



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS VANDEGRIFT (FFG-48)
FLEET POST OFFICE
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From: Commanding Officer, USS VANDEGRIFT (FFG-48)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (N09BH) (Charles T. Creekman Jr.)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR 1996

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl (1) 1996 VANDEGRIFT COMMAND HISTORY

1. Per reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded.
2. Please contact SK3 (SW) Jason W. Endress, PAO, at (619) 556-3934 if you have any questions.


D. S. ARMSTRONG

USS VANDEGRIFT 1996 COMMAND HISTORY

Part I

The mission of USS VANDEGRIFT (FFG-48) is "To provide self defense and effectively supplement planned and existing escorts in the protection of underway replenishment groups, amphibious forces and military and mercantile shipping against subsurface, air and surface threats; to conduct ASW operations in conjunction with other control forces tasked to ensure our use of essential sea lanes of communications; and be the best at it." From 01 January to 04 November 1996, VANDEGRIFT was commanded by CDR Joseph A. Corsi. From 05 November to 31 December 1996, VANDEGRIFT was commanded by CDR David S. Armstrong. VANDEGRIFT was homeported in San Diego, CA and was under the administrative command of Commander, Destroyer Squadron Two-Three, "The Little Beavers".

Part II

The following events occurred during 1996.

Date:	Event:
01-09 Jan	Holiday leave periods end, preps for underway
10 Jan	U/W Seal Beach
11 Jan	Ammo onload, U/W NAVSTA San Diego, Ca
16 Jan-02 Feb	TSTA II
22 Jan-26 Jan	U/W SOCAL TSTA II
29 Jan-02 Feb	U/W SOCAL TSTA II
12-16 Feb	U/W SOCAL TSTA III
16-18 Feb	Visit ship (Broadway Pier)
19 Feb	U/W NAVSTA San Diego, Ca
25 Feb	GENERAL QUARTERS!!! USNS YANO breaks mooring lines causing hull damage to AMR 3, CCS, and COC areas;
26-28 Feb	Final Evaluation Period (FEP) conducted pierside as Fast Cruise
17-21 Mar	U/W PACNORWEST
21 Mar	Missilex 96-5
21-26 Mar	U/W SOCAL
21-23 Mar	IERA
24-26 Mar	Mini-MEFEX Phase II (SOCAL OPAREA)
26-29 Mar	Deperming at SUBBASE Pt. Loma, Ca
29 Mar	U/W NAVSTA San Diego, Ca
01-09 Apr	CSRR (Inport)
05 Apr	U/W SOCAL for CSRR
02 Apr-09 May	IMAV
08-12 Apr	CSOSS Implementation
08-12 Apr	LMA
12 Apr-06 May	Pre-Deployment Leave
01 May	FCC Dunlop Commissioning Ceremony
01 May	Ship's Picnic
07 May	Fast Cruise

07-8 May		Industrial Hygiene Survey
09 May		BSA North Island
10 May		Dependent's Day Cruise
13 May		Commence WESTPAC '96
13-19 May		U/W Pearl Harbor, HI
13-19 May		Operations with USS ANTIETAM and USS REID
19-21 May		I/P Pearl Harbor, HI
20 May		Replace 76 mm Barrel
22 May-03 Jun	Jun	U/W Hong Kong
03-07 Jun		I/P Hong Kong
08-12 Jun		U/W Lumut, Malaysia
13-17 Jun		I/P Lumut, Malaysia
18-24 Jun		U/W Karachi, Pakistan
24-27 Jun		Exercise Inspired Siren with Pakistan
25-27 Jun		I/P Karachi, Pakistan
28 Jun-03 Jul	Jul	U/W Bahrain
04-07 Jul		I/P Bahrain, MMS onload
08 Jul-02 Aug	Aug	U/W in the Arabian Gulf conducting MIO and MPS MODLOC protection
25-29 Jul		XO Turnover
03-07 Aug		Exercise Red Reef with Saudi Arabian Navy
08-15 Aug		U/W MPS MODLOC protection
17-23 Aug		I/P Bahrain, SRU Availability
22 Aug		Ship's picnic ASU Bahrain
24 Aug-07 Sep	Sep	U/W SAG/CAG
29 Aug		Escort MPS through SOH
30 Aug		Return through SOH
01 Sep		RDVZ with ARG for SOH transit. ARG extended/transit delayed UFN.
01-04 Sep		ARG protection in CVOA 2
05-07 Sep		MIO
07-16 Sep		Exercise Neon Falcon with Bahrain Navy, USS LABOON, and HMS Edinburgh
17-26 Sep		U/W MIO, Plane Guard Operations
22 Sep		Combined VINSON/ENTERPRISE Battle Group PHOTOEX
24-27 Sep		Escorting USS ARDENT and USS DEXTROUS
26 Sep		SOH transit
01 Oct		Outchop to Seventh Fleet
04 Oct		Shellback Ceremony
04 Oct		Swim call
12-16 Oct		Albany, Australia
17-21 Oct		U/W Enroute Sydney, Australia
22-24 Oct		Sydney, Australia
25-30 Oct		U/W Fiji
30 Oct		I/P Suva, Fiji (BSF) for fueling and PAX onload
30 Oct-5 Nov		U/W Pearl Harbor, HI
31 Oct-04 Nov		PCO turnover
05 Nov		Change of Command (U/W)
05-06 Nov		I/P Pearl Harbor, HI
07-13 Nov		U/W San Diego, Ca

07-13 Nov	Tiger Cruise
13 Nov	Homecoming San Diego, Ca
13 Nov-11 Dec	Post Deployment Standdown
25 Nov-13 Dec	SIMA I/FVME Availability
17 Dec-31 Dec	Holiday Leave and Upkeep Period

PART III

- 01 Jan-18 Feb When the crew of VANDEGRIFT returned to the ship from holiday leave and upkeep, they were welcomed with one of the busiest portions of the deployment training cycle. After a short trip to Seal Beach for weapons onload, the ship returned to San Diego for Tailored Ship Training Availability (TSTA) II and TSTA III. It was during these assessment periods that VANDEGRIFT began to show her true colors. The ship continuously demonstrated her readiness by the superior Final Evaluation Period (FEP) level training. The crew finished off their underway time by returning to Broadway Pier in downtown San Diego for a weekend of visit ship, allowing civilians to see one of the finest ships in the harbor.
- 19-25 Feb After a weekend on display downtown, VANDEGRIFT was underway for a short period to move to Pier 1 NAVSTA, the next week being the last chance for training prior to FEP. The night before FEP the weather was rough. High winds caused the USNS YANO, a Ro-Ro moored at NASSCO, to part all lines except number six. The large cargo ship swung out in the wind and into VANDEGRIFT and USS TISDALE, also moored at Pier 1. This caused considerable damage to VANDEGRIFT.
- 26-28 Feb The examining team waived the requirement to get underway, so long as VANDEGRIFT simulate being underway. For the next three days lookouts were reporting contacts driving over Coronado Bridge, the bridge and Combat Information Center were manned, and the ship was at MOPP II requiring all hands to carry gas masks. After all of the drills, combat systems evaluations, and engineering evolutions, VANDEGRIFT was given a final grade of excellent with the evaluators commenting on how they and the crew seemed to think they were really underway.
- 29 Feb-21 Mar After FEP the ship was scheduled to participate in training with the CARL VINSON battle group as part of the Middle East Forces Exercise (MEFEX), however, despite three ten hour shifts a day by NASSCO workers repairing the hull damage, VANDEGRIFT was unable to get underway. This proved to be the only time in 1996 that VANDEGRIFT was unable to meet an operational commitment. Two days after repairs were completed, VANDEGRIFT took in all lines and headed for PACNORWEST. Once off the coast of Oregon and Washington, the crew once again showed their expertise as VANDEGRIFT

operated with USS ARKANSAS, USS CALIFORNIA and USS CAMDEN in a training exercise. This exercise included U.S. Air Force aircraft for a missile shoot. The aircraft were used for air target engagement training while drones were launched for actual missile firing. VANDEGRIFT's Combat Systems department had the best missile shot of the three guided missile ships, with a positive kill while the other ships' missiles were all evaluated as ineffective.

22-29 Mar

Once the missile shoot was completed, VANDEGRIFT turned back toward San Diego, but not for an idle cruise. Members of DESRON 23 were onboard for an ISIC Engineering Readiness Assessment (IERA). Throughout the return trip the engineers showed their ability to handle engineering casualties and Main Space Fires. Upon return to SOCAL, VANDEGRIFT did not pull in to port immediately. She dropped off the IERA team and picked up riders for a two day MEFEX. When the ship finally returned to port, it was for four days of hard work at the deperming pier at SUBBASE Pt. Loma, where the crew showed their determination and hard work by completing deperming preparations faster than the magnetic silencing facility had ever seen. Upon completion, VANDEGRIFT returned to Pier 4 for the short period remaining until WESTPAC.

30 Mar-06 May

The final weeks before deployment were filled with Supply department's LMA, Combat System's CSRR and CSOSS implementation, and an IMA availability. The crew had a few chances during this time to relax, most notable being the commissioning ceremony of FCC Dunlop and the subsequent ship's picnic.

07-12 May

Just prior to deployment VANDEGRIFT was busy with a fast cruise, weapons onload at North Island, and the Dependent's Day Cruise. The Dependent's Day Cruise was special, not only because the families of the crew were along for the ride, but also residents of Solana Beach, VANDEGRIFT's sponsor city.

13 May-03 Jun

On the morning of Monday, 13 May 1996, VANDEGRIFT took in all lines and began her six month deployment to the Arabian Gulf. On the first legs of this trip, the crew was constantly training. On the way to Hawaii, USS ANTIETAM and USS RIED were in company and the schedule of events was full. In Pearl Harbor, VANDEGRIFT met with another ship of her SAG, USS RUSSELL, and

continued on after a brief stop for fuel, stores, and a barrel for the 76 mm gun.

03 Jun-03 Jul The first week of June VANDEGRIFT and RUSSELL pulled in to Hong Kong. The crews were given a few days of rest at their first liberty port. Following this brief stop the ships headed toward the Straits of Malacca where they split up with VANDEGRIFT visiting Lumut, Malaysia and RUSSELL pulling in to Phuket, Thailand. While in Lumut the crew experienced the hospitality of the Malaysians while the ship received some minor voyage repairs from the local shipyard. On the morning VANDEGRIFT got underway CDR Corsi proudly frocked the newly advanced E-4's through E-6's and announced three CAP selectees EN1 Meyer, BM2 Lopez and GSM2 Cabrera. Once underway the mood started getting a bit more serious as, prior to pulling in to Karachi, VANDEGRIFT crossed in to the Fifth Fleet area and an increased defense posture. This did not, however, adversely affect the highly successful exercise Inspired Siren. The exercise was part of an ongoing joint exercise to continue improving relations in the area. Upon completion it was clear that VANDEGRIFT's crew was capable of professionalism under any circumstances.

04 Jul-01 Oct Upon entering the Arabian Gulf VANDEGRIFT continually proved her ability to get the job done. Starting with getting underway early to relieve another ship that was non-mission capable, and continuing until exiting the Gulf in September, VANDEGRIFT showed the flexibility, determination and resourcefulness that seem to have characterized 1996. On several occasions the crew was given as little as thirty minutes notice of tasking changes to conduct Maritime Interception Operations in the North Arabian Gulf, MPS protection in the Southern Arabian Gulf, Amphibious Readiness Group Escort, or plane guard with USS CARL VINSON. Throughout the entire time in the Gulf, VANDEGRIFT never missed an operational commitment and even filled those of other ships. For continued foreign relations, the crew participated in exercises Red Reef and Neon Falcon with the Saudi Arabian and Bahraini navies, respectively. While underway the ship welcomed aboard a new executive officer, LCDR Clay Sellers, and bid farewell to LCDR John Mehki. At 0501 on the morning of 01 OCT, VANDEGRIFT left the Fifth Fleet area.

01-30 Oct The month of October was a welcome chance to

relax. VANDEGRIFT was now on her way to Australia. On 04 OCT there were 74 new Shellbacks initiated and VANDEGRIFT's only swim call for WESTPAC '96. On 12 OCT 1996, VANDEGRIFT's crew finally reached their well deserved reward, Australia. In their two port visits of Albany and Sydney, Australia, the crew had a chance to see some beautiful sights and experience amazing things ranging from waters off the coast of Australia to holding a koala and petting kangaroos. Once two port visits in Australia were finished, VANDEGRIFT headed for Suva, Fiji and one more major change before the end of 1996.

31 Oct-12 Nov For the next week CDR J.A. Corsi introduced CDR David Armstrong, his relief, to VANDEGRIFT. On 05 Nov, prior to arriving in Pearl Harbor, CDR Armstrong assumed command during an underway Change of Command ceremony. CDR Corsi left soon after arrival in Hawaii, headed for shore duty in San Diego. Before leaving Pearl Harbor, VANDEGRIFT welcomed aboard some temporary additions to the crew -- TIGERS. For the next week family and friends of crew members would learn a little of what it meant to be on deployment on one of the finest ships in the fleet.

13 Nov On the morning of Wednesday, 13 November 1996, VANDEGRIFT returned to her home port of San Diego amid the cheers and tears of family and friends. Another deployment was over with everyone returning safe.

13 Nov-31 Dec The remainder of 1996 was the final reward for the crew of VANDEGRIFT, with all but three weeks being spent in post deployment and holiday leave periods. It was a needed time to regroup and prepare for the next work up cycle which had already begun.