



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDING OFFICER
USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC-19)
FPO AP 96628-3300

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From: Commanding Officer, USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC 19)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, DC 20374-0571

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAVINST REPORT 5740-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

1992

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following command history for the period of 1 January 1992 through 31 December 1992 is submitted:

a. Command Organization: Commanding Officer: Captain Alan L. Heisig from 22 November 1991 to present.

b. Summary of Operations: USS BLUE RIDGE commenced 1992 pierside in Yokosuka, Japan, in SRA-21. The New Year was kicked off with the traditional poetic Midwatch Deck Log entry. BLUE RIDGE's entry was published in the weekly Yokosuka Base Newspaper, Seahawk, as one of four outstanding examples of what a sailor can do at midnight, on New Years' Eve. As the New Year began, so did official ship visits. January saw visits by Naval Forces, Japan; Naval Security Group, Misawa; 6920th Electronic Security Group; Defense Attache, Australia; Canadian Forces Attache; Defense Attache, France; Military Attache, India; U.S. Chief of Foreign Liaison; Naval Attache, Republic of Korea; Defense Attache, Philippines; Naval Attache, Russia; Submarine Force, SEVENTH Fleet, Amphibious Force, SEVENTH Fleet, Special Forces Command, Pacific; Japanese Self Defense Fleet; and Naval Forces, Korea. Throughout the month, BLUE RIDGE conducted security, fire, flooding and rescue and assistance drills, while keeping up with the SRA-21 work schedule.

February 3rd, BLUE RIDGE refueled in preparation for sea trials. The 13th, BLUE RIDGE got underway for sea trials. During the underway period BLUE RIDGE conducted boiler flex test, PACFIRE exercises, helicopter deck landing qualifications and underway replenishment and emergency breakaway evolutions with USNS ANDREW J. HIGGINS. February was also a historic month as BLUE RIDGE became a floating Military Affiliate Radio Systems (MARS) station, enabling crew members to talk with their families ashore while the ship was underway. The crew was please to no end and were very happy to test the station while underway. Sea trials went very well, and the ship was able to return to port on the 15th, one day early. Ship visits in February were made by Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force Training Squadron and COMNAVSURFGRU WESTPAC. Fire fighting and other training continued as usual with concentration on Engineering Casualty

Control (ECC)drills as a work-up for OPPE scheduled for later in the year. February 29th, BLUE RIDGE set sail for Sasebo, Japan.

March 1st, BLUE RIDGE arrived in Sasebo, Japan, and immediately was visited by COMSERVRON ONE. While in Sasebo, several of the crew volunteered to paint and refurbish Seifu-En Orphanage. The children were very appreciative of BLUE RIDGE's good natured support. Although the stay in Sasebo was brief, the crew enjoyed a period of rest and relaxation, enjoying Sasebo's beautiful scenery.

BLUE RIDGE departed Sasebo March 4th, for Singapore. Enroute BLUE RIDGE conducted several ECC drills, General Quarters drills, gunnery exercises and helicopter evolutions. On the 12th BLUE RIDGE anchored in the Man of War Anchorage at Singapore. March 13th, BLUE RIDGE was visited by Naval Training and Victory, Republic of Singapore; Fleet Commander, Republic of Singapore; Naval Staff, Republic of Singapore; U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Singapore; Deputy Chief of Mission, Russian Federation; Deputy Chief of Mission, United States; Charge D'Affaires, Peoples Republic of China and Republic of Singapore, Navy. Singapore was another great place for the crew to get some time to rest and see some new sights. A good time was had by all.

March 15th, BLUE RIDGE was underway for Benoa, Bali; however, King Neptune, Ruler of the Raging Main came aboard and notified the Commanding Officer that there were slimy Polly-Wogs aboard that had to be dealt with before the ship would be permitted to proceed on course. In view of that fact, a Crossing the Line ceremony was conducted to initiate the slimy Polly-Wogs into Honorable Shell-Backs. 588 crew members were initiated in the time honored Crossing the Line ceremony as BLUE RIDGE crossed the Equator into the Southern Hemisphere. March 18th, BLUE RIDGE anchored outside Benoa Bay, Benoa, Bali. While in Bali, the Defense Attache to Bali paid the ship an official visit. The crew and several family members who had flown down to meet the ship had great liberty in the tropical sun. The people in Bali were very friendly, hospitable and anxious to show off their wares to the visiting BLUE RIDGE and COMSEVENTHFLT personnel. On March 21st, BLUE RIDGE began the trip back home to Yokosuka, Japan, and after a nine day transit, returned to Yokosuka, March 29th.

April 1st through 9th, Fleet Activities, Yokosuka; Naval Forces, Japan; Japanese Self Defense Fleet; Battle Force, SEVENTH Fleet; Naval Dental Corps; and Naval Security Group visited the ship. Training drills were conducted regularly while inport, then on April 14th, BLUE RIDGE embarked two PACE instructors and departed for Guam. While in transit, BLUE RIDGE began providing PACE courses for the crew who took the opportunity to get some college level or basic refresher education while underway. April

18th, BLUE RIDGE arrived Apra Harbor, Guam. While inport, the crew was given the opportunity to get some exercise on the pier during a scheduled warm-up and 1.5 mile run. Later visits were made by Naval Station, Guam; 13th Air Force and Chief of Staff, Naval Forces, Marianas. April 21st, the ship got underway for Noumea, New Caledonia. Enroute the ship continued ECC and other drills. April 28th, BLUE RIDGE anchored at Noumea, New Caledonia, where the ship paid tribute to the Government of New Caledonia, as part of Operation Remembrance, the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea. After the brief tribute, BLUE RIDGE weighed anchor and set sail for Sydney, Australia.

May 1st, BLUE RIDGE stood into Port Jackson, Sydney Harbor, in a timed to the second formation with several ships from the INDEPENDENCE Battle Group, Destroyer Squadron 31 and Royal Australian Navy for a Pass in Review and 21 gun salute to the Honorable P.J. Keating, Prime Minister of Australia and the Honorable Dick Cheney, U.S. Secretary of Defense. The waterfront was crowded with Australians who looked on as Operation Remembrance was kicked off. During the period of May 2nd through 5th, BLUE RIDGE and COMSEVENTHFLT personnel participated in several parties, parades and memorial services that were attended by thousands of U.S. Citizens and Australians. Admiral Charles Larson, USCINCPAC, was the senior representative at a wreath laying service at the Australian War Memorial in downtown Sydney. A group of 50 BLUE RIDGE sailors and Marines had the pleasure of marching in parades in the capital city of Canberra while the ship transitted to Townsville, Australia, May 5th through 8th. While in transit, BLUE RIDGE navigated the entire length of the inner Great Barrier Reef in company with USS FLETCHER, HMAS PERTH and HMAS ADELAIDE. May 8th, BLUE RIDGE moored in Townsville, Australia, after transitting a seven mile narrow channel in the rain. As soon as the brow was over, BLUE RIDGE was swamped with visitors requesting tours of the ship. Frequently, seven or more tour groups at one time in excess of 30 persons each, were touring the ship and examining the static displays that were set up around the ship.

May 10th, BLUE RIDGE got underway with USS FLETCHER, HMAS PERTH, HMAS ADELAIDE, HMAS TOBRUK, and HMAS JERVIS for a wreath laying ceremony at sea that was televised live, nationwide by the Australian Broadcasting Company. Seated on BLUE RIDGE's main deck to view the ceremony were over 250 WWII veterans; Australian Prime Minister, P.J. Keating; Special Envoy from President Bush, the Honorable Lamar Alexander, U.S. Secretary of Education, the Honorable Melvin Sembler, U.S. Ambassador to Australia and several other dignitaries. Commander Wayne Van Doren, Executive Officer, USS BLUE RIDGE delivered the address.

May 12th, BLUE RIDGE was underway for homeport Yokosuka, Japan. Enroute, BLUE RIDGE took the opportunity to fly MTT inspectors aboard May 16th when within helicopter range of Apra

Harbor, Guam. The remainder of the transit was spent with continued preparations for the upcoming MTT visit. May 22nd, BLUE RIDGE arrived at Yokosuka, Japan. BLUE RIDGE was in an upkeep and training period for the rest of the month.

June began with a flurry of visits including Naval Forces Japan and Submarine Force, SEVENTH Fleet. ECC and general quarters drills continued. On the 2nd the first group of Midshipmen arrived for summer training. June 5th, BLUE RIDGE continued to exercise the crew at general quarters and conducted tests of the ship's generators. June 9th, BLUE RIDGE got underway for local operations and returned to homeport on June 10th. From June 11th through 18th, visits were made to the ship by Amphibious Force, SEVENTH Fleet; Fleet Escort Force; 500th Military Intelligence Brigade; JMSDF YAMATO; U.S. Army, Japan; U.S. Forces, Japan; JASDF Air Defense; JMSDF Self Defense Fleet; U.S. Pacific Fleet; Fleet Submarine Force; JGSDF Staff, Ground Defense Force; Joint Staff Council, Yokosuka; Destroyer Squadron THIRTY ONE; Escort Division FORTY SIX; JMSDF YUGARA, Naval Forces, Marianas; and Defense Attache, India.

June 20th, BLUE RIDGE set sail for Hong Kong. Enroute to Hong Kong, the embarked Midshipmen were given extensive training in all aspects of navigation; bridge and CIC watches; engineering watch standing, gunnery stations, flight quarters and some division officer duties. June 25th, BLUE RIDGE moored at HMS TAMAR, Hong Kong, and was immediately greeted by Defense Liaison, Hong Kong; HMS TAMAR; and Commander, British Forces. June 29th, BLUE RIDGE departed Hong Kong, enroute to Colombo, Sri Lanka, with three more Midshipmen from the U.S. Naval Academy.

July 3rd, Commander SEVENTH Fleet, VADM Arthur was relieved by VADM Timothy W. Wright in a small ceremony witnessed by COMSEVENTHFLT Staff and USS BLUE RIDGE personnel on the main deck as BLUE RIDGE proceeded towards the Straits of Malacca. Later on, BLUE RIDGE set the Navigation Detail, entered the Straits of Malacca, set Flight Quarters near Singapore and flew ADM Arthur off one last time. BLUE RIDGE remained at Navigation Detail until the evening of July 5th, then commenced two and a half days of purely celestial navigation that continued until the morning of July 8th.

July 8th, BLUE RIDGE entered Colombo, Sri Lanka, with strong cross currents that made for challenging ship handling while mooring to the quay. While in Sri Lanka, most of the crew took the opportunity to delve into a bit of the Sri Lankan culture. Gem stones and wooden carvings were favorite shopping items. Colombo was one of the ports where the crew went all out, contributing volunteer time to assist the local community. Volunteers worked to clean and paint the Municipal Child Welfare Center, and Project Handclasp materials were presented to the Center. July 10th, a visit was made by the U.S. Defense Attache

and the U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka. July 11th, after a too short visit, BLUE RIDGE heaved in all lines and was enroute to Madras, India.

July 13th, BLUE RIDGE, again with strong winds, moored in Madras, India. In Madras, several of the Midshipmen departed back to their respective universities while several more reported aboard for their chance to gain a little shipboard experience. Over 80 Sailors and Marines volunteered their time in Madras for 2 COMREL projects. One project was the clean-up and maintenance of the Little Sisters of the Poor, elderly home. The other project was at the Mercy Homes Orphanage where 45 beds were painted and several electrical problems sorted out in a four hour period. July 16, BLUE RIDGE departed for Penang, Malaysia.

July 19th, BLUE RIDGE navigated the narrow entrance to Penang harbor in reduced visibility and anchored in the Man-of-War Anchorage. Several divisions held parties in Penang, and the crew thoroughly enjoyed the entire port visit. July 23rd BLUE RIDGE departed Penang for Yokosuka, Japan, with two Midshipmen from the Royal Malaysian Navy. Once clear of the channel, BLUE RIDGE stationed the modified Navigation detail and remained so until clear of the Straits of Malacca to the East. After a brief rest from the Straits of Malacca transit, BLUE RIDGE had the opportunity to refuel underway with the USNS WALTER S. DIEHL. The remainder of the transit consisted of Midshipmen and crew training at various drills including General Quarters and an extensive gunnery exercise where each of the Midshipmen were afforded the opportunity to man each of the three-inch gun mount stations and fire several rounds for a total of over one hundred rounds expended.

August 1st BLUE RIDGE returned to homeport, Yokosuka, Japan. While inport, August 1st, through 11th, visits were made to BLUE RIDGE by Naval Forces, Japan; Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force; First Marine Aircraft Wing; Submarine Force SEVENTH Fleet and Patrol and Reconnaissance Force SEVENTH Fleet. During the same time frame, the BLUE RIDGE crew began fire and flooding drills tailored to meet the shipboard environment of the ship's upcoming SRA/DSRA.

August 13th, BLUE RIDGE was underway for Chinhae, Republic of Korea. Enroute the BLUE RIDGE ran a measured mile course to calibrate the underwater log. August 16th, BLUE RIDGE moored in Chinhae where a large portion of the crew participated in the Multinational Forces Exercise, ULCHI-FOCUS LENS. The remainder of the crew knuckled down to get a head start on several Ship's Force Work List projects. BLUE RIDGE also began ship wide physical training three mornings each week and advanced damage control training each morning and afternoon. Visits to BLUE RIDGE in Chinhae included, First Marine Expeditionary Brigade; Amphibious Force, SEVENTH Fleet; Republic of Korea, First Marine

Division; Republic of Korea, Marine Corps; Third Marine Expeditionary Force; Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Republic of Korea; Second Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Republic of Korea; Republic of Korea, Fleet; Commanding Officer, Republic of Korea Oiler, CHUNG GEE; Inshore, and Underwater Warfare Group ONE, Republic of Korea. After concluding ULCHI-FOCUS LENS, BLUE RIDGE returned to sea on August 31st, enroute to homeport, Yokosuka, Japan.

September 2nd, BLUE RIDGE Junior Officers and embarked Midshipmen were trained in ship handling evolutions. September 3rd, BLUE RIDGE anchored for an ammunition off load, then proceeded pierside to off-load cargo. September 4th, Amphibious Force, SEVENTH Fleet visited BLUE RIDGE. September 5th, much of the crew began moving off BLUE RIDGE so habitability teams could begin berthing compartment rehabilitation. September 9th, all fuel was pumped off BLUE RIDGE for SRA/DSRA. SRA/DSRA began and BLUE RIDGE was literally swarmed with eager Ship Repair Facility (SRF) personnel. SRF and BLUE RIDGE personnel immediately began making progress well ahead of schedule. September 15th, BLUE RIDGE was dead-stick moved to Dry-Dock Six, Yokosuka. September 19th, BLUE RIDGE hosted a successful ship's picnic that was enjoyed by the entire crew and their families. Also on the 19th COMSEVENTHFLT hauled down his flag on BLUE RIDGE and broke it ashore at Fleet Activities, Yokosuka, Japan.

September 27th marked a historic first for BLUE RIDGE and the host nation of Japan. 75 BLUE RIDGE officers and sailors carried a Japanese Mikoshi shrine in a parade through central Yokosuka and Fleet Activities, Yokosuka. Led by LCDR Tom Greene, they became the first foreigners, or gaigin, in Japanese history to carry a Mikoshi shrine with no Japanese participants. It was a milestone of intercultural goodwill and cooperation.

October 1st through 31st several BLUE RIDGE crew members took advantage of the inport period to take leave and attend Navy schools at Afloat Training Group (ATG) and other locations. Both BLUE RIDGE and SRF continued to make work progress well ahead of schedule. BLUE RIDGE also continued all aspects of professional, damage control and physical training.

Throughout November, USS BLUE RIDGE personnel continued professional training, physical readiness training and ship's force work. Thanksgiving day was celebrated on the ship with an excellent meal prepared by the Mess Management Specialists.

December 2nd, USS BLUE RIDGE moved out of dry dock and back to Berth 8 to continue SRA/DSRA work. The bridge piloting teams took the opportunity to practice navigation piloting during the move out of dry dock. The crew threw its Christmas party on the 17th on the entire third floor of the FLEACT Yokosuka's Club Alliance. The party was reported as "An event." Everyone in

attendance had an excellent time and plenty of compliments to the success of the Christmas party. For the second year in a row, USS BLUE RIDGE was judged by FLEACT Yokosuka as the winner of the Ships Christmas Lighting Competition conducted on December 21st. Competition was tough as the entire INDEPENDENCE Battle Group was inport.



A. L. HEISIG