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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS AUSTIN (LPD-4)  
FPO NEW YORK 09564-1707

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5750  
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9 March 1992

From: Commanding Officer, USS AUSTIN (LPD-4)  
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy  
Yard, Washington, DC 20370

Subj: 1991 COMMAND HISTORY FOR USS AUSTIN (LPD-4)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization 1991  
(2) Command History 1991 Chronology  
(3) Command History 1991 Narrative  
(4) Current Ship's Photo  
(5) Welcome Aboard Packet

1. In accordance with reference (a), the 1991 Command History for USS AUSTIN (LPD-4) is forwarded.

  
C. C. BUCHANAN

Copy to:  
COMPHIBRON TWELVE

## COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

AUSTIN is an Amphibious Transport Dock designed to transport and land ashore her complement of up to 900 Marines and their equipment by both helicopter and surface amphibious landing craft. AUSTIN carries enough equipment and supplies to sustain her assault force ashore for a period of 30 days, unsupported.

AUSTIN is under the administrative command of Commander Amphibious Squadron TWELVE, Commodore Tickle.

AUSTIN's Commanding Officer is Captain C. C. Buchanan, United States Navy. Austin's home port is Norfolk, Va. Captain Buchanan is a native of Bradbury Heights, Maryland and a 1967 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. Following a tour in USS RADFORD (DD 446) as Asst. Navigator and Asst. ASW Officer, he attended Naval Flight Officer Training, earning his Radar Intercept Officer wings on 4 April 1969.

Captain Buchanan has amassed over 4,000 hours of flight time, 320 combat missions, and 1,136 carrier arrested landings in F-4 and F-14 aircraft. Squadron assignments have been with VF 213, VF 121, VF 211 and as Commanding Officer VF 151. Other assignments include the Naval War College, three tours in OP-05, and CDC/Operations Officer in USS CORAL SEA (CV-43).

Captain Buchanan's awards include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (4), Air Medal (2 individual and 20 Strike/Flight), Navy Commendation Medal (2), and Air Force Commendation Medal as well as various unit, theatre and foreign awards.

Captain Buchanan is married to the former Christine Schwartz of Fairfax, Virginia. They have three daughters, Tanya, Meredith, and Courtenay, and one son, Ryan.

1991 HISTORY

01 - 23 JAN	IN PORT NORFOLK, VA, PIER 12 BERTH 2.
23 JAN	DEPLOYED FROM NORFOLK, VA WITH USS CHARLESTON AND USS GUADALCANAL AS MARG 1-91 UNDER THE TACTICAL COMMAND OF COMPHIBRON EIGHT, COMMODORE TURNER.
23 - 24 JAN	ENROUTE MOREHEAD CITY, NC
24 JAN	ARRIVED MOREHEAD CITY, NC - ON LOAD ELEMENTS OF 24 MEU (SPECIAL OPERATIONS CAPABLE) INCLUDING UNITS FROM BATTALION LANDING TEAM 2/8, FORCE RECONNAISSANCE PLATOON 2/8, SEAL TEAM EIGHT, SPECIAL BOAT UNIT, BEACHMASTER UNIT 2, AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT VEHICLE PLATOON 2/8, LANDING CRAFT LCU-1662.
24 JAN	U/W FROM MOREHEAD CITY, NC
24 JAN - 04 FEB	ENROUTE ROTA, SPAIN.
04 - 06 FEB	IN PORT ROTA, SPAIN, PIER 1, BERTH 4
06 FEB	U/W FROM ROTA, SPAIN
06 FEB	PASSAGE THROUGH STRAIT OF GIBRALTER, INCHOP TO SIXTH FLEET
06 - 08 FEB	ENROUTE ALMERIA, SPAIN
08 FEB	ANCHORAGE C-3, GULFO DE ALMERIA, SPAIN
08 - 17 FEB	<u>EXERCISE SPANISH AIR ASSAULT</u>
08 - 10 FEB	ANCHORAGE C-3
10 - 11 FEB	U/W OPAREA #1
11 - 13 FEB	ANCHORAGE C-3
13 - 14 FEB	U/W OPAREA #1
14 - 15 FEB	ANCHORAGE C-3
15 - 16 FEB	U/W OPAREA #1
16 - 17 FEB	MOORED ALMERIA, SPAIN
17 FEB	U/W FROM ALMERIA, SPAIN
17 - 20 FEB	ENROUTE CORSICA, FRANCE VIA STRAITS OF BONIFACIO
18 FEB	REFUELED M.V. FROM RICHARD C. MATTHEISEN
20 FEB	ARRIVE EASTERN SHORE CORSICA, FRANCE OPAREA
20 - 23 FEB	<u>EXERCISE CORSICA 91</u> , ANCHORED AND U/W OPAREA REHEARSAL ASSAULT
21 FEB	MAIN ASSAULT, ANCHOR GULFO DI SANTA AMANZA, CORSICA, FRANCE
23 FEB	U/W FROM ANCHORAGE
23 - 25 FEB	ENROUTE TOULON, FRANCE
25 FEB	ARRIVE TOULON, FRANCE, PIER 3
25 FEB - 20 MAR	IN PORT TOULON, FRANCE FOR RESTRICTED AVAILABILITY
20 MAR	U/W FROM TOULON, FRANCE
20 - 23 MAR	ENROUTE SETE, FRANCE OPAREA
21 MAR	VERTREP FROM USNS SATURN
23 - 25 MAR	<u>EXERCISE MAYFLOWER 91</u> , SETE, FRANCE OPAREA
24 MAR	TURN AWAY ASSAULT REHEARSAL
25 MAR	MAIN ASSAULT

25 - 28 MAR ENROUTE PALMA DE MALLORCA, SPAIN  
 28 MAR ARRIVE PALMA DE MALLORCA, SPAIN, BLACKWELL  
 PIER  
 28 MAR - 06 APR IN PORT PALMA DE MALLORCA, SPAIN  
 06 APR U/W FROM PALMA DE MALLORCA, SPAIN  
 06 - 07 APR ENROUTE TO CAPO PULA, SARDINIA  
 07 APR ARRIVE ANCHORAGE A-6, SARDINIA  
 07 - 13 APR EXERCISE SARDINIA 91  
 07 - 09 APR AT ANCHOR, REHEARSAL  
 09 APR U/W FROM CAPO PULA TO CAPO TULADA, SARDINIA  
 09 - 10 APR AT ANCHOR, MAIN ASSAULT  
 10 APR U/W FROM CAPO TULADA, SARDINIA  
 10 - 14 APR ENROUTE ISKENDERUN, TURKEY  
 10 APR REFUEL FROM USNS JOHN LENTHALL  
 14 APR ANCHOR ISKENDERUN, TURKEY IN SUPPORT OF  
OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT  
 14 - 18 APR ANCHORAGE ISKENDERUN, TURKEY  
 18 APR SHIFT TO PIER SIDE BERTH AT DEEP WATER JETTY,  
 ISKENDERUN, TURKEY  
 18 - 29 APR IN PORT ISKENDERUN, TURKEY  
 29 APR U/W FROM ISKENDERUN  
 29 APR - 02 MAY ISKENDERUN, TURKEY OPAREA  
 02 MAY DEPART OPAREA ISKENDERUN, TURKEY  
 02 - 06 MAY ENROUTE ALICANTE, SPAIN  
 06 MAY ANCHORED ALICANTE, SPAIN  
 06 MAY U/W FROM ALICANTE, SPAIN  
 06 - 09 MAY ENROUTE BRINDISI, ITALY  
 09 MAY ARRIVE BRINDISI, ITALY  
 09 - 11 MAY IN PORT BRINDISI, ITALY, DIGIA DI COSTA  
 MORENA PIER  
 11 MAY U/W FROM BRINDISI  
 11 - 12 MAY ENROUTE GULFO DE SQUILLACE, ITALY  
 11 - 22 MAY EXERCISE DRAGON HAMMER 91 IN COMPANY WITH ITS  
 DESCUBIERTO, ITS ARDITO, ITS VENEDITTO, ITS  
 CASTILLA, UNDER CTF 440.1  
 12 - 13 MAY OPAREA GULFO DE SQUILLACE  
 13 MAY CHANGE OF COMMAND UNDERWAY, CAPT C. DEGRUY  
 RECEIVED BY CAPT C. C. BUCHANAN JR  
 13 - 16 MAY ENROUTE CAPO TULADA, SARDINIA  
 16 MAY ANCHOR CAPO TULADA, SARDINIA  
 16 - 22 MAY ANCHORED CAPO TULADA  
 22 MAY U/W FROM CAPO TULADA  
 22 - 24 MAY ENROUTE NAPLES, ITALY  
 24 MAY ARRIVE NAPLES, ITALY, MEDITERRANEAN MOORED TO  
 MOLO ANGIOINO  
 24 - 31 MAY PORT VISIT, RESTRICTED AVAILABILILTY, NAPLES,  
 ITALY  
 31 MAY U/W FROM NAPLES, ITALY  
 31 MAY - 04 JUN ENROUTE ISKENDERUN, TURKEY  
 04 JUN ANCHOR ISKENDERUN, TURKEY

04 - 28 JUN AT ANCHOR ISKENDERUN, TURKEY IN COMPANY WITH  
USS CHARLESTON, USS GUADALCANAL (COMPHIBRON  
EIGHT EMBARKED) IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION  
PROVIDE COMFORT

28 JUL UNDERWAY FROM ISKENDERUN, TURKEY

28 JUN - 02 JUL MODLOC ISKENDERUN, TURKEY OP-AREA

02 JUL DEPART ISKENDERUN, TURKEY OP-AREA

02 JUL ENROUTE HAIFA, ISRAEL

02 JUL ARRIVE HAIFA, ISRAEL

02 - 08 JUL PORT VISIT HAIFA, ISRAEL

04 JUL SHIP'S PARTY IN CELEBRATION OF INDEPENDENCE  
DAY

08 JUL U/W FROM HAIFA, ISRAEL

08 - 09 JUL ENROUTE ISKENDERUN, TURKEY

09 JUL ARRIVE ISKENDERUN, TURKEY

09 JUL - 18 JUL ANCHOR ISKENDERUN, TURKEY IN COMPANY WITH USS  
CHARLESTON, USS GUADALCANAL (COMPHIBRON EIGHT  
EMBARKED)

14 - 18 JUL BACKLOAD MARINE FORCES

18 JUL U/W FROM ISKENDERUN, TURKEY

18 - 19 JUL MODLOC IN ISKENDERUN, TURKEY OP-AREA

19 JUL U/W FROM MODLOC

19 - 26 JUL ENROUTE ROTA, SPAIN IN COMPANY WITH USS  
CHARLESTON, USS GUADALCANAL (COMPHIBRON EIGHT  
EMBARKED)

25 JUL PASSAGE THROUGH STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR

26 JUL MOORED PIER 3, NAVAL STATION, ROTA, SPAIN

26 JUL U/W FROM ROTA, SPAIN

26 JUL - 05 AUG ENROUTE MOREHEAD CITY, N.C.

05 AUG ARRIVE MOREHEAD CITY, N.C.

05 AUG COMMENCE WELL DECK OFF LOAD

06 AUG MOORED PORT SIDE TO, PORT TERMINAL, MOREHEAD  
CITY, N.C. - OFF LOAD ELEMENTS OF 24 MEU  
(SPECIAL OPERATIONS CAPABLE) INCLUDING UNITS  
FROM BATTALION LANDING TEAM 2/8, FORCE  
RECONNAISSANCE PLATOON 2/8, SEAL TEAM EIGHT,  
SPECIAL BOAT UNIT, BEACHMASTERS 2, AMPHIBIOUS  
ASSAULT VEHICLE PLATOON 2/8, LAND CRAFT LCU-  
1662

06 AUG COMMENCE "TIGER CRUISE"

06 AUG U/W FROM MOORHEAD CITY, N.C.

06 - 07 AUG ENROUTE NORFOLK, VA

07 AUG - 4 NOV MOORED NORFOLK NAVAL BASE, VA., PIER THREE,  
BERTH 2  
GREETED BY COMPHIBRON EIGHTEEN  
COMPLETE "TIGER CRUISE"

13 AUG SEAL TEAM EQUIPMENT OFF LOAD

26 AUG COMMENCE RAV/IMAV

24 - 25 SEP ELEX CAL LAB EVALUATION/INSPECTION

01 OCT DAMAGE CONTROL 3M INSPECTION

02 OCT RSG SUPPLY ASSIST TEAM

17 - 18 OCT INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE SURVEY

21 OCT	MHE/IP ASSIST VISIT
22 OCT	AVIATION ASSIST VISIT
27 OCT	SHIP'S HALLOWEEN PARTY
29 OCT	COMMAND ASSESSMENT DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY
04 - 07 NOV	AMMUNITION OFFLOAD - WHISKEY ANCHORAGE
07 NOV	PIER SIDE NAVAL BASE NORFOLK, VA, PIER 3, BERTH 1
07 NOV	MOGAS IMPROVEMENT INSPECTION
25 - 26 NOV	JP-5/F-76 FUEL OFF LOAD
02 - 06 DEC	SURFACE WARFARE TRAINING WEEK
03 DEC	LFORM OFFLOAD
03 - 06 DEC	LOE INSPECTION BY COMPHIBRON TWELVE
07 DEC	SHIP'S CHRISTMAS PARTY
14 DEC	COMMENCE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY LEAVE PERIOD

## NARRATIVE

1991 commenced with AUSTIN moored port side to, Pier 12 at Norfolk Naval Station in a Pre Overseas Movement leave period.

On the 23rd of January AUSTIN departed Norfolk enroute to Morehead City, NC, as part of MARG 1-91, in company with USS GUADALCANAL and USS CHARLESTON under the operational command of COMPHIBRON EIGHT, Commodore Turner. Embarked aboard were Bravo and Echo platoons from SEAL Team EIGHT and Landing Craft LCU-1662 from ACU TWO in Little Creek, Va. The following day MARG 1-91 arrived in Morehead City, NC and commenced embarking elements of 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable). Included were Battalion Landing Team 2/8, Force Reconnaissance Platoon 2/8, Special Boat Unit Twenty, Beachmasters Unit 2 and Amphibious Assault Vehicle Platoon 2/8. On the afternoon of 24 January 1991, MARG 1-91 left Morehead City and steamed east towards Rota, Spain arriving on 4 February.

After a two day port visit and turn over with MARG 2-90, AUSTIN departed Rota, Spain and on 6 February passed through the Straits of Gibraltar and steamed into the Mediterranean. AUSTIN sailed to Almeria Spain for Exercise Spanish Air Assault. Upon arrival in Almeria on 8 February she anchored and disembarked elements of 24 MEU who took part in ground troop movements with Spanish Marines until 17 February.

From Almeria, Spain, the MARG proceeded to the east coast of Corsica, France via the Straits of Bonifacio for Exercise CORSICA 91. The rehearsal assault took place upon arrival on the morning of 20 February and the main assault followed on the morning of 21 February. After the main assault AUSTIN remained at anchor off the coast of Corsica until the exercise completed on 23 February.

From Corsica, Spain, the MARG proceeded to Toulon, France for a restricted availability arriving on 25 February. The MARG remained in France for almost four weeks, taking tours, seeing the sights and enjoying the night life of Toulon.

On 20 March the MARG departed Toulon for the Set, France operations area where it took part in Exercise MAYFLOWER 91. There was a turn away assault on the coast of France on 24 March and the main assault on the following day. After recovering the assault force it departed Set enroute Palmy de Mallorca, Spain.

MARG 1-91 arrived in Palmy de Mallorca on 28 March where it enjoyed a port visit for one week. There were tours and beaches and plenty of local color as the celebrations of Easter Week were in full swing. On 5 April the MARG attempted to set sail, but was prevented by high winds from departing until the following day.

From Palmy de Mallorca the MARG proceeded to Capo Tulado, Sardinia, Italy, arriving on 7 April, for Exercise SARDINIA 91 which lasted 6 days. The exercise involved practicing responses to a developing crisis. Such real world crisis developed and Exercise SARDINIA was cut short by the COMSIXTHFLT order to proceed to Iskenderun, Turkey in support of Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. The AUSTIN, in company with USS GUADALCANAL and USS CHARLESTON backloaded her landing force and departed Sardinia on 10 April. The MARG proceeded east through the straits of Messina, south of Greece and north of the Island of Crete enroute to Iskenderun.

The three ships arrived in Iskenderun and anchored on 14 April. This was the first time in twelve years that U.S. Navy ships had put into this Turkish port. On 18 April AUSTIN proceeded pier side and commenced off loading elements of 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit. These elements were sent inland providing protection and provisions to aid the Kurdish refugees being driven out of northern Iraq by Saddam Hussein's forces.

After off loading 24 MEU, AUSTIN waited pier side for 10 days completing the arduous task of a complete off load of combat Marines, their vehicles, ammunition, and supplies. AUSTIN then proceeded to the Iskenderun Operations Area, on 29 April, for training evolutions. Operation PROVIDE COMFORT saved the lives of untold numbers of Kurdish refugees. AUSTIN, however, was not content to remain idle. With her Marines in the Eastern Turkey and Northern mountains of Iraq, she was ordered to depart alone in support of the largest annual allied maritime exercise of the year, Exercise DRAGON HAMMER.

On 2 May she turned west and proceeded first to Alicante, Spain to embark the staffs of CTF 503 and 504 and then to Brindisi, Italy to embark the San Marco Battalion. AUSTIN arrived in Alicante, Spain on 6 May, stayed at anchor for a few hours and then proceed directly to Brindisi, Italy by way of the Straits of Messina and then around the "heel" of Italy arriving on 9 May. She departed from Brindisi on 11 May and proceeded to Gulfo de Squillace, Italy for the rehearsal where she was joined by ITS CASTILLA, ITS VENEDITO, ITS ARDITO and ITS DESCUBIERTO. Capt C. C. Buchanan Jr., U.S. Navy, relieved Capt C. M. Degruy on 13 May while enroute to the exercise area. Following the rehearsal the Multi-National Task Force proceeded to Capo Tulada and were taken under attack by opposing green forces enroute.

The Task Force arrived at Capo Tulada on 16 May. AUSTIN and CASTILLA assaulted the beach from anchor while the other ships provided cover from the opposing forces. On the morning of 18 MAY AUSTIN was constructively sunk by opposing forces and was out of the exercise until the completion of the exercise on 22 May.

From Capo Tulada AUSTIN proceeded to Naples, Italy for a much needed port visit and restricted availability. She spend a very enjoyable 6 days in Naples until she was ordered to return post haste to Iskenderun to pick up her troops. She departed Naples on 31 May and anchored in the harbor at Iskenderun on 04 June.

AUSTIN remained at anchor and supported her troops involved in Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. The backload of her Marines was delayed and AUSTIN departed Turkey for Haifa, Israel on 2 July. AUSTIN returned to Iskenderun on 9 July. The 24 MEU made their way back slowly overland from Iraq through Turkey. National policy kept U.S. Marines in Iraq and on the Turkish border until a U.N. team could take over to guarantee security of the Kurdish people. With the backload complete, MARG 1-91 departed Iskenderun on 19 July and proceeded to Rota, Spain. On 25 July the AUSTIN passed through the Straits of Gibraltar and detached from COMSIXTHFLT. A brief period moored to Pier 3 of Naval Station, Rota, Spain on 26 July marked the only stop on the way home.

MARG 1-91 continued its transit and reached Morehead City, N.C. on 5 August. After completing a well deck off load, AUSTIN moored the next day port side to, Port Terminal, Morehead City, N.C. - and off loaded elements of 24 MEU (Special Operations Capable) including units from Battalion Landing Team 2/8, Force Reconnaissance Platoon 2/8, Seal Team Eight, Special Boat Unit, Beachmasters 2, Amphibious Assault Vehicle Platoon 2/8, and Land Craft Unit 1662). After completing the off load, AUSTIN embarked TIGERS and departed for Norfolk, VA.

AUSTIN's homecoming occured the next day and moored Pier 3, berth 2, at Naval Base, Norfolk, VA. The ship was greeted by COMPHIBRON EIGHTEEN. After the well planned festivities were complete, AUSTIN commenced it's post over seas deployment leave period.

AUSTIN's highly successful six and a half month deployment wore heavily on her material readiness. To return her to a high level of readiness a RAV/IMAV period commenced 26 August. The following months involved an entire series of surveys and inspections including Electrical Calibration Lab Evaluation/Inspection, Damage Control 3M Inspection, Industrial Hygiene Survey, Aviation Assist Visit, Command Assessment Diagnostic Survey, and Mogas Improvement Inspection. Several groups of navigation teams and deck officers honed their skills by plying the waters adjacent to Annapolis, MD aboard Naval Academy's YPs.

As plans for an early 1992 yard period began to formalize, the AUSTIN commenced preparations for entering dry dock. Several major preparatory events included an ammunition off load

conducted from 4 to 7 November. JP-5 and F-76 was off loaded 25 and 26 November to lighten the ship and make tanks accessible for inspection. The RAV/IMAV was concluded by a successful LOE inspection by COMPHIBRON TWELVE 3-6 December. During the same period of time, AUSTIN's crew demonstrated their skill and knowledge in the Amphibious Surface Warfare Training Week.

With AUSTIN'S engineering plant returned to a high state of readiness, full attention was paid to finalizing plans for the anticipated January, 1992 yard period. 14 December marked the beginning of a well deserved Christmas holiday leave period. Yet the remaining crew worked diligently to ensure maximum benefit would be gained from the yard period.