



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDING OFFICER
USS COMSTOCK (LSD-45)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS COMSTOCK (LSD 45)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09BH)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR 1991

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) USS COMSTOCK (LSD 45) Command History for 1991

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "W. L. Harris".

W. L. HARRIS

SHIP'S MISSION

United States Ship COMSTOCK (LSD 45) is the fifth ship of the WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41) class, and the third ship of the class to serve in the Pacific Fleet.

COMSTOCK'S mission is to transport United States Marines with their combat equipment to designated areas around the world, and then to launch and support assault landing craft and helicopters during amphibious operations against hostile shores. COMSTOCK can carry four of the new Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC). The LCAC is an assault hovercraft with the ability to exceed 40 knots while carrying a 60 ton payload. Using this new craft, COMSTOCK forces will be able to carry out an amphibious assault against a significantly wider range of beaches.

COMSTOCK accomplishes her mission through the use of a well deck which is flooded to embark and launch assault craft. After leaving the ship, the assault craft are directed towards the shore by the ship's Combat Information Center.

To provide continuing support to the assault force, COMSTOCK is equipped with the Navy's latest advanced technology including updated communication and combat systems, 20-ton and 60-ton cranes, expanded repair facilities, two helicopter landing areas, complete medical and dental facilities and an automated computer based supply system.

IMMEDIATE SENIOR IN COMMAND

Commander, Amphibious Group THREE

Commander, Amphibious Squadron SEVEN

Commanding Officer, USS COMSTOCK (LSD 45)

(R. H. Howe, CDR, USN/1110)

CHRONOLOGY FOR THE YEAR 1991

10-11 JANUARY

UNDERWAY IN THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA OPAREA (SOCAL) FOR TRAINING.

14-18 JANUARY

UNDERWAY IN THE SOCAL OPAREA FOR TRAINING READINESS EVALUATION (TRE), UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH THE USNS NAVASOTA, DECK LANDING QUALIFICATIONS, VERTICAL REPLENISHMENT AND EMERGENCY LOW VISIBILITY APPROACH TRAINING.

23-25 JANUARY

UNDERWAY IN THE SOCIAL OPAREA FOR TRAINING IN PREPARATION FOR REFRESHER TRAINING.

04-08 FEBRUARY

UNDERWAY IN THE SOCIAL OPAREA FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF REFRESHER TRAINING. CREW WAS EXERCISED AT NAVIGATION DETAIL, GENERAL QUARTERS, FLIGHT QUARTERS AND UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT DETAIL.

11-15 FEBRUARY

UNDERWAY IN THE SOCIAL OPAREA FOR THE SECOND WEEK OF REFRESHER TRAINING. CREW WAS EXERCISED AT NAVIGATION DETAIL, GENERAL QUARTERS, DAMAGE CONTROL DRILL PACKAGE, TRAINING BATTLE PROBLEM AND VISIT, BOARD, SEARCH AND SEIZURE DRILL. COMSTOCK DID NIGHT FORMATION STEAMING EXERCISES WITH THE USCG CUTTER MELLON, USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN AND THE USS GARY.

19-22 FEBRUARY

UNDERWAY IN THE SOCIAL OPAREA FOR THE THIRD AND FINAL WEEK OF REFRESHER TRAINING. THE CREW WAS EXERCISED AT NAVIGATION DETAIL, GENERAL QUARTERS, DAMAGE CONTROL DRILL PACKAGE, MASS CONFLAGRATION DRILL AND SMALL BOAT AND SEAL ATTACK. COMSTOCK DID NIGHT FORMATION STEAMING EXERCISE WITH THE USS ROANOKE AND AN UNDERWAY REFUELING WITH THE USNS NAVASOTA.

26 FEBRUARY - 06 MARCH

UNDERWAY, ENROUTE PANAMA CANAL PACIFIC TERMINAL.

07 MARCH

IN THE MORNING, MOORED PIER 2 SOUTH, RODMAN PANAMA. UNDERWAY AT 1700 FOR TRANSIT OF THE PANAMA CANAL.

08-09 MARCH

EXIT THE PANAMA CANAL, ATLANTIC TERMINAL. ENROUTE TO GEORGETOWN, GRAND CAYMAN ISLAND.

10-12 MARCH

ANCHORED GEORGETOWN, GRAND CAYMAN ISLAND.

13-15 MARCH

UNDERWAY, ENROUTE PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA. COMSTOCK PROVIDED DECK LANDING QUALIFICATIONS FOR HELICOPTERS AND WET WELL OPERATIONS FOR FOUR LANDING CRAFT AIR CUSHION (LCAC). THE FOUR LCAC'S WILL BE BROUGHT BACK TO SAN DIEGO AND DELIVERED TO ASSAULT CRAFT UNIT FIVE, CAMP PENDELTON, CALIFORNIA.

16 MARCH

INPORT PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA.

17-21 MARCH

UNDERWAY, ENROUTE CRISTOBAL, PANAMA CANAL ATLANTIC TERMINAL.

22-30 MARCH

TRANSIT PANAMA CANAL. ENROUTE CAMP PENDELTON, CALIFORNIA. COMSTOCK HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT IT HAS WON SEVERAL DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS WHICH INCLUDE NAVIGATION/DECK SEAMANSHIP, DAMAGE CONTROL, ENGINEERING AND AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE.

01 APRIL

COMSTOCK OFF LOADS THE FOUR LCAC AT CAMP PENDELTON. PROVIDES A READY DECK FOR DECK LANDING QUALIFICATIONS. HOST COMMANDER NAVAL FORCES SURFACE PACIFIC, REAR ADMIRAL BENNETT, FOR REENLISTMENT AND AWARD PRESENTATION FOR FOUR COMSTOCK SAILORS. RETURN TO HOMEPORT, SAN DIEGO.

09-11 APRIL

UNDERWAY IN SUPPORT OF MOBILE TRAINING TEAM PHASE THREE, ENGINEERING TRAINING VISIT.

16-17 APRIL

UNDERWAY IN SUPPORT OF OPERATIONAL PLANT PROPULSION EXAMINATION (OPPE).

30 APRIL - 12 MAY

UNDERWAY IN THE SOCIAL OPAREA IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION KERNEL USHER 91-1. SHIPS PRESENT ARE USS CUSHING, USS BRISTOL COUNTY, USS CLEVELAND AND USS PELELIU. AREAS EXERCISED ARE SACEX, SOCEX AND PHIBLEX. COMSTOCK PERFORMS VARIOUS TASKS DURING THE TWO WEEK EXERCISE WHICH INCLUDE FLIGHT QUARTERS, WET WELL OPERATIONS, LCAC CONTROL AND EMERGENCY DEFENSE OF THE AMPHIBIOUS TASK FORCE (EDATF).

29 MAY

UNDERWAY FROM SAN DIEGO CALIFORNIA ON MAIDEN DEPLOYMENT TO THE WESTERN PACIFIC, AS PART OF AMPHIBIOUS READINESS GROUP ALPHA (ARG ALPHA), COMMANDED BY COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS SQUADRON THREE AND MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT FIFTEEN, IN SUPPORT OF POST WAR OPERATION DESERT STORM. SHIPS IN COMPANY INCLUDE USS PELELIU (LHA 5), USS BRISTOL COUNTY (LST 1198), USS CLEVELAND (LPD 7). DEPARTING SAN DIEGO WITH ARG ALPHA ARE UNITS OF BATTLE GROUP BRAVO, WHICH INCLUDE USS ROANOKE (AOR 7), USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CG 57), USS GARY (FFG 51) AND USS MERRILL (DD 976). UNITS OF BATTLE GROUP BRAVO WILL MEET WITH USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN 72) AND USS LONG BEACH (CGN 9). ARG ALPHA IS ENROUTE TO IWO JIMA TO CONDUCT OPERATION VALIANT BLITZ.

03 JUNE

CONDUCTED VISIT BOARD SEARCH AND SEIZURE (VBSS) EXERCISE. TRAINED AT CONDITION 3 WATCHES FOR CIC WATCHSTANDERS. DRILLS INCLUDED FAST ATTACK BOAT SCENARIOS, SOVIET JET FLYOVERS AND LAUNCH AND RECOVERY OF LCAC'S.

04 JUNE

COMSTOCK IS VISITED BY COMPHIBRON THREE, FIFTEENTH MEU AND BLT ONE NINE, FOR A SHIP TOUR.

08 JUNE

CROSSED INTERNATIONAL DATELINE.

10 JUNE

PERFORMED AN UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USS ROANOKE.

11 JUNE

COMSTOCK AND REST OF THE ARG INCHOPS COMSEVENTHFLT.

13 JUNE

CONDUCTED OPERATION VALIANT BLITZ. LCAC LAND DELTA COMPANY LAI ON IWO JIMA. COMSTOCK AND OTHER ARG UNITS HELD A MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THE WAR DEAD OF IWO JIMA, WITH MOUNT SURABACHI IN THE BACKGROUND. WE REMEMBERED THE SACRIFICES THAT OUR FATHERS HAD TO MAKE IN THAT FEBRUARY 1945 BATTLE. THE ARG MEETS LINCOLN BATTLE GROUP AND PARTS WAYS. ARG ALPHA HEADS FOR HONG KONG, IN COMPANY WITH THE USNS PONCHATOUA.

14 JUNE

COMSTOCK RECHECKS SECURED FOR SEA IN ANTICIPATION OF TROPICAL STORM NUNA. ARG SLOWS SPEED TO 7 KNOTS TO AVOID NUNA.

16 JUNE

DUE TO MT. PINATUBO ERUPTION AND TYPHOON BLOWING ASH EVERYWHERE IN THE REGION, COMSTOCK CHANGED COURSE FOR TRANSIT DIRECTLY TO THE PHILIPPINES FOR RELIEF EFFORT, OPERATION FIERY VIGIL. WE OPENED SHIP'S STORE AND TOOK UP COLLECTION OF DONATIONS: TOILETRIES AND CLOTHING FOR SOME 3,000 REFUGEES, AMERICAN SERVICEMEMBERS AND THEIR DEPENDENTS TRAPPED UNDER THE VOLCANIC CLOUD. SHIP PLANS LOGISTICS FOR OUR ROLE IN THE RELIEF EFFORT.

17 JUNE

SECURED ALL VENTILATION AND TOPSIDE EQUIPMENT TO PREVENT THE INTAKE OF VOLCANIC DUST. CLEANED SPACES AND INSTALLED RACKS TO ACCOMMODATE PEOPLE COMING ABOARD.

18 JUNE

ARRIVED SUBIC BAY NAVAL STATION, RP, TO RECEIVE PEOPLE WHO WERE EVACUATED FROM THEIR HOMES DUE TO THE MT. PINATUBO ERUPTION. DEPARTED SUBIC BAY, RP, ENROUTE CEBU CITY, RP, TO DROP OFF EVACUEES.

19 JUNE

ARRIVED CEBU CITY AFTER DUSK. KEPT PASSENGERS ON BOARD OVERNIGHT FOR CONVENIENCE. NO FLIGHTS WERE AVAILABLE AND NO AIR CONDITIONING WAS IN THE AIRPORT.

20 JUNE

OFFLOADED PASSENGERS AT CEBU CITY WITH LANDING CRAFT UTILITY (LCU'S) FROM USS BRISTOL COUNTY AND HELICOPTERS FROM USS ROANOKE. BEGAN TRANSIT BACK TO SUBIC BAY FOR MORE EVACUEES.

21 JUNE

COMSTOCK WAS REMOVED FROM EVACUATION TASKING AND RE-POSITIONED WITH THE AMPHIBIOUS READINESS GROUP.

22 JUNE

ENTERED NAVAL STATION SUBIC BAY FOR UPKEEP AND REPAIR OF CONTROLLABLE PITCH PROPELLER SYSTEM.

24 JUNE

UNDERWAY FROM NAVAL STATION SUBIC BAY FOR UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USS PONCHATULA.

25 JUNE

VERTICAL REPLENISHMENT WITH USS NIAGARA FALLS FOR FRESH FOODS AND VEGETABLES. ENTERED NAVAL STATION SUBIC BAY FOR LIBERTY.

26 JUNE

UNDERWAY FROM NAVAL STATION SUBIC BAY, ENROUTE HONG KONG.

27 JUNE

LEAPFROG EXERCISES WITH USS CLEVELAND, WHICH HAS TODAY RE-JOINED THE ARG AFTER BOILER PROBLEMS CAUSED A LATE START FOR HER WESTERN PACIFIC DEPLOYMENT.

29 JUNE

ARRIVED PORT-OF-CALL, HONG KONG.

05 JULY

UNDERWAY FROM HONG KONG, ENROUTE ARABIAN GULF.

09 JULY

ANCHORED OFF SINGAPORE, FOR A SHORT TIME, TO EMBARK SUPPLY PARTS AND CRUISE BOOK PHOTOGRAPHERS. TRANSITED STRAITS OF MALACCA.

10 JULY

LT HORACIO NADALE, OF THE ARGENTINE NAVY BECAME OFFICER OF THE DECK (UNDERWAY) QUALIFIED.

15 JULY

COMSTOCK INCHOPPED U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND.

18 JULY

CONDUCTED TURNOVER WITH USS GERMANTOWN.

19 JULY

TRANSITED STRAITS OF HORMUZ. LTJG [REDACTED] BECAME FIRST OFFICER ABOARD COMSTOCK TO QUALIFY SURFACE WARFARE OFFICER.

20 JULY

ARRIVED ON STATION, AL HAMRA, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, AND ANCHORED FOR AN AMPHIBIOUS LANDING EXERCISE KNOWN AS AL HAMRA ONE.

21 JULY

AL HAMRA ONE PHIBLEX BEGINS WITH AN OFFLOAD OF TRUCKS, EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL TO THE SHORE. LCPL A. P. SAN JUAN, USMC, WAS KILLED IN THE WELLDECK. WHEN COMSTOCK BALLASTED DOWN FOR LCU OPERATIONS, AN UNMANNED 5-TON TRUCK ROLLED DOWN THE WELLDECK RAMP AND STRUCK HIM FROM BEHIND. HE WAS PRONOUNCED DEAD ON ARRIVAL AT USS PELELIU (LHA-5) BY THE CATF SURGEON.

22-31 JULY

CONTINUED PHIBLEX, AL HAMRA ONE.

28 JULY

VISIT BY COMMIDEASTFOR, VADM RAYNOR A.K. TAYLOR.

29 JULY

COMMENCED BACKLOAD OF MARINES AND EQUIPMENT.

31 JULY

BACKLOAD COMPLETED.

01 AUGUST

UNDERWAY FROM AL HAMRA U.A.E., ENROUTE BAHRAIN.

02-04 AUGUST

ANCHORED OFF THE COAST OF BAHRAIN.

05-09 AUGUST

PORT VISIT, BAHRAIN.

10 AUGUST

UNDERWAY FROM BAHRAIN.

13 AUGUST

ANCHORED, AL HAMRA U.A.E., FOR PHIBLEX KNOWN AS AL HAMRA TWO.

14-19 AUGUST

COMMENCED PHIBLEX, OFFLOAD OF MARINES AND EQUIPMENT.

18 AUGUST

ASSAULT ON BEACH WITH LINCOLN BATTLE GROUP ASSETS AND ARG ALPHA SHIPS.

19 AUGUST

BACKLOADED FROM PHIBLEX, AL HAMRA TWO. UNDERWAY, ENROUTE JEBEL ALI, U.A.E.

23 AUGUST - 03 SEPTEMBER

INPORT JEBEL ALI, U.A.E. FOR UPKEEP AVAILABILITY WITH USS L.Y. SPEAR.

04-10 SEPTEMBER

UNDERWAY FROM JEBEL ALI, U.A.E. TO THE CENTRAL ARABIAN GULF FOR TRAINING.

11-12 SEPTEMBER

ANCHORED IN THE VICINITY OF BAHRAIN BELL TO CONDUCT NAVY-WIDE EXAM, DAMAGE CONTROL STAND DOWN, VERTICAL REPLENISHMENT WITH THE USS WHITE PLAINS AND A BATTLE PROBLEM.

12 SEPTEMBER

UNDERWAY FROM BAHRAIN TO THE CENTRAL ARABIAN GULF FOR TRAINING AND ANCHORING.

13-16 SEPTEMBER

ANCHORED TO CONDUCT TRAINING AND PARTICIPATE IN THE SEARCH OF A DOWNED MH-53 HELICOPTER. THE HELICOPTER WENT DOWN AFTER LEAVING THE USS PELELIU'S (LHA 5) FLIGHT DECK.

17-19 SEPTEMBER

REMAINED ANCHORED IN THE VICINITY OF THE CRASH SITE TO CONDUCT SALVAGE AND SECURITY DUTIES. ASSUMED THE DUTIES AS ON SCENE SAR COMMANDER. SEAL RECONNAISSANCE DIVERS RECOVERED KIT 1A, A PIECE OF SECURE VOICE COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT. AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF THE SALVAGE SHIP USNS SIOUX TO TURN OVER ON SCENE SAR COMMANDER AND ASSIST IN RECOVERY OF WRECKAGE OF THE MH-53 HELO.

20-21 SEPTEMBER

TURNED OVER THE DUTIES OF ON SCENE SAR COMMANDER TO THE USNS SIOUX. ASSISTED IN THE RECOVERY THE TAIL SECTION AND MAIN FUSELAGE OF THE MH-53 HELO. THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY MOORING ALONGSIDE THE SIOUX AND USING COMSTOCK'S CRANES IN WHAT WAS THE FIRST JOINT OPEN OCEAN RECOVERY OF A DOWNED HELICOPTER.

22-23 SEPTEMBER

UNDERWAY FROM ANCHORAGE, ENROUTE DUBAI, U.A.E.

24-28 SEPTEMBER

INPORT BERTH 30 MINA RASHID DUBAI, U.A.E.

29 SEPTEMBER - 01 OCTOBER

UNDERWAY FROM DUBAI, U.A.E. TRANSITED THE SOUTH ARABIAN GULF, STRAITS OF HORMUZ, GULF OF OMAN AND THE NORTH ARABIAN SEA ENROUTE TO THE COAST OF OMAN TO CONDUCT EXERCISE SEA SOLDIER FIVE.

02-09 OCTOBER

REMAINED UNDERWAY AND CONDUCTED EXERCISE SEA SOLIDER FIVE OFF THE COAST OF OMAN.

10-20 OCTOBER

UNDERWAY IN THE NORTH ARABIAN SEA FOR TRAINING. ANCHORED DURING THIS PERIOD TO DO VERTICAL REPLENISHMENT WITH THE USS WHITE PLAINS. COMPLETED TURNOVER WITH THE USS SAIPAN (LHA 2) AMPHIBIOUS READINESS GROUP. DEPARTED THE U.S CENTRAL COMMAND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY. INCHOPPED INTO SEVENTH FLEET AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY.

21-26 OCTOBER

ENROUTE TO SEMBAWANG, SINGAPORE. TRANSITED THE STRAITS OF MALACCA.

27-31 OCTOBER

INPORT SEMBAWANG, SINGAPORE.

01-18 NOVEMBER

UNDERWAY FROM SEMBAWANG, SINGAPORE ENROUTE TO PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII.

01 NOVEMBER

COMSTOCK CROSSED THE EQUATOR FOR THE FIRST TIME AT LONGITUDE 105-29.5 E. OUR GOOD SHIP IS VISITED BY DAVEY JONES AND IS PREPARING TO RID ITSELF OF ALL SLIMEY POLLYWOGS.

02 NOVEMBER

COMSTOCK CONDUCTS ITS FIRST CROSSING THE LINE CEREMONY. THE ROYAL KINGDOM OF KING NEPTUNE AND DAVEY JONES HAS SUCCESSFULLY CLEANSED THE SHIP OF ALL SLIMEY WOGS.

05 NOVEMBER

TROPICAL DEPRESSION 27W HAS BEEN RENAMED TROPICAL STORM THELMA. ARG ALPHA WILL HAVE TO PASS WITHIN CLOSE PROXIMITY. THE SHIP PREPARES FOR HEAVY WEATHER AND SECURES FOR SEA.

12 NOVEMBER

INCHOPPED TO THIRD FLEET AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY.

19-25 NOVEMBER

UNDERWAY FROM PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII TO CAMP PENDELTON, CALIFORNIA. EMBARKED MALE FAMILY MEMBERS FOR A TIGER CRUISE.

26 NOVEMBER

ANCHORED IN VICINITY OF CAMP PENDELTON TO OFFLOAD MARINES AND ASSAULT CRAFT UNIT FIVE PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT. EMBARKED BOTH MALE AND FEMALE DEPENDENTS FOR A MINI-TIGER CRUISE TO HOMEPORT, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA.

27 NOVEMBER

MOORED PIER 6, NAVAL STATION SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA AND COMPLETED HER MAIDEN WESTERN PACIFIC/INDIAN OCEAN/ARABIAN GULF DEPLOYMENT IN SUPPORT OF POST-WAR, OPERATION DESERT STORM.

04 DECEMBER

SHIFTED FROM PIER 6 TO PIER 11, NAVAL STATION SAN DIEGO.

NARRATIVE

JANUARY 1991 HELD A GREAT AMOUNT OF PROMISE AND EXPECTATION CONCERNING THE SHIP'S OPERATIONAL SCHEDULE. THE YEAR BEGAN WITH OPERATION DESERT SHIELD TURNING TO WAR. THE PREVIOUS DECEMBER COMSTOCK HAD RECEIVED THE CALL TO BE READY TO DEPLOY TO THE

ARABIAN GULF IN SUPPORT OF OPERATIONS IN THE GULF REGION. THE CALL DID NOT COME AND COMSTOCK CONTINUED HER POST OVERHAUL PREPARATIONS AND DEPLOYMENT WORK UPS. THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT HURDLE WAS TO PASS TRAINING READINESS EVALUATION (TRE). IT CONSISTED OF A FOUR DAY UNDERWAY PERIOD TO EVALUATE THE SHIP'S READINESS TO ENTER INTO A MORE ADVANCE TEST OF OUR DAMAGE CONTROL POSTURE.

FEBRUARY SAW THE COMSTOCK CREW DO A SUPERB JOB DURING HER THREE WEEKS OF REFRESHER TRAINING. THE PREVIOUS MONTHS OF HARD WORK PAID OFF AS AN OVERALL SCORE OF OUTSTANDING WAS ASSIGNED TO THE SHIP IN THE FIRST REAL TEST OF CREW READINESS. COMSTOCK'S UNDERWAY TIME WOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO LOCAL AREA OPERATIONS. IN LATE FEBRUARY, COMSTOCK DEPARTED ON A SIX WEEK CRUISE FROM SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA TO PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA, TO PICK UP FOUR NEW LANDING CRAFT AIR CUSHIONED (LCAC) AND DELIVER THEM TO ASSAULT CRAFT UNIT FIVE LOCATED AT CAMP PENDELTON, CALIFORNIA. THE 12,000 NM ROUND TRIP UNDERWAY INCLUDED THE SHIP'S SECOND AND THIRD TRANSITS OF THE PANAMA CANAL AND A PORT VISIT TO THE GRAND CAYMAN ISLANDS. IT WAS DURING THIS TRANSIT THAT THE SHIP WAS INFORMED OF WINNING DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS IN NAVIGATION/DECK SEAMANSHIP, DAMAGE CONTROL, ENGINEERING AND AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE AS WELL AS A SCHEDULED DEPLOYMENT DATE OF 29 MAY. COMSTOCK WAS TO BE PART OF AMPHIBIOUS READINESS GROUP ALPHA UNDER THE COMMAND OF COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS SQUADRON THREE.

COMSTOCK REMAINED BUSY THROUGH THE MONTHS OF APRIL AND MAY AFTER RETURNING TO HOMEPORT. COMSTOCK SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED MOBILE TRAINING TEAM PHASE III AND OPERATIONAL PLANT PROPULSION EXAMINATION, FINISHING ALL ENGINEERING REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO DEPLOYMENT. THE MONTH OF MAY BROUGHT EXERCISE KERNEL USHER 91-1. THE EXERCISE WAS COMMANDED BY COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS SQUADRON THREE AND INCLUDED UNITS THAT HE WOULD BE TAKING WITH HIM ON DEPLOYMENT. THE EXERCISE INCLUDED A SACEX, SOCEX, PHIBLEX AND NEO OPERATIONS, PREPARING ARG ALPHA FOR ITS 29 MAY DEPLOYMENT DATE.

ON 29 MAY 1991, COMSTOCK GOT UNDERWAY FROM SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA ON HER MAIDEN DEPLOYMENT TO THE WESTERN PACIFIC, AS PART OF AMPHIBIOUS READINESS GROUP ALPHA (ARG ALPHA), COMMANDED BY COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS SQUADRON THREE AND MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT FIFTEEN, IN SUPPORT OF POST WAR OPERATION DESERT STORM. SHIPS IN COMPANY INCLUDE USS PELELIU (LHA 5) AND USS BRISTOL COUNTY (LST 1198). USS CLEVELAND (LPD 7) WAS TO DEPART AT A LATER TIME AFTER RESOLVING A BOILER CASUALTY AND MEET ARG ALPHA ENROUTE. DEPARTING SAN DIEGO WITH ARG ALPHA ARE UNITS OF BATTLE GROUP BRAVO WHICH INCLUDE USS ROANOKE (AOR 7), USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CG 57), USS GARY (FFG 51) AND USS MERRILL (DD 976). UNITS OF BATTLE GROUP BRAVO WILL RENDEZVOUS WITH USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN 72) AND USS LONG BEACH (CGN 9). ARG ALPHA IS ENROUTE TO IWO JIMA TO CONDUCT OPERATION VALIANT BLITZ.

AFTER CONDUCTING THE ONE DAY EXERCISE, VALIANT BLITZ, ARG ALPHA DEPARTED THE IWO JIMA AREA ENROUTE TO HONG KONG. ENROUTE ARG ALPHA WAS DIVERTED FROM ITS TRACK TO PROCEED TO SUBIC BAY NAVAL STATION, RP, TO RECEIVE PEOPLE FORCED TO EVACUATE THEIR HOMES DUE TO THE MT. PINATUBO ERUPTION. THE COMSTOCK BEGAN THE 400 NM TRANSIT TO CEBU CITY, ON THE ISLAND OF CEBU, WITH 975 EVACUEES, MOSTLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN. THE PLAN WAS TO DEBARK EVACUEES FOR FLIGHTS BACK TO THE STATES OR GUAM.

AFTER COMPLETING OPERATION FIERY VIGIL, THE MT. PINATUBO EVACUATION, THE SHIP HEADED FOR HER FIRST REAL LIBERTY PORT: HONG KONG. AFTER SIX DAYS IN HONG KONG, COMSTOCK GOT UNDERWAY FOR THE PERSIAN GULF. AFTER A ONE DAY TURNOVER WITH THE USS GERMANTOWN, THE SHIP CONDUCTED HER FIRST ARABIAN GULF EXERCISE, AL HAMRA ONE, OFF THE COAST OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES. CONCLUDING THE TEN DAY EXERCISE, COMSTOCK WAS BOUND FOR A PORT VISIT IN BAHRAIN. FOUR DAYS OF LIBERTY ENDED AND ARG ALPHA WAS HEADED BACK TO CONDUCT AL HAMRA TWO. AFTER THIS ONE WEEK EXERCISE, THE SHIP HAD A TENDER AVAILABILITY WITH THE USS L.Y. SPEAR. THE TWO WEEKS OF INPORT TIME ALLOWED THE COMSTOCK TO ACCOMPLISH SOME NEEDED REPAIRS AND FOR THE CREW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE "AFTER THE STORM" SPORTS TOURNAMENT.

COMSTOCK WAS UNDERWAY FOR A GOOD PART OF SEPTEMBER 1991. THE SHIP PARTICIPATED IN THE FIRST EVER OPEN OCEAN JOINT SALVAGING OF A DOWNED MH-53 HELICOPTER. THE HELICOPTER WAS PART OF US CENTRAL COMMAND MAKING A ROUTINE MAIL AND PARTS RUN TO THE ARG WHEN IT HIT THE WATER AFTER LEAVING THE DECK OF THE USS PELELIU. A SEARCH FOR SURVIVORS TURNED OUT TO BE FUTILE. SIX AIRMEN LOST THEIR LIVES. IN AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF SHIP MANEUVERING AND DECK SEAMANSHIP, COMSTOCK MOORED ALONGSIDE THE SALVAGE SHIP USNS SIOUX AND LIFTED THE WRECKAGE OF THE HELICOPTER OUT OF THE WATER AND ONTO THE STERN OF THE SIOUX.

ON 01 OCTOBER COMSTOCK TRANSITED THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ AND EXITED THE ARABIAN GULF HEADED FOR THE COAST OF OMAN TO CONDUCT THE LAST EXERCISE OF THE DEPLOYMENT. THE SEVEN DAY EXERCISE, SEA SOLDIER FIVE, WAS CONDUCTED WHILE UNDERWAY OFF THE COAST OF OMAN. IT CONSISTED OF A PHIBLEX IN WHICH COMSTOCK'S MEDICAL TEAM PROVIDED SERVICES TO THE LOCAL POPULATION. AFTER CONCLUDING THIS EXERCISE, THE SHIP RENDEZVOUSED WITH THE USS SAIPAN (LHA 2) AMPHIBIOUS READINESS GROUP TO CONDUCT A TURNOVER. AFTERWARDS, COMSTOCK DEPARTED THE US CENTRAL COMMAND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY ON HER WAY HOME.

ON THE RETURN TRIP TO SAN DIEGO, THE SHIP MADE PORT VISITS IN SINGAPORE AND PEARL HARBOR IN ADDITION TO PERFORMING HER FIRST CROSSING THE LINE CEREMONY. TIGERS EMBARKED THE SHIP IN HAWAII AND ENJOYED THE LAST LEG OF COMSTOCK'S DEPLOYMENT ON BOARD WITH

THEIR SPONSORS. THE COMSTOCK ARRIVED OFF CAMP PENDELTON ON 26 NOVEMBER TO OFFLOAD MARINES, THEIR EQUIPMENT AND THE LCAC'S. 27 NOVEMBER SAW THE COMSTOCK WELCOMED HOME BY A CROWD OF APPROXIMATELY FIVE HUNDRED FRIENDS AND FAMILY. 1991 WAS COMSTOCK'S FIRST FULL YEAR IN COMMISSION AND PROVED TO BE A BUSY AND EXCITING YEAR. COMSTOCK TRANSITED THE PANAMA CANAL TWICE, MADE A WESTERN PACIFIC DEPLOYMENT, TEN PORT VISITS AND TRAVELED APPROXIMATELY 43,000 NM. IT WAS A YEAR OF GREAT EXPECTATION AND FULFILLMENT. THE PROOF OF OUR HARD WORK ARE THE SUCCESSES THAT WE ENJOYED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE AND CONTINUED SUCCESS.