

USS FINCH (DER-328)
RPO San Francisco 96601

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ORNAV Report 5750-1

From: Commanding Officer, USS FINCH (DER-328)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)
Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)
Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet
Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet
Commander Destroyer Flotilla FIVE

Subj: 1968 Annual Command History of USS FINCH (DER-328)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A

- Encl:
- (1) 1968 Chronology of Highlights
 - (2) 1968 Basic Narrative
 - (3) Documentary Data Sheet
 - (4) Hong Kong Influenza Research Press Release
 - (5) Photograph of Commanding Officer, LCDR R. L. GRIMMELL, USN
 - (6) Biography of Commanding Officer
 - (7) Roster of USS FINCH Officers as of 31 December 1968
 - (8) Muster Roll of USS FINCH as of 31 December 1968
 - (9) Ship's Welcome Aboard Pamphlet
 - (10) (SC) Cruise Book of USS FINCH, REFLECTIONS

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (9) are forwarded comprising the 1968 Annual History of USS FINCH (DER-328). Enclosure (10) will be submitted after receipt from the publisher.


R. L. GRIMMELL

1968 Chronology of Highlights

- 1-3 January Underway enroute homeport, Guam, M. I. after six month deployment as a unit of SEVENTH Fleet.
- 3 January -
15 April In homeport for RAV, Upkeep, and underway for local operations.
- 13 January Began RAV at U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility, Guam, M. I.
- 18,19 January FINCH served as host ship for Taiwanese RCS TA TUNG (ATF-548).
- 17 February LT [REDACTED], USN, Engineer Officer won COMNAVMARIANAS light-weight boxing crown. In subsequent matches became All-Navy Runner-Up in his class.
- 26-28 February FINCH assisted CAPT R. R. LAW, USN, COMDESFLOR FIVE and CDR D. F. MILLIGAN, USN, COMCORTRON SEVEN and staffs in Administration and POM inspections of USS KHETCHMER (DER-329).
- 9 March FINCH held sea trials. RAV concluded.
- 13, 14 March Underway for local ASW exercises.
- 18-21 March Underway for Independent Ship Exercises.
- 25-29 March Underway for Independent Ship Exercises.
- 3 April FINCH notified of receipt of Green Operations Battle Efficiency "E" for period ending December 31, 1967.
- 14 April LCDR R. L. GRIMMELL, USN, Prospective Commanding Officer, reported aboard.
- 15-19 April Underway for Yokosuka, Japan.
- 22 April LCDR R. L. GRIMMELL, USN relieved as Commanding Officer, USS FINCH, relieving CDR M. A. SKUBINNA, USN. VADM W. F. BRINGLE, USN, COMSEVENTHFLT visited USS FINCH to attend ceremony. Began Refresher Training under FLETRAGRU WESTPAC. Underway for Training Battle Problem.
- 29 April -
3 May Underway for Refresher Training with instructors on board.
- 6-9 May Underway for Refresher Training drills, including AA gunnery exercises.
- 9 May Underway for ORI Battle Problem, completed with a grade of 90.45.
- 10-16 May Upkeep, Yokosuka.
- 11, 12 May Ship's parties, Club Alliance, Yokosuka.

16-20 May Underway for Guam, M. I.

22-24 May CAPT R. R. LAW, USN, COMDESFLOT FIVE, and CDR [REDACTED], USN, COMCOMTRON SEVEN conducted FINCH Administration and POM inspections with assistance from USS LOWE (DER-325).

27-29 May Underway for local ASW exercises.

29 May Moored alongside Thai Ship HTMS PRASAE (PF-2) at U. S. Naval Ship Repair Facility, Guam. Began Upkeep period.

17 June Underway for deployment as a unit of SEVENTH Fleet.

21 June Arrived Subic Bay, R. P.

22, 23 June Conducted gunnery exercises in vicinity of Subic Bay, R. P.

23 June Underway for Vietnam.

25 June Relieved USS FAIGOUT (DER-324) as CTE 115.2.2.2 in Market Time Area V.

27 June Entered Nha Trang, RVN for short briefing.

3, 4 July Conducted WGFs in vicinity of Hon Lao Island, RVN.

6 July Entered Cam Ranh Bay.

10 July Entered Cam Ranh Bay.

11 July Entered Cam Ranh Bay.

29 July Relieved by USS HAVERFIELD (DER-393). Underway for Hong Kong, B.C.C.

31 July Moored Bouy B-28 Hong Kong Harbor. Relieved USCGC CAMPBELL (WHEC-32) as SOPA ADMIN Hong Kong (CTU 70.2.0).

31 July -
13 August SOPA ADMIN Hong Kong (CTU 70.2.0).

2, 13 August Blood of FINCH crewmen drawn by personnel from NAMRU-2, Taipei for research on the then current Hong Kong Influenza Epidemic.

6, 10 August Ship tours conducted for 40 orphan school children.

13 August Relieved by USCGC BIBB (WHEC-31).

14 August Underway for Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

15 August Arrived Kaohsiung. Began assignment on Taiwan Patrol.

15 August - Taiwan Patrol duty with Kaohsiung inport periods .
16 September

3 September Departed Kaohsiung for evasion of typhoons Wendy and Agnes.

4-8 September Rendezvoused with USS KRETCHMER and conducted two-ship exercises while on storm evasion in the vicinity of Babuyan Islands off northern Luzon.

8 September Returned Kaohsiung. Resumed normal Taiwan patrol duties.

16-18 September Enroute Subic Bay.

18 September - Upkeep, Subic Bay, with USS MARKAB (AR-23).
1 October

26, 27 September Assisted CDR [REDACTED], USN, COMCORTRON FIVE in conducting Administrative Inspection on USS WILHOITE (DER-397).

1 October Enroute Vietnam.

3 October Relieved USCGC WINONA (WHEC-65) as CTU 115.1.2 in Market Time Area II.

3 October - Market Time Patrol.
19 October

5 October Entered Danang Harbor.

7-9 October Delivered NGSF support in conjunction with U.S. Army's Operation "Logan Field" on Cape Batangan, RVN.

19 October Relieved by USCGC OMASCO (WHEC-39). Enroute Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

22 October - Assigned Taiwan Patrol duties with inport periods in Kaohsiung and
23 November Keelung.

22 November FINCH visited by CAPT R. H. WATTEN, MC, USN, Commanding Officer, NAMRU-2 Taipei and presented awards for vital role in Hong Kong Influenza studies.

23-28 November Enroute Yokosuka, Japan.

28 November Moored alongside USS MARKAB (AR-23), Berth 6, U. S. Fleet Activities, Yokosuka for upkeep.

28 November - Upkeep, Yokosuka.
12 December

9, 10 December Ship's parties, Club Alliance, Yokosuka.

12 December Underway for Guam, M. I.

13 December 25th Anniversary of first commissioning.

16 December Arrived homeport, Guam, M. I. Deployment concluded.

17 December Underway for Pre-RAV sea trials. Off-loaded ammunition and fuel.

18-31 December Moored Berth L-1, U. S. Naval Ship Repair Facility, Guam.
Commenced RAV.

Basic Narrative

On 2 January 1968, USS FINCH (DER-328) out-chopped from the U. S. SEVENTH Fleet to the Cruiser-Destroyer Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet as she returned to homeport, Guam, M. I. from a six-month deployment. The following afternoon FINCH was in Guam. The ship plunged into her annual Restricted Availability at U. S. Naval Ship Repair Facility, Guam on 13 January.

While the focus of activities was material improvement of the ship, time was found for varied outside activities. 18 January FINCH welcomed the Republic of China Ship TA TUNG (ATF-54) to Guam. While Wardrooms exchanged greetings, the crews played softball. Softball figured prominently in organized leisure activities, followed by bowling. LT [REDACTED], USN, Engineer Officer, clinched the COMNAV-MARIANAS Lightweight Boxing Crown on 17 February. In subsequent weeks he went on to complete in the A.A.U. matches and take the All-Navy Runner-Up spot in his class.

FINCH completed her RAV with sea trials on 9 March. For the next month she concentrated on training and readiness by getting underway for local operations. During this period, she provided submarine target vessel services and received valuable ASW training in return from units of SUBRON 15. Easter Sunday, 14 April, FINCH greeted her prospective Commanding Officer, LCDR Robert L. GRIMMELL, USN. The following day, she departed for Yokosuka, Japan and annual Refresher Training with FLETRACHU WESTPAC.

The first day of REFTRA, 22 April, saw a lot of action. At 1000 under gray but dry skies CDR M. A. SKUBINNA, USN turned over command of FINCH to LCDR GRIMMELL. The fantail ceremony was held as the ship lay moored at Berth 9, U. S. Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan. Among notables in attendance was VADM W. F. BRINGLE, USN, COMSEVENTHFLT. Within three hours of assuming command, LCDR GRIMMELL had his new ship underway for the Training Battle Problem. The pace never let up for the next three weeks of training.

Enclosure (2)

Of the three weeks of REFTRA, FINCH spent the first inport, while a great percentage of the crew attended Firefighting, Gunnery, Communication, PMS/MDC, and other schools. The weekdays of the next two weeks were passed steaming in Sagami Wan near Yokosuka. Most underway time was spent in General Quarters drills and watch section drills which were administered by embarked FLETRAGRU instructors. 9 May FINCH conducted the Final Battle Problem and achieved a grade of "excellent" on her ORI. She completed REFTRA with an overall grade of "high good." Six more days passed in Yokosuka for Upkeep, and FINCH departed for home-port again on 16 May.

The tempo of ship life shifted upon return to Guam on 20 May. During the first week back, CAPT R. R. LAW, UEN, COMDESFLOT FIVE, CDR [REDACTED], USN, COMCORTRON SEVEN, staffs, and personnel from USS LOWE (DER-325) conducted Administration and Pre-deployment inspections on the ship. The post inspection period was spent making final preparations for deployment. FINCH got underway during this time for independent drills and calibration exercises. A portion of the period up to 17 June was spent moored alongside HTMS PRASAE (PF-2). The Thais and FINCH sailors enjoyed each other's company, while FINCH played the role of host to PRASAE.

0800, 17 June FINCH stood out of Apra Harbor, Guam enroute to Subic Bay, R. P. on the first leg of her deployment. She became a unit of SEVENTH Fleet on 19 June and reached Subic Bay two days later. After loading final stores and conducting several gunnery exercises, she made the short transit to Vietnam and relieved USS FAIGOUT (DER-324) as CTE 115.2.2.2 in Market Time Area V on 25 June.

FINCH's patrol period in Vietnam was relatively quiet except for one short visit to Nha Trang Harbor and three quick trips to Cam Ranh Bay. Daily routine consisted of tracking, inspecting, and boarding Vietnamese cargo junks. FGF boat crews lived aboard FINCH and alternated duty days, changing when the boats came to be refueled from the ship. The routine was broken about every three days for

underway replenishment. The only other interruption came on 3 and 4 July, when FINCH rendered Naval Gunfire Support on mainland slopes in the vicinity of Hon Lao Island, RVN. FINCH delivered her Fourth of July fireworks against thirteen suspected Viet Cong trails and assembly areas. She departed Area V when relieved by USS HAVERFIELD (DER-393) on 29 July.

By 31 July, FINCH had moored to Bouy B-28, Hong Kong Harbor, B.C.C. and relieved USCGC CAMPBELL (WHEC-32) as SOPA Admin Hong Kong (CTU 70.2.0). Hong Kong, the favorite port of WestPac, proved no disappointment in FINCH's two week stay inspite of the Hong Kong Influenza Epidemic. In hopes of researching this new disease, personnel from Naval Medical Research Unit TWO, Taipei, Taiwan drew blood from the entire crew on 2 and 13 August. As shown in enclosure (4), a Hong Kong Flu vaccine was developed from the virus collected solely from the blood of FINCHMEN.

While in Hong Kong, FINCH supplied permanent shore patrol, served as a message center for R&R ships, acted as liaison between American and British authorities, and coordinated special services desired by R&R ships. The FINCH crew, also enjoyed themselves on the good liberty. In cooperation with personnel at HMS TAMAR, the British Naval Station in Hong Kong, FINCH held open house for about 40 Chinese orphan children on 6 and 10 August.

In the afternoon of 13 August, USCGC BIBB (WHEC-31) relieved FINCH. Early the following morning FINCH embarked on the one day transit to Kaohsiung, Taiwan, for assignment to Taiwan Patrol Duty. For the next month, the ship operated out of Kaohsiung as a unit of TG 72.1, spending about 70% of her time on patrols in the Straits. FINCH returned to Kaohsiung on 2 September from patrol and moored in a nest with USS MARKAB (AR-23). At 1600, 3 September, however, all U.S. Navy units present sortied south to avoid typhoons Wendy and Agnes. The next morning USS KRETCHMER, which had been on patrol, rendezvoused with FINCH. The two DERs

proceeded to the lee of the Babuyan Islands just north of Luzon Island in the Philippines. Until the ships returned to Kaohsiung on 8 September, they put storm evasion to good use by conducting numerous dual ship exercises. The remainder of the patrol period passed quickly.

Five letters of commendation from the Commanding Officer were presented to outstanding FINCH sailors on 14 September in Kaohsiung.

From 16 to 18 September FINCH transitted to Subic Bay, R. P. for upkeep. Time in Subic was spent mostly at work. After the proposed ship's party was cancelled because of Typhoon Elaine, the only diversion was the arrival of USS NEW JERSEY (BB-62). On 26 September FINCH personnel assisted CDR [REDACTED], USN, COMCORTRON FIVE and staff in conducting an Admin Inspection on USS WILHOITE (DER-397). FINCH's stay in Subic ended in a rough transit to Vietnam on 1 October.

When FINCH arrived in Market Time Area II, she relieved USCGC WINONA (WHEC-65) as CTU 115.1.2. She entered Danang Harbor for a few hours of 5 October, and then settled into what seemed to be a routine patrol. Then early 7 October FINCH was called upon for gunfire support at Cape Batangen, RVN. During the daylight hours of three successive days FINCH lay to near the shore and delivered coordinated gunfire support against specific enemy targets in connection with the U.S. Army Americal Division's Operation "Logan Field." Direct fire from her 3"/50 caliber guns damaged or destroyed nearly forty bunkers, structures, and tunnels. The remaining ten days of patrol, until relieved by USCGC OMASCO (WHEC-39), were calm.

By 22 October, FINCH was back in Kaohsiung ready for more Taiwan Patrol. Twice FINCH visited Keelung (28 October - 5 November, 11-15 November). On patrol, the ship twice provided indirect convoy support to GRC convoys composed of Chinese DDs and ISTs. During one Kaohsiung inport period, FINCH personnel used Tsoying Naval Station's ASW attack training facilities. Much of this period's good relations with the Chinese Navy were due to FINCH's liaison officer, LCDR [REDACTED], CN.

At the end of her time on Taiwan Patrol, the ship's crew, Commanding Officer, and corpsman were honored by CAPT R. H. WATTEN, MC, USN, Commanding Officer, NAMRU-2, Taipei. CAPT WATTEN presented FINCH with plaques and certificates of appreciation for her part in research of the Hong Kong Flu (see enclosure (4) for details). During the ceremony, CAPT WATTEN inspected the crew and the Commanding Officer commended four men for outstanding contributions in the field of engineering. On this high note, FINCH concluded her Taiwan duty and left for Yokosuka, Japan the following day.

FINCH reached Yokosuka on Thanksgiving Day, 28 November and moored alongside USS MARKAB at U. S. Fleet Activities, Berth 6. The Yokosuka upkeep period had two beneficial effects. First, it gave a headstart on the upcoming restricted availability. Yokosuka also provided a last chance for the crew to blow off steam before returning to the rigors of an overhaul in Guam. This was the purpose of the gala ship's party held at the Club Alliance 9 and 10 December. Two days later, FINCH departed on the deployment's last transit--the return to Guam, M. I.

In a modest shipboard ceremony held during the rough transit, FINCH celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of her first commissioning on 13 December. Two days later, she departed SEVENTH Fleet and returned to the operational control of COMCRUDESAC. The ship ended her deployment on 16 December as she tied up in Apra Harbor at U. S. Naval Supply Depot, Guam.

17 December, FINCH got underway under her own power for the last time in 1968 for Pre-RAV sea trials. These ended with off-loading ammunition and fuel. She entered RAV at U. S. Naval Ship Repair Facility, Guam, M. I. on 18 December. FINCH ended 1968 preparing for her next deployment to the Western Pacific.

Documentary Data Sheet

1. Calendar year 1968 information:

Total fuel consumed (marine diesel and JP-5): 759,418 gallons

Underway Replenishments: 20

Days underway: 166

3"/50 caliber rounds expended:

Hostile Fire: 447

Training: 503

2. Deployment Data (17 June - 16 December):

Underway replenishments: 20

PCF/WPB/MSO supported: 54

NGFS Missions: 10

Ammunition expenditures:

3"/50 caliber: 455

50 caliber machine gun: 4308

30 caliber machine gun: 2210

Cruise duration: 182 days

Days underway: 112

Miles steamed: 25,396

Most miles steamed in one month: July - 7215

Fuel consumed (marine diesel and JP-5): 532,776 gallons

Cash disbursed to FINCH crew: \$253,202.09

Cash disbursed to personnel of other units during duty as SOPA ADMIN Hong Kong exceeded \$31,000.00

Food consumption:

Beef: 7,969 lbs

Lettuce: 3,445 lbs

Enclosure (3)

Food consumption: (Cont'd)

Bread: 4,224 lbs
Potatoes (fresh): 19,090 lbs
Ice Cream: 758 gallons
Coffee: 1,200 lbs

Postal Information:

Stamp sales: \$1,708.50
Money Orders: 492
Value of Money Orders sold: \$27,837.70
Mail dispatched: 7,212 lbs
Mail received: 11,210 lbs

Communications:

Messages transmitted: 907
Messages received: 2930

Medical:

Total sick call: 1259
Admission referrals: 9
Immunizations: 969

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PRESS RELEASE

RESEARCH ON USS FINCH LEADS TO NEW VACCINE

Kaohsiung, Taiwan - 22 November 1968

USS FINCH (DER-328) received official recognition of her role in medical research of last summer's Hong Kong influenza epidemic in ceremonies held on board Friday, November 22. On behalf of the ship's crew, the Commanding Officer, LCDR R. L. Grimmell, USN accepted an award from CAPT R. H. Watten, MC, USN, Commanding Officer of Naval Medical Research Unit TWO, Taipei.

NAMRU-2's Dr. W. D. Kundin and Mr. George Irving came aboard FINCH as she was Station Ship Hong Kong in the first half of August. With the aid of the ship's "Doc", HML [REDACTED], USN, they drew blood samples from approximately 125 of the 140 man crew on the 2nd and 13th of August. A third drawing was made on August 26th when the ship was in Kaohsiung. HML [REDACTED] made a final drawing during the week of 18 November. In addition numerous throat swabs were taken, and data was kept on the number of men who caught the disease.

With the help of the Army 406th Medical-General Laboratory and the U.S. Public Health Service, it was discovered that the Hong Kong influenza was a variant of the Asian Flu unaffected by present vaccines. The information gathered solely from the FINCH was excellent for research because the ship, in the words of Dr. Kundin, "provided the perfect controlled experiment."

"The most significant thing," stated CAPT Watten "is that for the first time we were able to observe and study the outbreak of an influenza on a Naval vessel before the disease actually got started. This has provided valuable and unique information." As a result, the virus recovered from the men of the FINCH, 70% of whom caught the flu to some degree, has been made into a new vaccine which will be available on December 1st; first to the armed forces, and then to the general

Enclosure (4)

population. Availability of this vaccine will benefit all of South East Asia and the rest of the world if the disease spreads during the winter as is expected. Appreciation for the open cooperation of all FINCH crew members was expressed by NAMRU-2 personnel. In recognition for outstanding assistance, HML [REDACTED] and LCDR Grinnell were given Certificates of Appreciation by CAPT Watten. Prior to the ceremony, CAPT Watten reviewed the crew at a personnel inspection. The 17,400 ton Radar Picket Escort USS FINCH is homeported in Guam, Mariana Islands and is presently deployed as a unit of the U. S. SEVENTH Fleet.