



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
U.S.S. AMERICA (CVA-66)  
FPO NEW YORK 09501

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From: Commanding Officer, USS AMERICA (CVA-66)  
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Subj: Ship's History for 1972; forwarding of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5770.12A  
(b) COMNAVAIRLANTINST 5750.1F

Encl: (1) USS AMERICA (CVA-66) History of 1972

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b), enclosure (1) is forwarded.
2. AMERICA's 1972 Cruise Book and the WESTPAC Cruise Report will be forwarded upon receipt.

*B. H. Shepherd*  
B. H. SHEPHERD

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COMNAVAIRLANT (PAO)  
CINCPACFLT

USS AMERICA (CVA-66)

HISTORY

1972

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## CHRONOLOGY OF HIGHLIGHTS

1972

- 5 JAN AMERICA received the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Korea) for the period 24 September 1970 through 26 September 1970
- 25 FEB BTL Glenn R. BROWNING was selected as COMNAVAIRLANT Sailor of the year
- 25 FEB Chief Warrant Officer Donald P. TURNER and Senior Chief Disbursing Clerk G. F. SIMS received the sixth annual Catherine T. McDONALD Award
- 29 FEB Miss Laurie Lea SCHAFER, Miss America 1972, visited the ship to rededicate AMERICA's C-1A aircraft, MISS AMERICA
- 13-14 MAR The USS AMERICA All Hands Party was held at the Alan Shepard Convention Center, Virginia Beach, VA.
- 7 APR Admiral Charles K. DUNCAN, Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, visited AMERICA for change of command ceremony
- 7 APR Captain Burton H. SHEPHERD relieved Captain Thomas B. RUSSELL Jr. as Commanding Officer
- 8 APR-21 MAY Rear Admiral Robert B. BALDWIN, Commander Carrier Division SIX broke his flag aboard AMERICA to evaluate training progress
- 15-16 APR Senators Allen J. ELLENDER (D-LA) and Peter H. DOMINICK (R-COLO), Vice Admiral Means JOHNSTON, Inspector General, and Rear Admiral Edwin K. SNYDER, Chief of Legislative Affairs, visit AMERICA
- 11-15 MAY AMERICA's annual OPERATIONAL READINESS EXERCISE was conducted
- 15-16 MAY Rear Admiral Kenneth C. WALLACE, Commander Cruiser Destroyer Flotilla TWELVE, visited AMERICA
- 15-20 MAY AMERICA participated in exercise Exotic Dancer V
- 16 MAY Vice Admiral Vincent P. DePOIX, Commander Second Fleet, visited AMERICA

- 19 MAY Brigadier General Edward J. MILLER, Commanding General Second Marine Air Wing, flew aboard to visit AMERICA and VMFA-333
- 2 JUN Admiral Elmo R. ZUMWALT, Chief of Naval Operations, visited AMERICA to address the crew concerning the forthcoming deployment and to present the Navy Commendation Medal to BTFN Kirt D. SAMPSON
- 5 JUN AMERICA departs for Southeast Asia
- 12 JUN Equator Crossing - 4,3000 slimy, scurvy, greasy Pollywogs initiated into the realm of Neptunis Rex
- 27 JUN Change of operational control to CINCPACFLT
- 14 JUL First full day of operations on Yankee Station
- 21 JUL Rear Admiral Damon W. COOPER, Commander Task Force Seventy-Seven, visited AMERICA to welcome her to the Gulf of Tonkin and discuss WESTPAC operations
- 12 AUG Vice Admiral Thomas J. WALKER, Commander Naval Air Forces, U. S. Pacific Fleet, Vice Admiral William D. HOUSER, DCNO Air Warfare and Rear Admiral Albert H. CLANCY Jr., Force Material Officer, COMNAVAIRPAC, visited AMERICA
- 16 AUG Rear Admiral John S. CHRISTIANSEN, Commander Carrier Division Seven, and Vice Admiral George C. TALLEY Jr., Deputy Chief of Staff, CINCPACFLT, visited AMERICA
- 23 AUG Admiral Elmo R. ZUMWALT, Chief of Naval Operations, Vice Admiral James L. HOLLOWAY, Commander Seventh Fleet, Rear Admiral Belly D. Holder, Director of the Strategic Plans and Policy Division, and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy John D. WHITTET, visited AMERICA
- 6 SEP AMERICA hosted a visit by the Australian Ambassador to the Republic of South Vietnam, Mr. Arthur M. MORRIS, the British Ambassador to the Republic of South Vietnam, and Rear Admiral Owen H. OBERG, Chief of Fleet Coordinating Group Saigon
- 12 SEP The first MIG to be downed by a Marine aircraft operating from a Navy carrier was downed by Major Lee T. LASSITER, pilot, and Captain John D. CUMMINGS, Radar Intercept Officer, flying from AMERICA
- 15-17 SEP AMERICA was visited by Vice Admiral Frederick H. MICHAELIS, Commander Naval Air Forces, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, who came to confer with AMERICA's Commanding Officer and to see how the ship was faring in the Pacific Fleet

- 17 SEP Rear Admiral Jonh S. CHRISTIANSEN, Commander Carrier Division SEVEN, broke his flag aboard AMERICA
- 19 SEP Admiral Noel A. M. GAYLER, Commander in Chief Pacific, Vice Admiral James L. HOLLOWAY, III, Commander Seventh Fleet, and Major General Ralph H. SPANJER, USMC, assistant to CINCPAC, visited AMERICA
- 29 SEP Vice Admiral Means JOHNSTON Jr., Navy Inspector General, visited AMERICA on an inspection tour
- 9 OCT The infamous THANH HOA Bridge was downed by AMERICA air-crews
- 3-4 NOV Rear Admiral J. M. TIERNEY, Commander Fleet Air Whidbey Island, visited AMERICA
- 22-23 DEC The Honorable John W. WARNER, Secretary of the Navy, and Vice Admiral James L. HOLLOWAY, Commander Seventh Fleet, visited AMERICA while on a Christmas visit to the Seventh Fleet

SHIP'S SCHEDULE

1972

<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	
1 JAN	17 JAN	Pier 12 Naval Operating Base (NOB) Norfolk, Virginia
17 JAN	21 JAN	Whiskey (Munitions) Anchorage, NOB Norfolk, Virginia
21 JAN	27 MAR	Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Virginia
27 MAR	31 MAR	Sea Trials, Virginia Capes Operating Area (VACAPES)
31 MAR	1 APR	Whiskey (Munitions) Anchorage, NOB Norfolk, Virginia
1 APR	2 APR	Pier 12, NOB Norfolk, Virginia
2 APR	6 APR	Whiskey (Munitions) Anchorage, NOB Norfolk, Virginia
6 APR	10 APR	Pier 12, NOB Norfolk, Virginia
10 APR	21 APR	Type Training, Virginia Capes Operating Area
21 APR	26 APR	Pier 12, NOB Norfolk, Virginia
26 APR	4 MAY	Type Training, Virginia Capes Operating Area
4 MAY	8 MAY	Pier 12, NOB Norfolk, Virginia
8 MAY	20 MAY	Type Training, Operational Readiness Exercise, Exercise Exotic Dancer V, Virginia Capes Operating Area
✓ 20 MAY	5 JUN	Pier 12, NOB Norfolk, Virginia
5 JUN	6 JUL	Transit to Naval Station Subic Bay, Philippine Islands
6 JUL	9 JUL	Alava Pier, Naval Station Subic Bay, P.I.
9 JUL	12 JUL	Transit to Yankee Station
✓ 12 JUL	25 JUL	Yankee Station
25 JUL	26 JUL	Transit to NS Subic Bay, P.I.
26 JUL	9 AUG	NS Subic Bay, P.I., Alava Pier
9 AUG	11 AUG	Transit to Yankee Station
11 AUG	27 AUG	Yankee Station

27 AUG 29 AUG Transit to Subic Bay, P.I.  
29 AUG 1 SEP Carrier Pier, NAS Cubi Point, P.I.  
1 SEP 5 SEP Alava Pier, NS Subic Bay, P.I.  
5 SEP 7 SEP Transit to Yankee Station  
7 SEP 7 OCT Yankee Station  
7 OCT 9 OCT Transit to Subic Bay, P.I.  
9 OCT 10 OCT Carrier Pier, NAS Cubi Point, P.I.  
10 OCT 13 OCT Transit to Singapore  
13 OCT 19 OCT Man of War Anchorage, Republic of Singapore  
19 OCT 21 OCT Transit to Yankee Station  
21 OCT 1 DEC Yankee Station  
1 DEC 2 DEC Transit to Subic Bay, P.I.  
2 DEC 8 DEC Alava Pier, NS Subic Bay, P.I.  
8 DEC 9 DEC Transit to Yankee Station  
10 DEC 26 DEC Yankee Station  
27 DEC 28 DEC Transit to Hong Kong, B.C.C.  
28 DEC 31 DEC Anchorage, Hong Kong, B.C.C.



## SHIP'S HISTORY

New Year's Day found AMERICA in the middle of a thirty-day stand-down after completion of her fifth major deployment. (AMERICA had made three Mediterranean cruises and two to the Gulf of Tonkin since she was commissioned in 1965.) Shortly after New Year's Day, the ship received a pair of belated Christmas presents: receipt of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Korea) for service in the Sea of Japan from September 24 through September 26, 1970; and notification of the selection of one of her crew, BT1 Glenn R. BROWNING, as COMNAVAIRLANT Sailor of the Year.

After a four day stay at the ammunition anchorage, AMERICA entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard at Portsmouth, Virginia, for a scheduled two month restricted availability (RAV) period. During this RAV the ship completed a minor overhaul of the engineering spaces, electronic equipment and hangar and flight deck facilities. While in the yard, Chief Warrent Officer, Donald P. TURNER and Senior Chief Disbursing Clerk G. F. SIMS were presented the Sixth Annual Catherine T. McDonald Award. This award is presented to an officer and enlisted member of AMERICA's crew who, during the preceding year, contributed most to the morale, operating efficiency, and material readiness of the ship.

After a two month stay in the yard, the ship once again cast off lines and returned to sea for five days of sea trials. Upon returning to Norfolk, two significant events occurred. On the seventh of April her Commanding Officer, Captain Thomas B. RUSSELL, Jr., was relieved by Captain Burton H. SHEPHERD in a colorful ceremony on the hanger deck. Heading the extensive list of dignitaries was Admiral Charles K. DUNCAN,

Commander in Chief Atlantic Fleet. On the following day, Rear Admiral Robert B. BALDWIN, Commander Carrier Division SIX, came aboard to begin evaluation of AMERICA's training and readiness in preparation for the forthcoming Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE).

While at sea during the next training period, AMERICA hosted two distinguished guests, Senator Allen J. ELLENDER (D-LA) and Senator Peter H. DOMINICK (R-COLO). The Chief of Naval Operations expressed his personal pleasure with AMERICA's conduct of the visit in the following message:

Deeply appreciate consideration and unsurpassed hospitality to Senators ELLENDER and DOMINICK by all hands during recent visit; they were most impressed and enlightened by the genuine enthusiasm and professionalism of the men of AMERICA and its attached Air Group. Recognize the extent to which personal effort and attention of all addresses made visit a success.

E. R. ZUMWALT, Jr., Admiral, U. S. Navy

Before returning to port, AMERICA was informed that she would be deploying over one month earlier than scheduled because of a shift to LANTFLT carrier assets.

During the middle of May, AMERICA departed Norfolk on a threefold mission; to train for the Operational Readiness Exercise; the ORE itself; and participation in Second Fleet's exercise EXOTIC DANCER V. Receiving an overall grade of SATISFACTORY and an adjective grade of EXCELLENT, AMERICA quickly transitioned from the ORE to a Fleet Exercise, EXOCTIC DANCER V. This was a joint exercise involving units of the Army, Navy, Coast Guard and Air Force and was conducted in and around the coastal area of North Carolina to exercise the amphibious capabilities of the units involved. AMERICA provided required air

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cover for the landings and subsequent operations. AMERICA's participation in EXOTIC DANCER V, was commended in the following message from COMCARDIV SIX:

the outstanding performance during our recent operations were noted with pleasure. The outstanding coordination and professional execution of the full range of operations reflected credit on each of you.

Although the planned evolutions proceeded smoothly, two mishaps occurred which marred the training period. The first involved an SH2A Helicopter from HC-2 DET 66, which experienced the loss of an engine and settled to the water. In spite of concentrated efforts by all hands, the helicopter inverted and sank as it was about to be hoisted back aboard. The second incident, the bursting of a main feed pump in a boiler room, required the ship to return to port early for repairs. The damage incurred was minimized by the quick thinking and action of BTFN Kirt D. SAMPSON, who was later awarded the Navy Commendation Medal for his action.

After a brief stay at Pier 12, which was utilized for final pre-deployment<sup>172</sup> preparations, leave and liberty, AMERICA departed on 5 June on an extended deployment. Three days prior to her departure (2 June), AMERICA was honored by a visit from the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Elmo R. ZUMWALT. He used the occasion to explain to the crew why the sailing orders had been changed from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Tonkin and also to present the Navy Commendation Medal to BTFN Kirt D. SAMPSON for his actions during the broken steam pump emergency.

On June 12th, as the ship crossed the Equator, the crew welcomed aboard King Neptune. With the assistance of approximately 500 loyal Shellbacks a successful initiation was held. By sunset approximately

4,300 new Shellbacks had been welcomed into King Neptune's Realm. His Majesty was particularly pleased with the capture and successful initiation of one high ranking Pollywog who had been evading the ceremony for many years. It was none other than the Commanding Officer of AMERICA, Captain B. H. SHEPHERD.

With her escorts, the destroyers USS DAVIS (DLG-14), USS DEWEY (DD-937) and the USS WACCAMAW (AO-109), AMERICA proceeded steadily toward the Southeast and rounded Cape Horn on June 21st,<sup>'72</sup> where three thousand pounds of mail was taken aboard and men going on Emergency Leave were put ashore.

AMERICA inchooped into Seventh Fleet in late June, relieving USS CORAL SEA. Actual combat operations began on 12 July \*\* but were prematurely terminated on the 25th when a ruptured main feed pump forced an early return to Subic Bay. This was a period of floods, landslides, and destruction in the Philippines and resulted in the declaration of a state of national emergency. The gloom caused by the weather was lightened somewhat by the USO Show presented on the hanger deck by 'Young Hawaii', a troop of young people from the Hawaiian Islands.

Repair work on the damaged feed pump was delayed for approximately two weeks while the needed parts were rushed to Subic Bay. AMERICA was at sea again on 9 August.

Many distinguished guests visited AMERICA during her next line period including Ambassadors from Australia and the United Kingdom, and the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Elmo R. ZUMWALT. The question most often

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\*\* Enclosure (1), the ship's WESTPAC Cruise Report, is included as a separate addendum. It gives a much more complete and broader scope of problems encountered, lessons learned, techniques applied and statistics during the days at Yankee Station than could be written in this brief history.



asked of the Admiral was, "When are we going home again?" The same question was asked of another of our guests, Vice Admiral Frederick H. MICHAELIS, Commander Naval Air Forces, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, who visited AMERICA on 15 September. He too said that he did not know the answer, but that he was assured by Admiral ZUMWALT that everything possible was being done to find out. This question was to remain unanswered until late January.

On the seventeenth of September Rear Admiral John S. CHRISTIANSEN, Commander Carrier Division SEVEN, broke his flag aboard AMERICA where it remained through the rest of the year.

On October 6th AMERICA's Air Wing dropped the infamous Thanh Hoa Bridge. The severing of this link in the chain of logistics from North Vietnam to South Vietnam had been a major objective since the bombing of North Vietnam was begun in 1964. Many congratulatory messages were received for the achievement, including one from Vice Admiral HOLLOWAY, Commander Seventh Fleet, and one from Vice Admiral COOPER, Commander Task Force Seventy-Seven.

Upon completing the line period and following a one day stopover at Subic Bay, AMERICA transited to Singapore. Numerous AMERICA men and their wives were already there due to efforts by the Captain to arrange an airlift from Danang to Singapore. The ship departed Singapore on October 20th and returned once again to Yankee Station.

On November 19th, fire broke out aboard AMERICA. It occurred at 1410H in the number two catapult spaces. It initially appeared to be a small fire but as smoke began to quickly fill most of the 03 level and run down ladders into lower levels, General Quarters was sounded. All hands were

calm and orderly as they went about their assigned tasks and soon the fire was extinguished. The long and difficult task of clean-up and repair began immediately. Results were quick in coming, and although she was not to regain the full use of the catapult until after the in-port period in Subic Bay in early December, AMERICA remained on the line and continued to meet her commitments.

After an extended line period of 43 days, AMERICA arrived in Subic Bay on December 2nd. AMERICA was underway again on December 8th with all looking forward to entering port again in less than three weeks. This time it would be Hong Kong.

About one week before Christmas, it was learned that there was a snag in the peace talks and that full-scale bombing was to be resumed against North Vietnam. AMERICA quickly swung into action once again and the pace was hectic until the Christmas Cease-Fire. Christmas away from home is never good, but the men of AMERICA made the best of it with homemade decorations. Religious services were held and carolers were noted strolling through the passageways.

On December 28th AMERICA anchored in Hong Kong Harbor, where she remained until after the start of the New Year. We had spent Christmas at sea, but Hong Kong was a fitting place to remember auld lang syne.

STATISTICAL DATA

1972

Commanding Officer: CAPT Thomas B. RUSSELL, Jr., USN  
CAPT Burton H. SHEPHERD, USN

Executive Officer: CDR G. E. LE BLANC, Jr., USN

Homeport: Norfolk, Virginia

Mission: To support and operate aircraft to engage in attacks on targets afloat and ashore which threaten our control of the seas and to engage in sustained operations in support of other forces.

Next Senior Operational Command: 1 JAN - 15 MAY COMNAVAIRLANT  
16 MAY - 27 JUN COMSECONDFLEET  
27 JUN - 17 SEP COMSEVENTHFLT  
17 SEP - 31 DEC COMCARDIVSI

Nautical Miles Steamed: 67,522.7

Ship's Fuel (NSFO) Consumed Underway: 23,279,695 GALLONS

Ship's Fuel Consumed Not Underway: 2,668,606 GALLONS

Personnel Manning Complement as of 31 December 1972:

Aviators:	33
Other Officers:	98
Total Officers:	131
Enlisted:	2,495

Communications: Approximately 343,000 messages handled.

Number of Aircraft Launchings: 14,374

Number of Arrested Landings: 14,493

Carrier Landings:

DATE	NUMBER LANDING	PILOT	SQUADRON	ACFT
11 APR	83,000	LTJG F. S. STAARUP	VA-86	A7E
26 APR	84,000	LT R. N. TRACY	VF-74	F4J
09 MAY	85,000	LT C. SEEGER	VF-74	F4J
09 JUN	86,000	MAJOR T. J. LYMAN	VMFA-333	F4J
17 JUL	87,000	LT T. WEILAND	VA-82	A7C
12 AUG	88,000	LT J. H. YEAGER	VA-82	A7C
23 AUG	89,000	LTJG J. D. MCDUFF	VAW-124	E2B
09 SEP	90,000	LCDR, L. W. SMITH	VA-82	A7C
19 SEP	91,000	LCDR R. N. LUDLOW	VMFA-333	F4J
29 SEP	92,000	LCDR R. C. CROSS	VF-74	F4J
25 OCT	93,000	LT J. C. YEARICK	VA-35	KA6D
09 NOV	94,000	LCDR R. C. CROSS	VF-74	F4J
23 NOV	95,000	LT G. TABERT	VA-82	A7C
12 DEC	96,000	LT W. M. CASTLE	VAW-124	E2B

Aviation Fuel Consumed:

AVGAS: 23,164 gallons  
 JP-5: 20,673,040 gallons  
 Lub Oil 16,869  
 Mobile Gas: 40

Air Units Aboard:

Carrier Air Wing EIGHT Consisting of  
 VF-74, VMFA-333, VA-82, VA-86, VA-35  
 VAQ-132, RVAH-6, VAW-124  
 (10 APR - 31 DEC)

HC-2 DET 66  
 (27 MAR - 31 MAR)  
 (10 APR - 31 DEC)

HS-75  
 (15 MAY - 18 MAY)

HC-7 DET 110  
 (16 SEP - 7 OCT)  
 (24 OCT - 9 NOV)  
 (11 DEC - 25 DEC)