



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDING OFFICER
USS ASHLAND (LSD 48)
FPO AE 08564-1736

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w/clisk

IN REPLY REFER TO:
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Ser CO
7 Mar 02

From: Commanding Officer, USS ASHLAND (LSD 48)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), Naval Historical
Center, Washington Navy Yard, 901 M Street SE, Bldg. 57,
Washington, DC 20374-5060

Subj: 2001 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

1. Per reference (a), enclosure (1) IS forwarded.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "S. C. Howard", written over the typed name.

S. C. HOWARD

USS USS ASHLAND (LSD 48) COMMAND HISTORY FOR 2001

1. Command Composition and Organization:

a. Mission: Amphibious warfare; designed to transport Marines and their combat equipment to designated areas throughout the world, and then to launch and support assault landing craft and helicopters during amphibious operations ashore.

b. Organizational Structure: Assigned to Commander, Amphibious Group TWO, Little Creek, Virginia.

c. Commanding Officer: Commander Samuel C. Howard, USN

d. Homeport: Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Norfolk, Virginia

2. Chronology:

INPORT LITTLE CREEK	01 JAN - 27 JAN
UNDERWAY TRAINING (VCOA)	28 JAN - 29 JAN
INPORT LITTLE CREEK	30 JAN - 01 FEB
CHANGE OF COMMAND	02 FEB
INPORT LITTLE CREEK	03 FEB - 04 FEB
TRANSIT TO BALTIMORE, MD	05 FEB - 06 FEB
PORT VISIT BALTIMORE, MD	07 FEB - 11 FEB
TRANSIT TO LITTLE CREEK	12 FEB
INPORT LITTLE CREEK	13 FEB - 18 FEB
TRANSIT TO GULFPORT, MS	19 FEB - 23 FEB
INPORT GULFPORT, MS	23 FEB - 28 FEB
TRANSIT TO LITTLE CREEK	01 MAR - 08 MAR
INPORT LITTLE CREEK	09 MAR - 26 JUN
UNDERWAY W/MIDSHIPMEN (VCOA)	26 JUN - 28 JUN
INPORT LITTLE CREEK	28 JUN - 09 JUL
TRANSIT TO MHI SHIPYARDS, NORFOLK, VA	09 JUL
INPORT MHI SHIPYARDS	09 JUL - 10 OCT
TRANSIT TO NORFOLK NAVAL BASE	10 OCT
INPORT NORFOLK NAVAL BASE	10 OCT - 11 OCT
UNDERWAY SEA TRIALS (VCOA)	12 OCT - 15 OCT
AVCERT, INPORT LITTLE CREEK	15 OCT - 19 OCT
INPORT LITTLE CREEK	19 OCT - 22 OCT
UNDERWAY, TRAINING/DLQ'S/LCAC (VCOA)	22 OCT - 26 OCT
ENROUTE ONSLOW BAY, NC	26 OCT
ONLOAD MARINES AND VEHICLES, ONSLOW BAY, NC	27 OCT

ENROUTE MAYPORT, FL	27 OCT - 28 OCT
INPORT MAYPORT, FL	29 OCT - 01 NOV
JAX SEA AND AIR EXTRAVANGANZA, DAILY DEPART AND RETURN FOR REHEARSAL AND ACTUAL SHOW	02 NOV - 04 NOV
- INPORT MAYPORT, FL	05 NOV - 06 NOV
UNDERWAY, ENROUTE ONSLOW BAY, NC	07 NOV
OFFLOAD MARINES AND VEHICLES, ONSLOW BAY, NC	08 NOV
ENROUTE LITTLE CREEK	08 NOV - 09 NOV
INPORT LITTLE CREEK	09 NOV - 02 DEC
WELL DECK CERT, UNDERWAY (VCOA)	03 DEC - 05 DEC
INPORT LITTLE CREEK	05 DEC - 31 DEC
HOLIDAY LEAVE AND STANDDOWN	17 DEC - 31 DEC

USS ASHLAND rang in the New Year with family and friends in our homeport of Little Creek, Virginia. Just back from a Mediterranean Deployment 10 days earlier, USS ASHLAND crewmembers were enjoying a much-deserved leave and standdown period.

During the standdown period USS ASHLAND readied the ship and themselves for the Change of Command ceremony that was held on 2 February. Following a one-week turnover with all of the departments, CDR Todd G. Ratner relieved CDR Jorge Sierra as Commanding Officer of USS ASHLAND.

Only days after the change of command, USS ASHLAND was once again underway to Baltimore, MD to provide support to the Society of Black Naval Engineers during their annual conference and awards ceremony. USS ASHLAND provided tours to members attending the conference. The port visit was also an excellent opportunity for the crew to have liberty in a port where the primary language is English. USS ASHLAND returned to Little Creek on 12 February for another week of upkeep, and departed for Gulfport, MS on 19 February.

The transit to Gulfport was uneventful, unlike the port visit itself. Although our force protection posture made it impossible to give tours to the public, the USS ASHLAND crew represented themselves extremely well in the town of Gulfport. MWR also arranged numerous trips to New Orleans for the crew to take part in the Mardi Gras celebration. After an outstanding week in Mississippi, USS ASHLAND set sail for the return transit to Little Creek.

The trip back took a turn for the worse when extreme storms along the east coast forced us to remain underway in the Strait of Florida for 4 days, canceling scheduled training in the VACAPES OPAREA and delaying our return to

Little Creek until 8 March. Finally back in port, we spent over three months pierside conducting much needed maintenance and preservation. The recent DEI determined the diesel generators were in need of an overhaul. USS ASHLAND would not get underway again until 26 June.

Supply department underwent a Supply Management Assist (SMA) in early June. The general stores division scored a 97.8 percent, sales and service scored 95.7 and mess management scored 90.5 percent. The success during SMA allowed SURFLANT to waive the Supply Management Inspection for S-1 and S-3 divisions. For all their efforts, Supply department was awarded the Blue "E" for the first time in ship's history.

After months of repairs and preservation, USS ASHLAND departed Little Creek with over 50 midshipmen from universities all over the country for a three day shakedown in the VACAPES. The USS KAUFMANN and USS STUMP were also in company training midshipmen. The ship conducted DIVTACS and flag hoists drills as well as DC Olympics with the midshipmen. However, due to severe evaporator casualties and subsequent low feedwater for the boilers, USS ASHLAND returned early to avoid cascading damage to the boilers or potable water shortages with the midshipmen onboard. USS ASHLAND returned to Little Creek.

On 9 July, USS ASHLAND embarked on what would be the defining period of 2001. A greatly needed and several times canceled, delayed and rescheduled Planned Maintenance Availability. USS ASHLAND head up the Elizabeth River for MHI Shipyards in Norfolk, at the foot of the Campostella Bridge. The harrowing transit through the Berkley Lift Bridge and Bascule Railroad Bridge No. 5 were expertly navigated as there was barely 30 ft of clearance on either beam. Adding to the challenge, the top five feet of the mast were lowered to clear the cable crossing on the eastern branch of the Elizabeth River. The first night consisted of unreliable shore power and a fire in Nr 3 generator. This was a sign of things to come. The following week the emergency generator on the pier caught fire. Over the next three months, USS ASHLAND endured the tribulation of an industrial period including numerous CHT spills, power outages, and overheated spaces. Finally on 10 October, USS ASHLAND left MHI, headed for NOB, Norfolk.

Upon arriving at Pier 12 Norfolk, USS ASHLAND experienced an MRG casualty on her approach. After a day and a half of repairs to the MRG lube oil pumps, and the refitting of the mast, USS ASHLAND headed out to the VACAPES for Sea Trials. Upon return from sea trials, USS ASHLAND successfully completed AVCERT and continued maintenance throughout the ship.

On 22 October, USS ASHLAND got underway for her most successful operational tasking of the year. Tasked with providing an amphibious demonstration for the Jacksonville Sea and Sky Extravaganza, USS ASHLAND headed south to embark Marines, LCACs, and vehicles for the show. USS ASHLAND stole the show from the Blue Angels as Marines, LCACs, AAV's and the Battle Ensign captivated the crowds of Jacksonville Beach. Liberty in Jacksonville and Mayport was greatly enjoyed by the crew during the festive atmosphere of the air show. Upon return to Little Creek, USS ASHLAND continued its efforts on material condition and preparations for well deck certification, and other inspections. Upon completion of this milestone in early December, the crew continued maintenance, enjoyed a wonderful Christmas Party at the Surfside Inn, and finished out the year, similar to how it started, on Holiday standdown.