



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS AUSTIN (LPD-4)

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From: Commanding Officer, USS AUSTIN LPD-4
To: Chief of Naval Operations (N09BH), Washington, DC
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Subj: 1997 COMMAND HISTORY FOR USS AUSTIN (LPD-4)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Command History 1997 Chronology
(2) Command History 1997 Narrative
(3) Current Ship's Photo
(4) Commanding Officer's Biography and Photo

1997

1. In accordance with reference (a), the 1997 Command History for USS AUSTIN (LPD-4) is forwarded.

R.S. CALLAS

Copy to:
COMPHIBGRU TWO

1997 HISTORY - CHRONOLOGY

01-22 JAN IN PORT NORFOLK, VA. POST DEPLOYMENT STANDDOWN/LEAVE PERIOD
23 JAN UNDERWAY FOR INSURV REHEARSAL
24 JAN MOORED AT NORFOLK, VA
17JAN-07FEB INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY PERIOD (IMAV)
22JAN-03FEB READY DUTY AMPHIBIOUS READINESS GROUP (ARG) ASSIGNMENT
27-31 JAN HULL CLEANING
29 JAN FAST CRUISE
30JAN-09FEB INPORT NORFOLK, VA
10FEB-18FEB UNDERWAY FOR TYPE COMMANDERS AMPHIBIOUS TRAINING (TCAT)
10-14 FEB ENGINEERING TRAINING GROUP PRE-LIGHT OFF TRAINING I
18 FEB ARRIVE NORFOLK, VA
19-23 FEB INPORT NORFOLK, VA
24-28 FEB INSURV
25 FEB UNDERWAY FOR INSURV
25 FEB MOORED NORFOLK, VA PIER 12
26FEB-09MAR INPORT NORFOLK, VA MAKING PREPARATIONS TO TRANSIT TO NORFOLK
SHIPBUILDING & DRYDOCK CORP. (NORSHIPCO)
10 MAR UNDERWAY TRANSITING TO NORSHIPCO PIER 6 (DEADSTICK)
10MAR-30APR INPORT NORSHIPCO PIER 6
01-04 MAY DAMAGE CONTROL TRAINING TEAM (DCTT) - ENGINEERING READINESS
ASSIST TEAM (ERAT)
05-09 MAY ENGINEERING TRAINING GROUP PRE-LIGHT OFF TRAINING II
10-29 MAY INPORT NORSHIPCO PIER 6
30 MAY SHIP CONDUCTED SAFETY STANDDOWN
01-09 JUN INPORT NORSHIPCO PIER 6
10-12 JUN REFUELING AT NORSHIPCO PIER 6
13 JUN GALLEY/MESS DECKS GRAND OPENING
12-22 JUN INPORT NORSHIPCO PIER 6
23JUN-06JUL FLIGHT DECK RESURFACING
27 JUN PRODUCTION COMPLETION DATE
07-09 JUL LIGHT OFF ASSESSMENT (LOA)
09-15 JUL AVIATION CERTIFICATION/AVIATION READINESS EVALUATION TECH
ASSIST
15 JUL FAST CRUISE
16 JUL UNDERWAY FROM NORSHIPCO
17JUL-20JUL MOORED NORFOLK, VA
21-25 JUL UNDERWAY TRANSITING TO YORKTOWN, VA FOR
AMMO TRANSFER FROM USS NASHVILLE
21 JUL MOORED YORKTOWN, VA
25 JUL UNDERWAY TRANSITING TO NORFOLK NAVAL BASE.
AUSTIN CONDUCTED A FAMILY DAY CRUISE ENROUTE.
25JUL-27JUL MOORED NORFOLK, VA
28JUL-1AUG HORSE
28 JUL AVIATION READINESS EVALUATION
29 JUL AVIATION CERTIFICATION
31 JUL UNDERWAY FOR HORSE
01 AUG MOORED NORFOLK, VA
02-10 AUG INPORT NORFOLK, VA
05-14 AUG REMOVE PROGRAM
11-17 AUG COMMAND ASSESMENT OF READINESS AND TRAINING II (CART)
18-22 AUG UNDERWAY FOR TRAINING SERVICES. GUEST OF
THE NAVY VISIT
22AUG-24AUG MOORED NORFOLK, VA
25-27 AUG PERSONNEL AFLOAT TRAINING GROUP ASSIST
VISIT
25AUG-01SEP INPORT NORFOLK, VA

Enclosure (1)

02-05 SEP	UNDERWAY FOR TAILORED SHIPS TRAINING ASSESSMENT I (TSTA)
05-07 SEP	MOORED NORFOLK, VA
08-12 SEP	UNDERWAY FOR TSTA I (FTG)
13-14 SEP	MOORED NORFOLK, VA
15-19 SEP	TSTA I CSTG/FTG
20-28 SEP	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
29SEP-02OCT	UNDERWAY FOR TSTA I ETG (VCOA)
03 OCT	MOORED NORFOLK, VA
04-09 OCT	LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT (LMA) ASSIST VISIT
10 OCT	CHANGE OF COMMAND
11-19 OCT	TSTA I CSTG (INPT)
20OCT-31OCT	UNDERWAY FOR TSTA II ETG
30 OCT	COMPLETED ENGINEERING CERTIFICATION
31OCT-03NOV	MOORED NORFOLK, VA
04-05 NOV	SAFETY STANDDOWN
03-07 NOV	TSTA II CSTG (INPT)
08-11 NOV	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
12NOV-13NOV	UNDERWAY FOR TSTA III
14NOV-16NOV	MOORED NORFOLK, VA
17NOV-20NOV	UNDERWAY FOR FINAL EVALUATION PERIOD (FEP)
21 NOV	MOORED NORFOLK, VA
22NOV-01DEC	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
02DEC-04DEC	UNDERWAY FOR TRAINING SERVICES
05 DEC	MOORED NORFOLK, VA
06-21 DEC	INPORT NORFOLK, VA
15-18 DEC	LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT (LMA)
19-31 DEC	INPORT NORFOLK, VA HOLIDAY LEAVE/UPKEEP PERIOD

COMMAND HISTORY 1997 NARRATIVE

01 January 1997 found the USS AUSTIN moored at the Norfolk Naval Base in Norfolk, Virginia. The ship had recently returned from a Mediterranean Cruise and was observing a Post Deployment holiday leave and upkeep period which would last through 22 January. On 17 January the ship began an Intermediate Maintenance Availability Period (IMAV) in preparation for the upcoming Planned Maintenance Availability (PMA) at the Norfolk Shipbuilding & Drydock Corp. (NORSHIPCO). The IMAV was completed on 07 February.

On 10 February, the ship got underway and transited to Onslow Bay, NC to participate in Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV) operations in support of Type Commanders Amphibious Training (TCAT). The ship also conducted its first flight deck operations of the year on 11 February. In five days of operations, AUSTIN completed 874 flight deck evolutions, with USMC H-46, H-53, AH-1 and UH-1 aircraft. AUSTIN returned to Norfolk, VA on 18 February to begin preparations for the Board of Inspection & Survey (INSURV).

AUSTIN conducted the INSURV from 24 to 28 February. The ship successfully completed all areas of the INSURV and was found fit for further service.

March 1997 began with AUSTIN making preparations for her transit to Norfolk Shipbuilding & Drydock Corp (NORSHIPCO). On 03 March, all Diesel Fuel Marine (DFM) was offloaded and on 09 March, AUSTIN completed the offload of all ammunition while at pier 12 Norfolk, VA. On 10 March, the ship completed a dead stick transit to NORSHIPCO to begin the PMA, which would see AUSTIN in NORSHIPCO until 16 July 1997.

During the PMA, AUSTIN went through many changes. A few of the more significant jobs included:

- *Resurfacing of the Flight Deck
- *Installation of Coffin Feed Pumps
- *Repair of #1 & #2 Main Condensers
- *Replacement of the well deck planking
- *Replacement of the last two Steam Turbine Firepumps with Titanium Firepumps
- *Installation of the Plastic Waste Processor
- *Installation of the Oily Waste Separator
- *Upgrades to the Degaussing system
- *Installation of the SPS-67
- *Complete overhaul of the main galley

Enclosure (2)

As the end of the PMA approached, AUSTIN was making preparations for the upcoming work-up schedule. The Engineering and Damage Control Training Teams (ETT & DCTT) began preparations for the ships first major hurdle, the Light Off Assessment (LOA) which was slated for the first week of July. The LOA prepares the ship for light off and initial hot plant operations at the end of depot level maintenance period that exceeds 120 days. On 13 June, AUSTIN held a Grand Re-opening ceremony for the mess decks and galley. After several months of intense work by the food service personnel, AUSTIN'S 33 year old galley was transformed into one of the best on the waterfront.

On 07 July, the Light Off Assessment (LOA) was conducted. The Engineering Department and the Damage Control Training Team successfully passed the LOA and AUSTIN's propulsion plants were lit off on 09 July. On 15 July, the ship completed a Fast Cruise in preparation for getting underway for Sea Trials on 16 and 17 July. A fast cruise is conducted pierside and simulates at-sea operational conditions, its objective is to train the crew and determine their ability to take the ship to sea safely in a peacetime environment. In addition to the normal underway routine, to the maximum extent possible, equipment should be tested to check for proper operation and to determine the state of training of the crew. AUSTIN returned to Norfolk on 17 July after completing successful sea trials in the Virginia Capes Operating Area (VCOA).

On 21 July, AUSTIN transited to Yorktown Naval Weapons Station to conduct a stern-to-stern ammunition transfer from USS NASHVILLE (LPD-13). While at Yorktown, AUSTIN's Well Deck was completely certified on 24 July. Upon completion of the ammo transfer on 25 July, AUSTIN transited back to Norfolk with over 500 dependents onboard the ship.

On 28 July, AUSTIN commenced the HORSE and Aviation Certification (AVCERT). HORSE provided the Commanding Officer with an assessment of all the Engineering equipment with technical representatives onboard should there be any problems.

In support of the HORSE, AUSTIN got underway on 28 July. On 29 July, AUSTIN passed her Aviation Readiness Examination. The ship returned to Norfolk, VA on 01 August and remained in port until 18 August.

On 14 August, AUSTIN completed the Removal of Excess Material and Validity Enhancement program (REMOVE). This cost

saving program resulted in the removal of 4,345 line items from AUSTIN's storerooms.

The ship got underway for training services on 18 August. During this underway period the ship hosted a Guest of the Navy cruise. The Guest of the Navy program allows civilians the opportunity to get underway with a host ship and see Navy operations first hand. AUSTIN also completed her first flight operations since departing the shipyard, completing 161 flight deck evolutions with Navy and Marine Corps aircraft. AUSTIN returned to Norfolk, VA on 22 August and remained in port until 01 September.

On 02 September, the ship got underway for Tailored Ships Training Assessment (TSTA) I with the Afloat Training Group (ATG) and remained in the VCOA. During TSTA I, the Afloat Training Group comes onboard to train the ship's training teams which are as follows:

- Integrated Training Team (ITT)
- Combat Systems Training Team (CSTT)
- Engineering Training Team (ETT)
- Damage Control Training Team (DCTT)
- Medical Training Team (MTT)
- Seamanship Training Team (STT)

During this phase of training, ATG conducts deckplate training as necessary and works on developing basic warfare skills. Also during this underway, AUSTIN conducted 186 flight deck evolutions with HELSUPPRON SIX (HC-6) based out of Norfolk, VA.

AUSTIN returned to port on 05 September for the weekend and was back underway on 08 September to continue TSTA I ATG. During this underway period, AUSTIN conducted her first joint operations of the year when she provided Deck Landing Qualification (DLQ) Services for the Army's 82nd Airborne Division. Over 440 flight deck evolutions were completed in three days of operations. AUSTIN's services were also utilized for Search & Rescue (SAR) Operations when an F-14 based out of Oceana Naval Air Station Norfolk, VA, crashed into the Atlantic Ocean. AUSTIN was immediately dispatched to the scene of the accident and launched her boats and aircraft in support of the rescue efforts. AUSTIN returned to port on 12 September.

On 15 September TSTA I Combat Systems Training Group/Fleet Training Group (CSTG/FTG) commenced. This team was onboard to conduct training in the ship's Combat Information Center in basic warfare skills for the Operations Department and the ship's

Tactical Action Officers (TAOs). The team also provided training to the CSTT to ensure that the team could run scenarios and train the watchstanders in CIC. This portion of work-ups was done inport and ended on 19 September.

AUSTIN remained inport until 29 September when the ship got underway to support TSTA I ETG. The Engineering Training Group (ETG) was onboard to train the ETT and ensure that the team could provide training to the watchstanders in the Engineering Department.

On 03 October, AUSTIN returned to Norfolk, VA, and commenced the Logistics Management Assessment (LMA) assist visit from 6 to 09 October. On 10 October AUSTIN welcomed its new Commanding Officer. CDR William D. Valentine Jr., was relieved by CDR Richard S. Callas as Commanding Officer.

TSTA I CSTG was held from on 14 to 17 October. On 20 October, AUSTIN got underway in support of TSTA II ETG. The goal of TSTA II is to refine skills and integrate watch teams into a single organization capable of coordinating their efforts for mission accomplishment. The primary thrust of TSTA II is for the ship's training teams to train the ship under the guidance of the ATG. On 30 October, AUSTIN completed her Engineering Certification. The ship returned to Norfolk, VA on 31 October.

01 November found AUSTIN in port for TSTA II CSTG. The Combat Systems Training Team (CSTT) was required to develop an in depth battle problem which would train the Combat Information Center's (CIC) watchstanders in tracking and reporting air and surface contacts and defending the ship. The Afloat Training Group observed the exercise with the goal of determining the ability of the CSTT to provide training to the CIC watchstanders.

The ship got underway on 12 November in support of TSTA III and for training services. TSTA III provides the Commanding Officer and the ATG trainers the opportunity to focus on building integrated training proficiency using the ship's training teams to train the ship under the guidance of the ATG. During this underway the ship provided DLQ services to HC-6, completing 62 flight deck evolutions. This underway period was interrupted on 13 November by a recommended recall to port due to approaching heavy weather. As a safety precaution, AUSTIN returned to port on 14 November.

On 17 November, AUSTIN got underway for the Final Evaluation Period (FEP). The Final Evaluation Period is a training

assessment conducted before the ship reports to its numbered fleet commander. FEP is a non-graded evolution whose objective is to provide a realistic, comprehensive and demanding scenario requiring a ship to demonstrate:

- a. Ability to conduct a multi-day battle problem
- b. Thorough knowledge of the Rules of Engagement
- c. The ship's capability to perform as an integrated combat systems platform
- d. Flexibility to fight the ship in accordance with applicable doctrine and battle orders by successfully completing a total ship survivability exercise
- e. Ability to advance to the intermediate phase of the inter-deployment training cycle and report to the respective numbered fleet commander

Also during the underway period, AUSTIN completed 86 flight deck evolutions with the Army's 160th Special Operations Squadron and HELSUPPRON EIGHT (HC-8). After successfully completing FEP, AUSTIN returned to Norfolk, VA on 21 November and remained inport until 02 December.

On 02 December, AUSTIN pulled out of Norfolk enroute to the VCOA for training services. The ship completed 404 flight deck evolutions with the Army's 82nd Airborne Division. The ship returned to Norfolk, VA on 05 December. From 15 to 19 December the Logistics Management Assessment was held onboard AUSTIN. The Supply Department successfully completed the assessment with an overall score of 92.3%. On 19 December AUSTIN began a leave and standdown period which lasted into the New Year.