



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS MITSCHER (DDG 57)
FLEET POST OFFICE
AE 09578-1275

Reply 6/18/01
w/o dsh

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5757

Ser00/043

APR 3 2001

From: Commanding Officer, USS MITSCHER (DDG 57)

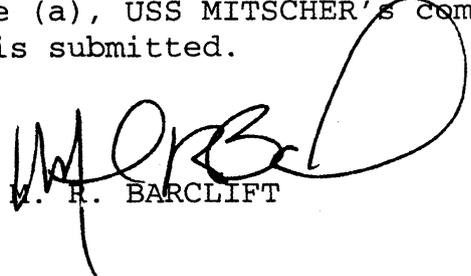
To: Chief of Naval Operations (N09BH)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR CY00

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G, Command Histories

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Commanding Officer Biography
(5) USS MITSCHER 2000 Battle Efficiency and Command Excellence Awards Package, 17 Nov 00

1. In accordance with reference (a), USS MITSCHER's command history for calendar year 2000 is submitted.


W. R. BARCLIFT

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

Command Title: USS MITSCHER (DDG 57)

UIC: 21687

Missions: Anti-Air Warfare, Anti-Submarine Warfare, Anti-Surface Warfare, Strike Warfare

ISIC: Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWO (COMDESRON TWO)

Commanding Officer: Commander Frank C. Pandolfe, USN

Homeport: Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia

Aircraft Assigned: None

CHRONOLOGY

01 Jan Inport Naval Station, Norfolk, VA (homeport).
Continue holiday leave period.

01-23 Jan 5"/54 Gun Groom.

12 Jan Holiday leave period ends.

27-28 Jan Underway en route for port visit.

29-31 Jan Port visit to Miami, FL.

01-04 Feb Underway en route AUTEC, Andros Island, Bahamas.

04 Feb EXTORP exercise, AUTEC, Andros Island, Bahamas.

05-09 Feb Underway in Virginia Capes Operating Area (VCOA),
conducting group sail with HSTBATGRU.

10 Feb Arrive homeport.

10-22 Feb Inport Homeport.

14-19 Feb CCG2 ATRC Team Training.

22-24 Feb Underway en route Charleston Operating Area
(CHASOA) for All Services Combat Identification
Evaluation Team (ASCIET).

25-26 Feb Port visit to Mayport, FL.

27 Feb-08 Mar Underway in Jacksonville Operating Area (JAXOA)
and CHASOA for Joint Exercise ASCIET 2000, in
company with HMS NORFOLK (F230).

09 Mar Transit to homeport.

10 Mar-03 Apr Inport homeport.

13 Mar-02 Apr Command, Control, Computer, Communications, and
Information (C4I)/Information and Technology -
21st Century (IT21) equipment installation
availability.

20-24 Mar Naval Surface Fire Support (NSFS) Team Trainer.

03-08 Apr Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) preparations.

04-05 Apr Underway in VCOA for INSURV preparations.

06-10 Apr Inport homeport.

10-12 Apr INSURV.

11 Apr Underway in VCOA for INSURV

13 Apr-02 May Inport homeport.

17-28 Apr Industrial Hygiene Survey.

20 Apr Pierside small arms ammunition onload.

24-29 Apr Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Fleet Introductory Training (FIT).

03-09 May Underway in VCOA for COMDESRON TWO ASW Exercise SLAPSHOT, in company with USS HARRY S TRUMAN (CVN 75), USS SAN JACINTO (CG 56), USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51), USS PORTER (DDG 78), USS STUMP (DD 978), USS DEYO (DD 989), USS CARR (FFG 52), USS NORFOLK (SSN 714), and HNLMS ZEELEEUW (S803).

10-11 May Transit to port visit.

12-14 May Port visit to Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, PR.

15-23 May Underway in Puerto Rico Operating Area (PROA) for Cooperative Engagement Capability (CEC) testing NR 9, in company with USS JOHN F KENNEDY (CVN 67), USS HUE CITY (CG 66) and USS VICKSBURG (CG 69).

24-25 May Transit to homeport.

26 May-19 Jun Inport homeport.

30 May-16 Jun Fleet Maintenance Availability (FMAV).

20-22 Jun Underway in VCOA for Core Training for Midshipmen (CORTRAMID) and Surface Warfare Officer School Command (SWOSCOLCOM) Prospective Commanding Officer (PCO) training.

23-29 Jun Inport homeport.

30 Jun-01 Jul Underway en route port visit.

02-04 Jul Port visit to Eastport, ME, for Old Home Week Celebration.

05-07 Jul Transit to homeport.

08 Jul-01 Aug Inport homeport.

10-30 Jul Topside non-skid deck refurbishment.

17-28 Jul C5RA Phase I/SEMAT II.

02-08 Aug Underway en route PROA for Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX), in company with Destroyer Squadron TWO (DESRON TWO).

04-06 Aug ASW Proficiency Training (ASWPT).

08 Aug Missile exercise in PROA.

09-12 Aug Port visit to St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands.

13-20 Aug Underway in PROA for COMPTUEX "Wagon Wheel."

14 Aug Ship's Self-Radiated Noise Measurement (SSRNM), St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.

21-24 Aug Underway in PROA for COMPTUEX Integrated Training Assessment (ITA).

25-27 Aug Transit to VCOA for Fleet Battle Experiment "H" (FBE-H).

28-30 Aug Underway in VCOA for FBE-H.

31 Aug Return to homeport.

01-21 Sep Inport homeport.

05-20 Sep Non-skid availability.

22 Sep Underway in VCOA for Family Day Cruise.

23-26 Sep Inport homeport.

27-28 Sep Underway in VCOA for Missile Exercise (VANDALEX).

29 Sep-15 Oct Inport homeport.

02-06 Oct Aviation Certification (AVCERT).

02-13 Oct C5RA Phase II.

16-26 Oct Underway in VCOA and Cherry Point Operating Area (CPOA) for Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX)/NATO Exercise UNIFIED SPIRIT 2000.

27 Oct-26 Nov Inport homeport.

06 Nov-01 Dec FMAV.

27 Nov En route Yorktown Naval Weapons Station for ammunition on-load.

28-29 Nov Ammo on-load.

30 Nov-01 Dec Underway in VCOA for training.

02-31 Dec Inport homeport.

07 Dec MITSCHER Holiday Party.

15-28 Dec Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) Leave and Upkeep period one.

28 Dec Begin POM Leave and Upkeep period two.

NARRATIVE

After a highly successful Basic Phase of the Inter-Deployment Training Cycle (IDTC) in 1999, MITSCHER entered 2000 primed for success. The crew continued to train while preparing for numerous exercises, qualifications, inspections, assessments, and certifications in preparation for the next deployment, still one year away. Throughout the year, MITSCHER led DESRON TWO in all warfare areas while winning awards and early certifications in every department.

The crew returned from Holiday leave and upkeep period on 12 January, ready and motivated for the work awaiting them, preparing for the demanding schedule of Spring underway periods and inspections. MITSCHER had completed the Basic Phase of the IDTC rapidly, and had the first half of 2000 to devote to training, improvement, and high-visibility underway periods outside of the normal HARRY S TRUMAN Battle Group (HSTBATGRU) schedule.

While inport Norfolk, MITSCHER finished two major material projects. The first was a complete overhaul of the 5"/54 MK 45 Light-Weight Gun Mount. The gun groom stripped down and rebuilt the entire gun mount, preparing it for a period of extended, and highly reliable, usage.

MITSCHER was scheduled to get underway the day following Martin Luther King Jr. Day, but was unable to due to a major snowstorm that buried the Hampton Roads area under six inches of snow. Two days later, on 27 January, MITSCHER put to sea for the first time since the previous November, and headed to Miami, Florida, for a port visit.

The visit to Miami, MITSCHER's first port visit of 2000, was a great chance for the crew to enjoy some warm weather and great liberty. Most MITSCHERMEN spent the majority of their time visiting nearby Coconut Grove and South Beach. The local Navy League put on a picnic for the crew on Super Bowl Sunday, to show their appreciation for the good-will visit.

After departing Miami, MITSCHER transited to the Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center (AUTEC) range, at Andros Island, Bahamas. On 4 February, MITSCHER, along with USS SAN JACINTO (CG 56), conducted over-the-side (OTS) torpedo launches against a mobile underwater target, utilizing exercise torpedoes (EXTORPS). Each ship also took turns controlling SAN JACINTO's SH-60B Seahawk helicopter, in order to conduct air-launched torpedo attacks.

The following day, MITSCHER transited up the east coast to the Virginia Capes Operating Area (VCOA), rejoining HSTBATGRU to complete a group sail, and returned to homeport on 10 February.

The following week saw extensive preparations for the All Service Combat Identification Exercise Team (ASCIET) 2000 event near Savannah, Georgia. MITSCHER put to sea on 22 February, en route Mayport, Florida, to complete preparations for the exercise.

Following a weekend port visit to Naval Station Mayport, MITSCHER was underway on 27 February to join up with HMS NORFOLK (F230), a Royal Navy anti-submarine warfare (ASW) frigate, to conduct the two-week exercise. MITSCHER and NORFOLK operated closely together, monitoring the air picture in a strenuous exercise simulating a war between the fictitious countries of Georgia and Florida. During the exercise, MITSCHER successfully shot down over 100 exercise aircraft, continually protecting the simulated battle group from air assault. The crews also fostered international friendship by daily personnel exchanges, to observe operations and life aboard a foreign warship.

While conducting the exercise, MITSCHER was notified for being awarded the DESRON TWO Battle Efficiency Award for 1999, recognizing the ship's great achievements during the previous year.

Upon return to homeport 11 March, MITSCHER began preparations for the upcoming Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) visit, an inspection that occurs aboard U.S. Navy vessels every five years. In preparation, MITSCHERMEN spent long hours ensuring all equipment was running properly, all spaces were in excellent material condition, and all required paperwork was in order. On 4-5 April, MITSCHER got underway to VCOA to conduct a simulation of the following week's actual inspection. The underway period included Anti-Air Warfare (AAW) and ASW detect-to-engage sequences, testing all sensors from detection of a contact to a simulated engagement by the weapon system, full power runs, and crash-backs.

INSURV began 10 April with the arrival of the inspection team. It was scheduled for five days, but MITSCHER required only two and a half to demonstrate excellent material and personnel readiness to the board. The first day, inport, consisted of inspections throughout the ship, while the second day was conducted underway, as rehearsed the previous week. The third day was used by the inspection team to wrap up loose ends. The board had the following to say about their visit in a quick-look message dated 14 April: "MITSCHER was exceptionally well prepared for this inspection. The ship was very clean and

several inspection areas set a new benchmark of material readiness."

The remainder of April was spent inport, with an Industrial Hygiene Survey from 17-28 April, and a week of ASW Fleet Introductory Training seminar, providing excellent training and support for MITSCHER's ASW team.

MITSCHER departed Norfolk on 3 May to begin another arduous but groundbreaking underway. The first five days consisted of a major COMDESRON TWO ASW exercise, including all of HSTBATGRU and a Dutch diesel submarine, HNLMS ZEELEEUW. Exercise SLAPSHOT, as it was termed, featured a variety of small Search/Attack Unit (SAU) exercises, and culminated in a full battle group choke-point transit versus both submarines.

Upon completion of Exercise SLAPSHOT, MITSCHER began transiting to the Puerto Rico Operating Area (PROA), for a series of high-profile tests. She first pulled in to Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, for a three-day port visit.

Leaving the Puerto Rican beaches behind, MITSCHER headed to the Northern PROA, where rendezvousing with USS JOHN F KENNEDY (CV 67), USS HUE CITY (CG 66), and USS VICKSBURG (CG 69), for Cooperative Engagement Capability (CEC) Testing period number nine. The tests were geared towards improving a technology that will allow a ship to engage a track held by a non-organic sensor - that is, one ship could attack a missile being tracked by another ship's radar. MITSCHER provided an invaluable instrumentation platform, supporting the test-firings conducted from the other platforms. The command was commended for her support, by COMCARGRU SIX; Program Executive Officer Theater Surface Combatants, Washington DC; and the Chief of Naval Operations, who said, "Your enthusiasm and determination to excel in every test objective was evident throughout."

While transiting to homeport, MITSCHER was directed by COMSECONDFLT to search for and assist a stricken sailing vessel, RESOLUTE, off the coast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. The destroyer sped to assist the distressed vessel, and arrived in the early morning hours of 25 May. The vessel, with four passengers aboard, had torn her mainsail, and requested a tow into port. MITSCHER hove to and waited for the arrival of USCGC VIGOROUS, who took control upon arrival at the scene. She continued to Norfolk, arriving on 26 May, where she remained for several weeks.

After spending the first half of June in port, during a Fleet Maintenance Availability (FMAV) to improve the material

condition and readiness of the ship, MITSCHER again put to sea, this time with a number of passengers on board.

MITSCHER got underway for training in VCOA from 22-24 June, carrying three Prospective Commanding Officers (PCOs) from the Surface Warfare Officer School Command (SWOSCOLCOM) in Newport, Rhode Island, a group of 80 midshipmen from Naval Reserve Officer's Training Corps (NROTC) units located at schools around the nation, and a group of Junior NROTC cadets from a high school in Tennessee. The PCOs were in training, on their way to command at sea, and the midshipmen were third-class midshipmen underway for the first time, participating in the Surface Warfare portion of a four-week familiarization program known as Core Training for Midshipmen (CORTRAMID). The three-day exercise involved torpedo, air warfare, and gunnery exercises, maneuvering drills, and other events designed to demonstrate the variety and excitement that is surface warfare.

The following week, on 30 June, MITSCHER began voyage to Eastport, Maine, for a Fourth of July goodwill visit. She arrived in the easternmost American town on 2 July, and was welcomed instantly by the people of the small seafaring town. MITSCHERMEN were treated like heroes, taking center stage in each of the town's holiday celebrations. The ship's company was the featured presentation for the annual town parade, an experience that will not be soon forgotten by any sailor who marched in Summer Whites and was cheered by the thousands of appreciative citizens. The visit to Eastport was unique, not only for the opportunity to take part in a small-town holiday celebration, but because of the mooring considerations. Eastport has a tidal range of roughly 25 feet, the greatest of any in the United States. This posed an unusual challenge and required an unconventional mooring configuration. One such departure was the placement of the brow on the after deckhouse, one deck above its normal location. During the six hours between low and high tide the brow became noticeably more difficult to traverse!

Upon return to homeport, MITSCHER underwent a three-week non-skid deck refurbishment. The ship also underwent two material assists: C5RA, designed to assist in the combat systems area; and SEMAT II, designed to aid in improving engineering deficiencies. These two assists, along with the topside deck work, finished out July.

On 2 August, MITSCHER put to sea with HSTBATGRU Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX), and started the transit to PROA. En route, the battle group conducted three days of ASW Proficiency Training (ASWPT), utilizing a new concept, Web-

Centered ASW Networking (WECAN), a SIPRNET chat room designed to ease engagement planning and SAU operations. Following the exercise, MITSCHER compiled a major acoustic intelligence package, which was forwarded to Surface Ship Acoustic Analysis Center (SSAAC), Norfolk, Virginia, for review.

Upon arrival in Northern PROA, MITSCHER participated in the first of two live missile-firing exercises in 2000, along with the rest of HSTBATGRU. The ship fired two Standard Missiles (SM-2) and achieved two kills, one passing within feet of the target, the other a skin-on-skin. During the exercise, MITSCHER hosted a camera crew from Pioneer Productions, who filmed in preparation for a cable television show featuring MITSCHER, to be aired in February 2001, on The Learning Channel.

After the missile exercise, MITSCHER, along with USS PORTER (DDG 78), pulled into St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands, for a three-day port visit. The crew was glad to have the chance to spend time snorkeling and scuba diving in the clear waters of the Caribbean.

MITSCHER left St. John on 12 August, and began a week of "wagon wheel" events of COMPTUEX. The wagon wheel consists of each ship in the battle group continually moving from one exercise to another, including Close-In Weapon System (CIWS) and 5"/54 LWG shoots; live torpedo exercises; Lear jet tracking exercises; Naval Surface Fire Support (NSFS) on Vieques Island; and a Ship's Self-Radiated Noise Measurement (SSRNM) on the underwater test range at St. Croix. MITSCHER outperformed every ship in the battle group, executing a successful ASW detect-to-engage EXTORP launch sequence in under 30 minutes, and set the HSTBATGRU standard for NSFS at Vieques, scoring a high of 95.44 points on the graded run.

After wagon wheel, the battle group rendezvoused for the start of the Intermediate Training Assessment (ITA), a three-day continual battle problem utilizing all battle group resources in every major warfare area. During this time, MITSCHER was devoted primarily to Anti-Surface Warfare (SUW) and ASW. She excelled in both, successfully preventing attack on the carrier by Opposition Force (OPFOR) submarine units, and clearing the Carrier Operating Area (CVOA) of all OPFOR surface units.

Following a three-day transit back to VCOA, HSTBATGRU took part in the naval portion of a major joint exercise, Fleet Battle Experiment "H" (FBE-H) 28-31 August. The naval component was geared towards testing the use of Network-Centric Warfare, which MITSCHER had practiced at the beginning of the month during ASWPT. After completion of FBE-H, MITSCHER returned to homeport on 1 September.

The ship remained in homeport until 22 September, when she visited VCOA once again, this time for a one-day family orientation cruise. Family and friends of MITSCHERMEN were treated to a day of Navy life, including gun exercises, full power runs, and a "steel beach" picnic on the flight deck.

The next week, MITSCHER was underway again, this time with ENTERPRISE Battle Group (ENTBATGRU) for another missile exercise. The group proceeded to the northern VCOA on 26 September for a practice run, and conducted the live exercise on 27 September. This exercise was conducted against a supersonic sea-skimming target, called a Vandal. Again, MITSCHER performed superbly, taking the target on the first look and at the maximum allowable range.

MITSCHER returned to Naval Station Norfolk on 28 September, for another two and a half weeks in port. While pierside, the ship conducted an Aviation Certification (AVCERT) inspection of all flight deck fixtures and equipment, including fire-fighting gear, the Helicopter Control Tower, and other relevant gear. MITSCHER also entered C5RA Phase II, a continuation of, and improvement on, the earlier Phase I, conducted during July.

On 16 October, MITSCHER was underway for the final pre-deployment training qualification for HSTBATGRU, Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX) and NATO Exercise UNIFIED SPIRIT 2000. JTFEX included units from HSTBATGRU and NASSAU Amphibious Ready Group (NASARG), along with ships from the United Kingdom, Canada, France and Germany (UNIFIED SPIRIT). The hypothetical scenario took the battle group from a period of political turmoil between fictional countries through to a hot-war situation, lasting several weeks. During the initial phase, MITSCHER monitored OPFOR units, compiling a comprehensive strategic picture for the battle group, en route from the south. She simultaneously conducted training by performing Maritime Intercept Operation (MIO) boardings of various NATO ships in preparation for the upcoming deployment.

With the arrival of the battle group, MITSCHER began operations in earnest, conducting continual ASW operations in support of the carrier, occupying OPFOR submarines for the duration of the exercise, and achieving two mission kills on the simulated submarines.

Scheduled to last until 30 October, COMSECONDFLT scrubbed the last four days of the exercise, ordering all ships to return to homeport because of approaching severe weather. MITSCHER returned home on 26 October at the head of a score of ships transiting Thimble Shoals Channel to avoid the coming storm.

HSTBATGRU had passed the advanced qualification and was ready to begin deployment.

MITSCHER remained in Norfolk through the end of November, taking advantage of the down time to enter a third Fleet Maintenance Availability (FMAV) lasting from 6 November to 1 December.

On 27 November, MITSCHER headed to Naval Weapon Station Yorktown, Virginia, to commence her pre-deployment ammunition onload, where she received all missiles, torpedoes, and gun ammunition required to commence operations overseas. While the remainder of HSTBATGRU, with the exception of USS CARR (FFG 52) began deployment on 28 November, MITSCHER hoisted missiles and torpedoes aboard in the chill of late November. The ship was underway in VCOA on 30 November, and returned home on 1 December.

MITSCHER's officers and crew celebrated the end of a long and triumphant year with the Command Holiday Party on 7 December. One week later, the crew dispersed to their families across the country, as the ship entered the Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) Leave and Upkeep period on 15 December, in anticipation of the deployment to the Mediterranean Sea and Arabian Gulf. 2000 came quietly to an end onboard MITSCHER, a fitting finale for such a busy and successful year.