# DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS MAHAN (DDG 72)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS MAHAN (DDG 72)
To: Director, Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR 2002

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12H of 14MAR02

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Supporting Documents (sep cover)
(5) Ship Pictures (sep cover)

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (3) are forwarded. Enclosures (4) and (5) will be forwarded at a later date.

2. POC: ENS C. M. Mahon, Public Affairs Officer, (757)444-6653.

T. D. MOSHER

# COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

Command Short Title: USS MAHAN

UIC: 21946

Mission: To fight and win in combat on the seas. AAW, SUW, ASW, and STW.

Immediate Superior in Command: COMDESRON 26

Commander: CDR David C. Robertson Jr. (1 January, 2002 to 18 March, 2002)

CDR Terry D. Mosher (18 March, 2002 to 31 December, 2002)

Homeport: Norfolk, VA.

# CHRONOLOGY

*11 January to 14 January* – Underway in VACAPES.

*15 January to 18 January* – Underway in VACAPES.

*19 February to 21 February* – Weapons Onload at Yorktown Naval Weapons Station, VA.

*18 March* – Change-Of-Command. CDR Terry D. Mosher relieved CDR David C. Robertson Jr. as Commanding Officer USS MAHAN.

*28 March* – MAHAN departs for combined Composite Training Unit Exercise and Joint Task Force Exercise with the GW Battle Group.

*23 March* – VANDAL Exercise, SM-2 shot at a supersonic target.

*4 April* – NGFS qualifications held at Vieques Range.

*11 April* – Vertical Launch Anti-Submarine Rocket shoot.

*22 April to 25 April* – Port Visit St. Johns, U.S. Virgin Islands.

*6 May* – Return to Norfolk, VA. Started POM period.

*7 May to 24 May* – Fleet Maintenance Availability held.

*13 May* – MAHAN successfully completes Aviation Certification.

*4 June* – Friends and Family Day cruise held. Over 500 family members take part in day-long sail.

*20 June* – Departed Norfolk, VA for 2002 Deployment.

*30 June* – MAHAN chopped to 6th Fleet.

*30 June* – Conducted Strait of Gibraltar (STROG) transit, escorted USNS CAPABLE (T-AGOS 16).

*1 July to 5 July* – Port Visit Gibraltar, UK.

*18 July to 22 July* – Port Visit Koper, Slovenia.

*24 July to 4 September* – Independent Steaming in Eastern Mediterranean. Conducted surveillance missions in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

*4 August to 8 August* – Port Visit Souda Bay, Crete.

*22 August to 26 August* – Port Visit Valleta, Malta.

*25 August* – Ship's Executive Officer LCDR Sean T. Epperson relieved by LCDR Richard J. Cheeseman, Jr.

*28 August* – Conducted ship-handling and communication training with Hellenic Navy Ship BOUBALINA.

*30 August* – Conducted CASEX with naval forces from UK, Turkey, Germany, France, and Greece.

*13 September to 18 September* – Port Visit Rota, Spain.

*15 September to 26 September* – Participated in Exercise NEO TAPON '02 with naval forces from Spain, UK, Turkey, Italy, France, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, and Greece.

*23 September* – MAHAN off coast of Canary Islands for NEO TAPON '02 exercises, farthest south ship sailed in 2002.

*26 September to 30 September* – Participated in MEDSHARK 2002 with the Moroccan Navy

*25 September* – Mid-Cycle Spot Check I conducted by CCDG-2 and CDS-26.

*1 October* – MAHAN proceeded to North Atlantic area as first 6th Fleet North Atlantic patrol ship.

*3 October to 6 October* – Port Visit Southampton, UK

*10 October to 14 October* – Port Visit Brest, France.

*24 October to 26 October* – Port Visit Faslane, Scotland. Furthest north ship sailed in 2002.

*26 October* – MAHAN begins transit to STROG to carry out STROG escort duty.

*29 October to 13 December* – MAHAN on station in and near Strait of Gibraltar acting as STROG escort ship.

*31 October to 3 November* – Port Visit Rota, Spain.

*8 November to 12 November* – Port Visit Rota, Spain.

*13 November* - MAHAN provides assistance to U.S. Submarine after a possible collision with merchant ship.

*27 November to 1 December* – Port Visit Rota, Spain.

*7 December to 12 December* – Port Visit Rota, Spain.

*13 December* – MAHAN rejoins GW Battle Group for Trans-Atlantic crossing and return to homeport.

*13 December* – Mid-Cycle Spot Check I conducted by CCDG-2 and CDS-26.

*20 December* – MAHAN returns to Norfolk, VA completing 2002 Deployment and beginning Post-Deployment/Christmas leave and upkeep.

# NARRATIVE

The calendar year 2002 was a busy time for USS MAHAN, from preparing for deployment, training with other Naval units, and conducting an assortment of missions while overseas. The ship stayed active the entire year.

The 1st of January 2002 saw MAHAN moored in Norfolk Virginia, finishing up her Christmas leave and upkeep after a successful completion of the Final Evaluation Period the previous month. The ship continued to heighten her capabilities through a wide assortment of training opportunities and schools. In the months of January, February, and March, large numbers of the crew would be off the ship at schools or training sessions. Those left onboard would deal with a number of equipment upgrades and important maintenance items. All of this was in preparation for the perceived high op-tempo we would face in the coming months. A major evolution during this time period was our Weapons Onload from 19 February to 21 February at Yorktown Weapons Station. We took on a wide assortment of munitions, such as Tomahawk and Standard Missiles to Torpedoes and 5in shells. Two separate underways were held with DESRON 26, to improve the warfighting skills of the Squadron as a whole.

On 18 March the ship got underway again, this time for a change-of-command ceremony. CDR T.D. Mosher relieved CDR D.C. Robertson in a small but meaningful ceremony on the ship's flight deck.

The first major operation for the ship approached very quickly: on 28 March the ship left Norfolk and headed south with the rest of the Battle Group. The George Washington Battle Group was underway for combined COMPTUEX and JTFEX training. During this time, the different commands within the Battle Group would come together after many months of

individual training and begin to work on improving their teamwork and coordination. After an easy transit to the Northern Puerto Rican Op Area the training began. For the next month, the ship would be continuously underway, and was busy everyday with some sort of evolution. The vast majority of our operations occurred in the Southern Puerto Rican Op Area. The COMPTUEX scenario was just part of the training opportunities; a number of smaller, non-scenario based situations were created, giving the Battle Group units the chance to improve their skills while waiting for the next COMPTUEX scenario event to occur. During this time period MAHAN had the opportunity to shoot three SM-2 missiles during various missile exercises, and was also able to conduct a VLA shoot during an ASW training exercise. But perhaps most enduring of the live ammunition firings was the Naval Gunfire Support qualification held at the Vieques Range. Finally, after a month of firing munitions, guiding planes, landing helicopters, and conducting underway replenishments, MAHAN had its first real port visit since the previous fall. Early on the morning of 22 April, MAHAN, in company with USS NORMANDY, approached the U.S. Virgin Islands, and anchored in Cruz Bay, next to the island of St. John's. MAHAN stayed anchored off the island for four days, while the crew was able to enjoy the port. Following our departure from Cruz Bay and a transit to the waters off the Carolinas, the JTFEX scenario began. Working with a large number of units, from other Naval ships to USAF aircraft, we trained on operating in a high intensity environment as part of a joint force. The JTFEX training ended in early May, and on May 6th, after 40 days away, MAHAN returned to Norfolk.

It was at this time that the final stretch of Pre-Deployment preparations began, with an assortment of last minute maintenance requirements, stores onloads, and training opportunities. It was also the start of our Pre-Overseas Movement stand-down, and the majority of the crew

managed to fit in a nice period of leave with their families. June 4th was a special day for families as we conducted our Friends and Family Day cruise. Accompanied by 500 family and friends the ship conducted a one-day underway off the VACAPES. Finally the Departure Day arrived, June 20th, and MAHAN was the first ship of the GW Battle Group to get underway that morning, leading the way for the rest of the Battle Group's journey 'over there.' A wide range of exercises and readiness evolutions marked the transit across the Atlantic, serving to further hone the skills of all onboard. On 30 June the MAHAN made her first Strait of Gibraltar Transit, escorting the USNS CAPABLE (T-AGOS 16) through the narrow waters. Though the rest of the Battle Group conducted the transit simultaneously, the MAHAN independently carried out this escort duty, a taste of things to come.

MAHAN's first deployment port of call was Gibraltar, the British enclave overlooking the strait that share the name. Arriving there the 1st of July, MAHAN spent the next four days enjoying the sights and sounds of the colony. Some highlights of the visit included a number of athletic competitions against the British, visits by many local dignitaries, including the Commander of British Forces and the City Mayor, and a Fourth of July party hosted by the American Naval Liaison and attended by many of the local community members. Early on the 5th of July MAHAN again set sail and began steaming Eastward.

MAHAN rendezvoused with GEORGE WASHINGTON on the 8th of July and stayed with the Carrier a number of days, acting as plane-guard and accompanying the Carrier's transit toward the Suez Canal. On 11 July MAHAN was detached from the GW Battle Group and headed Westward toward the Central Mediterranean. Just to the West of the island of Sicily MAHAN rendezvoused with the USS FRANKLIN D ROOSEVELT (DDG 80) and USS

DEWERT (FFG 45). Working with ROOSEVELT and DEWERT MAHAN completed her MIO certification successfully, and got acclimated to operating in the Mediterranean theater.

From the Central Mediterranean MAHAN moved into the Adriatic Sea and started a transit North. Halfway up the Sea she rendezvoused with USS SULLIVANS (DDG 68) and conducted boat operations to exchange charts, parts, and passengers. After this MAHAN continued North and on 18 July moored in Koper, Slovenia. MAHAN stayed in this former Yugoslavian Republic for four days, enjoying the scenery and pleasant atmosphere. MAHAN played guest to a large number of visitors, from the Mayor of Koper to local Slovenian Journalists. A number of American Embassy and local Liaison Officers also made it onboard. On 22 July MAHAN left Slovenia and headed south for further operations.

MAHAN was sent to the Eastern Mediterranean to take up duty as a MIO patrol ship. It was this job that MAHAN would spend the next month and a half completing. In support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM, MAHAN would work with other U.S. Navy and NATO units to keep an up to date maritime picture. This would include visual identification of merchant ships, and many Bridge-to-Bridge queries. MAHAN's MIO certification meant she was always on standby to conduct a boarding if ever necessary. MAHAN spent most of this time period in the vicinity of Cyprus, Lebanon, and Israel, patrolling the neutral waters in between these countries. Yet MAHAN did not stay on station for all that time. As occasionally other Naval units would relieve her, and DDG 72 would move away from the area to conduct UNREP's or port visits.

MAHAN's third port visit of deployment was to the Naval Support Activity at Souda Bay, Crete, arriving there the 4th of August. This joint U.S./Greek base was well served to provide MAHAN with some much needed downtime. The four day visit to the island of Crete

was great fun, the sailors especially enjoying the many luxuries of home the Naval Activity provided, and of course the entertainment to be found in the nearby Cretan cities. Ship's visits were made by a number of local dignitaries, including the Commander of the Naval Support Activity and the Commander of the Greek Naval Station. On the 8th of August MAHAN again returned to sea.

On the 11th of August MAHAN rendezvoused with USS SPRUANCE (DD 963), USS DEWERT (FFG 45), and USS KAUFFMAN (FFG 59) in the Central Mediterranean for a series of Group Sail exercises. MAHAN's first opportunity to do this since her detachment from the GW Battle Group nearly a month before. MAHAN did a superb job, displaying the benefits of the individual training carried out while on station in the MIO patrol box.

After the Group Sail finished on 14 August, MAHAN returned to her MIO patrol for a short time, before once again heading west for another port visit. On the 22nd of August MAHAN landed in the Grand Harbor of Valletta, Malta, the small island nation in the Central Mediterranean. Malta was a lively port, with many of the crew enjoying the combination of great history and great tourist destination the port offered. While in Malta the ship was visited by a number of local journalists, and a party from the American Embassy. Malta was the place where a major leadership change occurred for DDG-72. LCDR Rick Cheeseman relieved the ship's Executive Officer, LCDR Sean Epperson on the 25th of August. On the 26th of August, the ship left Malta, returning again to the Eastern Mediterranean and her role as a MIO patrol ship in that location.

On the way back to the MIO patrol box, the MAHAN had a unique training opportunity. Rendezvousing with the HNS BOUBALINA, MAHAN spent a day of ad hoc training, including DIVTACS, Flag Hoist drills, and other basic ship-handling evolutions. The day ended with a

cross-decking and a race through the calm waters of the Eastern Mediterranean. Two days later MAHAN took part in a CASEX with ships from the Royal Navy, Hellenic Navy, Turkish Navy, German Navy, and French Navy. MAHAN made it to her patrol box in the Eastern Mediterranean having successfully showed off her skills to the international naval community. But MAHAN's time in the Eastern Mediterranean was drawing to a close. It was soon after the Maltese port visit that official word was received of MAHAN's new role. She would become the first ever 6th Fleet North Atlantic patrol ship, after that organization's assumption of duties in the North Atlantic. MAHAN proceeded west on the 4th of September, carrying out a number of STROG transit rehearsals along the way. MAHAN's second STROG transit occurred on the 12th of September, and she once again entered the waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

As the first assignment as NORTHLANT patrol ship, MAHAN was tasked with being the U.S Naval representative in the NEO TAPON exercises. This annual exercise is hosted by the Spanish, and is one of the larger international Naval exercises carried out. From the 15th to the 26th of September, MAHAN was a full participant in the exercises. Working with ships and aircraft from Spain, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Greece, France, Germany, Portugal, the Netherlands, Italy, and Belgium MAHAN was able to user her highly advanced combat systems to greatest effect. On the 13th of September MAHAN landed in Rota, Spain, the large U.S. Naval Base and Air Station on the Southwestern tip of Spain. The Harbor was very crowded with all the warships from the many different nations, and the ship was visited by a number of personnel from the base and the other ships present. The NEO TAPON scenario took MAHAN from Rota, Spain to the Canary Islands, arriving off the islands on 23 September. But the next day MAHAN had to detach from the exercise early in order to proceed north on her next assignment.

MAHAN arrived off the coast of Morocco on 26 September to rendezvous with GEORGE WASHINGTON and NORMANDY. This was the first time MAHAN had worked with her Battle Group in nearly three months. MAHAN spent a day with the Carrier, conducting her Mid-Cycle Spot Check and being visited by RADM Joe Sestak and CAPT Roncolato, the Commander of the GW Battle Group and the DESRON 26 Commodore respectively. On the 28th of September, MAHAN began her participation in the surface ship phase of MEDSHARK. This exercise is conducted between the Moroccan and American Navies, to improve their skills in working together. For three days MAHAN steamed in company with an assortment of Moroccan warships, conducting Pac-Fires, DIVTACS, and other evolutions. The exercise ended with a joint transit of the STROG on the 30th of September.

On the 1st of October MAHAN again transited the STROG and began heading north, en-route to the North Atlantic and a wide assortment of port visits and international exercises. MAHAN's first North Atlantic port visit was in Southampton, UK, arriving there on the 3rd of October. Moored at the same pier the RMS TITANIC was moored at prior to her fateful voyage, MAHAN crew spent four days enjoying the sights and sounds of the Southampton community. The ship was visited by the Mayor of Southampton. But all too soon it was over and on the 6th of October, MAHAN sailed down the Devon River and into the English Channel.

MAHAN transited to the Bay of Biscay, spending a number of days enjoying the Atlantic Ocean and preparing for future endeavors. On the 10th of October, MAHAN sailed through the Goulet De Brest and into the French Naval Base of Brest. MAHAN was a guest of the French Navy for the following four days, and the old seaside town of Brest was a great place for the crew. While in Brest the ship was visited by some local dignitaries and the Commanding Officer

of the French Naval Base. On the 14th of October MAHAN left Brest and proceeded north, heading toward the Irish Sea, in between the islands of England and Ireland.

For a week MAHAN enjoyed the calm weather and easy waters to be found in this small sea. Like before, the crew used to time for training and preparations. MAHAN was scheduled to take part in the Royal Navy's Joint Maritime Course (JMC), the English version of the U.S. Navy's JTFEX. This is a high intensity exercise, and thus the quiet times beforehand steaming in the Bay of Biscay and the Irish Sea were well-suited to preparing for it. On the 24th of October, MAHAN landed in Faslane, Scotland, the Royal Navy's premier Strategic Submarine Base. The visit was to last four days, and be followed by the immediate start of JMC. But unfortunately, other events prevented this.

On the 25th of September, word was received of new tasking for MAHAN. She would proceed south again, to take up escort duty in the STROG for the many USNS and chartered ships transiting this strait en-route to the Persian Gulf, carrying a wide assortment of equipment as part of the military build-up there. Thus, early on the morning of the 26th of September, MAHAN cut her visit to Faslane early, and proceeded south to the STROG at best speed. MAHAN arrived off the on the 29th of October, having been held up by foul weather in the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay, and began what would become her final duty of deployment.

As STROG escort ship, MAHAN would make numerous transits of the strait, escorting ships in and out of the Mediterranean. Due to the increased threat from terrorist attack the area offered, the crew of MAHAN would be especially vigilant during these evolutions, with every STROG transit carried out at a high degree of combat readiness. In between these transits MAHAN would steam off the coast of Spain and Morocco, waiting for the next group of ships to

arrive. Frequent visits were made to Rota, Spain. MAHAN would conduct 6 precision anchorages in the harbor of Rota, picking up USMC security teams, supplies, and other passengers. Once the ship had rendezvoused with the USNS ships, she would conduct small boat transfers of the security teams, accompanied by liaison officers from MAHAN. The transit would commence, and be completed at the best possible speed of the escorted ship. Then MAHAN would recover the security teams and liaison officers, and await the next transit. In all, MAHAN would escort 12 ships through the STROG, carrying everything from armored vehicles to munitions and engineering equipment to landing craft. During the entire deployment MAHAN transited the STROG 22 times, getting to know the sight of the Rock of Gibraltar quite well.

In between these escort missions, and the wait for the next one, MAHAN would make four extended port visits to Rota, using the time for liberty for the crew, stores onloads, and inport refuelings. These occurred on 31 October to 3 November, 8 November to 12 November, 27 November to 1 December, and 7 December to 12 December. The crew came to know the port quite well, and from Athletic facilities to Thanksgiving Dinners, it was a great place to spend the time ashore.

The last port visit was also the end of MAHAN's time as STROG escort duties. On 13 December MAHAN was relieved of escort duties and rendezvoused with the GW Battle Group to begin the Trans-Atlantic crossing and the return from deployment. The crossing was marked by a number of operational scenarios and exercises, but mostly it was just a tedious journey across the wide sea. Foul weather forced the Group to travel farther south than had been originally planned, and MAHAN made landfall at the Azores on 14 December. On the 18th of December, MAHAN was again detached from the Battlegroup, along with the LABOON and

MONTEREY. The three ships were permitted a high speed transit back to the VACAPES OpArea. MAHAN 'won' the transit and spent the 19th, the last full day of deployment, steaming in a box, with the Chesapeake entrance just over the horizon. The calm seas and great weather ensured that the ship would be well painted prior to her entrance.

Finally, on the 20th of December, MAHAN conducted her last Sea and Anchor detail of the year. She arrived back at Norfolk Naval Station at approximately 1100, the last ship of the Battle Group to arrive home. Though the day was very wet and cold, with sporadic bursts of hard rain, many family members and friends were there to meet DDG-72 as she pulled in. After tying up MAHAN immediately began her Post Overseas Movement/Christmas leave and upkeep, thus ending her very busy year in a relaxed atmosphere. But like every Naval warship she was ready for the next challenge, remaining in a 96-hour surge status for the remainder of the year.