

May 13, 2015

To whom it may concern:

My name is James W. Stoner. I served aboard the USS Ponchatoula (AO-148) from March of 1967 to October of 1969 as an engineering officer. I met the ship in Subic Bay, Philippines and participated in the last trip to Yankee Station and Viet Nam waters of the deployment and completed two subsequent deployments to WestPac. I served as the ship's Main Propulsion Assistant, Damage Control Officer, and Cargo officer, all in the Engineering Division. I was also qualified as Officer of the Deck, Engineering Watch Officer, and Command Duty Officer. I certify that any statements I make on this form are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

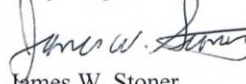
The Ponchatoula did conduct a refueling mission to An Thoi, Viet Nam at the end of the deployment in April of 1969. I do not know the circumstances, but I remember the Captain telling me that we were ordered to go to An Thoi. As I remember, we went into the harbor early in the morning, and left before dark. We also had to proceed a long distance south from our previous position, which was near Yankee Station.

During our visit, a substantial number of the crew, including myself were allowed to go ashore just to look around. I believe one of the ship's boats performed a shuttle service. I remember several things about An Thoi. There was a large fish sauce (nuoc mam) factory and a prisoner camp. I met a friend, Lt (jg) Ed Cimino on the base and we shot a game of pool in a metal hut and we were interrupted by a waterspout/tornado. I believe that we departed An Thoi late in the day.

This ship's movement was documented in a previous VA hearing, citation number 1004578 with a decision date of 01/29/2010. The ship's log verified the port call even though the Joint Services Records Research Center had no record of it. I seem to remember hearing from someone that records pertaining to the Ponchatoula had been destroyed or lost.

I CERTIFY THAT the statements above are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Very Respectfully,

 13 May 2015
James W. Stoner

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