



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS PELICAN (MHC-53)  
FPO AA 34092-1952

5750

Ser MHC53/123

5 Apr 01

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

From: Commanding Officer, USS PELICAN (MHC 53)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (N09BH)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR 2000

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

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

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following command history is submitted for USS PELICAN (MHC 53) for calendar year 2000.

  
C. A. HOTTENROTT

Command Composition and Organization

1. Command Organization.

a. Command Short Title: (MHC 53) PELICAN 21865

b. Mission: USS PELICAN is a coastal mine hunter, the third ship of the OSPREY class. PELICAN was designed solely for minehunting, the technique of locating mines with sonar and neutralizing them with a remotely controlled underwater vehicle. The ship's mission is to clear harbor, coastal and ocean waters of acoustic, magnetic, pressure, and contact type mines, utilizing reconnaissance, classification, and neutralization tactics.

c. Organizational Structure: Commander, Mine Countermeasures Squadron One, UIC 60546, 1455 Ticonderoga Road, Suite W-200, Ingleside, TX 78362-5001.

d. Commanding Officer: CDR Scott S. Gordon (Jan 01 Trough 08 Aug); LCDR Carol A. Hottenrott (09 Aug through 31 Dec).

e. Type and number of aircraft assigned: N/A

## Chronology

### **January 2000:**

Jan 01 - 14 - Holiday Upkeep and Stand down, Ingleside, TX  
Jan 15 - 23 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Jan 24 - 31 - Underway Corpus Christi Operational Area GOMEX (Gulf of Mexico Exercise) 00-1

### **February 2000:**

Feb 01 - 11 - Underway Corpus Christi Operational Area, GOMEX (Gulf of Mexico Exercise) 00-1  
Feb 12 - 18 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Feb 19 - 20 - Naval Reserve Training, In Port Ingleside, TX  
Feb 21 - 28 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Feb 29 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Fast Cruise

### **March 2000:**

Mar 01 - 03 - Underway Gulf of Mexico en-route Port Arthur, TX  
Mar 04 - 05 - Port Visit Port Arthur, TX  
Mar 06 - 14 - Underway Gulf of Mexico En-route Veracruz, Mexico  
Mar 15 - 19 - Port Visit Veracruz, Mexico  
Mar 20 - 22 - Underway Gulf of Mexico En-route Ingleside, TX  
Mar 23 - 31 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period

### **April 2000:**

Apr 01 - 02 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Apr 03 - 14 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Fleet Maintenance Availability  
Apr 10 - 21 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Combat Systems, Command, Control, Computers, and Communications Readiness Assessment  
Apr 22 - 23 - In-port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Apr 24 - 26 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Electromagnetic Range Offload  
Apr 27 - 30 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period

### **May 2000:**

May 01 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
May 02 - 04 - Underway Gulf of Mexico, RONEX (Squadron Exercise) 00-1  
May 05 - 07 - Port Visit Orange, TX  
May 08 - 11 - Underway Gulf of Mexico, RONEX (Squadron Exercise) 00-1  
May 12 - 13 - Port Visit Pascagoula, MS  
May 14 - 19 - Underway Gulf of Mexico, RONEX (Squadron Exercise) 00-1  
May 20 - 21 - Port Visit Panama City, FL  
May 22 - 26 - Underway Gulf of Mexico, en-route Ingleside, TX  
May 27 - 28 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
May 29 - 31 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Diesel Engine Inspection

### **June 2000:**

Jun 01 - 09 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Diesel Engine Inspection  
Jun 10 - 12 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Jun 13 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Hull Cleaning  
Jun 14 - 16 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Jun 17 - 18 - Naval Reserve Training In-Port Ingleside, TX  
Jun 19 - 22 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Jun 23 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Naval Safety Center Assist Visit  
Jun 24 - 30 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period

### **July 2000:**

Jul 01 - 09 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Jul 10 - 21 - Under Way Corpus Christi Operational Area GOMEX/MERCURY 2000 (Gulf of Mexico exercise)  
Jul 22 - 31 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period

**August 2000:**

Aug 01 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Aug 02 - 04 - Underway Corpus Christi Operational Area, Prospective  
Commanding Officer Sail  
Aug 05 - 08 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Aug 09 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Change Of Command  
Aug 10 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Aug 11 - 31 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Pre-Deployment Movement Stand Down

**Sep 2000:**

Sep 01 - 03 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Sep 04 - 07 - In-Port Ingleside, TX E-TECRA (Electronic Test Equipment  
Calibration Readiness Assessment)  
Sep 08 - 11 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Upkeep Period  
Sep 12 - 13 - Underway 2000 Deployment en-route Beaumont, TX  
Sep 14 - 17 - Port Visit Beaumont, TX Navy Days 2000  
Sep 18 - 21 - Underway Gulf of Mexico En-route Key West, FL  
Sep 21 - U/W Gulf Of Mexico, Heavy weather evasion Pascagoula, MS  
Sep 22 - 25 - Port Visit Pascagoula, MS Heavy Weather evasion  
Sep 26 - 28 - Underway Gulf of Mexico, en-route Key West FL  
Sep 29 - 30 - Port Visit Key West, FL

**October 2000:**

Oct 01 - Port Visit Key West, FL  
Oct 02 - 04 - Underway Atlantic Ocean en-route Mayport, FL  
Oct 05 - 10 - Port Visit Mayport, FL Upkeep Period  
Oct 11 - Underway Western Atlantic Ocean en-route Virginia Capes  
Operational Area  
Oct 12 - 22 - Underway Virginia Capes Operational Area JTFEX (Joint Task  
Force Fleet Exercise) UNIFIED SPIRIT 2000  
Oct 16 - In-Port Morehead City, Brief Stop for Fuel  
Oct 20 - In-Port Morehead City, Brief Stop for Fuel  
Oct 23 - 25 - Underway Virginia Capes Operational Area En route Norfolk, VA  
Oct 26 - 31 - Port Visit Norfolk, VA Upkeep Period

**November 2000:**

Nov 01 - 05 - Port Visit Norfolk, VA Upkeep Period  
Nov 06 - 09 - Underway Virginia Capes Operational Area Mine Counter Measures  
Training  
Nov 10 - 13 - Port Visit Norfolk, VA  
Nov 13 - 14 - Underway en-route Annapolis, MD  
Nov 14 - 19 - Port Visit Annapolis, MD  
Nov 20 - Underway Atlantic, en-route New York City, NY  
Nov 21 - 23 - Port Visit New York City, NY  
Nov 24 - Underway Atlantic Ocean, en-route Mayport, FL  
Nov 25 - 26 - Port Visit Little Creek, VA Heavy Weather Evasion  
Nov 27 - 30 - Underway Atlantic Ocean, en-route Mayport, FL

**December 2000:**

Dec 01 - 02 - Port Visit Mayport, FL  
Dec 03 - 04 - Underway Atlantic Ocean en-route Key West, FL  
Dec 04 - Late Arrival, Key West FL  
Dec 05 - 08 - Underway Gulf Of Mexico, en-route Panama City, FL  
Dec 09 - 10 - Port Visit Panama City, FL  
Dec 11 - 14 - Underway Gulf Of Mexico, en-route Ingleside, TX  
Dec 15 - Arrive Ingleside, TX  
Dec 16 - 31 - In-Port Ingleside, TX Holiday Leave and Stand down

Command Narrative, CY 2000

Following Holiday stand down PELICAN's crew returned ready to enter the advanced phase of the Inter-Deployment Training Cycle (IDTC). At the end of January into early February, PELICAN participated in her first large, multi-ship MIW exercise in almost a year. Gulf of Mexico Exercise 00-1 (GOMEX) was a multi-ship, multi-platform (Air and Underwater Mine Countermeasures assets) exercise designed to prepare ships for operations in support of Battle Group level operations. This exercise, coordinated by Mine Countermeasures Squadron Two, was highly successful and proved to be a solid test of the skills PELICAN's crew had learned during the basic phase of the IDTC. At the completion of the exercise PELICAN returned to Ingleside, TX for a period of maintenance and upkeep.

At the beginning of March PELICAN was underway, enroute the "Golden Triangle" port of Port Arthur, Texas. After sailing up the Sabine River to Port Arthur, PELICAN moored at the brand new port facility in downtown Port Arthur. During this visit, PELICAN crewmembers participated in the local Mardi Gras celebrations. The entire crew was invited to ride in National Guard trucks in the parade where thousands of people lined the streets. Crewmembers enjoyed themselves by throwing thousands of necklaces, beads, and doubloons to the crowd. In addition to the Mardi Gras festivities, PELICAN crewmembers were treated to multiple barbeque dinners and socials hosted by the Port Arthur Mardi Gras Committee and by the PELICAN Commissioning Committee from Beaumont. As usual, the people of the Golden Triangle welcomed PELICAN sailors with open arms and treated them generously.

After three days in Port Arthur PELICAN was once again underway, steaming down the Sabine River heading back out to sea. Instead of returning back to Ingleside, however, PELICAN transited the Gulf of Mexico and on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March arrived in Veracruz, Mexico for a four-day port visit. This was PELICAN's first trip outside the United States in two years. The city of Veracruz treated PELICAN to four days of Mexican hospitality. PELICAN's wardroom hosted local navy officials, and crewmembers had tours arranged to visit the Mexican Naval Academy and other local sites in the Veracruz area. The city of Veracruz is a large commercial Port, yet still retains the small town feel, which is lost in many of the tourist centers in the Mexican Caribbean coast. The downtown area and its plaza, with outdoor bars and restaurants, was a favorite spot for many crewmembers.

Upon completion of her Veracruz port visit, PELICAN returned to Ingleside, Texas. During her return transit to South Texas, PELICAN deployed a MK-6 mine shape to conduct deep-water mine detection and neutralization training. After successful detection and simulated neutralization of the target, PELICAN transmitted the position of the shape to all MIW ships so it could be used for training in the future as ships transit to Mexico for port visits. PELICAN returned to her homeport on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March and spent the remainder of the month pierside conducting maintenance during an upkeep period.

During the first two weeks of April, PELICAN conducted a Fleet Maintenance Availability (FMAV) and her first Command, Control, Computers, and Communications Readiness Assessment (C5RA). The Fleet Maintenance Availability provided some needed grooming and refurbishment to both of PELICAN's main diesel engines and various other engineering systems and equipment. C5RA assessors gave the ship's operations and combat systems equipment an intensive inspection, simultaneously identifying deficiencies and helping to restore the equipment to its full operational design parameters. The civilian technicians from Fleet Technical Support Center Atlantic (FTSCLANT) also provided much needed training and valuable experience to PELICAN's sailors. Additionally, PELICAN received over \$26,000 in parts support and was able to correct most deficiencies and conduct repairs on the spot. After conducting an intensive inspection and testing of all electronic equipment and systems, the C5RA technicians determined that PELICAN was fully operational in C4I (command, control, communications,

computers and intelligence); detect capabilities (radar, sonar, and display consoles), and EMI (Electromagnetic Interference).

After completion of C5RA, PELICAN began preparations for magnetic signature testing at the Electromagnetic Ranging (EMR) Facility in Ingleside. Prior to entering the EMR Facility PELICAN conducted an offload of all non-essential magnetic items. This was done so that the most realistic reading of the ship's magnetic signature could be determined. The idea behind removing as many tools, binders, TVs, VCR's, and other extra pieces of equipment as possible, is to approximate the optimum configuration of a mine warfare ship conducting operations in a real minefield. PELICAN would thus enter a minefield with the lowest magnetic signature possible and only the most essential pieces of equipment on board. PELICAN completed her trip to the EMR Facility in one day and returned to Naval Station Ingleside. The decision was then made to leave this magnetic material ashore to test the operational premise during PELICAN's participation in a Squadron Exercise (RONEX) scheduled for the following week.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May PELICAN was underway to participate in Squadron Exercise 00-1 (RONEX 00-1). As Commander Task Unit (CTU) 21.1.1, PELICAN was responsible for the MIW planning and operations of USS HERON (MHC 52) and USS CHAMPION (MCM 4), under Commander Task Group (CTG) 021.1 (COMCMRON ONE). This exercise was scheduled to take place in the Panama City, FL Operational Area (OPAREA). En route to RONEX 00-1 PELICAN once again made a port visit to the Golden Triangle, making stops in Orange, TX for the International Gumbo Festival and in PELICAN's adopted hometown of Beaumont.

After making the 46 mile transit up the Sabine and Neches Rivers, PELICAN moored at the Naval Reserve Activity Pier in Orange, TX. The atmosphere was once again very hospitable with local officials hosting a welcome barbeque and providing free tickets to the festival. During the festival PELICAN sailors participated in a 5K fun run and a tug-of-war competition against the local fire and police departments. The crew also attempted to repay some of the hospitality through participation in a community relations project and helping to clean up the Gumbo festival area following the activities. PELICAN then made a brief stop down the river in Beaumont where the PELICAN Commissioning Committee again hosted the crew during their brief visit.

Underway again on the 8<sup>th</sup>, PELICAN headed for Pascagoula, Mississippi for a short two-day port visit for the final planning of RONEX 00-1. This Squadron Exercise entailed mine countermeasure operations in a mine threat area (MTA) that stretched from Pascagoula, Mississippi, (simulated Chinhae, Korea) all the way to Panama City, Fl (Pusan, Korea). Upon departing Pascagoula and arriving in Panama City, the task unit simulated port break-out and port break-in procedures. Throughout the weeklong exercise, PELICAN, as CTU 21.1.1, oversaw the clearing over 230 square miles of Q-routes, allowing for the simulated entry of large replenishment ships into the port of Pusan. Additionally, due to the CTG experiencing communications problems at the Mobile Information and Command Facility (MICFAC), PELICAN also assumed CTG duties to round out a highly successful mine warfare exercise.

After returning to Ingleside, PELICAN engineers completed preparations for an intensive inspection of all her diesel engines (DEI). The DEI focuses not only on the material condition of the engines and associated support equipment, but program reviews and material history as well. PELICAN passed this inspection, clearing all discrepancies on 4 of her 5 diesel engines prior to the out brief at the end of the week. The remaining main propulsion diesel engine was re-inspected and cleared for full operation two weeks later. The rest of the month of June PELICAN remained pierside undergoing maintenance, a hull cleaning, and an assist visit from the Naval Safety Center on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June. The Naval Safety Center conducts assistance visits to evaluate the conduct of the ships safety program along with actual identification of material safety conditions.

On July 10<sup>th</sup>, PELICAN was underway to take part in Gulf of Mexico Exercise (GOMEX)/EXERCISE MERCURY 2000 in the Corpus Christi Operational Area. During GOMEX/MERCURY 2000 PELICAN was a member of CTU 21.1.1 under USS HERON (MHC

52), along with USS CHAMPION (MCM 4). In conjunction with GOMEX/MERCURY 2000 MIREM 13 was conducted. MIREM (Mine Warfare Readiness and Effectiveness Measuring) collects data from a variety of mine warfare operations to establish a database and benchmark for further fleet performance. As a structured test event, MIREM involved each platform performing specific MIW events in accordance with established criteria. This allowed the MIREM evaluators to judge how well equipment and personnel work against known targets and objectives.

The tactical portion of GOMEX/MERCURY 2000 consisted of an unopposed amphibious landing for which an amphibious geometry (Q-routes, inner transport areas, LCAC and boat lanes) had been established and then cleared of mines. PELICAN started successfully, but two days into the exercise, suffered a serious casualty to the Mine Neutralization System AN/SLQ-48 and was forced to return to port for emergent repairs. When it became apparent that the casualty was extensive, PELICAN made the decision to return to the exercise and participate as a search unit and as a platform for Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) operations. For the remainder of the exercise, PELICAN helped detect and neutralize mines with embarked EOD divers. PELICAN then returned to port at the completion of the exercise and underwent maintenance, upkeep, and repairs for the rest of the month.

From August 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 4<sup>th</sup> PELICAN was underway in the Corpus Christi operational area conducting operations as LCDR C.A. Hottenrott prepared to relieve CDR Scott S. Gordon. The official change of command took place on the sunny and hot South Texas day of 9 August. The ceremony was highlighted by the speech of the senior guest, Commodore Bob O'Donnell, CAPT (ret), the former Commodore of Mine Countermeasures Squadron Two.

As PELICAN was preparing to enter a 20 day stand-down prior to deployment, the news of a MHC-53 crash from HM-15 was received. Even though a portion of the crew had already departed on leave, the crew rapidly shifted gears from starting a pre-deployment stand down to preparing the ship to get underway for emergent Search and Rescue (SAR) operations. With a 12-hour notice, PELICAN got underway from Ingleside and made best speed to the crash site to support ongoing recovery operations. Just prior to arrival at the site, the ship received word that the debris field had been located and PELICAN was detached to return to port. Despite the short time duration of the tasking, the crew was justifiably proud of their professional response. The crew then resumed their plans for stand-down and preparations for deployment.

PELICAN sailed on 12 September for her first operational deployment. The first stop on the agenda was her commissioning port of Beaumont, Texas, arriving on the 14<sup>th</sup> for the 2000 Navy Days festival. The Navy Days celebration in Beaumont was started by the PELICAN Commissioning Committee to commemorate the "Golden Triangle's" contribution to the U.S. Navy and to celebrate the efforts of these sailors on behalf of national defense. During this visit, PELICAN was the flag ship for the Commander, Mine Countermeasures Squadron ONE, CAPT Randolph Young, USN and during the visit, PELICAN not only hosted the Commodore and his distinguished guests for a fantail reception, but over 1600 citizens of the area. Mr. David Hearn and the PELICAN Commissioning Committee once again displayed incredible hospitality, hosting a barbecue, port reception, softball tournament, and a final evening banquet at Mr. Hearn's Clifton Steamboat Museum.

Underway once again on the 18<sup>th</sup>, PELICAN headed to Key West, Florida but a severe weather front diverted her to Pascagoula, LA. PELICAN spent the 22<sup>nd</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup> pierside in Pascagoula, and while there, ended up conducting emergent repairs to her Nr 2 UPS (un-interrupted power supply) before once again getting underway on the 26<sup>th</sup> and heading south towards Key West, Florida. PELICAN arrived in Key West on the 29<sup>th</sup> and spent several days enjoying the sun and sights of this tropical town. Departing on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, PELICAN proceeded north towards Mayport, Florida.

PELICAN arrived in Mayport on 5 October and began preparations for her operational commitment to HARRY S TRUMAN JTFEX/NATO Exercise UNIFIED SPIRIT

2000. PELICAN spent approximately a week pierside for general maintenance and upkeep. Then on 11 October, she was underway enroute the Virginia Capes Operational Area for participation in this large battle group and NATO exercise. Under COMCMRON TWO, Commander Task Group (CTG) 405.6, PELICAN assumed the duties of Commander Task Unit (CTU) 405.6.2, which placed her in operational control of two U.S. navy surface MIW platforms (USS HERON, USS CHAMPION), an EOD Detachment (EOD Mobile Unit 6, Detachment 2), and two Canadian surface MIW platforms (HMCS MONCTON, HMCS GOOSE BAY). Our Task Unit was charged with MIW exploratory and clearance operations in over 175 square miles of ocean in the Virginia Capes Operational Area. PELICAN alone cleared over 42 square miles of ocean and positively detected 26 sonar contacts and neutralized 6 mines with a combination of EOD and SMCM assets. Upon completion of UNIFIED SPIRIT, the EOD divers assisted HMCS GOOSE BAY in the recovery of her deep sweep array which had to be paid out due to a casualty while sweeping. During UNIFIED SPIRIT 2000 PELICAN additionally made two brief stops for fuel in Morehead City, North Carolina before completing UNIFIED SPIRIT 2000 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October and heading to Norfolk, Virginia for up-keep and maintenance.

PELICAN spent the rest of the month of October and the first week of November in Norfolk. This time inport was used for upkeep and maintenance, as well as sending numerous sailors to training schools only available there. The officers attended the Marine Safety International Shiphandling complex, which was also the site of the Squadron's junior officer shiphandling competition, which was won by PELICAN's entry, LTJG Stebbins. Norfolk marked the separation of the MCMRON deployment into two Task Units—one led by USS OSPREY and consisting of USS PIONEER and USS FALCON; and the other led by USS HERON and consisting of USS PELICAN and USS CHAMPION. This division into two task units facilitated various port visits, while contributing to a degree of reliability in part support and towing assistance if required. (The MHC's with only two engines could easily find themselves requiring such assistance.)

PELICAN departed Norfolk on 13 November, transited up the Chesapeake Bay to arrive in Annapolis, MD the next day. PELICAN moored at the sailing center at the Naval Academy along with USS HERON and USS CHAMPION. Being berthed at the sailing center provided a unique opportunity for the midshipmen to visit the ships without having to take a launch out into the harbor where visiting ships usually anchor. While at the Naval Academy PELICAN sailors and officers interacted with midshipmen, provided ship tours, and taught mine warfare. In particular, the ships played host to the Second Class Midshipmen who were learning about mine warfare in their tactics class. The sailors also enjoyed liberty in Annapolis, and took advantage of its proximity to take day trips to both Baltimore and Washington D.C..

Completing her visit to Annapolis on 20 November, PELICAN then transited the northernmost portion of Chesapeake Bay and entered the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. This canal cut many hours from the transit time to New York and allowed PELICAN sailors to enjoy the sights of rural Delaware and Maryland. PELICAN continued down the Delaware Bay and back into the Atlantic Ocean. Entering New York Harbor on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November, PELICAN sailed up the Hudson River and was treated to spectacular views of the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and the Manhattan Skyline. PELICAN conducted a three-day port visit to New York during which she was moored alongside the Ex-USS EDSON at Pier 86 across from the USS INTREPID Museum. While in New York crewmembers had a chance to witness the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade-- despite the freezing temperatures. Additionally, sailors made the most of the diverse sights, sounds, shopping and entertainment opportunities the city has to offer.

Departing New York on the 24<sup>th</sup>, PELICAN headed south, back towards Mayport, FL for the return trip of the deployment. Enroute, PELICAN was once again diverted to avoid heavy weather, this time to Norfolk, VA. PELICAN pulled into Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek on the 25<sup>th</sup> and remained inport for two days. After the weather had abated, the ship once again headed south

for Mayport, arriving on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December. Taking on fuel and stores in one day, the ship then departed for Key West, arriving on the 4<sup>th</sup>. After refueling and completing some emergent repairs, PELICAN set out late on the 5<sup>th</sup> for Panama City, FL. PELICAN had been steaming in company with USS PIONEER since Mayport, and a day out from Panama City, PIONEER detached to head to Mobile, AL while PELICAN made her rendezvous with CHAMPION and HERON in Panama City on 9 December. After the enjoying the weekend stop, PELICAN set out to conduct some mine warfare training in the local opareas before setting a course for home.

After the four-day transit, filled with exercises and evolutions, PELICAN steamed back into local waters. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, after delaying her initial arrival due to dense fog, PELICAN transited the Corpus Christi Channel arriving back in Ingleside late in the afternoon. The ship's return from deployment coincided with the traditional start of the holiday leave and stand-down, and both crew and families were eager to celebrate the holiday homecoming.