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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS AUSTIN (LPD-4)
FPO AE 09564-1707

5750

Ser LPD-4/X:

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16 MAR 1993

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

Subj: 1992 COMMAND HISTORY FOR USS AUSTIN (LPD-4)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Command History 1992 Chronology
(3) Command History 1992 Narrative
(4) AUSTIN ltr 3590 Ser LPD-4/X:282 of 14 Sep 92 (w/o
enclosures)
(5) USS AUSTIN 041945Z FEB 92
(6) USS AUSTIN 232315Z MAR 92
(7) USS AUSTIN 151450Z APR 92
(8) COMPHIBRON TWELVE 192020Z MAR 92
(9) USS AUSTIN 132000Z MAY 92
(10) COMPHIBGRU TWO 092132Z DEC 92
(11) CINCUSNAVEUR 150500Z DEC 92
(12) Commanding Officer's Biography
(13) Commanding Officer's Photo
(14) Current Ship's Photo
(15) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet

1992

1. In accordance with reference (a), the 1992 Command History for USS AUSTIN (LPD-4) is forwarded.

G. S. Holder
G. S. HOLDER

Copy to:
COMPHIBGRU TWO (W/O ENCLS (13-15))

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 Group TWO, Rear Admiral L. F. Picotte. She is homeported in Norfolk, VA.

Enclosure (1)

1992 HISTORY - CHRONOLOGY

01 - 07 JAN IN PORT NORFOLK, VA, PIER THREE BERTH SIX.
07 JAN UNDERWAY FROM NORFOLK, VA. ENROUTE TO METRO
MACHINE SHIPYARD IN NORFOLK, VA.

07 JAN - 25 FEB RESTED ON KEEL BLOCKS IN OLD DOMINION DRY
DOCK. SANDBLASTING OF THE HULL AND SIDES WAS
IN PROGRESS AT VARIOUS POINTS THROUGHOUT THIS
PERIOD.

21 FEB SMI ASSIST VISIT.
25 FEB MOVED TO FINGER PIER WEST SIDE BERTH AT METRO
MACHINE SHIPYARD.

25 FEB - 02 APR MOORED AT FINGER PIER WEST SIDE BERTH AT
METRO MACHINE SHIPYARD. DURING THIS TIME, THE
ENGINES WERE ROUTINELY JACKED OVER AND
NUMEROUS FIRE AND CASUALTY DRILLS WERE
CONDUCTED.

09 MAR - 13 MAR ELECTRICAL CABLEWAY INSPECTION.
17 MAR - 19 MAR COMNAVSURFLANT LOE IN PROGRESS.
31 MAR DOCK TRIALS.

02 APR U/W FROM NORFOLK, VA.
02 APR - 04 APR CONDUCTING POST DPMA SEA TRIAL OPERATIONS OFF
THE VIRGINIA CAPES.

03 APR EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CDR P. MAZICH RELIEVED BY
LCDR. S. JOACHIM.

04 APR - 13 APR MOORED AT NORFOLK, VA. PIER THREE, BERTH SIX.
13 APR U/W FROM NORFOLK, VA.

13 APR - 17 APR CONDUCTING OPERATIONS OFF THE VIRGINIA CAPES
(BECCES, LEAP FROGS, H-53 DLQs).

17 APR - 27 APR MOORED AT NORFOLK, VA. PIER SEVEN, BERTH
FIVE.

27 APR U/W FROM NORFOLK, VA.
27 APR - 29 APR CONDUCTING BECCES DRILLS AND UMI REHEARSALS
IN THE VIRGINIA CAPES OPERATIONS AREA.

30 APR ANCHOR AT NORFOLK, VA. (G-3).
30 APR UNDERWAY FROM ANCHORAGE.
30 APR - 12 MAY MOORED AT NORFOLK, VA. PIER SEVEN, BERTH
FIVE.

12 MAY U/W FROM NORFOLK, VA. (INSURV) UMI TERMINATED
DUE TO CASUALTY TO #1 STEAM LUBE OIL PUMP.

12 MAY - 13 MAY MOORED NORFOLK, VA. PIER TWO, BERTH SIX.
13 MAY U/W FROM NORFOLK, VA.
13 MAY ANCHOR AT NORFOLK, VA. (G-2)
13 MAY U/W FROM ANCHORAGE.

13 MAY - 15 JUN MOORED NORFOLK, VA. PIER TWO, BERTH SIX.
18-20 MAY RESURFACE NON-SKID FLIGHT DECK.
18-29 MAY NAVSEA AND SIMA REMOVED 3"/50 CAL GUN MOUNTS
31 AND 34.

26-29 MAY SHIPWIDE PRT.
29 MAY SHIP'S PICNIC.

06-30 JUN AUSTIN ASSIGNED TO READY ARG, 2ND FLT.
08 JUN 7 MIDSHIPMEN CHECKED ONBOARD FOR SUMMER
TRAINING.

08-22 JUN NAVAL RESERVE ANNUAL TRAINING FOR ENS PATTERSON.
FOREIGN OFFICER EXCHANGE PROGRAM - CDR EARNST GOLDAMMER, FRG NAVY. ONBOARD FOR TWO WEEKS EXCHANGE.

15 JUN U/W FROM NORFOLK, VA.

17-18 JUN ARMY HELICOPTER DLQ'S.

19 JUN MOORED AT NORFOLK, VA. PIER TWO BERTH SIX.

23 JUN U/W FROM NORFOLK, VA. VACAPES OPAREA.
CONDUCTED ARMY HELICOPTER DLQ'S.

28 JUN ANCHORED LYNNHAVEN ANCHORAGE FOR AMPHIBIOUS WET WELL TRAINING WITH ACU-2.

29 JUN MOORED AT NORFOLK, VA. PIER TWO BERTH TWO.

02 JUL U/W FROM NORFOLK, VA, AND ANCHORED LYNNHAVEN ANCHORAGE FOR DEPENDENTS DAY CRUISE.
RETURNED TO NORFOLK, VA. PIER TWO BERTH TWO.

09 JUL CPR-12 ADMIN ASSIST VISIT.

06-10 JUL ASRR/CSRR PHASE 1.

06-12 JUL SEA SCOUT EMBARK PERIOD (06 - 12 JULY).
HOSTED APPROXIMATELY 20 MALE AND FEMALE SEA CADETS.

13-17 JUL MTT ASSIST VISIT.

20 JUL INITIAL 22 MEU TROOP HABITABILITY INSPECTION

28-30 JUL OPPE. PASSED WITH A 2-YEAR CERTIFICATION, ADJECTIVE GRADE OF "GOOD".

02 AUG 5 RESERVISTS CHECKED ON FOR 2 WEEKS ACDUTRA

03 AUG U/W FROM NORFOLK, VA BOUND FOR ONSLOW BAY, NC FOR TCAT (TYPE COMMANDER'S AMPHIBIOUS TRAINING).

08 AUG MOORED AT NORFOLK, VA. PIER TWO, BERTH FIVE

17 AUG INSURV TEAM ARRIVES ONBOARD.

18 AUG U/W 1 DAY FOR INSURV INSPECTION. UMI TERMINATED DUE TO CASUALTIES TO BOTH ANCHOR WINDLASSES.

21 AUG SET HURRICANE CONDITION 4 FOR HURRICANE ANDREW.

26 AUG U/W FOR INSURV UNDERWAY MATERIAL CHECKS.
SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED ALL CHECKS.
MOORED AT NORFOLK, VA. PIER THREE, BERTH TWO.

25-28 AUG CSRR PHASE II.

24 AUG CMS ASSIST VISIT.

25 AUG LCAC WELLDECK CERTIFICATION INSPECTION.

27 AUG MEDICAL READINESS INSPECTION.

28 AUG COMPLETED INSURV INSPECTION.

31 AUG FORCE DENTAL OFFICER'S INSPECTION.

31 AUG-04 SEP ISA ASSIST VISIT (INCLUDING SUPPLY MANAGEMENT INSPECTION AND 3M ASSIST).

01-02 SEP U/W ENROUTE YORKTOWN NAVAL WEAPONS STATION FOR AMMUNITION ONLOAD.

02 SEP MOORED AT NORFOLK, VA. PIER FIVE, BERTH FIVE.

03-04 SEP USMC CARGO ONLOAD.

04 SEP COMMAND INSPECTION.

08 SEP SECRET/NATO SECRET INSPECTION.
SEAL TEAM/SBU ONLOAD.
INTEL VAN ONLOAD.

09 SEP TROOP HABITABILITY REINSPECTION.

10 SEP U/W ENROUTE MOREHEAD CITY, NC. IN PREPARATION
FOR FLEETEX 1-93 AND BLUE/GREEN WORKUPS.

11 SEP ONLOADED BLT AND OTHER EMBARKED UNITS
PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT AT MOREHEAD CITY, NC.

12-24 SEP FLEETEX 1-93 AND BLUE/GREEN WORKUPS AT
ONSLow BAY, NC.

17 SEP E-6 NAVY WIDE ADVANCEMENT EXAMINATION.

24 SEP OFFLOADED AT MOREHEAD CITY, NC.

26 SEP MOORED AT NORFOLK, VA. PIER TWELVE, BERTH
FIVE.

26 SEP-13 OCT PRE-DEPLOYMENT POM PERIOD.

28 SEP-13 OCT IMAV.

29 SEP BERTH SHIFT TO PIER THREE BERTH TWO.

06-15 OCT JOTS/OTCIXS UPGRADE.

10-15 OCT WRN-6 GPS SYSTEM INSTALLATION.

07 OCT FINAL TROOP HABITABILITY INSPECTION.

22 OCT U/W FROM NORFOLK, VA.

22 OCT - 23 OCT ENROUTE TO MOORHEAD CITY, NC.

23 OCT ONLOAD MARINES. MAJOR FORCES EMBARKED
INCLUDE: MSSG 22, B COMPANY, BLT 1/6, AND
VARIOUS OTHER NAVAL DETACHMENTS INCLUDING
DETACHMENTS FROM FST-4, ST-8, SBU 2, ACU-2,
PHIBCB 2, EODMU-2.

23 OCT U/W FROM MOORHEAD CITY, NC.

23 OCT - 2NOV ENROUTE ROTA, SP.

02 NOV INPORT ROTA, SP, PIER THREE, BERTH TWO FOR
FUEL AND STORES ONLOAD, AND CROSSDECK
EMBARKATION OF CPR-4 DET A, BLT 1/6(-)
STAFFS. CROSSDECK DUE TO SPLIT ARG
OPERATIONS.

02 NOV U/W FROM ROTA, SP. ENROUTE LUANDA, ANGOLA FOR
CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS, IN SUPPORT OF
POSSIBLE NEO IN COMPANY WITH MARG 1-93.

04 NOV CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS CANCELLED.

04-05 NOV SAR OPERATIONS VICINITY CANARY ISLANDS FOR
DOWNED CH-53 HELICOPTER FROM USS GUAM
(LPH-9).

04 NOV-31 DEC AUSTIN IS FLAGSHIP FOR MARG 1-93(-) WHILE USS
GUAM CONDUCTS SAR/TRAP CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS
IN ADRIATIC SEA.

05-07 NOV ENROUTE ROTA, SP.

07 NOV MOORED ROTA, SP. PIER ONE, BERTH TWO.
INCHOP BRIEFS HELD WITH MARG 2-92.

11 NOV VADM BOORDA, CINCUSNAVEUR VISITS.

13 NOV U/W FROM ROTA, SP. ENROUTE ALBORAN BASIN.

16-20 NOV MOORED GIBRALTAR, U.K. BERTH 49 FOR PORT
VISIT.

20-22 NOV CONDUCTED OPERATIONS IN THE ALBORAN BASIN.

22 NOV MOORED GIBRALTAR BERTH 41 FOR GIBEX '92 AND
MAIN CONDENSER VOYAGE REPAIRS.
22-25 NOV GIBEX '92 - NEO AND OTHER JOINT EXERCISES
WITH BRITISH FORCES.
30 NOV CHANGE OF COMMAND. CAPT G. S. HOLDER
RELIEVED CAPT C. C. BUCHANAN AS COMMANDING
OFFICER IN A CEREMONY HELD ONBOARD IN PORT
GIBRALTAR.
08 DEC U/W FROM GIBRALTAR FOLLOWING VOYAGE REPAIRS
TO #2 MAIN CONDENSER.
08-16 DEC AFRICAN EAGLE '92. CONDUCTED AMPHIBIOUS
ASSAULT FOLLOWED BY BILATERAL TRAINING ASHORE
WITH ROYAL MOROCCAN NAVAL, ARMY AND AIR
FORCES.
18 DEC MOORED BARCELONA, SP.
18-30 DEC IN PORT BARCELONA, SP FOR HOLIDAY UPKEEP
PERIOD.
31 DEC U/W FROM BARCELONA SP, ENROUTE HAIFA IS.

1992 COMMAND HISTORY - NARRATIVE

1992 commenced with AUSTIN moored port side to, Pier 3, Berth 6, at Norfolk Naval Station. After the holiday leave and upkeep period, AUSTIN got underway for a dead-stick berth shift to METRO MACHINE shipyard in Norfolk and an extended Drydock Phased Maintenance Availability (DPMA). She rested on keel blocks in drydock until 25 February during which time the hull and sides were sandblasted and painted, extensive engineering repairs were effected by METRO MACHINE Corp., and approximately 300 ship's force jobs were completed. A Supply Management assist visit was also conducted onboard during this period.

After leaving drydock on 25 February, AUSTIN remained moored at the "finger pier" at METRO MACHINE shipyard until 2 April. Major work was accomplished by ship's force and shipyard personnel, the engines were routinely jacked over, and numerous fire and casualty drills were conducted. Crewmembers lived in a hotel and on the APL floating barracks which was tied outboard the AUSTIN while major habitability work was accomplished in living spaces.

The end of the DPMA shipyard period was marked first by an electrical cableway inspection, then by a COMNAVSURFLANT LOE (Light Off Inspection). Inspectors remarked on the smooth execution and speed of this LOE. Next, Dock Trials were conducted on 31 March and a fast cruise on 1 April. Post-DPMA sea trials were very successful from 2-4 April, officially finishing the yard period. While underway, on 3 April, CDR P. Mazich was relieved as Executive Officer by LCDR S. Joachim.

13 April began AUSTIN's first of a series of operational underway periods in 1992 designed to ready the ship for OPPE, INSURV inspections, and eventually, deployment with MARG 1-93. BECCE drills, leap frogs drills, and CH-53 DLQ's were conducted off the Virginia Capes OPAREA until 17 April. From 27-29 April, BECCE drills and an INSURV UMI rehearsal were conducted underway in the VACAPES OPAREA. On 30 April AUSTIN stood out to anchorage for ammunition onload for one day. On 12 May, the INSURV Underway Material Inspection (UMI) was started, then terminated due to a casualty to Number 1 Steam Lube Oil Pump. The INSURV inspection would not resume until mid August. Both 3"/50 cal gun mounts were removed 18-29 May.

Through the summer, AUSTIN increased in readiness by short underway periods followed by maintenance inport, all the while shaking down and eliminating material and training deficiencies. During 6-30 June AUSTIN was assigned to the 2nd Fleet Ready ARG. Twice in June, AUSTIN flexed her flight deck crews while underway supporting Army helicopter DLQ's. After a spectacular dependent's day cruise on 2 July, the month was primarily spent inport, preparing for the imminent OPPE inspection, and completing

administrative requirements. A COMPHIBRON TWELVE administrative assist visit and CSRR Phase I were completed early in July. Hard work in Engineering Department culminated on 30 July in a 2 year certification by PEB with an overall adjective grade of "good."

Training and preparation for the upcoming deployment started in earnest on 3 August with AUSTIN underway for five days of Type Commander's Amphibious Training (TCAT) at Onslow Bay, NC. All major ship functions, including operating LCAC's, Command Control Communication functions, welldeck and flight deck operations supporting an amphibious landing were tested and exercised. On the 17th of August, the INSURV team returned. The inspection was again terminated due to casualties to both anchor windlasses. The board returned and finished their inspection on 28 August. AUSTIN completed all checks. Meanwhile, the welldeck was certified satisfactory for LCAC operations, Medical and Dental readiness was inspected, and the CMS program was judged satisfactory.

AUSTIN moved another step closer to being ready for deployment with a major ammunition onload at Yorktown NWS on 2 September. Embarked USMC units began unloading cargo the next day, and Seal Team Eight, SBU-2 and the Intel detachment commenced onload of equipment by the end of the week.

From 10-26 September AUSTIN completed the final pre-deployment training with FLEETEX 1-93 and Blue/Green Workups at Onslow Bay, NC. A complete battle scenario was followed to maximize training in all mission areas with all departments and embarked units participating.

After FLEETEX and workups, the ship stood down for a three week POM period. Crewmembers took leave, and personnel remaining onboard worked full days in an IMAV that included 208 jobs completed by USS SHENANDOAH and SIMA Norfolk. The ship received an up to date JOTS/OTCIIXS upgrade and the WRN6 GPS navigation system. Troop spaces were given the final check for habitability and judged ready in all aspects. On the day AUSTIN was to begin her deployment, trouble arose with #2 main condenser. High salinity indicated a leak, and inspection revealed a leak on the tube wall. Repairs were made, but this problem was to plague the ship until late November.

On 22 October AUSTIN got underway for Morehead City, NC and final onload of USMC personnel and equipment. After onload, she proceeded independently to catch the MARG already 2 days into the Atlantic transit to Rota, Spain. A tropical depression that would soon become hurricane Frances hazarded the ship at the midpoint of the transit. By luck, the storm turned north, taking with it related weather systems and paving the way for a smooth voyage. Before reaching Rota, events in the African countries of Angola and Liberia threatened to entangle the MARG.

AUSTIN arrived in Rota, Spain for one day of fuel and stores onload on 2 November. Partial staffs from BLT 1/6 and CPR-4 were embarked, and the ship left port the same day to head south for contingency operations near Luanda, Angola. Two days later, the MARG was turned around when contingency operations were cancelled. Returning north to the Mediterranean, lookouts reported sighting a flare on the night of 4 November, which was soon discovered to be a downed CH-53 helicopter from USS GUAM (LPH-9). A grueling night of SAR operations followed. No survivors were found, and the body of only one of five crewmen was recovered. The MARG returned to Rota in a somber mood on 7 November for turnover and INCHOP to Sixth fleet cognizance. GUAM continued straight to the Adriatic Sea to support Operation Provide Promise without returning to Rota, leaving AUSTIN as the MARG flagship. AUSTIN crewmembers trained, worked, and enjoyed liberty in Rota. AUSTIN was visited by VADM Boorda, CINCUSNAVEUR on 11 November and departed Rota two days later for operations in the Alboran sea.

On 16 November, AUSTIN pulled into the city of Gibraltar, U.K. for a liberty port visit, leaving on the 20th and returning two days later to participate in GIBEX '92 with the Gibraltar Regiment and other British forces. Non Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO), rock climbing-cliff assault, and military operations in urban terrain (MOUT) were exercised, as well as an amphibious raid. While conducting a very successful GIBEX '92, the ship concentrated on voyage repairs to #2 main condenser. Contractors plugged all tubes, sandblasted the condenser headers, then installed a unique ceramic-alloy liner which finally put to rest the chronic problems that had been a long-standing headache in the propulsion plant.

Command of the AUSTIN passed from CAPT C. C. BUCHANAN to CAPT G. S. HOLDER in a ceremony onboard on 30 November. Numerous local military commanders and distinguished visitors attended this uniquely American event.

From 8 to 16 December, the ship took part in AFRICAN EAGLE '92, a joint exercise with Moroccan Royal Navy, Army and Air Forces. The MARG, as well as the USS John F. Kennedy carrier battle group, acted as aggressors in a superbly coordinated, full scale amphibious assault, followed by sustainment training ashore.

Following a successful exercise, AUSTIN passed the holidays in Barcelona, Spain from 18 to 30 December, then closed the year out underway, enroute Haifa, Israel.