



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS BLACK HAWK (MHC-58)
FPO AA 34091-1955

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From: Commanding Officer, USS BLACK HAWK (MHC 58)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH) Washington Navy Yard, 901 M. Street S.E.,
Washington, DC., 20374-5060

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) USS BLACK HAWK (MHC 58) Command History

1. Per reference (a), enclosure (1) submitted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M.H. Williams", with a long, sweeping underline.

M. H. WILLIAMS

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COMMAND HISTORY USS BLACK HAWK (MHC 58)

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.

01-12 JANUARY 1997

The new year found BLACK HAWK enjoying the traditional holiday standdown. Even though half the crew was on leave, the ship was in the midst of deployment preparation; loading required ammunition for the upcoming overseas deployment and NATO exercises. Additionally the ship received it's first major upgrades of the communication suite and Combat Information Center (CIC) with the installation of SATCOM, INMARSAT and JMCIS. BLACK HAWK transferred to the Navy Reserve force effective 01 January 1997.

16 JANUARY - 26 JANUARY 1997

BLACK HAWK completed Final Evaluation Problem. BLACK HAWK participated in the first mine warfare exercise of FY 97, GOMEX 97-1. Participating units were USS INCHON (MCS 12), USS SCOUT (MCM 8), USS HERON(MHC 52) and USS AVENGER (MCM 1). Although the exercise was hampered with heavy fog, all exercise objectives were met.

27 JANUARY - 21 FEBRUARY 1997

In order to let the crew prepare for deployment and to take care of family matters, BLACK HAWK enjoyed Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) standdown.

22 FEBRUARY 1997

BLACK HAWK in company with USS DEVASTATOR (MCM 6), USS SCOUT (MCM 8) and USS AVENGER (MCM 1) departed Ingleside, Texas for MCM EURO 97. The first overseas deployment of an Osprey Class Coastal Minehunter. LCDR Bruce Nichols, CO USS BLACK HAWK, is the senior CO. BLACK HAWK is also the force navigator.

22 FEBRUARY - 25 FEBRUARY 1997

The four ship mine warfare task group transitted to Key West, Florida. Transit was uneventful.

25 FEBRUARY 1997

Task group arrives Key West, Florida for a brief stop for fuel, and over night liberty.

26 FEBRUARY - 28 FEBRUARY 1997

BLACK HAWK and AVENGER depart Key West, Florida enroute Mayport, Florida.

28 FEBRUARY 1997

BLACK HAWK with AVENGER arrive Mayport, Florida.

28 FEBRUARY 1997 - 7 MARCH 1997

While inport, BLACK HAWK undergoes a maintenance availability, with SIMA Mayport. All remaining preparations for deployment are completed and the Navigation team receives some training from ATG, Mayport. Western Hemisphere Group tours BLACK HAWK.

7 MARCH - 11 MARCH 1997

BLACK HAWK departs Mayport enroute Charleston, South Carolina in company with AVENGER.

11 MARCH - 13 MARCH 1997

BLACK HAWK inport Charleston, South Carolina. The ship conducts a magnetic offload and satisfactorily completes degaussing runs..

13 MARCH - 17 MARCH 1997

BLACK HAWK underway enroute to Bermuda. Rendezvous with DEVASTATOR, SCOUT and AVENGER. Transit is mostly uneventful. The ship did experience the first bad weather of the deployment by encountering 10-12 foot seas. The ship performs well and any doubt of the ability of the Coastal Minehunter to cross the Atlantic are erased.

17 MARCH 1997

Task group arrives Bermuda for a brief stop for fuel and provisions. Overnight liberty is granted to the crew.

18 MARCH 1997

Mine Warfare Task Group departs Bermuda enroute Portsmouth, England.

21 MARCH - 06 APRIL 1997

Task group rendezvous with USS INCHON (MCS 12). INCHON remains with the task group for the rest of the transit to England. The first underway astern refueling conducted during deployment.

06 APRIL 1997

Task group arrives Portsmouth, England. INCHON arrived one day earlier and is berthed in South Hampton, England.

06 APRIL - 14 APRIL 1997

While inport Portsmouth, England. BLACK HAWK conducted minor voyage repair. Organized tours to London, Stonehenge and Bath were conducted. Several tours are given to British Naval Officers and contractors.

14 APRIL - 19 APRIL 1997

BLACK HAWK and AVENGER underway enroute Aarhus, Denmark via the Kiel Canal.

15 APRIL 1997

BLACK HAWK transits Kiel Canal.

19 APRIL 1997

BLACK HAWK arrives Aarhus, Denmark.

19 APRIL - 22 APRIL 1997

BLACK HAWK inport Aarhus, Denmark, for NATO exercise BLUE HARRIER 97 preparations and briefs. Eight man Canadian Clearance Dive Team (CDT) embarks.

22 APRIL 1997

BLACK HAWK underway for exercise "BLUE HARRIER 97". The exercise is conducted in the Kategatt Straits, and BLACK HAWK is assigned to COMCMRON TWO. During the exercise, BLACK HAWK locates and with the assistance of the CDT neutralizes two live WWII British MK 9 ground mines. In addition to these two live mines, BLACK HAWK clears more area than any other unit.

02 MAY - 05 MAY 1997

BLACK HAWK inport Aarhus, Denmark, for post exercise debriefs. Canadian CDT debark. LT [REDACTED], USNR, is relieved as Chief Engineer by LT [REDACTED], USN.

05 MAY 1997

BLACK HAWK departed, enroute La Spezia, Italy with AVENGER, via Kiel Canal.

06 MAY 1997

BLACK HAWK transits the Kiel Canal.

08 MAY 1997

BLACK HAWK arrives in Portsmouth, England for storm evasion. The ship takes the opportunity to refuel and receive stores. Overnight liberty is granted to the crew.

09 MAY - 19 MAY 1997

BLACK HAWK and AVENGER enroute La Spezia, Italy.

19 MAY - 25 MAY 1997

BLACK HAWK arrives inport La Spezia, Italy, for PALMERIA 97 preparations and briefs. Crew enjoyed some time off from a busy schedule. Great liberty was enjoyed by all in the town of La Spezia, Italy. Several tours were offered to Rome, Pisa and Florence. U. S. Army base Camp Darby was nearby and offered the crew the chance to shop at an exchange and commissary giving everyone a small taste of home. Ship's company enjoys a picnic at Camp Darby's beach resort.

26 MAY - 27 MAY 1997

BLACK HAWK underway in company of AVENGER to commence PALMERIA 97 exercise with the Italian navy. All exercise objectives are met.

27 MAY - 28 MAY 1997

BLACK HAWK inport La Spezia, Italy, for post exercise debriefs. Tours are given to several Italian Navy Officers and contractors, including Intermarine, the parent company of BLACK HAWK builders, Intermarine, USA..

28 MAY 1997

DEVASTATOR and SCOUT join BLACK HAWK and AVENGER in LA Spezia, Italy.

29 MAY - 31 MAY 1997

BLACK HAWK departs La Spezia enroute Palma, Spain with DEVASTATOR, SCOUT and AVENGER.

31 MAY - 01 JUNE 1997

BLACK HAWK arrives inport Palma, Spain, for NATO exercise ALCUDRA 97 preparations and briefs. Four ship MCM Task Group rejoins INCHON (MCS 12).

02 JUNE - 12 JUNE 1997

BLACK HAWK underway to participate in ALCUDRA 97. BLACK HAWK is assigned to COMCMRON TWO. BLACK HAWK located and recovered four exercise moored mines and recovered 10 mine decoys, the most of any unit. BLACK HAWK conducted the first and only swim call of the deployment during the last day of the exercise. All exercise objectives were met.

12 JUNE - 16 JUNE 1997

BLACK HAWK inport Palma, Spain, for ALCUDRA 97 debriefs and preparations for the transit home.

17 JUNE - 20 JUNE 1997

BLACK HAWK along with the Mine Warfare Task Group departs Palma enroute Rota, Spain.

20 JUNE 1997

Task group arrives Rota, Spain Naval Station for a brief stop for fuel. Crew members were able to visit base facilities and enjoy overnight liberty.

21 JUNE - 10 JULY 1997

Task group departs, enroute Ingleside, Texas. Several astern refueling evolutions are conducted with INCHON. Weather during the transit is near perfect.

10 JULY 1997

While conducting repairs to Nr 1 MPDE, NR 2 MPDE sustained casualty. BLACK HAWK drifts for two hours until AVENGER takes BLACK HAWK undertow enroute Key West.

BLACK HAWK repairs NR1 MPDE and proceeds to Key West under her own power.

11 JULY 1997

BLACK HAWK and AVENGER detach from the task group and arrive Key West, Florida for a brief stop for fuel and emergent repairs to BLACK HAWK's engines. Nr 2 MPDE is condemned for main bearing and crankshaft damage. Permission is granted for BLACK HAWK to return to Ingleside with one MPDE.

12 JULY - 19 JULY 1997

BLACK HAWK with AVENGER depart Key West enroute Ingleside, Texas.

13 JULY 1997

BLACK HAWK's NR1 MPDE sustains catastrophic casualty and ship is taken under tow by AVENGER.

14 JULY 1997

AVENGER is relieved by ST. Philip Towing service's ocean going tug. Who takes BLACK HAWK the remaining distance home.

19 JULY 1997

BLACK HAWK arrived in homeport, completing the first Coastal Minehunter Deployment. Friends and families were there to greet the ship. COMINEWARCOM is present and addresses all BLACK HAWK sailors for a job well done. First overseas deployment is complete with distinction.

20 JULY - 11 AUGUST 1997

BLACK HAWK inport Ingleside, Texas. Post Deployment Up Keep and standdown. SIMA Ingleside commences change-out of both Main Propulsion Diesel Engines (MPDE).

12 AUGUST - 02 SEPTEMBER 1997

BLACK HAWK continued maintenance upkeep.

19 AUGUST 1997

BLACK HAWK's first Commanding Officer, LCDR Bruce W. Nichols is relieved of command by LCDR Mark H. Williams at Naval Station Ingleside at 1200. Guest Speaker was CAPT O'Connell, Commander, Regional Support Group.

25 AUGUST - 29 AUGUST 1997

BLACK HAWK conducted the Logistics Management Assessment Assist. MPDE change-out is complete, all pierside checks complete.

28 AUGUST

Underway Corpus Christi TX Oparea for engine tests.

03 SEPTEMBER 1997

BLACK HAWK satisfactory conducts Navigation Check ride with MINEWARCOM inspectors in the Corpus Christi Operational Area.

04 SEPTEMBER - 08 SEPTEMBER 1997

BLACK HAWK departs Ingleside enroute Panama City, Florida in support of Final Operational Testing and Evaluation (FOT&E) for the MHC 51 Class Coastal Minehunter.

08 SEPTEMBER - 01 OCTOBER 1997

BLACK HAWK conducted FOT&E. The ship excels during all three phases: Q-routes, Shallow water MCM and Deep water MCM. The ship enjoys several days inport Panama City during this period for crew rest and maintenance.

10 SEPTEMBER 1997

BLACK HAWK arrives Panama City.

02 OCTOBER - 04 OCTOBER 1997

BLACK HAWK departs Panama City enroute Ingleside, Texas. Transit is uneventful.

04 OCTOBER 1997

BLACK HAWK arrives Ingleside, Texas.

05 OCTOBER - 26 OCTOBER 1997

BLACK HAWK inport Ingleside, Texas, for maintenance upkeep.

07 OCTOBER 1997

LT [REDACTED], USN is relieved as Operations Officer by LTJG [REDACTED], USN.

27 OCTOBER - 29 OCTOBER 1997

BLACK HAWK underway in the Corpus Christi Operational Area conducting engineering training.

30 OCTOBER - 17 NOVEMBER 1997

Inport Ingleside for maintenance and inspection preparations.

01 NOVEMBER 1997

BLACK HAWK sponsored Dependents Cruise 97. Family and friends enjoyed a day at sea and a cook-out on the fantail.

03 NOVEMBER - 07 NOVEMBER 1997

BLACK HAWK completed Logistics Management Assessment with a grade of 91 percent.

10 NOVEMBER - 14 NOVEMBER 1997

BLACK HAWK conducts a Diesel Inspection, inport Ingleside, Texas.

13 NOVEMBER 1997

BLACK HAWK offloaded all ammunition and explosives in preparation of Post Shakedown Availability (PSA).

18 NOVEMBER - 21 NOVEMBER 1997

BLACK HAWK supported Mid-Cycle Assessment (MCA). The assessment is one of the best ever seen on the waterfront.

21 NOVEMBER 1997

LT James Hruska, USN is relieved as Executive Officer by LT Bradley Manning, USNR.

22 NOVEMBER - 01 DECEMBER 1997

BLACK HAWK continued upkeep period.

02 DECEMBER 1997

BLACK HAWK dead stick moved to South Texas Marine shipyard for Post Shakedown Availability (PSA) and the availability commences immediately.

02 DECEMBER - 31 DECEMBER 1997

BLACK HAWK in Post Shakedown Availability. LT [REDACTED], USN, Supply Officer
departs ship.

15 DÉCEMBER 1997

BLACK HAWK commenced a traditional holiday leave period.