



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS CHAMPION (MCM-4)
FPO AA 34090-1924

Rec'd 6/10/97

IN REPLY REFER TO:
5750
Ser 4/049
4 Apr 97

From: Commanding Officer, USS CHAMPION (MCM-4)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), Naval Historical
Center, Washington Navy Yard, 901 M Street SE, BLDG 57
Washington, DC 20374-5060

Subj: USS CHAMPION (MCM-4) 1996 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) Command History 1996

1. Per reference (a), CHAMPION submits enclosure (1).
2. Point of contact is Public Affairs Officer: LTJG Brett M. Mears, DSN 776-4622, COMM (512) 776-4622.

Lewis C. Nygard
LEWIS C. NYGARD

COMMAND HISTORY 1996
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1. COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION:

a. Mission: The mission of USS CHAMPION is to locate and neutralize floating, moored, and bottom type mines using either conventional sweep techniques or sonar minehunting.

b. Organizational Structure: The Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) of USS CHAMPION is Commander, Mine Warfare Command, Corpus Christi, TX (COMINWARCOM). The Type Commander (TYCOM) is Commander, Naval Surface Forces, Atlantic Fleet.

c. Name of Commander: LCDR Sean Gilliland commanded CHAMPION until 8 March 1996, when he was relieved by LCDR John M. Chandler. LCDR John M. Chandler commanded CHAMPION until 29 March 1996, when he was relieved by LCDR Lewis C. Nygard. LCDR Lewis C. Nygard commanded CHAMPION for the remainder of 1996.

d. Permanent Duty Station: USS CHAMPION is homeported at Naval Station Ingleside, Ingleside, TX.

e. Aircraft Assigned: There are no aircraft assigned to USS CHAMPION.

2. Chronology: The following is a description of selected events listed in the Chronological Command History:

15-28 January-Underway for Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA4)
29 January-Underway for Panama City, FL
01 February-Arrive Panama City, FL
02-09 February-Underway for Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA4)
19-23 February-Mine Warfare Readiness Certification Inspection (MRCI)
24 February-Underway for Ingleside, TX
27 February-Arrive Ingleside, TX
04-08 March-Crew swap between USS WARRIOR (MCM 10) and MCM Rotational Crew Charlie in USS CHAMPION
12 March-Underway in CCOA for crew familiarization
18-29 March-Diesel Engine Inspection (DEI)
29 March-Change of command
09-11 April-Underway in CCOA in support of Senior Officer Ship Material Readiness Course (SOSMRC)
13 April-Visit ship: Corpus Christi, TX
22 April-Commenced Phased Maintenance Availability (PMA)

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14-17 May-Engineering Training Group (ETG) Pre-Lightoff Training (PLOT2)
01 July-Transferred to Naval Reserve Force (NRF)
08-09 July-Magazine Sprinkler System Inspection (MSSI)
10-11 July-Lightoff Assessment (LOA)
12 July-Dock trials
13 July-Sea trials
22 July-Completed PMA
23-26 July-Underway CCOA for training (DASMN)
03-04 August-Underway CCOA for Naval Reserve Training (NRT) weekend
08 August-Underway for Panama City, FL
12 August-Arrive Panama City, FL
13-14 August-Underway in Panama City Operating Area for NRT
15 August-Safety Survey inspection, Panama City, FL
17 August-Underway for Ingleside, TX
20 August-Arrive Ingleside, TX
11-12 September-Underway in CCOA for training (MIW)
14-15 September-Underway in CCOA for NRT
23-27 September-Command Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART2)
04 October-Communications exercise (CCC-27-SF)
15-16 October-Inport phase of Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA1): DASMN
17-18 October-Underway CCOA for TSTA1: DASMN
21-22 October-Underway CCOA for TSTA1: DASMN
23 October-Inport TSTA1: DASMN
24-25 October-Underway CCOA for TSTA1: DASMN
25 October-Safety Survey inspection
28-29 October-Inport phase of TSTA1: MIW
30 October-01 November: Underway CCOA for TSTA1: MIW
06 November-Underway for INSURV Underway Material Inspection (UMI) rehearsal
12-15 November-INSURV
04 December-Navigation check ride inspection
05 December-Underway for Brownsville, TX; navigation certification
06-08 December-Port visit: Brownsville, TX
09 December-Arrive Ingleside, TX
09 December-Inport phase of TSTA1: Engineering
10-13 December-Underway CCOA for TSTA1: Engineering

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3. NARRATIVE:

The crew of CHAMPION returned from holiday leave and upkeep in early January to prepare for Mine Warfare Readiness Certification Inspection (MRCI). The Afloat Training Group (ATG) Ingleside detachment embarked to conduct the fourth and final phase of Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA IV) on January 15th. The first two weeks of training were completed in the Corpus Christi operating area. Then on Monday, January 29th, CHAMPION departed for Panama City, FL, a four day transit. The second two weeks of TSTA IV were conducted during the transit and off the coast of Panama City. CHAMPION completed TSTA IV and pulled into port in Panama City on February 10th.

The crew had one week to make material preparations and lay out the minesweep inventory for inspection. On Monday, February 19th, the Mine Warfare Inspection Group commenced MRCI in CHAMPION. The first day of the inspection involved safety checks of all minesweep machinery, an extensive administrative review, and a thorough inspection of the minesweep deck gear inventory. Then, on Tuesday morning, CHAMPION got underway for the at-sea portion of the inspection. The crew demonstrated minehunting, mine neutralization using the AN/SLQ-48 vehicle, mechanical minesweeping, combination influence minesweeping, small boat vectoring, Q-route survey, danning, and mine destruction. Friday, February 23rd, CHAMPION pulled in for one last night of liberty in Panama City to celebrate a successful MRCI. The next morning CHAMPION departed for Ingleside, TX.

CHAMPION arrived in Ingleside on February 27th. On Monday, March 4th, the USS WARRIOR (MCM 10) pulled alongside to facilitate a crew swap between the two ships. The turnover process lasted the full week. On March 8th, LCDR John M.

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Chandler and the WARRIOR crew took command of CHAMPION and LCDR Sean Gilliland and MCM Rotational Crew Charlie left CHAMPION and took command of WARRIOR.

On March 12th, CHAMPION got underway for a one day crew familiarization in the Corpus Christi operating area. The perspective Commanding Officer, LCDR Lewis C. Nygard, also got his first chance to get underway in CHAMPION. CHAMPION returned to port and the engineering department prepared the plant for a two-week diesel engine inspection which started on March 18th. Concurrently, the crew began preparing the ship for a change of command ceremony.

On March 29th LCDR Lewis C. Nygard relieved LCDR John M. Chandler as Commanding Officer of CHAMPION. The ceremony and reception were held on the Naval Station Ingleside wharf in front of CHAMPION. CAPT Dennis I. Parsons, Commander Regional Support Group Ingleside, delivered the guest speaker remarks.

After a week in port, CHAMPION got underway for three days, April 9-11, in support of Senior Officer Ship Material Readiness Course (SOSMRC). A SOSMRC instructor and three MCM 1 class perspective commanding officers embarked for the opportunity to see CHAMPION demonstrate several mission areas.

CHAMPION returned to Ingleside on April 11th and got underway the following morning to transit across the bay to the port of Corpus Christi. The crew got the opportunity to invite family and friends for the two hour transit. After mooring in Corpus Christi, the crew set about preparing CHAMPION for visit ship duties the next day. On Saturday, April 13th, RADM John Pearson, Commander Mine Warfare Command, spoke at the Greater Corpus Christi Business Association's annual meeting. Following the meeting, the crew of CHAMPION gave ship tours. On Sunday morning, CHAMPION departed Corpus Christi and returned to homeport.

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After one week of preparations, CHAMPION was delivered to Southwest Marine shipyard to commence Phased Maintenance Availability (PMA) on April 22nd. On the same day, the crew moved off the ship into a bunkhouse provided by Southwest Marine. Major work items included: Ship's Service Diesel Generator (SSDG) Bedplate Modification (Ship Alteration 180K), Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) System Upgrade (Ship Alteration 106K), and inspection, repair, and cleaning of the fuel oil and potable water tanks. The crew moved back aboard CHAMPION on July 1st, and engineering spaces were turned over to ship's force four days later. The Regional Support Group Ingleside Propulsion Readiness Team conducted a successful Light Off Assessment (LOA) in CHAMPION on July 10-11. Fast cruise and dock trials were completed on July 12th. On July 13th, CHAMPION departed Southwest Marine for sea trials in the Corpus Christi operating area before returning to Ingleside.

During PMA, CHAMPION transitioned to the Naval Reserve Force (NRF) on July 1st. On July 14th, selected reservists from Houston reported for their first Naval Reserve Training (NRT) weekend. The reservists received an indoctrination on shipboard life and completed administrative matters associated with their transfer to CHAMPION.

On July 23rd, CHAMPION got underway for four days of training in the Corpus Christi operating area. CHAMPION returned to homeport on Friday, July 26th, and spent the next week in Ingleside. CHAMPION's selected reservists received their first underway experience on August 3-4, when CHAMPION went out into the Corpus Christi operating area in support of NRT weekend.

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On August 8th, CHAMPION departed Ingleside enroute to Panama City, FL. CHAMPION arrived at the Coastal Systems Station Panama City, FL on August 12th; and the crew received a tour of the mine warfare facilities on the station. The next morning the ship departed for two days of mine warfare training off the coast of Panama City. CHAMPION returned to port on August 15th. The next day assessors from the Naval Safety Center conducted a safety survey in CHAMPION. On Saturday, August 17th, CHAMPION departed Panama City enroute to Ingleside, where she arrived on August 20th.

After two and a half weeks of upkeep in port, CHAMPION got underway on September 11-12 for mine warfare training in the Corpus Christi operating area. The ship pulled in on Friday to embark the selected reservists, and then got underway the next morning for NRT weekend. After a weekend of training the selected reservists, the crew set about preparations for commencing the training cycle.

ATG Ingleside detachment and the LANTFLT Propulsion Examining Board (PEB) conducted a Command Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART2) during the week of September 23-27. The trainers looked at material conditions, the minesweep deck gear inventory, training plans and other administrative programs. After ATG completed their assessment the crew of CHAMPION spent the next two weeks correcting material restrictives that could hold up the training process.

ATG returned on October 15th to start TSTA1. The first two weeks the ATG DASMN team helped train the Combat Systems Training Team (CSTT), Navigation and Seamanship Training Team (NSTT), and the Damage Control Training Team (DCTT). Training consisted of various scenario-driven evolutions both inport and at sea. On October 28th the MIW team embarked for a week of mine warfare training in port and at sea.

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CHAMPION returned to port on November 1st to focus on preparations for INSURV. November 6th, CHAMPION steamed out into the Corpus Christi operating area to conduct a Underway Material Inspection (UMI) rehearsal. The LANTFLT INSURV board embarked the next week on November 12th. The inspectors conducted safety checks and ensured there were no material restrictions that would prevent CHAMPION from getting underway. The next morning CHAMPION got underway for UMI. The crew spent a long day demonstrating the engineering plant, various mission areas, and general material conditions before returning to port. The INSURV inspectors returned November 14-15th to conclude their material inspection in CHAMPION.

After successfully completing INSURV and UMI, CHAMPION spent the next three weeks in port cleaning and preserving the ship. The crew got an unwelcome surprise on December 3rd when a short in one of the shore power cables caused an electrical fire in the cable. The inport emergency team was dispatched and the fire extinguished when shore power was secured. The class "C" fire caused some minor cosmetic damage to the deck non-skid and forced replacement of the nylon line on the AN/SLQ-48 Vehicle Handling System (VHS).

After the excitement from the fire faded, CHAMPION got underway enroute to the port of Brownsville, TX on December 5th. During the transit out of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel, the Mine Warfare Command Navigation Check Team completed a highly successful certification of CHAMPION's navigation team. CHAMPION arrived in Brownsville the next afternoon and began preparations for participation in a ceremony commemorating the 55th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Rio Grande Valley Chapter of the Pearl Harbor Survivor's Association held the

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commemorative service on December 7th, followed by ship tours in CHAMPION. The next afternoon CHAMPION departed Brownsville to return to homeport. The stay in Brownsville afforded the crew a nice opportunity to visit South Padre Island and Matamoros, Mexico.

CHAMPION arrived in Ingleside on December 9th and commenced TSTA1 engineering training with ATG. The first day involved hot and cold checks inport. CHAMPION then got underway in the Corpus Christi operating area for the next four days to conduct various engineering evolutions and drills.

With engineering training completed, CHAMPION returned to Ingleside on Friday, December 13th. The crew of CHAMPION concluded the year with holiday leave and upkeep.

4. **SUPPORT DOCUMENTS:** The following documents are enclosed to amplify important information on USS CHAMPION activities:

- a. Mine Warfare Readiness Certification results
- b. SITREPS (five)
- c. Oil Spill Reports (two)
- d. OPREP-3 Navy Blue (two)
- e. Phased Maintenance Availability SITREPS (thirteen)
- f. Magazine Sprinkler System Inspection results and message
- g. Light Off Assessment results
- h. Communication Exercise (CCC-27-SF) report
- i. TSTA1 Executive Summary reports (three)