

# **USS Rankin New Year's Logs**

**1946–1971**



# FOREWORD

Navy tradition says that the first Deck Log entry of the new year may be written in verse, but must contain all the information required by the current versions of *Navy Regulations* and supporting instructions from the Chief of Naval Operations. This includes information such as:

*"...mooring lines, ships present, senior officer present, sources of electric power, steam and water... the character of duty in which the ship is engaged; the state of the sea and weather, courses and speed of the ship; bearings and distance of objects sighted; position of the ship; draft and soundings; (time) zone description; particulars of anchoring; disposition of the engineering plant and changes thereto; tests and inspections; changes in the status of ship's personnel; and matters specified by competent authority".<sup>1</sup>*

It's quite a challenge to write a log entry in verse, but many brave men accept it. Sometimes an especially talented one is asked to stand the year's first watch.

The USS Rankin was in commission for a total of 21 New Year's Days between 1946 and 1971. This book shows the 0000-0400 Deck Log entries for every one of those days, including scans of their original signatures. The entries were copied from the original Deck Logs in the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, obtained with the assistance of Karen Lehmkuhl. They have been edited only for the occasional misspelling or typographical error.

Sixteen of the entries are obviously in verse; five of them *seem* not to be, but modern poetry is not always easy to recognize. As their reader, you can be the judge.

Louis F. Sander  
www.ussrankin.org  
July 20, 2005

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<sup>1</sup> The required information changes somewhat over time. This citation is from *All Hands* for January, 1968.

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# 1946

## DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Tuesday 1 January, 1946

0 to 4

0000 Steaming independently on base course 063° (T), 052° (pstgc) standard speed 83 R.P.M., 15.65 knots, making 88 R.P.M., 16.56 knots enroute from Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Territory of Hawaii to San Francisco, California in accordance with ComHawSeaFron Serial #2505 of 27 December 1945. Number 1 and 2 boilers in use. Navigational lights burning at full brilliancy. 0034 Reduced speed to 56 R.P.M., 10.54 knots. 0100 Advanced ship's clocks one half hour to conform with zone 9. 0155 Increased speed to 88 R.P.M., 16.56 knots.

*O. J. Kimbrough*  
O. J. KIMBROUGH  
Lieut. (jg),  
USNR.

# 1947

## DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Wednesday 1 January, 1947

00 to 04

Anchored in Gulf of Liao-Tung in SIX (6) fathoms of water, with SEVENTY FIVE (75) fathoms of chain to the port anchor. On the following bearings: Chinwangtao Light 351° true, End of Breakwater 337° true. Boiler #2 in use for auxiliary purposes. SOPA in USS CHILTON (APA 38); USS BOLLINGER (APA 234), and USS CAVALIER (APA 37) present.

  
J. C. Ahman  
Lt. USN

# 1953

## DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Thursday 1 January, 1953

00-04 We assumed the watch at 2350,  
Welcomed the New Year in a way quite nifty,  
We sounded the siren, whistle and bell,  
Our sentries reported, all seems to be well,  
In Berth Baker-2, Hampton Roads, Virginia, this night,  
We are anchored quite securely with the following in sight,  
Clock Tower a true bearing of 130°.5,  
Hardly a man is now alive,  
Who remembers Fort Wool and the fight that was there,  
It now bears 063°(t) when sighted with care,  
To complete our fix on the chart room table,  
At 082°(t) we spot Buoy 1-Able,  
Old Point Comfort is last but far from the least,  
It's at 042°(t) which is almost northeast,  
Our starboard anchor is on a bottom of mud,  
60 fathoms of chain let it down with a thud,  
The water tonight is quite rough indeed,  
Measures 10 fathoms deep, which is more than we need,  
We have F. G. FAHRION as the SOPA,  
He's a VADM in the Navy, and that isn't hay,  
He keeps his staff on the USS POCONO,  
That's the AGC-16, as we all know,  
The ships all around us appear quite neat,  
They should, for they're units of the U. S. Atlantic Fleet,  
Well that about does it, not much else to report,  
So with one last thought I'll cut this entry short,  
Our ship is the best, ditto the officers and crew,  
We've made an excellent record for a vessel so new,  
In the coming twelve months we shall all do our best,  
To operate our ship a bit better than all of the rest,  
So from us who are standing this watch for four hours,  
From Giles, Smith and Allen, Ricks, Bolen and Powers,  
We want to wish you from all of us here,  
A prosperous '53, and a "HAPPY NEW YEAR."

  
W. H. MCDANIEL  
LTJG, USNR

# 1954

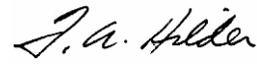
## DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Friday 1 January 1954

00-04 Here sits the RANKIN, tied to the dock,  
While the ships bell on the focsle rings 12 o'clock,  
Moored to the south side of good old Pier 2,  
And our days at a pier are always few.  
Some wire to the HYADES plus some 8 inch manila,  
Are enough to moor this sea going villa,  
In Norfolk, Virginia where we are taking a rest,  
Before going to sea to prove we are best.  
Number 2 boiler is right on the line,  
Number 2 generator is standing up fine.  
A good PhibLant ship is the ADIRONDACK,  
She carries VADM FAHRION, who is COMPHIBLANT,  
He is SOPA, and reigns supreme,  
And flies his flag from the (AGC-15)  
So from POWERS and BREEN of the quarterdeck crew,  
And those in radio and on the bridge too,  
May happiness and joy come to you with might,  
Happy New Year to all and to all a good night.

0115 ALLEN, Winfred W., BMSN, 303 19 12, USN returned on board having been absent over leave since 0730, 18 December 1953, a period of about 13 days, 17 hours and 45 minutes.

0130 ROTENBERRY, Harry W, SN, 440 81 68, USN returned on board drunk. Unable to stand or talk coherently. Examined by DONALDSON, HM3. No evident injuries. Carried below.

  
F. A. HILDER  
LTJG, USN

# 1955

## DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Saturday 1 January 1955

00-04 Eight bells rouse a new year to life,  
For the old one has passed away.  
And thus does the year of Our Lord  
Nineteen fifty-five start this day.  
The starboard anchor is down in the mud  
With sixty fathoms of chain,  
The marking is at the water's edge,  
The stopper is taking the strain.  
The Navigator fixes the ship  
By bearings taken with care,  
Eight hundred yards west of anchorage eight,  
Which is not unusual or rare,  
In area Fox One of the Great Hampton Roads.  
In this state of Virginia so fair;  
Which the Good Ship Rankin certainly knows,  
This being her favorite lair.  
The depth of the water in fathoms is six,  
And those bearings taken with care,  
Show Middle Ground light bearing two thirty-three,  
If it changes, Sailor Beware!  
The Grain Elevator with a red light on top  
Bears one thirty-five and two-thirds,  
The Radio Tower: two seventy three,  
But no truer than these next words:  
The Senior Officer Present Afloat,  
His flag is there to see,  
Is COMPHIBLANT in the POCONO,  
The sixteenth AGC.  
The other ships present this New Year's Day,  
Include units various and sundry  
Of the United States Atlantic Fleet  
In which no one ever goes hungry,  
Especially true this glorious day,  
For the cooks will soon be awake,  
Rising this Happy Holiday  
To bake a festive cake.  
In closing this piece of poetic courage  
For the air is damp and chilly  
I must mention that Boiler Number One is in use  
For purposes auxiliary.

  
D. L. SCHREIBER  
ENS, USNR

# 1956

## DECK LOG—ADDITIONAL REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Sunday 1 January 1956

00-04 The ship's near deserted;  
All but the watch is ashore,  
While we're resting on keel blocks  
In drydock number four.  
At the place that is known  
Throughout the USA  
As New York Naval Shipyard  
North of the Lower Bay.  
All the service we have  
We get straight from the pier  
While the horns of Times Square  
Welcome in the New Year.  
The ships that are present  
Are elements of LANT FLEET;  
The watch is awake  
But nearly dead on their feet.  
The town is a wet one  
With drunks and what's more,  
SOPA is Captain KEELER  
In the WISCONSIN, BB six-four  
While I'm here to make  
A log that will rhyme  
My shipmates are out having  
One hell of a time:  
But one must remain here  
One tried and one true  
To take care of this ship;  
Hope that next year it's you!

  
J. F. AYERS JR.  
LTJG USNR-R

# 1957

## DECK LOG—ADDITIONAL REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Tuesday, 1 January 1957

00-04 This proud lady of the sea,  
Is moored starboard side to pier three.  
With standard mooring lines doubled up for any condition,  
And bow, stern, and forward spring wires in addition.  
At the Newport News Virginia Shipbuilding and Drydock Company,  
Receiving miscellaneous services from their facility.  
Throughout the ship condition modified baker is set,  
This ship stays ready like a worried old vet.  
Ships present in the area total quite a few,  
Units of the U.S. Fleet and foreign nations too.  
All are friendly right now, at the start of this new year,  
Pray this situation will continue providing us with peace  
and good cheer.  
SOPA is our own Commanding Officer today,  
He's an easy man to follow because he knows the way.  
It's been an eventful year - old '56,  
We've been round half the world, had lots of kicks.  
We have carried Marines, fulfilled many a mission,  
Were awarded a plaque for Battle Efficient Condition.  
But keep your foreign ports, keep Mandalay  
Keep Marseille, France - give us the U.S.A.  
The Exec's on board, the Captain's not on the scene,  
But no one is worried, the OOD is a United States Marine.

  
M. M. BRUNNER  
1ST LT, USMC

# 1958

## DECK LOG—ADDITIONAL REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)

Wednesday 1 January 1958

00-04 With standard lines doubled moored port side the pier.  
In Catania, Sicily we welcomed the New Year.  
Our lines are as standard as any KA  
With bow and stern wires so we won't break away  
Twenty fathoms of chain lies on the deck  
To the starboard anchor to act as a check  
The crews are returning to ships that are here  
To help celebrate the Happy New Year  
Included among them all ships of the line  
POCONO, DONNER, WALDO COUNTY we find  
TERREBONNE PARISH, CAMBRIA too  
Are tied to the pier much as we do  
COMTRANSPHIBRON EIGHT  
Is SOPA this date  
The fire in number one boiler is burning  
To keep number one generator's armature turning  
Condition Baker set below main deck  
The security patrol continues to check  
The breeze is light  
No moon tonight  
The air is cool the sky is clear  
And dawn soon will break on a Happy New Year.

  
D. P. TREPPE  
LTJG, USN

# 1959

## DECK LOG—ADDITIONAL REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Thursday 1 January 1959

00-04 'Tis the first watch of the New Year, and all through the base,  
not a single ship stirs from her berthing space.  
'Tween us and pier 12, another vessel doth lay,  
It's the U.S.S. OLMSTED, all shiny and grey.  
Doubled up lines hold us snuggled up tight,  
By our portside, beside her, we rest in the night.  
Berth one twenty-two is our home in this place,  
At Norfolk, Virginia, Naval Operating Base.  
Condition of readiness five has been set,  
and with X-Ray below decks, we're safe, you can bet.  
Both the boiler and generator that bear Number one,  
Have been chosen this night as the ones that would run,  
We're receiving our fresh water straight from the pier,  
And on this special evening I wish it were beer.  
Dozens of ships lie about us in splendor,  
Destroyer, cruiser, auxiliary, and tender.  
Of our Atlantic Fleet, these ships all are part,  
A force which stirs pride in each sailor's heart.  
Merchant ships, too, can be seen on the pond.  
Ships from nations of which we are fond,  
Com NavAir Lant, our SOPA, is the biggest "wheel" on hand,  
and I'll wager, tonight no watch does he stand.  
A breeze, light and steady, from the northeast blows,  
The weather is chilly and so are my toes.  
The New Year hath come, the year Fifty-Nine,  
and because of it, I have written this rhyme.  
There are thousands of things I would rather have done,  
And there are many places where I could've had more fun,  
But though this watch didn't bring me great cheer,  
Let me wish to you all - A Happy New Year.

  
F. Donald Fleming  
Ens. USNR

# 1960

## DECK LOG—ADDITIONAL REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Friday 1 January 1960

00-04 Once upon a Midwatch dreary  
While I pondered weak and weary  
I saw the ghost of Father Time  
The parting spirit of '59.  
Said the spirit,  
"Relieve the watch, relieve the watch."

We were not at sea the night  
That I saw this ghostly sight.  
But port side to Pier Number One  
Excluded from the New Year fun.  
Said my heart,  
"Relieve the watch, relieve the watch,"

At Army Terminal, Hampton Roads  
Sat the RANKIN with her loads.  
Her wires out and lines all doubled  
All was calm, yet - the Spirit troubled.  
Where was '60?  
Relieve the watch, relieve the watch.

I told the Spirit, "Please believe  
Just as the RANKIN does receive  
Telephone and water from the pier  
Your relief will soon be here."  
Yet he sighed,  
"Relieve the watch, relieve the watch."

Condition YOKE was set below  
Readiness Condition was five - or so.  
Still the ghost was not impressed.  
"Where is the lad? I need my rest."  
Again I heard,  
"Relieve the watch, relieve the watch,"

The time was one for all to share.  
The yard and district craft were there,  
And units of the U. S. Fleet  
With merchants waited for the fete.  
And they waited -  
Relieve the watch, relieve the watch.

The man called SOPA who rules our seas  
Is known to all as Vice Admiral REES.  
"Ah yes" I heard the Spirit chant,  
"I know the man, COMNAVAIRLANT.  
Will he help?"  
Relieve the watch, relieve the watch!

Generator One and Boiler Two  
Were giving service to the crew.  
While to his life the Spirit cleaved  
He must not die before relieved.  
"I must hang on!"  
Relieve the watch, relieve the watch.

A gentle quiet settled over all  
The Spirit now too weak to call.  
Above the quiet eight bells rang clear,  
And we waited for the bright new year.  
The time was here  
Relieve the watch, relieve the watch.

And suddenly the babe was there.  
A few short words between the pair,  
The small child smiled, and shook his hand  
The Old Man vanished from the land.  
Said the Babe,  
"I have the watch, I have the watch."

  
H. ZIMMER  
LTJG, USN

# 1961

## DECK LOG

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Sunday 1 January 1961

00-04 O'er the Naval Shipyard rains do pour down,  
Obscuring the lights of Portsmouth town.  
Deserted and bare is pier forty three,  
And equally so is the white sheet before me.

Across the doubled-up mooring lines  
The Virginia rains do dot the brine.  
Blown by wind from the starboard side  
Th' off-shore wires, fore and aft, to hide

Slowly lulled by the patter of rain  
My thoughts do drift in a different vein,  
Repelled by the dark and the rain twixt the masts  
I slide from the present, into the past.

Out of the cold into warmer seas,  
O'er sunny islands wafts a balmy breeze.  
Amphibious landings, yet still time to play,  
In San Juan, St. Thomas and Montego Bay.

Tropical sun does tan the skin,  
Girls on vacation; a chance to sin?  
Different peoples, strange speech, new lands,  
Palm trees waving o'er golden sands.

Now rudely awakened from a glorious dream,  
How far away those days do seem.  
Water, steam, power, phones; life blood from the pier,  
Looming large and silent, is RANKIN, lifeless here.

While all around her life moves on,  
Yard and district craft sing a happier song,  
Various units of th' Atlantic Fleet,  
At the bidding of SOPA, COMSECONDFLT.

In condition V, a cold iron plant,  
Totally helpless, the pride of PHIBLANT.  
Still beneath the main deck, YOKE remains set,  
So others may sleep, and no one need fret.

But again I am lulled by the patter of rain,  
T'ward happier moments my mind I do train.  
Times when we laughed, worked, and glowed with pride  
A ship with purpose and life did I ride.

Back to September, a bright sunny day,  
Admirals and generals coming our way,  
The ship newly painted, decked with flags A to Z,  
All are assembled to receive the Gold "E".

And just last week, at Christmas time,  
Orphans aboard to play and to dine  
For once to be wanted, with glee they did sing  
These few gifts such happiness and joy did bring.

But still harder the rain hits the roof of the shack  
And again from my rev'ry I have to snap back.  
The wind, it grows stronger, and problems arise,  
No spark of light, no hope from the skies,

Alone on the midwatch; the dawn of the New Year;  
Portentious of good? Not so, I do fear!  
Seeing nothing but darkness and gloom thick as fog,  
Broken only by the stark, bare, and white New Year's log.

  
H. L. HARDEGREE  
ENS                      USNR

# 1962

## DECK LOG—SMOOTH REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Monday 1 January 1962

00-04 Tonight upon the midnight clear  
The good ship RANKIN lies portside to a pier.  
I STAND THE WATCH.  
"My God," I said, "61" sailed by,  
Faster than the Enterprise.  
Let us not look back though, said my ego to my id  
Not when there's poetry to be written on the mid.  
SO?  
You see, in the Navy by tradition  
The mid log is penned in poetry fashion.  
I'll write my epitome of trashery  
Along the style of Ogden Nashery.  
I STAND A TAUT WATCH.  
The Skipper and XO both are ashore  
Mr. JOHNSON is the CDO. (Ed. Note: Mr. Johnson had the  
general and chemical alarms, ship's whistle and siren, and  
21MC placed out of commission for a short period this  
evening. He feared some of the more frivolous members of  
the crew as well as some of our fun loving J.O.'s would  
think the New Year Baby should be beeped and welcomed  
aboard with such ceremony as befits a VIP.)  
TAUT?  
We are moored alongside Pier 11, Berth 106  
With various yard and district craft we do intermix;  
We did not come here of own accord  
More like a losing gambit on a chess board.  
YES TAUT!! meaning tough; firm; or snug; tidy; in a nest  
and proper condition or tense as taut nerves.  
We are down here at St. Helena Annex alongside the mothball fleet  
With which we most favorably compete  
Like the Packers and Giants!  
BY WHAT MISFORTUNE DID YOU DRAW THE WATCH?  
Don't worry about drifting into another craft  
We have off-shore wires both fore and aft.  
And standard mooring lines doubled up.  
And standard mooring lines doubled up.  
POETIC ABILITY?  
The engine room is on a 4-hour standby  
Upon which we'll not totally rely.  
So we'll keep number 2 boiler and number 1 and number 2  
generator on the line.  
NO.

Zero two forty-five. Time to commence a short trek  
to ascertain YOKE is set below the main deck  
and X-RAY main deck and above.  
and X-RAY main deck and above.  
A THOUSAND TIMES NO!!

By the way, SOPA is Commanding Officer, on U.S.S. CANBERRA (CAG-2)



P. S. Wisnewski  
ENS                      USNR

# 1963

## DECK LOG—SMOOTH REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Tuesday 1 January 1963

00-04 Waiting, awaiting, aboard her tonight  
Moored pier twelve, at Norfolk, U.S. Naval Station  
With mooring lines standard, and wires fore and aft  
Waiting for warmth  
The ALGOL to port, the MOUNTRAIL to the right  
We're outboard the ALGOL at  
Berth number two  
Awaiting the quilt  
XRAY is set, on main deck and above  
In Condition Six Ready with  
YOKE down below  
Waiting for dreams  
Two and three generators, are now on the line  
Number one boiler supplies  
All our needs  
Waiting for secrets  
Ships of friendly nations, are present with us  
Vessels of the District and  
Even small craft  
Awaiting the climax  
In charge of all vessels, of this area  
Is SOPA now present COM-  
ASWFORLANT  
Waiting for life  
It matters little, here or elsewhere  
The anxiety's the same and  
Seeming for ever  
Awaiting the end

  
R. A. SLATER  
ENS USNR

# 1964

## DECK LOG—SMOOTH REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Wednesday, 1 January 1964

00-04

Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, Va.  
Is where the ship is setting today,  
We're resting on keel blocks in drydock 4  
We're getting power from the shore  
Engines are torn down, cold iron plant,  
Not making power, yard says we can't.  
High and dry, though we are setting,  
Material Conditions, we're still not forgetting.  
Below the main deck, modified YOKE's in effect,  
X-RAY set elsewhere, should someone inspect.  
We're not quite alone in this here location,  
We've got merchant ships here from some foreign nations.  
District and yard craft, auxiliaries too,  
Atlantic Fleet units, it's a maritime stew.  
Senior officer in this part of the sticks  
Is Commander of CARDIV ONE SIX.  
Captain's ashore and so's the Exec.  
All those without duty, too, I expect.  
Here's wishing all hands a Happy New Year  
I'm off duty at eight, so have me a beer.

0308 GRANT, J.R., 904 03 96, RD2, USN was  
returned aboard by Shore Patrol accused of  
theft and intoxication.

  
H. R. KIMBERLING  
SMCA USN

# 1965

## DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Zone Description +5R  
Friday 1 January 1965  
At U.S. Army Terminal, Norfolk, Virginia

00-04 The baby new year has just arrived  
At the good ship Rankin by the Army Pier  
In Norfolk, Virginia this "balmy" night  
Tied to the Amphion her starboard side  
Her lines are doubled, her wires are set.  
Her iron is cold, her sailors are warm  
As steam she receives as well as her lights  
From our neighbor next door to starboard or right.  
Security is set, condition is four  
With YOKE below and X-RAY is high  
Many ships are here from near and afar.  
Most are Naval, though, of course, some are not  
But all are friendly and join in good cheer  
To wish you all a Happy New Year!

SOPA is COMNAVAIRLANT.



R. E. Dyson  
LTJG USNR

# 1966

## DECK LOG—REMARKS

USS Rankin (AKA-103)

Zone Description +5R

Saturday 1 January 1966

At South Quay Wall, South Annex, U.S. Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia

00-04 Cry my stalwart bright mates, "Aye, Sir, all's well,"  
As a weary watch struck the last eighth bell.  
Then huddled together 'gainst the north wind's wail,  
We hear from the foretop an eerie hail,  
"65, Departing."

With glass we strive to pierce the gloom  
'Til at last there stands an amorphous loom,  
As once again from the high murky loft  
A voice is heard with eight bells e'er so soft,  
"66, Arriving."

"Lo, on deck! Bear a hand with your reach,  
'Tis long 'fore we'll see a Dutchman's breech.  
Thank ye kindly now let's sit an' mesh  
O'er a cup o' jamoke that's hot an' fresh.

"Well, I see you're portside fast with all doubled line,  
To the South Annex Quay that was once part o' mine  
That must be Vermilion out to starboard I reckon,"  
"Aye, Sir," I said as he rose and beckoned.

"Come along, let's stalk about the darkened ship  
As quiet she rides of this dismal slip.  
Now, for your status I'd be much obliged,"  
To which, "Cold iron, Sir," I replied.

"We're receiving steam and electrical power,  
From the Vermilion at this late, dreary hour.  
Our security watch is making his sounds,  
On his many nightly fire watch rounds."

"Your condition of readiness can only be five,  
As in this time o' peace 'tis fine to be alive.  
For when I was a lad o' a score an' eight,  
The strongholds of power were filled with hate."

"Up forward 'tis good ye needn't cat an' fish,  
For in this weather 'twould be a mighty foul dish.  
"I believe by that port you're in modified Yoke"  
He queried of me. "Affirmative," I spoke.

"Aye, these days you receive from the pier  
Unlimited services not quite so dear.  
For 'n my age they were needin' to press,  
To bring our complements up to full dress."

While on the fantail pondering deep of below,  
He asked about SOPA with head slightly bōw.  
"Follow his path," said he with eyes dim,  
As I mentioned COMSECONDFLT'S title to him.

"Perched as ye be in the Second Fleet's midst,  
Remember quite well this following twist.  
Your country needn't ramparts to shield,  
You are her bulwarks that never yield!"

"Remember Serapis and Richard, surprizing hulks,  
Lay fast together as two blazing bulks.  
Strike never, 'I have just begun to fight!'  
As I laid the enemy into my sight.

"They stood and they died in a hail of 'antridge,  
While officer an' men fought on from the bridge.  
'Don't give up the ship! Blow 'er up!' said I,  
In a dirge-like tone that's my battle cry."

"Two ships, two brigs, a schooner and sloop  
I engaged in battle from my poop.  
And through the smoke-filled, tearing hours  
'We . . . met the enemy and they are ours.'"

"'Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead,'  
An' on through the minefields I cried and sped.  
The enemy was there an' solidly dug in,  
But we fought him out to the cannons din."

"I heartily shouted, 'Fire when ready, Gridley'  
In a Philippine port well north of Sydney.  
And out o' that cauldron of fire an' flame,  
We brought to our flag a new found fame."

"Son, my wanton past is full of glory  
And I've spun you a yarn of its fine story.  
Now your ship is involved from guess to hawse,  
Forever to fight in this mighty cause,

"If ye keep splicing the main with similar passion,  
I've no doubt she'll remain shipshape, Bristol fashion.  
Howe'er if once ye sawyer's traverse,  
Speak as a sundowner and be quite terse."

"Recall to mind that many are bankin'  
With just cause on the Ready-Now Rankin.  
Smart ye must be in every way,  
For a deed of reckoning will come some day.



"Aye, 'tis come the time I parted,  
'Fore the next watch is also martyred."  
Then he swung from chain to ratlin' an' shroud,  
Once up in the fore top he did cloud.

"Now who shall I write in our visitor's log,  
Boarded the ship from the hazy fog?  
An apparition you cannot see?"  
Inquired my tired watch of me.

Having weighed this question in mind did I  
Slowly answer their challenge with deep drawn sigh.  
"Privileged we've been for once and last,  
To view the spirit of Captains Past."

*W. R. Lawrence*  
W. R. Lawrence  
ENS., USNR

# 1967

## DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)  
Zone Description +5R  
Sunday 1 January 1967  
At U.S. Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia

00-04 Our watch set taut this misty night  
Old "66" he looks a sight  
We just have time to tell you this fable  
Before the old year slips his cable

From larboard to starboard he paces with sadness  
While out on Pier Three, "67" has gladness  
Eight bells have been sounded to end up his reign  
So a chanty we sing as he follows the Maine

A diddo he cuts as he's piped o'er the side  
Ahoy! To you New Year, it's your turn to ride  
Eight more bells rang out, piercing the night  
While up the ladder, "67" makes flight

It's time you describe this place where you stay  
If you don't follow SOPA, the Devil's to pay  
COMASWFORLANT's his title, no sundowner's he  
His watch marks are many, he rules handsomely

His orders are simple, just follow the rules  
It's doubled up standard, you see, you're no fools  
You're starboard side to, in berth thirty-one  
NAVSTA NORVA pumps water so scuttles can run

Atlantic Fleet units here give you no ration  
For you're always shipshape and Bristol fashion  
You've every award that Phiblant can leaven  
Let's hope you're as good in the new "67"

  
J. M. Cusick  
LT(jg) USNR

# 1968

## DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (AKA-103)

Zone Description +5R

Monday 1 January, 1968

At U.S. Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia

00-04        A strange relief took place last night,  
              'Though it happens every year.  
              It took place on our Quarterdeck;  
              and I was close enough to hear

              The New Year showed up right on time,  
A squared away young boot.  
              Old sixty-seven heaved a sigh.  
And gave a tired salute

              The word passed down was not all good,  
But the new year took it well.  
              I could not understand it all,  
But what I did, I'll tell.

              "SOPA tonight is PHIBGRU Four  
for the Little Creek retreat.  
              And here are resting many ships  
Of the US Atlantic Fleet.

              "While all these ships are an able lot,  
Manned by the country's best,  
              The Rankin, berthed at Pier Fifteen, South  
Stands high above the rest.

              "Her lines are doubled, for and aft;  
A wire leads to the shore,  
              But if it were left up to her and her crew,  
They'd rather sail than moor.

              "Her engine room is on cold iron,  
her generators still.  
              That steam line running from the pier  
Keeps out the winter's chill.

              "She also gets electric power  
And fresh water from the beach.  
              Her men are all turned in below,  
Or within an easy reach.

"With modified yoke below the decks  
And Material Condition Five,  
You may think that she's sound asleep,  
But she's really quite alive.

"Now I stand relieved, New Year,  
I pass it all to you.  
My last fine hour has slid away,  
There's no more I can do,

"Except to tell you once again,  
Before I cross the brow,  
It makes no difference where or when  
The Rankin's 'Ready Now.'"

*O. M. Baker*

O. M. Baker  
CWO-3 U.S.N.

# 1969

## DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (LKA-103)  
Zone Description +5R  
Wednesday 1 January, 1969  
At U.S. Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia

00-04 Moored port side to and outboard of the USS CAMBRIA (LPA-36) at Pier 12, Berth 122, U. S. Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia, with standard mooring lines doubled and wire to the pier fore and aft. Boiler #two and ship's service generator #one are on the line, and the ship is receiving fresh water and telephone service from the pier. Material condition YOKE (modified) is set second deck and below. Ships present include various units of the U.S. Atlantic Fleet and yard craft. SOPA is COMSECONDFLT aboard the U.S.S. SPRINGFIELD (CLG-7).



T. E. Nau  
MMC, USN

# 1970

## DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (LKA-103)

Zone Description +5R

Thursday 1 January, 1970

At U.S. Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia

00-04 Ship is moored starboard side to Pier 58 U.S. Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, VA. with six (06) standard mooring lines doubled and spring lay fore and aft. Material condition YOKE (modified) is set. The ship is in Condition of Readiness V. The engineering plant is in a cold iron status. The ship is receiving steam, electrical power, fresh water and telephone services from the pier. Ships present include various units of the U.S. ATLANTIC FLEET, yard and service craft. SOPA is COMPHIBLANT.

L. Simpson  
BM1

# 1971

## DECK LOG—REMARKS SHEET

USS Rankin (LKA-103)  
Zone Description +5R  
Friday 1 January, 1970  
At Little Creek, Virginia

00-04 The ship is moored starboard side to Pier 14, U. S. Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia, with standard mooring lines doubled and spring lay forward and wire aft. The engineering plant is cold iron and receiving the following services from the pier: fresh water, auxiliary steam, telephone service, AC and DC electrical power. Material condition YOKE is set second deck and below. Ships present include various units of the Atlantic Fleet, yard, and district craft. SOPA is COMPHIBLANT.

*Henry C. Orr*

Henry C. Orr  
LTJG, USNR

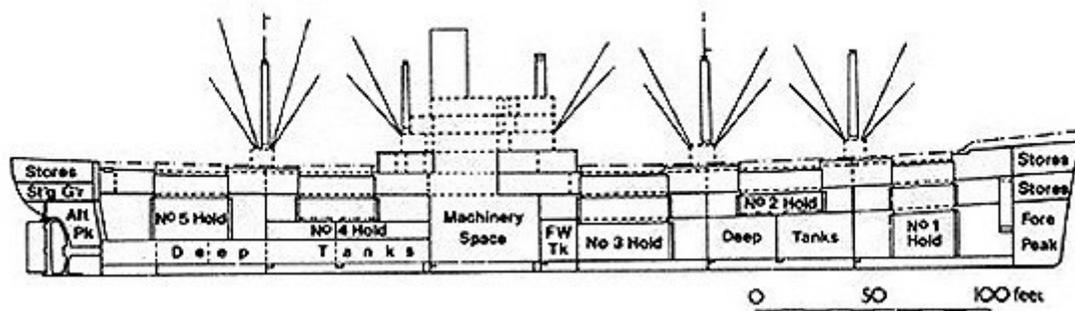
## USS RANKIN FACTS

USS Rankin (AKA-103) was an Attack Cargo Ship, designed to land weapons and supplies during amphibious assaults. She was the 103rd of 114 ships eventually constructed for this purpose. Commissioned in February, 1945, she was attacked by kamikazes later that year at Okinawa. She was taken out of service in May, 1947, then recommissioned in March, 1952 during the Korean conflict. In 1969, the Navy changed the AKA designation to LKA, and renamed her type Amphibious Cargo Ship. She was finally decommissioned in May, 1971, and was struck from the Naval Register on January 1, 1977. In July, 1988, she was sunk as a fishing and diving reef off the coast of Stuart, Florida.

The ship was 459 feet long, with a beam of 63 feet. Fully loaded, she displaced 11,000 tons, with a mean draft of about 20 feet. She had a maximum speed of 16.5 knots and a cruising range of 17,000 miles. Her crew was composed of 25-30 officers and 200-225 enlisted men.

The Rankin was a very special ship during her 21 years in commission, always characterized by high morale and very high performance. At one time, she held every award available to a ship of her type. Later, she was the first Atlantic Fleet ship to wear the Gold E, signifying five straight victories in the annual Battle Efficiency competition. Her captains included a Medal of Honor winner, a winner of the Navy Cross, and a member of the Navy's Blue Angels flight team. An uncommonly large number of her officers later became two- to four-star Navy admirals.

You can find much more about the Rankin and her crew at [www.ussrankin.org](http://www.ussrankin.org)



Drawing courtesy of [www.usmm.org](http://www.usmm.org)