



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS THACH (FFG 43)  
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From: Commanding Officer, USS THACH (FFG 43)  
To: Director of Naval History, (OP-09BH), Washington Navy  
Yard Washington, D.C. 20374-0571

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAV REPORT 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization  
(2) Chronological Summary  
(3) Historical Narrative  
(4) Supporting Documents

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are forwarded.

*WA Sheehan*

W. A. SHEEHAN

## USS THACH (FFG 43)

### COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

USS THACH, the namesake of two-time Navy Cross recipient Admiral John Smith Thach, is the thirty-sixth ship of the Oliver Hazard Perry (FFG-7) class of guided missile frigates. THACH's mission is to provide air, surface, and sub-surface protection for merchant and military convoys, aircraft carriers, logistics battle groups, and amphibious task forces, operating either independently or as a part of a Surface Action Group. THACH was built by Todd Pacific Shipyards Corporation, Los Angeles, California. Her keel was laid on March 6, 1982. She was christened on December 18, 1983 and commissioned on March 17, 1984.

The Commanding Officer has the ultimate authority, responsibility and accountability for the performance and welfare of the ship and her crew. Second in command, the Executive Officer implements policies and regulations as applicable to the ship and her mission. Each Department Head reports to the Commanding Officer via the Executive Officer.

USS THACH is under the administrative command of Commander, Destroyer Squadron SEVEN and is homeported in San Diego, CA.

## **SHIP'S ORGANIZATION, 2001**

COMMANDING OFFICER: CDR Richard W. Daniel  
(11<sup>th</sup> Commanding Officer)  
Relieved by CDR William A. Sheehan

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: LCDR Kevin P. Flanagan  
Relieved by LCDR Paul J. Lommel

### **DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION**

COMBAT SYSTEMS: LT Daniel T. Evans  
Relieved by LT Walter T. Taylor

Fire Control Officer (CF Division)  
LT Michael T. Gagnon  
Relieved by LTJG Ted W. Carlson

Electronic Materials Officer (CE Division)  
ENS William E. Hieronimus

Anti-Submarine Warfare Officer (CA Division)  
LTJG George Murga  
Relieved by ENS Brian M. Lee

Gunnery Officer (CG Division)  
LTJG Juan R. Ubeiria

OPERATIONS: LT Arlen E. Aspenson

First Lieutenant (First Division)  
LTJG James P. Chalupsky

Combat Information Center Officer (OI Division)  
LTJG Austin C. Johnson

Communications Officer (OC Division)  
LT Darren R. Genstil  
Relieved by ENS Matthew G. Kennedy

Electronic Warfare Officer (OW Division)  
ENS Robert R. Ellison

NAVIGATOR/ADMIN OFFICER: LTJG Robert E. Fulkerson

ENGINEERING: LT Martin E. Rodriguez

Main Propulsion Assistant (M Division)  
LTJG Eric M. Samuelson  
Relieved by ENS Arol B. Trewin

Damage Control Assistant (R Division)  
LTJG Ted W. Carlson  
Relieved by ENS Ashley L. Pankop

Auxiliaries Officer (A Division)  
LTJG David A. Espeut  
Relieved by LTJG Anthony R. Graham

Electrical Officer (E Division)  
LTJG David A. Espeut  
Relieved by LTJG Anthony R. Graham  
Relieved by ENS Peter M. Bernard

SUPPLY: LT Morgan C. Tulang  
Relieved by LT Robert S. Scott

Storekeepers (S-1 Division)  
LT Morgan C. Tulang  
Relieved by LT Robert S. Scott

Food Service (S-2 Division)  
LT Morgan C. Tulang  
Relieved by LT Robert S. Scott

Ship's Servicemen (S-3 Division)  
ENS Michael L. Warner

Disbursing Officer (S-4 Division)  
ENS Michael L. Warner

MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE COMMAND:

STGCM(SW) Glenn T. St. Pierre

**USS THACH (FFG 43)  
COMMAND HISTORY 2001  
CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY**

01 JAN      INPORT, NAVAL STATION SAN DIEGO, HOLIDAY STANDDOWN

01 JAN      CHOP TO COMDESRON SEVEN

07 JAN      HOLIDAY STANDDOWN ENDS

08 JAN-      C5RA  
17 JAN

22 JAN-      UNDERWAY, FLEETEX, SOCIAL OPAREA  
31 JAN

26 JAN      CINCPACFLT VISIT (ADM FARGO)

31 JAN-      INPORT, NAVAL STATION SAN DIEGO, FORCE PROTECTION  
01 FEB      EXERCISE

02 FEB-      UNDERWAY, JTFEX, SOCIAL OPAREA  
13 FEB

10 FEB      COMTHIRDFLT VISIT (VADM BUCCHI)

12 FEB      UNDERWAY, MISSILEX

13 FEB      INPORT, NAVAL STATION SAN DIEGO

15 FEB-      PRE-OVERSEAS MOVEMENT LEAVE AND STAND DOWN (BLOCK I)  
25 FEB

27 FEB      FAMILY DAY CRUISE

27 FEB      INPORT, NAVAL STATION SAN DIEGO

01 MAR-      PRE-OVERSEAS MOVEMENT LEAVE AND STAND DOWN (BLOCK II)  
11 MAR

15 MAR      UNDERWAY, WESTERN PACIFIC DEPLOYMENT

19 MAR      CHIEF RONALD HILAND KILLED DURING HELICOPTER ACCIDENT

04 APR-      PORT VISIT SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA  
09 APR

09 APR UNDERWAY, ENROUTE ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA

12 APR- PORT VISIT ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA  
14 APR

15 APR UNDERWAY, ENROUTE ARABIAN GULF

30 APR INCHOP, 5<sup>TH</sup> FLEET

04 MAY- PORT VISIT BAHRAIN  
07 MAY

07 MAY UNDERWAY, ARABIAN GULF

08 MAY- ON SCENE COMMANDER, NCB MIO OPERATIONS  
10 MAY

11 MAY INPORT BAHRAIN, SISTER SHIP IN-BRIEF W/ BANS SABHA

13 MAY UNDERWAY, SISTER SHIP EXERCISE W/ BANS SABHA

15 MAY UNDERWAY, ARABIAN GULF

04 JUN BATTLE OF MIDWAY DAY COMMEMORATION

15 JUN- PORT VISIT BAHRAIN  
17 JUN

18 JUN UNDERWAY, MIO SURGE, ARABIAN GULF

22 JUN CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY: CDR W. A. SHEEHAN RELIEVES  
CDR R. W. DANIEL

27 JUN CCDG1 VISIT (RADM ETNYRE)

15 JUL- PORT VISIT JEBEL ALI, UAE  
18 JUL

18 JUL UNDERWAY, ARABIAN GULF

26 JUL- PORT VISIT BAHRAIN  
29 JUL

28 JUL MCPON HERDT VISIT

29 JUL UNDERWAY, ARABIAN GULF

07 AUG INCHOP, 7<sup>TH</sup> FLEET

07 AUG UNDERWAY, ENROUTE PHUKET, THAILAND

10 AUG FON OPERATIONS, GREATER NICOBAR ISLAND, INDIA

12 AUG- PORT VISIT PHUKET, THAILAND  
14 AUG

14 AUG UNDERWAY, ENROUTE HONG KONG, CHINA

20 AUG- PORT VISIT HONG KONG, CHINA  
25 AUG

25 AUG UNDERWAY, ENROUTE PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII

02B SEP INCHOP, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLEET

05 SEP- PORT VISIT PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII  
09 SEP

09 SEP UNDERWAY, ENROUTE NAVAL STATION SAN DIEGO

15 SEP INPORT, NAVAL STATION SAN DIEGO, RETURN FROM WESTERN  
PACIFIC DEPLOYMENT

17 SEP- POST-OVERSEAS MOVEMENT LEAVE AND STAND DOWN (BLOCK I)  
01 OCT

01 OCT- POST-OVERSEAS MOVEMENT LEAVE AND STAND DOWN (BLOCK II)  
14 OCT

01 NOV OSC(SW) BRIAN WHEELER COMMISSIONING CEREMONY

02 NOV- UNDERWAY, JTFEX OPFOR, SOCAL OPAREA  
08 NOV

26 NOV- SUPPLY MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT  
29 NOV

26 NOV- 3M BASELINE ASSESSMENT  
29 NOV

27 NOV POSTAL ASSESSMENT VISIT

11 DEC UNDERWAY, ENROUTE NAVAL WEAPONS STATION SEAL BEACH

11 DEC INPORT, NAVAL WEAPONS STATION SEAL BEACH

12 DEC- AMMUNITION OFFLOAD  
13 DEC

13 DEC UNDERWAY, ENROUTE NAVAL STATION SAN DIEGO

14 DEC INPORT, NAVAL STATION SAN DIEGO

14 DEC- HOLIDAY LEAVE PERIOD (BLOCK I)  
27 DEC

27 DEC- HOLIDAY LEAVE PERIOD (BLOCK II)  
31 DEC

**USS THACH (FFG 43)**  
**COMMAND HISTORY 2001**  
**HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

*USS THACH* started the New Year by shifting from the operational command of COMDESRON TWENTY-THREE to COMDESRON SEVEN. The crew enjoyed holiday stand-down with one half of the crew on leave. All holiday leave concluded on 7 January and normal inport routine commenced.

From 8-17 January, Combat Systems Department went through Combat Systems, Command, Control, Communication, Computer, Readiness Assessment (C5R5), a comprehensive operational/maintenance evaluation of *THACH*'s Combat Systems equipment.

After technical assistance and training was provided, *THACH* was ready to get underway on 22 January with the *CONSTELLATION* Battle Group, and the embarked Helo Squadron HSL 49 Detachment 8 in order to start the latter part of the Inter Deployment Training Cycle. *THACH* completed training in all facets of warfare during the Fleet Exercise with the Battle Group which consisted of *USS CONSTELLATION*, *USS KINKAID*, *USS BENFOLD*, and *HMCS WINNIPEG*. On 26 January, *THACH* welcomed aboard ADM Thomas B. Fargo, Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Enclosure (3)

After the nine day exercise, *THACH* returned to port on 31 January to conduct a Force Protection Exercise until 1 February. On 2 February, *THACH* went back out sea to complete the Inter Deployment Training Cycle and practiced Battle Group operations during the all encompassing Joint Task Force Exercise with the Battle Group. Before the end of the exercise, *THACH* welcomed aboard VADM Bucchi, Commander, Third Fleet.

Following a Missile Exercise on 12 February, *THACH* returned to port on 13 February and commenced the first block of Pre-Overseas Movement leave sending half of the crew home to spend quality time with their families and friends in anticipation of the upcoming deployment. The first block of leave ended on 25 February in order to prepare for the family-day cruise on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

On 27 February, family and friends of the crew embarked *THACH* and rode her to sea. The guests were mesmerized by gunfire exercises, ship tours, and witnessing *THACH*'s underway routine.

The second block of leave was from 1 to 11 March for the half of the crew that was not able to go home during the first block of leave.

With the entire crew onboard 11 March, *THACH* put on the finishing touches, preparing for her Western Pacific deployment on 15 March. Leaving families, friends, and San Diego in her

wake, the crew of *THACH* got underway with the Scorpions from HSL 49 DET 8 on 15 March with the *CONSTELLATION* Battle Group for WESTPAC 2001.

The excitement of being on deployment came to an abrupt end when AMSC(AW) Ronald Hiland was killed on 19 March in a tragic helicopter accident on the flight deck.

Navigating her way through the pugnacious waters of the Pacific, *THACH's* first stop was Sydney, Australia. Sydney extended a warm welcome to the *THACH* and her crew on 4 April. Sailors enjoyed an array of tours of the outback, socializing with friendly locals, and relaxing on Sydney's world renowned beaches.

On 9 April *THACH* returned to sea, charting a course to Adelaide, Australia in hopes of replicating time spent in Sydney. Arriving in Adelaide on 12 April, *THACH* celebrated Easter weekend in the effervescent atmosphere created by the townspeople.

Receiving reports of an incoming storm, the crew returned to the ship and headed out to sea on the 15 April. The crew kept *THACH* out of harm's way, courageously employing its navigational prowess by implementing complex storm avoidance tactics.

On 30 April, *THACH* chopped into the 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet Area of Operation. *THACH* headed through the Straits of Hormuz enroute to the Arabian Gulf. On 4 May, *THACH* moored in Bahrain for a brief port visit.

Back out to sea on 7 May, *THACH* headed to the Arabian Gulf to perform Maritime Interception Operations. After two weeks of tracking United Nations Sanctions violators *THACH* returned to Bahrain on 11 May, joining up with Bahraini Frigate *BANS SABHA* for 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet's Sister Ship Program.

After one day of familiarization and planning between *THACH* and *BANS SABHA*, both ships would head out to sea on the 11 May. Conducting day to day personnel transfers between the ships, performing communication drills, ship maneuvering exercises, and sharpening tactical skills proved to be professionally rewarding and beneficial to both ships.

*THACH* would bid farewell to the *BANS SABHA* and return to the Arabian Gulf to conduct Maritime Interception Operations. *THACH* proved its tactical proficiency in tracking United Nations Sanctions Violators by hunting a known oil smuggler and diverting her to an appropriate holding area. *THACH's* highly-trained Visit Board Search and Seizure team would perform

numerous guardship duties and boardings of oil smugglers greatly decreasing the flow of illegal oil from Iraq.

On 4 June *THACH* took the time to remember the Battle of Midway and the contributions made by the ship's namesake, ADM John Smith Thach.

After one month of performing Maritime Interception Operations, *THACH* returned to Bahrain on 15 June for a well deserved port visit. On 18 June, *THACH* got underway to conduct MIO Surge in conjunction with Battle Group assets attempting to crack down on oil smuggling in the Arabian Gulf.

On 22 June CDR William Sheehan relieved CDR Rick Daniel as Commanding Officer of *USS THACH*. The change of command was held at sea, with the crew bidding farewell to CDR Daniel as CDR Sheehan became *THACH*'s 12<sup>th</sup> Commanding Officer.

With the Change of Command ceremony concluded, Commander, Cruiser Destroyer Group One, RADM Etnyre came aboard for a tour of *THACH* on 27 June.

After completing several weeks of MIO Operations, *THACH* pulled into Jebel Ali, UAE on 15 July. There wasn't much to do, but after almost nearly a month underway, *THACH*'s crew found the liberty to be both rewarding and refreshing.

After spending a few days relaxing, *THACH* returned to sea on 18 July, was again in support of United Nations sanctions against Iraq. Following three weeks of MIO and VBSS operations,

*THACH* pulled into Bahrain on 26 July for the last time. While in Bahrain, *THACH* was visited by MCPON James L. Herdt, who came aboard to discuss items of interest with the crew.

After leaving Bahrain on 29 July, *THACH* spend one final week on patrol in the Arabian Gulf before chopping into the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet Area of Operation on 7 August.

On 10 August *THACH* performed a Freedom of Navigation (FON) Exercise, demonstrating the right of innocent passage within 12 nautical miles of Greater Nicobar Island, India. Following this exercise, *THACH* transited at high speeds towards a much needed liberty port, arriving in Phuket, Thailand on 12 August. The crew spent three days taking in the sites before getting underway on 14 August.

Arriving in Hong Kong, China on 20 August, the crew got to enjoy one last foreign port before the end of deployment. After almost a week in Hong Kong, got underway on 25 August. Before leaving the territorial waters of Hong Kong, *THACH* engaged in helicopter operations with the Government Flying Service of Hong Kong.

Crossing the international dateline on 2 September, the crew was a given the opportunity to experience 2 September a second time. On the second 2 September, *THACH* chopped into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet Area of Operation.

Pulling into Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on 5 September gave several crew members not only a chance to see the legendary Hawaiian beaches, but also a chance to pay tribute to the heroes of World War II by seeing the sunken remains of both *USS ARIZONA* and *USS UTAH* and the museum ship *USS MISSOURI* and museum submarine *USS BOWFIN*.

Embarking family members for a "Tiger Cruise," *THACH* said good-bye to her family WESTPAC port visit on 9 September. After treating family members to several shipboard demonstrations, *THACH* returned to Naval Station San Diego, California on 15 September.

Before pulling in, a ceremony was held on the flight deck to pay tribute the *THACH*'s fallen comrade, AMSC(AW) Ronald Hiland. After a short prayer and a moment of silence, the Chief Petty Officer Mess laid a wreath of flowers in the water and the crew came to attention as the ship passed the vicinity of Rosecrans Cemetery, the final resting place of AMSC(AW) Hiland.

With the tragic events of the World Trade Center and Pentagon terrorist attacks of 11 September, the first block of Post-Overseas Movement leave period was delayed from 15 September until 17 September. The shortened first block of leave ended 1 October, where after a full work day with the entire crew, the second block of leave commenced on the

afternoon of 1 October. With the end of the second block of leave on 14 October, *THACH* began getting back into a normal work routine.

Following a commissioning ceremony for OSC(SW) Brian Wheeler on 1 November, *THACH* got underway from 2 November for a Joint Task Force Exercise with the Battle Group. Following several exercises proving *THACH* was still up to the challenge, *THACH* returned to Naval Station San Diego on 08 November.

Supply Department was put to the test with both a Supply Management Assessment (SMA) and a Postal Assessment from 26-29 November. Scoring above 90 percent in all areas of the SMA, *THACH* not only qualified to have the SMA upgraded to a Supply Management Inspection (SMI), but was also in the running for the "Blue" Efficiency Award.

In addition to the SMA and Postal Assessment, a 3-M Baseline Assessment also took place from 26-29 November. This assessment took a thorough look at *THACH*'s 3-M program. When the assessment was over, *THACH*'s MDS performance rate was above 90%.

On 11 December *THACH* got underway one last time, enroute to Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach. Arriving in the early evening of 11 December, the offloading of all ammunition commenced on the morning of 12 December. After completing the offload, *THACH* departed for Naval Station San Diego on 13 December.

Following overnight training exercises, *THACH* arrived at Naval Station San Diego on 14 December, where, upon arrival, the first block of the Holiday leave period commenced. Following a turnover day on 27 December, the second block of the Holiday leave period consumed the remainder of the year.