

U.S.S. VESUVIUS (AE-15)  
FPO, San Francisco, 96601

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From: Commanding Officer, USS VESUVIUS (AE-15)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09B9) ←

Subj: Command History; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12  
(b) CINCPACFLTINST 5750.2

Encl: (1) Chronological History of USS VESUVIUS (AE-15) 1966  
(2) Narrative History of USS VESUVIUS (AE-15) for period 1 January to  
31 December 1966 with attachments

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b) enclosures (1) and (2) are forwarded herewith.

  
R. K. KARCHER  
By direction

Copy to:  
CINCPACFLT

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Enclosure 1

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF  
U.S.S. VESUVIUS (AE-15)  
1966

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- 1 JAN 1966 IN HOMEPORT CONCORD, CALIFORNIA.
- 3 JAN 1966 ENROUTE PUGET SOUND NAVAL SHIPYARD, BREMERTON, WASHINGTON.
- 6 JAN 1966 ARRIVE PUGET SOUND NAVAL SHIPYARD.
- 19 FEB 1966 DEPART PUGET SOUND NAVAL SHIPYARD FOR CONCORD.
- 21 FEB 1966 ARRIVE CONCORD. COMMENCE LOADOUT.
- 5 MAR 1966 ENROUTE SAN DIEGO FOR UNDERWAY TRAINING.
- 7 MAR 1966 ARRIVE SAN DIEGO.
- 19 MAR 1966 REPLENISH USS CONSTELLATION WITH 614 TONS OF AMMUNITION.
- 24 MAR 1966 COMPLETE RFT SATISFACTORILY. (ORI GRADE 76.3) ENROUTE CONCORD,  
CALIFORNIA TO OFFLOAD REMAINING AMMUNITION.
- 26 MAR 1966 ARRIVE CONCORD. COMMENCE OFFLOAD FOR EMERGENCY DRY DOCKING.
- 1 APR 1966 ARRIVE BETHLEHEM STEEL FOR REPAIR OF 26" SPLIT SEAM IN HULL. RECEIVED  
NTPI/NWSI INSPECTION.
- 2 APR 1966 ENTER DRYDOCK.
- 4 APR 1966 INSURV.
- 10 APR 1966 LEAVE DRYDOCK.
- 12 APR 1966 DEPART BETHLEHEM STEEL FOR NAS ALAMEDA FOR TAV.  
ARRIVE NAS ALAMEDA SAME DAY.
- 14 APR 1966 PRE-DEPLOYMENT INSPECTION.
- 23 APR 1966 DEPART NAS ALAMEDA. ARRIVE CONCORD, CALIFORNIA FOR PRE-DEPLOYMENT LOADOUT.
- 1 MAY 1966 PRE-DEPLOYMENT REINSPECTION.
- 14 MAY 1966 DEPARTED U.S. NAVAL WEAPONS STATION, CONCORD, CALIFORNIA FOR WESTERN  
PACIFIC IN GROUP SAIL WITH U.S.S. GRAFFIAS (AF-29) AND LATER JOINED BY  
U.S.S. TOLOVANA (AO-64)
- 27 MAY 1966 CHANGED TO OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF COMSEVENTHFLT
- 4 JUNE 1966 ARRIVED SUBIC BAY, REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES FOR FINAL LOADOUT.
- 13 JUN 1966 COMMENCED OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA.

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27 NOV 1966 DEPARTED SUBIG BAY FOR CONUS.  
4 DEC 1966 CHANGED TO OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF COMFIRSTFLT  
10 DEC 1966 ARRIVED PEARL HARBOR.  
12 DEC 1966 DEPARTED PEARL HARBOR WITH 9,700,000 DOLLARS IN SPECIAL CURRENCY LIFT.  
19 DEC 1966 ARRIVED CONUS.

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NARRATIVE HISTORY OF USS VESUVIUS (AE-15,  
FOR PERIOD 1 JANUARY 1966-31 DECEMBER 1966

The USS VESUVIUS (AE-15), commanded by Captain Michael Stephen ALEXATOS, USN, began the new year in its home port of Concord, California. On 3 January lines were cast off and the VESUVIUS was underway for the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington to commence a six week restricted availability. During the restricted availability many needed repairs were accomplished. This was the first time in the yard for this AE since 1962. The interim period included 3 deployments to the Western Pacific.

Upon completion of the restricted availability period VESUVIUS returned to her home port on 21 February and immediately commenced loadout in preparation for interim refresher training in San Diego. A high-paced training program was implemented and many schools were utilized. On 5 March VESUVIUS reported for duty to the Commander, Fleet Training Group, San Diego for refresher training. The first week was spent in receiving a training readiness evaluation upon completion of which VESUVIUS was found ready to commence underway training. During this first week, however, divers were sent down to inspect the hull and found a 26" split in a seam beneath the water line. This discovery required drydocking for repairs upon completion of refresher training and necessitated offloading as much ammunition as possible during underway training to prepare for the drydocking period. Thus, as the VESUVIUS commenced the underway phase of her training, she was also engaged in a program to offload her ammunition by means of underway replenishment (UNREP); and, while the crews of other ships assigned to COMFLETRAGRU were enjoying their weekends in port, VESUVIUS was busily engaged in UNREPS completing a total of 10 replenishments in six days. While this did not enhance the combat readiness phase of underway training, it certainly assisted the ship to prepare for future operations in support of forces near Vietnam. Messages were sent to other ships to help relieve the VESUVIUS of her ammunition and units of CRUDESPAC and AIRPAC responded in fine fashion. From 19-24 March the VESUVIUS

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replenished over 1200 short tons of ammunition including an UNREP of 614.14 short tons to the USS CONSTELLATION (CVA-64) on 19 March which is believed to be an all-time high for a single replenishment with no VERTREP involved. In spite of this additional load during the short training period, VESUVIUS successfully completed refresher training on 24 March and proceeded to her home port to offload the remainder of her ammunition. Once accomplished, arrangements were made to place the VESUVIUS in drydock at the Bethlehem Steel Shipyard, San Francisco, California. The split seam in the hull was repaired in 10 days and much other work was also completed. During the drydocking VESUVIUS received various inspections including one by the Sub-board of Inspection and Survey, San Francisco, a Nuclear Weapons Technical Proficiency Inspection, a Nuclear Weapons Safety Inspection, and a Pre-deployment Inspection. Because of certain conditions existing aboard ship, the VESUVIUS was found by Commander Service Squadron SEVEN to be in an unsatisfactory condition for deployment, and a subsequent investigation was conducted by COMSERVRON SEVEN. A period of tender availability was assigned to the VESUVIUS and a re-inspection conducted three weeks later found a marked improvement and sufficient grounds for the VESUVIUS to deploy on time. The results of the investigation showed that the VESUVIUS, (last overhauled in 1962), had been improperly maintained. Only extremely hard effort by ship's force enabled the VESUVIUS to ready herself for the next Western Pacific deployment.

On 11 April the VESUVIUS left drydock and proceeded to the U.S. Naval Air Station, Alameda, California for the Tender Availability period mentioned above. By 23 April the VESUVIUS returned to her homeport to commence preparations for a re-inspection of deployment readiness, which was conducted on 1 May, and to loadout for deployment.

On 14 May the VESUVIUS set sail for the Western Pacific. (To commence her second deployment since December 1965, when she returned from 10 months in the Western Pacific.) Although slated to be a six month deployment, an extension made it a total of seven months and the VESUVIUS returned to the continental United States on 19 December 1966. During the transit to the Western Pacific, the VESUVIUS sailed in

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company with the USS GRAFFIAS (AF-29) and the USS TOLOVANA (AO-64). Commanding Officer, USS VESUVIUS was designated as CTU 13.8.1 (Westward Transit Group) and, after the change of operational control to COMSEVENTHFLT on 27 May, as CTG 73.2 (Movement Group), for the duration of the transit. An intensive training program was envisioned and carried out in accordance with the operation order written for the transit, a copy of which is included as an attachment to this history. The major function of the replenishment ship operation, that is, alongside replenishment, was the focal point of training attention. A total of 78 approaches were made within the task organization enroute and alongside winch operation was also a point of heavy concentration. In addition many communication and CIC drills were held among the three ships and many intra-ship drills were also conducted by all ships. A copy of the transit report is attached hereto.

VESUVIUS arrived at the U.S. Naval Magazine, Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines on 4 June 1966 and remained in port until 13 June when she proceeded on her first mission to the South China Sea in support of U.S. Naval Forces fighting off the coast of Vietnam. During the period 13 June 1966 to 25 November 1966 the VESUVIUS had a total of 6 operational periods which, exclusive of transit times, averaged 15 days each. A complete report of the deployment is included as VESUVIUS letter serial 046 of 25 November 1966. Notable moments of the cruise include the development of the POTTER-PERKINS light weight high line rig for light weight freight transfers at sea, the development of the VESUVIUS red light replenishment-at-night system and the VESUVIUS white light night replenishment lighting system, the staff study on the AE scheduling problems all of which are included as attachments to this history. Other notable events include the assistance of the VESUVIUS in shipping \$9,729,500 from Pearl Harbor to the United States. The VESUVIUS claims a record in the number of gallons of ice cream transferred from a service force ship to promote morale. USS CHEVALIER (DD-705) message 131100Z October 1966 illustrated the effectiveness of this procedure as well as the 201725Z October 1966 message from the same originator. The USS PLUCK's 210600Z July 1966 also is illustrative of the

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service provided by the VESUVIUS. On 6 July VESUVIUS was asked to assist the USS HALEAKALA (AE-25) by providing a 33' utility boat for the HALEAKALA to utilize during its next liberty port. This boat was sent to the newer AE. HALEAKALA's 062251Z July refers.

The VESUVIUS was originally scheduled to visit Bangkok, Thailand at the end of the first trip "on the line", but was cancelled out due to port services being unavailable. When a liberty port was rescheduled it was Hong Kong where the officers and men of this replenishment ship enjoyed seven days of shopping, recreation and rest.

VESUVIUS departed the Western Pacific for the United States on 27 November 1966. After a 2 day stop-over at Pearl Harbor where the ship received a brief visit by COMSERWPAC, the VESUVIUS proceeded to CONUS where it arrived at berth 34, U.S. Naval Weapons Station Annex, Mare Island, California. On 30 December the VESUVIUS shifted berths to berth 13, San Francisco Bay Naval Shipyard, Mare Island in preparation for a forthcoming restricted availability and yard overhaul.

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