



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6)

FPO AP 96617-1656

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From: Commanding Officer, USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6)
To: Director of Naval History

Subj: USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6) COMMAND HISTORY 1999

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6) Command History 1999

1. Per reference (a) find enclosure (1) as subject matter.

RAH

R. A. YNGVE
By direction

From: USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6)

To: Director, Naval Historical Center

Subj: USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6) COMMAND HISTORY 1999

Encl: (1) "USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6) Wins Command Excellence Awards" article by CDR Sean Sullivan

(2) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet

(3) Ship's photograph

(4) Ship's newspaper clippings

1. Command Composition and Organization

USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD 6)

"Revolutionary Gator"

UIC: 22202

FPO AP 96617-1656

Commanding Officer: CAPT D. W. Keith, USN

2. Narrative

It has been a challenging 12 months. During the 1999 Competitive Cycle BONHOMME RICHARD demonstrated sustained, superior performance in all warfare areas. BONHOMME RICHARD maintained the highest level of combat readiness and qualified for every Command Excellence Award. BONHOMME RICHARD executed a challenging operational and exercise schedule meeting all operational commitments with unparalleled professional and safe achievement.

The officers and crew in BONHOMME RICHARD delivered to the United States Pacific Fleet, a national asset eight months earlier than the nominal work-up cycle and deployment schedule. This accomplishment was achieved through the aggressive and simultaneous execution of both new construction ship testing, certification and installation schedules and a compressed pre-deployment work-up cycle. Despite these challenges, BONHOMME RICHARD overcame the conflicts of competing objectives through precise coordination of a long list of new construction and operational requirements. BONHOMME RICHARD's ability to execute numerous simultaneous events and excel was remarkable.

BONHOMME RICHARD's performance during Basic Tactical Training was superb. This challenging period culminated with Final Evaluation Period(FEP) , February, 1999. The FEP results were OUTSTANDING and quantify the superior skill of the crew and training teams in BONHOMME RICHARD. The months of preparation and development of numerous challenging drills , training events created a continuum of training which led directly to these superb results. At the completion of FEP, all warfare areas were evaluated at FEP Level and five training teams were evaluated at FEP level with one team evaluated at TSTA III.

Operational excellence is the signature ability to perform in the most challenging and complex operational environments as demonstrated during major FLEET exercises. Clearly BONHOMME RICHARD displayed the ability to operate with Marine Forces and provide the CATF and CLF with the SUPPI and service needed to execute amphibious operations and project combat power ashore. This was accomplished in her first ever amphibious exercise immediately upon completion of FEP.

During exercise KERNEL BLITZ, BONHOMME RICHARD clearly demonstrated her strong suit, operational execution of a FLEET innovation. BONHOMME RICHARD embarked COMCMRON THREE and a squadron of four MH-53 aircraft the first-ever LHD AMCM operation. The embarkation of mine countermeasure aircraft in addition to elements of a Marine ACE was tested aboard BONHOMME RICHARD and was an operational success driven from BONHOMME RICHARD's ability to handle multiple complex missions simultaneously. Additionally, BONHOMME RICHARD provided C4I support to Fleet Battle Experiment Echo in which innovative command and control concepts were tested in the littoral. BONHOMME RICHARD excelled during exercises URBAN WARRIOR and KERNEL BLITZ contributing greatly to the success of the exercises.

BONHOMME RICHARD established a new standard in Command and Control. Throughout the year BONHOMME RICHARD tested newly installed equipment. Despite a C4I suite that saw near continuous upgrade and change, BONHOMME RICHARD provided the finest support to numerous FLEET and Navy system test requirements and CNO projects as well as maintaining communication connectivity for embarked commanders. BONHOMME RICHARD masterfully balanced operational commitments and requirements both at sea and inport with technical installation and testing plans and schedules.

BONHOMME RICHARD consistently demonstrated the superior ability to safely conduct sustained high-tempo flight operations in a demanding and inherently dangerous environment. In the past year, BONHOMME RICHARD safely conducted in excess of 2000 aircraft moves, 10,000 aircraft take-offs and landings, 1800 VERTREP evolutions and more than 2000 aircraft refuelings without a single mishap or injury. BONHOMME RICHARD delivered over 1.1 million gallons of fuel without a spill or incident during every fuel transfer evolution.

Flight Deck performance under pressure was tested during EXERCISE LITTORAL LIGHTNING when a CH-46 loaded with 12 civilian media members caught fire during take-off. The BONHOMME RICHARD Flight Deck team safely landed the aircraft on deck, immediately gained control of the fire, and evacuated all passengers and crew without injury. BONHOMME RICHARD also was able to continue safe flight operations during the fire by using the remaining spots to keep fueled the numerous additional aircraft in the pattern.

BONHOMME RICHARD played a major role in the Navy's largest at sea Y2K test. During EXERCISE COMPTUEX 99-Y2K, BONHOMME RICHARD and CINCPACFLT BG Systems Integration Team tested numerous systems for Y2K compliance. These tests were conducted simultaneously with Amphibious Ready Group operations and amphibious training events. Most noteworthy was the fact that BONHOMME RICHARD executed all Y2K testing and conducted all amphibious operations just nine days after the completion of a three month Post Shakedown Availability including an aggressive two day sea trial.

BONHOMME RICHARD executed the pre-deployment exercise schedule displaying exceptional skill in amphibious warfare. BONHOMME RICHARD played a major role in establishing ARG/MEU teamwork. During all exercises BONHOMME RICHARD's execution of the duties as Sea Combat Commander, Air Defense Commander, and Screen Coordinator was outstanding. During FLEETEX 00-1, BONHOMME RICHARD conducted the preparations and smoothly coordinated ARG operations with the JOHN C STENNIS BATTLE GROUP. These operations were extremely successful and lay the ground work for future integrated operations.

BONHOMME RICHARD qualified for all four COMMAND EXCELLENCE AWARDS

ENGINEERING/SURVIVABILITY EXCELLENCE AWARD, COMMAND AND CONTROL EXCELLENCE AWARD, LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE AWARD, MARITIME WARFARE EXCELLENCE AWARD

Whether it was ship construction objectives, inspections, training events, exercises or real world tasking, BONHOMME RICHARD's extraordinary crew rose to meet the challenge and excelled. BONHOMME RICHARD clearly demonstrated sustained superior performance in all warfare areas and met all operational commitments and maintenance or installation schedules. BONHOMME RICHARD's strong performance is telling of a crew dedicated to excellence in all areas of Surface Warfare.