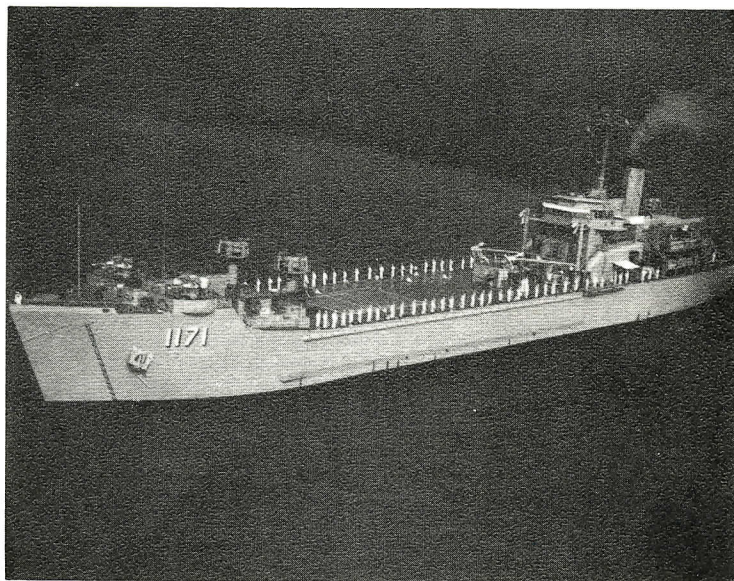


WELCOME ABOARD

USS DESOTO COUNTY

LST-1171



AMPHIBIOUS FORCE

U.S. ATLANTIC FLEET

COMMAND HISTORY

The DESOTO COUNTY is a prototype of the LST 1171 Class. Her keel was laid in September 1956, and she was launched February 28, 1957. She was commissioned on June 10, 1958, and then assigned to Commander Amphibious Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, for duty. After initial training in the Caribbean, DESOTO COUNTY deployed to the Mediterranean for seven months in 1959.

The year 1961 was highlighted by trips to Scotland and Ireland. She was in the Mediterranean for five months in 1962, participating in training as part of the Sixth Fleet. Deployed in the Caribbean when the Cuba crisis erupted, DESOTO COUNTY was the only Amphibious Force ship to participate in the evacuation of Guantanamo Bay Naval Base personnel.

In December 1963, she headed for the Caribbean on a normal deployment with her Squadron. The Panama riots broke out and the Squadron remained until the crisis was settled.

During the summer of 1964, she cruised the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes displaying the capabilities of the Navy-Marine Corps team. She visited 17 cities during the cruise and hosted almost half a million visitors. In November 1964 she participated in STEELPIKE I. Staged in Spain, it was the largest peacetime Amphibious landing ever conducted.

After extensive operations and type training in 1965, the ship deployed to the Caribbean as part of the Amphibious Ready Group in the spring of 1966. During August and September DESOTO COUNTY made three trips to the Dominican Republic, following the crisis in that country, to embark Army personnel for return to North Carolina.

DESOTO COUNTY returned to the Caribbean twice in the spring of 1967, taking part in Operation CLOVEHITCH III, a joint Navy-Army-Air Force exercise. The ship deployed to the Mediterranean with Amphibious Squadron TWO as a unit of Med 2-67 in August, and returned to Little Creek in February 1968. The last half of 1968 found her in the shipyard for regular overhaul.

Following refresher training, she deployed in May 1969 to the Caribbean for five months with Amphibious Squadron TEN as a unit of Carib 2-69. A period of leave and upkeep followed the ship's return to Little Creek.

In July 1970, DESOTO COUNTY deployed to the Mediterranean as a unit of Med 2-70. Of the many operations conducted, the NATO exercise "DEEP EXPRESS" involving English, Italian, Greek and American ships was the most significant which culminated in a joint landing at Alexandroupolis, Greece. A period of leave and upkeep followed the ship's return to Little Creek in December 1970.

Between January and April 1971, DESOTO COUNTY deployed to the Caribbean on three occasions participating in Amphibious exercises.

In May 1971 she was active in the joint exercise "EXOTIC DANCER". Since June 1971, the ship has been involved in local operations and a major engineering overhaul.

AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE

Amphibious warfare isn't new.

The earliest amphibious task force was probably a fleet of dugout canoes and rafts that transported a band of prehistoric "marines" along a coast to attack an enemy village.

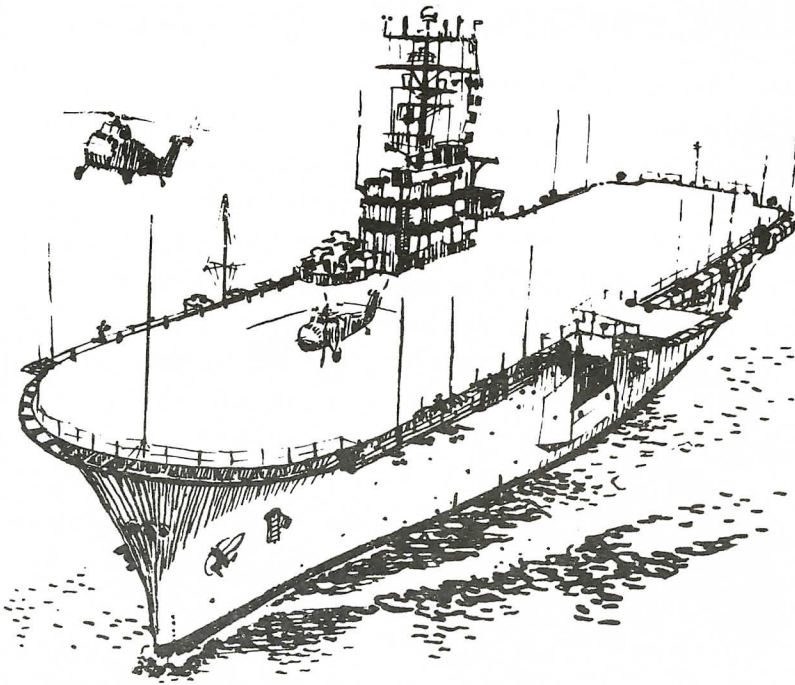
A modern amphibious operation, with landings on hostile shores, is launched from the sea by naval and landing forces in ships and landing craft. Its aims may be to prosecute further combat operations, obtain sites for bases, or deny areas or facilities to the enemy.



This highly specialized type of warfare came into its own during World War II. The war's global nature was a major factor. To be successful in modern war, forces must fight offensively; war must be carried to and fought on enemy soil. Because two-thirds of the earth is covered by water, amphibious operations are vital.

Early experiments helped give America its World War II amphibious capabilities. The Navy and the Marine Corps held basic amphibious exercises, including experiments with specially designed landing craft and vehicles, as early as 1923. Ten years later, when the Fleet Marine Force was formed to specialize in amphibious operations, the Navy began a major effort toward the design and construction of amphibious ships and craft.

During the 25-year lull between World Wars I and II, the United States developed the doctrine, organization, tactics, and techniques necessary for success in amphibious warfare. The Navy and Marine Corps, in addition to actually conducting landing operations, established a workable doctrine for both troop and naval components of an amphibious attack force.



The planning and training begun by the Navy and Marine Corps in the early thirties paid off in World War II. In fact, every major drive made by U.S. Forces in the war was started with an amphibious assault, beginning with Guadalcanal in 1942 and ending with Okinawa in 1945.

By the end of the war, America had the most powerful amphibious warfare capability in the world. She has never lost this lead.

Modern amphibious operations are quite different from their historical predecessors. First of all, naval forces in a modern amphibious operation have an important combat role as well as a transportation role. Gunfire from Navy ships and carrier aircraft substantially reduce enemy defenses before the first troops ever land.

Secondly, troops that engage in modern amphibious operations are highly trained for just that role.

Amphibs In Action



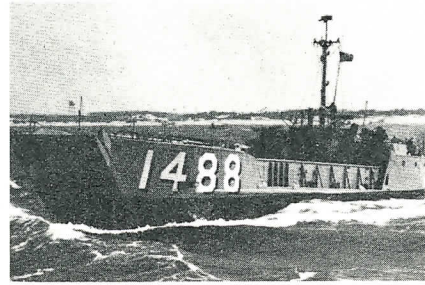
LVT-P5s land the first Marines on the beaches to begin the sea-to-shore phase of the landing.



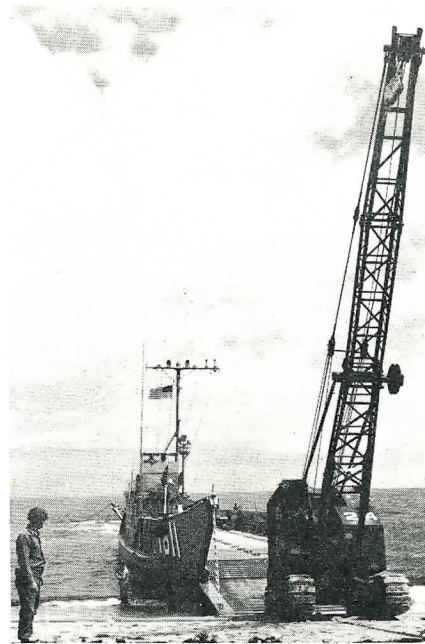
Vertical envelopment is an important part of an amphibious landing.



Cargo is also taken ashore by helicopters during the amphibious landing.

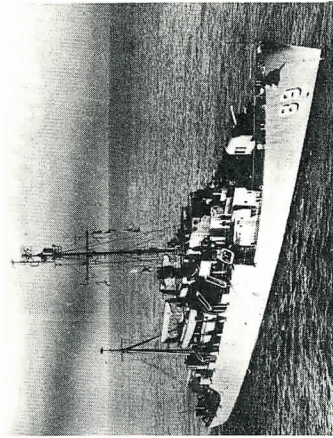


LCUs bring tanks, artillery and other heavy equipment ashore.

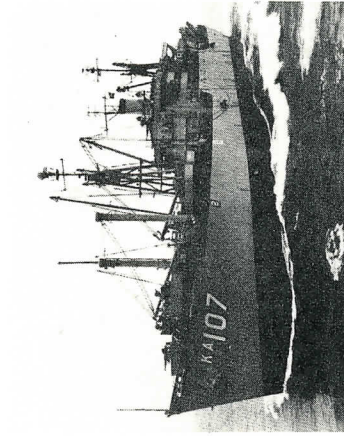


Heavy equipment rolls ashore from a LCU in support of an amphibious landing.

Amphibious Force Ships



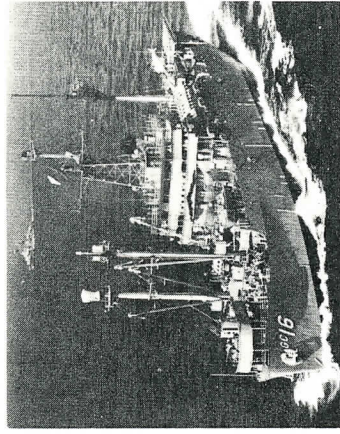
USS RUCAMKIN
(LPR-89)
Inshore Fire Support
Ship



USS VERMILION
(LKA-107)
Attack Cargo Ship



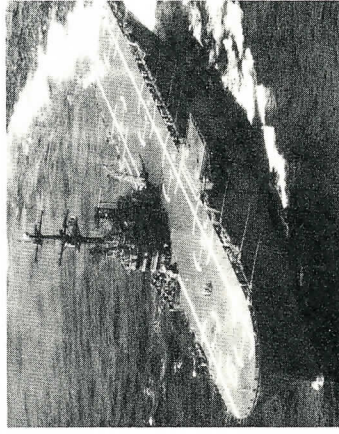
USS POCONO
(LCC-16)
Amphibious Command
Ship



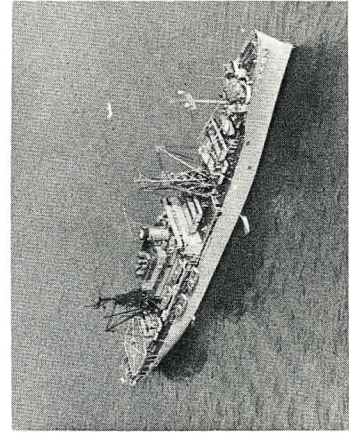
USS TALBOT
COUNTY
(LST-1153)
Tank Landing Ship



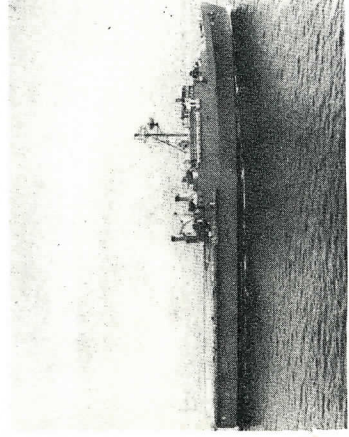
USS GUAM
(LPH-9)
Amphibious Assault
Ship



USS FORT SNELLING
(LSD-30)
Dock Landing Ship

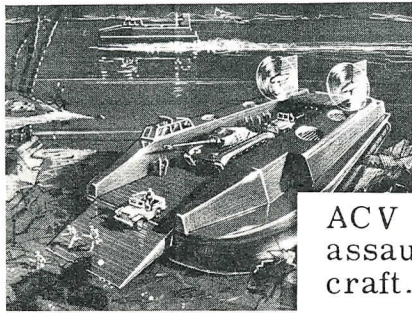


USS FRANCIS
MARION
(LPA-249)
Attack Transport

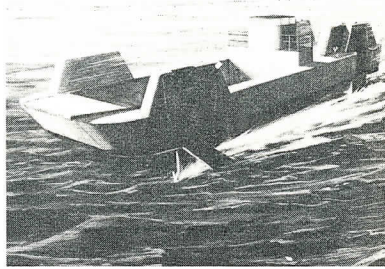


USS AUSTIN
(LPD-4)
Amphibious Transport
Dock

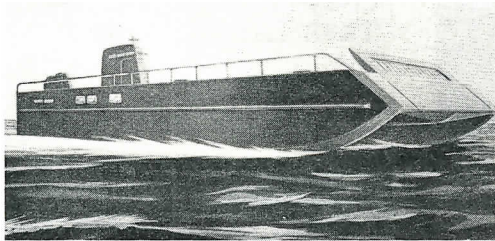
Amphibious Assault Landing Craft Candidate Designs



ACV
assault
craft.



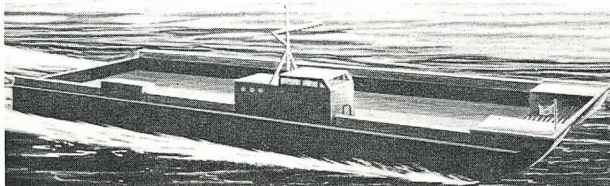
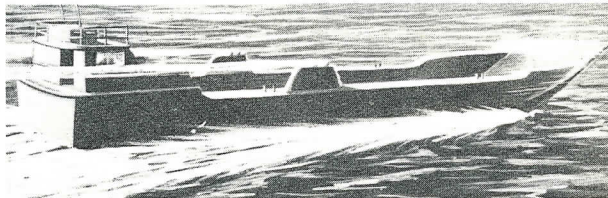
Hydrofoil assault craft.



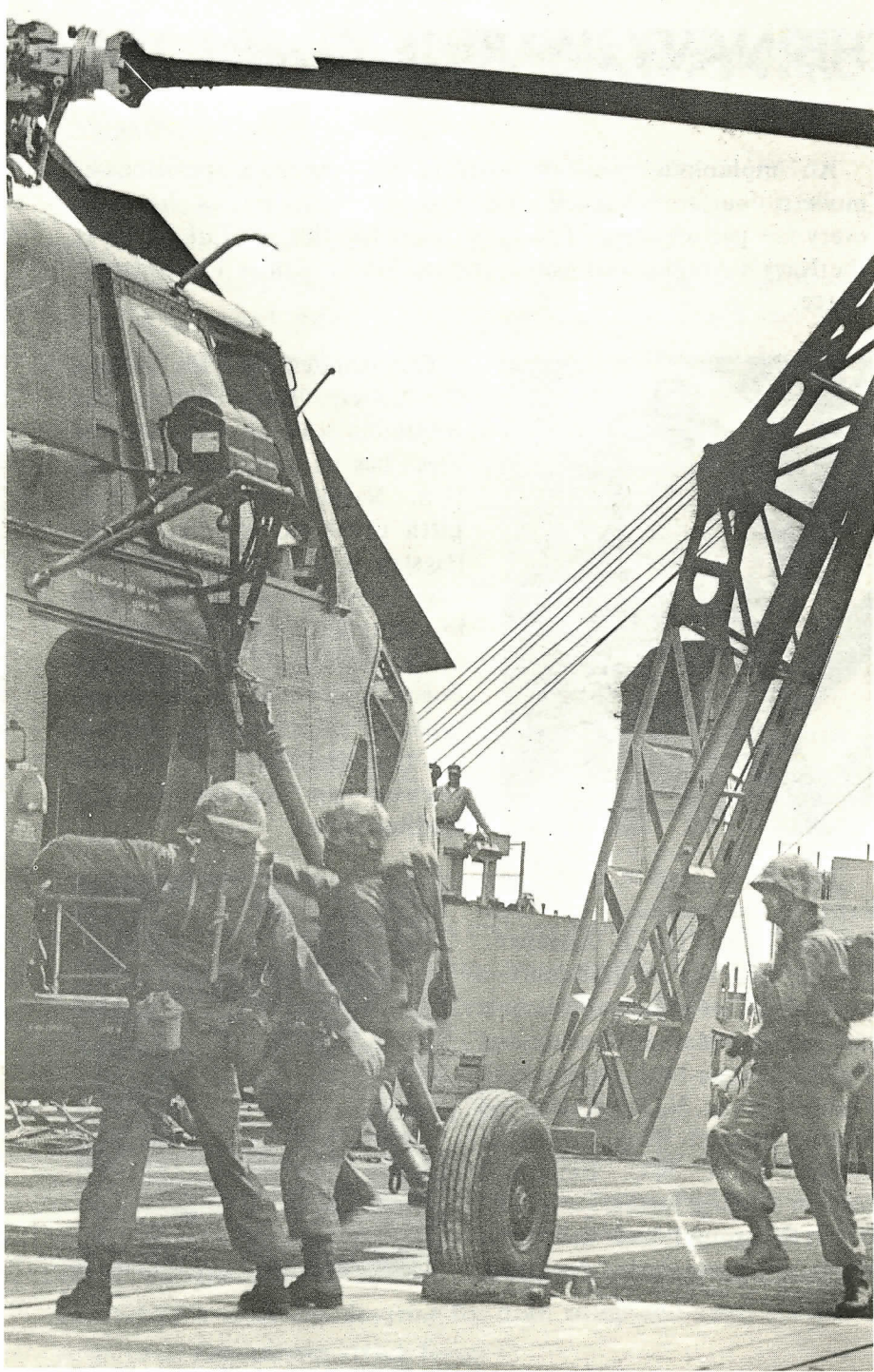
Amphibious assault
landing craft.

The Navy continues to test new landing craft of different sizes, speeds, and types to improve the ship-to-shore movement of troops, equipment and supplies. These pictures show some new craft concepts.

Amphibious
assault
landing craft.



High-speed
assault craft.



THE NAVY-MARINE CORPS TEAM

An amphibious assault is one of the most complex operations in modern warfare. Success requires expert teamwork between everyone participating. The ideal team for this kind of action is the Navy's Amphibious Force, and the Marine Corps' Fleet Marine Force.



Commanded by Vice Admiral C. Edwin Bell, USN, the Amphibious Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet has its headquarters at the U.S. Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, at Norfolk, Va. His flagship is the USS Mount Whitney (LCC-20). Over 12,000 men in about 35 ships and nearly 30 other commands comprise the Force. One squadron of various types of ships regularly deploys to the Caribbean — another serves on station in the Mediterranean.

The Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, commanded by Lieutenant General Earl E. Anderson, USMC, also has its headquarters at Norfolk. Its principal elements are the 2nd Marine Division and Force Troops, both stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C.; and the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, located at Cherry Point, N.C. Embarked Marine landing forces, consisting of both ground and helicopter units, are customarily deployed.





LCDR BONHAM

On behalf of the officers and men of the USS DESOTO COUNTY I extend to you a sincere "WELCOME ABOARD". We hope that your brief tour with us will be pleasant and informative.

The tank landing ship is unique. As its name implies, it transports tanks and equipment and lands them directly on enemy beaches. The original LST's were small, slow and had only a moderate transport capacity. As techniques, strategy and tactics improved to meet the demands of modern warfare, so did the LST.

DESOTO COUNTY is the first of her Class and represents an investment of 27 million dollars. She rivals any large transport ship in size and capacity with the capability to transport 600 troops and their associated equipment. Air conditioning provides a comfort which enhances the readiness of troops on D-Day.

We are all proud of our profession, our job and our ship. Each of us wants to do everything possible to make your visit a memorable one. I trust you will not hesitate to ask any questions you might have. We look forward to telling you about our ship.

Lieutenant Commander Charlie Leonard Bonham was born in Richmond, California and graduated from the California Maritime Academy with a degree in Marine Engineering. He also has received a degree in International Relations from the Naval Postgraduate School. He entered Naval Service following a six month tour with the Merchant Marine in 1961. After an initial assignment as Damage Control Assistant in USS INTERPRETER (AGR 14), LCDR Bonham served as Executive Officer on board USS KODIAK (LSM 161). Additional assignments have included: student, Naval Destroyer School; Engineer Officer, USS STORMES (DD 780); Aide/Flag Lieutenant, Chief Military Assistance Advisory Group, Norway; Executive Officer, USS BRONSTEIN (DE 1037); and student Naval Postgraduate School.

In addition to the Navy Commendation Medal, LCDR BONHAM holds the Navy Unit Commendation Medal for service in Alaska during the 1964 earthquake.

He is married to the former Pamela Prah of Seattle, Washington. They have three children: Stephen, age 8, Karen, 7, and Tracy, 4.

THE UNITED STATES NAVY

Guardian Of Our Country

The United States Navy is responsible for maintaining control of the sea and is a ready force on watch at home and overseas capable of strong action to preserve the peace or instant offensive action to win a war. It is upon the maintenance of this control that our country's glorious future depends; the United States Navy exists to make it so.

We Serve With Honor

Tradition, valor, and victory are the Navy's heritage from the past. To these may be added dedication, discipline, and vigilance as the watchwords of the present and the future. At home or on distant stations we serve with pride, confident in the respect of our country, our shipmates, and our families. Our responsibilities sober us; our adversities strengthen us. Service to God and Country is our special privilege. We serve with honor.

The Future Of Our Navy

The Navy will always employ new weapons, new techniques, and greater power to protect and defend the United States on the sea, under the sea, and in the air. Now and in the future, control of the sea gives the United States her greatest advantage for maintenance of peace and for victory in war. Mobility, surprise, dispersal, and offensive power are the keynotes of the new Navy. The roots of the Navy lie in a strong belief in the future, in continued dedication to our tasks and in the reflection on our heritage from the past. Never have our opportunities and our responsibilities been greater.
