

USS O'BANNON (DD 450)
FPO San Francisco 96601

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5750
Ser: 19
22 JAN 1968

From: Commanding Officer, USS O'BANNON (DD-450)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09B9)
Subj: Annual Command History (OPNAV Report 5750-1); submission of
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12
(b) CINCPACFLTINST 5750.2
(c) COMDESRON 11 INST 5750.1C
Encl: (1) Chronological History of USS O'BANNON (DD-450) for the period
1 January through 31 December 1967
(2) Narrative Command History of USS O'BANNON (DD-450) for the
period 1 January through 31 December 1967
(3) Special Topics Narrative for the period 1 January through 31
December 1967
(4) Muster Roll and Roster of Officers for USS O'BANNON (DD-450)
for 7 December 1967 and 31 December 1967 respectively
1. In accordance with references (a) through (c), enclosures (1) through
(4) are herewith submitted.


J. W. WELLS

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Chronological History of USS O'BANNON (DD-450)
1 January to 31 December 1967

1-22 January 1967	Inport Pearl Harbor for leave and upkeep
23-26 January	At sea for operational evaluation of a specialized radar.
27 January	Ammunition off load at NAD West Loch.
28 January - 10 February	Tender availability with USS FRONTIER (AD-25).
10 February - 15 March	In Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard to remove 3" and 5" gun mounts, MK 15 Hedgehog mount, and MK 56 Director. Set replacements on board for installation by SRF, Guam.
16-26 March	Underway for Guam in company with USS CIMARRON (AO-22).
26 March	Arrived Apra Harbor, Guam. Sea trials with SRF observers.
26 March - 26 June	Inport Apra Harbor, Guam for RAV.
5-24 May	Drydocked on keelblocks in USS ARGO (ARD-29).
18 June	Dock trials
20 June	Sea trials
26 June	Celebrated 25th Anniversary of Commissioning.
27 June - 3 July	Underway for Pearl Harbor in company with USS SACRAMENTO (AOE-1).
3-16 July	Inport Pearl Harbor for leave and upkeep.
17 July	Ammunition onload at NAD West Loch, ISE
18-19 July	Underway as ASW target vessel.
20 July	Gunnery exercises.
21-24 July	Inport Pearl Harbor for upkeep.
25-27 July	Underway ISE and FORACS.
28-29 July	Underway with TG 32.2 as part of CONVEX 2-67, opposed transit and entry.
29 July - 6 August	Inport preparing for refresher training.
7-25 August	Refresher training with Fleet Training Group, Pearl Harbor, inport and at sea.
19-22 August	Weekend alongside USS PRAIRIE (AD-15).
26 August - 19 September	Alongside USS PRAIRIE (AD-15) for repairs.
19 September	At sea for refresher training.
20-24 September	Inport Pearl Harbor for pre-deployment repairs.
25 September	Pre-deployment ammunition loadout at NAD West Loch, and Engineering trails.
26-27 September	Inport for final deployment preparations.
28 September - 7 October	Underway for Yokosuka, Japan.
1 October	Fueling stop at Midway.
8-9 October	Inport Yokosuka for voyage repairs.
10-14 October	Underway for Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines.
12 October	Fueling stop at Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
15-22 October	Inport Subic Bay for upkeep.
23 October - 4 November	Underway as plane guard for USS CONSTELLATION (CVA-64) in the vicinity of Yankee Station.
5-6 November	Enroute to Subic Bay, independently.
7-16 November	Inport Subic Bay for repairs and upkeep.

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17-18 November	Underway for Hong Kong, British Crown Colony.
19-22 November	Inport Hong Kong for R & R.
23-24 November	Enroute to DaNang, Republic of Vietnam.
25 November - 5 December	Providing gunfire support in the northern I Corps area of South Vietnam.
6-7 December	Enroute to Kaohsiung, Taiwan.
8-11 December	Inport Kaohsiung for R & R.
12-14 December	Enroute to I Corps area.
15-31 December	Providing gunfire support in the northern I Corps area of South Vietnam.

Enclosure (1)

NARRATIVE COMPANY HISTORY OF USS O'BANNON (DD-450)

Under the command of Captain John W. Welle since 8 October 1965, USS O'BANNON (DD-450) performs the duties of a general purpose destroyer in the U. S. Pacific Fleet. O'BANNON is homeported at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and is deployed regularly to the Western Pacific as a member of the U. S. Seventh Fleet. Her allowance on 31 December 1967 was 18 officers and 265 enlisted men.

O'BANNON began 1967 where she had ended 1966, alongside "Bravo" piers in Pearl Harbor. With an overhaul or restricted yard availability later in the year still indefinite, ship's force was given this opportunity for a major effort to conquer some of the material problems stemming from age and five years out of overhaul.

After four days at sea, 23 through 27 January, and a tender availability, O'BANNON moved on 10 February to Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. It had been decided, since she needed an overhaul and Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard was already overloaded, that she would have an extended restricted availability at Ship Repair Facility, Guam to accomplish the necessary work.

At the Pearl Harbor Shipyard, her 5" and 5" gun mounts, MK 15 heading mount, and MK 58 director were removed. Replacements were set on board and bolted down but not wired. During this restricted availability, ship's force continued its overhaul, concentrating on a thorough represservation of topside spaces.

On 18 March, O'BANNON left Pearl Harbor in company with USS STARBUCK (AO-22) and transited to Guam. She arrived at Apra Harbor, Guam on 26 March, took on observers from Ship Repair Facility, Guam, and headed back to sea for sea trials. On completion of sea trials, she returned to Apra Harbor where she was to remain from 26 March until the morning of 27 June.

During O'BANNON's three month restricted availability in Guam, ship's force and technicians from ship Repair Facility overhauled most of her equipment as well as wiring and checking out the ordnance equipment which Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard had provided. This was the first significant shipyard work done on O'BANNON in 48 months. From 5 to 24 May, she was drydocked in the floating drydock USS ARGO (ARD-29) while her underwater hull was represserved.

On 26 June, O'BANNON celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of her commissioning. There was no formal celebration, for her crew was too busy finishing the jobs which had to keep her going for more years, but the event was recognized by the Pacific Cruiser-Destroyer Force publication Vigilance which carried a long article on O'BANNON's history. The next morning she left Guam for Pearl Harbor and the best anniversary present her crew could have asked for; a return home on 5 July after three and one half months away. In Guam, approximately \$708,000, 75,000 SRP man-hours and 150,000 ship's force man hours were expended to increase her material readiness.

After a two week respite, O'BANNON began preparations in earnest for refresher training and her upcoming Westpac deployment, conducting various drills and exercises. On 28 and 29 July, she took part in COMUSMACV 2-67, screening a convoy of amphibious vessels in an opposed transit and entry into Honolulu Harbor.

On 7 August, O'BANNON began refresher training with observers from Fleet Training Group, Pearl Harbor. Throughout refresher training, she was plagued by material problems, particularly in engineering. She spent the weekend of 19 through 22 August alongside USS PRAIRIE (AD-15) for repairs, and she returned to the tender on 26 August for an extended period, interrupting refresher training, to repair material problems.

On 19 September, O'BANNON gave refresher training a last try, but still troubled by engineering problems, she was dropped out of refresher training after one more day to devote full time to becoming ready to deploy from a material standpoint.

On 28 September, O'BANNON sailed for Yokosuka, Japan in company with USS HAMNER (DD-718). She made a fueling stop at Midway on 1 October, had to take evasive action to avoid Typhoon Amy, and arrived in Yokosuka on 8 October for two days of voyage repairs. On 10 October she and HAMNER continued on to Subic Bay, the Philippines, with a fueling stop at Buckner Bay, Okinawa on 12 October.

O'BANNON spent 15 through 22 ^{OCTOBER} November in Subic Bay for upkeep, then departed with USS CONSTELLATION (CVA-64) for Yankee Station. She operated as plane guard with CONSTELLATION as part of Task Group 77.4 from 23 October through 4 November, when she detached to return independently to Subic Bay. During this period she rescued two men who fell overboard from CONSTELLATION during an underway replenishment on 1 November.¹ She also was involved in a night time search for the wreckage from an A-5 Tanker aircraft which crashed off CONSTELLATION's bow, recovering the body of one crew member.²

After ten days in Subic Bay for repairs and four days in Hong Kong for R and R, O'BANNON departed for Danang Harbor, South Vietnam to commence shore bombardment as part of task unit 70.8.9. From 25 November to 6 December, operating in the Danang area, she fired 1308 rounds of 5" and 40 rounds of 3" ammunition at the enemy. On 6 December she departed for Kachsiung, Taiwan, and four days of R and R.

O'BANNON spent the period 8 through 11 December in Kachsiung. She departed on the 12th for the northern I Corps Area of South Vietnam. She arrived just south of the Demilitarized Zone on 14 December and again commenced fire on enemy targets.

On 17 December, while operating just south of the Demilitarized zone, O'BANNON went to rescue the pilot of an American aircraft which had been shot down over the DMZ, crashing just off shore.

While O'BANNON, the cruiser NEWPORT NEWS (CA-148), and a rescue helicopter from NEWPORT NEWS were maneuvering in the area, several rounds apparently from a shore battery landed in the vicinity. No damage was suffered by any of the units involved, and the aircraft crew were picked up by the rescue helicopter.

On 21 through 24 December and 26 December through the end of the year, O'BANNON supported the amphibious operations Fortress Ridge and Badger Teeth, providing fire to assist the marines on the beach. During a period of not quite six hours on 28 December, she fired 342 rounds of 5" projectiles on enemy targets at a rate of better than 1 round a minute.

O'BANNON ended the year on the gun line, having fired 4001 5" and 40 3" projectiles in Vietnam. During the year she had also replenished underway 52 times, 18 from oilers, 10 from ammunition ships, and 4 from supply ships. She burned 2,459,835 gallons of Navy Standard Fuel Oil and steamed 30,180 miles.

FOOTNOTES:

1. The men were AN [REDACTED], USN and ADTAN [REDACTED] USN.
2. During this search, she brought aboard the body of PO2 Richard W. SANDIFER, of VAH-8 Air Refueling team, found in the water on 5 November.

SPECIAL TOPICS

1 January - 31 December 1967

1. Performance of Material

a. Engineering: The engineering department was plagued with casualties both before and after the Guam period which also caused the ship to be dropped from REFTRA, the most significant equipment being a boiler, #1 and #2 air ejectors, Main feed pumps, Fire and Bilge pumps, Fire and Flushing pumps, Dummy and Pitlog, and an excessively high heat problem in all Main Engineering spaces caused by missing, and deteriorated Lagging pipes and poor ventilation.

Toward the latter part of the year, the Starboard Shaft Spring Bearings were being given a PMS check and it was discovered that number two spring bearing was wiped and had to be reworked. #1 boiler, which had six superheater tubes plugged previously, began leaking around flanges and tubes had to be replaced. Overall, the performance and reliability of the Engineering Plant and equipment greatly improved as the availability in Guam, massive work by ship's force personnel, and long periods at sea on deployment to SEVENTHFLT, enabled the crew to be trained on the installed plant and equipment.

The improvement culminated in achieving a passing grade on an Engineering Economy Trail for the first time in over three years. It also allowed the O'BANNON to operate for three months in the Western Pacific without missing a commitment or going on water hours.

b. Weapons: At the start of 1967, Weapons Department material in general was badly deteriorated. Most Fire Control gear was in dire need of a class "A" overhaul, and both internal and external wiring showed the effects of age, heat, and in some cases moisture. All gun mounts were worn and in need of complete overhaul.

With tender assistance, ship's force embarked on an aggressive "self overhaul" program in January while awaiting a decision on whether the ship would be given an RAV. It was finally determined to provide replacements for all gun mounts, the Mark 15 hedgehog projector, and Mark 56 director in Pearl Harbor, and to have these carried by the ship to Guam where they would be installed by Ship Repair Facility.

SRF Guam not only installed this equipment but also made other repairs which were beyond ship's force capability. Ship's force continued its thorough overhaul program, and by the time the ship left Guam, ordnance equipment was in the best condition in years. The high quality of work done by SRF Guam and ship's force is attested by the performance of ordnance equipment through operational training and three months of a Westpac deployment without a major equipment casualty.

From 25 November 1967 through 6 January 1968, O'BANNON fired over 5500 rounds in Naval Gunfire Support with only minor equipment casualties.

c. Operations: Operations department material status and reliability improved considerably during the year. The following equipment was installed:

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Two SPA-4A repeaters
one SLA-2
one URR-13
two WRR-3

one KY-8
one VRC-46
one KW-7
one SRT-11

The addition of this equipment increased O'BANNON'S capabilities significantly. The KY-8 system proved to be extremely useful and flexible in combatant operations in the Tonkin Gulf and Northern I corps area. The VRC-46 was an invaluable communication system during NGFS missions.

Material problems were only infrequently serious enough to hinder operations. The lack of a USM-115 range calibrator, or a substitute, was a continuing problem during most of the year.

O'BANNON was often hard pressed to meet all of the requirements for HF communications during Westpac operations. This problem was compounded by a high failure rate on the installed URC-32 transceivers, especially during Naval Gunfire Support missions.

The extended RAV in Guam was beneficial to material reliability. Material problems in general seem to be diminishing.

2. Supply

a. The Supply Department received Supply Overhaul and Assistance Program assistance during the overhaul period in Guam. As a result of this program, the reliability of general supply support has been greatly improved. Wholesale replacement of equipment in the galley and laundry has greatly improved service in these areas.

3. Personnel

a. During 1967 O'BANNON experienced a vast turnover of personnel. While no month could be considered typical, the statistics of the three months prior to deployment in September illustrate the problem. During that period 86 men were received and 40 transferred, representing 34% of the total crew. In the last month alone 39 were received and 17 transferred.

Although the ship did not complete refresher training due to the material problems discussed elsewhere, the training that was received was diluted in effect by the large turnover immediately prior to deployment.

The effort towards crew stabilization was commenced in January as soon as the decision was made to retain the ship in commission and a deployment date in September was set. It was not successful due partly to the Navy wide problem of retention of mid-grade petty officers but also to the fact that some imbalances are normally compensated for by intra Division/Squadron transfers. O'BANNON, by being almost completely out of phase with the other ships of the Division/Squadron did not have this advantage.

There were, at any time of the year, some shortages of supervisory petty officers. In some technical areas this became critical and for the first 3 months of the deployment the ship was in a C-3 category for personnel readiness. This was primarily due to shortages in the ratings of: MM1, IC1, and SH1.

An aggressive retention program has been in effect and the results, although not outstanding, are encouraging. As of 31 December 11% of eligible first term personnel reenlisted, 78% career designated personnel reenlisted. Additionally, applications for 5 men are awaiting Bureau of Naval Personnel approval which will affect 1968 statistics. The opportunity of reenlisting in a tax free zone has been a great advantage in the retention effort.

4. Community Relations

a. During October, a collection of old clothes was made from members of the crew and delivered to the Leprosarium at Tala, Republic of the Philippines, by a group of officers from the ship.

b. O'BANNON also cooperated with a SOPA(Admin) community relations project in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, providing a motor whaleboat for a touring "Santa Claus" visiting local orphans.

5. Congratulatory Messages

a. While operating with the Seventh Fleet, O'BANNON received numerous congratulatory messages for every kind of achievement from unloading stores efficiently during underway replenishment to rescuing two men overboard from the USS CONSTELLATION (CVA-64) before the carrier's helicopter could reach the scene. But the most prized message came from the Major General ROBERTSON, Commanding General of the First Marine Division, who said, "The support rendered the First Marine Division by O'BANNON 27 November through 3 December was worthy of the highest praise. The timeliness and accuracy of your gunfire is greatly appreciated. Well done and smooth sailing."