



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDING OFFICER
USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC-19)
FPO AP 96628-3300

Rec'd 7/31/96

IN REPLY REFER TO
5750
Ser 30/695
125 JUN 1996

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

1994

Encl: (1) Portrait of Captain E. H. Joy II, USN
(2) Official biography of Captain E. H. Joy II, USN
(3) COMSEVENTHFLT Change of Command Brochure, 28 July
1994
(4) Copies of Family Ties for Calendar Year 1994
(5) Chronological List of Significant Events, Calendar
Year 1994

1. In accordance with reference (a), the command history for
1 January 1994 through 31 December 1994 is submitted:

a. Command Organization: USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC 19) Commanding
Officer: Captain E. H. Joy II from 4 September 1993 to present.

b. The mission of USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC 19) is to support the
staff of Commander SEVENTH Fleet. One specific support mission
is to "show the flag" in ports of the SEVENTH Fleet Area of
Responsibility. Additionally, the SEVENTH Fleet flagship is
designed to serve many purposes, depending on the crises.
Specifically, it is designed to be the flagship for C7F as a
CJTF or CCNCC, to accommodate JFACC Afloat, to serve as a SACC for
a MEF size landing, and to be a combined operations center.

c. Summary of Operations: USS BLUE RIDGE commenced 1994
pierside in Yokosuka, Japan. The new year kicked off with the
traditional poetic midwatch entry and blowing of the ship's
whistle.

On January 7, BLUE RIDGE set sail for a brief visit
to Beppu, Japan. BLUE RIDGE arrived in Beppu on January 10th.
While in port the crew enjoyed the local hot springs and scenery
that has made Beppu famous. On January 13, BLUE RIDGE left
Beppu, Japan to head back to her homeport Yokosuka, Japan.
During the underway period BLUE RIDGE conducted ECC drills and
General Quarters. Upon arrival on January 15, the crew began
making preparations for Selected Restricted Availability (SRA)
24 that officially commenced on January 17. January 24-28, BLUE
RIDGE successfully supported and completed exercise TEMPEST
EXPRESS. For the remainder of the month, BLUE RIDGE participated
in exercise KEEN EDGE from January 26 through February 4.
Throughout the month of January BLUE RIDGE was visited by
CINCSDFFLT, JMSDF and 43rd Refueling Squadron.

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February and March were months of great accomplishment as SRA 24 continued in high speed. Several crew members took advantage of the inport period to take leave and attend Navy schools at Afloat Training Group (ATG) Western Pacific and other locations. Both BLUE RIDGE and Ships Repair Facility (SRF) continued to make work progress well ahead of schedule. BLUE RIDGE also continued all aspects of professional, damage control and physical training. The Damage Control Training Team began its comprehensive training cycle to prepare for Operational Propulsion Plant Examination by holding inport General Quarters drills. On March 30, BLUE RIDGE was visited by COMNAVFORJAPAN, JMSDF, COMDESRON FIFTEEN, MSC Far East, EODMU FIVE and NAVSPECWARUNIT ONE.

Exercise TEMPO BRAVE began April 6, two days before the end of Selected Restricted Availability 24. On April 11, BLUE RIDGE departed Yokosuka for Apra Harbor, Guam. Upon arrival in Guam, the Command Assessment of Readiness for Training team from ATG Westpac set up shop prior to commencement of CART II on April 20. Exercise TEMPO BRAVE was completed April 21, then BLUE RIDGE set sail for Okinawa, Japan with the CART team. CART II went well and was completed a day prior to BLUE RIDGE's arrival in Okinawa on April 26. In Okinawa, the BLUE RIDGE Community Relations (COMREL) Project Team painted orphanages and handed out reading material to the delight of many children. The month of April saw visits to C7F by SOCPAC, MURAKUMO, Kure District, SUBFORSEVENTHFT, Air Command Australia, Strike Reconnaissance Group Australia, 13th Air Wing, EIGHT TWO Wing, FOUR ONE Wing, NAVSTA GUAM, ATG WESTPAC, NAVSPECWARUNIT ONE, Battle Force SEVENTH Fleet, Amphibious Force SEVENTH Fleet, III MEF, 3rd MARDIV, 1st MAW, 3rd FSSG, LOG WEST PAC, NAVFORKOREA, NAVMARIANAS, SUBFORSEVENTHFLT, FAIRWESTPAC and Patrol and Reconnaissance Force SEVENTH Fleet.

On May 2, BLUE RIDGE departed Okinawa, Japan for homeport Yokosuka, Japan. While in transit, BLUE RIDGE conducted daily training in preparation for Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA) phase I. TSTA I included harbor and navigation exercises, chemical and radiological self defense, and mainspace fire and ECC drills. On May 6, BLUE RIDGE returned to port for upkeep and inport training through May 17. On May 18, representatives from ATG WESTPAC embarked and commenced the assessment of BLUE RIDGE's ability to train. On May 25, BLUE RIDGE was assessed by ATG as being fully ready to begin TSTA Phase I, May 26-31 was spent acting on what had been learned during TSTA I. On May 16 COMSEVENTHFLT was visited by CINCSDFFLT Japan, Fleet Escort Force Japan, Fleet Submarine Force Japan, Fleet Air Force Japan, Fleet Training and Development Japan, NAVFORJAPAN, Battle Force SEVENTH Fleet, NCTAMS Westpac and NCTS Japan.

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAVINST REPORT 57-40-1)

The month of June continued the intensive training cycle, through the 17th when ATG WESTPAC embarked for TSTA II. After ATG embarked, TSTA II began and BLUE RIDGE cast off all lines, enroute to Hong Kong. ATG was impressed with progress that was made.

Beyond what was expected in the short time since TSTA I, halfway through TSTA II, June 23, BLUE RIDGE stopped in Hong Kong for a port visit. On June 26, TSTA II continued at sea as BLUE RIDGE was returning from Hong Kong enroute to Yokosuka.

On July 1, BLUE RIDGE completed TSTA II and pulled in to Yokosuka, Japan. From July 6-9, ATG WESTPAC conducted CART II. As expected, CART II was a success for BLUE RIDGE. Continuous validation, review and improvement kept BLUE RIDGE from dropping out of the training mode. Upkeep and training in all areas continued throughout the month. The new PT on the Pier program continued three mornings a week and showed positive results on a day to day basis.

Preparation began early in the month of July for the COMSEVENTHFLT change of command. On July 28, the COMSEVENTHFLT change of command ceremony took place on the main deck. Vice Admiral Timothy W. Wright completed his tour and Vice Admiral Archie R. Clemens assumed command. This event was attended by PACFLT, JSDF Joint Staff Council, MSDF Japan, CINCSDF Japan, Yokosuka District Japan, Fleet Escort Force Japan, NAVSURFPAC, NAVFORJAPAN, NAVAIRPAC, Patrol and Reconnaissance Force SEVENTH Fleet, Fair West Pac, HELTACWINGPAC and NAF Atsugi.

On August 3rd, BLUE RIDGE got underway for sea trials until August 5th. On August 6, BLUE RIDGE set sail for one day for a Family Day Cruise in Tokyo Wan. On August 17, BLUE RIDGE deployed for a two day transit to Chinhae, Republic of Korea to begin joint/multi-national exercises and ULCHI FOCUS LENS. ULCHI FOCUS LENS (UFL) kicked off on August 22nd and finished on September 3rd. Throughout the month of August and exercise UFL, BLUE RIDGE was visited by PACFLT, US Forces, Japan, US Ambassador, NAVFORJAPAN, US Navy, Task Group 70.4, CINCROKFLT, Landing Force SEVENTH Fleet, Battle Force SEVENTH Fleet, LOGWESTPAC, Amphibious Force SEVENTH Fleet, NAVFORKOREA, MINEWARCOM, Patrol and Reconnaissance Force SEVENTHFLT, 1st ROK MARDIV, ROK Army, NAVSPECWARGRU One, ROK Naval Academy, ROK Navy, ROK Flotilla SEVEN, and ROK Flotilla EIGHT.

The beginning of the month of September brought BLUE RIDGE a 3M Assist visit on the 4th and back in Yokosuka on the 9th. The 3M Assist was completed with success on the 14th. For the rest of September, the crew continued with upkeep and training while spending time with their families. September saw the visits of Staff Japanese Self Defense Force and AIRPAC.

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On October 5th, BLUE RIDGE set sail for yet another sea trial to return on the 7th. COMPHIBGRU ONE rode with BLUE RIDGE enroute to Okinawa, Japan to conduct a Navigation Check Ride 10-11. After a brief stop in Okinawa, Japan, BLUE RIDGE continued to Sembawang, Singapore. BLUE RIDGE enjoyed liberty and upkeep prior to OPPE from the 21-28 inport Sembawang, Singapore. On the 29th, BLUE RIDGE departed Singapore to head up to Okinawa, Japan to pick up the Propulsion Examining Board. The Singapore portcall brought the visit of U.S. Ambassador Singapore.

On November 4, BLUE RIDGE arrived and departed Okinawa, Japan and commenced OPPE. Throughout 5-6 November, the BLUE RIDGE crew performed deftly in order to successfully complete OPPE. Upon arrival in Yokosuka on November 7, BLUE RIDGE began the on-going task of training and upkeep. On November 14, the Logistic Management Assessment commenced. On the 17th, BLUE RIDGE Inport Emergency Team successfully combatted an actual Class B fire in the paint locker. On November 27, BLUE RIDGE departed Yokosuka, heading for Apra Harbor, Guam, and commenced exercise TANDEM THRUST. BLUE RIDGE was able to conduct valuable training for ECC Drills, man overboards, abandon ship drills, General Quarters and an underway replenishment. On November 11, COMSEVENTHFLT was visited by Submarine Force SEVENTH Fleet, COMNAVFORJAPAN and the Under Secretary of Defense Policy. On 16-17, BLUE RIDGE was visited by Carrier Group ONE, Submarine Force SEVENTH Fleet, NAVFORKOREA, LOG WESTPAC, Staff Maritime Command Australia, Staff Patrol and Reconnaissance SEVENTH Fleet, Landing Force SEVENTH Fleet, Battle Force SEVENTH Fleet, NAVMARIANAS, Self Defense Fleet Japan, ROK Fleet, NAVFORKOREA, NAVFORJAPAN, Task Group SEVEN ZERO POINT FOUR, 1st Brigade 6th Infantry Division and 13th Air Force.

After several days of drills while underway, BLUE RIDGE arrived in Guam on December 7 and completed exercise TANDEM THRUST. On the 8th, BLUE RIDGE set sail for home and arrived in Yokosuka on the 12th. BLUE RIDGE remained inport for the rest of December to enjoy the holiday season. The month of December saw the visits of SPECWARGRUONE, SEAL TEAM FIVE, SAU TEAM ONE, PACFLT ILO, CARGRU ONE, COM MAE, NAV MARIANAS, Landing Force SEVENTH Fleet, SOC PAC, 13th Air Force, Task Group SEVEN ZERO POINT FOUR, and DESRON SEVENTEEN.


P. LABRECQUE

Chronological List of Significant Events, Calendar Year 1994

- 1 - 6 January - Upkeep and Inport training, Yokosuka, Japan
- 7 - 9 January - Underway for Training, enroute to Beppu, Japan.
- 10 - 12 January - Visit Beppu, Japan.
- 13 - 14 January - Underway for Training, enroute to Yokosuka, Japan.
- 15 - 16 January - Upkeep and Inport Training, Yokosuka, Japan.
- 17 January - Began Ship's Restricted Availability 24.
- 24 - 28 January - Tempest Express Exercise.
- 26 January - Began Exercise Keen Edge-94.
- 4 February - Completed Exercise Keen Edge-94.
- 6 April - Began Exercise Tempo Brave-94.
- 8 April - Completed Ship's Restricted Availability 24.
- 9 - 10 April - Upkeep and Inport training, Yokosuka, Japan.
- 11 - 17 April - Underway for training, enroute to Guam.
- 18 - 21 April - Upkeep and inport training, Apra Harbor, Guam
- 20 April - Began Command Assessment of Readiness for Training, Level II.
- 21 April - Completed Exercise Tempo Brave-94.
- 22 - 25 April - Underway for Training, enroute to Okinawa, Japan.
- 25 April - Completed CART II.
- 26 April - Began Upkeep and Inport Training, Okinawa, Japan.
- 2 - 5 May - Underway for Training, enroute to Yokosuka, Japan.
- 6 - 17 May - Upkeep and Inport training, Yokosuka, Japan.
- 18 - 25 May - Underway for Tailored Ship's Availability (TSTA), Phase 1.
- 25 May - Completed TSTA 1.
- 26 May - Began Upkeep and Inport training, Yokosuka, Japan.
- 17 - 22 June - Underway for TSTA 2, enroute to Hong Kong.
- 23 - 26 June - Visit Hong Kong
- 27 June - Underway for TSTA 2, enroute to Yokosuka, Japan.
- 1 July - Completed TSTA 2.
- 2 - 26 July - Upkeep and Inport Training , Yokosuka, Japan.
- 6 July - Began CART II.
- 9 July - Completed CART II.
- 28 July - COMSEVENTHFLT Change of Command, Onboard.
- 3 - 5 August - Underway for Training.
- 6 August - Underway for Tokyo Wan Family Day Cruise.
- 7 - 16 August - Upkeep and Inport, Yokosuka, Japan.

Chronological Events (con.)

- 17 - 19 August - Underway for Training, enroute to Chinhae, ROK.
- 20 August - Upkeep and Inport Training, Chinhae, ROK.
- 22 August - Began Joint/Multi-National Forces Exercises Ulchi Focus Lens-94.
- 3 September - Completed Exercise Ulchi Focus Lens-94
- 4 - 8 September - Underway for training, enroute to Yokosuka, Japan.
- 4 September - Began 3M Assist Visit.
- 9 September - Upkeep and Inport Training, Yokosuka, Japan.
- 4 October - Completed Upkeep Yokosuka, Japan.
- 5 - 7 October - Conducted Underway sea trials.
- 8 - 10 October - Upkeep and Inport training, Yokosuka, Japan.
- 10 - 11 October - PHIBGRU ONE conducted Navigation Check Ride.
- 11 - 15 October - Enroute to Okinawa, Japan.
- 15 - 22 October - Enroute to Sembawang, Singapore.
- 21 - 28 October - Upkeep Sembawang, Singapore.
- 29 October - Enroute to Okinawa, Japan.
- 4 November - Arrive Okinawa, Japan, commenced OPPE and departed Okinawa, Japan.
- 5 - 6 November - Enroute to Yokosuka, Japan.
- 7 November - Arrived Yokosuka, Japan.
- 8 - 26 November - Upkeep and inport training, Yokosuka, Japan.
- 14 November - Commenced LMA exam.
- 27 November - Commenced Exercise TANDEM THRUST-94. Underway for Guam.
- 7 December - Inport Guam. Completed Exercise TANDEM THRUST- 94.
- 8 - 12 December - Underway, enroute to Yokosuka, Japan.
- 12 - 31 December - Upkeep and Inport Training, Yokosuka, Japan.



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

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

Rec'd 5/3/94

IN REPLY REFER TO

5750
Ser 33/266
94 APR 14

From: Commanding Officer, USS BLUE RIDGE (LCC 19)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), Washington Navy Yard,
901 M Street, SE Washington, DC 20374-5060

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAV REPORT 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

1992

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following command history for the period of 1 January 1993 through 31 December 1993 is submitted:

a. Command Composition and Organization: USS BLUE RIDGE is forward deployed to the Western Pacific and permanently home ported in Yokosuka, Japan, as Flagship for Commander, U.S. SEVENTH Fleet, Commander, Amphibious Force SEVENTH Fleet, and Commander, Landing Force, SEVENTH Fleet. Commanding Officer: Captain Alan L. Heisig from 1 January to 4 September. Captain Ernest H. Joy II from 4 September to 31 December. Immediate Superior: RADM D. R. Conley from 1 January to 6 August. RADM J. F. Sigler from 6 August to 31 December.

b. <u>Chronology:</u>	Light Off Exam (LOE)	1 February
	Embark COMSEVENTHFLT	7 February
	Dock Trial	8 February
	Sea Trial	13-14 February
	Total Ship's Training	
	Availability Phase I	16-25 February
	Exercise TEAM SPIRIT 93	5-15 March
	54th Annual Black Ship Festival, Shimoda, Japan	15-17 May
	Operational Propulsion Plant Exam (OPPE)	3-5 June
	Exercise TANDEM THRUST 93	15-22 July
	Exercise ULCHI FOCUS LENS 93	19-23 August
	Change of Command	4 September
	INSURV	20-23 September
	Depart Yokosuka	4 October
	Visit Hong Kong	10-13 October
	Visit Singapore	19-21 October
	Cross Equator	22 October
	Visit Jakarta, Indonesia	24-26 October
	Visit Perth/Fremantle, Western Australia	2-5 November
	Visit Manila, Republic of the Philippines	15-18 November
	Return to Yokosuka	24 November

c. Summary of Operations: USS BLUE RIDGE began 1993 pier side in Yokosuka, Japan in the final month of SRA/DSRA-23. During SRA-23 BLUE RIDGE completed a major self-help rehabilitation project of two-100 man crew berthing spaces, removed the 3-inch gun systems and upgraded numerous command and control systems. BLUE RIDGE also continued a rigorous training schedule in preparation for the upcoming Light-Off Examination (LOE), dock trials, sea trials, Total Ship's Training Availability (TSTA) Phase I, Operational Propulsion Plant Exam (OPPE) and advancement exams. Each morning the Damage Control Training Team (DCTT) conducted main space fire drills for duty section training, and the crew mustered on the pier three mornings each week for physical training. On 21 January BLUE RIDGE refueled for the first time in five months.

On 1 February BLUE RIDGE conducted the LOE. The many months of preparation were evident as BLUE RIDGE passed in all areas that were examined with flying colors. On 7 February Commander SEVENTH Fleet, VADM Timothy W. Wright, broke his flag on BLUE RIDGE, returning his command to sea. On 9 February BLUE RIDGE successfully conducted dock trials. On 13 and 14 February BLUE RIDGE was underway for sea trials. The ship and her crew performed superbly after an extended period in port. All the new and overhauled equipment were tested while crew members re-familiarized themselves with the underway for TSTA Phase I. Afloat Training Group, Western Pacific (ATG) observers road the ship for 10 days while BLUE RIDGE operated near Okinawa, Japan. With ATG aboard BLUE RIDGE exercised daily in all areas of war fighting, seamanship, damage control, and communications. For the first time the gun crews fired the new 25-millimeter chain guns which replaced the 3-inch guns. 26 February, BLUE RIDGE entered Buckner Bay, Okinawa; to embark Commander, Amphibious Force SEVENTH Fleet; and Commander, Landing Force SEVENTH Fleet. The morning of the 28th BLUE RIDGE was underway in company with USS BELLEAU WOOD, USS DUBUQUE, USS SAN BERNARDINO, and USS GERMANTOWN for Pohang, Republic of Korea (ROK) and Exercise TEAM SPIRIT 93.

1-3 March, BLUE RIDGE continued en route to Pohang, Republic of Korea in company with Task Force 76. En-route the crew continued training with main space fire and general quarters drills. On 3 March BLUE RIDGE entered Pohang and immediately began unloading the last of the personnel and equipment required to support the BLUE RIDGE mission as Command and Control platform for Exercise TEAM SPIRIT 93. On 5 March BLUE RIDGE began TEAM SPIRIT 93 with a port breakout with U.S. and Republic of Korea TEAM SPIRIT 93 units. For the next two weeks BLUE RIDGE operated off the coast of Korea, finishing with a visit to Chinhae. On 8 March BLUE RIDGE went alongside USNS ANDREW J. HIGGINS for underway replenishment and refueling. It was an excellent opportunity for Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist training in underway replenishment and refueling. After an eventful five weeks BLUE RIDGE returned home to Yokosuka on 23 March.

April was a month of upkeep in home port, Yokosuka, Japan. On 12 April Captain John Lyons III relieved Captain Robert Cepek as Chief of Staff, COMSEVENTHFLT. During the month the ship's Basic Point Defense Missile System (BPDMS) was removed along with

related equipment and cabling. Also in April BLUE RIDGE received the news that the ship and crew had been awarded the Battle Efficiency Award excellence in mission readiness and execution. A new "E" was painted on each Bridge Wing and each crew member proudly affixed the ribbon to his uniform.

By the first week of May, the BLUE RIDGE crew was ready for a small break. The break was arranged and provided by the BLUE RIDGE Moral, Welfare and Recreation team headed by the ship's Navigator, LT [REDACTED], with a joint USS BLUE RIDGE/USS SAMUEL B. GOMPERS picnic on Fleet Activities, Yokosuka. The picnic was a resounding success for both commands, and contributed immensely to the excellent cooperation between the crews. On 12 May BLUE RIDGE headed for sea local operations in preparations for OPPE. After a few days of intense training, focusing on Engineering and Damage Control, BLUE RIDGE dropped anchor off Shimoda, Japan, on 15 May for the 54th annual Black Ship Festival. In the three days at anchor thousands of Japanese toured the BLUE RIDGE, and BLUE RIDGE sailors were heartily welcomed in Shimoda. On 19 May BLUE RIDGE weighed anchor and put to sea for more training and underway drills. On the 22nd BLUE RIDGE returned to Yokosuka for final OPPE preparations.

From 3 to 5 June the Pacific Fleet Propulsion Examining Board gave BLUE RIDGE the Operational Propulsion Plant Exam. Preparing and training for OPPE had been a major focus of the whole crew for the past year. The culmination of this long range planning was the successful OPPE and stands as a credit to the Chief Engineer, LCDR [REDACTED], the Damage Control Assistant, LT [REDACTED] and all hands for their hard work and dedication to excellence. The remainder of the month was an upkeep period. Work continued to upgrade and install new equipment further increasing BLUE RIDGE's command and control capabilities. On 19 June Engineers from Naval Sea Systems Command conducted an inclining experiment moving weight from side to side on the main deck to recompute BLUE RIDGE's stability in the aftermath of a year of major equipment changes. On 28 June Captain Douglas Marcy, USMC, relieved Major Hideo Sato, USMC, as Commanding Officer, Marine Communications Detachment, USS BLUE RIDGE. The following day BLUE RIDGE got underway for the day to test equipment that was to be used in the upcoming joint exercise TANDEM THRUST 93.

On the first day of July the Commanding Officer commissioned Ensign [REDACTED] as a Limited Duty Officer and the new Ensign departed for his new assignment. Late in the evening on 11 July after unloading the last of the equipment and personnel for Exercise TANDEM THRUST 93, BLUE RIDGE left Yokosuka for Tinian Island. En route Tinian, embarked personnel, many of whom had never been on a ship before, were familiarized with the ship, the crew and the equipment. Exercise TANDEM THRUST was a demonstration of the capability of the Commander U.S. SEVENTH FLEET to serve as a Joint Task Force Commander from an afloat command. The USS BLUE RIDGE provided support for the Commanding General, First Marine Aircraft Wing, the Joint Forces Air Component Commander and the Assistant Division Commander, Sixth Infantry Division U.S. Army, as Deputy Commander Joint Task Force. The exercise provided a dynamic scenario requiring

constant adjustments to plans as the situation changed. On 23 July BLUE RIDGE moored in Apra Harbor, Guam. While in Guam some of the crew enjoyed their first visit to U.S. soil since arriving on board BLUE RIDGE. TANDEM THRUST 93 achieved its major objectives, and on the 26th BLUE RIDGE began the return trip to Yokosuka arriving on 29 July.

On 13 August BLUE RIDGE was again underway en route Chinhae, ROK for Exercise ULCHI FOCUS LENS 93. The 15th BLUE RIDGE moored at Fleet Activities Chinhae, ROK. Tragedy struck as the Korean crane operator on the pier was killed when his crane toppled while lifting the brow from the main deck of the BLUE RIDGE to the pier. BLUE RIDGE departed Chinhae on the 19th with Commander, Amphibious Group ONE and Commanding General, First Marine Expeditionary Brigade embarked and remained at sea until the evening of the 24th. While in port for the completion of ULCHI FOCUS LENS, BLUE RIDGE welcomed aboard the Prospective Commanding Officer, Captain Ernest H. Joy II. Upon departure from Chinhae the crew demonstrated its full spectrum of capabilities for the PCO en route to Yokosuka and learned to spell his name correctly or so it seemed!

BLUE RIDGE returned to Yokosuka on 2 September. Two days later Captain Ernest H. Joy II relieved Captain Alan L. Heisig as Commanding Officer at a ceremony in Yokosuka, Japan, with Vice Admiral Jerry O. Tuttle as the guest speaker. VADM Tuttle presented CAPT Heisig with the Legion of Merit for his highly successful tour as Commanding Officer. The next two weeks were spent preparing for the arrival of the Pacific Fleet Board of Inspection and Survey. The INSURV board stepped aboard on 20 September and scrutinized every space and every system on board. All systems were ready for the underway material inspection which began at 0600 the 21st. BLUE RIDGE completed the inspection "Fit for further Service" and impressed the board with "outstanding" preparation and support. The crew took great pride in their fine performance during the inspection. The remainder of the month was spent in upkeep.

On 4 October BLUE RIDGE took in all lines and got underway for Hong Kong with a Limited Training Team (LTT) comprised of experts from Afloat Training Team, Pacific (ATGPAC). En route BLUE RIDGE felt the force of Typhoon Ed and had to delay entering Hong Kong until the 10th while skirting the edge of the typhoon's strong wind. While in port Hong Kong the crew enjoyed liberty with excellent opportunities to shop in both Hong Kong and Kowloon. A few were fortunate to visit China through tours arranged by the Recreation Service Officer. Several of the crew's spouses flew down from Japan to enjoy the port visit. On October 14th BLUE RIDGE was underway again for Singapore. Underway emergency drills such as general quarters for main space fire drills were conducted en route to train the crew with the LTT observing. On 19 October BLUE RIDGE moored in Sembawang port, Singapore. During the short visit all departments benefitted from the maintenance facilities, having minor repairs and improvements accomplished throughout the ship. On 21 October the new Command Master Chief, AVCM (SW/AW) Wayne Leibzeit, was welcomed aboard for duty. On 22 October BLUE RIDGE departed Singapore for Jakarta, Indonesia. the transit was short

including the crossing of the Equator in the Southern Hemisphere. VADM Wright received numerous distinguished visitors and fostered improved military relations with Indonesia, a major objective of the port visit. Liberty in Jakarta exceeded all the crew's expectations. Hundreds of local U.S. citizens toured the ship during the visit. After a great visit in Jakarta, BLUE RIDGE set sail for Perth, Western Australia on 27 October. the honorable Neptunus Rex and Davey Jones graced the decks of the BLUE RIDGE and in the time honored ceremony, inducted numerous Polly Wogs, including Captain Joy. The crew rushed to Emergency Flight Quarters to receive a CH-46 helicopter which was low on fuel and unable to land on the fouled deck of USNS MARS. Knightrider 07 landed safely and refueled. The following morning, BLUE RIDGE conducted underway replenishment training with USNS MARS with station-to-station connected transfers and vertical transfers by helicopter along with several emergency and maneuvering drills.

On 1 November BLUE RIDGE stood into the port of Fremantle/Perth, Australia. Visits were made by Consul General Croatia, HMAS STERLING and PEARCE. While in port Fremantle, BLUE RIDGE MWR sponsored a party for the crew and several hundred invited guests. Several of the crew in turn took advantage of invitations offered by residents of Fremantle and Perth to attend functions, visit homes, and to be shown the local sights. In the morning of the sixth BLUE RIDGE departed Fremantle for Manila, Republic of the Philippines. Immediately after clearing the coastal waters off Fremantle the crew was exercised at a general quarters drill, followed by Engineering Casualty Control (ECC) drills. During the long transit to Manila, the crew exercised daily with a mix of abandon ship, man overboard, general quarters and ECC drills. By 15 November when BLUE RIDGE arrived at Manila, the crew was well trained in a great number of special evolutions and ready for the recreation that Manila had to offer. Just before entering port, the Navigation team successfully completed a graded precision anchorage exercise while awaiting the arrival of the Manila Pilot. Entering port with the Manila pilot turned out to be a seamanship challenge. The pilot was unable to convey his orders to the two tugs that were made up to BLUE RIDGE. As a result of the pilot's lack of communication with the tugs, the Commanding Officer was forced to take control of the tugs, narrowly avoiding a collision with a moored ship and a hard landing on the pier. The pilot was used to relay messages from the Commanding Officer to the tugs, however, difficulties continued until lines were put over to the pier and the BLUE RIDGE was able to warp herself in using the lines and the tugs were cast off. Once BLUE RIDGE was safely moored, final preparations were made for receiving guests at a reception hosted by COMSEVENTHFLT on the main deck that night. Several local Government and U.S. Embassy officials attended the "Big Top". Manila was a drastic change from Fremantle as the weather in Manila was hot and humid, compared to the comfortable spring weather experienced in Fremantle only days earlier. On 19 November BLUE RIDGE set sail for home, Yokosuka, Japan. En route Yokosuka, BLUE RIDGE spent the time preparing for SRA-24 and pending intermediate maintenance availabilities. On 24 November BLUE RIDGE moored in Yokosuka, Japan, just in time for Thanksgiving. As usual the mess decks presented a superb dinner for the crew and guests.

In the month of December, BLUE RIDGE remained in Yokosuka. Several jobs scheduled for SRA-2 were commenced by SRF Yokosuka and ship's company due to available manpower and materials at SRF. A leave period was granted for those of the crew who wanted to spend the Christmas and New years holiday periods away with family and friends. Toward the end of the month BLUE RIDGE was creatively decorated in lights by the electrical Division for the annual Christmas lighting completion sponsored by Fleet Activities Yokosuka. BLUE RIDGE won hands down for the third straight year.


E. H. JOY II



SHIP'S HERITAGE

USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19) is the third ship to be named for the Blue Ridge Mountains of the eastern United States.

The first Blue Ridge was originally a Great Lakes passenger steamer, the Virginia built in 1891, in Cleveland, Ohio. The Virginia was purchased for use as a Navy Transport during World War I and commissioned October 17, 1918 as USS Blue Ridge (SP-2432). At the end of the war Blue Ridge was sold, returned to private service and renamed Avalon. During World War II, Avalon again served as a transport in the San Francisco Bay area. She was returned to private service in 1946 following the end of the war. The ship was destroyed by fire at Long Beach, California in 1960.

The second USS Blue Ridge (AGC-2) was originally a merchantman built by the Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company in Brooklyn, New York and commissioned there on September 27, 1943. During World War II, she served as flagship for the Seventh Amphibious Force operating along the New Guinea coast. In October 1944, USS Blue Ridge led the Northern Attack Force and in December 1945 the San Fabian Attack Force during the liberation of the Philippines. She continued to serve as Seventh Amphibious Force flagship until June 30, 1945. USS Blue Ridge later became the flagship for Amphibious Groups FIVE, SEVEN and ONE, serving in Okinawa and along the China and Korean coasts until February 1946.

During World War II USS Blue Ridge received two battle stars, the Navy Occupational Medal, China Service Medal and Republic of the Philippines Unit Citation. She also served as a command and observation ship during the atomic bomb tests in July 1946 at Bikini Atoll.

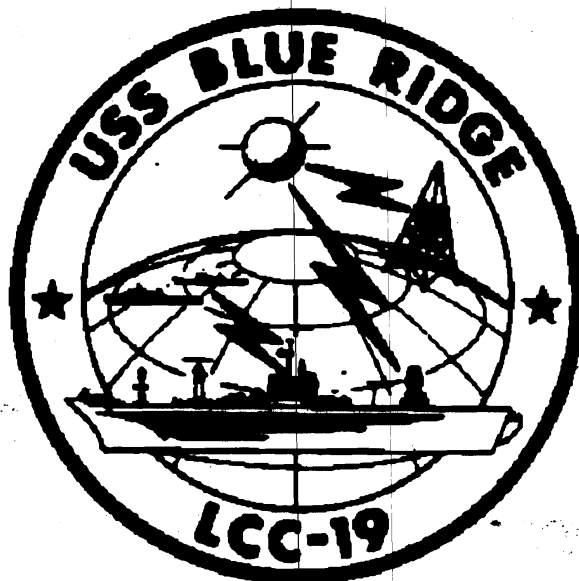
Decommissioned in March 1947 and assigned to the U.S. Pacific Reserve Fleet, her name was struck from the Navy List on January 1, 1960. She was sold for scrap in August of that year.

USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19) was conceived in 1963 and was in the planning and design stage for four years. She was built by the Philadelphia naval Shipyard in 1967 and commissioned November 14, 1970.

DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS

Length 620 feet
Beam 107 feet
Draft 26 Feet
Displacement 19,200 Tons (Full Load)
Speed 20+ Knots
Power Plant Two boilers, one geared turbine, one shaft
Aircraft One SH-3G Sikorsky Sea King Helicopter
Normal Complement 90 Officers, 900 Enlisted
Builders Philadelphia Naval Shipyard

USS Blue Ridge became the Seventh Fleet flagship in 1979. She operates from Yokosuka, Japan as part of the U.S. Navy's Overseas Family Residency Program (OFRP).



USS BLUE RIDGE COMMAND AND CONTROL CAPABILITY

Unlike her World War II predecessor of the same name which was converted from a merchantman to an amphibious force flagship, USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19) was designed and built from the keel up as a command and control ship.

Designed to direct and manage every phase of command and control operations, Blue Ridge represents the accumulated knowledge of four decades of Navy experience in the difficult problem of control and coordination of fleet units.

Initially conceived in 1962, Blue Ridge was in the planning and design stage for four years before construction finally began at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard in early 1967. Three and a half years later she was commissioned on November 14, 1970. Her hull rivals that of a World War II aircraft carrier -- 620 feet long, 107 feet wide, displaces 19,000 tons with a full load, with a draft of 26 feet.

Blue Ridge utilizes her "main battery" of computers, communication gear and other electronic facilities to fulfill her mission as flagship for Commander, United States Seventh Fleet. She is also fully capable of completing her secondary function as "command ship for amphibious task force and landing force commanders during all phases of fleet-wide operations." During her eight-month assignment as flagship for Commander U.S. Naval Forces Central Command in the Arabian Gulf for Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Blue Ridge proved repeatedly her capabilities by being the command and control nerve center for a U.S. Navy armada of over 130 ships, including six carrier battle groups, two battleships and an amphibious task force.

To maximize the task force and landing force commanders' ability to effectively utilize the vast amount of incoming information, Blue Ridge has a command and control complex which is divided to give precise control of certain aspects of operations to a specific control module. At the heart of this complex is two computer systems -- the Naval Tactical Data System (NTDS) and the Amphibious Support Information System (ASIS). NTDS, through information provided by Blue Ridge radars, as well as through data links with other fleet ships, can provide a complete tactical picture of air, surface and sub-surface contacts. From the NTDS picture the most expeditious and coordinated weapons assignment may be made to protect the task force from attack. ASIS allows commanders to have logistical information instantaneously.

In addition to these two major computer systems, an extremely refined communications system is also an integral part of the ship's radical design. Through an automated patch panel and computer-controlled switching matrix, any combination of communication equipment desired may be quickly connected, giving the ship instantaneous global communications capability. The "clean" topside appearance of Blue Ridge is the result of careful design intended to keep the ship's interference to her own communications systems at a minimum.

A description of Blue Ridge would not be complete without mention of her 20-knot+ speed capability. The ship's design not only improves her speed, but also her habitability for crewmembers. Recreation rooms, air conditioning, ship's stores, spacious galleys and messing areas all help make life at sea more pleasant for the crew and embarked staffs. Blue Ridge has accommodations for 268 officers and 1,200 enlisted men.