

COMMAND HISTORY USS BLACK HAWK (MHC 58)

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BLACK HAWK (MHC 58) is the eighth ship in the U. S. Navy's OSPREY Class Coastal Minehunter Program and the third U. S. Navy ship to bear the name. BLACK HAWK's keel was laid on September 3, 1992, and her Christening and Launching took place on August 27, 1994. MHC 51 Class ships are the world's largest Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) ships and the first U. S. Navy ships designed solely for mine hunting, the technique of locating mines with sonar and neutralizing them with a remotely controlled underwater vehicle. The ship's mission is to clear harbor, coastal and ocean waters of acoustic, magnetic and pressure/contact type mines, utilizing reconnaissance, classification and neutralization tactics. The MHC 51 Class design integrates modern mine countermeasures technology into a uniquely designed platform. The ship is protected during mine hunting operations with an exceptionally low magnetic and acoustic signature.

16 JANUARY 1996

Intermarine USA Shipyard, Savannah Georgia delivered BLACK HAWK to the Department of the Navy on 16 January 1996. The Commanding Officer was LCDR Bruce W. Nichols of Philadelphia, PA.

16 JANUARY - 06 APRIL 1996

The Post Delivery Availability (PDA) at Intermarine Shipyard, Savannah, GA began after delivery. The crew intensified their training and watch standing check list. BLACK HAWK spent Saint Patrick's Day on the waterfront in Savannah, Georgia. This was a great opportunity for the city of Savannah to admire their craftsmanship and their contribution to this country's defense.

06 APRIL - 09 APRIL 1996

BLACK HAWK's first underway was enroute to Mayport, FL for Shipboard Electronics Systems Evaluation Facility (SESEF).

09 APRIL - 16 APRIL 1996

After a successful SESEF, the ship returned to Savannah, GA to complete the final week of PDA.

17 APRIL 1996

On 17 April, BLACK HAWK departed Savannah, GA on her maiden voyage. The first stop was Charleston, SC.

20 APRIL - 25 APRIL 1996

BLACK HAWK arrived in Charleston, SC for an ammunition onload. The ship moved to the southern pier for a massive degaussing offload. The ship unloaded all magnetic items and store rooms. After ensuring degaussing readings were within specifications, BLACK HAWK ran the degaussing range with satisfactory results. Thursday, the ship unloaded the magnetic equipment.

25 APRIL - 29 APRIL 1996

BLACK HAWK's enroute to New York, NY.

29 APRIL - 02 MAY 1996

On 29 April, BLACK HAWK arrived in New York (Intrepid Park). BLACK HAWK enjoyed her first liberty port visit.

02 MAY - 05 MAY 1996

BLACK HAWK's enroute to Newport, RI.

05 MAY - 12 MAY 1996

BLACK HAWK arrived Newport, RI on 05 May. Between 05-12 May, the crew prepared for the ship's commissioning ceremony. The formal commissioning of USS BLACK HAWK was held on 11 May 1996 at 1200 hours. The guest speaker was U. S. Representative Jack Reed of Rhode Island. RADM Tim Jenkins the Assistant Deputy Commander for Logistics, Naval Surface Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet served as BLACK HAWK's commissioning officer. Mrs. Mary Farrell acted as ship's sponsor.

13 MAY - 31 MAY 1996

BLACK HAWK departed Newport and transited to Nassau, Bahamas by way of Morehead City, NC (a brief stop for fuel). The ship arrived on 20 May and enjoyed three days in the Caribbean, her first overseas port visit. The ship departed on 23 May, enroute to Key West FL, the ship's final port visit of her maiden voyage. Finally, on 27 of May, BLACK HAWK departed Key West and was heading to the ship's home port. The ship arrived in Ingleside on 31 May, with family and friends applauding her arrival.

31 MAY 1996

BLACK HAWK arrived in her homeport of Ingleside, TX. The ship's homecoming was an event attended by; RADM Pearson, COMINWARCOM, Capt Peters, Commanding Officer Naval Station Ingleside, local civilian officials, local media and most importantly the ship's families. The USS ROBIN acted as BLACK HAWK's host ship for her arrival.

31 MAY - 19 JUNE 1996

A respite was the order of the day. The time was spent settling crew members and families into their new homes. Those onboard were busy preparing BLACK HAWK for her upcoming Combat Systems Ship Qualification and Training (CSSQT).

19 JUNE - 04 JULY 1996

BLACK HAWK was haze gray and underway again on 19 June, after only two and half weeks inport. The ship sailed to Fort Lauderdale to start Acoustic trials with a brief stop for fuel in Key West FL. The 25 and 26 of June were spent loading and testing acoustic equipment. The ship ran the range for a week providing much needed acoustic data for the entire class.

05 JULY - 17 AUGUST 1996

BLACK HAWK was underway after the 4th of July bound for Panama City, FL to commence CSSQT Phase III/IV. BLACK HAWK arrived in Panama City, FL on 08 July. The ship started a shipwide training program to familiarize the crew members with the operation of AN/SLQ-48 (remotely controlled vehicle) and the AN/SQQ-32 V2 sonar systems. On 10 July, the ship traveled to Pensacola, and spent the weekend in Pensacola in support of the Blue Angel Air Show. BLACK HAWK recommenced training in Panama City on Tuesday, 16 July. The ship conducted AN/SQQ-32 and AN/SLQ-48 system training in the next few weeks. The inspection team (INSGRU) arrived to conduct the ship's Mine Warfare Readiness Certification Inspection (MRCI) on 12 August. The ship completed the MRCI in record time and was cleared to return to homeport two weeks ahead of schedule.

17 AUGUST - 20 AUGUST 1996

On 17 August, the ship departed Panama City and sailed to Ingleside, TX. The ship arrived in Ingleside, TX on 20 August after two and a half months of training and evaluation. The crew was awarded half work days in recognition for their hard work.

21 AUGUST - 30 SEPTEMBER 1996

Starting 26 August, the ship started its preparations for Tailored Ships Training Assessment (TSTA) I/II. For the next couple of weeks, the ship continued with TSTA I/II preparations and conducted her first Shipboard Explosive Safety Inspection.

01 OCTOBER - 31 OCTOBER 1996

The ship went through Engineering Cart II on 01 October. COMINEWARCOM called upon BLACK HAWK to join in on a Joint Exercise (JTFEX 97), which led to BLACK HAWK finding the most mines and mine like objects. The ship returned to port on Saturday, 19 October, just in time for the Navy Ball that evening. VADM Lautenbacher, Commander Third Fleet toured the ship, his first opportunity to visit a mine hunting ship. Atlantic Fleet Engineering Training Group (ETG) came aboard to conduct TSTA I engineering starting 21 October. BLACK HAWK was underway for training on 22 October. Due to the sea and wind conditions, BLACK HAWK returned to port at 1400 on 22 October to continue with her training pier side. The ship completed TSTA I on 25 October. NAVSAFECEN, Norfolk conducted a Shipboard Safety Survey at the end of the month. RADM Garnett and Capt. McMillian, Maritime Operations Group Five, Royal Canadian Navy visited the ship on 29 October appreciating the hospitality and friendliness of the crew. RADM Lippert, Commander Naval Inventory Control Point, who toured the ship on 30 October commented on the professionalism onboard BLACK HAWK. Capt. Murphy, Chief of Naval Operations, Mine Warfare Branch visited the ship on 31 October. He took particular notice of the material condition and cleanliness of the ship.

01 NOVEMBER - 30 NOVEMBER 1996

The ship was underway from 12 to 15 November 1996, in order to prepare for TSTA II. While in port, the following week, Commander Regional Support Group Logistics Management Assessment Team came onboard to conduct a Logistics Management Assessment (LMA) groom. BLACK HAWK sailed again on 20 November to participate in a towing and astern refueling exercise with the USS INCHON. BLACK HAWK returned to port on Thursday, November 21, and spent the remaining part of November in port.

02 DECEMBER - 06 DECEMBER 1996

The Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) led by Capt. Ziller conducted Final Contract Trials (FCT), the first week of December. Capt. Ziller of the inspection team noted the ship's exceptional state of preservation and cleanliness, and stated that BLACK HAWK was the best prepared ship of the mine warfare community. The INSURV team completed their inspection on 06 December with only a handful of discrepancies noted.

11 DECEMBER 1996

BLACK HAWK was underway for the day to conduct her Engineering Certification Inspection. An inspection completed in record time and with minimal discrepancies.

12 DECEMBER - 31 DECEMBER 1996

BLACK HAWK spent the rest of December on holiday stand down. During this period, BLACK HAWK unloaded ammunition required for the upcoming BLUE HARRIER exercise. BLACK HAWK's communications suite and Combat Information Center (CIC) were upgraded with the installation of SATCOM, INMARSAT and JMCIS.