

Board 19 ships at Pearl Harbor

7,500 Isle marines to Okin

By LYLE NELSON

Kaneohe's marines, loaded aboard 19 ships at Pearl Harbor, will leave today for Okinawa.

The move is to reinforce U.S. ground strength in the Far East following the landing of 3,500 marines at Da Nang, South Vietnam, several days ago.

Kaneohe's First Marine Brigade has a strength of more than 7,500 men including its air wing, Marine Air Group 13.

All were loaded aboard Navy ships, mostly from the end of the Pearl City Peninsula, yesterday afternoon.

The move was quick but not unexpected.

Military spokesmen here are tight-lipped as is always the case involving troop movements under war-like conditions.

A spokesman for Admiral U.S. Grant Sharp, Pacific Commander-in-Chief, would say only "the marines are moving."

Long lines of Army trucks and Army buses made the trip from Kaneohe to Pearl City yesterday.

The marines, dressed in green fatigue uniforms and ready for combat, stood in the trucks and joked with girls at every traffic intersection they stopped.

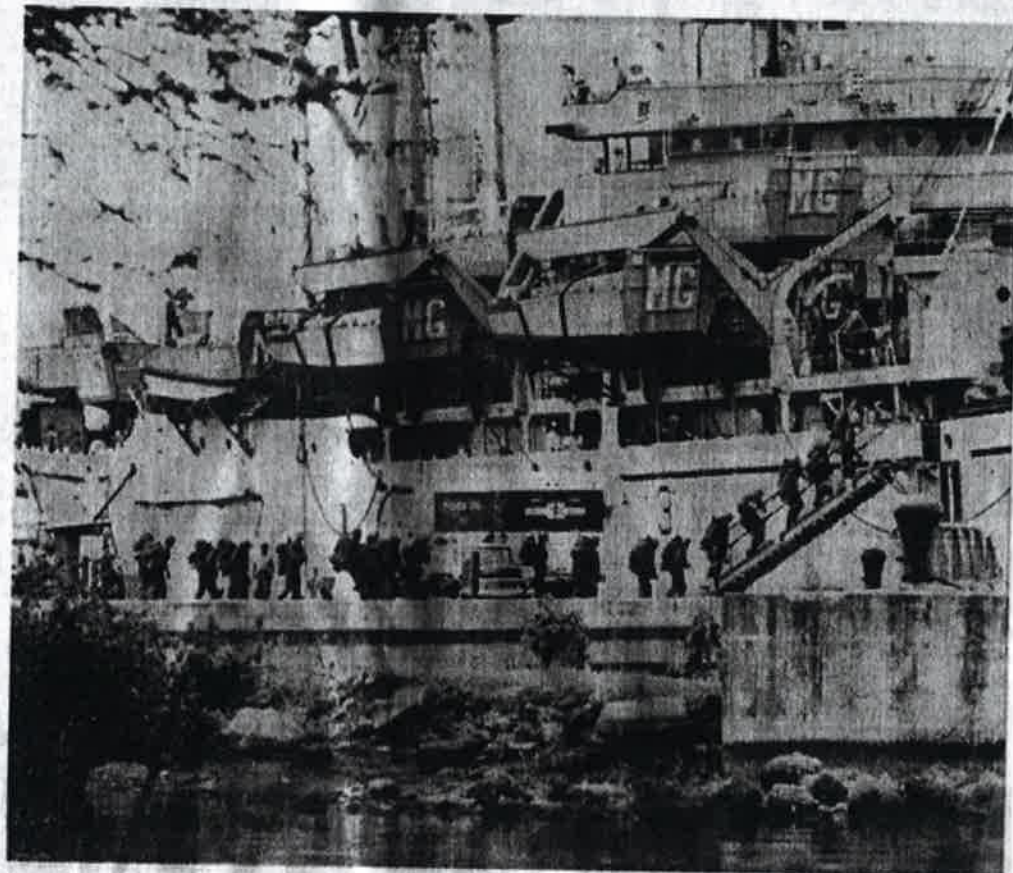
But at Pearl City the scene was not so humorous.

A few wives and children were allowed through gates near the piers to have a last chat with departing husbands.

In one case a station wagon was parked behind an abandoned building. A marine, his wife behind the wheel, and their little girl chatted quietly.

Long lines of men, hand-carrying their gear, moved up the gangway to the transport ships.

There was the sound of small landing craft backing off from piers with bells ringing. The scene was more like World



Kaneohe marines are shown boarding the Navy transport Magoffin at the Pearl City peninsula. — Star-Bulletin Photo.

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Marines leave for Far East

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War II than anything seen at Pearl in years.

A pall hung over the harbor on a smoggy, dark afternoon.

A whistle sounded aboard the transport Magoffin and a voice said over the ship's loudspeaker: "Now hear this, all marines lay down to the armory to draw weapons."

The transports Magoffin, Calvert and Seminole were at Pearl City which the marines normally use for loading and unloading.

Other ships such as the dock landing ships Oak Hill, Catamount, Fort Marion, Monticello and Belle Grove were alongside Ford Island.

The amphibious assault ship Iwo Jima sat out in the harbor, marine fighter planes on its carrier-like deck and a huge portable crane on a lighter alongside.

LST's of World War II vintage sat about the harbor with lighters alongside.

Marines were being loaded aboard the Wexford County, Page County, Stone County, Sumner County, St. Clair County, Summit County and Snohomish County.

The transport Skagit sat alongside Ford Island and other ships involved in the "mound out" were the transports Montrose and Paul Revere.

Today the base at Kaneohe looks almost abandoned and similar to those days 30 years ago before the Brigade came to Hawaii.

A small Air Station detachment of around 300 men are still on the job as housekeepers.

The Brigade is being sent to Okinawa

to reinforce the Third Marine Division stationed at Camp Hansen.

Two battalions from this force moved into South Vietnam over the weekend to provide security for the U.S. air base at Da Nang.

And large numbers of Third Division troops probably are aboard Seventh Fleet ships right now in the South China Sea or Tonkin Gulf waters close to Vietnam.

Marines from Okinawa are always aboard Navy ships for instant shore landings if needed.

There has been speculation that marines with the First Division stationed at Camp Pendleton, California, might come here to serve as a backup at Kaneohe.

But official military sources wouldn't talk about this.

The 19 ships at Pearl Harbor include those that left San Diego February 5 to take the Kaneohe troops to California for a recent war games exercise called Silver Lance.

Kaneohe participation was canceled at the last minute even though heavy gear had already been stored on the ships at Pearl Harbor.

Fighter pilots from MAG 13, however, were already on the West Coast and some were aboard the carrier Oriskany when Silver Lance got started.

The fleet of LST's arrived here from the West Coast last Wednesday.

Speculation has been high since that the men from Kaneohe would be leaving.

Military sources had declined for days to discuss plans for these 19 ships. They just sat awaiting orders from Washington. The orders came.