

U.S.S. BEXAR (APA-237)
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

APA237:HML:za
5700
Ser 61

12 FEB 1967

OPNAV REPORT 5750-1

From: Commanding Officer, USS BEXAR (APA237)
To: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Command History, 1 January 1966 to 1 January 1967

I. CHRONOLOGY OF OUTSTANDING EVENTS:

A. Deployments: 6 January 1966 departed San Diego for special deployment-destination, WESTPAC.

1. USS BEXAR (APA237) loaded ammunition at Seal Beach then proceeded to Long Beach to embark 2nd Battalion 5th Marine Regiment and assorted cargo and vehicles. Enroute to it's appointed destination the ship made stops in Pearl Harbor, Okinawa, and Sasebo. Arriving at it's destination in DaNang, it proceeded to debark troops and cargo on 18 February 1966. On 12 March 1966 the ship departed DaNang, stopping in Yokosuka and Pearl Harbor, enroute to U.S. Naval Station, San Diego, California. The ship arrived in San Diego on 9 April 1966.

2. From 9 May 1966 to 20 May 1966, USS BEXAR was engaged in amphibious refresher training in the San Diego area.

3. From 31 May 1966 to 13 June 1966, USS BEXAR was engaged in regular shipboard refresher training in the San Diego area.

4. On 27 July 1966, USS BEXAR (APA237) departed San Diego with embarked troops, the 2nd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment and assorted cargo and vehicles, stopping in Pearl Harbor before unloading 50% of embarked troops and cargo in Okinawa. On the twenty-third of August, USS BEXAR arrived in DaNang and off-loaded the remaining troops and cargo.

5. On 28 August 1966, USS BEXAR was engaged in an operation at Tuy Hoa, embarking ROK Marines and equipment and transporting them to Chu Lai for debarkation on 31 August 1966.

6. On 11 September 1966, the BEXAR relieved the USS RENVILLE (APA227) as station ship and CTU 76.0.7. On 17 December 1966, BEXAR departed DaNang, enroute to Subic Bay for upkeep and preservation.

7. On 31 December 1966, BEXAR loaded the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment in Okinawa and conducted Amphibious Landing Exercises with USS POINT DEFIANCE (LSD31) and USS UNION (AKA106).

B. Community Relations Projects:

1. During the period as station ship in DaNang, the officers and men of the BEXAR participated in a people-to-people program by constructing a home, and giving technical and personal assistance to the workers at the DaNang Civilian Hospital.

2. In December, the USS BEXAR was honored by the citizens of San Antonio and Bexar County Texas by exchanging a Lone Star Flag for an American Flag flown by the BEXAR in Vietnam.

II. BASIC NARRATIVE

A. Command Organization and Relations:

1. Commanding Officers of the USS BEXAR (APA237) during the year were Captain E. J. BOUDINOT, USN, from 1 January 1966 through 1 September 1966; and Captain H. M. LAMB, USN, from 1 September 1966 through 1 January 1967.

2. Location of home port of USS BEXAR (APA237) is U.S. Naval Base, San Diego, California.

3. The mission and function of this command is to transport combat troops and their equipment to an objective area and land them on a beach by the use of assault boats.

4. The year-end composition of this command consists of 24 officers and 304 enlisted personnel.

B. Operations:

1. On 1 January 1966, the USS BEXAR was stationed at the Naval Base in San Diego preparing for a special WESTPAC deployment. On the sixth of January, the BEXAR departed San Diego, enroute to Vietnam, stopping in Seal Beach to load ammunition and again in Long Beach to embark the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment on the eight of January. The BEXAR loaded 48 officers and 1,350 enlisted personnel, along with vehicles, ammunition, food, and other operational equipment. The amount of cargo was so great that a portion of it had to be deck-loaded. On the tenth the BEXAR departed Long Beach enroute to Okinawa via Pearl Harbor. The USS MATTHEW (AKA96) and the USS BELLE GROVE (LSD2) accompanied the BEXAR and together they arrived in Pearl Harbor on the eighteenth for a two day lay-over. Upon arrival in Okinawa, on the third of February, the BEXAR unloaded her troops and cargo and reloaded other material for DaNang and the III MAF. On the fourth of February, the BEXAR left Okinawa enroute to Sasebo for a five day period of up-keep and liberty. The BEXAR departed Sasebo for DaNang on the twelfth of February, arriving there on the eighteenth. At this time she relieved the USS MAGOFFIN (APA199) as station ship and as CTU 76.0.7. The BEXAR also assumed SOPA, and after discharging her troops and cargo, loaded 500 NSA personnel for berthing and messing. On 12 March 1966, the BEXAR was relieved as station ship and proceeded to Yokosuka for liberty and up-keep. The BEXAR departed Yokosuka on the twenty-fourth of March, stopping at Pearl Harbor before arriving in San Diego on the ninth of April 1966, for the conclusion of this tour.

2. The period from 10 April 1966 through 8 May 1966 was one of leave and up-keep in San Diego. On the ninth of May, the USS BEXAR began the first of two, two week, Refresher Training programs. The first commenced on the ninth and continued through the twentieth of May. This first training program consisted of Amphibious Refresher Training. The second consisted of regular shipboard Refresher Training and took place from 31 May through 13 June 1966. From that date, until the tenth of July, the BEXAR was in a pre-deployment status. On 11 July, the BEXAR departed for Seal Beach to load ammunition, returning to San Diego on the twelfth. The period from 13 July through 26 July was spent making final preparations for an extended WESTPAC deployment.

3. On 27 July, the USS BEXAR (APA237), along with the USS HENRICO (APA45), USS UNION (AKA106), USS COMSTOCK (LSD19), USS DIACHENKO (APD123), USS ESTES (AGC12) and USS WASHBURN (AKA108), departed San Diego enroute to WESTPAC. Stopping first in Pearl Harbor, for a two day lay-over, the BEXAR arrived in Okinawa on the twenty-first of August and off-loaded 50% of her assigned troops and cargo. On the twenty-third, the same forces got underway for DaNang, arriving there on the twenty-seventh of August. On 28 August 1966, the BEXAR departed DaNang enroute to Tuy Hoa where she embarked a contingent of ROK Marines and their equipment, then proceeded to transport them to Chu Lai for off-loading on the thirtieth of August. The BEXAR then, on 1 September, proceeded to Subic Bay, Philippines, for a period of upkeep and preservation. Leaving Subic Bay on the ninth of August, the BEXAR arrived in DaNang on the eleventh to relieve the USS RENVILLE (APA227) as station ship and CTU 76.0.7.

On the twenty-sixth of October the BEXAR was relieved temporarily as station ship and departed enroute to Keelung, Taiwan, for a five day period of rest and recreation, returning on the seventh of November. The BEXAR remained as station ship until relieved by the USS OKANOGAN (APA220) on 17 December, when she departed for Subic Bay for up-keep. The BEXAR left Subic Bay enroute to Okinawa on the twenty-sixth and arrived on the thirtieth of December to embark ammunition, the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment and commence amphibious landing exercises with USS POINT DEFIANCE (LSD31) and USS UNION (AKA106).

C. Special Topics:

1. Operational statistics for the year 1966 were as follows:

a. Two major deployments to WESTPAC.

b. Number and unit designation of troops and cargo transported:

(1) January 10 to January 28-2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, (1,342 personnel) and associated cargo from San Diego to Okinawa.

(2) July 27 to August 27-2nd Battalion, 26th Marine Regiment, (1,286 personnel) and associated cargo from San Diego to DaNang, RVN.

c. The BEXAR was involved in seven underway replenishments.

2. Performance of material and weapons system, including engineering and maintenance:

a. The BEXAR's weapons system, consisting of five 40mm mounts, performed adequately. The problems in the Gunnery Division were due to the fact that the mounts are old, making maintenance a full time job.

b. Engineering statistics are as follows:

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| (1) Passengers carried | 9110 Personnel |
| (2) Navigation miles | 30,319.1 Miles |
| (3) Engine miles | 33,695.3 Miles |
| (4) Days underway | 130 |
| (5) Days not underway | 235 |
| (6) Repair availabilities | 56 |
| (7) Days out of dry dock | 1045 |
| (8) Water distilled | 6,134,945 Gallons |
| (9) Fuel consumed | |
| NFSO (Main Propulsion) | |
| Underway - 1,300,404 Gal. | |
| Inport - 749,367 Gal. | |
| Total - 2,098,557 Gal. | |
| Diesel Oil (Aux. Boats) | |
| 133,898 Gal. | |
| (10) Major casualties: #2 A.C. Generator, Cummins 300KW Diesel Gen. | |
| Cause: Bent Rods, Broken Liners. | |
| CASREPT 3 OCT 1966, unable to repair, due to logistics | |
| problems, parts on order but not yet received. | |
| (11) New projects: Planned Maintenance System Started 27 July 1966. | |
| Maintenance Data Collection System Started 27 August 1966. | |

3. Communications:

a. While the BEXAR was acting as station ship in DaNang, the Communications Department served as communication relay ship for Commander, Naval Support Activity, DaNang, RVN. During this period, the communications department handled an average of one hundred messages per day.

b. During the year 1966, the communications department experienced a substantial loss in both non-rated and experienced personnel. At this time, the communications department was neither sufficiently staffed, nor equipped to maintain the proper standards for accomplishment of its mission.

c. Volume of traffic for the year of 1966 is as follows:

- | | |
|--------------|-------|
| (1) Incoming | 8,469 |
| (2) Outgoing | 1,454 |

4. The logistics and supply support of the BEXAR, during the period of 1 January through 31 December 1966, is considered to have been highly effective with the following exceptions:

MATERIAL

a. In the Engineering, Electrical, and Ordnance areas, numerous CASREPS of primary and secondary equipment have experienced excessively long lead times in obtaining replacement components and spare parts. This situation in most instances, can be attributed to the age of originally installed-

equipment that is no longer being manufactured, therefore, spare parts to effect maintenance and repairs are becoming less available in the supply system stocks. In the Supply Department area of service equipment, the condition of numerous items, i.e., dishwashing machines, garbage grinders, mess deck tables, food service spaces, etc., are pointing up a definite need for major overhaul or replacement.

FUNDING

b. Funding of OPTAR by the Type Commander was generally increased from \$25,000 per quarter in fiscal 1966 to \$33,000 per quarter for fiscal 1967. During the first six months of fiscal 1967, actual expenditures exceeded the increased optar by \$16,000. However, this over expenditure is attributable to increased operating commitments, i.e., previous interim deployments and increased direct support to the Vietnam operation.

PERSONNEL

c. During this period the BEXAR has experienced a definite loss, both in numbers and in experience level, of supply type personnel. At the present time the Supply Department is inadequately staffed to maintain proper standards for accomplishment of its mission.

5. Personnel and Legal Matters:

a. Many of the departments and divisions were, and are presently, undermanned in both non-rated and rated billets. The manning level of the BEXAR was, at certain periods of the year, in a sub-standard condition which effected the operational capabilities of the ship. During the year the ship lost a substantial number of qualified personnel.

b. Re-enlistments aboard the BEXAR averaged approximately 10%, slightly lower than the overall average for amphibious ships.

c. Within the legal department, disciplinary matters were slightly above average for 1966, while legal action showed little change.

6. Medical and Dental Activities: During the operating year 1966, the Medical Department was responsible for:

a. 2,931 out-patient treatments

b. 23 admissions to sick bay for treatment

c. 3,101 prescriptions

d. 528 X-ray evaluations

e. 1,927 laboratory procedures

f. 3,466 immunizations

g. There were 74 accident reports, 21 of these resulted in partial or complete incapacity for 24 hours or more. There were 27 accidents involving head injuries and 21 involving hand injuries. Most time-lost-from-

work resulted from hand injuries to mess cooks.

h. Approximately 180 out of 330 ship's company have had all dental work completed.

i. 1,497 patients have been treated.

j. At the present time the dental equipment is outdated, but it is to be replaced during the coming 1967 yard period.

7. Community Relations:

a. The officers and men of the USS BEXAR contributed to the people-to-people program in Vietnam through their efforts at the DaNang Civil Hospital. The BEXAR completed in mid-December a three month tour as the station ship in DaNang.

The BEXAR men, under the leadership of Captain Harold M. Lamb, Commanding Officer of the ship, helped the civilian hospital through construction of a home for hospital personnel. Blood donations and professional assistance by the ship's doctor and corpsmen were also a part of this program. In addition, BEXAR wives in San Diego joined in the program by gathering supplies and clothing for the hospital. The hospital is mainly caring for civilians who have been caught in the fighting around DaNang and the DMZ.

A three-apartment house was erected for Vietnamese families who work at the hospital compound. Housing is critically short in refugee swollen DaNang. Previously, all three families had lived in a one room hut with no plumbing or electricity. There was never a shortage of volunteers, and at one time or another during construction, over 100 officers and men from the BEXAR took part. The building materials were donated by the Commander, U.S. Naval Support Activities, DaNang and by U.S. AID.

The BEXAR's wives, with money earned in garage sales, purchased six dozen pairs of crutches and other urgently needed supplies. The medical supplies, along with clothing collected for the patients, were sent to DaNang with the help of the Pacific Fleet Amphibious Force Chaplin, Captain M. A. Carpenter,

b. During December 1966 the USS BEXAR (APA237) was honored by the citizens of San Antonio and Bexar County, Texas by an exchange of flags. The colors, which flew from the USS BEXAR in Vietnam, were proudly raised over City Hall, in San Antonio Texas, in a ceremony honoring the USS BEXAR, its officers and men. The Mayor of San Antonio presided over the ceremonies and read a proclamation, honoring the USS BEXAR for its gallant contribution to the fight for freedom in Vietnam. Representing the Navy at the Ceremony was Captain Carl R. Pingrey, Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Reserve Training Center, Captain Gordon E. Hendricks, Naval Reserve Group Commander, C. Lindon Sledge, Chairman, Armed Forces Committee and a number of city officials.

The City of San Antonio sent a Lone Star Flag, as a symbol of the bond that exists between the two, which was raised with pride and honor during the last underway replenishment. The Lone Star Flag is to be flown during all future special occasions, as a proud display of the BEXAR's Texas heritage.

8. Special ceremonies in which the USS BEXAR participated in during the year of 1966:

a. In November of 1966, the BEXAR was the host ship for an important Vietnam milestone, the commemoration of the first anniversary of the Naval Support Activity in DaNang, Vietnam. The Bexar was host to a cake cutting ceremony in honor of that event. Among the guests present were Rear Admiral Thomas R. WESCHLER, Commander, NAVSUPPACT DaNang, Major General L. B. ROBERTSHAW, USMC, Commanding General First Marine Air Wing, and General H. X. LAM, Commander of Vietnamese Army in the "I" area. During the ceremonies, the BEXAR was tied up alongside the NAVSUPPACT Pier, DaNang's new deep water pier installation.


H. M. LAMB

Copy to:
CINCPACFLT (1)
COMPHIBPAC (1)