

U.S.S. WHETSTONE (LSD-27)
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

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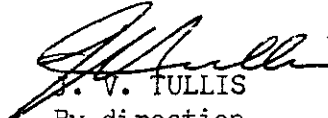
From: Commanding Officer
To: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Command History for 1967; submission of

Ref: (a) OP-09B91 ltr Ser 3724P09B9 of 8 AUG 68
(b) OPNAVINST 5750.12

Encl: (1) Command History for 1967

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b), enclosure (1) is submitted.


J. V. TULLIS
By direction

HISTORY OF USS WHETSTONE. (LSD-27)

USS WHETSTONE (LSD-27) was launched at the U.S. Naval Shipyard, Boston, Massachusetts, on 18 July 1945 and commissioned 12 February 1946. The present Commanding Officer is Commander William H. WEBB, who relieved Commander Raymond R. SEABAUGH at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on 27 September 1966. WHETSTONE carries a crew of approximately 230 enlisted men and 15 officers.

LSD type ships are named after famed historical sites in the United States. WHETSTONE bears the name of Whetstone Point, Maryland, where Fort McHenry was the site of the Battle for Baltimore in 1814 during the war of 1812. It was during this battle that Francis Scott Key composed the lyrics of our National Anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner."

The mission of an LSD (Landing Ship Dock) is to transport combat loaded amphibious craft and vehicles and to launch them in support of amphibious operations. When the combat load is offloaded, the "Well Deck", which is 394 feet long and 42 feet wide, becomes available for docking small boats and craft which may have been damaged in making the amphibious assault. In addition, the flight deck may be used for launching or recovering helicopters.

WHETSTONE was commissioned too late to participate in World War II but she did assist the Seventh Fleet in occupational duties, and for this was awarded the Occupational Service Medal and the China Service Medal. WHETSTONE was a victim of the reduction in military strength in 1948, and was decommissioned and placed in the Reserve Fleet at San Diego on 20 October 1948. With the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, WHETSTONE was removed from the Reserve Fleet and returned to active duty in October 1950. During the Korean Conflict, WHETSTONE proved her worth and received the Korean Service Medal and United Nations Service Medal for her services. In July 1951 WHETSTONE won the distinction of being the first Navy ship to salvage a downed Russian

MIG aircraft from Korean waters, thus providing valuable technical information to the United Nations Force. In 1953 WHETSTONE effected the rescue of nine Japanese fisherman for an overturned fishing boat during heavy weather.

In 1954 WHETSTONE was employed in the evacuation of civilian men, women and children from North and Central Vietnam. For this service WHETSTONE was awarded the Vietnam Ribbon of Friendship (Vietnam Presidential Unit Citation) in recognition of the humanitarian assistance rendered.

Since 1954 WHETSTONE has served regular tours with the SEVENTH Fleet and has participated in numerous amphibious operations maintaining herself in a high state of readiness. In April 1961, WHETSTONE rescued two San Diego businessmen from their capsized sailboat off Point Loma. In July 1961, WHETSTONE went to the assistance of the burning merchant ship SS STEEL TRAVELER in Inchon, Korea, and through the efforts of her Rescue and Assistance Team saved the damaged merchantman.

In February 1961 WHETSTONE was deployed to Christmas Island for approximately one month to participate in Joint Task Force EIGHT operations. Upon completion of this deployment and interim overhaul the ship took part in refresher training at San Diego, California, and as a result was the first ship awarded the COMPHIBTRAPAC Excellence Award for outstanding achievement while undergoing refresher training. From October to December 1962, WHETSTONE was deployed to the Caribbean area as a unit of both Task Force 128 and Task Force 53 during the Cuban Crisis. WHETSTONE was then deployed in December to serve a regular tour in WESTPAC.

WHETSTONE was on her regular WESTPAC deployment when the Tonkin Gulf incident in August 1964 ushered in a new phase of the conflict in Vietnam. From 7 August to 2 October, a period of 56 consecutive days, WHETSTONE steamed as part of Task Force 76 in the South China Sea, thereby earning the

Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. As the Vietnam build-up continued through 1965, WHETSTONE was called upon to help transport troops and equipment across the Pacific. In March 1965 she joined forces with Amphibious Squadron FIVE in lifting elements of the Third Marine Battalion to Okinawa. The members of the crew who weren't aboard to earn the Expeditionary Medal in 1964 were awarded the Vietnam Service Medal when WHETSTONE landed Marines at DaNang in July 1965 on her second deployment of that year. Between the two 1965 deployments WHETSTONE's Engineering Department earned the "Red E", Engineering Excellence Award.

During her 1966 WESTPAC deployment, maximum use was made of WHETSTONE's unique drydocking capabilities. In a conflict in which ship-to-shore movement plays such a vital part and sea logistic support is the sustaining factor, an LSD can take her boat repair capabilities to wherever they are needed. In April and May of 1966 WHETSTONE spent six weeks as boat haven at DaNang providing needed repair service for boats of Naval Support Activities DaNang. On 3 June WHETSTONE arrived for a two month stay at Qui Nhon where she joined forces with the U.S. Army's 394th Transportation Battalion, of the Qui Nhon Support Command, to provide repair and upkeep for the many Army landing craft at work there. WHETSTONE returned to San Diego on 6 October 1966 after a 238 day deployment.

Following an in port period at San Diego after her 1966 WESTPAC deployment, WHETSTONE spent four and a half months in Seattle, Washington undergoing an extensive yard overhaul. Major changes were made to her communications facilities while her engineering plant received extensive repairs. Upon returning to San Diego on 26 May 1967, WHETSTONE was prepared for a summer of hard training in preparation for a fall WESTPAC deployment.

After three weeks of refresher training however, WHEATSTONE was again back in the yards for two more months at Long Beach, California for major repairs to her Engineering plant. Following her return to San Diego on 2 September 1967 WHEATSTONE completed the remainder of her refresher and amphibious training and then prepared in port for her WESTPAC deployment date on 31 October 1967.

Arriving in WESTPAC in early December, WHEATSTONE was greeted by her first task of delivering 11 Marine helicopters from Okinawa to DaNang. On Christmas Day WHEATSTONE joined Task Group 76.5, Amphibious Ready Group Bravo, and embarked units of the Marine Special Landing Force composed of the Third Battalion, First Regiment. Notable events in WHEATSTONE's assignment with Ready Group Bravo were her participation in two Amphibious operations, FORTRESS RIDGE and BADGER CATCH, and the making of two hazardous supply runs to Hue and Dong Ha utilizing LCM's embarked in her Well Deck. On 16 March 1968 WHEATSTONE was relieved by the USS THOMASTON (LSD-28) as a unit of the Amphibious Ready Group and continued to support the Vietnam operations by lifting vital war material from support bases to various incountry areas.