



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS CARTER HALL (LSD 50)
FPO AE 09573-1738

Rev 02/02/98
w/o disk

5757

Ser LSD 50/025

10 Jan 98

From: Commanding Officer, USS CARTER HALL (LSD 50)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy
Yard, Washington, D.C. 20374-0571

Subj: ANNUAL COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Command Organization
(2) Chronology of Events
(3) Historical Narrative

1. As per reference (a), the annual command history for USS CARTER HALL (LSD 50) for calendar year 1997 is hereby forwarded.

a. Command Mission. The mission of CARTER HALL is to transport and launch amphibious craft and vehicles with their crews and embarked personnel in an amphibious assault, to act as Primary Control Ship during amphibious assaults and render limited docking and repair service to small ships and craft.

b. Command composition and organization.

(1) CARTER HALL is homeported in Little Creek, Virginia and is assigned to Amphibious Group Two, commanded by RADM Gordon S. Holder, U.S. Navy.

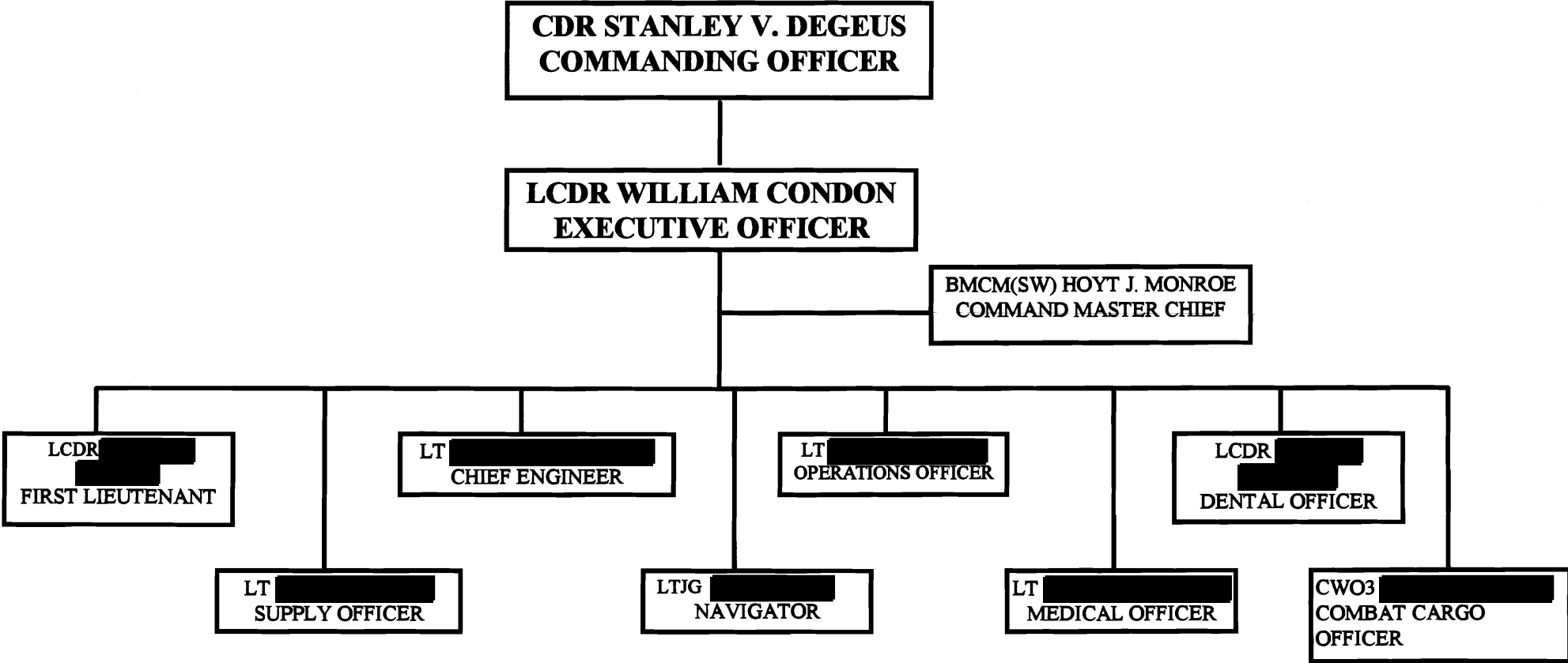
(2) The ship's crew consists of 22 officers and 300 enlisted personnel. The ship's organization is outlined in enclosure (1).

c. Chronology. Enclosure (2) is a chronology of the events and milestones reached during 1997.

d. Narrative. Enclosure (3) is a historical narrative of significant events in 1997.

S. V. Degeus
S. V. DEGEUS

USS CARTER HALL COMMAND ORGANIZATION



CARTER HALL (LSD 50)
CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

ENCL(2)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
06 Jan 97	Holiday standown period ends
07 Jan 97	Boiler inspection held
24 Jan 97	First ESWS Board held for a Chief Petty Officer, ETC [REDACTED]
28 Jan 97	Embarked 19 members of the Richmond Navy League Underway from Little Creek NAB
29 Jan 97	Conducted LCAC Operations in Vacapes OPAREA
30 Jan 97	Moored Quay Wall East Little Creek NAB
04 Feb 97	Underway from Little Creek NAB Embarked LCU 1644 enroute to Morehead City, NC
04-13 Feb 97	Conducted COMPTUEX with JFK Battlegroup Underway from Morehead City, NC
08 Feb 97	UNREP with USS Vicksburg EA-6B jamming demonstration
12 Feb 97	Conducted first amphibious assault of 1997 in Onslow Bay, NC
13 Feb 97	Moored Quay Wall East Little Creek NAB after debarking LCU 1644
19 Feb 97	Berth shift to Quay Wall West for Ammo Onload
28 Feb 97	LTjg [REDACTED] becomes the first Surface Warfare Qualified Officer
09 Mar 97	Underway from Little Creek NAB, embarked LCU enroute to Morehead City, NC
10 Mar 97	Moored pierside Morehead City, NC Embarked Marine Service Support Group 22 of MEU 22 Underway from Morehead City, NC
18 Mar 97	RADM Wirt Fladd, COMPHIBGRU TWO, visits Carter Hall
21 Mar 97	Conducted amphibious assault, New River Inlet, NC
22 Mar 97	Moored pierside Morehead City, NC, to offload embarked Marines Underway from Morehead City, NC
23 Mar 97	UNREP with USS Arctic
24 Mar 97	Launched LCU 1644 enroute to Little Creek, VA. Moored Quay Wall East, NAB
25 Mar - 28 Apr 97	POM Standown
23 Apr 97	Underway from Little Creek for Sea Trials
25 Apr 97	Ship's picnic with dependents
29 Apr 97	Underway for Mediterranean Deployment 1997
30 Apr 97	ARG Onload in Morehead City, NC

	Underway enroute to Rota, Spain
04 May 97	First steel beach picnic
08 May 97	UNREP with USS Monongahela
11 May 97	INCHOP to Sixth Fleet
12-13 May 97	PVST Rota, Spain
14-19 May 97	Exercise Linked Seas
21 May 97	Anchor in Tagus River, Lisbon, Portugal
24 May 97	Change of Command Ceremony: CDR Stanley V. DeGeus relieves CDR Rand D. LeBouvier as Commanding Officer
26 May 97	Underway from Lisbon, Portugal
27 May 97	Transit the Straits of Gibraltar
28 May 97	Moor pierside Almeria, Spain Exercise BETACOM commences IMAV with USS Simon Lake commences Midshipmen Phase I Embark
07 Jun 97	Underway from Almeria, Spain
08 Jun 97	Steel Beach picnic Fish Call-WESTMED
10 Jun 97	UNREP with USS Monongahela CIWS PAC Fire
12-20 Jun 97	Exercise Alexander the Great
13-15 Jun 97	Anchor in Volos Bay, Greece for PVST
17 Jun 97	Seven Wave Amphibious Assault rehearsal Ambassador to Greece spends the evening onboard Carter Hall
18 Jun 97	Seven Wave Amphibious Assault Begin Alexander the Great
19 Jun 97	Midshipmen Phase I Debark
21 Jun 97	UNREP with USS Monongahela CO's and XO's ballcaps transferred to USS Monongahela and held hostage
22 Jun 97	Fish Call - CENTMED
23 Jun 97	Transit Straits of Messina
24 Jun 97	Transit Straits of Bonafacio
25 Jun 97	Anchor in Cassis, France for PVST Day of Hope Midshipmen Phase II Embark
30 Jun 97	Underway from Cassis, France Swim Call in well deck
01 Jul 97	Moor pierside in Toulon, France for PVST 22 MEU(SOC) and BLT 1/2 visit CARTER HALL
03 Jul 97	DC Standown Crew visits Rhone National Cemetary, France
04 Jul 97	Ship hosts Fourth of July Picnic for the crew
07 Jul 97	Underway from Toulon, France UNREP with USS Monongahela

07-09 Jul 97	Mid-Cycle Assessment
09 Jul 97	COMPHIBRON FOUR, Commodore Ertel, visits Carter Hall
10-17 Jul 97	COMSIXTHFLT INVITEX
12 Jul 97	Synthetic highline with USNS Patuxent
15 Jul 97	AAV Compatability test with ITS San Georgio
18 Jul 97	UNREP with USNS Saturn Midshipmen Phase II Debark
19 Jul 97	UNREP with USNS Patuxent
21-27 Jul 97	Exercise Atlas Hinge
23 Jul 97	Midshipmen Phase III Embark Swim Call, Tunisia
27 Jul 97	UNREP with USNS Patuxent Anchor in Ibiza, Spain, for PVST
04 Aug 97	Underway from Ibiza, Spain
06 Aug 97	Swim Call - WESTMED
07 Aug 97	UNREP with USS Monongahela
08 Aug 97	Industrial Hygiene survey Leapfrogs and highline transfer with USS Kearsarge
09 Aug 97	Fast Rope/Spy Rig exercise Pizza Delivery to USS Kearsarge CIWS TDU Shoot
10 Aug 97	Steel Beach Picnic and Talent Show Transit Straits of Gibraltar
11 Aug 97	Moor pierside Rota, Spain, for PVST
11-19 Aug 97	IMAV with USS Simon Lake
14 Aug 97	Major General Nylan, Deputy Command General 2 MEF, and Deputy CG2 MEF visit Carter Hall with Colonel Helland
15 Aug 97	LCDR Todd Ratner, Executive Officer, succesfully passes Command Qualification Board
17 Aug 97	Visit by Command Ombudsman
18-21 Aug 97	ETG Special Assist Visit
19 Aug 97	Underway from Rota, Spain
21 Aug 97	Transit Straits of Gibraltar
22 Aug 97	Command Safety Standown
23 Aug 97	VERTREP with USNS Saturn "Killer Tomato" Gun Shoot
24 Aug 97	Danish served to Commodore Ertel, CPR 4, and Colonel Helland, MEU 22
25 Aug 97	UNREP with USS Kearsarge Man overboard drills Search and Rescue Swimmer Training
27 Aug 97	UNREP with USNS Patuxent Stream Nixie
29 Aug 97	Moor pierside Palma, Spain, for PVST Commence Material Self Assessment

05 Sep 97	Underway from Palma, Spain
06 Sep 97	Moor pierside Barcelona, Spain, for PVST
13 Sep 97	Underway from Barcelona, Spain
15 Sep 97	CNO, ADM Jay Johnson; COMSIXTHFLT, VADM Steve Abbott; COMPHIBRON FOUR, CAPT Ertel; and MCPON, ETCM(SW) John Hagan visit Carter Hall
16 Sep 97	OS1(SW) [REDACTED] frocked to OSC(SW) CIWS TRACKEX
18 Sep 97	UNREP with USS Monongahela
19 Sep 97	VERTREP with USNS Concord
21 Sep 97	Aviation Safety Standown
22 Sep 97	Anchor in Kiriprissa, Greece
23 Sep - 07 Oct 97	Exercise Dynamic Mix
23 Sep 97	Refuel USS Cyclone
26 Sep 97	Formation steaming with USS Kearsarge and USS Ponce
27 Sep 97	Refuel USS Cyclone
28 Sep 97	Steel Beach Picnic
06 Oct 97	Refuel USS Cyclone
07 Oct 97	UNREP with USNS Kanawha
10 Oct 97	Transit Straits of Gibraltar
11-15 Oct 97	Agriculture Certification Swing Compass checks for PL1 and PL2
11 Oct 97	Moor pierside Rota, Spain, for washdown and OUTCHOP
16 Oct 97	Underway from Rota, Spain
17 Oct 97	Flush Ballast Tanks
18 Oct 97	RDVU with JFK Battlegroup
19 Oct 97	Flush Ballast Tanks
20 Oct 97	Stream Nixie
21 Oct 97	Flush Ballast Tanks
23 Oct 97	UNREP with USS Arctic
26 Oct 97	Anchor Onslow Bay, NC, to offload AAV's
27 Oct 97	Moor pierside Morehead City, NC, to offload embarked Marines
28 Oct 97	Embark Tigers for the Tiger Cruise Underway from Morehead City, NC
29 Oct 97	Moor pierside Little Creek NAB End Mediterranean Deployment 1997
29 Oct - 31 Nov 97	Post-deployment standown
04 Dec 97	Carter Hall Christmas Party
06 Dec 97	Carter Hall Children's Christmas Party
09 Dec 97	Underway from Little Creek NAB UNREP with USS Monongahela
09-16 Dec 97	Exercise TCAT
10 Dec 97	Anchor in Onslow Bay, NC, for onload of embarked Marines

16 Dec 97	Moor pierside Little Creek NAB
17-19 Dec 97	PLOT I
19 Dec 97	Commence Holiday standown

USS CARTER HALL (LSD 50)
Historical Narrative for 1997

ENCL(3)

USS CARTER HALL (LSD 50) began her second full year since commissioning making preparations for her maiden deployment to the Mediterranean in April. Several pre-deployment exercises had to be completed before becoming a deploying member of the ARG, or Amphibious Ready Group, with the USS Kearsarge and the USS Ponce.

The first exercise was COMPTUEX. It was conducted from February 4-13 with the JFK Battlegroup in Onslow Bay, North Carolina. It was the second exercise with embarked members of the Marine Support Service Group 22 and Battalion Landing Team 1/2. On February 8, an alongside replenishment was conducted with the USS VICKSBURG, Carter Hall's first dry hook-up. COMPTUEX culminated in the first full scale amphibious assault of 1997 on February 12. At the conclusion of the exercise, CARTER HALL debarked the Marines in Morehead City, NC, and returned to Little Creek, VA. She later conducted an ammunition onload on February 19.

On March 9, CARTER HALL (LSD 50) returned to Morehead City and embarked the Marines and their vehicles and equipment for JTFEX/SOCEX, which was conducted from March 11-22 in Onslow Bay, NC. On March 18, COMPHIBGRU2, RADM Wirt Fladd toured the ship, speaking to various crewmembers along his tour route. The second major amphibious assault of 1997 occurred on March 21, near New River Inlet, NC. At the conclusion of the exercise, CARTER HALL moored pierside in Morehead City on March 22 to offload remaining Marines and their gear. Enroute from Morehead City to Little Creek the following day, the ship completed a successful alongside replenishment with USS ARCTIC. CARTER HALL moored at Little Creek on March 24.

In April, the ship entered a Pre-Overseas Movement period to make the final preparations for her maiden six month Mediterranean deployment. While the crew rotated through four different leave periods, the ship was painted and stocked with necessary supplies for the deployment. On April 23, CARTER HALL got underway and headed to the VACAPES OPAREA for one day of sea trials and general operational checks.

Finally, on April 29, families and friends lined the quay wall as CARTER HALL departed Little Creek NAB to begin her deployment. She first traveled to Morehead City before heading across the Atlantic Ocean in order to onload the Marines and their equipment and vehicles. At this time, MSSG 22 and BLT 1/2 became permanently embarked members of the crew. These were the same Marines with which CARTER HALL had performed all of her work-ups. Just offshore of Morehead City, in Onslow Bay, the ship unloaded a full complement of 15 Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAV's) and four M1A1 Tanks.

The month of May began as the USS CARTER HALL (LSD 50) turned her bow east for the Mediterranean Sea. After a 12 day transit, she arrived in Rota, Spain, on May 12, one day after her at-sea turnover.

On May 13, the ship embarked 142 members of the Spanish Marine Corps as part of Exercise Linked Seas. Linked Seas brought together a multinational Maritime Force consisting of NATO representatives from Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom. On May 14, the ship got underway from Rota with the embarked Spanish Marines. The ship took her place in formation and proceeded south to Ensenada de Zahara, or Bay of Zahara, located near the Straits of Gibraltar.

During Linked Seas, CARTER HALL conducted both flight operations and wet well operations. The exercise provided the officers and crew with valuable training in both amphibious assault operations and Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO). CARTER HALL served as primary control ship for the NEO on the evening of May 16, processing 79 Spanish Marines for evacuation. Onboard, they were given food and shelter overnight before departing the ship the following afternoon via CH-46 helicopters. LINKED SEAS 97 was deemed a safe and successful exercise. It strengthened ties between the allied Navies involved as well. Thus far, it was the largest and most complex logistical exercise in CARTER HALL's history.

On May 19, CARTER HALL weighed anchor and departed the Bay of Zahara. She traveled northward to the Tagus River, which runs through Lisbon, the capital of Portugal. For the next 6 days, CARTER HALL's Sailors and Marines

rode the 50 meter utility boat from the ship to the Fleet Landing Area of Lisbon, enjoying what the exciting city had to offer. Lisbon was the first of many ports at which liberty boats were run to and from the ship while anchored.

On May 24, a Change of Command ceremony in Lisbon, Portugal, marked a page in CARTER HALL 's history as her first Commanding Officer, CDR Rand D. LeBouvier, turned over command of the ship he commissioned. With the crew mustered in the Vehicle Turning Area, both Commanders read their orders aloud and CDR Stanley V. DeGeus assumed command of CARTER HALL.

On May 26, CARTER HALL left Lisbon enroute to Almeria, Spain. She transited the Straits of Gibraltar for the first time on May 27 and entered the Mediterranean Sea.

Almeria, Spain, was the backdrop for Exercise BETACOM and a pierside availability with the USS Simon Lake (AS 33). Before pulling into port on May 28, Carter Hall offloaded the LCU, AAV's, tanks, and trucks onto the beach. The Marines needed each piece of gear for their ten days of cross-training with the Spanish Marines. In Almeria, the days were spent maintaining and preserving the ship while nights were spent at clubs and restaurants. May 28 also marked the arrival of the first of three groups of midshipmen that would spend their summer cruises onboard.

The morning of June 6, CARTER HALL left Almeria. Friends made during the week could be seen scattered on the pier waving good-bye. As hard as it was to leave, another exercise awaited CARTER HALL in Volos, Greece.

After spending a few days transiting the Mediterranean, CARTER HALL arrived in Volos Bay, Greece, on June 13 for the planning stage of Exercise Alexander the Great. The crew was treated to two nights of liberty in Volos before being immersed in amphibious operations. The amphibious assault itself took place in Skyros Bay, Greece. Consisting of more than seven boat waves and coordinated between the Greek and U.S. Navies, the assault was timed perfectly and worked in a textbook fashion. After the initial assault, the USS Cyclone (PC 1) pulled alongside for fuel in what was CARTER HALL's first alongside replenishment operation.

The conclusion of the exercise saw the CARTER HALL unloading the Marines and offloading the first group of midshipmen on June 19. Highly successful, Exercise Alexander the Great again displayed the teamwork and coordination that the Navy and the Marines built up during their pre-deployment workups.

Cassis, France, was the next destination for CARTER HALL. On the morning of June 25, CARTER HALL anchored in Cassis. Later that morning, Sailors and Marines participated in the Day of Hope. An event celebrating life, happiness, and human strength, the Day of Hope highlighted children who were victims of cancer. In less than 24 hours, the crew pulled together to give each of the eighty children who visited the ship a ballcap filled with candy and a tour of the ship with various demonstrations along the way. The crew received nothing short of hugs and smiles of thanks from each child involved. After the conclusion of the Day of Hope, CARTER HALL embarked the second group of midshipmen.

From the small resort town of Cassis, CARTER HALL moved on to moor in Toulon, France on July 1. Amidst several other French warships, CARTER HALL celebrated the Fourth of July. A picnic was held on the beach for the crew, complete with music, food, and ballgames. Away from the fun and the sun, a small group of Sailors paid homage to Americans who gave their life during World War II at Rhone National Cemetery outside of Toulon. Both the fun and the sober side of the holiday were observed. Toulon was CARTER HALL's last breather before her next two exercises.

Enroute to her next exercise, CARTER HALL's Engineering Department underwent the Mid-Cycle Assessment. MCA was a major inspection that looked at training, programs, and PQS.

During Exercise INVITEX, which occurred from July 10 through July 17, ships from all over Europe participated in amphibious operations and carrier battle group operations. Off the coast of Italy, CARTER HALL rigged her deceptive lighting, streamed Nixie, and stood undefeated in numerous publication exercises. Combat readiness inside the lifelines of the ship was flexed and toned. Working closely with other countries and

overcoming the language barrier was challenging but all operations went smoothly and CARTER HALL left with another success under her belt. The second group of midshipmen debarked on July 18, shortly after INVITEX concluded.

Shifting from one exercise to another, CARTER HALL joined the Tunisian Navy and Marines during Exercise Atlas Hinge off the coast of North Africa on July 21. Atlas Hinge began with the CARTER HALL stealthily infiltrating the territorial seas of Tunisia. After the Marines later stormed the beach in a massive amphibious assault, CARTER HALL remained anchored in the area to provide logistical support and to conduct training. CARTER HALL embarked its final group of midshipmen on July 23.

With temperatures soaring well past the 112 degree mark in the shade, the sun seemed to be waging a sort of solar warfare. Fighting back in the best way possible, CARTER HALL sent over three-quarters of her crew in three shifts to the beach via LCU 1644 for an amphibious assault consisting of a swim call and an afternoon of fun.

With four exercises behind her, CARTER HALL headed north to Ibiza, Spain, an island synonymous with vacation and relaxation. Anchoring just outside the mouth of the harbor on July 27, CARTER HALL enjoyed a week of liberty on the beaches, in the nightclubs, and at the restaurants.

The good life had to end at some point in time though. CARTER HALL left the Mediterranean Sea for another stop in Rota, Spain. Rota proved to be a working port with the USS Simon Lake and the USS Kearsarge from August 11 through August 19. An additional Intermediate Maintenance Availability during the deployment aided CARTER HALL in wrapping up a number of unfinished jobs. Rota also gave the Marines the opportunity to washdown all of their vehicles and equipment.

Beginning in Rota and extending through the transit to Palma, CARTER HALL's Engineering Department was visited by ETG for a Special Assist Visit. Once again, programs, training, and PQS were evaluated.

On August 29, CARTER HALL moored pierside in Palma, Spain, an island east of Ibiza. Like Ibiza, Palma was host to a festive nightlife and great

beaches. Being there for over a week, Sailors and Marines were able to participate in a community relations project, helping to rebuild and refurbish a local orphanage. They were also able to take advantage of tours sponsored by Morale, Welfare, and Recreation.

With the last port visit for the deployment, CARTER HALL set her sights toward Barcelona, Spain, where she moored on September 6. A city enriched by its past, Barcelona gave the Sailors and Marines an education in history, architecture, and Spanish culture, including dishes like paella.

Before beginning the last exercise of the deployment, CARTER HALL hosted the CNO, Admiral Jay Johnson, COMSIXTHFLT, Vice Admiral Steve Abbot, and MCPON, ETCM(SW) John Hagan on September 15. The CNO took a brief tour of the ship and then held an Admiral's Call for the crew on the flight deck. Talking about his vision of the Navy and the importance of its people, the CNO fielded questions from the crew before meeting with the junior officers in the wardroom. The CNO was thoroughly impressed with the crew, the ship, and the warm welcome he received. Before he left, the CNO and his entourage were presented with some of CARTER HALL's 'Core Value' coins. Each coin has the ship's crest, the adage '5-OH, The New Standard', 'Honor, Courage, and Commitment', and the Command-at-Sea pin engraved on it.

September 23 saw the start of CARTER HALL's final exercise of the deployment. Operating with the JFK Battlegroup and Navies from different European countries, CARTER HALL launched an amphibious assault in Kiriprissia Bay, Greece. Acting as PCO and PCS, CARTER HALL orchestrated the assault and coordinated assets from four different countries. CARTER HALL anchored off the beach during the exercise to continue to coordinate communications, backloads, air operations, and replenishment operations.

With the conclusion of Dynamic Mix on October 7, CARTER HALL had one stop in Rota, Spain, for a major washdown and agricultural certification before returning to the states. While transiting the Straits of Gibraltar enroute to Rota for the fourth and final time on her way out of the

Mediterranean, CARTER HALL was personally escorted on both her port and starboard beams by over one hundred dolphins.

On October 16, CARTER HALL departed Rota, Spain, for an eleven day transit across the Atlantic Ocean. Along the way, CARTER HALL continued training the crew, practicing shipboard evolutions, and made last minute preparations for entering port on October 29.

The offload in Morehead City, NC, began on October 27. Two days were used to disembark the Marines, their equipment, and their vehicles.

With the offload complete, CARTER HALL embarked the Tigers for her Tiger Cruise on October 28. The Tigers sailed with the ship up to Little Creek for the CARTER HALL's official return to the United States. October 29 saw friends and families lining the quay wall as CARTER HALL moored. Every sailor manned the rails with roses in hand for their loved ones.

Upon pulling into Little Creek, CARTER HALL began her post-deployment standown. For one month, sailors took leave, visiting friends and family after six months of being away.

On December 9, CARTER HALL once again got underway from Little Creek for TCAT, an amphibious exercise. Anchored in Onslow Bay, NC, CARTER HALL conducted flight operations, small boat operations, and wet well operations in support of the Marines embarked. TCAT ended on December 16, when CARTER HALL moored pierside in Little Creek.

ETG again visited CARTER HALL on December 17 through December 19 for PLOT I. Engineering Department began another rigorous inspection of its training, its programs, and its PQS. With the conclusion of PLOT I, CARTER HALL commenced her holiday standown period.