



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS CURTIS WILBUR (DDG 54)  
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DDG 54/Ser 047  
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From: Commanding Officer, USS CURTIS WILBUR (DDG 54)  
To: Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR 2004

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12H

Encl: (1) Command Organization  
(2) Chronology 2004  
(3) Narrative History  
(4) Commanding Officer Biography  
(5) Change of Command Ceremony Pamphlet

1. Pursuant to reference (a), enclosures (1) through (5) comprise the 2004 calendar year history of USS CURTIS WILBUR (DDG 54).

  
J. T. LALER III

**Command Composition and Organization 2004**

**Name:** USS CURTIS WILBUR (DDG54)

**UIC:** 21640

**Commanding Officer 01JAN04-19MAR04:** Abramson, A. J., CDR

**Commanding Officer 19MAR04-Present:** Lauer, J. T. III, CDR

**Mission:** The general mission of Curtis Wilbur is to operate offensively in a high-density multi-threat environment as an integral member of a battle group or surface action group to include striking at targets along hostile shorelines and well inland. In addition, CURTIS WILBUR provides its own anti-air warfare, anti-surface warfare, and anti-submarine warfare defense and can effectively provide local area protection to underway replenishment groups, amphibious groups, and other military units. CURTIS WILBUR will provide one of the only operational employments of ballistic missile defense.

**Organization:** Destroyer Squadron FIFTEEN

Battle Force SEVENTH Fleet

**Home Port:** Forward deployed to Yokosuka, Japan as part of the Forward Deployed Naval Forces.

CURTIS WILBUR Chronology 2004

<u>MISSION</u>	<u>SEA DATES</u>	<u>DAYS UNDERWAY</u>
Upkeep	Jan 01-Jan 26	
Ammo Onload	Jan 15	
Sea Trials	Jan 22-Jan 23	2
Multi-Sail	Jan 26-Feb 09	15
Integrated Battle Group Ops IBO	Feb 25-Apr 22	58
Mid-Cycle Assessment (MCA) Vietnam	Jul 16-Jul 30	15
RTS Certification	Aug 19-Aug 20	2
COMMS Check	Sep 23-Sep 24	2
BMD	Sep 27-Oct 16	20
PVST Sasebo	Oct 16-Oct 21	
Ready Tail Ship	Oct 21-Oct 26	6
TASWEX 04	Oct 28-Nov 9	13
ANNUALEX 16G	Nov 9-Nov 22	13
Enroute to Kagoshima	Nov 30-Dec 3	4
PVST Kagoshima	Dec 3-Dec 7	
Enroute to Yokosuka	Dec 7-Dec 9	3
Holiday Upkeep	Dec 9-Dec 31	

## **Command History Narrative 2004**

USS CURTIS WILBUR (DDG 54) began 2004 with the continuation of a month long holiday upkeep which left the ship in Yokosuka with the crew enjoying their holidays. CURTIS WILBUR saw its first underway time of the year on January 15<sup>th</sup> as the ship proceeded to ammunition anchorage in Yokosuka for a brief transfer. CURTIS WILBUR then took two more days at sea in late January to shake off more than five weeks of in port time in preparation for Destroyer Squadron 15's Exercise Multi-Sail 2004.

Multi-Sail 2004 was an exercise dedicated to the overall improvement of readiness within Destroyer Squadron 15. It was conducted the last week of January through the first week of February. CURTIS WILBUR joined forces with USS O'BRIEN, USS JOHN S. MCCAIN, USS VINCENNES, USS CUSHING, USS VANDEGRIFT, and USS GARY in every kind of exercise. During two weeks at sea Destroyer Squadron 15 covered underway replenishment operations, naval gunfire support training, air warfare defense training, and anti-submarine warfare training. Following Multi-Sail CURTIS WILBUR returned to Yokosuka for more in port training and preparations prior to departing for its early spring deployment.

CURTIS WILBUR departed for Battle Force Seventh Fleet's spring integrated battle group operations deployment on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February. One of the first stops for CURTIS WILBUR was the Japanese port of Osaka for a goodwill port visit in March. In Osaka CURTIS WILBUR sailors enjoyed everything from Osaka Castle to Japan's Universal Studios. CURTIS WILBUR then sailed south and joined the USS KITTY HAWK Battle Group for carrier qualifications and strike training. Using the first opportunity in months to work with the carrier, CURTIS WILBUR improved skills that would become vitally necessary during the upcoming FOAL EAGLE Exercise 2005.

Before FOAL EAGLE could take place CURTIS WILBUR had to take a day on the way to Korea to celebrate its birthday. On March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004 USS CURTIS WILBUR turned ten years old. During the day CURTIS WILBUR sailors celebrated with special food and a party on the messdecks where a presentation was given covering CURTIS WILBUR's namesake and history throughout its decade of service to its country.

Prior to FOAL EAGLE, CURTIS WILBUR conducted a port visit in Chinhae, South Korea in which CURTIS WILBUR sailors got to experience the sights of nearby Busan again. Leaving Chinhae, CURTIS WILBUR proceeded to the port of Pohang on South Korea's east coast and awaited the start of FOAL EAGLE. The annual FOAL EAGLE Exercise was CURTIS WILBUR's first opportunity in 2004 to work with the Korean Navy. Through two weeks of intense events and training CURTIS WILBUR worked hand in hand with USS VINCENNES and the Korean Navy during numerous maneuvering, anti-submarine, anti-surface, and anti-special forces exercises.

Following FOAL EAGLE, CURTIS WILBUR took another day for itself as Battle Force Seventh Fleet's Rear Admiral Kelly and Destroyer Squadron 15's

Commodore Perez came aboard to witness the changing of CURTIS WILBUR's command from Commander A. J. Abramson to Command J. T. Lauer. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2004 in a ceremony rolling in the waves of the Sea of Japan the crew of CURTIS WILBUR welcomed a new Captain and said farewell to another.

The next stop for CURTIS WILBUR was a port visit in the other United States Navy base in Japan at Sasebo. Over the span of a week CURTIS WILBUR conducted some much needed repairs to its engineering plant as well as giving the crew some much needed time ashore following its time off Korea. Soon after, CURTIS WILBUR returned home to Yokosuka in late April to begin months of preparations to become the Navy's first active Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) ship.

For the next three months CURTIS WILBUR underwent extensive alterations to its communications and combat systems suites in preparation for the first BMD patrol. With the assistance of experts from Port Hueneme Naval Surface Warfare Division, Ship Repair Facility Yokosuka, and Center for Surface Combat Systems Yokosuka, CURTIS WILBUR was able to transform both its equipment and training to prepare for this vanguard deployment. CURTIS WILBUR sailors used their expertise to not only learn their new equipment and mission but to also expand upon it and establish doctrine and training for other BMD ships to follow.

In mid-July after months of strenuous installations and training CURTIS WILBUR put to sea to test its BMD equipment and theory and also to conduct its Destroyer Squadron 15 Mid-Cycle Assessment. With both evolutions passed and validated CURTIS WILBUR sailed south toward a groundbreaking and unprecedented port visit to Da Nang, Vietnam.

As only the second United States Navy ship to visit Vietnam in thirty years, CURTIS WILBUR sailors were more than aware as to the uniqueness of the port visit and the opportunities it offered. CURTIS WILBUR sailors made most out of their time conducting numerous site sightseeing and shopping tours. Several receptions and community projects helped to reawaken and strengthen ties that had not existed in Da Nang since the American departure in 1973. Through five miraculous days CURTIS WILBUR sailors had the experience of a lifetime opening new doorways for their country and themselves.

Following Da Nang, CURTIS WILBUR returned to Yokosuka for another two months of BMD preparations. Using much the same regimen as the early spring, CURTIS WILBUR continued with the extensive installations and training that was needed. The first ever BMD patrol began the last week of September as CURTIS WILBUR sailed north from Yokosuka bound for the Sea of Japan.

October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004 found CURTIS WILBUR on station and radiating its modified SPY-1D radar over North Korea in defense of the United States. Through two weeks of this proof of concept patrol CURTIS WILBUR avoided the swipes of both the BMD critics and two typhoons to provide the best possible coverage for this new mission.

**CURTIS WILBUR would set the standard for all of the destroyers that would follow into the Sea of Japan.**

**The BMD patrol completed, CURTIS WILBUR returned to Sasebo for another port visit. Finding a much different place from the spring before CURTIS WILBUR sailors made the most of their time once again enjoying their break after the long workups and deployment of BMD. Sailing from Sasebo CURTIS WILBUR shifted its focus and mission without losing a beat toward anti-submarine warfare.**

**Over the next three weeks into mid-November CURTIS WILBUR participated in a major anti-submarine warfare exercise with the United States Navy and then rolled instantly into Tactical Anti-Submarine Warfare Exercise '04, a multi-national exercise with the Japanese Navy that tested new and exciting concepts for the future of anti-submarine warfare.**

**Next stop for CURTIS WILBUR in the third week of November was Seventh Fleet's 2004 Annual Exercise with the Japanese Navy. For two weeks CURTIS WILBUR along with the entire Seventh Fleet conducted coordinated exercises with the Japanese Navy involving anti-submarine, anti-surface, BMD, and anti-weapons proliferation exercises. Testing new and unproven equipment and concepts CURTIS WILBUR once again led the way into the future of naval warfare.**

**After ANNUALEX and a brief stop in Yokosuka CURTIS WILBUR set to sea again and headed for another goodwill port visit to the Japanese city of Kagoshima. Following Kagoshima CURTIS WILBUR returned to its forward deployed port of Yokosuka where it would remain for the Christmas holiday stand down and upkeep to the end of 2004.**