



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS AUSTIN (LPD-4)

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From: Commanding Officer, USS AUSTIN (LPD-4)  
To: Director of Navy History (OP9BH), Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.

Subj: Command History Update

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C

Encl: (1) Calendar Year 1983 Command History Update for USS AUSTIN (LPD-4)

1983

1. Enclosure (1) is forwarded in accordance with reference (a).

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "F. A. Olds", is written above the typed name.

F. A. OLDS

Calendar year 1983 was a most significant and a most arduous one for the USS AUSTIN and its crew. During the year AUSTIN spent 273 days underway. There were 75 anchorages and modified condition 1A was set 53 times. There were 3,217 separate small boat operations during the year. AUSTIN conducted 63 underway replenishments receiving 4,153,763 gallons of DFM without a single spill. Number 1 boiler steamed 5,019 hours, number two boiler steamed 4,882 and there were 3 waterside and 3 fireside cleanings performed on each boiler. A grand total of 4,361,763 gallons of DFM was burned through the year.

On 14 January 1983 AUSTIN arrived in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to commence a month of Refresher Training. The one month training period was broken into two parts. The first two weeks saw AUSTIN and her crew go through strenuous, but well-needed training. AUSTIN then took a 12 day port visit to New Orleans, La. for the Mardi Gras celebrations. While inport, AUSTIN was docked near the French Quarter along with three British ships and served as a "floating hotel" for almost 900 young men and women of Reserve Training Corps marching units, drill teams and bands from all the services and all over the country who took part in the Mardi Gras festivities. For most of these students, this was the first time on board a U.S. Navy ship. AUSTIN held a "visit ship" for several days and more than a thousand people toured the ship.

AUSTIN returned to Guantanamo Bay to resume Refresher Training from 19 February 1983 to 1 March 1983. The ship completed ORI, ORE and became OPPE certified while at GTMO.

From March to April 1983 AUSTIN engaged in MARG 2-83 work-ups in the Norfolk/Virginia Capes area before deploying on a seven month cruise. During the work-ups AUSTIN Air Department personnel totaled 297 safe landings and take-offs. There were a number of first time accomplishments while on this work-up: a CH53E VERTREP of the new M-198 Howitzer artillery piece from a ship; four helo's were operated for launch simultaneously; and CH53E HIFR evolutions were conducted. Fuel pumped to refuel the helicopters during the work-ups totaled 11,000 gallons.

On 10 April 1983, the ship entered Norfolk to prepare for her deployment off the coast of Beirut, Lebanon as part of the Multinational Peacekeeping Forces. While inport, AUSTIN had work done on its remote steam stops and port shaft syntron seal.

In May of 1983, AUSTIN's Medical Department had a medical inspection and was found to be satisfactory.

AUSTIN departed Norfolk for Morehead City, North Carolina on 8 May 1983 to embark units of Marine Battalion Landing Team 1/8 (BLT 1/8) and Marine Amphibious Unit 24 (24th MAU). Thus commenced the ship's deployment to Lebanon.

The ensuing seven months were arduous ones. On 29 May 1983, with the offload of 24 MAU and Navy beach group detachments complete, AUSTIN, as part of Amphibious Squadron EIGHT and 24 MAU assumed duties of the amphibious and

landing forces of the Sixth Fleet operating in Beirut, Lebanon. Throughout the cruise AUSTIN maintained a high state of readiness for 212 days with only a 5 day port visit to Antalya, Turkey, during July 1983. Daily routine consisted of daytime anchoring and night time steaming. Anchoring evolutions became very routine as each watch section gained experience. During AUSTIN's initial days on station, the ship's self defense measures were exercised many times until a norm was established. For the second consecutive year, the Deck Department received the Amphibious Assault Award. AUSTIN's Air Department provided a ready deck for alert AH-1T Cobra helicopters from HMM 162. These aircraft, flying from the AUSTIN's deck both day and night, participated in numerous missions in support of the U.S. ground forces based ashore in Beirut. AUSTIN received on board a variety of aircraft employed by the Navy and Marine Corps: UH-1N, SH-2F, SH-3G/H, CH-46D/E, H-1 Huey, CH-46 Frog, CH-53E Super Stallion, as well as the AH-1T Cobra, and the AV-8A Harrier Jet. AUSTIN occasionally accommodated her Multinational partners such as the British Royal Air Force CH-47 Chinook and CH-34 Wessex and the Italian Navy H-1 Huey. The Air Department successfully completed 75 consecutive accident free days of flight operations and compiled over 3500 total landings for the cruise. Air Department operations included pumping over 200,000 gallons of JP5 aviation fuel and over 15,000 gallons of automotive gasoline. Over 3,300 mishap free landings were recorded.

In addition to performing her military duties, AUSTIN hosted numerous high ranking civilian and military officials, including the Chief of Naval Operations, Secretary of the Navy, several members of the House Armed Services Appropriations Committee, the United States Ambassador to Lebanon and Special Mid-East Envoy McFarlane. As a gesture of good-will several "steel beach" picnics and tours of the ship were conducted for Lebanese civic groups.

In August of 1983 the engineers passed a 3M inspection with an overall grade of 95 and in September there was a command inspection in which the oil lab and training petty officer were praised for their excellent programs. Upon AUSTIN's return to CONUS the engineers were proud to paint the Engineering "E" on the ship's smoke stacks.

On 23 October 1983, after the tragic truck bombing of the Marine Battalion Landing Team 1/8 Headquarters which killed over 200 Marine and Navy personnel, AUSTIN crewmembers provided valuable assistance to the Marines ashore by standing security watches and aiding in search and rescue operations. Capt. F.A. Olds became AUSTIN's sixteenth Commanding Officer when he relieved Capt. J.H. Springer on 31 October 1983. AUSTIN made a brief port stop at Rota, Spain, for a routine wash down of vehicles and equipment enroute to CONUS. The deployment ended on 7 December 1983 at Morehead City, N.C. where AUSTIN's combat load of Marine helicopters, vehicles and nearly 600 troops were debarked. AUSTIN's Navy and Marine personnel were awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, as well as the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon. The ship arrived in Little Creek, Va for an upkeep and leave period on 8 December 1983.