



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS COWPENS (CG 63)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS COWPENS (CG 63)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

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Encl: (1) Command History

1. Per reference (a), enclosure (1) is provided.
2. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to write or contact my Ship's Secretary, YN1 Clarke at Commercial: (619) 556-4530/DSN: 526-4530.

W. R. Mason
W. R. MASON

USS COWPENS (CG 63) COMMAND HISTORY – 1999

1999 served to be a year of recognition and rebuilding for “The Might Moo”.

CAPT (now RADM) William Sullivan was relieved as Commanding Officer by CAPT William Mason, and CDR Terry Culton passed on his assignment to LCDR (now CDR) Roy Kitchener as Executive Officer.

In 1999, COWPENS continued her tradition of excellence and received numerous accolades and awards for outstanding performance in 1998. In January 1999, COWPENS and her crew scored a 104.5 points out of a possible maximum score of 105 in Naval Surface Fire Support at the San Clemente Naval Gunnery Range just off the coast of California.

The following awards were presented to COWPENS for performance in 1998:

- COWPENS was awarded a sixth consecutive Battle “E” award for overall combat effectiveness.
- The Type Commander Safety Award for the ship’s attention to safety and safety-related training. CG 63 now flies the honorary green pennant signifying their dedication to maintaining a shipboard environment prepared for personnel and equipment casualty dangers.
- The Meritorious Unit Commendation for executing tasking as directed by the National Command Authority.
- The Golden Anchor Award for recognition of CG 63 whose crewmember retention far exceeded norms and goals.
- The CIWS Excellence Award to COWPENS’ CIWS team for their commitment to superlative performance with the Vulcan/Phalanx Close-In Weapons System.
- The MWR Excellence Award for providing the best possible command-sponsored activities for COWPENS’ crewmembers and their families, both at home and abroad.

In preparation for the ship’s upcoming nine month Regular Overhaul (ROH), CG 63 made a port call to Acapulco, Mexico in January 1999, allowing the crew some well-deserved liberty prior to the rigors of overhaul.

COWPENS began a 9-month regular overhaul (ROH) at Southwest Marine (SWM) shipyard in March 1999. The ship spent the majority of the year in ROH, with major rework and retrofit taking place. In particular, COWPENS’ communications, navigation, and combat / weapons systems were upgraded, ensuring that COWPENS’ warfighting capability remains cutting edge. COWPENS returned to the active fleet in late-November, following sea-trials.

Among the systems rebuilt and upgraded during COWPENS ROH:

- AEGIS Weapons System 3A Upgrade – Advanced capabilities for COWPENS combat systems suite
- PCMS – Similar to a submarine’s rubberized anechoic coating, PCMS serves to decrease CG 63 radar cross-section, making her stealthier at sea
- ATWCS (Advanced Tomahawk Weapons Control System) – Upgraded Tomahawk mission planning and launch capabilities
- GCCS-M – Replacing JMCIS, serves to allow CG 63’s command structure and personnel a stronger situational awareness of the battlespace environment
- SQS-53D – New, more powerful processing abilities for the sonar suite aboard COWPENS
- MK 41 VLS – Launcher ablative retrofit, allowing for launch of the Navy’s newest and more capable missile systems, such as the forthcoming SM-2 Block IV
- NAVSSI & WSN-7 – Upgraded graphical interface and tracking for navigation and more capable inertial navigation system (gyroscope)

Female Crewmember Modification – Allowing for integration of women at sea aboard CG 63 – conversion of berthing and washroom facilities for officers, CPO’s and enlisted shipmates

During the ROH, the extensive tear-out and refit necessitated ship’s company to “move out”. Administrative offices, messing, and duty berthing were moved to a barge APL-18 at Southwest Marine. In addition, the sailors who would normally be living aboard the ship were moved to barracks aboard former NTC San Diego on Point Loma. Even the ship’s small boats had a temporary home, receiving an overhaul at the boat shop at Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado. While most of the crew worked days refitting and repairing shipboard systems, a core of “habitability team” members worked nights reworking, rebuilding, and repainting COWPENS living spaces. The results were outstanding.

During ROH, the crew began efforts to have COWPENS ready for the 2000 hull swap with USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53) in Yokosuka, Japan. COWPENS will become part of the Forward Deployed Naval Forces – Japan, and MOBILE BAY will return to San Diego for her own overhaul. Manning conferences were held on several occasions, where designated members developed plans with MOBILE BAY and the Naval \

Personnel Command to ensure a smooth transition. A traditional homeport shift consists of an entire ship and ship’s company replacing the incumbent ship and crew. As a more cost effective measure and with respect for crew and family quality of life, CG 63 and CG53 will undergo a hull swap, where only a few certain job-specific crewmembers will remain with COWPENS in Japan. The remainder will return to Southern California with MOBILE BAY. This is necessary for the ship-specific systems aboard each platform.

Another major milestone for COWPENS was the integration of enlisted female sailors to the crew. The transition has been smooth, and by year's end, twenty-six female sailors are now part of COWPENS' heritage of excellence.

In June, to commemorate and celebrate the historic roots of COWPENS, several COWPENS sailors traveled to Cowpens, South Carolina for the annual "Mighty Moo Festival". The festival commemorates the historic battle after which CG 63 and CVL 25, the World War II Light Aircraft Carrier, are named.

COWPENS' final event of the year was the holiday round up at the Big Stone Lodge in Poway. In typical COWPENS fashion, the party featured hayrides, plenty of cow memorabilia, and excellent chow.