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NAVY NEWS

HOLD FOR RELEASE UNTIL 11:00 AM E.S.T.,
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1998

Date: 01 December 98
Contact: MMCM(SW/SS)

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USS MERRIMACK DECOMMISSIONS

The U. S. Atlantic Fleet will bid farewell to USS *Merrimack* (AO-179) in a decommissioning ceremony to be held at 11:00 a.m., December 18, 1998 at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. *Merrimack's* decommissioning crew of 156 service members and their guests will assemble aboard the Cimarron class oiler to pay tribute to her 17 years of faithful service providing logistics support for forward deployed U. S. forces and NATO allies.

Merrimack, the fourth U. S. Navy ship to bear the name, was launched on May 17, 1980 at Avondale Shipyard in Avondale, Louisiana, and was commissioned in New Orleans on November 14, 1981. Her mission included the transportation of bulk petroleum products, fleet freight, mail and personnel from shore depots to combatants

and support forces afloat. In 1990, *Merrimack* was the first of the Cimarron class oilers to undergo a process called "jumboization", which added 108 feet to her midsection, increasing her cargo fuel capacity and transshipment capability.

Merrimack's nearly two decades of service to the fleet included seven deployments to the North Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea, with visits to the Eastern Pacific and Arabian Gulf. *Merrimack* played a vital role in numerous NATO exercises and took part in peacekeeping efforts in Lebanon, the Middle East, and Bosnia. In 1993, she responded swiftly when called upon to provide logistics support to units participating in Operation Restore Democracy off the coast of Haiti, and while deployed to the Red Sea in 1994, *Merrimack* demonstrated her versatility when she became the first fleet oiler to participate in the Multi-National Red Sea Maritime Intercept Force. Her boarding team boarded and searched ten merchant vessels in support of the Desert Storm cease-fire campaign. *Merrimack's* seventh and final deployment to the Mediterranean Sea saw her steaming in the Adriatic Sea where she refueled the USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* Battle Group in support of Operation Deliberate Forge.

During her 17-year career, *Merrimack* conducted over 1,400 underway replenishments with ships operating world-wide, distributing over 200 million gallons of diesel fuel marine and jet fuel as well as 15 thousand pallets of cargo and ammunition via connected and vertical replenishment. *Merrimack's* pride in service and pride in self earned her the competitive Battle Efficiency Award from 1986 through 1988, and again in 1997. She was the runner-up for the 1983 Ney Award and was the recipient of the Chief of Naval Operations Safety Award in 1993 and 1997. *Merrimack* has also been awarded a

Presidential Unit Citation, Meritorious Unit Citation, the Navy Expeditionary and Southwest Asia Service medals, and the United States Coast Guard Law Enforcement Operations ribbon. *Merrimack's* tireless dedication to service and significant contributions to the Navy's combat logistics force have secured her an important place in history.

Merrimack will be the first of the Cimarron class oilers stationed on the East Coast to retire from service, with the others scheduled to decommission by the year 2000. She will be transferred to the Inactive Reserve Fleet upon decommissioning. The ceremony honoring her outstanding career will include remarks by distinguished guests Vice Admiral and Mrs. Griffiths, who commissioned *Merrimack* in 1981, retired Captain Steven Mondul, *Merrimack's* first Commanding Officer, and Captain James Graham, Commander of Combat Logistics Group Two, with concluding remarks by Commanding Officer, Commander Garrat Cooper.



COMMANDER NAVAL SURFACE FORCE
U.S. ATLANTIC FLEET

18 December 1998

Dear Commander Cooper,

On the occasion of the decommissioning of USS MERRIMACK, please convey to your fine crew and former crewmembers in attendance a well-earned salute from the Atlantic Fleet Naval Surface Force. MERRIMACK has served our Navy and nation with distinction for 17 years.

A decommissioning can be a sad time for shipmates as they reminisce over their ship's contribution to naval service. MERRIMACK, however, will live on in spirit... a spirit that will allow crewmembers to continue to serve our Navy with the same devotion whether it is in other vessels of our fleet or in challenging billets ashore.

To those who have served in MERRIMACK belongs the credit of true and faithful service that established the proud reputation of this superb fleet oiler. All the best!

Well done!
→

Warmest regards,

HENRY C. GIFFIN III
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy

Commander Garrat E. Cooper, USN
Commanding Officer
USS MERRIMACK (AO 179)
FPO AE 09578-3020

Naval Surface Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet

News Release

Norfolk, Va. 23511-5215 (757) 836-3141/3142

For immediate release
Release No. 44-98

August 12, 1998

USS MERRIMACK Returns From Deployment

The Norfolk-based oilers USS MERRIMACK (AO 179) returns to Naval Station Norfolk Thursday, August 13, at 11 a.m. after a six month deployment as the Mediterranean oiler.

During the deployment, MERRIMACK steamed over 15,000 miles across the Atlantic, through the western, central and eastern Mediterranean and up into the Adriatic Sea to meet its commitments. The ship fueled ships of the JOHN C. STENNIS Battlegroup, the DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER Battlegroup, the GUAM Amphibious Ready Group and the SAIPAN Amphibious Ready Group. MERRIMACK also refueled several foreign ships from NATO's Standing Naval Force Mediterranean.

-USN-

Note to media: Media interested in covering the arrival of USS MERRIMACK should meet public affairs representatives at Pier 3 at Naval Station Norfolk at 10:30 a.m.

*Rev 0
5/4/98*

USS MERRIMACK (AO-179) COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

1. Roberta Spillane, Commander, United States Navy, Commanding Officer, USS MERRIMACK (AO-179), for the period 01 January-20 June 1997. Garrat E. Cooper, Commander, United States Navy, Commanding Officer, USS MERRIMACK (AO-179), for the period 20 June -31 December 1997.
2. The primary mission of USS MERRIMACK (AO-179) is to conduct underway replenishment operations in support of operating forces by simultaneously providing fuel, lubricants, compressed gases, ammunition, provisions, stores, fleet freight, spare parts, mail, and personnel using both connected replenishment and vertical replenishment methods.
3. USS MERRIMACK (AO-179) is a unit of Commander, Combat Logistics Group TWO.
4. USS MERRIMACK (AO-179) underwent a maintenance availability, performed logistic and other services, and conducted pre-deployment training under the operational control of Commander, Combat Logistics Group TWO from 01 January through 31 December 1997.
5. Aircraft Assigned: None.

USS MERRIMACK (AO-179) NARRATIVE:

USS MERRIMACK started 1997 quietly enough, with her crew enjoying a holiday leave and standown period her Norfolk homeport. However, when that period ended on 06 Jan, MERRIMACK yet again began her busy schedule. The period from 06 to 10 January saw MERRIMACK underway in the Virginia Capes operating areas providing deck landing qualifications for various Norfolk-based helicopter squadrons. The rest of January was spent inport Norfolk conducting engineering training with Engineering Training Group, Norfolk.

February started inport Norfolk, but soon MERRIMACK was underway again. On 04 February, MERRIMACK departed for the Puerto Rico operating areas to provide logistics services. Enroute, she conducted underway replenishments with the cruiser USS NORMANDY (CG-60), the destroyers USS COMPTE DE GRASSE (DD-974) and USS DEYO (DD-979), and the aircraft carrier USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV-67). An evaporator casualty cut MERRIMACK's trip short, however, and she returned to homeport on 09 February.

MERRIMACK spent the next four months in homeport while her fate, decommission or remain in service, stood in the balance. The decommissioning question was settled once and for all when MERRIMACK commenced a much needed repair availability in March in preparation for a newly scheduled March 1998 deployment. During this availability, MERRIMACK successfully completed both PLOT II and III Engineering Training Group visits, a boiler inspection, an aviation certification, and an aviation readiness evaluation.

MERRIMACK finished her availability in June, and went underway from 11 to 13 June for sea trials. The next week was spent underway again providing logistic support and deck landing qualifications for Helicopter Support Squadron Eight from Naval Air Station, Norfolk. The week ended on 20 June with the Change of Command between CDR Roberta Spillane, USN and CDR Garrat E. Cooper, USN.

The next six weeks may have been spent in homeport, but this did not mean that the MERRIMACK was idle. MERRIMACK had no fewer than six major inspections during this period. These inspections included the Logistics Management Assist visit, HORSE (a pre-CART engineering groom), inport Underway Replenishment Ship's Qualification and Testing, CICLANTFLT Field Exam Audit, the Afloat Training Group Atlantic Command Assessed Readiness for Training (CART) Phase II (the official start to MERRIMACK's pre-deployment training cycle), and the Combat Systems Training Group Tailored Ship's Training Availability Phase I.

MERRIMACK next got underway on 04 August for underway Underway Replenishment Ship's Qualification and Testing with the USNS BIG HORN (T-AO-198) acting as assist ship. Upon MERRIMACK's return on 07 August, she played host to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary RFA BRAMBLELEAF until BRAMBLELEAF's departure on 17 August. MERRIMACK was on the move again on 18 August as she provided logistics support for the Orange forces participating in JTFX 97-3 while enroute to Naval Station, Mayport FL. She played host to Helicopter Visit, Board Search and Seizure training for SEAL Team Eight, and refueled the Canadian frigates HMCS CHAROLETTETOWN (F 339), and HMCS TORONTO (F 333), as well as the mine control ship USS INCHON (MCS-12). MERRIMACK arrived in Mayport on 23 August.

After a brief respite in Mayport, MERRIMACK and her crew commenced the Fleet Training Center Tailored Ship's Training Availability Phase I. During this intense two week event, MERRIMACK conducted numerous battle and damage control drills, a CIWS towed target exercise, and UNREPS with the USS DOYLE (FFG-39), USS KIDD (DDG-993), and USS ROBERT G. BRADLEY (FFG-49). MERRIMACK completed her training on 05 September and departed for Norfolk the same day. While enroute, she provided aviation fuel to the USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN-69). MERRIMACK returned to Norfolk on 07 September.

MERRIMACK spent the next month inport Norfolk conducting more inspections and a ship-wide preservation effort. The Engineering Training Group conducted training during the week of 08 September, while the Logistics Management Assessment was conducted the week of 15 September. During this assessment, MERRIMACK earned an average score of 92.2 percent. This was the highest score an AO-class vessel attached to Combat Logistics Group Two had received in the past two years. MERRIMACK also conducted an Environmental Health Survey, performed a steering gear change out to support the deployed USS MONONGAHELA (AO-178), and hosted the RFA FORT VICTORIA during this inport period.

October started with MERRIMACK doing what she does best, conducting underway replenishments. The period of 8-10 October, MERRIMACK conducted logistic services in the Virginia Capes and Atlantic City operating areas, conducting a refueling for the cruiser USS VELLA GULF (CG-72) and a fuel consolidation with the USS SUPPLY (AOE-6). The following week, MERRIMACK conducted an underway Engineering Training Group Tailored Ship Training Availability Phase I. After completing engineering training, MERRIMACK returned to Norfolk, conducted an ammunition onload and unloaded Fleet Information Warfare Center, Atlantic (FIWC) equipment in preparation for COMPTUEX 98-1 in the Puerto Rico operating areas. MERRIMACK departed Norfolk on 27 October bound for Puerto Rico, and arrived on 30 October.

After offloading the FIWC gear at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, MERRIMACK embarked on an ambitious logistic schedule. Throughout the month of November, MERRIMACK conducted multiple underway replenishments with ships of the John C. Stennis Carrier Battle Group including the carrier USS JOHN C. STENNIS (CVN-74), the cruisers USS SAN JACINTO (CG-56) and USS MONTEREY (CG-61), destroyers USS CARON (DD-970), USS LABOON (DDG-58), and USS COLE (DDG-67), the frigate USS SIMPSON (FFG-59), and the ammunition ship USS SANTA BARBARA (AE-28). In addition MERRIMACK conducted replenishments with the Dutch frigate HNLMS PIETER FLORIEZ (F-826), the destroyer USS BRISCOE (DD-977), the frigates USS KAUFFMAN (FFG-59), USS ROBERT G. BRADLEY (FFG-49), and USS ESTOCIN (FFG-15), as well as the maiden replenishment of the newly commissioned amphibious assault ship USS BATAAN (LHD-5). MERRIMACK also stopped off at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads no fewer than four times for refueling, anchored off Vieques IS, Puerto Rico for an ammunition offload, and conducted Engineering Training Group Tailored Ship's Training Availability Phase II. MERRIMACK's crew had time to catch their breath during a port visit to St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin IS where they enjoyed scuba diving, shopping, and the beaches. MERRIMACK left Puerto Rico on 22 November and returned to Norfolk on 26 November. After the Thanksgiving holiday, MERRIMACK spent the last week in November preparing for Engineering Certification.

MERRIMACK started December underway conducting the final Engineering Training Group Tailored Ship's Training Availability and completed successfully her Engineering Certification. Upon her return to Norfolk, MERRIMACK conducted Combat Systems Training Group Tailored Ship's Training Availability Phase II, and a CINCLANTFLT postal audit before finally settling down for a well earned holiday leave and upkeep period.

USS MERRIMACK CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF EVENTS:

01-05 Jan: Holiday Leave/Standdown

06-10 Jan: Underway, Virginia Capes operating area, Deck Landing Quals.

11-26 Jan: Inport Norfolk.

27-31 Jan: PLOT I visit, inport Norfolk.

01-03 Feb: Inport Norfolk.

04- 09 Feb: Underway, Logistic Services

05 Feb: UNREP with USS NORMANDY, USS COMPTE DE GRASSE,
USS DEYO.

06 Feb: UNREP with USS JOHN F. KENNEDY

10 Feb -10 Jun: Inport Norfolk, Repair Availability

14-17 Apr: PLOT II visit, Norfolk

16 Apr: Boiler Inspection, Norfolk.

05-10 May: AVCERT, PLOT III visits, Norfolk

11-13 Jun: Post RAV Sea Trials, Va Capes Operating Area.

16-20 Jun: Underway, Logistic Services, Deck Landing Qualifications, Va Capes Operating Area

20 Jun: Change of Command

21 Jun-03 Aug: Inport Norfolk

30 Jun-03 Jul: Logistics Management Assist Visit.

07-11 Jul: Inport UNREP Ship's Qualification and Testing

08-14 Jul: CINCLANTFLT Field Exam Audit.

14-18 Jul: Command Assessment Readiness for Training Phase II visit

28 Jul-01 Aug: Combat Systems Training Group Tailored Ship Training Availability Phase I visit.

04 -07 Aug: Underway UNREP Ship's Qualification and Testing with USNS BIG HORN

08-17 Aug: Inport Norfolk, Host ship for RFA BRAMBLELEAF

18-21 Aug: Underway, Logistics support in support of JTFX 97-3, enroute Mayport FL.

20 Aug: Helicopter borne Visit Board Search and Seizure training with SEAL Team 8.

21 Aug: UNREP with HMCS CHAROLETTETOWN, HMCS TORONTO, and USS INCHON

22 Aug: Enroute Naval Station, Mayport FL.

23-24 Aug: Inport, Naval Station Mayport, FL

25 Aug- 05 Sep: Fleet Training Group Tailored Ship Training Availability, Mayport FL.

28 Aug UNREP with USS DOYLE

29 Aug: UNREP with USS DOYLE

02 Sep: CIWS Towed Target exercise

04 Sep: UNREP with USS KIDD, USS ROBERT G. BRADLEY

06-07 Sep: Enroute Norfolk.

07 Sep: UNREP with USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

08 Sep- 07 Oct: Inport Norfolk.

08-12 Sep: Engineering Training Group Visit

15-19 Sep: Logistics Management Assessment, Environmental Health Survey.

01 Oct: Steering Gear Repair Assist for the USS MONONGAHELA

02 Oct: Magazine Sprinkler Inspection

03-06 Oct: Host ship for RFA FORT VICTORIA.

08-10 Oct: Underway, Logistics Services, Virginia Capes/Atlantic City operating areas.

09 Oct: UNREP with USS VELLA GULF, USS SUPPLY.

11-13 Oct: Inport Norfolk.

14-17 Oct: Underway Engineering Training Group Tailored Ship Training Availability Phase I.

18-26 Oct: Inport Norfolk.

27 Oct-25 Nov: Logistic services in support of COMPTUEX 98-1, Puerto Rico operating areas.

30-31 Oct: Inport, Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico

01 Nov: UNREP with USS JOHN C. STENNIS, USS MONTEREY

02 Nov: UNREP with USS SAN JACINTO, USS CARON, USS COLE, USS SIMPSON, USS LABOON.

03 Nov: Anchored, Vieques IS, Puerto Rico, ammunition offload.

04-07 Nov: Port visit, St Thomas, U.S. Virgin IS.

08 Nov: UNREP with USS SANTA BARBARA, HNLMS PIETER FLORIEZ, USS MONTEREY, USS BATAAN, USS LABOON.

09 Nov: UNREP with USS CARON, USS SAN JACINTO.

10 Nov: UNREP with USS JOHN C. STENNIS, USS SIMPSON, USS COLE.

11 Nov: Inport Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico.

12 Nov: Engineering Training Group visit, UNREP with USS LABOON, HNLMS PIETER FLORIEZ.

13 Nov: UNREP USS JOHN C. STENNIS, USS COLE

14 Nov: UNREP USS LABOON

15 Nov: UNREP USS JOHN C. STENNIS, USS SANTA BARBARA, USS MONTEREY.

16 Nov: UNREP USS JOHN C. STENNIS, USS LABOON, USS CARON

17 Nov: Inport Naval Station Roosevelt Roads Puerto Rico.

18 Nov: UNREP USS COLE, USS LABOON, USS MONTEREY, USS SAN JACINTO, USS CARON, USS SANTA BARBARA, USS SIMPSON.

19 Nov: UNREP USS KAUFFMAN, USS ROBERT G. BRADLEY, USS BRISCOE.

21 Nov: UNREP USS SANTA BARBARA, USS SAN JACINTO, USS COLE, USS LABOON, USS SIMPSON, USS CARON, USS MONTEREY, USS ESTOCIN.

22 Nov: Inport Naval Station Roosevelt Roads Puerto Rico

23-25 Nov: Enroute Norfolk.

26 -30 Nov: Inport Norfolk.

01-05 Dec: Underway Engineering Training Group Tailored Ships Training Availability Phase II with Engineering Certification.

06-31 Dec: Inport Norfolk.

08-12 Dec: Combat Systems Training Group Tailored Ships Training Availability Phase II.

15-31 Dec: Holiday leave and standdown period.

19 Dec: CINCLANTFLT Postal Audit.

USS MERRIMACK STATISTICAL DATA:

AMMUNITION EXPENDED:

<u>NALC</u>	<u>NOMENCLATURE</u>	<u>QTY</u>
A011	.12GA OO BUCKSHOT	226
A131	7.62MM LINKED M-60	1200
A363	9MM BALL	6163
A475	.45 CAL BALL M1911	334
A576	.50 CAL LINKED	3270
A676	20MM CIWS	1600
B546	40MM GRENADE	18
G839	7.62 MM BLANK	384
L580	MK 58 MARINE MARKER	20

UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENTS:

68 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENTS COMPLETED FROM 01 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 1997.

FUEL DELIVERED:

F76 (DFM): 8,266,074 GALLONS

F44 (JP5): 6,486,157 GALLONS