

USS WILHOITE (DER-397)

FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO 96601

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From: Commanding Officer, USS WILHOITE (DER-397)

To: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Command History for 1967; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12 of 8 November 1966

Encl: (1) USS WILHOITE (DER-397) Command History for 1967
(Report Symbol: OPNAV Report 5750-1)

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is hereby submitted.


D. H. GRIFFIN

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USS WILHOITE (DER-397) Command History For 1967

I. Chronology of Highlights:

10 February-28 March	Restricted Availability in Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard
1-12 May	Refresher Training
29 May	Commenced WESTPAC deployment
19 June	Commenced Market Time Patrol off the coast of South Vietnam
11 July	Commenced surveillance of suspicious trawler suspected of infiltration attempt
15 July	Participated in the capture of North Vietnamese re-supply trawler attempting infiltration into South Vietnam
29 July-11 August	Station Ship Hong Kong-CTU 70.2.0
1-28 September	Taiwan Patrol-CTG 72.1
1-23 October	Market Time Patrol
27 October-17 November	Station Ship Hong Kong-CTU 70.2.0
28 November-26 December	Taiwan Patrol-CTG 72.1
31 December	Change of Command

II. Narrative

A. Command Organization

1. Commanding Officers: 1 January-30 December CDR E. W. HAYS
31 December-present LCDR D. H. GRIFFIN
2. Homeport : Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
3. Mission : To carry out ocean surveillance; to detect air, surface, and submarine activity; to counter sea infiltration efforts; and to operate offensively against submarines.
4. Complement on 31 December: Officers - 13
Enlisted - 147

B. Operations & Activities

Having completed her fifth Market Time patrol of 1966, WILHOITE departed the combat zone on 1 January 1967 enroute to Yokosuka, Japan for a three day stopover before the return voyage to her homeport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Departing Yokosuka on 10 January, in company with the USS NEWELL (DER-322), WILHOITE set a course for Hawaii. Commanding Officer USS NEWELL was OTC.

On 19 January WILHOITE arrived back in homeport, completing a seven and one half month deployment with the U.S. SEVENTH Fleet.

On 29 January, having offloaded ammunition and fuel, WILHOITE commenced a tender upkeep period alongside the USS FRONTIER (AD-25) at Ford Island.

On 10 February WILHOITE completed her tender availability and moved to the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard to begin a six week restricted availability.

WILHOITE left the shipyard on 28 March, having successfully completed engineering and weapons sea trials.

The period from 29 March-30 April was spent preparing for Refresher Training and the forthcoming deployment. WILHOITE loaded ammunition, underwent a Preparation for Overseas Movement (POM) inspection and Training Readiness Evaluation, spent twelve days alongside the USS FRONTIER and operated at sea in the Pearl Harbor op-areas, conducting numerous drills and exercises. Virtually the only respite from work during this time was a weekend inport at Kahului, Maui (21-23 April).

WILHOITE underwent Refresher Training 1-12 May with observers from Fleet Training Group Pearl Harbor. Upon completion of REFTRA the ship commenced final preparations for deployment. Stores and additional ammunition were loaded and, on 22 May, the SPS-8 radar antenna was permanently

referred. Sheerly re in WILHOITE's role of a... 01194.

WILHOITE departed her home port on 29 May 1967 for an extended deployment to the Western Pacific.

Following an uneventful two week westward voyage, broken only by an eight hour fuel stop in Guam, WILHOITE arrived in Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines, for four days of final preparation for her first patrol in the combat zone.

WILHOITE departed Subic Bay on 17 June and set a course for Vietnam, arriving about two days later off the South Vietnamese Coast near Chu Lai, where she relieved the USS KRETCHMER and assumed duties as a unit of operation Market Time. Her mission: to prevent the infiltration of ammunition and supplies to the Viet Cong by sea.

The days went quickly on Market Time, as the crew kept busy with watches, replenishment-at-sea evolutions, and rendezvous with other Market Time units. WILHOITE acted as "Mother Ship" for two Navy swift boats, berthing extra crews on board and supplying them with fuel, food, and water.

At approximately 2000 on 11 July a Market Time patrol aircraft detected a darkened steel hull trawler fifty-five miles from the South Vietnamese coast, on a westerly heading which would soon put it in WILHOITE'S patrol area. The aircraft notified WILHOITE by radio and WILHOITE commenced closing the trawler for investigation. Upon gaining radar contact with the trawler WILHOITE commenced covert surveillance, remaining out of visual range throughout the night. The next morning WILHOITE closed the trawler for identification purposes, then opened out beyond visual range again.

By this time the trawler had changed course and was headed away from the coast. WILHOITE maintained surveillance for three days, until finally the trawler turned and again headed for the coast. When the trawler entered the Market Time area WILHOITE was joined by three other Market Time units under the overall command of Commander C. R. STEPHAN, USN, who embarked aboard

WILHOITE. WILHOITE and the other units—USS GALLUP (PGM 85), USCGC POINT ORIENT (WPB 82319) and PCF 79—intercepted the trawler as it reached a point five miles from the beach. Ignoring calls to surrender broadcast by a psychological warfare unit embarked in POINT ORIENT, the trawler was taken under fire and ran aground in flames on a sandbar at the mouth of the River De Sa Ky in Quang Ngai Province. Intermittent fire was directed at the trawler throughout the night and in the morning a boarding party went aboard to assess damage and inspect the trawler's cargo. It's holds were jammed with guns, ammunition and explosives—the largest arms cache captured in the Vietnam War. As a result of this action the following decorations were awarded WILHOITE personnel:

LCDR E. W. HAYS	Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Palm
LT W. H. TREDICK	Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Gold Star
LT J. P. REA	Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Gold Star
LTJG Z. F. GRAHAM	Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Gold Star
LTJG P. B. MCKALLAGAT	Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Gold Star
ENS R. B. ADAMS	Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Gold Star
F. E. PETTIT, GMG2	Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Copper Star
J. J. KNIGHT, GMG3	Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Copper Star
R. L. NAIL, FTG3	Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Copper Star

WILHOITE was relieved on 26 July and proceeded to the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong for two weeks duty as Station Ship. In this new assignment WILHOITE carried out all the administrative duties of a small naval station, making berthing arrangements with the Royal Navy for U.S. Navy ships and supplying mail, movies, and numerous other services to units of the SEVENTH Fleet visiting this exotic port for R & R.

On 12 August WILHOITE was underway for Sasebo, Japan, where she was to undergo a thirteen day upkeep period. WILHOITE accomplished a great deal of work in Sasebo, receiving repair assistance from the Ship Repair Department of the local shipyard as well as the repair ship USS KLONDIKE. The industriousness and enthusiasm of the Japanese shipyard workers greatly impressed everyone. They swarmed over the ship and accomplished a number of important jobs.

The twenty-ninth of August found WILHOITE en route to Kaohsiung, Taiwan to assume duties on the Taiwan Patrol Force.....a new assignment for the ship. She operated out of Kaohsiung and Keelung.....a busy port city on the northern coast of Taiwan.....for 29 days, spending about half the time in port and the remainder patrolling the Taiwan Straits off the coast of Communist China.

While in Taiwan WILHOITE had the valuable experience of working with the Nationalist Chinese Navy on anti-submarine warfare exercises. She participated in a joint training session at Tsoying, a large Chinese naval base outside Kaohsiung, then joined two Chinese destroyer types for exercises at sea with the U.S. submarine CHARR (AGSS-328).

On 29 September WILHOITE departed Taiwan for Vietnam and another Market Time patrol. She spent an uneventful month patrolling the South Vietnamese coast in the vicinity of Qui Nhon. The only thing notable about the patrol was the weather, which was miserable. Most of the time WILHOITE was the only Market Time unit able to remain at sea along a lengthy strip of coastline, as the wind and waves prevented the swift boats from leaving port. The ship replenished several times in heavy weather which created extremely hazardous conditions for the men working on deck, but a combination of luck and teamwork enabled her to complete all these evolutions successfully.

Upon relief by the USS CAMP (DER-251) on 24 October WILHOITE proceeded to Hong Kong for another tour as Station Ship. She had a busy three weeks attending to the needs of such giant, prestigious ships as the attack carrier USS CORAL SEA (CVA-43) and the heavy cruiser USS NEWPORT NEWS (CA-148).

Getting underway again from Hong Kong on the morning of 18 November WILHOITE headed for Kaohsiung, where she was to have an eight day tender availability with the USS KLONDIKE (AR-22). Upon completion of this upkeep period WILHOITE again joined the Taiwan Patrol Force for a month of operations

in the Taiwan Strait

WILHOITE spent Christmas in Kaohsiung then sailed for Pearl Harbor, via Guam, on 27 December. On 31 December WILHOITE stopped in Apra Harbor, Guam to refuel and take on supplies. During this interlude a Change-of-Command Ceremony was held on the fantail and Commander HAYS was relieved by Lieutenant Commander D. H. GRIFFIN, USN.

LCDR GRIFFIN came to WILHOITE from the USS STRONG (DD-758), where he served as Executive Officer. CDR HAYS departed for a tour as a student at the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia.

C. Special Topics

1. Operational Statistics:

Days Underway.....	156
Days Deployed.....	217
Number of Underway Replenishments.....	27
Nautical Miles Traveled.....	32,987
Fuel Consumed.....	772,302 Gallons
Ammunition Expended (Operational).....	76 [3"]
Ammunition Expended (Training).....	727 [3"]
	10,657 [Small Arms]

2. Material Performance - No major problems were encountered in material performance and WILHOITE was able to meet all commitments.

3. Modifications - On 22 May the SPS-8 radar antenna was permanently removed from WILHOITE under the authority granted by the Chief of Naval Operations in his message 121929Z APR 67.

4. Communications - See Annex F

5. Casualties of men and equipment - No significant personnel or equipment casualties were sustained.

6. Personnel

(a) WILHOITE's manning level was adequate for the successful accomplishment of all assigned tasks.

(b) During the year there were 9 first term re-enlistments and 8 career re-enlistments on board.

7. Community Relations Activities

a. At the conclusion of WILHOITE's restricted availability in the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard in March an open house was held for the shipyard workers and their families.

b. During two assignments as Station Ship Hong Kong sixty-eight blood donations were given to the British Red Cross by WILHOITE personnel.

c. In Hong Kong a party was given aboard WILHOITE for thirty Chinese children.

d. While assigned to Market Time in October eleven WILHOITE crewmen participated in the clean-up and sanitization of a civilian hospital in Qui Nhon, South Vietnam.

8. Awards, commendations and congratulatory messages received_____

See Annex D

III. Lessons Learned, Conclusions, or Recommendations - None

IV. Documentary Annexes

A. Photograph of captured North Vietnamese re-supply trawler.

B. Cruise Book - WILHOITE's 1967 cruise book has not yet been published; a copy will be forwarded when the books are received.

C. Rosters of crew and officers.

D. Congratulatory messages.

E. Public affairs press releases.

F. Communications report.

G. WILHOITE "Familygram"