



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS COLUMBUS (SSN 762)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS COLUMBUS (SSN 762)
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Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

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Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative

1. Per reference (a), enclosure (1) through (3) are submitted.


N. B. MOORE

USS COLUMBUS (SSN 762)
COMMAND HISTORY FOR JAN 2001 to August 2002

1. Command Composition and Organization

USS COLUMBUS (SSN 762) is the fifty-first ship of the Los Angeles class, and the twelfth of the improved version. With stealth, endurance and agility, COLUMBUS can be used in roles and missions to meet the challenges of the ever-changing global geopolitical climate. COLUMBUS has the ability to arrive on station quickly, stay for an extended period of time and covertly carry out multiple missions including undersea warfare(USW), anti-surface warfare(ASUW), deployment of special operation forces, mine laying precision strike land attack or deterrence through perceived presence. Home-ported in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, she is under the cognizance of Submarine Squadron SEVEN, and is commanded by Commander Norman B. Moore. Lieutenant Commander Michael J. S. Sangster, Executive Officer; Lieutenant Commander Gregory R. Kercher, Engineer Officer; Lieutenant Commander Geoffrey C. James, Navigator; Lieutenant Kirk J. Loftus, Weapons Officer; Lieutenant Jeffrey S. Mills, Supply Officer and MMCS(SS) William A. Roberts, Chief of the Boat are responsible for leading the crew and maintaining the ship at a maximum state of readiness.

CHRONOLOGY FOR JAN, 2001 TO AUG, 2002
USS COLUMBUS (SSN 762)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
January '01	Selected Restricted Availability in Drydock
February '01	Selected Restricted Availability in Drydock
March '01	Selected Restricted Availability in Drydock
April '01	Selected Restricted Availability Sea Trials Crew certification
May '01	Underway tactical training NSTCP Training Combat Systems Readiness Review
June '01	Combat Systems Readiness Review Underway Engineering Training Tactical Weapons Proficiency Exam
July '01	Deployment Preparation Upkeep
August '01	Sea trials Planning Availability Eastern Pacific Operations Sound Trials Port Call - Ketchikan, Alaska
September '01	Eastern Pacific Operations Operational Reactor Safeguards Examination Port call - San Diego, California
October '01	Deployment Preparation Upkeep
November '01	Deployment Preparation Upkeep Sea Trials Deployment Preparation Tactical Training
December '01	Deployment Preparation Tactical Training Holiday Leave Period
January '02	Holiday Leave Period Deployment Preparation Tactical Training

February '02 Western Pacific Deployment
Port Call - Guam
Western Pacific Operations

March '02 Western Pacific Operations
Port Call - Singapore

April '02 Port Call - Singapore
Western Pacific Operations

May '02 Western Pacific Operations
Port Call - Sasebo

June '02 Port Call - Sasebo
Western Pacific Operations

July '02 Western Pacific Operations
Port Call - Chinhai
Operation ROKN SUBEX 02-1
Port Call - Chinhai
Upkeep Yokosuka

August '02 Operational Reactor Safeguards Exam
Return to Pearl Harbor
Post-deployment Leave Period

1. NARRATIVE

COLUMBUS began 2001 in her homeport of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii enjoying a holiday stand-down. When her crew returned rested and relaxed, they began to make preparations for the upcoming Selected Restricted Availability. The ship was moved to Dry Dock 2 at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard on 10 JAN 02. For the next three months, the crew worked day and night to accomplish over 700 separate jobs and re-tests. Some supervisors averaged 100+ hour work weeks to ensure that every task was completed safely and efficiently. The Engineering Department trained vigorously for weeks to complete a major reactor plant maintenance evolution. All of this complex nuclear work and retests were completed flawlessly and lauded by the shipyard and squadron staffs.

The Navigation/Operations Department accomplished a complete revamp of the ship's Radio Room, which replaced many of the manual cable operations with an automated switchboard run from a computer. The ship also installed a technologically advanced EHF communications terminal, which allows the ship to transfer computer files and conduct voice communications in a completely secure and encrypted manner.

The Weapons Department completed extensive modifications to the weapons battery adding significant capability and stealth to the ship. Improvements were also made to the ship's weapons handling and sonar systems.

On 31 MAR 01, COLUMBUS finally left Dry Dock 2 and commenced the final phase of its SRA at the Bravo Piers at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. While here, the crew was occupied with many re-tests that were conducted to ensure that the ship was ready to return to sea. On 20 APR 02, the ship conducted crucial fast cruise training. This fast cruise simulated an at-sea period to ensure that the ship was, in fact, ready to return to sea duty.

On 21 APR 02, COLUMBUS left Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard and sailed into the local Hawaiian areas to conduct Sea Trials. During this period, the ship's watertight integrity was tested by a sequence of deep dives. Many other re-tests that could only be conducted while the ship was at sea were also conducted. The ship officially ended its SRA and was now officially returned to sea duty.

The ship returned from Sea Trials and headed directly to the West Loch of Pearl Harbor to load exercise weapons. After the load-out, the ship returned to sea to prepare for its upcoming Combat Systems Readiness Review (CSRR) and its Tactical Weapons Proficiency Exam (TWP). The crew performed well in several different war-fighting scenarios. Exercise torpedoes were fired at the Barking Sands Weapons Range off the coast of Kauai and torpedo evasion techniques were also honed in during this period.

Several Junior Officers were also afforded the opportunity to increase their tactical proficiency. In addition to practicing ship landings off of Ford Island, the Junior Officers were also able fire actual exercise weapons in simulated approach-and-attack scenarios. The Junior Officers and crew thoroughly enjoyed the "J.O. Shootout" and learned valuable lessons that will follow them for the rest of their naval careers.

From 21 MAY 01 to 10 JUN 01, the ship was put through the rigors of a CSRR. During this period, the capabilities of the Fire Control Technicians, Sonar Technicians, Torpedomen, and the entire combat systems suite were thoroughly checked out to ensure maximum capability existed. As expected, Weapons Department performed brilliantly.

From 11 JUN 01 to 24 JUN 01, the ship conducted both at-sea and in-port training to prepare for the Tactical Weapons Proficiency Exam. During the at-sea periods, the capabilities of the ship were evaluated while conducting different tracking and approach-and-attack scenarios. Preparation for this underway training was completed in the attack trainers at the Naval Submarine Training Command Pacific (NSTCPAC). The Engineering Department also took advantage of the at-sea periods to conduct complex engineering drills. These drills tested the nuclear trained operators to respond to serious and complicated reactor and propulsion plant casualties.

During the last week of JUN 01, COLUMBUS completed its Tactical Weapons Proficiency Exam (TWP). During the TWP, the ship proved that it could successfully track and engage enemy submarines and surface ships.

On 01 JUL 01, COLUMBUS began the first of two Deployment Preparation Period (DPP I) upkeeps. During this extensive upkeep, several important modifications were installed. Most notably, Fire Control Division installed the newest tactical support computer system available.

The substantial upgrade enabled the ship to develop and maintain a common tactical picture, fusing inputs from numerous sensors. Another notable installation was the newest digital imaging technology for the Type-18 periscope, SUBIS. Also included with SUBIS is a Low-Level-Light Television camera, which allows an image-intensified picture to be displayed on a monitor for nighttime operations. These systems, integrated by a central computer unit, greatly upgraded the ship's capability to conduct visual reconnaissance missions and digitally record them in the process.

DPP I upkeep was completed on 06 AUG 01, and after a period of sea trials, COLUMBUS sailed on 20 AUG 01 for Alaska. From 28 AUG 01 to 01 SEP 01, the ship conducted sound trials off the coast of Ketchikan, Alaska. The ship traveled through a series of hydrophones in different machinery lineups to measure the ship's sound signature. During the sound trials, the crew was able to rotate in three different groups to shore for some liberty in Ketchikan, a small Alaskan fishing town. Although the liberty period was short, the crew was still able to take in some of the local culture, which is composed of Native American, fishing, and logging influences. Many crewmembers enjoyed the best salmon they had ever eaten at the many local establishments.

On 02 SEP 01, the ship left Ketchikan, Alaska and headed for San Diego, California. During the transit, the ship prepared itself for the upcoming Operational Reactor Safeguards Exam (ORSE). The Engineering Department practiced combating many major propulsion plant and reactor casualties. Many casualties required the prompt actions of the entire crew.

COLUMBUS also participated in a missile exercise, in which several U.S. naval vessels practiced a coordinated Tomahawk missile strike in the local San Diego operations area. COLUMBUS was the only submarine in the exercise and was able to complete its missions flawlessly. For the first time, the ship was able to employ its newly installed EHF system to "chat" live via laptop computer with the other vessels involved in the strike. This is a capability that has only recently been made available to submarines.

The ORSE was conducted on 08 SEP 01 to 09 SEP 01. During this exam, the crew was subjected to over 12 hours of engineering and ship-wide casualty drills. The Engineering Department also underwent a rigorous records audit, and written and oral exams were conducted to assess

the crew's knowledge on many engineering topics. The countless hours of preparation spent by every crewmember contributed to the success that COLUMBUS enjoyed on the exam. Many individuals were recognized with personal awards for their significant contributions.

After the ORSE was completed, the ship pulled into San Diego on 09 SEP 01 for some much-needed liberty. Many crewmembers enjoyed liberty in San Diego, while some were able to travel as far as Las Vegas and Arizona to visit friends and family members. Unfortunately, the terrorist attack on September 11 forced the recall of all personnel and a lock-down of the Point Loma Submarine Base. The crew worked hard to make the ship ready for a possible emergency underway. Force protection measures were promptly taken and security of the ship and the surrounding areas on the pier was increased considerably. This process was completed quickly and efficiently due to the ship's effective force protection training program.

COLUMBUS remained in San Diego for four more days, and headed back to Hawaii on 15 SEP 01. The crew was tense during the transit back to Pearl Harbor since news from the home front about the war on terrorism was sparse. COLUMBUS returned to Hawaii on 22 SEP 01 and continued preparations for its upcoming Western Pacific Deployment. The second pre-deployment upkeep period (DPP II) began on 23 SEP 01. Intense preservation and cleaning of the sail and masts and antennas was completed during this period.

COLUMBUS returned to sea on 08 NOV 01 after loading mine shapes for an upcoming mine laying exercise. The ship ended November and started December with underway tactical training. During the exercise, the crew practiced tracking and attacking diesel submarines, COLUMBUS gaining a great deal of experience against a quiet and capable target. Additionally, the ship practiced taking both still photos and video pictures of a portion of the Hawaiian coastline to demonstrate proficiency in intelligence collection.

COLUMBUS ended the year in Pearl Harbor with a holiday standown, in which most of the crew was able to take some well-earned leave. Many junior crewmembers were able to go home to the mainland for the first time since reporting on board.

The beginning of 2002 brought the end of the holiday leave period and began with a series of intense in-port tactical training to ready the ship for deployment. In February, COLUMBUS underwent a Pre-Overseas Movement

Certification (POMCERT). This is an observed at-sea exam that allowed the ship to be certified to begin Western Pacific operations. While on POMCERT, the crew was tested in several different scenarios that would likely be encountered while deployed. The crew was able to use the training received at NSTCP and apply it to actual at-sea situations.

On February 8, COLUMBUS sailors bid their families and friends farewell and departed on the ship's fourth Western Pacific Deployment. The crew stopped in Guam for some rest and relaxation before beginning their first operation. Crewmembers enjoyed the hospitality of the people of Guam, and also took in some sightseeing and some of the best scuba diving in the world. After this quick stop, COLUMBUS started the first of three operations that it would perform while deployed.

COLUMBUS pulled into Singapore in late March for six days of well-needed liberty. The crew enjoyed the unique qualities of Singapore that are characterized by a mix of exotic Asian culture and Western influence. Some crewmembers took trips to the world's only nighttime zoo while others indulged themselves with the latest electronic gadgets from Sembawang.

After leaving Singapore, COLUMBUS began its second and longest mission. During the operation, one crewmember was diagnosed with appendicitis, which forced the crew to perform an emergency small-boat transfer of the crewmember to Okinawa. The crew's corpsman and many other members of the crew worked together to ensure that this was done safely and quickly, to ensure the patient's quick recovery. After the transfer, COLUMBUS finished its operation and finally pulled into port in Sasebo, Japan. This quick stop in Sasebo allowed the crew to replenish supplies and do some souvenir shopping. The ship's MWR fund set up nightly trips to Fukuoka, where many crewmembers enjoyed the city's active nightlife.

The ship left Sasebo to participate in a coordinated exercise with the Kitty Hawk Carrier Battle Group. During this exercise, COLUMBUS practiced anti-submarine warfare tactics with the battle group. As the only "friendly" submarine in the exercise, COLUMBUS provided valuable tactical information to the battle group commander.

The ship then returned to Sasebo for more liberty. During this inport period, the crew was afforded more opportunities to be able to venture further out into the surrounding cities, including more trips to Fukuoka and Nagasaki.

COLUMBUS left Sasebo in early June for its final Western Pacific operation. This operation concluded in early July with an exercise with a South Korean submarine. This short exercise enabled COLUMBUS and ROKN LEE SUN SHIN to practice anti-submarine tactics. COLUMBUS also embarked two South Korean naval officers and one senior chief petty officer. This gave the three Korean riders the unique experience to see how an American submarine conducts day-to-day operations at sea. Following this exercise, COLUMBUS pulled in pier-side in Chinhae, South Korea. During this six-hour stop, the COLUMBUS wardroom was able to have lunch with the wardroom of the LEE SUN SHIN. The officers of both wardrooms dined on Korean food and swapped sea stories with their counterparts. Many officers exchanged their gold "dolphin" insignias as souvenirs. The event allowed the two wardrooms to come together and celebrate their common bond as submariners.

COLUMBUS headed for Yokosuka, Japan, immediately after leaving Chinhae. In Yokosuka, COLUMBUS started a ten-day upkeep to ready herself for her return voyage to Pearl Harbor. The crew worked hard to clean and paint the boat, as well as finish some much-needed repairs to vital equipment. On July 27, COLUMBUS finally began the voyage back to Pearl Harbor.

Prior to pulling into Pearl Harbor, COLUMBUS participated in an Operational Reactor Safeguards Examination. Once again, the crew was put through the rigors of various flooding and fire drills, as well as different reactor and propulsion plant casualties. The hard work and dedication that the crew put into practicing for the ORSE during the transit back to Pearl Harbor paid off and COLUMBUS successfully passed the exam.

COLUMBUS finally returned home after six months at sea on August 6, 2002. Family members and friends were eagerly awaiting COLUMBUS on the pier and the crew was finally happy to be home.