



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

*Rec'd 4/9/96*

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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

1995

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following command history for the period of 1 January 1995 through 31 December 1995 is submitted:

a. Command Composition and Organization: USS BLUE RIDGE is forward deployed to the Western Pacific and permanently homeported in Yokosuka, Japan, as flagship for Commander, SEVENTH Fleet, Commander, Amphibious Force SEVENTH Fleet and Commander, Landing Force SEVENTH Fleet. Commanding Officer: Captain Ernest H. Joy II from 1 January to 18 July 1995, and Captain Terence P. Labrecque from 19 July to 31 December 1995. Immediate Superior: RADM J. F. Sigler from 1 January to 1 June 1995, and RADM W. Doran from 1 June to 31 December 1995.

b. Chronology:

Sea Trials	17 January
Brief Stop for personnel, Okinawa	22 January
Visit Hong Kong	25-29 January
TSTA III	30-31 January
Visit Manila, Philippines	1-5 February
FEP	6-8 February
SRA 25	13 February - 15 March
Sea Trials	23 March
Visit Tokyo, Japan	25-26 March
Visit Townsville, Australia	13-17 April
Visit Sydney, Australia	21-25 April
Visit Hobart, Australia	28 April - 1 May
Visit Adelaide, Australia	4-7 May
Visit Fremantle, Australia	12-15 May
Visit Bali, Indonesia	20-23 May
SRA 26	5 June - 31 July
Change of Command	19 July
Sea Trials	1 August
CART IIA	7-11 August
Friendship Day Cruise	13 August
Brief Stop for personnel, Okinawa	16 August
Exercise ULCHI FOCUS LENS	21-31 August
Visit Chinhae, ROK	18-20 August
Visit Pusan, ROK	25-26 August

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Visit Tonghae, ROK	26-27 August
Visit Chinhae, ROK	1-2 September
Sistership Cruise with JDS HIEI	14-21 September
Visit Nagasaki, Japan	15-17 September
JWIDS	18-30 September
Visit Sasebo, Japan	17-19 September
Visit Kagoshima, Japan	21 September
Visit Cebu, Philippines	27-29 September
Visit Port Kelang, Malaysia	5-7 October
Visit Singapore	9-13 October
Exercise Mergate 95	9-11 October
Exercise TEMPO BRAVE	10-20 October
Visit Hong Kong	18-21 October
Brief Stop for personnel, Okinawa	24 October
Exercise FOAL EAGLE	24 October - 5 November
Visit Chinhae, ROK	26-28 October
Visit Pohang, ROK	30-31 October
Visit Pohang, ROK	4 November
25th Anniversary	14 November
"Coming Alive" Ceremony	
SRA 27	10-31 December

c. Summary of Operations: USS BLUE RIDGE began 1995 pierside in Yokosuka, Japan during an upkeep period. The crew had to train heavily for BLUE RIDGE's upcoming busy schedule which included FEP, three Ship's Repair Availabilities, three major exercises, and 25 port visits in seven different countries.

On 17 January, after completion of the upkeep and holiday period, BLUE RIDGE got underway for Sea Trials in preparation for its first extended underway period for 1995. After correcting the final problems with the shipboard systems, BLUE RIDGE shifted colors for its first mission in 1995. This mission included steaming to Okinawa to embark over 400 Marine Corps personnel for port visits to Hong Kong and Manila, Philippines. On 25 January, BLUE RIDGE entered port in Hong Kong, mooring at Fenwick Pier, on the former HMS TAMAR. The crew and embarkees enjoyed a successful port visit while the ship hosted luncheons and a Big Top reception for local dignitaries. On 30 January, BLUE RIDGE departed HONG KONG en route Manila for TSTA III. During this period, the crew honed its combat and damage control skills in preparation for the upcoming FEP. On 1 February, BLUE RIDGE entered port in Manila. The crew had an extremely warm reception, ensuring that the US Navy would always be welcome there. Another successful Big Top ceremony was held for all to enjoy. On 6 February, the BLUE RIDGE departed for Okinawa and FEP. The BLUE RIDGE completed the FEP with outstanding results reported by ATG WESTPAC. After a brief stop in Okinawa to debark the Marines, BLUE RIDGE returned home to Yokosuka on 12 March to begin SRA 25.

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SRA 25, the first of a series of SRA's designed toward the upgrade of the ship's communications and C4I suite, began on 13 March. During this availability, BLUE RIDGE began its habitability upgrade of many spaces, including major work on the Flag Module. All staterooms and the Flag Mess were completely refurbished for the purpose of embarking staff personnel in the future. Also, SRA 25 marked the beginning of PHASE I of the installation of the AN/USC-38 EHF system.

On 23 March, BLUE RIDGE departed Yokosuka for Sea Trials to once again work out the bugs out of the new and repaired ship systems. After a successful Sea Trial, BLUE RIDGE was ready to embark on its most exciting extended underway period in history, "Southern Swing 1995". But first, it had to perform a successful port visit and Big Top event in Tokyo, Japan. BLUE RIDGE, escorted by her sister ship JDS SHIRANE, traveled up Tokyo Wan for the two day visit. On 3 April, BLUE RIDGE departed on Southern Swing. The mission of this period was to circumnavigate Australia, while having port visits in five cities and a port visit in Bali, Indonesia. While en route to Australia, BLUE RIDGE CONREPped with the USNS SAN JOSE for a refueling at sea. BLUE RIDGE arrived in Townsville on 13 April. The next month included port visits to Sydney (21-25 April), Hobart (28 April-1 May), Adelaide (4-7 May), and Fremantle (13-15 May). During these port visits, BLUE RIDGE participated in many "Australia Remembers" ceremonies commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II. Also, Over 200 BLUE RIDGE crew members marched in the Annual ANZAC Day Parade in Sydney on 25 April. Afterwards, BLUE RIDGE visited Bali, Indonesia. The ship encountered an unsuitable bottom for anchorage off the south eastern coast. After several unsuccessful attempts at anchorage, the BLUE RIDGE finally found a suitable anchorage. On 22 May, while at anchorage, BLUE RIDGE encountered heavy weather that precluded boat operations. In an attempt to get crew members back aboard, BLUE RIDGE resorted to helo operations to extract personnel from the island. That evening, BLUE RIDGE had begun to drag anchor and subsequently ordered a personnel recall. After more than 24 hours of ferrying personnel from the landing, BLUE RIDGE was able to get underway without injuries or casualties. Although during the rough weather, BLUE RIDGE's bridge officers had to use her engine in order to provide a safe landing for the small boats, resulting in the loss of both flukes on the starboard anchor. BLUE RIDGE returned home to Yokosuka on 2 June to begin SRA 26.

On 5 June, BLUE RIDGE entered its second SRA for 1995. This would prove to be the largest and most extensive upgrade period during the year. During this time, the Joint Message Center was completely cleared and refurbished, NAVMACS II, TACINTEL II and SNAP III systems were installed. SRA 26 continued with more space rehabilitation and upgrade until 31 July.

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On 19 July, the BLUE RIDGE had a change of command. Captain T. P. Labrecque relieved Captain E. H. Joy II during a ceremony held on board. The ceremony's guest speaker was the Chief of Japan's Self Defense Fleet, VADM T. Muranaka.

On 1 August, BLUE RIDGE underwent Sea Trials to test the new systems on board. This was followed by a "Friendship" cruise in Tokyo Wan on 13 August. Family members and guests were invited to come aboard and enjoy a day at sea just off of the coast of Miura, Japan.

The end of Summer through Autumn marked BLUE RIDGE's exercise period. During this time BLUE RIDGE was involved in three major exercises, including ULCHI FOCUS LENS '95 (UFL 95), TEMPO BRAVE '95, and FOAL EAGLE '95. UFL 95 lasted from 21-31 August. It is the largest exercise held for Korea. BLUE RIDGE embarked RADM Doran (CTF 76) and MGEN Rollins (CTF 79). During this exercise, BLUE RIDGE acted as the command center to react to a North Korean invasion of the south. During this period, BLUE RIDGE held port visits in Chinhae, Pusan, and Tonghae.

On 5 September, BLUE RIDGE returned to Yokosuka for a brief homeport period before getting underway for its final extended underway period of 1995. On 14 September, BLUE RIDGE rendezvoused with the JDS HIEI for sistership operations. During the following week both ships exchanged personnel, conducted bilateral exercises, and held successful port visits to Nagasaki, Sasebo and Kagoshima, Japan. The Kagoshima port visit had to be curtailed due to an approaching typhoon. On 22 September, BLUE RIDGE detached from HIEI and proceeded on to its next port visit in Cebu, Philippines. While en route, a demonstration of the new Joint Warfare Interoperability Demonstration was performed for use onboard BLUE RIDGE. The ship anchored off of the coast of Mactan Island near Cebu on 27 September. Again, BLUE RIDGE had another successful port visit hampered by heavy weather. The Captain ordered a personnel recall on 28 September. BLUE RIDGE lowered all of its boats in order to remove personnel from the shore. After approximately 30 hours of boat operations, all but fifteen BLUE RIDGE personnel were retrieved. BLUE RIDGE then sortied for typhoon evasion the evening of 29 September enroute to another port visit in Port Kelang, Malaysia. BLUE RIDGE transited the straits of Malacca on 4 October. On 5 October, BLUE RIDGE entered Port Kelang. The wharf was approximately two hours from the center of Kuala Lumpur. While inport, BLUE RIDGE embarked staffs for TEMPO BRAVE, including an Australian Group Commander, III Marine Expeditionary Force and their staff. On 9 October, BLUE RIDGE steamed to Singapore, once again transiting the Straits of Malacca. After entering port, BLUE RIDGE participated in MERGATE '95, a small exercise between the Singapore Navy and

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U.S. Navy. TEMPO BRAVE began on 10 October. This exercise was a humanitarian exercise designed toward disaster relief in Cambodia. The exercise continued until 20 October, inport Hong Kong. Most of the staffs not involved with FOAL EAGLE departed. BLUE RIDGE departed Hong Kong on 22 October for Korea. On 24 October, BLUE RIDGE stopped in Okinawa to embark COMPHIBGRU ONE and Marines for the exercise. This is also the date that FOAL EAGLE began. FOAL EAGLE took BLUE RIDGE to Chinhae and Pohang to support the embarkation of amphibious forces. On 20 October, while steaming with USS DUBUQUE, USS FORT MCHENRY and various Korean units, BLUE RIDGE observed an amphibious assault exercise just north of Pohang. BLUE RIDGE entered Pohang on 4 November to debark all embarked personnel.

On 7 December, BLUE RIDGE returned home. While en route from Korea, BLUE RIDGE transited the Shimonoseki Straits. On 10 November, SRA 27 commenced with upgrades in the Supply berthing compartment and the Photographic and Print shop. Also, SACC was completely gutted and refurbished and has been renamed JOCC, or Joint Operations Command Center.

Finally, on 14 November, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of BLUE RIDGE's commissioning, the crew of BLUE RIDGE had a "Coming Alive" celebration. In the same spirit of her commissioning, she saw her rotate all of her antennas, light off engines and re-man all stations. The Commander SEVENTH Fleet, VADM Clemens, was the guest speaker for the event.

  
T. P. LABREQUE