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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS BENFOLD (DDG 65)

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IN REPLY REFER TO:
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From: Commanding Officer, USS BENFOLD (DDG-65)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), Washington Navy Yard, 901 M Street, SE, Washington, DC
20374-5060

Subj: USS BENFOLD (DDG-65) COMMAND HISTORY FOR CY 1996

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

- Encl: (1) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet
- (2) "Bold Defender" Newsletters
- (3) Ship's pictures
- (4) Commanding Officer's Photograph
- (5) Commissioning Book

1. Command Composition and Organization.

Mission: *To be ready to win the next war at sea. We will be ready to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations at sea, executing assigned tasks correctly, safely, and decisively in support of our national policy objective.*

Immediate Senior Command: *Captain P.J. Slattery, Destroyer Squadron Twenty-One.*

Commanding Officer: *Commander Mark E. Ferguson III.*

Permanent Duty Station: *San Diego, California.*

2. Chronology.

December 4, 1995	<i>Custody Transfer, Ingalls Shipbuilding, Pascagoula, MS</i>
December 4, 1995 - February 27, 1996	<i>Post Delivery Availability</i>
December 16, 1995	<i>First Christening onboard</i>
January 16, 1996 - January 19, 1996	<i>SRTT</i>
January 16, 1996 - January 26, 1996	<i>Tomahawk/Harpoon Material Certification</i>
January 31, 1996 - February 1, 1996	<i>Aviation Assist Visit (AAV) / Aviation Readiness Exam (ARE)</i>
February 21, 1996 - February 23	<i>Light-Off Assessment (LOA)</i>
February 27, 1996	<i>Departed Pascagoula, MS</i>
March 4, 1996	<i>Panama Canal Transit</i>
March 11, 1996 - March 12, 1996	<i>Port visit - Puerto Vallarta, Mexico</i>
March 16, 1996	<i>Arrived San Diego, CA</i>
March 30, 1996	<i>Commissioning</i>
April 1, 1996	<i>Dependents Cruise</i>
April 8, 1996 - April 10, 1996	<i>UNREPSQT, SOCAL</i>
April 10, 1996 - April 12, 1996	<i>Ammunition Onload, Seal Beach, CA</i>
April 22, 1996 - April 26, 1996	<i>CART II</i>
April 29, 1996 - May 17, 1996	<i>CSSQT Inport Maintenance</i>
May 13, 1996 - May 17, 1996	<i>Dockside Acoustic Trials/Inport Weapon System Assessment</i>
May 20, 1996 - May 24	<i>CCSQT, SOCAL</i>
May 23, 1996	<i>AAW Gun & CIWS FIREX/TRACKEX</i>
June 3, 1996 - June 7, 1996	<i>Logistics & Admin Training Review (LATR)</i>
June 12, 1996 - June 18, 1996	<i>Transited to Pearl Harbor, HI</i>
June 19, 1996 - June 23, 1996	<i>Port visit, Lahaina, HI</i>
June 25, 1996 - June 28, 1996	<i>EWSQT/ASWSQT</i>

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July 3, 1996	<i>Arrived Pearl Harbor, HI</i>
July 6, 1996 - July 9, 1996	<i>MISSILEX</i>
July 10, 1996 - July 15, 1996	<i>Transited to San Diego</i>
July 22, 1996 - August 2, 1996	<i>Industrial Hygiene Survey</i>
July 29, 1996 - August 16, 1996	<i>TSTA II</i>
August 19, 1996 - August 21, 1996	<i>Final Contract Trial (FCT)</i>
August 26, 1996 - August 27, 1996	<i>ATG/PEB Certification</i>
September 19, 1996	<i>Engineering Certification</i>
September 20, 1996 - September 29, 1996	<i>Offload</i>
September 30, 1996 - January 10, 1997	<i>Post Shakedown Availability (PSA)</i>
September 30, 1996 - October 24, 1996	<i>Drydock</i>
November 4, 1996 - November 8, 1996	<i>Combat Systems Light-Off</i>
December 2, 1996 - December 6, 1996	<i>Crew move aboard</i>
December 2, 1996 - December 6, 1996	<i>ASIR</i>
December 12, 1996 - December 13, 1996	<i>Sea Trials</i>

3. Narrative.

Custody Transfer. *"It is with great honor and great pride that I accept BENFOLD for the United States Navy and the United States of America..." With these words, Commander Mark E. Ferguson III accepted custody of BENFOLD from Ingalls Shipbuilding of Pascagoula, MS.*

First Christening onboard BENFOLD. *Saturday, December 16, 1995 was a special day for Lieutenant Kevin Hill and Tracey Hill. Their daughter, Elizabeth Bronwyn, was christened by Chaplain Swindell Edwards of USS INCHON. According to Navy tradition, her name was engraved inside the ship's bell following the ceremony. The last child to be christened onboard will be presented with the ship's bell once BENFOLD is stricken from the Naval Register. Following the ceremony, a small reception was attended by members of the Hill family and the Wardroom.*

Search and Rescue Team Training (SRTT). *SRTT was an evaluation of BENFOLD's readiness for Search and Rescue (SAR) operations. The capabilities of the SAR gear, ship's rescue swimmers, and deck division personnel were evaluated. BENFOLD received a SAR ready status in preparation for her maiden voyage to San Diego, CA.*

Tomahawk/Harpoon Material Certification. *Tomahawk/Harpoon Material Certification was the US Navy acceptance of the cruise missile systems onboard BENFOLD. Built with cooperation between MacDonnell Douglass, Lockheed Martin and Ingalls, the light-off and testing of this equipment and its associated launching and C2 systems by NSWC Port Hueneme Division was a great milestone in the life of this warship.*

Aviation Assist Visit (AAV) / Aviation Readiness Exam (ARE). *AAV was the first look at the readiness of the ship's aviation facilities. All flight deck gear, publications, and personnel qualifications along with "crash and salvage" drills were reviewed. The AAV was upgraded into an ARE and BENFOLD's flight deck facilities were evaluated to "Air Capable Ready."*

Light-Off Assessment (LOA). *Light-Off Assessment was the first hurdle for the ship and especially the Engineering Department. The Engineering Department spent over a year in preparation for this Propulsion Examining Board (PEB) inspection. BENFOLD was one of the first Pacific Fleet ships to conduct this new engineering certification process, which starts with LOA. BENFOLD passed the inspection of inport fire drills, equipment cold checks, and engineering program review. PEB gave its approval for BENFOLD to "light off" and conduct underway operations.*

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Panama Canal Transit. The transit through the Panama Canal was the biggest navigational challenge BENFOLD had to date. The Canal Zone is like a funnel, impressing fifty or more large ships at a time into an area only several square miles in circumference, all waiting to enter the canal. The background lights of Cristobal make navigation using lighted navigational aids impossible. Once past the narrow breakwater, BENFOLD had to anchor, waiting for higher priority shipping to pass. The ship drifted in confined waters for several hours, while traffic ahead passed through the locks. After the transit through the first set of locks, the remainder of the trip passed uneventfully. BENFOLD arrived safely at Naval Station Panama after a safe but arduous eleven hour transit.

Commissioning. In the presence of over 5,000 family members, friends, comrades and other patriotic Americans, BENFOLD was commissioned into service of her country on Saturday morning at 1000 the 30th of March 1996 under pleasant weather conditions. Vice Admiral Phil Quast was the Keynote Speaker. Commander Mark E. Ferguson III read his orders and accepted command of BENFOLD at approximately 1030 and reported to Captain Carl L. Lundquist, Commander Destroyer Squadron Twenty-One, for duty. Other platform guests included VADM Robinson, RADM Quast, Dorothy Waida, Edward C. Benfold Jr., Michael Crnkovich, and ENCM Scheeler. The master of ceremonies was Lieutenant Commander Sinclair M. Harris, the Executive Officer. The ceremony was conducted in one hour and was flawless.

Dependents Cruise. On 1 April, BENFOLD hosted over 300 people, family and friends of USS BENFOLD on a day excursion out of San Diego. During the transit in San Diego Harbor, a guide from Hornblower Cruises provided guests with an interesting tour and description of the ship's new home port. After a high speed run to the shooting range and a gunshoot with the 5"-54 gun mount and Close-In Weapon System (CIWS), guests enjoyed a tremendous cook-out on the fantail on the way home. Crew and guests returned to port happy after a great day to meet new friends.

Underway Replenishment Ships Qualification Test (UNREPSQT). UNREPSQT was a training and evaluation period of BENFOLD's capability to perform replenishment at sea. Under the guidance of the First Lieutenant, Ensign Marshall, and the Port Hueneme Representative, Mr. Ike Eisenhardt, the ship performed several along-side refuelings, personal high-line transfer, and missile transfer exercises efficiently and without any mishaps.

Ammunition Onload. On 11-12 April 1996, USS BENFOLD (DDG 65) unloaded weapons at Naval Weapons Station, Seal Beach, CA. This intense, two-day evolution was BENFOLD's first major training ammunition onload. Over 50,000 rounds of ammunition, including 13 Standard Missiles, were loaded in support of Post Delivery Testing and Trials. The onload was completed in a safe and expeditious manner.

Command Assessment of Readiness for Training - Phase II (CART II). Conducted from 22 to 26 April 1996, CART II by the Afloat Training Group (ATG) marked BENFOLD's entrance into the Tactical Training Strategy (TTS) cycle's Basic Training Phase. The officer's and crew performed general drills and inspections of all required equipment for routine and emergency evolutions. All areas, less engineering training, were found satisfactory. Seamanship and Damage Control excelled.

CSSQT Inport Maintenance. CSSQT IM was a total combat system groom of all weapons, sensor and support systems. This was the first such inspection and maintenance since acceptance trials, and marked the joining of the NSWC and BENFOLD maintenance teams with the common goal of ordnance on target during weapons firings. Led by Jamal Rashounny from Port Hueneme, the civilian representatives established themselves as great supporters of BENFOLD's combat readiness. The teams completed their exhaustive total grooms of BENFOLD prior to getting underway for firing events.

Dockside Acoustic Trials/Inport Weapon System Assessment. As part of the groom, the ships noise signature and set baselines were tested further at the underwater range on San Clemente Island. The WSA was a review of hardware, software and repair parts requirements to go to sea and conduct missile firings later in the month.

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Combat Systems Ships Qualification Test (CSSQT). *Performed in the Southern California Operations Area, CSSQT was part of crew work-ups toward missile firing exercises. Firing gun systems (5 inch and CIWS) was important in testing ship's doctrine and personnel qualifications. Both the Close-In Weapon System (CIWS) and 5 inch scored direct hits on the drone, sending the tow plane back to California with nothing but an empty tow wire.*

Close-In Weapon System (CIWS) Tracking and Firing Exercise (TRACKEX/FIREX). *On 20 May 1996, BENFOLD completed AAW-21-SF Phalanx Firing Exercise. This evolution was conducted as part of Post Delivery Testing and Trials. These trials are designed to test each weapons system to its fullest capabilities. The purpose of the Phalanx Firing Exercise was to exercise CIWS against a low-altitude high-speed incoming target. BENFOLD was one of the first DDG's to successfully complete this exercise utilizing Auto Designation Enable capabilities. Utilizing 16,000 rounds, MT 21 Forward and MT 22 Aft had direct kills on each of their incoming targets, resulting in satisfactory completion of the exercise. This test also confirmed the effectiveness of the use of Auto Designate Enable on low, high-speed targets.*

Logistics Management Assessment (LMA) / Logistics Assessment of Training Readiness (LATR). *Conducted from 23 to 27 September 1996 (LMA), and from 3 to 7 June 1997 (LATR), these inspections by the Afloat Training Group (ATG) concentrated on the logistical and administrative support of BENFOLD. Ship's Services, Food Service, Disbursing and Administrative Offices, and Storeroom Operations were evaluated in exacting detail. The Supply Department received the highest overall score of any ship in the Pacific Fleet that had been inspected in the last three years. All areas were graded as excellent with numeric grades above 97 percent. The Supply Officer, Lieutenant Commander Robert J. Bestercy and his assistant, Lieutenant Junior Grade Pamela Theorgood were able to proudly paint the ship's first mission area efficiency award, the Blue 'E' on the bridgewing of BENFOLD.*

Electronic Warfare / Anti-Submarine Warfare Ships Qualifications Test (EWSQT/ASWSQT). *BENFOLD successfully tested her electronic and anti-submarine warfare capabilities from 25 June to 28 June 1996. Electronic Warfare Technicians were monitored for signal evaluation using the SLQ-32 Electronic Warfare Set and Anti-Ship Missile Defense System. The ASW SQT consisted of system alignments, calibrations, and weapons systems checkouts which were verified by successfully firing 18 of 18 torpedoes, all kills, two of which were MK50's against a LA Class SSN. Both the EWs and STGs received outstanding grades and reviews from AEGIS Training Support Group (ATSG), San Diego, and TRACOR representatives.*

Missile Exercise (MISSILEX). *MISSILEX was the culmination of over 100 hours of test rehearsals, beginning over a year earlier. The five scenarios were designed to test the limits and capabilities of the weapon systems, assuming perfect operator action. All those hours of practice paid off in flawless performance by ship's force in the firing of ten SM-2 missiles. During each event, the two watch teams performed admirably, overcoming both imposed and unforeseen casualties to score kills in each scenario. Additionally, BENFOLD set a record for the highest intercept ever and was the first AEGIS ship to fire in the "Shoot-Shoot-Look-Shoot-Shoot" missile firing doctrine.*

Industrial Hygiene Survey. *The command's first Industrial Hygiene Survey was conducted inport 22 July to 2 August 1996 with the underway portion conducted 28 to 30 January 1997. With no major discrepancies discovered, no administrative problems noted and only a few minor discrepancies that were submitted for the Post Shakedown Availability (PSA), the senior inspector, Lieutenant Commander Vellamora, recommended that BENFOLD be nominated for the TYCOMM safety award.*

Tailored Shipboard Training Availability - Phase II (TSTA II). *Conducted from 29 July to 16 August 1996. TSTA II was the second event in BENFOLD's Basic Training Phase. This inspection by the Afloat Training Group (ATG) concentrated on parallel training by the command's training teams. The command's training teams are the Integrated Training Team (ITT) and the Damage Control Training Team (DCTT) led by the Executive Officer, Combat Systems Training Team (CSTT) led by the Combat Systems Officer, the Engineering Training Team (ETT/ECCTT) led by the Engineer Officer, and the Seamanship Training Team (STT) led by the Operations Officer. All areas were evaluated as satisfactory or better. Seamanship, both watchstanders and training team led by Lieutenant Patrick Kelly, was evaluated as superior and graded as being at the Final Examination Problem (FEP) level.*

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ATG/PEB Certification. ATG/PEB Certification was the principal hurdle for the Engineering Department. As part of the new engineering certification process, this certification was conducted by the Afloat Training Group (ATG) and Propulsion Examining Board (PEB). With this evaluation, the engineering plant is certified for 18 months and was completed on 19 September 1996.

Drydock. One of the most challenging and critical times for a ship is the docking and undocking. The process involves the precise calculation of weights and liquid loading of the ship. The crew took painstaking efforts to ensure no list was on the ship and the screws were locked in the proper docking position. The docking and undocking evolutions were executed flawlessly and without event. During the drydock period, the ship's hull was inspected, cleaned, and painted. Drydocking also allowed for the installation of new equipment in the main spaces and supply areas including a reverse osmosis water-production plant and a plastics waste removal center.

Combat Systems Light-Off. Combat Systems Light-off is an important milestone while the ship is undergoing repairs and upgrades in the shipyard. During light off, systems that have been dormant for several months are turned on and the warship comes to life. Light-off is a joint project with shipyard, project officers from PMS 400, and ship's force which was successful due primarily to the quality of work accomplished by Southwest Marine and the quality assurance of Supervisor of Shipbuilding, San Diego.

Aviation Systems Inspection of Readiness (ASIR). After returning to Naval Station, San Diego from a highly successful post-shakedown availability, USS BENFOLD completed her ASIR. The inspection took place from 2 to 6 December 1996 and required the coordination of Operations and Engineering departments. During the yard period, extensive repairs were made to the flight deck including the removal and replacement of a 2 x 5 foot section of steel decking. Additionally, the entire flight deck's non-skid was replaced and repainted, the helicopter line-up lights were checked and verified, and the fuel system analyzed. The successful completion of ASIR certified BENFOLD's flight deck and crew for continued operations with all variants of USN and USMC helicopters.

4. Biography of Commanding Officer - Commander Mark E. Ferguson III.

CDR Ferguson was born in Newfoundland, Canada. Raised in Maryland, he is a distinguished graduate of the United States Naval Academy, where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Systems Engineering. Upon graduation, he received the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution awards for the highest standing in weapons systems studies and professional military courses.

Following graduation, Commander Ferguson completed naval nuclear propulsion training. His sea assignments have been both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets, with tours on the nuclear-guided Missile cruiser USS SOUTH CAROLINA (CGN 37), the aircraft carrier USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN 69), and the destroyer USS FIFE (DD 991). His operational deployments included participation in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Ashore, he has served in the Bureau of Naval Personnel as the Surface Nuclear Assignment Officer (PERS-412N) and as the Assistant Surface Captain Assignment Officer (PERS-41A). His most recent assignment was to the Secretary of the Navy's Office of Legislative Affairs, where he was responsible for providing liaison to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees for all surface warfare, sealift, and shipbuilding programs. In 1984, Commander Ferguson graduated with distinction from the Naval Postgraduate School, earning a Master of Science degree in Computer Science. He is also a graduate of the United States Air Force Command and Staff College.

His decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal, the Navy Achievement Medal, and various unit awards and campaign ribbons.

Commander Ferguson is married to the former Laure' Elizabeth Durbin of McLean, Virginia. They have two children, Andrew and Elaine.


M. E. FERGUSON III