

Contributed by George Kissenger

WELCOME ABOARD



**U.S.S. PITKIN COUNTY
LST-1082**

Your host today, the USS PITKIN COUNTY (LST-1082) belongs to a unique class of ship developed in World War Two specifically for landing tanks and other heavy vehicles across a hostile beach.

Her primary function is in strict contradiction to all rules of maritime safety. She, and all like her, were designed to run aground! She is an ocean going ship whose primary function it is to beach.

To facilitate this awkward, and sometimes dangerous mission, ships of this class have features not found on any other type of ship. LST's have nearly flat bottoms which allow them to remain level while beached, but also makes for an uncomfortable ride at sea. Ships of this type have a very shallow draft to enable them to get in close to the beach. Their bow opens up with two huge bow doors through which can pass large tanks and other vehicles.

The unique design and characteristics of the LST have given this ship particular value in the war in Vietnam. Their shallow draft and relatively small size make them ideal as support ships for patrol craft operating in the great river systems of Southeast Asia. Also, LST's can be used for logistic support; reaching areas bordered by the shallow coastal waters off Vietnam.

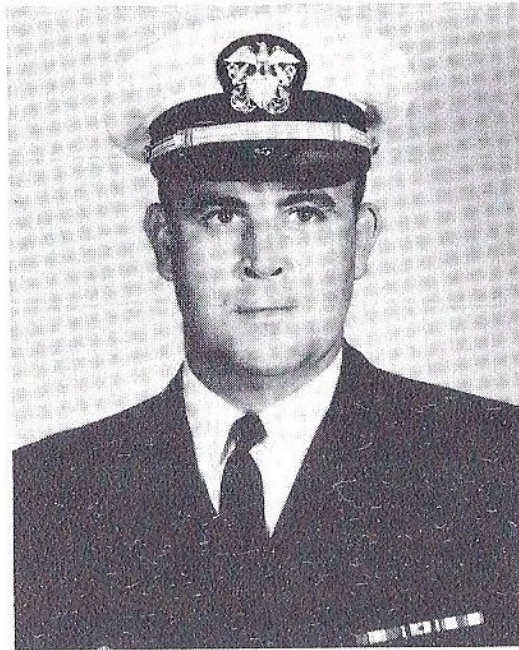
This latter area of operations has been the work of the ships in Landing Ship Squadron THREE; of which PITKIN COUNTY is a part. PITKIN COUNTY has also recently taken part in redeployment lifts to OKINAWA.

It is the job of nine officers and some one-hundred enlisted men to keep these ships operationally ready. Although primarily a defensive ship, the PITKIN COUNTY boasts two Twin 40MM gun mounts, four 40MM single gun mounts and numerous 50 and 30 caliber machine gun mounts.

The USS PITKIN COUNTY (LST-1082) was built by the American Bridge Company, Ambridge, Pennsylvania and launched 11 JANUARY 1945. The ship was commissioned in New Orleans 7 FEBRUARY 1945 and then bore the name "LST 1082". It wasn't until 8 JUNE 1955 that she was renamed USS PITKIN COUNTY (LST-1082).

The ship saw action in World War Two, participating in landings at OKINAWA and in the Marianas Islands. After the war, the ship was inactivated but resumed active duty during the Korean conflict. Here the ship made landings at ULSAN, PUSAN, KUNSAN, and INCHON. After Korea the ship was again inactivated and was placed in the reserve fleet in San Diego.

With the escalation of the war in Vietnam, duty again called, and on 9 July 1966 the PITKIN COUNTY was recommissioned. Since that time, she has seen continued service in Vietnam.



Lieutenant Commander CALLAHAN was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on 17 November 1938. He attended the University of Notre Dame as a midshipman in the NROTC Regular Program. He was commissioned as ENSIGN, USN, and received his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering in 1961.

Lieutenant Commander CALLAHAN's first duty station was USS NEWMAN K. PERRY (DDR-883) where he served as Electronics Officer. In November 1962, Lieutenant Commander CALLAHAN reported to U. S. Naval Destroyer School, Newport, Rhode Island.

In June 1963, Lieutenant Commander CALLAHAN reported to USS HOLDER (DD-819) as Operations Officer. In November 1964 he also assumed the duties of Navigator.

While on HOLDER, Lieutenant Commander CALLAHAN qualified for Command of Destroyers.

Lieutenant Commander CALLAHAN was next ordered to NROTC Georgia Institute of Technology as the Operations and Navigation Instructor. While at Georgia Tech he earned his Masters Degree in Information Science. He was detached from Georgia Tech in June 1968, with orders to report as Commanding Officer, USS PITKIN COUNTY (LST-1082).

Lieutenant Commander CALLAHAN is married to the former Teresa EVANS of Jersey City, New Jersey, who is a graduate of Seton Hall University.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PITKIN COUNTY (LST-1082)

LENGTH 327'00"
BEAM 50' 1½"
DRAFT (Normal) 7'2" fwd 13' aft
DISPLACEMENT (at normal draft) 3,650 tons
ALLOWANCE 8 Officers, 89 Enlisted