



**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**

COMMANDING OFFICER  
USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7)  
FPO AE 09574-1664

5750  
Ser LHD7/ 00501  
10 Jul 03

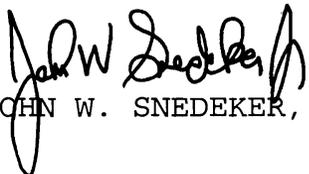
From: Commanding Officer, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7)  
To: Director, Naval Historical Center  
805 Kidder Breese Street SE  
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5059

Subj: USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12H

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Statistics  
(2) Command Chronology  
(3) Command Narrative  
(4) COMPHIBRON 6 Official Biography  
(5) Commanding Officer Official Biography  
(6) Executive Officer Official Biography  
(7) Command Master Chief Official Biography  
(8) Ship's Imagery  
(9) Ship's Newspapers  
(10) Change of Command Materials  
(11) Media Bootcamp Materials  
(12) Various Ship's 5050's  
(13) Various Ship's External News Releases  
(14) Fleet Week Week Materials  
(15) Media Bootcamp Materials  
(16) Change of Command Media Advisory  
(17) Outgoing CO Change of Command Speech  
(18) "All Hands" Magazine featuring IWO in NYC  
for Fleet Week 2002

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (18) are submitted.

  
JOHN W. SNEDEKER, JR.

## **Command Composition and Organization**

Command Short Title: USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7)

UIC: 23027

Mission: IWO JIMA's primary mission is to embark and land elements of a Marine landing force in amphibious assault operations by helicopter, landing craft, amphibious vehicle or any combination of these methods. A secondary role of IWO JIMA is to serve as the command ship of an amphibious ready group, or ARG, comprised of cruisers, destroyers and other classes of amphibious ships. The ARG serves as a quick response team capable of responding to various missions, including special purpose operations and humanitarian missions.

Immediate Superior In Command: Amphibious Group 2

Commanding Officer: Captain John W. Snedeker, Jr.

Permanent Duty Station: Naval Station, Norfolk, VA.

Type of aircraft assigned:

CH-46E Medium Lift Assault Helicopter (12)

Bureau Numbers: 157678, 157687, 153353, 153382, 153990, 153998, 154819, 156464, 156470, 157656, 157664, 157688

CH-53E Heavy Lift Assault Helicopter (6)

Bureau Numbers: 163059, 163061, 163063, 161257, 161998, 162495

HH-46D Sea Air Rescue (2)

Bureau Numbers: 151955, 152539

AH-1W Light Attack Helicopter (6)

Bureau Numbers: 160806, 160819, 161019, 161021, 163926, 165331

UH-1N Command and Control Helicopter (2)

Bureau Numbers: 158280, 159683

AV-8B Harrier Vertical/Short Take and Landing (6)

Bureau Numbers: 163876, 164126, 165353, 165357, 165382, 165383

Encl (1)

## Command Chronology

06JAN02 Transit to NORSHIPCO Naval Shipyard for Post Ship's Availability (PSA)  
14JAN02 Light off/Begin main space fire drills while in shipyard  
28JAN02 MM1(SW) Richard Parker named Sailor of the Year  
28JAN02 AS2 Brian Strawn named Junior Sailor of the Year  
FEB02 Diesel Engine Inspection completed  
10FEB02 Awarded Engineering Survivability Award  
APR02 Type Commander Assessment of Readiness and Training (TCAT) completed  
12APR02 Command Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART II) completed  
19APR02 Completed Deperming  
26APR02 Well Deck Certification  
MAY02 Anti Terrorism/Force Protection Phase I Certified  
MAY02 Anti Terrorism/Force Protection Phase II Certified  
20MAY02 Completed Tailored Ship Training Availability (TSTA I)  
21MAY02 Arrived NYC for Fleet Week 2002  
26MAY02 Hosted VIP Gala aboard IWO JIMA to complete Fleet Week festivities  
JUNE02 Completed training in all Mission Areas  
14JUN02 Completed Tailored Ship Training Availability (TSTA II)  
21JUN02 Supply Management Inspection (3-M Assist) passed with highest possible score  
26JUN02 Certified to operate under conditions I and III  
26JUN02 Certified to effectively control battle damage  
27JUN02 FEP for overall assessment completed  
28JUN02 Completed TSTA III  
23SEP02 Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) Navigation Assessment completed  
OCT02 Completed Amphibious Readiness Group Exercise (ARGEX)  
4OCT02 Completed Combat Systems Readiness Assessment  
25OCT02 Completed training in Primary Warfare Mission Areas  
NOV02 Completed Supporting Arms Coordination Exercise (SACEX) and Special Operations Capability Exercise (SOCEX)  
17NOV02 Hosted Media Bootcamp  
DEC02 Completed Deck Landing Qualifications (DLQ)'s  
6DEC02 Captain John W. Snedeker, Jr. relieved Captain John T. Nawrocki as Commanding Officer

## Command History Narrative

USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) commenced the year at the NORSHIPCO Navy Shipyard in downtown Norfolk for a three-month maintenance period. On January 14, IWO JIMA became the first ship to ever light off a main engine and conduct fire drills in a main machinery room while in the shipyard. On January 28, MM1(SW) Richard Parker and AS2 Michael Strawn were named IWO JIMA's Sailor of the Year and Junior Sailor of the Year, respectively.

Three months in the shipyard not only improved the habitability of the ship and its capability to fulfill its mission of putting Marines on the shore, but it also provided the 1,200-member crew a great opportunity for training at service schools.

Immediately following the shipyard period, IWO JIMA transitioned to a pier a few miles from Norfolk Naval Station. For three days the ship was demagnetized by hundreds of steel cables, charged with electricity, erasing the ship's magnetic signature. Deperming, as the process is called, is a requirement for all ships prior to deployment.

In mid April, IWO JIMA began a series of qualifications and inspections during several underway periods that would certify the ship in all areas of warfare, maintenance, and crew readiness.

Inserted in between the qualification phases, was a historic trip to New York City as the Flag Ship of a Navy Flotilla for FLEET WEEK 2002. Less than a year after 9-11, NYC was welcoming visitors back to the city; and the Navy, for the first time since 9-11, was prepared to welcome visitors back aboard ships. FLEET WEEK and IWO JIMA were the launch pad for more than 45,000 tourists visiting the ship during the six-day port visit. The night before the ship pulled in, the crew was treated to an evening of Marine Corps history and heritage. Jack Lucas, the youngest Medal of Honor recipient in history, spoke to more than one thousand Sailors and Marines. As he described the heroic acts that earned him the medal, he was interrupted several times by thunderous applause.

Following Mr. Lucas, James Bradley, the author of *Flags of our Fathers*, a best-selling book about the flag raisers on top of Mt. Suribachi, spoke at length about the history of the battle. He discussed his father, Jack Bradly, and his role in the battle; and the events that led to Jack and five Marines raising the American Flag atop Mt. Suribachi.

IWO JIMA was greeted by thousands of New Yorkers as she sailed up the Hudson River to Manhattan, the last ship in a 20-ship armada. New York was clearly using FLEET WEEK as an opportunity to show the world the city was back after 9-11. As a result, there were more events planned for FLEET WEEK 2002 than had ever been planned during the history of this event. IWO JIMA Sailors were seen on all major television networks pulling into port. The flight deck was filled with news anchors and satellite dishes, all reporting live the morning of May 21.

Encl (3)

During the FLEET WEEK, television programs such as Good Morning America, the David Letterman Show, and BET invited IWO JIMA Sailors to appear. The result was the most significant amount of television coverage of a single crew in Navy history.

IWO JIMA capped off its week in New York City with a Sunset Parade on the hangar bay. More than 1,000 guests attended the formal affair and witnessed demonstrations from the Navy Drill Team and IWO JIMA's own Color Guard.

Prior to Fleet Week, IWO JIMA was certified in a number of areas including: Type Commander's Amphibious Training (TCAT), Command Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART II), Well Deck Certification and Anti-Terrorism and Force Protection (ATFP Phases I and II). With deployment looming less than a year away, it was time to integrate the Marines of the 26<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit. While the Sailors of IWO JIMA were qualifying on the open ocean in the areas of damage control, navigation, and operations under varying simulated conditions of battle, the Marines were training hard at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

In June, IWO JIMA underwent the Supply Management Inspection/3-M assist and passed both assessments with the highest possible scores. Additionally, the crew successfully completed a Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA) and its Final Evaluation Problem (FEP). During these exercises, inspectors from Afloat Training Group, Norfolk certified IWO JIMA's Integrated Training Teams.

During the month of July, IWO JIMA remained in port for maintenance and then proceeded back to sea in August for a PHIBRON/MEU Integration Training (PMINT) period enabling the ship, Amphibious Squadron and Marines to train as a team. During this underway period, IWO JIMA also conducted NATO Sea Sparrow Missile/Slave Illumination Test procedures.

In September, IWO JIMA's Navigation Team successfully completed the Navigation Assessment while Combat Systems underwent a very successful C5 Readiness Assessment. Simultaneously with these events, a Systems Equipment and Material Assessment Team came aboard and performed field changes and upgrades to a variety of equipment.

In October, the 26 MEU embarked for the Amphibious Ready Group Exercise (ARGEX) that was immediately followed by the Supporting Arms Coordination Exercise/Special Operations Capability Exercise (SACEX/SOCEX) during the month of November. Highly successful in both exercises, the 26 MEU earned the distinction of being Special Operations Capable (SOC).

During late November on the transit back to Norfolk from Morehead, NC, 60 media members embarked IWO JIMA for a day of fleet indoctrination. A Pentagon-driven program, their orientation visit was designed to provide media members an illustration of what life at sea is like aboard a Naval warship.

The last significant event of 2002 saw Captain John T. Nawrocki, IWO JIMA's first Commanding Officer, turning over the ship to Captain John W. Snedeker, Jr. in a change of command ceremony on December 6.

As 2002 turned to 2003, IWO JIMA was awaiting orders to deploy.