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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS NASSAU (LHA-4)

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From: Commanding Officer
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: OPNAVINST 5750.12D

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronological Narrative
(3) Statistical Summary
(4) Supporting Documents
(5) Familygrams for CY 1989

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (5) are forwarded.


F.M. DIRREN JR.

Copy to:
Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)

Command Mission, Composition & Organization

1. **MISSION.** The mission of the LHA is to embark, deploy and land elements of a Marine landing force in an assault by helicopters, landing craft, amphibious vehicles or by a combination of these methods; thus possessing the capabilities of the LPH, LSD, LPD and LKA classes of ships. The LHA can operate independently or in conjunction with other units conducting heliborne and surface amphibious operations. The TARAWA class multipurpose amphibious assault ship was designed to maintain "tactical integrity" or to get a balanced force to the same point at the same time. The USS NASSAU can carry a complete Marine Battalion Landing Team (approximately 1800 men) along with the supplies and equipment needed in an assault, plus the vehicles to land them ashore either by helicopter and/or by small amphibious craft. Furthermore, NASSAU is capable of operating the Marine Corps AV-8B vertical take-off and landing jet for close-air support of an amphibious assault.

2. **COMPOSITION & ORGANIZATION.** The USS NASSAU is a unit of Commander, Naval Surface Force, Atlantic, and is commanded by Captain Frank M. Dirren Jr., USN. The NASSAU's immediate seniors in the chain of command are Commander, Amphibious Squadron Twelve and Commander, Amphibious Group TWO. The NASSAU's internal organization is composed of twelve departments with their subordinate divisions as listed below:

EXECUTIVE DIVISION/SPECIAL ASSISTANTS

Admin Office
Personnel Office
Captain's Office
Public Affairs Office
Chaplain's Office
3-M Coordinator
Legal Office
Post Office
Print Shop
Security
Safety Officer
Career Counselor
Combat Cargo Assistant

AIRCRAFT INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

IM-1 Maintenance Admin
IM-2 Aircraft
IM-3 Avionics
IM-4 Support Equipment

AIR DEPARTMENT

V-1 Flight Deck/Crash & Salvage
V-3 Hangar Deck
V-4 Aviation Fuels

ENCL (1)

COMBAT SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT

CA Ordnance
CD Data Systems Maintenance
CE Electronics
CF Fire Control
CO Gunnery
CW Electronic Warfare

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

CR Radio
CS Signals
NLFS Nucleus Landing Force Staff (Marines)

DECK DEPARTMENT

First Division
Second Division
Third Division

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

A Auxiliaries
AS Assault
E Electrical
MP-1 Main Propulsion I
MP-2 Main Propulsion II
R Repair

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

H Hospital

DENTAL DEPARTMENT

NAVIGATION DEPARTMENT

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

OA Aerography
OC Helicopter Direction Center
OI Combat Information Center
OP Photography
OZ Intelligence

SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

S-1 Stores
S-2 Food Services
S-3 Sales and Services
S-4 Disbursing
S-5 Wardroom
S-6 Aviation Supply
S-7 Data Processing
S-8 Stock Control

**USS NASSAU (LHA 4)
COMMAND HISTORY NARRATIVE**

USS NASSAU (LHA 4) is the fourth of the Navy's General Purpose Assault Ships. Like her sister ships, NASSAU fuses complex weapons systems, automated cargo handling and state-of-the-art propulsion into a huge hull, forming a ship with a wide range of mission capabilities including amphibious warfare, anti-surface warfare, anti-air warfare and power projection shore utilizing helicopters and VSTOL aircraft. NASSAU was commissioned in Pascagoula, Mississippi, on July 28, 1979.

In October 1979, NASSAU deployed to reinforce the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and earned the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation just 70 days after commissioning.

In April 1981, NASSAU departed for a short-notice Mediterranean deployment and was underway for 68 consecutive days, standing ready to effect the evacuation of U.S. citizens from Lebanon. In January 1982, NASSAU deployed to the Mediterranean Sea/Indian Ocean and participated in four amphibious operations. Returning to Norfolk in June, NASSAU departed in August to take part in NATO exercises BOLD GUARD and NORTHERN WEDDING in Northern Europe.

In 1983 NASSAU participated in the annual amphibious exercise SOLID SHIELD. Marine Corps OV-10 "Bronco" aircraft landed - for the first time - on the flight deck of a ship from the Atlantic Fleet. In August NASSAU embarked 180 vehicles, 36 helicopters and over 1,000 Army personnel for transport to Central America for exercise "AHUAS TARA II" (the "Big Pine"). The transit marked the first time the ship had transported Army units for military exercises.

In January 1984, NASSAU deployed to Northern Europe for TEAMWORK '84 before steaming to the Med for duties off the coast of Lebanon. NASSAU returned to Norfolk in August 1984 and completed an extensive ship repair availability.

In the spring of 1985, NASSAU served as flagship for a nine-ship Navy task force in exercise UNIVERSAL TREK, highlighted by an amphibious landing near Puerto Castillo, Honduras. NASSAU participated in her second SOLID SHIELD amphibious exercise that same year. NASSAU closed a busy year with participation in NATO exercise OCEAN SAFARI '85 in the North Atlantic.

In early February 1986, NASSAU entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth, Va., where she began a 10-month complex overhaul. During spring and summer, the ship and crew began an intensive series of post overhaul repair availabilities and training periods, including flight deck qualifications for the AV-8B "Harrier" VSTOL jet aircraft. NASSAU then finished Refresher Training at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, three days ahead of schedule. She then continued work-ups in preparation for deployment as lead ship of MARG 4-87.

First up on what was to be an event-packed schedule was an amphibious assault at Sierra de Retin, Spain, where the men of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Battalion Landing Team 2/8 were delivered ashore in a smoothly professional evolution. During this exercise, sailors from all three ships were invited ashore to get an up-close look at Marine operations at the beachhead, followed by a cook-out on the beach.

The ships of MARG 2-89 then steamed through the Straits of Gibraltar and entered the Mediterranean Sea. Next, it was on to a port call at Monte Carlo, Monaco, where the sailors and Marines of Nassau enjoyed six days in the world "of the rich and famous."

Following this all-too-brief stay on the French Riviera, NASSAU then transited to the other end of Sixth Fleet responsibility area as she steamed to the port city of Haifa, Israel, for a shipyard repair availability and a 21-day port stay. While in Israel, crewmembers were able to explore a country which encompasses both the very ancient and very modern, taking organized tours to such biblical wonders as Jerusalem, Massada and more while also enjoying some of the comforts offered by the modern city of Haifa.

Crewmembers and embarked Marines also extended the hand of friendship as volunteers painted orphanages and homes for the elderly or mingled with local citizens at beach parties organized by the local USO.

With a successful shipyard repair availability and port visit behind them, NASSAU departed Haifa on July 30th, only days after the Israeli abduction of Sheik Abdul Obeid from Lebanon, which would prove a catalyst for Nassau and its crew. Elements of the U.S. Sixth Fleet began to gather in the Eastern Mediterranean.

For the next 35 days, NASSAU and most of the U.S. Sixth Fleet stood ready for almost any contingency. Early on, NASSAU became a focal point as Vice Admiral James D. Williams, Commander U.S. Sixth Fleet, frequently chose the amphibious assault ship as a meeting place for all his afloat commanders in the battle force.

NASSAU was also a clearinghouse for passengers, mail and cargo transiting to or from ships in the eastern Mediterranean, at times tripling her normal workload in this vital support role.

As tensions in the Middle East gradually resumed their previous status quo, NASSAU took the opportunity to make a brief seven-day portcall at Naples, Italy, for some well-deserved rest and recreation. Organized tours were offered to Rome (where 200 uniformed sailors and Marines enjoyed a Papal audience), Pompeii, Vesuvius and other Italian sights. NASSAU was even host ship as Admiral J.T. Howe, Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, officiated over a spectacular "sunset parade" ceremony conducted by NASSAU sailors and Marines for over 80 NATO dignitaries while the ship was moored to two buoys at the outer harbor Naples seawall.

On 29 September 1987, NASSAU departed Norfolk as flagship of MARG 4-87. In the ensuing six months, NASSAU participated in five amphibious assaults, including exercise AFRICAN EAGLE with U.S. Air Force and Royal Moroccan Forces.

NASSAU crewmembers also participated in numerous goodwill projects including the repainting of nursing homes in Israel and France, replanting 7,000 trees on a fire-ravaged hillside in France, blood donations in Spain and hosting orphan visits throughout the Mediterranean. NASSAU crewmembers appeared twice on the NBC "Today Show" featuring their goodwill efforts. NASSAU returned to homeport after this highly-successful deployment on March 29, 1988.

NASSAU passed a vigorous INSURV in June and then prepared to deploy for TEAMWORK '88. In August, NASSAU departed for the North Atlantic, acting as flagship for Commander, Amphibious Strike Force/Commander, Amphibious Group TWO and Commander, Marine Striking Force Atlantic/4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade.

After the grounding of a tank landing ship on September 13, NASSAU unloaded the men and equipment of the stricken ship and participated in a highly-successful amphibious landing in Northern Norway on the 15th. After a well-deserved port visit in Hamburg, West Germany, where NASSAU was visited by more than 8,000 German citizens, the ship and crew returned to homeport.

In early November, NASSAU again departed Norfolk enroute to Kingston, Jamaica, with 81,000 lbs of relief supplies. During the transit, NASSAU rescued 172 Haitian nationals from an unseaworthy craft and handed them over to the Coast Guard for medical treatment.

In port Kingston, NASSAU crewmembers and embarked Marines and Seabees assisted in re-roofing three primary schools and distributed tons of disaster relief supplies. The Jamaicans were still reeling from the effects of Hurricane Gilbert, which had passed over the island two months earlier. NASSAU returned to Norfolk on November 19, 1988.

On January 18, 1989, Captain Frank M. "Skip" Dirren Jr., USN, became NASSAU's seventh Commanding Officer.

The coming months brought the embarkation of Captain Morris B. Kemple Jr., Commander Amphibious Squadron EIGHT, and workups for a Mediterranean deployment in the Virginia Capes (VACAPES) and Cherry Point (N.C.) operating areas (CPOA).

As flagship of Marine Amphibious Ready Group 2-89, NASSAU departed Norfolk on May 30, 1989 and, in company with the amphibious transport dock USS Shreveport and tank landing ship USS Barnstable County, arrived at Naval Base Rota, Spain, on June 12 for turnover and three days later "assumed the watch" for the amphibious forces of the U.S. Sixth Fleet.

Refreshed, NASSAU's crew, staff and embarked Marines put to sea again, this time in support of "Display Determination '89," one of the Sixth Fleet's most complex and prestigious exercises. During this exercise, NASSAU was selected by the Carrier Task Force Commander as best ship of the exercise.

After conducting amphibious training operations in the country of Turkey not far from the disastrous British World War I amphibious operation at Gallipoli, NASSAU headed west and out of the Mediterranean Sea. She arrived at Lisbon, Portugal, for a brief repair period before taking part in the Portuguese Marine and Naval exercise "Galera '89."

While in Lisbon, sailors and Marines enjoyed one last look around southern Europe as the clock ran down on their Mediterranean deployment. After embarking Portuguese "Fuzileiros" and landing them by helicopter ashore in "Galera," NASSAU headed for Naval Base Rota once more for a three-day stay and, more importantly, turnover with the helicopter assault ship USS Iwo Jima and the ships of Marine Amphibious Readiness Group 1-90.

The final hurdle of the deployment came as NASSAU successfully completed an Operational Propulsion Plant Examination during her transit across the Atlantic Ocean. NASSAU returned from her Mediterranean deployment on November 10, 1989.

After a well-deserved leave and upkeep period during which crewmembers re-aquainted themselves with friends and families during the 1989 holiday season, Nassau was notified it had been selected by Commander, Surface Force Atlantic, as the top LHA/LPH for the battle efficiency competitive cycle ending in September 1989, earning the ship its second Battle "E" in its ten years of commissioned service.

The following is a statistical summary of activities of various departments aboard USS NASSAU (LHA 4) during calendar year 1989.

Number of days at sea for CY 89 209

SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

Total number of consumables and repair parts stocked	38,934
Total value	\$39,423,675
Total receipts	27,158
Value of receipts	\$21,304,115.52
Total issues	16,265
Gallons of JP5 received	1,448,903 gal
Gallons of DFM 76 received	6,288,676 gal
Total spent for parts & services	\$6,477,516.26

Sales in Ship's Store	\$1,919,045
Cans of soda sold	687,500 cans
Candy bars sold	214,285 bars
Number of haircuts given	26,000
Pounds of laundry washed	804,200 lbs

Meals served	247,275
Food consumed (dollar value)	\$1,031,138
Bread flour used	40,420 lbs
Sugar	21,620 lbs
Milk	30,264 gal
Eggs used	27,562 dz

Funds disbursed by Disbursing	\$6,621,507.53
Funds collected by Disbursing	\$1,821,339.21
Funds deposited by Disbursing	\$7,676,037.53
Bad checks returned to Disbursing	\$20,253.83

Number of ADP jobs run	2,509
Number of ADP production hours	5,219
Cost of paper used	\$28,541.17

LEGAL STATISTICS

Powers of Attorney, including general and special	-	139
Admin discharges processed	-	26

POSTAL STATISTICS

Postage sold	\$55,802.00
Money orders sold - 10,120 -	\$1,183,043.00
Money orders cashed - 499 -	\$55,430.00
Amount of mail received, dispatched or transferred	*270,284 lbs
(* 128,000 lbs of mail alone was handled while Nassau was off Beirut)	