

COLONNA'S SHIPYARD SCENE 1986SUBJECT: U.S.S. GUAM - LPH-9

HELICOPTER & TROOP CARRIER

This ship was not at Colonna's Shipyard as pictured.

The Navy had doubts about this class vessel physically fitting into the shipyard for top side repairs so we had Casey Holtzinger (artist) paint this rendition in proportion to show the Navy that it would fit and that necessary services could be provided therefore hoping we would be allowed to bid this class vessel.

DISPLACEMENT: 11,000 Tons Light
18,300 Tons Full Load

LENGTH: 556 feet (169.5 m) wl
602 1/4 feet (183.6 m) oa

BEAM: 83 2/3 feet (25.5 m) wl

EXTREME WIDTH: 104 feet (31.7 m)

DRAFT: 26 feet (7.9 m)

PROPULSION: Steam Turbine (Westinghouse): 22,000 shp; 1 shaft

BOILERS: 2 600 psi (Combustion Engineering, except Babcock and Wilcox in LPH 9)

SPEED: 22 knots (21 knots sustained)

RANGE: 16,600 n. miles at 11.5 knots
10,000 n. miles at 20 knots

MANNING: Varies 685 (47 officers + 638 enlisted)

TROOPS: Approx. 2,000

AIRCRAFT: Approx. 25 helicopters

ELEVATORS: 2 deck edge (50 x 34 feet: 15.2 x 10.4 m)

MISSILES: 2 8-cell Sea Sparrow BPDMS Launchers Mk 25,
except 1 in LPH 3

GUNS: 4 3-inch (76-mm) 50-cal AA Mk 33 (2 twin)
2 20-mm Phalanx CIWS Mk 15 (2 multibarrel) in
most ships

RADARS: SPS-10 Surface Search
SPS-40 Air Search

FIRE CONTROL: 2 Mk 115 Missile FCS
Local Control Only for 3-inch guns

EW: SLQ-32(V)3

These ships were the first of any navy to be constructed specifically to operate helicopters. Unlike the Royal Navy's commando carriers of the 1960s and 1970s, and the later TARAWA/WASP classes, the LPHs do not carry landing craft (except for the LCVP davits in the INCHON).

Design: SCB no. 157. These ships represent an improved World War II-type escort carrier design with accommodations for a Marine battalion and supporting helicopter squadron. The INCHON has davits for two LCVPs. The ships have approximately 3,000 square feet of vehicle space and 40,000 cubic feet of space for bulk cargo.

No catapults or arresting gear are fitted.

Electronics: SPN-35 and SPN-43 aircraft approach/control systems are fitted in these ships.

Guns: As built, these ships had four 3-inch twin gun mounts, two forward of the island structure and two on the after corners of the flight deck. Between 1970 and 1974 all ships had two 3-inch gun mounts replaced by Sea Sparrow launchers (one forward of the island and one on the port quarter).

These ships are being fitted with two Phalanx CIWS. The OKINAWA had her forward Sea Sparrow launcher replaced by a Phalanx mount; all others have one Phalanx on a sponson on the starboard side, forward of the Sea Sparrow launcher. The second Phalanx is fitted on a sponson on the port side, aft.

All gun FCS have been removed, and only local control is now available for the 3-inch guns.

Helicopters: The ships have the capability of handling up to seven CH-45 Sea Knight or four CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopters on their flight decks. The hangar deck can accommodate 19 Sea Knights or 11 Sea Stallions or various mixes of these and other aircraft.

Medical: These ships have extensive medical facilities with a 300-bed sick bay.

Operational: The GUAM operated as an interim Sea Control Ship (SCS) from 1972 to 1974 to evaluate the concept of flying VSTOL aircraft and ASW helicopters in the convoy defense role from a ship of about this size. She operated AV-8A Harriers and SH-3 Sea Kings. The ship subsequently reverted to an amphibious assault role.

These ships have also operated CH-53 helicopters in the mine countermeasures role off North Vietnam and in the Suez Canal.

The LPH classification was established in 1955. The World War II-era escort carrier Block Island was to have been LPH 1, but her conversion was cancelled. Three Essex (CV-9) class aircraft carriers subsequently were modified to LPHs as was the escort carrier Thetis Bay. The smaller ship had been designated as a helicopter assault carrier (CVHA 1) at the start of her 195-1056 conversion; she was changed to LPH to avoid confusion and budget competition with the CV-type aircraft carriers. In addition to the three Essex-class ships changed to LPH, the TARAWA (CVS 40) operated extensively with Marine helicopters in the late 1950s (see 8th edition, page 42).

The designation LPH has never indicated "Landing Platform Helicopter", as used in some documents; the L indicated amphibious, the