

Contributed by Joe Gardella

USS OKINAWA

LPH-3



WELCOME ABOARD



OKINAWA: THE STORY BEHIND THE NAME

The history books record with great emphasis that Commodore Perry and his squadron made a visit to Japan in July 1853, but a close search is required to reveal that one of his stops on the way was an island about 250 miles southwest of Japan—OKINAWA. In 1945, ninety-two years after Commodore Perry's visit the island acquired a special significance since it was selected for the initial penetration of Japan's inner ring of defenses and its capture was to be the prelude to the invasion of Japan.

The plan for its conquest fully utilized the experience of previous Pacific war campaigns—the all important lessons regarding cooperation and combined striking power of all the armed services, techniques for amphibious operations and the value of air power.

In as much as the island was the key to the invasion of Japan it was stoutly defended. More ships were used, more troops put ashore, more supplies transported and more casualties reported than in any previous World War II battle.

Some interesting statistics of the battle for OKINAWA include:

- “Land the Landing Force” on Easter Sunday 1945.
- A total of 1300 naval ships participated, 26 American ships sunk and 164 ships damaged by Japanese Kamikaze aircraft.
- Aircraft losses: USA 763—Japan 7,800
- American casualties—12,000 killed, 35,000 wounded
- Japanese casualties approached—100,000 killed
- Final victory was on June 30, 1945.

The battle for OKINAWA was the biggest amphibious battle that our sea, air, and land forces fought during World War II in the Pacific Theater. This fact coupled with the tradition that aircraft carriers have previously been named to battles famous in our history made it natural that this special type of aircraft carrier, this Amphibious Assault Ship, should be named “USS OKINAWA.”

HISTORY OF THE USS OKINAWA (LPH-3)

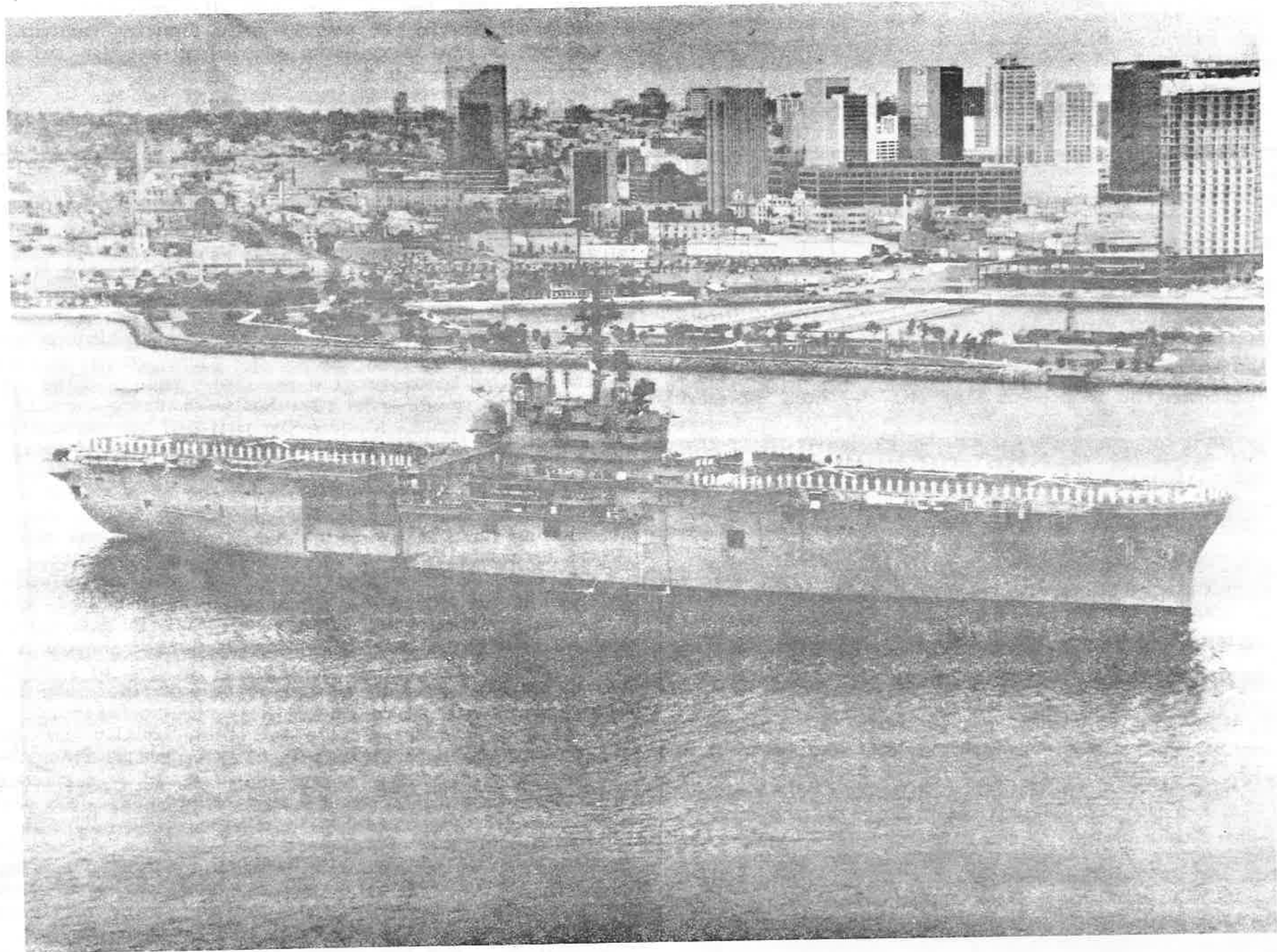
USS OKINAWA has a long and distinguished record of faithful service to her country as a fighting warship. The second of the Iwo Jima class amphibious assault ships, her illustrious career began with the laying of her keel on April 1960. USS OKINAWA was launched by Mrs. John L. McClellan, wife of the Senior Senator from Arkansas, on August 1961 and commissioned on 14 April 1962. Since her commissioning she has compiled a record of distinguished service which few ships can match.

During her 25 year sea-going career, USS OKINAWA has participated in many combat operations and training exercises which include operations such as KANGAROO II in 1976, the largest amphibious training exercise ever conducted. She has made three Caribbean deployments, one deployment to European waters, and 12 western Pacific deployments.

USS OKINAWA has long led the way for amphibious assault ships. In April 1968 she became the first LPH to participate in the Apollo space program when she was selected as the primary recovery ship for the Apollo 8 space capsule. In August 1971 USS OKINAWA again demonstrated her versatility by recovering the astronauts and command module of Apollo 15. USS OKINAWA was the flagship for the first amphibious ready group deployment to the Indian Ocean in January 1980 as part of the United States' response to the Iranian Crisis. She remained on station for 53 days. In 1981 she was the first LPH to successfully launch OV-10 fixed-wing aircraft.

USS OKINAWA has been battle-tested on numerous occasions and has served with distinction in each instance. Shortly after her commissioning, she participated in the quarantine of Cuba from 15 October to 3 December 1962. She was a major participant in over 19 amphibious operations in Vietnam and was an integral part of Operation Bold Mariner—the largest amphibious assault operation of the Vietnam conflict.

Her humanitarian service has been equally impressive. USS OKINAWA has participated in the evacuation of U.S. citizens from trouble spots around the world. In Phnom Penh, Cambodia she evacuated the U.S. Ambassador, John Gunther Dean, and President Soukham Khoy along with 36 new correspondents and foreign nationals from 13 different countries during OPERATION EAGLE PULL. Again in Saigon, from 29 April to 1 May 1975, over 1,200 Americans were evacuated during OPERATION FREQUENT WIND. For her heroic participation in these operations USS OKINAWA was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation. She has proved herself with numerous rescues at sea the most notable of which was the rescue of 38 crewmen



of a grounded Panamanian freighter in April 1967. USS OKINAWA was awarded the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation for the assistance she rendered to victims of Typhoon Jean in October 1970.

The USS OKINAWA continues to excel and has been the recent recipient of numerous departmental Battle Efficiency Awards. She won the Commodore's Cup for athletic excellence and was awarded the COMPHIBRON THREE Bronze Anchor award in recognition of her outstanding personnel retention program. She is most proud of the fact, however, that she is the four time recipient of the Admiral Flatley Award for aviation safety and operational readiness (the best LPH/LHA in the fleet). USS OKINAWA has won this coveted award more than any of the other 12 LPH/LHA's in the Navy.

USS OKINAWA underwent a regular overhaul (ROH) lasting from 24 May 1982 to 11 March 1983. Modifications during this ROH period included installing a Vulcan Phalanx Close-In Weapons System, a new air conditioning system, and 720 tons of lead ballast. A massive habitability program was also undertaken designed to improve the living conditions of the 650 officers and enlisted men of ship's company and the 1700 embarked Marines.

USS OKINAWA began 1984 with a cruise to Hawaii where she participated in "Kernal Blitz," a major amphibious operation that was conducted off Oahu. The ship returned to San Diego but deployed a short time later in late May with a completely different mission than that of her previous cruises. Instead of embarking Marines, OKINAWA had a mine countermeasures helicopter squadron aboard for her 11th western Pacific deployment. After participating in mine-counter measures exercises with Japan, Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines, USS OKINAWA returned to San Diego in mid-September.

The ship spent the first part of 1985 conducting local operations in the southern California area. She participated in two amphibious exercises, Kernal Usher 85-3 and 85-5, in preparation for yet another western Pacific deployment that began in early August of 1985. Overseas port visits included the Philippines, Western Australia, Singapore, and Hong Kong. While overseas USS OKINAWA and other ships in its amphibious task force were involved in major exercises in Australia and the Philippines. USS OKINAWA returned from deployment on 16 December in time for the holidays.

USS OKINAWA continues to be the standard by which other amphibious assault ships are measured. The officers and men are proud of their ship and proud to have the opportunity to show her off. We welcome you aboard and hope you will enjoy your visit.





"WELCOME ABOARD"

I am truly delighted to show you the "Proud Lady of the Pacific," one of the Navy's finest amphibious assault ships.

The USS OKINAWA has recorded a long history of proud service, successfully accomplishing every assigned task from joint Navy/Marine amphibious operations to major multi-nation amphibious exercises. She has played an active role forming Naval history and carrying out national policy world-wide.

This welcome aboard brochure has been prepared to answer some of the many questions you may have about the ship. Feel free to ask anyone for assistance at any time you should need it and I hope your tour is an enjoyable one.

Sincerely,

JAMES L. DURBIN, JR.
Captain, U.S. Navy
Commanding Officer

USS OKINAWA FACT SHEET

Built.....	Philadelphia Naval Shipyard
Commissioned.....	April 14, 1962
Length Overall.....	597 feet 10 inches
Extreme Beam.....	94 feet 3 inches
Draft (full load).....	28 feet 9 inches
Displacement.....	18,155 tons
Propeller.....	22,000 shaft horse power
Anchors.....	22,500 pounds each
Length of Chain.....	1,110 feet
Weight of each Link.....	72 pounds
Aviation Fuel Capacity.....	277,700 gallons
Ship's Fuel Capacity.....	882,359 gallons
Distance from Horizon to Bridge... 9.9 miles	
Electrical Generating Capacity... 5,000 kilowatts	
Daily Fresh Water Output.....	100,000 gallons
Cargo Space.....	70,000 cubic feet
Cargo Elevators.....	14,000 lift capacity
Speed.....	24+ knots
Rudder.....	21 by 12 feet
Crew.....	60 officers and 621 enlisted
Meals Served Daily.....	2,050+
Dial Phones.....	500+
Berthing Compartments.....	5 Navy and 10 Marine
Flight Deck Area.....	1.1 acres or 47,649 square feet
Boats.....	2-40 foot Utility; 2-36 foot personnel boats; 2-26 foot Motor Whaleboats; 182 liferafts
Aircraft Elevators (2).....	34 by 50 foot dimension 44,000 pound lift capacity each
Aircraft Carried.....	6 CH-53 Sea Stallions 15 CH-46 Sea Knights 4 AH-1 Cobras and 1 UH-1N Huey
Helo Landing Spots.....	8

CAPACITY FOR FOOD SUPPORT

Dry Provisions.....	262,644; 167 days
Frozen Provisions.....	227,986; 55 days
Chilled Provisions.....	58,786; 22 days

USS OKINAWA is also equipped with a large laundry, five galleys, two ship stores, a snack bar, library, chapel, two barber shops, and a Universal Gym exercise area. Medical facilities include a 200 bed hospital ward, two fully equipped operating rooms, and a modern two-chair dental office, and a radio and TV station. Our ship is very much like a small city. We are very proud of her.