DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51)
FLEET POST OFFICE
AE 09565-1269

IN REPLY REFER TO:
5750
DDG51/PAO/

From: Commanding Officer, USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH) Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, 805 Kidder Breese Street, SE, Washington, DC 20374-5060

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY 2002

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Supporting Documents

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are submitted to document ARLEIGH BURKE's command history for 2002.

W. C. HARRIS

USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51)
Command History 2002
Command Composition and Organization

Mission: Conduct multi-warfare, sustained combat operations at sea or in the littoral as part of a Carrier Battle Group, a Joint Task Force, or independently.

Organizational Structure: Assigned to Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWO.

Commanding Officer: Commander William Claiborne Harris, U.S. Navy.

Permanent Duty Station: Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia.

USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51) Command History 2002
Chronology

01	Jan:	EDSRA continues
01 - 06	Jan:	Holiday Leave
07 - 11	Jan:	Single Ship ASW Trainer
14 - 18	Jan:	Single Ship ASW Trainer
14 - 15	Jan:	RADNAV Team Trainer
22 - 25	Jan:	Engineering Limited Training Team (LTT)
29	Jan:	Firefighting Team Trainer Rep II
30	Jan:	Firefighting Team Trainer Rep III
31	Jan:	Firefighting Team Trainer Rep V
01	Feb:	HELO Firefighting Training
04 - 07	Feb:	Engineering Limited Team Trainer (LTT)
11 - 15	Feb:	Engineering Limited Team Trainer (LTT)
21	Feb:	Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) Syndicate Meeting
25	Feb:	Surface Warfare (SUW) Syndicate Meeting
26	Feb:	Battle Group Commanders Conference
27 - 28	Feb:	RADNAV Team Trainer
28	Feb:	CCDG 8 MIW Syndicate
04 - 08	Mar:	Engineering LTT (Cold Checks)
14 - 15	Mar:	Maritime Safety Institute (MSI) Trainer
18	Mar:	Start Plant Light Off
19 - 21	Mar:	Light Off Assessment (Engineering)
25	Mar:	Propulsion Plant Light Off
01	Apr:	U/W Depart Metro Machine Shipyard
03 - 04	Apr:	Sea Trials
03	Apr:	Yorktown 5-inch Ammo onload

05	Apr:	Complete EDSRA Availability
05 - 26	Apr:	FMAV
08 - 12	Apr:	ASW Team Trainer
15 - 19	Apr:	ASW Team Trainer
16	Apr:	TRE Ammo Onload
19	Apr:	Dining Out (Wardroom and Chief's Mess)
22 - 24	Apr:	MSI Trainer
22 - 23	Apr:	RADNAV Team Trainer
22	Apr:	AMMO Onload
24	Apr:	CSIS Dinner - Washington D.C.
29 Apr - 05	May:	Underway - JTFEX OPFOR, TRE, PVST
30	Apr:	UNREP
03 - 10	May:	WSN 7 Certification
08 - 10	May:	Tactical Readiness Evaluation (TRE)
10 - 15	May:	PVST - Port Everglades, FL
15 - 17	May:	Underway - Engineering LTT
16	May:	SLAMEX
17	May:	Return Homeport
20 - 23	May:	Battle Force Team Trainer (BFTT) Training
20 - 31	May:	Tomahawk Material Certification
24	May:	Strike Warfare (STW) Syndicate
29 - 30	May:	U/W AMMO Onload - Yorktown
31	May:	Destroyermen's Ball
03 - 07	Jun:	Physical Readiness Test (PRT)
05 - 07	Jun:	Engineering LTT
10 - 14	Jun:	Naval Surface Fire Support (NSFS) Team Traininer; Cruise Missile Tactical Qual (CMTQ) LTT
10	Jun:	Small Boat Training

11	Jun:	Undersea Warfare (USW) Tests
13	Jun:	Naval Historical Center Visit
17 - 19	Jun:	Initial Assessment (IA)- Engineering
18	Jun:	Small Boat Training
19	Jun:	Main Space Fire Doctrine (MSFD) CERT; STW Forum
24 - 28	Jun:	CART II
01	Jul:	IA closeout
02 - 03	Jul:	CMTQ LTT; BGIE II
08 - 11	Jul:	Exercise SOLID CURTAIN (Precursor) ; NSFS Phase II (Qual)
09 - 10	Jul:	CBR-D LTT
10 - 11	Jul:	SLAMEX Phase I+ (LAC)
12 - 19	Jul:	U/W - VCOA / CPOA (SMART SEARCH 02 - SS02)
19	Jul:	Return Homeport
22 - 26	Jul:	Exercise SOLID CURTAIN - NORFOLK NAVAL BASE Force Protection Exercise
30	Jul:	SS02 Hot Wash C4I Syndicate
02	Aug:	MSFD Cert
05 - 09	Aug:	CMTQ LTT
05 - 06	Aug:	DC LTT (Basic Fire Fighting)
06	Aug:	KEFTACEX Pre-sail Conference
07 - 08	Aug:	DC LTT (Pipe Patch/Shore)
09	Aug:	Change of Command - CDR William C. Harris, USN relieves CDR Robin L. Russell, USN
10	Aug:	Boy Scouts of America Ship Tour
12 - 13	Aug:	CMTQ LTT
13 - 14	Aug:	KEFTACEX COMM CHECKS

13	Aug:	CO's Pre-sail Conference; Berth Ship
14	Aug:	CMTQ
16 - 24	Aug:	U/W Enroute Iceland
24 - 26	Aug:	PVST - Reykjavik, Iceland
26	Aug:	KEFTACEX Conference - Keflavik
26 Aug - 03	Sep:	U/W KEFTACEX
03 - 04	Sep:	Brief Stop for Fuel (BSF) Reykjavik, IC
04 - 10	Sep:	U/W - Enroute Norway
07 - 08	Sep:	PVST - Bergen, Norway - Flagship COMDESRON TWO Embarks with Staff
08 - 10	Sep:	U/W; NSFS Qual - Frohavet, Norway
10 - 17	Sep:	U/W Enroute Halifax, Nova Scotia
17	Sep:	UNREP w/ HMCS PRESERVER
17 - 20	Sep:	PVST - Halifax, Nova Scotia
20 - 23	Sep:	U/W Enroute NORVA
20 - 22	Sep:	Final Evaluation Problem (FEP)
23	Sep:	COMDESRON TWO Change of Command - CAPT Mark E. Kosnik relieves CAPT David M. Thompson
23	Sep:	Return Homeport - COMDESRON TWO shifts Flag
24	Sep:	Detailer Visit - Surface Warfare Officers
27	Sep:	ASW Syndicate
02 - 03	Oct:	SLAMEX 38-02
04 - 14	Oct:	GOTS-D Upgrade
07 - 11	Oct:	Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) Cert
07	Oct:	CAPSTONE Visit
08 - 10	Oct:	AT/FP Certification
15 - 16	Oct:	U/W Underway Demo (UD) Preps - VACAPES OPAREA

16	Oct:	Return Homeport
31	Oct:	Young President's Visit
01	Nov:	Commissioning Ceremony - ENS Michalski
04 - 08	Nov:	BG End-to-End Training
04 - 05	Nov:	U/W UD Preps ENG LTT
06 - 08	Nov:	Ammo Onload - Yorktown
08	Nov:	UNREP w/ USNS John Lenthall
09 - 15	Nov:	U/W UD Preps
12 - 13	Nov:	ENG LTT
15	Nov:	Underway Demonstration - Engineering Flagship: COMDESRON TWO embarks
15	Nov:	Return Homeport - COMDESRON TWO shifts Flag
18 Nov - 20	Dec:	FMAV
05	Dec:	Ship Holiday Party - Downtown Marriott
09 - 13	Dec:	VBSS TT (Team 2); 3M Inspection
09 - 10	Dec:	C4I Fast Cruise
12 - 13	Dec:	MSI
12 - 13	Dec:	Berth Shift
13	Dec:	Ammo Onload - Norfolk
16 - 31	Dec:	Holiday Leave
19	Dec:	SLAMEX 48-02
25	Dec:	Christmas Day
27	Dec:	Turnover Day

USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51)
Command History 2002
Narrative

2002 was another banner year for the Norfolk, VA based USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51). Her journeys would take her from the dry-docks, to the Caribbean, to the waters of the North Atlantic, and back home, all the while completing step after step of an aggressive Inter-deployment Training Cycle (IDTC). By December 2002, with the war clouds gathering over Iraq, the ship had successfully accomplished the IDTC and prepared to sail for COMPTUEX in January and a possible short notice deployment.

2002 began with the Admiral's Destroyer conducting an Extended Docking Ship's Restricted Availability (EDSRA) in Metro Machine Shipyards, Norfolk, VA. This was the first major EDSRA for any of the ARLEIGH BURKE-class Destroyers. The ship received a new WSN-7 and NAVSSI upgrade, berthing and galley refurbishing, a stern flap for improved speed and reduced squat, shaft removal and cleaning, overall engineering and topside preservation, Battle Force Team Training (BFTT) install, Advanced Tomahawk Weapons Control System (ATWCS) equipment, as well as various other projects to enhance the combat performance of the Destroyer.

During the shipyard period, Sailors continued their education and practiced their war fighting skills using team trainers available on the Norfolk waterfront. Throughout the month of January, Sailors trained on Anti-Submarine warfare, radar navigation, engineering, and fire fighting, while the ship remained in the shipyards.

On January 10, Congressman Randy Forbes, Representative for Virginia's Fourth District, paid a visit to ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51) to show his support for the military and for the shipyards that keep the Navy sailing at peak performance. Admiral J. Paul Reason (ret.), who holds the distinction as the first African-American Four Star Admiral, spoke at ARLEIGH BURKE's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Memorial Ceremony on January 18.

Through February, Sailors continued the Team Trainers around Hampton Roads while COMCRUDESGRU EIGHT spearheaded various warfare syndicates attended by ARLEIGH BURKE Sailors. Designed to get members of the battlegroup planning ahead in multiple areas, the warfare syndicate meetings brought the operators and planners together to discuss tactics, schedules, and training. These syndicate meetings would continue through the Interdeployment Training Cycle (IDTC), and improved communication between ships and staff while enhancing warfighting abilities throughout the Battle Group.

March focused on preparations for engineering plant light off. The engineering department hosted several Limited Team Trainers (LTT's) onboard, sponsored by Afloat Training Group (ATG) Norfolk. These LTT's flexed and prepared the engineering watchstanders for the Light Off Assessment (LOA) in late March. LOA focuses on the condition of the engineering plant after prolonged yard periods. Passing LOA means that a ship can steam away from dry dock safely using its own propulsion. ATG Inspectors conducted LOA March 19-21. ARLEIGH BURKE passed this important first step in the IDTC with a ship-wide effort.

Junior Officers continued training at the Maritime Safety Institute (MSI) trainer in March. Located in Norfolk and housing

pilothouse simulators, MSI allowed JO's to practice underway replenishments, getting underway, and pulling into port with various computer generated situations with the aid of the MSI instructors, former Navy Captains.

With the LOA behind her, ARLEIGH BURKE proudly left the Metro Machine Shipyards in Norfolk on April 1, 2002. During that first underway, while anchored at Lynnhaven Anchorage, the crew held a "thank you" ceremony and grill out for the shipyard workers who had played integral role in the EDSRA. Two days later on April 3, the ship was underway to conduct sea trials and ammo onload. The EDSRA was officially over on April 5, though topside preservation work and engineering upgrades would continue throughout the IDTC. The ASW team continued their training off-ship during two team trainers in April.

Off-ship activities during this period included the Wardroom and Chief's Mess Dining Out at Fort Story Officers Club in Virginia Beach and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Dinner in Washington D.C. CSIS, headquartered in Washington, D.C., was founded in part by support of Admiral Arleigh Burke after retiring from the Navy. Every year, the CSIS awards a member of Congress the "Admiral Arleigh A. Burke Memorial Award" for a Congressman who has made contributions in defense or international affairs. ARLEIGH BURKE's Commanding Officer, Sailor of the Year, and Bull Ensign attended the event on April 24.

The ARLEIGH BURKE got underway on April 29 to participate as opposing forces (OPFOR) in USS ENTERPRISE Battle Group's Joint Tactical Force Exercise (JTFEX). This underway period helped bring the Combat and Bridge watch standers back into the rhythm of operational steaming.

Following ARLEIGH BURKE's previous deployment, many of the experienced Sailors had transferred. Therefore, engaging in war exercises with ENTERPRISE Battle Group was crucial in improving combat readiness onboard ARLEIGH BURKE.

After being detached from the JTFEX, ARLEIGH BURKE steamed south to the Caribbean to help two submarines conduct their Tactical Readiness Evaluation (TRE). Enroute, ARLEIGH BURKE helped two mariners in distress in a rescue at sea for a fishing boat that had lost propulsion and had drifted out to sea. ARLEIGH BURKE towed the wayward fishermen close to the coast and turned the vessel over to the United States Coast Guard.

Off the coast of the Bahamas from May 8-10, ARLEIGH BURKE conducted several exercises with the submarines to support their combat proficiency. Of course, this also helped the ARLEIGH BURKE Antisubmarine Warfare team hone their skills in tracking the submarines. In addition, ARLEIGH BURKE assumed the role of Launch Area Coordinator (LAC) and Alternate Theater Strike Coordinator (ALT TSC) for a simulated Tomahawk Cruise Missile Launch by the submarines and the USS PORTER (DDG 78).

After completion of the TRE, ARLEIGH BURKE pulled into Port Everglades (Fort Lauderdale), FL from May 10-15. The Navy League of Fort Lauderdale had several events planned for all hands, including a free dinner at a local restaurant in Fort Lauderdale. On Saturday, May 11, Florida Marlins owner Jeffery Loria and two of his star players, third baseman Mike Lowell and centerfielder Preston Wilson visited USS ARLEIGH BURKE. During their visit, the Marlins gave the crew two hundred free tickets to the Marlins game on May 12, which was

subsequently well attended by ARLEIGH BURKE Sailors. The Commanding Officer was given the honor of throwing out the first pitch at the Marlins game in Miami. Underway on May 15, the trip back to Norfolk consisted of several Engineering LTT's and overall ship training in Main Space Fire Doctrine. ARLEIGH BURKE returned to Norfolk on May 17.

The remainder of May was spent conducting various training evolutions in the engineering department and the combat systems Battle Force Team Trainer (BFTT). Also, the Advanced Tomahawk Weapons Control System (ATWCS) Material Certification for the EDSRA install and upgrade was completed. At the end of the month, May 29-30, ARLEIGH BURKE was again underway, sailing to Yorktown Weapons Station for a missile and ammunition onload. On May 31, members of the Wardroom attended the Destroyermen's Ball at the Downtown Norfolk Marriot, honoring the Century of Destroyers.

June saw the Inter-Deployment Training Cycle (IDTC) in full swing. Limited Team Trainers (LTT), in a variety of different areas, highlighted the first two weeks of June. The ATG Norfolk provided the outside expertise for the LTT's. ATG personnel came to train the crew in Engineering Casualty Control Drills, simulated Naval Surface Fire Support (NSFS), and Simulated Employment of Tomahawk Cruise Missiles (SLAMEX).

All hands were intimately involved in the Engineering Initial Assessment (IA), which was held from June 17-19. One of the most important engineering assessments, the assessors inspected the material condition of the plant and the proficiency of the ship's watchstanders in combating casualties and main space fires. The next major evolution for the ship was Command Assessment of Readiness and Training, or CART

II, which is a ship self-assessment on all aspects of manning and administrative readiness.

July brought new challenges to the crew of ARLEIGH BURKE. On the first of the month, the engineering department wrapped up an ATG and DESRON TWO sponsored evolution and Main Space Fire Drill not seen by ATG assessors during IA. During the first week of July, the ship also held another Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification (CMTQ) LTT, training on launching Tomahawk and Harpoon Cruise Missiles in tandem. The second week focused on the NSFS Qualification, which the ARLEIGH BURKE combat team passed successfully. By July 12, the ship sailed to the Virginia Capes Operating Area (VACAPES OPAREA) for Smart Search '02, a multi-ship, anti-submarine warfare (ASW) exercise. The ARLEIGH BURKE ASW team put their training to good use in an operational environment. The ship returned to homeport on July 19. For the remainder of the month, the ship participated in Exercise Solid Curtain, a Force Protection Exercise for the entire Norfolk waterfront and in another CMTQ LTT as well as various off-ship warfare syndicate meetings.

August would bring new leadership to the ARLEIGH BURKE as well as a host of new challenges and new journeys. On August 5, CDR William C. Harris checked onboard to begin his turnover with ARLEIGH BURKE's Commanding Officer. The busy week that followed included several off ship meeting in advance of the ship's participation in KEVTACEX later in the month, as well as a CMTQ LTT. CDR William "Clay" Harris relieved CDR Robin L. Russell as the ship's eighth Commanding Officer, during the Change of Command ceremony held onboard on August 9. Guests included former ARLEIGH BURKE Commanding Officers, Commander DESTROYER

SQUADRON TWO, CAPT Daniel M. Thompson, and the guest speaker, Commander CRUISER DESTROYER GROUP EIGHT, Rear Admiral Cosgriff.

The next week as the ship prepared for KEVTACEX, the combat team successfully completed Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification six weeks ahead of schedule on August 14. The ship then got underway for KEVTACEX on Friday, August 16. KEVTACEX was a multi-national anti-submarine warfare exercise in the North Atlantic, which included maritime patrol aircraft and ships from several NATO countries. Joined by fellow DESRON TWO ships, USS PORTER (DDG 78), with embarked COMDESRON TWO staff, and USS CARR (FFG 52), ARLEIGH BURKE battled through fog and heavy seas enroute Reykjavik, Iceland. During the transit, the ship conducted training in anticipation of the Final Evaluation Problem (FEP) and Underway Demonstration (UD), with several battle problems, which tested both the Combat Information Center (CIC) and the engineering department.

ARLEIGH BURKE anchored in Reykjavik, Iceland on August 24, along with PORTER and CARR. This visit represented the first visit of U.S. Navy ships in Iceland in five years. On the morning of August 25, ARLEIGH BURKE had to re-anchor in Reykjavik Harbor due to heavy weather. After anchoring, the ship's Wardroom and Chiefs Mess attended an International Night at the U.S. Naval Air Station Keflavik. In attendance were representatives from all the NATO countries involved in KEVTACEX. The next morning, after a KEVTACEX Conference outlining the schedule of events, the ship weighed anchor and headed back out into the unforgiving North Atlantic seas. KEVTACEX then began in earnest. The NATO ships and aircraft hunted the elusive Type 209 Diesel submarine from Norway for five days. With the close coordination

between the ships and aircraft, ARLEIGH BURKE was able to use her organic sensors to track the Norwegian submarine. All the team trainers for the Sonar Technicians and Operations Specialists paid off during the exercise.

Upon conclusion of the KEVTACEX events, the ship anchored again in Reykjavik on September 3 for fuel. September 4, the ship headed to Norway, stopping in Bergen, Norway on September 7 for fuel and liberty. In Bergen, ARLEIGH BURKE became the flagship for Destroyer Squadron Two, with the embarkation of COMDESRON TWO, CAPT Thompson and his staff. By September 8, ARLEIGH BURKE was headed up to the NSFS Range at Frohavet, Norway. Tucked into a fjord, the Frohavet Range was being considered by U.S. Naval planners as a possible substitute for the Vieques Island, Puerto Rico gun range. On September 10, ARLEIGH BURKE scored an impressive 97.5% during the NSFS qualification. The NSFS qualification tests the ship's ability to place rounds from its MK 45, 5-inch gun on shore targets called by Marine Corps and U.S. Navy spotters on the beach.

Upon completion of the NSFS qualification, it was back across the Atlantic for ARLEIGH BURKE. Along the way the ship trained constantly for the Final Evaluation Problem (FEP). Following an underway replenishment with HMCS PRESERVER, ARLEIGH BURKE pulled into Halifax, Canada on August 17. The crew enjoyed some well-deserved liberty in Halifax. ARLEIGH BURKE left Halifax on September 20 with the DESRON TWO staff and ATG assessors onboard. The ATG assessors were onboard for ARLEIGH BURKE's FEP. FEP tests all areas of warfare on the ship and the overall ship's ability to train herself. ARLEIGH BURKE passed the FEP on September 22, leaving only one more Engineering Inspection

as the last hurdle in the IDTC. On September 23, the ship hosted the Change of Command for DESTROYER SQUADRON TWO on the ship's forecastle. CAPT Mark E. Kosnik, a former ARLEIGH BURKE Commanding Officer, relieved CAPT Thompson in an event featuring RADM Cosgriff as the guest speaker. That night, ARLEIGH BURKE moored pierside, Norfolk, VA, home after five weeks of intense training, hard-hitting weather, and impressive accomplishment in ASW, NSFS, and FEP. The last week of September saw a Detailer Visit for the Wardroom and several off-ship meetings.

Through KEVTACEX, members of the Wardroom and Chief's Mess stayed warm in the harsh North Atlantic wearing the "Destroyerman's Jacket", a black leather jacket, unique to the culture onboard the greyhounds of the fleet. Thus, the "Destroyerman's Jacket" was introduced onboard the ARLEIGH BURKE, and encouraged strongly to fellow DESRON TWO Destoyers.

ARLEIGH BURKE used October for preparation for the Underway Demonstration, as well as various meetings in all major warfare areas off-ship. On October 3, the Strike Warfare Team participated in a SLAMEX with several other ships on the Norfolk Waterfront. ARLEIGH BURKE had the honor of hosting a tour group from CAPSTONE, a course for new flag officers from all branches of the military, on the morning of October 7. From October 8-10, ARLEIGH BURKE conducted the first ever Level III Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) Certification. Evaluated by ATG's Force Protection experts, ARLEIGH BURKE's security teams were tested through fifteen scenarios a day for three days. After passing the AT/FP Certification, ARLEIGH BURKE's experience and feedback helped the ATG assessors tailor the new certification and set

the tone for how all future certifications would be conducted on the Norfolk waterfront. The ship got underway on October 15-16 for UD preparations. During the last weeks in October, ARLEIGH BURKE continued to prepare for her remaining IDTC Engineering inspection, the Underway Demonstration (UD). On October 31, the ship hosted the Young Presidents, a youth organization for people interested in politics and participated in another SLAMEX.

November began with a Limited Duty Officer (LDO) commissioning ceremony on November 1. On November 4, the ship hosted a National Geographic film crew. The film crew and National Geographic Explorer host Boyd Matson used several crewmembers and the ship's 5-inch gun (dubbed "Jessica" by the Gunners Mates) as the backdrop for a National Geographic special on the USS MONITOR. That afternoon, ARLEIGH BURKE got underway for UD preparations. November 6-8 the ship moored at the Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown for weapons onload. From November 8-14, ARLEIGH BURKE drilled and geared up for the UD. On November 15 the UD assessment team from ATG arrived onboard, along with COMDESRON TWO, making ARLEIGH BURKE the DESRON TWO flagship for the 15th. A challenging and rewarding day, the ship completed the UD and returned home late during the night of November 15.

With the last hurdle of the IDTC finished, ARLEIGH BURKE focused on getting ready for COMPTUEX and the possibility of early deployment. The last two weeks of November were filled with C5RA and SEMAT, a shipwide assessment by civilian technicians designed to bring focused attention to material discrepancies onboard before COMPTUEX. In addition to the C5RA, many in the Wardroom were involved in a CRUISER

DESTROYER GROUP EIGHT sponsored Sea Combat Commander's conference in Dam Neck, VA. The month concluded with the Thanksgiving holiday.

In December, the ship continued preparing for COMPTUEX and the increasing probability of early deployment with the USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT Battle Group. During the first week, the Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) teams participated in off ship training. The ship's Holiday Party was held at the Downtown Marriot on December 5. The next week, the ship conducted her 3M Inspection, hosting inspectors to review the ship's maintenance program. The 3M Inspection was another successful evaluation in a year chock full of inspections, visits, and assists. Shifting berths on December 12 for ammunition onload on the 13th, the ship would return the original berth the night of December 13. Junior Officers again participated in the MSI trainer on December 12-13. The Engineering Department remained busy, replacing flex hoses in all the main engineering and auxiliary spaces. December 17 began the Holiday Leave and Upkeep Period. During the leave period, the ARLEIGH BURKE participated in a COMCRUDESGRU EIGHT sponsored SLAMEX on December 19. Turnover date for the duty sections was December 27.

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2002, was a pivotal year in the life of the USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51), highlighted by months in the drydocks, months of training, months of operational steaming, and months of preparation for the eventuality of war. Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, ARLEIGH BURKE, and indeed the Navy, has felt that Sailors could expect to put their training to use at anytime, anywhere around the globe.

Even with the countless inspections, training, and operations, the ship earned all four efficiency awards: the Maritime Warfare Excellence Award (Black "E"), the Engineering Survivability Award (Red "E"), the Command and Control Excellence Award (Green "E"), and the Logistic Management Award (Blue "E"). As 2003 dawned, USS ARLEIGH BURKE stood at the tip of the spear, prepared by a year of training and challenges, to take the fight to the shores of an uncertain world.