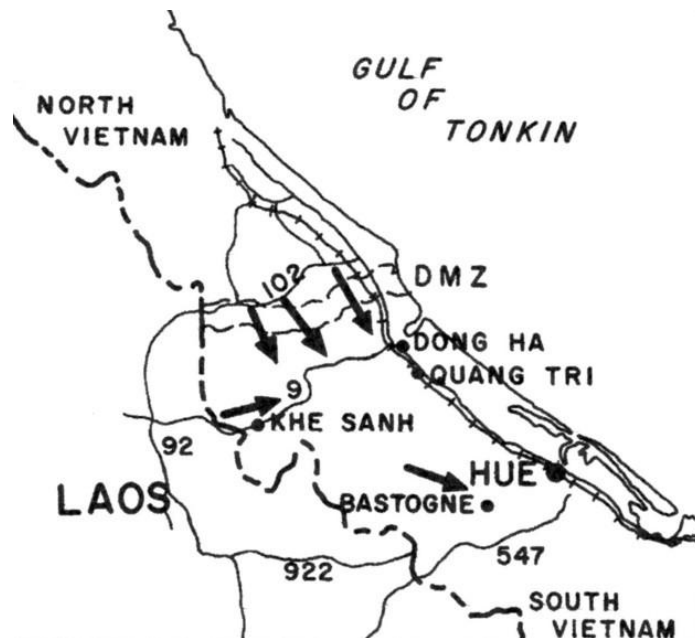
STARS STRIPES.

Nixon Maps Counter Strategy Recalls 2 Carriers

SAIGON (AP)—The United States recalled two aircraft carriers to the Tonkin Gulf Monday to reinforce a massive air strike force preparing to hit back at an enemy offensive in South Vietnam's northernmost province.

The carrier Kitty Hawk arrived in waters off Vietnam Tuesday and the Constellation was steaming in from Japan to join the Coral Sea and the Hancock. The four carriers and their some 275 warplanes, combined with 250 Air Force jets at bases in South Vietnam and Thailand, will form the biggest U.S. attack force since the 1968 bombing halt.

The U.S. Command strongly indicated massive air strikes are planned against North Vietnam to retaliate for the enemy offensive across the demilitarized zone and against enemy troops and materiel already engaged south of the zone. U.S. pilots said targets inside North Vietnam would include long-range artillery guns bombarding South Vietnamese positions across the DMZ and a reserve infantry division poised just north of the zone. Other key targets will include tanks, self-propelled artillery pieces and other heavy equipment that North Vietnam is using more than ever before in the Indochina war.



April 3, 1972 The ship departed Yokosuka and returned to the gun line and was assigned to Task Unit 70.8.9 to provide gunfire support for ARVN forces in the DMZ area. With just an hour left before the ship set sail, I received orders to report to Postal Clerk "Class A", advanced training in San Diego set to begin in five days. I barely had time to gather my orders, sign out administratively from various divisions and departments, and turn in my assigned equipment before the final gang plank was removed from the ship. Most of my personal possessions and some of my uniforms had to be left behind, including a brand new \$80 camera and bicycle I had left on the pier. But none of that mattered much because I was very excited to be going home. For the next few days I was in transit from Naval Station, Yokosuka, Japan to Service School Command, Naval training Center, San Diego.

TRANSFER ORDER 1. TYPE AND SECURITY CLASSIFICATION 10-02 2. 10-02 3. 10-02 4. 10-02		No. T-32805-72						
NAME AND LOCATION OF TRANSFERING SHIP OR STATION USS OKLAHOMA CITY (CG-5) AT YOKOSUKA, JAPAN		DATE PREPARED 3 APR 72						
AUTHORITY COMCRUDESPAC TANGO TC T-32805-72		TRAVEL CLASS CODE						
1	NAME IN FULL	SERVICE NO.	RATE AND NAVY JOB CODE NO.	CLASS	BR	MP	PR	RE
2	SHAN, STEVEN		SN (0100/0000)	USN	1	1	1	YES
3	AND							
4	MC							
5	COST							
6								
PROCESSED, REDIRECTED AND REPORT TO THE FOLLOWING STATION IN THE ORDER NAMED								
INTERMEDIATE STATION NATO, MAC TRM YOKOTA AFB				INTERMEDIATE STATION GLCMN 10 APR 72				
ULTIMATE DESTINATION USS OKLAHOMA CITY (CG-5) HP: YOKOSUKA, JAPAN				SERVICE SCH OL COMAND, NTC, SDIEGO, CALIF.				
DELAY AUTHORIZED (Counted as leave)				NATURE OF DUTY PC*A* SCHOOL COMPLETE**				
NUMBER OF DAYS: NONE		NUMBER OF DAYS: NONE		DATE: 3 APR 72		HOUR: 2400		
ADDRESS WHILE ON LEAVE NA								
SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE REPORTING (Authorizing signatures must follow each instruction)								
SECNAV FIND NOT REQUIRED AUTH 106 Lds BAGGAIR								
MACS: 5 OCT 70 ISSUED MTA/B-0303917 AND B-0303918								
LV BAL: 15 1/2 DAYS								
ACCOUNTING DATA 1721804, 102G/000/57017/0/060957/2D/T32805-72/0000/03591/KM				EST PER DIEM: \$104.00 EST TVL: \$328.00 EST TOTAL COST: \$432.00				
THE FOLLOWING TRANSPORTATION IS AUTHORIZED (Select and check as appropriate)								
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL <input type="checkbox"/> GROUP <input type="checkbox"/> BY PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLE				TAKE CHARGE OF _____ MILE PER ATTACHED _____				
TRAVEL INDICATED IS DIRECTED				PRIORITY FROM _____ TO _____				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOV'T AIRCRAFT <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL				III JAPAN/JONUS C.NUS/JAPAN				
DISBURSING OFFICER IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED AND DIRECTED TO FURNISH SUCH TRANSPORTATION/SUBSISTENCE AS MAY BE REQUIRED IN THE EXECUTION OF THESE ORDERS.								
INSTRUCTIONS TO PERSONNEL								
1. Your records and accounts as indicated above are handed you herewith for safe delivery to your new commanding officer. Your personal effects are in your possession, if so indicated above. If any records, accounts, or effects are missing, a statement must be attached hereto, explaining the circumstances in detail. It is your responsibility to report to your new station with the above records and personal effects.				3. In case of illness or accident, notify the nearest known Naval Activity immediately and request instructions.				
2. Personnel under orders, including authorized delay, are considered to be attached to the ultimate destination or the next designated intermediate station as the case may be. If unable to contact these activities, in cases of emergency, contact the nearest known Naval Activity. If the ship to which you are ordered is not in port, report to the nearest Receiving Station or Naval Activity.				4. If leave is granted, you are responsible for receiving any communications forwarded to the address above. If leave is cancelled you must return immediately.				
				5. The contents of these orders and the whereabouts of ships and personnel must not be divulged to unauthorized persons.				
				6. A copy of these orders is being mailed direct to the ultimate destination shown above.				
				7. Cooperate with Shore Patrol and armed services police at all times. Misconduct will be cause for disciplinary action. You are subject to the orders of your superior officers in all branches of the armed forces.				
TRANSFER CODE NO. CG5/T-32805/030800/APR72/crf		AUTHENTICATING SIGNATURE T. V. FEREBEE,		RANK WO1, USN		TITLE PERS OFF BY DIR OF THE C.O.		
I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THESE ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS AND I HAVE RECEIVED THE RECORDS AND ACCOUNTS AS INDICATED.				SIGNATURE OF TRAVELER OR SENIOR IN CHARGE				
ENDORSEMENTS								
COPY TO: FILE JIARY ULTDUSTA				CLASSN 10 APR 72. UPON COMPLETION OF PC*A* SCHOOL YOU ARE AUTHORIZED 15 DAYS ANNUAL LEAVE. T. V. FEREBEE, WO1, USN, PERS OFF BY DIR OF C.O.				

April 4, 1972 In a further response to the Eastertide Offensive, President Nixon authorized a massive bombing campaign targeting all NVA troops invading South Vietnam along with B-52 air strikes against North Vietnam. Naval gunfire support is intensive resulting in almost constant combat operations for my ship, (including a visit to Korea), while I am away for training. For those I left behind, they will remember this as the most intensive combat activity of the year involving ship's operations. Some of the combat photos I have included in this journal may have covered this time period. Most of the pictures I received from the Signal bridge were obtained upon my return from training and included the rest of my time aboard ship however none of the pictures were ever dated or marked. For a home sick teenager it was great to be going home but I must admit that I have always had later regrets about not being aboard in support of my shipmates during such an active operational period.

NORTH VIET BELTED BY U.S. AIR ARMADA

PACIFIC STARS AND STRIPES
 AN AUTHORIZED BIWEEKLY PUBLICATION FOR THE U.S. NAVAL FORCES OF THE PACIFIC COMMAND
 Vol. 28, No. 98 Saturday, April 8, 1972

F105 Sq. Shifting To Asia

WASHINGTON (AP)—A squadron of Kansas-based Air Force F105 fighters was ordered to Southeast Asia Thursday on a continuing buildup of American war power in the war zone, administration sources disclosed.

The planes are from the 3rd Fighter Group at McConnell Air Force Base, Kan. The source did not say how many planes or how many crew members would be sent, but it said the number would be about 20.

The Pentagon refused all comment, giving its standard reply that "for security purposes we do not want to discuss operational matters."

At word of the F105 movement, the South Korean Defense Secretary Yuhun E. Laird would hold a news conference Friday morning. The subject was not discussed, but obviously will deal with the war.

The spokesman said "The Department of Defense has announced that we will take whatever precautionary measures are necessary to protect remaining U.S. forces in Vietnam."

It was understood the Nixon administration is considering

SAIGON — Scores of U.S. warplanes and several destroyers pounded targets inside North Vietnam for a second day Friday in the biggest air and naval offensive since the 1968 bombing halt.

Waves of other bombers and destroyers raked North Vietnamese positions in the northern sector of South Vietnam, and the U.S. 7th Fleet announced that one of its ships had been hit.

Spokesmen said the destroyer Lloyd Thomas was hit by Communist artillery and automatic weapons fire while it was shelling North Vietnamese targets just below the DMZ. Three Americans were wounded and the ship sustained light damage, the Navy said. It remained on the firing line.

The U.S. had unleashed its air power over North Vietnam Thursday in retaliation for a week-long Communist offensive in the south which the U.S. Command described as "an invasion."

U.S. military spokesmen said an armada of U.S. Air Force and Navy fighter-bombers were bombing "military targets" north of the DMZ "in response to an invasion of the Republic of Vietnam by North Vietnamese forces across the DMZ."

Command spokesmen refused to issue any information on the strikes "until they are completed." They said the air attacks also were ordered "to protect the lives of diminishing U.S. forces in South Vietnam."

The heavy raids marked the first time since the Nov. 1, 1968, official bombing halt over the north that the United States has not claimed its warplanes were bombing in "protective reaction" to Communist military activity.

Commenting on the new U.S. bombing, Adm. Thomas Moorer, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the aerial air strikes penetrated 40 to 50 miles north of the demilitarized zone.

Moorer told the Overseas Writers Club in Washington that North Vietnam has deployed more than 80

New Wrinkles In ITT Dispute

By the Associated Press

Lobbyist Jack Harris heard told a California congressman she wrote a dispatch saying having a consultant of at least \$100,000 by International Telephone & Telegraph Corp. to the Republic National Conference and the anti-Communist movement of antiwar anti-Communist activities against the government, according to the transcript of a newspaper interview quoted Thursday by Sen. John V. Tunney, D-Calif.

In the unrecorded interview March 2 with a San Diego Union reporter, Bob Wilson, D-Calif., 10



GIs from a company of the 38th Light Inf. Brigade disembark from a military transport of Pz 41. later

late Thursday. The company, providing base security, replaces another unit just completing its month of duty

at the outpost. Three GIs, along with helicopter outfit, are the northernmost American forces in Vietnam.

April 15, 1972 Hanoi and Haiphong harbor are bombed by the U.S.

HAIPHONG BOMBED B52s, Other Jets Hit Supplies

SAIGON (UPI)—U.S. B-52 bombers and other jets hit North Vietnam's main supply port, Haiphong, on Monday, April 17, 1972. The attack was the first since the 1968 bombing halt.



Cop With His Hands Full

Ulster Erupts After IRA Leader Slain

Prof is a Peash That's A-as in Astronaut

Does Doubt Mrs. Beard

April 22, 1972 The USS Higbee and USS Oklahoma City attacked by an enemy MIG jet fighters and enemy shore batteries.

**Pacific Stars & Stripes
Saturday, April 22, 1972**

DA NANG, Vietnam

(AP)— "MIG corning! MIG coming!" yelled the lookout and seconds later the after deck of the destroyer Higbee was aflame. The North Vietnamese jet dropped a 250-pound bomb onto the deck of the destroyer, wounding four seamen and destroying a gun mount that housed two 5-inch guns. The U.S. Command said at least three enemy jets attacked an American task force in the Tonkin Gulf off the coast of North Vietnam late Wednesday afternoon. The command said one of the planes was shot down, two enemy torpedo boats were believed sunk and shrapnel from shore battery fire caused minor damage on the cruiser Oklahoma City, the flagship of the 7th Fleet.

Capt. Ronald Zuilkoski, skipper of the Higbee, said the MIG attacked his ship at least twice before the bomb hit the deck. "In the first two passes, bombs fell left and right of the ship," he said, "but on the third try .one hit the deck and exploded under the mount. She flew so low over the deck that you could see everything." Luckily the gun mount was empty, the 12-man gun crew having been ordered out while a round stuck in one of the barrels was hosed down to keep it from exploding. But three men in the ammunition storage compartment under the mount were wounded. Other men pulled them out as the ammunition began to explode.



HIGBEE BATTLE DAMAGE



Le Xuan Di (left) shows how he attacked the destroyer USS Higbee on April 19 1972 with 2 bombs of 250 kgs with his MiG-17. The attack destroyed one of the 127 mm turrets of the ship and injured 4 US sailors. Nguyen Van Bay (right) hit the USS Oklahoma City in the same attack, but caused only slight damage to the ship

April 19, 1972 The NVA Eastertide attack on An Loc begins.

South Viet forces push back the enemy for awhile but are later forced to retreat.



May 1, 1972 South Vietnamese abandon Quang Tri City to the NVA ending the first battle for Quang Tri Province.



May 8, 1972 In response to the ongoing NVA Eastertide Offensive, President Nixon announced Operation Linebacker I, the mining of North Vietnam's harbors along with intensified bombing of roads, bridges, and oil facilities



May 9, 1972 Operation Linebacker I commenced with U.S. jets laying mines in Haiphong harbor. My ship continues to be actively involved in these operations but for now the war is over for me and I concentrate on my studies. Training went by all too quickly and the clerical work seemed to suit me. While others may consider it to be dull and routine, it was just what I needed to keep myself grounded at the time. Training was mostly weekdays with Saturday and Sunday off. Life was good and graduation came all too soon.

May 12, 1972 Graduate Postal Clerk Class "A" School. Rate re-designated to Postal Clerk Striker- Seaman, [PCSN]. Pay grade E-3. Reclassification required that I now be assigned to Navy Postal Clerk duties exclusively. While I would still be have to stand any assigned sea or port details, battles stations and watches, I would never have to swab a deck or paint and chip again.

In November 1960 the first 644 sailors were converted to Postal Clerks (PC) and allowed to wear the PC rating. The need for efficient movement of the mail was a recognized necessity in the days before the internet and satellite communications. The thinking was that a specialized rate would streamline the process and make it more reliable, which it did.

Since then the Navy has been served by a dedicated team getting mail to the Fleet. Often these sailors serve as the only Postal Clerk in their command. All Navy PCs are required to be a US citizen and obtain at least a Secret Clearance.

The PCs' days were numbered because the Navy had plans to eliminate them as a specific rate. as the Navy continued to downsize. By 2004 all remaining PC's had been removed from surface ships.



more scheming !!

Much to my shock and dismay I was informed that I had received orders to report back to the USS Oklahoma City upon completion of training. With just over a year of active duty time left they were going to incur the cost of sending me back halfway around the world to a ship that already had a full complement of postal clerks. With all billets filled I would be required to transfer immediately upon return to the ship. It seemed crazy but it was the Navy way. It was time for some

May 13, 1972 Upon receiving my new orders I requested and was granted 15 Days leave. I had been writing to several girls in the Baltimore, Md. Area just a short drive from Washington DC. I soon hatched a plan to visit my friends and take care of some business too.

During my leave I took a trip to Washington DC and paid a visit to the Bureau of Naval Personnel. The NAVPERS command has since moved from its old location and I cannot recall where in DC the building was located. It was a large structure almost as big as the Pentagon and contained the Postal Clerk detailer whose job it was to track all Navy Postal Clerks and ensure that all billets for this position were filled anywhere in the world. I figured it would be worth a day's leave to meet with this person face to face and express my desire for a transfer that would keep me stateside.

And so, at the age of 19 I put on a suit and tie to give myself an air of legitimacy and marched to the entrance of BURPERS where I announced to the lobby clerk that I had business with the Navy Detailer section. A Marine guard, dressed sharply in his full dress blue uniform, was then assigned as my escort and addressed me as "Sir" as we walked what seemed like miles of corridors. I couldn't help but be amused at thinking how upset my escort would be if he find out that I was just a simple E-3 enlisted sailor.

Shortly I was ushered into the office of one very surprised Petty Officer, PC1, who now held my life in his hands, I explained that I had traveled all the way from California to

make my case for a transfer, (while neglecting to mention the real reason for my trip – the girls), and discussed the expense and futility of sending me back overseas when I had so little time left on active duty. He was receptive to my pleas but he was still a career Navy man and rules were rules. Since the USS Oklahoma City had approved my request for “A” school they were entitled to have me back unless otherwise stated and that was that. No matter the cost or conditions you just can’t change the “Navy Way”. But I had achieved some measure of success in that this detailer would remember my name as we continued to communicate by letter and by phone throughout t my transfer process. I have no doubt that this was a positive factor in eventually receiving orders to a stateside duty assignment.



May 23, 1972 While my ship, the USS Oklahoma City, was still at sea on the gun line, VADM J. L. HOLLOWAY, III, USN relieved Vice Admiral W. P. Mack as Commander SEVENTH Fleet.

James Lemuel Holloway III is now a retired United States Navy admiral and naval aviator who was highly decorated for his actions during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

He took command of the 7th Fleet in 1972 during the Vietnam War, and personally led a cruiser-destroyer gunfire strike against the main North Vietnamese port of Haiphong. During Operation Linebacker II, he directed the massive carrier strikes against Hanoi which were a part of the intensive joint air effort which led to the Vietnam cease-fire in 1973. Under his command, the 7th Fleet subsequently performed the airborne mine clearing operations in North Vietnam ports in accordance with the terms of the Paris Peace Accords. For duty as Commander, 7th Fleet, he received a third Distinguished Service Medal.

After the Vietnam War, he was posted to The Pentagon, where he established the Navy's Nuclear Powered Carrier Program. As Chief of Naval Operations from 1974–1978, he was a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), and served as Chairman of the JCS. In 1980, he chaired the Special Operations Review Group and in 1985, he served as Executive Director of Vice President Bush's Task Force on Combating Terrorism.

.....

June 12, 1972 I report back to the USS Oklahoma City (CLG – 5) which was docked in Yokosuka, Japan. Rank – Postal Clerk Seaman, [PCSN]. Pay grade E-3. Re-assigned from Ship Weapons Department to Executive Department, X- Division - Cross designated as a clerk with the U.S. Postal Service and assigned to general mail transit and postal duties in the ship's post office.



Mail Helicopter arrives - Call Sign was, “Big Mother”

June 22, 1972 Captain William Atherton. Kakanui, Jr. relieved Captain J. J. Tice III as Commanding Officer *USS Oklahoma City*. This required a muster in full dress white uniforms and the usual round of spit shined, chicken shit, inspections designed to make you cuss like a sailor. This was the only time I was required to wear the full dress military medals, [as opposed to the ribbons] which had to be pinned to our shirt. The ceremony consisted of seaman and officers lined up in formation for hours along the outer decks of the ship and made for a “recruiting poster” effect as the ship was filled with bright colors of flags and uniforms. Kakanui seemed to be a better liked then our previous Captain. He was a native Hawaiian and a Pearl Harbor survivor. .



**COMMANDING OFFICER
CHANGE OF COMMAND
JUNE 22, 1972**



All is ready for change-of-command ceremony.

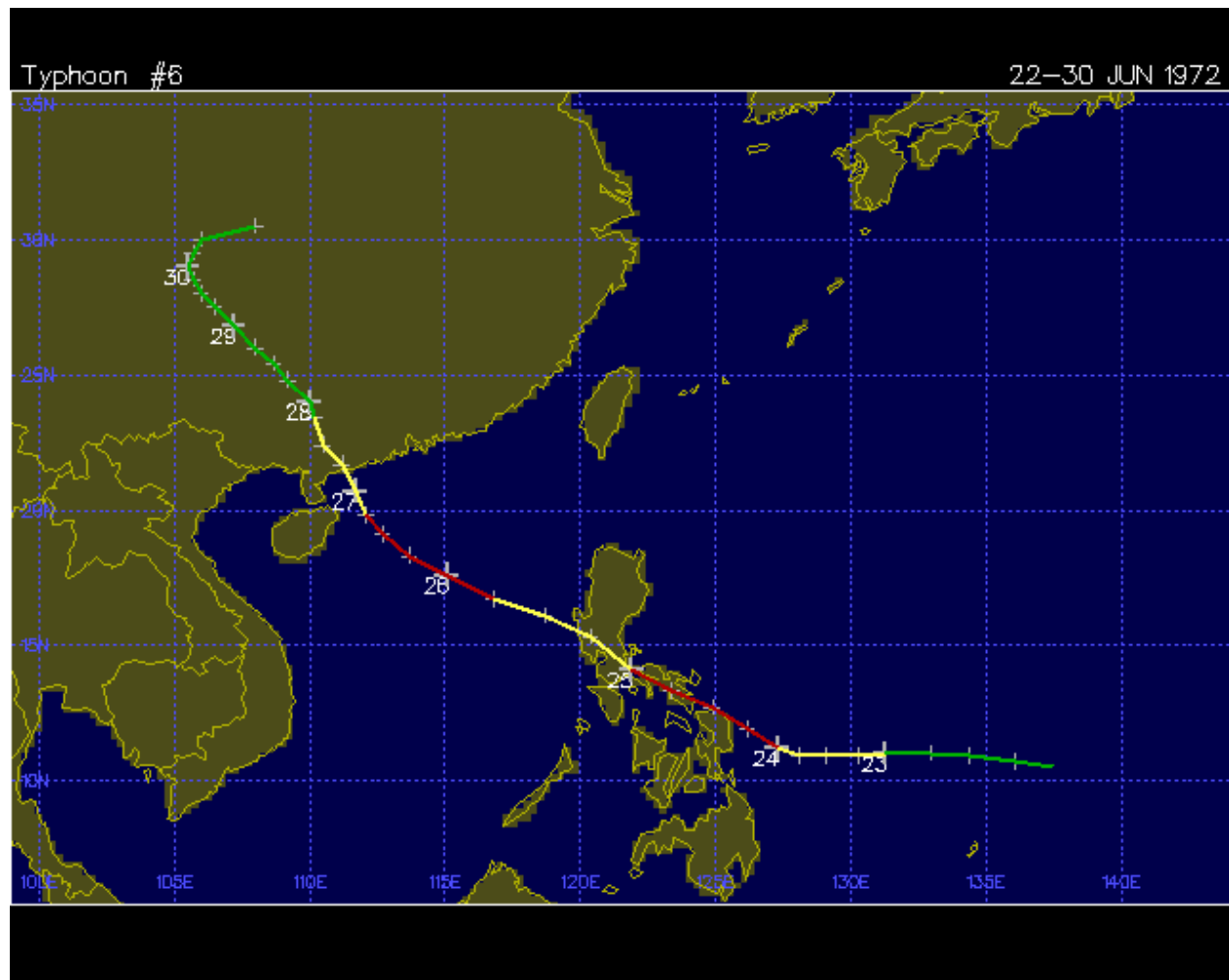


VADM Holloway congratulates Captain Tice after presenting him the Legion of Merit.



Captain Kanakanui and Captain Tice

June 23, 1972 Depart Yokosuka, Japan en-route to the Naval gunfire support station near Quang Tri City.



Now June is the start of hurricane season and although I can find no date of record for the typhoon I sailed through I am pretty sure it occurred during my second assignment to the ship and that it happened shortly after we sailed out of Japan on my first cruise upon my return. I definitely recall that we were hit by the worst of the storm while sailing through the South China Sea. Research leads me to believe that I had experienced Typhoon Ora which was a June 1972 Category 1 typhoon that left 131 people dead and caused \$15 million in damages, (Over 70 million in today's dollars).

A tropical wave embedded in a trough formed on June 20 and moved westward without development. By June 23, the disturbance had strengthened, and became Tropical Storm Ora about 330 miles east of the Philippines. Although poorly organized, Ora continued strengthening, becoming a Category 1 typhoon before encountering a high pressure system.

Ora made landfall in the Philippines and again in southern China. The first landfall brought 115 mph wind gusts and 9.3 inches of rain in a 24 hour period to Luzon. Flashfloods from Ora damaged homes and businesses, and the storm surge caused many ships offshore to run aground. A sailboat capsized near Rapu Rapu during the storm, causing one fatality while hundreds were killed over land. Three others were declared missing. Ora's second landfall was in southeastern China as a tropical storm on June 27, however deaths or damage during that landfall is unavailable.

This was one scary storm and it was the only time I had real concerns about the ship capsizing or sinking. Our ship was covered in spray and waves topside and took 20 and 30 degree rolls continuously, (35 degrees is about the maximum before she'll turn over.) I finally had to tie myself into my rack to keep from being tossed out on to the deck when trying to sleep. We tried to eat at our tables with trays and food being tossed about everywhere. Then one day I was walking in to the mess hall for lunch when the ship took an extremely heavy roll. I found a pole and hung on for dear life while a contingent of sailors and marines began to slide, as if in slow motion along their seats and were then flipped all at once into a pile of bodies and food at one end of the mess hall. At least fifty men tried to untangle themselves from the deck all covered in spaghetti and meatballs. Several ribs were cracked, knees twisted and wrist and ankle sprains occurred and it looked like a war zone in there. From then on we ate by laying down on the deck on our stomachs with our trays in front of us. Of course that was something I wish I had caught on camera. What a sight ! But thanks to Lt. Hayes I do have a few pictures of what can happen in the officer's mess during a major storm at sea..



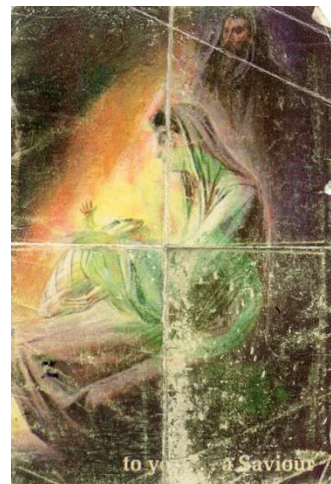
Just take that chaos and multiply it a few hundred times to get a feeling of what it was like below decks. Pots and pans were crashing in the kitchen, men were swearing and bits of broken glass, food and eating utensils mixed with water washed across the deck. That was a stressful couple of days as we sailed through the worst of it and I felt sorry for those who suffer from sea sickness.



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More than a few times our ship listed so far to port or starboard and seem to hang just a minute, as if deciding whether or not to roll over and sink or slowly bring itself upright. With each severe roll I found myself praying for dear life. While I never attended church in the military I did find a small pocket bible that some anonymous donor had slid beneath my pillow which I kept throughout my service years. During our Christmas holiday in Yokosuka I clipped a small picture of a nativity scene from a book and kept it in my wallet for many years as a reminder to never lose faith no matter how difficult life had become..

HE GIVETH MORE GRACE
He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;
To added affliction He addeth His Mercy
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.



June 28, 1972 South Vietnamese troops begin a counter-offensive later called the Second Battle of Quang Tri to retake the Quang Tri Province, aided by U.S. Navy gunfire and B-52 bombardments.

ARVIN's Operation *Lam Son* commenced this date to retake the Quang Tri region. The 1st Division continued its westward push toward Laos while the Airborne and Marine Divisions, the 1st Ranger Group, and the 7th Armored Cavalry moved north to retake Quảng Trị. The Airborne Division led the way and, utilizing airmobile end-runs and the North Vietnamese were slowly levered out of their defensive positions.¹ The division then advanced to the outskirts of Quảng Trị City within ten days, but then South Vietnamese President Thieu intervened in the operation. Lieutenant General Ngo Quang Truong, commander of III Corp had planned to bypass the city and push on quickly to the Cua Viet River, thereby isolating any PAVN defenders. Thieu, however, now demanded that Quảng Trị be taken immediately, seeing the city as "a symbol and a challenge" to his authority.

It was not going to be an easy task for General Truong. The ARVN assault bogged down in the outskirts and the North Vietnamese, appraised of the plans for the offensive, moved the 304th and 208th Divisions to the west to avoid the U.S. airpower that was about to be unleashed upon Quảng Trị. The defense of the city and its walled citadel was left to PAVN replacement units and militia. Recalled one participant: "The new recruits came in at dusk. They were dead by dawn...No one had time to check where they were from, or who was their commander." Others described the defense as a "senseless sacrifice" and referred to Quảng Trị as "Hamburger City"



A view of the Citadel at Quang Tri from our ship.

June 11, 1972 The ARVN Marine Division launched a helicopter borne assault north and east of the city which would cut the last remaining road and force the North Vietnamese to reinforce and resupply across the Thach Han River, making them vulnerable to air strikes. After a vicious, three-day battle against the 48th Regiment of the 320B PAVN Division, North Vietnamese forces broke and withdrew. During the month of July, American aircraft flew 5,461 tactical sorties and 2,054 B-52 strikes to support the counteroffensive. On 27 July, the ARVN Marine Division was ordered to relieve the Airborne units as the lead element in the battle. But progress was slow, consisting of vicious house-to-house fighting and incessant artillery barrages by both sides. On September the assault to capture the heavily-defended citadel was launched and it was finally taken on 16 September. Truong's forces then advanced to the southern bank of the Thach Han River, where they halted, exhausted and depleted by heavy casualties and unable to push on to Dong Ha.

The Second Battle of Quang Tri lasted 81 days until September 16, 1972, when the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) defeated the North Vietnamese at the ancient citadel of Quảng Trị (Vietnamese: *Thành cổ Quảng Trị*) and recaptured most of the province.

To achieve victory, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, backed by the United States military, shelled more than 80,000 tons of ordnance, the destructive capacity equivalent to almost six Hiroshima-size atomic bombs.



28 - 30 June 1972 Conducted Naval gunfire support operations off the coast of Vietnam.

When conducting Naval Gunfire Support (NGFS) the ship moved to a station a few miles off the coast and waited for missions to be called in from spotters ashore. While waiting the ship typically steamed back and forth or in a triangle around the station. When a mission was called in the ship moved to a good firing position and opened fire with the spotter calling in corrections. Firing continued for as little as 15 minutes or up to an hour or more. After the mission was complete the ship returned to the waiting station. We often received several NGFS missions each day, sometimes for three to four weeks at a time. We left the station about once a week to refuel, and rendezvoused with ammunition ships about every three days. During periods of heavy gunfire support activity the ship would rearm every day, firing until we ran out of bullets, rushing out to rearm, then returning to resume firing. At night we sometimes fired H&I all night long.



We used our 6 inch and 5 inch guns to provide artillery support for our troops ashore. We usually patrolled at point Alpha near the DMZ between north and south Vietnam or at point Delta near Da Nang. During gunfire operations there was a lot of waiting for "Charley" (the Viet Cong) to give us something to shoot at.

Occasionally a Huey would bring a spotter aboard from shore to discuss pending operations and the opportunity for gunfire support. Gunfire mission started when a spotter called in a job. He gave us the target map coordinates and the ship's computers calculated the firing solution. Then we fired a spotting round. The spotter observed where it hit and gave us corrections. Then we began "fire for effect," expending whatever rounds were needed to accomplish the mission.



The dense jungles in Vietnam sometimes caused problems for the spotter. On one occasion we fired a 5 inch spotting round, and the spotter answered "Lost, repeat." We fired again with a two gun salvo, and the spotter failed to see it. We repeated using "willie peter" (white phosphorous) which makes a big cloud of white smoke. "Lost, repeat" came back from the spotter. At this point the Captain asked us to check the fire solution, just to be sure we weren't blowing the top off a mountain between us and the target. No, the rounds had plenty of clearance over the hilltops.

The Captain decided to switch to the 6 inch battery, and we fired another white phosphorous round. The spotter didn't see it. So we fired a three gun salvo of willie peter. Again, the spotter didn't see the explosions or smoke. We fired one more three gun salvo, which also went unobserved. At this point we gave up. The triple canopy jungle was too dense for the effects of twelve rounds to be seen!

As the second Battle for Quang Tri started our ship arrived on the gun line and begin conducting Naval Gunfire Support operations in Northern Military Region One, Republic of Vietnam. Shore bombardment was conducted in support of Army of Republic of Vietnam Forces engaged in fierce ground fighting in defense of Quang Tri City.



Enemy spotting tower near Quang Tri used to call in shore artillery strikes against our ships along the coastal waters.

NOW YOU SEE IT.....NOW YOU DON'T !!







Sam,

Whew! this is the wrong time of the year to be in Vietnam. It's so hot here all the coins in my pocket have turned green from the sweat and heat. Due to enemy return fire the crew is restricted below decks which doesn't help either. It's always hotter ~~even~~ inside the ship. I'm luckier than most, though. I usually get out twice a day to dispatch mail by chopper to Da Nang.

Well, we started our big offensive to try and regain the Northern provinces around the DMZ. We usually do most of our firing at night then pull out a few miles to refuel or take on ammo. We fired all night for the past 2 nights, shooting off 1200 rounds. ~~was~~ A few days ago I ^{got} to within 8,000 yards of Quang Tri. There is a division of ARVN infantry, paratroops and tanks trying to retake the area, while the 7th Fleet keeps moving north to soften up the area with shore bombardment. Sure isn't much

left standing in Quang tri. Spent a few minutes yesterday watching U.S. jets make air strikes along the beach. Its all been pretty interesting.

July 1-21, 1972 Continued conducting Naval Gunfire Support in the vicinity of the DMZ as a member of TU 70.8.9 with breaks only long enough to allow for refueling, rearming and replenishing from SEVENTH Fleet mobile logistic support ships.

On one occasion we received an urgent call for gunfire support from a spotter in a light airplane. He reported that Viet Cong were overrunning a town, and gave us the coordinates. He was calling antipersonnel fire into the center of a pretty large town. We held fire while getting confirmation from I Corps Headquarters in Da Nang. They said to commence firing, so we did. We fired a spotting round but the observer failed to see it. We fired a second spotting round, and again it wasn't observed. At that point we asked the spotter to confirm the coordinates, and he reported a different set - he had reversed north-south and east-west coordinates. We were firing into the wrong town! I learned later that there were several civilian casualties.



On another occasion we received a call from an airborne spotter for direct fire (target visible from the ship) into some caves along the shore that were suspected of being VC storage sites. When we came into range the Director Officer reported the target was crowded with families fishing along the beach. We reported this to the spotter and asked him to confirm the target. He came back with another target a few miles up the beach. Again, there were people on the beach fishing at this target. The Captain called down to CIC and asked us to use the air search radar to locate the spotter plane. We couldn't see it, but we did see the plane's IFF (Identification Friend or Foe) signal and plotted its location. The plane was sitting on the runway at a nearby air strip! The spotter, who was supposed to fly over the target area and verify that it was safe to fire, was just sitting in the plane on the ground and using the radio to call fire missions. We told him to forget it and left.

In defense of such operations I should add that I have read many after action battle accounts from both Marine and Army units on the ground that praised the accuracy and fire power of naval gunfire support during the Vietnam war..

