



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS TRENTON (LPD-14)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS TRENTON (LPD-14)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, DC 20374-0571

Subj: 1996 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5150.12F

Encl: (1) Photograph and Biography of Commander Ronald W.
Zaperach, USN
(2) 1996 Chronology
(3) 1996 Command Narrative

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following is submitted:

a. Background: USS TRENTON (LPD 14), an amphibious transport dock, is named for the capital of the state of New Jersey.

The present USS TRENTON is the third United States warship to bear the name. The first was a steam sloop of war commissioned in 1884. The second was a light cruiser, CL-11, commissioned in 1924, which served with the Asiatic, Caribbean, and Southwest Pacific Fleets during World War II. The keel for the present TRENTON was laid on 8 August 1966. She was christened on 3 August 1968 by Mrs. Richard J. Hughes, wife of the governor of New Jersey. TRENTON was commissioned 6 March 1971. The amphibious transport dock (LPD) is a very versatile amphibious ship. TRENTON can transport, land and support a Marine force on a hostile shore. TRENTON is capable of carrying over 900 troops plus their vehicles, equipment, weapons, ammunition and supplies. She also carries landing craft such as LCUs and AAVs (amphibious assault vehicles) in her floodable well deck. Her flight deck allows her to operate all Navy and Marine Corps helicopters and VTOL aircraft (harriers).

TRENTON participated in the 1983 liberation of Grenada, was a member of the multinational force off the coast of Beirut, Lebanon in 1983-84, and was a participant in Operation PRAYING MANTIS in April 1988 during a six month deployment to the Persian Gulf.

TRENTON played a supporting role in the presidential summit at Malta in December 1989, participated in Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama in June 1990, and deployed on short notice to the Middle East as a member of the amphibious task force during Operation DESERT SHIELD (January 1991) and Operation DESERT STORM (January - April 1991). In

Subj: 1996 COMMAND HISTORY

1992, TRENTON participated in Operation PROVIDE PROMISE as the sea and air rescue platform for humanitarian relief flights into the former Yugoslavia.

TRENTON was deployed in January 1994 back to the Mediterranean Sea in support of Operation CONTINUE HOPE off the coast of Somalia (February - March 1994). After only 10 days post deployment, TRENTON was called upon again to deploy in support of Operation SUPPORT DEMOCRACY off the coast of Haiti for six weeks (July - August 1994).

In 1995, TRENTON spent most of her time preparing for the next deployment in 1996. She spent April in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba going through refresher training. She set many milestones by passing all the major drills/inspections on the first try. OPPE (Operations propulsion plant examination) was passed in August of 1995.

TRENTON's most recent deployment was from January 26 until July 24, 1996. During this deployment, she participated in Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR off the coast of Bosnia, Operation ASSURED RESPONSE (April-May) off the coast of Monrovia, Liberia, Africa, and in three exercises (DESTINED GLORY, MATADOR, ALEXANDER THE GREAT).

Almost immediately upon returning to homeport, TRENTON was called on again, this time she was tasked as the command ship in the salvage of TWA Flight 800 off the coast of Long Island, NY. TRENTON participated in the recovery from September 9 until October 19.

b. TRENTON has developed and now operates under the following Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles:

OUR MISSION:

To conduct sustained amphibious combat and special operations safely and efficiently.

OUR VISION:

- TRENTON "looks good" and does everything with class.
- TRENTON personnel are qualified and trained to perform each mission assigned and have modern, well-maintained equipment to perform such missions.

Subj: 1996 COMMAND HISTORY

- TRENTON is maintained as a clean, safe, and healthy ship in which to live and work.
- TRENTON maintains the highest state of operational and damage control readiness and is unsurpassed in the support of landing force units.
- TRENTON personnel achieve and are rewarded for personal excellence in an atmosphere of trust, cooperation, and equality.
- TRENTON promotes continuous improvement through strong positive leadership, intelligent innovation, and enthusiastic teamwork.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Effective communications up and down the chain of command.
- Individual value and growth.
- Integrity, moral courage, and responsibility at all levels.
- Preservation of assets.
- Safety.
- Quality assurance and innovation.
- Positive leadership.
- Reward for good performance.
- Family involvement.

c. Commanding Officer: Commander Ronald W. Zaperach, USN, 1 January to 31 December 1996.

d. Homeport: Norfolk, Virginia.

e. Command Association:

96Jan01-26: Commander, Amphibious Group TWO/ Commander, Second Fleet.

Subj: 1996 COMMAND HISTORY

96Jan26-Jul24: Commander, Amphibious Squadron TWO/
Commander, Sixth Fleet.

96Jul25-Dec31: Commander, Amphibious Group TWO/
Commander, Second Fleet.

f. Deployments: Mediterranean Sea, 26 January to 24 July 1996.

g. Exercises and Operations: "Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR",
"Operation ASSURED RESPONSE", "Exercise DESTINED GLORY", "Exercise
MATADOR", "Exercise ALEXANDER THE GREAT", TWA Flight 800 Salvage
Operation.

h. Embarked Units During Deployment.

22-MSSG (Marine Supply and Support Group)
Second Force Recon
Battalion Landing Team, Echo Company
SEAL Team 8, Platoon G
Explosive Ordnance Disposal Maritime Unit 2 Det 4
Special Boat Unit 20, Det
Assault Craft Unit TWO Det

i. Deployment Statistics:

- (1) Fuel consumed: 3,000,000 gallons.
- (2) Refueling at sea: 11.
- (3) JP5 aviation fuel received: 90,000 gallons.
- (4) MOGAS delivered: 1500 gallons.
- (5) Large caliber ammunition expended: Unknown.
- (6) Underway replenishments: 19.
- (7) Aircraft landings: 2100.
Life time total landings: 42,749.
- (8) 1996 Budget: Repair parts - \$ 787,000.00
Consumables - \$ 499,000.00

j. Awards received this calendar year: Sea Service Deployment
Ribbon for the January-July Mediterranean deployment, Armed Forces
Service Medal for Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, Humanitarian Service Medal
(HSM) and Joint Meritorious Unit Award (JMUA) for Operation ASSURED
RESPONSE, and Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon for TWA Flight 800 Salvage
Operation.

Subj: 1996 COMMAND HISTORY

k. Biography and photo of Ronald. W. Zaperach attached as enclosure (1).

l. Chronology attached as enclosure (2).

m. Narrative attached as enclosure (3).



R.W. ZAPERACH

1996 CHRONOLOGY

96JAN01-25 FINAL PREPARATIONS MADE FOR DEPLOYMENT.

96JAN24 ADM BOORDA VISITS SHIP

96JAN26 TRENTON DEPARTS ON 6 MONTH DEPLOYMENT. TRANSITS TO MOREHEAD CITY, NORTH CAROLINA TO EMBARK MARINES.

96JAN28 TRENTON DEPARTS MOREHEAD CITY WITH USS GUAM MARG (GUAM (LPH-9), TRENTON, TORTUGA (LSD-46), AND PORTLAND (LSD-37)) FOR MEDITERRANEAN SEA.

96FEB02 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USS MERRIMACK.

96FEB06 COMMODORE W. YOUNG, COMMANDER, AMPHIBIOUS SQUADRON TWO, AND COLONEL FORBUSH, COMMANDER, TWO TWO MEU VISIT SHIP.

96FEB08 TRANSIT STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR WITH GUAM MARG, ENROUTE TO ADRIATIC SEA.

96FEB09 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USS MONONGAHELA.

96FEB11 TURNOVER WITH USS WASP MARG COMPLETED UNDERWAY.

96FEB12-06MAR TRENTON ON STATION IN ADRIATIC SEA IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION JOINT ENDEAVOR.

96FEB13 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS BIGHORN.

96FEB18 REFUELING AT SEA WITH USNS LEROY GRUMMAN.

96FEB21 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS SATURN.

96FEB24 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS LEROY GRUMMAN.

96MAR01 REFUELING AT SEA WITH USNS BIGHORN.

96MAR05 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS BIGHORN.

96MAR05-07 MR. GASPERINI, CBS RADIO CORRESPONDENT FROM
MOSCOW, VISITED SHIP.

96MAR06 TRENTON DETACHED FROM OPERATION JOINT ENDEAVOR.
ENROUTE TO FIRST PORT VISIT, GENOA, ITALY.

96MAR06 TRENTON CELEBRATES 25TH BIRTHDAY. COMMISSIONED ON
06MAR71.

96MAR08-12 TRENTON CONDUCTS PORT VISIT IN GENOA, ITALY.

96MAR13-25 TRENTON PARTICIPATES IN EXERCISE DESTINED GLORY
OFF THE COAST OF SARDINIA.

96MAR13 TRENTON ANCHORS NEAR CAGLIARI, SARDINIA.

96MAR15 GENERAL WILHELM, COMMANDER, MARINE FORCES
ATLANTIC, VISITED TRENTON.

96MAR17 REFUELING AT SEA WITH USNS BIGHORN, REPLENISHMENT
AT SEA WITH USNS SAN DIEGO.

96MAR18 ANCHORAGE, CAPO TEULADA, SARDINIA.

96MAR21 VADM PILLING, COMMANDER IN CHIEF, SIXTH FLEET, AND
COMMANDER, STRIKE FORCE SOUTH VISITED TRENTON.

96MAR23 ADM W. J. FLANAGAN, COMMANDER IN CHIEF, U.S.
ATLANTIC FLEET VISITED SHIP.

96MAR26 DETACH FROM EXERCISE DESTINED GLORY, ENROUTE FOR
NAPLES, ITALY WITH USS PORTLAND.

96MAR27 REFUELING AT SEA WITH USNS LEROY GRUMMAN.

96MAR27-08APR TRENTON CONDUCTS PORT VISIT AND INTERMEDIATE
MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY IN NAPLES ITALY.

96APR07 CHAPLAIN MOON, TRENTON'S CHAPLAIN, CONDUCTS EASTER
SUNRISE SERVICE.

96APR08 DEPART NAPLES, ITALY. TRANSIT STRAITS OF MESSINA
ENROUTE TO HAIFA, ISRAEL.

96APR09 TRENTON DIVERTED TO MONROVIA, LIBERIA TO PARTICIPATE IN OPERATION ASSURED RESPONSE.

96APR13 TRENTON EMBARKS FOUR CH-46, TWO MH-53 HELICOPTERS FROM HMM 153.

96APR14 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS BIGHORN. TRANSIT STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR IN EVENING.

96APR15-17 FIVE MEDIA PERSONNEL FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS AND WORLD WIDE TELEVISION VISITED AND CONDUCTED INTERVIEWS.

96APR19 ARRIVE ON MAMBA STATION OFF MONROVIA, LIBERIA.

96APR19-09MAY TRENTON PARTICIPATED IN OPERATION ASSURED RESPONSE.

96APR21 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS BIGHORN.

96APR28 STEEL BEACH PICNIC AND MID DEPLOYMENT TALENT SHOW CONDUCTED OFF THE COAST OF LIBERIA.

96MAY01 COMMODORE WILLIAM YOUNG, COMMANDER, AMPHIBIOUS SQUADRON TWO, VISITED SHIP.

96MAY03 ECHO COMPANY FROM BATTALION LANDING TEAM DEBARKS FOR SECURITY DUTY AT U.S. EMBASSY IN MONROVIA, LIBERIA.

96MAY05 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS BIGHORN.

96MAY08 ECHO COMPANY RETURNS TO SHIP.

96MAY09 TRENTON DEPARTS MAMBA STATION, ENROUTE TO TARRAGONA, SPAIN FOR EXERCISE MATADOR WITH USS TORTUGA.

96MAY14 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS BIGHORN. TRANSITED STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR IN THE EVENING.

96MAY16 MOORED, TARRAGONA, SPAIN. OFFLOADED EMBARKED MARINES FOR EXERCISE MATADOR (16-25 MAY).

96MAY17 UNDERWAY FROM TARRAGONA, SPAIN FOR THE MIDCYCLE ASSESSMENT.

96MAY18-20 TRENTON CONDUCTED ENGINEERING MID CYCLE ASSESSMENT.

96MAY20 TRENTON CONDUCTED MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR ADM MIKE BOORDA.

96MAY21-23 PORT VISIT, PALMA DE MALLORCA, SPAIN.

96MAY23 UNDERWAY FROM PALMA DE MALLORCA, SPAIN ENROUTE TO TARRAGONA.

96MAY24-26 MOORED, TARRAGONA, SPAIN FOR BACKLOAD OF EMBARKED MARINES. CHAPLAIN MOON CONDUCTS COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROJECT.

96MAY26 REFUELING AT SEA WITH USS MERRIMACK, REPLENISHMENT AT SEA WITH USNS SAN DIEGO.

96MAY27-31 PORT VISIT, CANNES, FRANCE.

96MAY29 TRENTON EMBARKS 40 MIDSHIPMEN FOR 1 MONTH SUMMER TOUR.

96MAY30 TRENTON OFFICERS AND CREW ATTEND COCKTAIL PARTY SPONSORED BY DEPUTY MAYOR OF CANNES AT VILLA DOMERGUE.

96MAY31 TRENTON UNDERWAY, ENROUTE TO RHODES, GREECE.

96JUN01 TRANSIT STRAITS OF MESSINA ENROUTE TO RHODES, GREECE.

96JUN02 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS BIGHORN.

96JUN04-10 PORT VISIT, RHODES, GREECE.

96JUN05 COMMANDING OFFICER VISITED DEPUTY MAYOR OF RHODES, COMMANDER OF NATIONAL GUARDS, AND HARBOUR MASTER.

96JUN10 CAPT P. SOWA, ACTING COMMANDER, AMPHIBIOUS TASK FORCE FOR EXERCISE ALEXANDER THE GREAT EMBARKED TRENTON ALONG WITH CTF SIX ONE DET ALFA STAFF FROM USS GUAM.

96JUN11 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS BIGHORN. 2 MH-53 HELICOPTERS FROM HC4, SIGONELLA, EMBARK TRENTON.

96JUN12-20 EXERCISE ALEXANDER THE GREAT AT VOLOS BAY, GREECE.

96JUN21 TRENTON DEPARTS VOLOS BAY ENROUTE TO CORFU, GREECE.

96JUN23-27 PORT VISIT, CORFU, GREECE.

96JUN27 DEPART CORFU, ENROUTE TO BRINDISI, ITALY. MOORED IN BRINDISI IN EVENING.

96JUN28 OFFLOAD ONE MH-53 HELICOPTER BY CRANE. DEPART BRINDISI ENROUTE TO LISBON, PORTUGAL. UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USS MERRIMACK.

96JUL01 TRANSIT STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR.

96JUL02-07 PORT VISIT, LISBON, PORTUGAL WITH USS GUAM.

96JUL04 4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION CONDUCTED BY USS GUAM.

96JUL07 DEPART LISBON ENROUTE TO ROTA, SPAIN.

96JUL08-12 PORT VISIT, ROTA SPAIN AND WASHDOWN OF MARINE EQUIPMENT.

96JUL12 TURNOVER WITH SAIPAN MARG. USS AUSTIN (LPD-4) IS TRENTON'S RELIEF. DEPARTED ROTA ENROUTE TO MOREHEAD CITY, NC.

96JUL17 RADM GIFFIN, COMMANDER, GEORGE WASHINGTON BATTLE GROUP, VISITED SHIP.

96JUL18 REFUELING AT SEA WITH USS MERRIMACK.

96JUL22 ARRIVE MOREHEAD CITY, NC. DEBARK MARINES.

96JUL23 DEPARTED MOREHEAD CITY, NC FOR NORFOLK, VA.
EMBARK TIGERS FOR TIGER CRUISE VIA WELL DECK
IN LANDING CRAFT UTILITY (LCU-1656).

96JUL24 RETURN TO NORFOLK FROM 6 MONTH DEPLOYMENT.

96AUG26-29 FLIGHT OPERATIONS OFF VIRGINIA CAPES.

96AUG28 BURIAL AT SEA OF CASKETED REMAINS OF EO2 JAMES
NALLY.

96AUG30 ANCHOR, LYNNHAVEN ANCHORAGE FOR EMBARK OF
DEPENDENTS VIA THE WELL DECK IN AN LCU FOR
DEPENDENT'S DAY CRUISE.

96AUG30 RETURN TO PORT.

96SEP03-07 AMMUNITION CROSS-DECK AT NORFOLK NAVAL BASE WITH
USS NASHVILLE.

96SEP09 DEPART NORFOLK FOR CAPE MORICHES, LONG ISLAND, NY.

96SEP09 TWO CH-46 HELICOPTERS FROM HELO COMBAT SUPPORT
SQUADRON (HC-6) FROM NAVAL AIR STATION NORFOLK
ARRIVE ON TRENTON.

96SEP10 ARRIVED OFF CAPE MORICHES FOR TWA FLT 800 RECOVERY
OPERATION; TURNOVER HELD WITH USS OAK HILL
(LSD-51). ASSUMED DUTIES AS FLAGSHIP FOR
COMMANDER, LOGISTICS GROUP TWO, IN CHARGE OF
SALVAGE OPERATION.

96SEP14 ARRIVED AT STAPLETON PIER, STATEN ISLAND, FOR A
PORT VISIT.

96SEP14 REFUELED PIERSIDE, NEW YORK CITY.

96SEP15 DEPARTED NEW YORK CITY FOR CAPE MORICHES FOR
SALVAGE OPERATION.

96SEP23-26 ENGINEERING TRAINING GROUP PLOT I INSPECTION.

96OCT12 RETURN TO NEW YORK CITY FOR PIERSIDE REFUELING.

96OCT12 DEPARTED NEW YORK CITY FOR CAPE MORICHES FOR
SALVAGE OPERATION.

96OCT13 NAVY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION.

96OCT18 WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF
FLIGHT 800.

96OCT18 DEPARTED CAPE MORICHES, NY FOR RETURN TO NORFOLK,
VA.

96OCT19 RETURN TO HOME PORT.

96OCT28-29 FUEL OFFLOAD, CRANEY ISLAND FUEL DEPOT.

96OCT30- ENTERED NORSHIPCO SHIPYARDS, NORFOLK, VA
96DEC31

96DEC02-06 ENGINEERING TRAINING GROUP PLOT II INSPECTION.

96DEC11 TRENTON FAMILY CHRISTMAS AT PAVILION TOWERS RESORT
HOTEL, VIRGINIA BEACH, VA.

COMMAND NARRATIVE 1996

January was a very busy month for TRENTON. Work continued at a feverish pace as the crew made final preparations for the six month voyage. On the 18th, TRENTON got underway to ensure the Engineering Plant was fully operational. On the 24th, ADM Boorda, Chief of Naval Operations, and RADM H. C. Giffin, Commander, GEORGE WASHINGTON Battle Group, came by to wish the officers and crew a happy and safe deployment. TRENTON departed Norfolk on the 26th of January, embarking SEAL Team 8 and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit TWO personnel, and sailed in company with the USS GUAM (LPH-9), USS TORTUGA (LSD-46) and USS PORTLAND (LSD-37) to Morehead City, NC, where they embarked the Marines of MEU (SOC) TWO TWO. TRENTON received about 500 Marines from MSSG-22, Echo Company of Battalion Landing Team, and Second Force Reconnaissance. TRENTON departed Morehead City on the 28th, sailing West towards the Mediterranean Sea.

During the trans-Atlantic crossing, TRENTON achieved a milestone, conducting her 40,000th safe helicopter landing. The helicopter was piloted by Captain Joe Kringler, USMC, co-piloted by Major Bill Walsh, USMC, Aircraft Commander, and cleared for landing by TRENTON's Air Boss, LT Woody Snyder. ABH3 Jason Leboeuf skillfully guided the CH-53 "Super Stallion" to a perfect landing on Spot Two. The accomplishment was performed while conducting Night Deck Landing Qualifications (DLQ's) with a CH-53E from Air Combat Element HMM-162 stationed on USS GUAM (LPH-9).

On the 6th of February, CAPT William Young, Commander, Amphibious Squadron TWO visited the ship to address the upcoming operation. TRENTON passed through the Straits of Gibraltar on the morning of 8 February and participated in the turnover on board USS GUAM on the 11th. Due to the need for the MARG to be on station in the Adriatic Sea, the turnover actually occurred underway. TRENTON arrived on station on the 12th of February and participated in Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR until the 6th of March. TRENTON was host to one media visit during the exercise. On March 6th, Mr. Gasperini, a CBS Radio Correspondent stationed in Moscow, came on board for a two day visit to observe Amphibious Operations, and conduct interviews in conjunction with Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. The 6th of March also marked TRENTON's 25th

Birthday, having been commissioned on 06 March 1971. A special ceremony was conducted on the mess decks with the Commanding Officer, CDR R. W. Zaperach, providing a lesson on the history of the current TRENTON and her two predecessors. TRENTON was also detached on the 6th of March to conduct her first port visit in Genoa, Italy, from 8-12 March.

Genoa provided the crew its first taste of the European culture. On the 12th of March, TRENTON got underway to conduct both cold weather training for her Marines in Albania and Exercise DESTINED GLORY 96, a combined NATO Amphibious Exercise that occurred 14-26 March 1996 at Capo Teulado, Sardinia. All four ships of the GUAM MARG participated with ships from Italy, Spain, Turkey, and Greece. During the exercise, TRENTON was host to three Flag Officers. General Charles E. Wilhelm, Commander, Marine Forces Atlantic, visited on the 15th of March; VADM Donald Pilling, Commander in Chief, SIXTH Fleet, and Commander, Strike Force South, visited on the 21st; and ADM William Flanagan, Commander in Chief, U. S. Atlantic Fleet, visited on the 23rd of March. Each Flag Officer commended the Navy-Marine Corps Team on their excellent preparations for the deployment, participation in Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR, and encouraged the team to maintain the highest state of readiness as the possibility of a future crisis still existed.

On the 27th of March, USS TRENTON arrived in Naples, Italy with USS PORTLAND (LSD-37) to conduct her second port visit and a ten day Intermediate Maintenance Availability (IMAV) until the 8th of April. On the 6th of April, the Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Committee for the TRENTON sponsored a highly successful command picnic, held at Carney Park, an extinct volcano just outside Naples. Also during the Naples visit, TRENTON was host to a second media event. Fox TV from Miami, along with reporters from Boston, Massachusetts, Manchester, New Hampshire, and The Defense Daily, spent the morning of the 7th of April observing TRENTON's Chaplain Richard Moon conduct an Easter Sunrise Service which was attended by crew members of TRENTON, USS PORTLAND (LSD-37), and USS SIMPSON (FFG-56). After the brief IMAV in Naples, TRENTON got underway on the 8th heading East for her next exercise, Exercise NOBLE SHIRLEY in Israel. After transitting through the Straits of Messina with the USS PORTLAND, TRENTON and PORTLAND received new sailing orders: proceed Westward at top speed; destination Monrovia, Liberia. Civil unrest had led to looting and a civil war in the country, and U. S. and foreign nationals were seeking help from the U. S. Embassy. On the 13th

of April, TRENTON embarked four CH-46 and two MH-53 helicopters for Operation ASSURED RESPONSE and transited the Straits of Gibraltar on the 14th, refueling underway with USNS BIGHORN (TAO 198). On the 15th, 5 media personnel from Associated Press and World Wide Television Network came on board for a two day visit as TRENTON steamed southward toward Liberia.

TRENTON and PORTLAND arrived on Mamba Station on the 19th of April, rendezvousing with USS GUAM, and participated in Operation ASSURED RESPONSE until the 9th of May. On the 28th of April, TRENTON held a special "steel beach picnic" and talent show in conjunction with the midpoint of the deployment. Commodore Young revisited the ship on the 1st of May to discuss future plans for TRENTON. During the last week of her participation in Operation ASSURED RESPONSE, TRENTON's ECHO Company of the Marine Battalion Landing Team went ashore to provide security for the American Embassy. After recovering ECHO Company, TRENTON was detached on 09 May to join USS TORTUGA (LSD 46) in the Mediterranean Sea to conduct their second exercise of the deployment, Exercise MATADOR 96. TRENTON offloaded her Marines on the 16th in Tarragona, Spain, and proceeded to Palma de Mallorca for her third port visit. Prior to entering port, TRENTON conducted a highly successful Engineering Mid Cycle Assessment as well as a memorial service for Admiral Boorda.

TRENTON visited Palma, a Spanish Island, from 21-23 May. TRENTON's sailors enjoyed visiting Magalluf, one of the most popular European resorts. TRENTON headed back to Tarragona on the 24th to backload her Marines. While the Marines were back loading, Chaplain Moon conducted the first of two community relation projects. Twelve TRENTON sailors performed maintenance and restoration work on a handicapped home located in Tarragona. TRENTON got underway on the 26th of May enroute to her next port visit, Cannes, France, from 27-31 May. TRENTON spent four fabulous days in Cannes, the picturesque resort where the International Film Festival is annually held. TRENTON's officers and crew were hosted to a very special event at City Hall on the 28th of May sponsored by the Deputy Mayor of Cannes, Ambassador De Launey, and the Military Attaché, Colonel Lasseys. The officers and crew then enjoyed a special banquet hosted by Ambassador de Launey at Villa Domergue on the last evening of the port visit. Chaplain Moon also conducted his second community relation project during this port visit. Twelve Sailors traveled to Petites Souers des Pauvres Ma Maison, a home for elderly poor and operated by the local nuns.

TRENTON departed Cannes on the 31st and headed East for her third and final exercise. She transited the Straits of Messina on the 1st of June and arrived at her fifth port visit on the 4th of June. TRENTON visited beautiful Rhodes, Greece from 04 to 10 June. TRENTON Sailors and Marines were treated to beautiful resort beaches and enjoyed great shopping and food in the 2400 year old castle located in old town. During the port visit, CDR Zaperach visited the Deputy Mayor, Mr. Alaveras, Commander of the National Guards, General Petinis, and the Harbour Master, Captain Kirlakitsis. TRENTON in return hosted a special tour for the local Greek Officers stationed in Rhodes. Brig. General Theodorakopoulos, Colonel Kritikos, and 8 other officers toured the ship.

TRENTON's third and final exercise was Exercise ALEXANDER THE GREAT 96, and was conducted with USS TORTUGA and the Greek military from 10-20 June in Volos Bay, Greece. This exercise afforded the opportunity for the Navy-Marine Corps team to conduct combined military operations with our NATO ally Greece. For this exercise, TRENTON served as the flagship, embarking both the Commander, Amphibious Task Force (CATF) and his staff (CTF SIX ONE DET ALFA from USS GUAM) on the 10th and Commander, Landing Forces (CLF) Staff on the 15th. TRENTON also embarked 2 MH-53's and their crews for the exercise. Rounding off the guest list was approximately 40 Midshipmen who came on board for their summer cruise, embarking the TRENTON on the 29th of May. During the exercise, Brig. General Gletzes, Commanding General, 32nd Marine Force Brigade, Brig. General Panayotopoulos, Commander, 6th Support Brigade, and Colonel Tournavitis, Deputy Commander, 32nd Marine Force Brigade (CLF for the exercise) were hosted by TRENTON and the CATF, Captain Phillip Sowa, to a special luncheon on board on the 14th of June. Upon completion of the exercise, the CATF and CLF Staffs departed and TRENTON headed for her next port visit.

TRENTON visited the Greek Island of Corfu from 23 to 27 June. Corfu again provided TRENTON Sailors and Marines with wonderful shopping and a lively night life. After her visits in Greece, TRENTON headed West to join up with USS GUAM to conduct the final deployment port visit in Lisbon, Portugal. TRENTON transited the Straits of Gibraltar for the final time this deployment on the 1st of July, and arrived in Lisbon on 02 July. TRENTON Sailors and Marines enjoyed a special 4th of July celebration coordinated by USS GUAM and the American Embassy. TRENTON got underway on the 7th

of July and arrived in Rota, Spain for the 08 to 12 July turnover with the next MARG. While in Rota, TRENTON made preparations for her journey home, conducted a wash down of all Marine vehicles and completed an agricultural inspection. On July 12, TRENTON completed her turnover with the USS SAIPAN MARG and commenced her voyage home. RADM Giffin, Commander, GEORGE WASHINGTON Battle Group, visited TRENTON on the 17th of July and RADM Fladd, Commander, Amphibious Group TWO, flew out to TRENTON via helicopter on the 19th of July, welcoming the entire crew back home. TRENTON reached Morehead City on the 22nd of July and offloaded her Marines. On 23 July, TRENTON got underway and embarked approximately 100 dependents via a Landing Craft Utility (LCU) for the traditional "Tiger cruise." TRENTON arrived at Norfolk Naval Base on the 24th of July to a very warm welcome by the crew's families and started her post deployment IMAV.

The month of August would be the only rest the crew of the TRENTON would receive this year. From 26-29 August, TRENTON conducted flight operations off the coast of the Virginia Capes, conducting a total of 272 successful landings. During these operations, TRENTON conducted a burial at sea of EO2 James Nally. Chaplain Moon's ceremony was very moving as the entire crew attended. On the return to Norfolk on 30 August, TRENTON conducted a highly successful Dependent's Day Cruise, embarking the dependents by LCU via the well deck while anchored at Lynnhaven Anchorage. The one day cruise was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

In the first week of September, TRENTON received word that she was needed in New York to relieve USS OAK HILL (LSD-51) as the command ship in the recovery of TWA Flight 800 which had tragically crashed the evening of 17 July 1996. TRENTON departed Norfolk September 9th, embarking two CH-46 helicopters and their crew from Helo Support Squadron SIX (HC-6). TRENTON arrived off Cape Moriches, Long Island the following morning and conducted a turnover with USS OAK HILL (LSD-51), who had been the command ship for the first 6 weeks of the operation.

As the command ship for the recovery of TWA Flight 800, TRENTON was host to Navy divers, FBI and National Transportation Safety Board personnel, affording them with comfortable accommodations. On multiple occasions, TRENTON hosted Admiral Christiansen, Commander, Logistics Group TWO. Each day for 6 weeks, TRENTON conducted multiple flight and small boat operations, working side-by-side the USS GRAPPLE in the recovery.

The mission of TRENTON's two CH-46 helicopters was wide and varied, transporting wreckage debris from the crash site to the Calverton hangar, VIP runs for press conferences, supplies, passengers and mail runs from shore to the TRENTON, and conducting medical evacuation of personnel as required. TRENTON conducted 405 successful flight landings during the operation. In addition, every day, two Landing Craft (LCM-8's) from Assault Craft Unit TWO departed the TRENTON's well deck to deliver on-coming divers, passengers and supplies to the GRAPPLE, and to collect off-going divers and wreckage. Debris was transported to a hangar at Calverton, Long Island, where Flight 800 was being meticulously pieced together in an attempt to ascertain what led to her demise.

TRENTON had two port visits during the operation, visiting New York City 14-15 September while evading Hurricane Eduardo and again on 12 October for fuel. Also during the operation, TRENTON underwent a successful Engineering Training Group (ETG) Plot I Inspection from 23-26 September. Prior to departing Long Island on October 18th, Chaplain Thomas Webber conducted a wreath-laying ceremony off the Flight Deck in memory of the 230 passengers who perished with TWA Flight 800.

TRENTON returned to homeport October 19th, receiving a hero's welcome from family, friends, and media. But, there was still plenty of work to be done. TRENTON proceeded to Craney Island Fuel Depot on 28 October to offload all of her fuel. TRENTON entered the Norfolk Shipbuilding and Drydock Company Shipyard on October 30th for repairs and remained in the shipyards throughout the rest of the calendar year. During this period, TRENTON was modified to accommodate the Navy's Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) which will ensure TRENTON's suitability for modern amphibious operations well into the next century.