



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS ESSEX (LHD-2)
FPO AP 96643-1661

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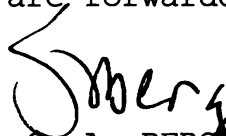
From: Commanding Officer, USS ESSEX (LHD 2)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY 2001

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Supporting Documents

1. Enclosures (1) through (4) are forwarded per reference (a).


S. A. BERG

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

MISSION: The mission of USS ESSEX (LHD 2) is to embark, deploy and land elements of a Marine landing force in an amphibious assault by aircraft, landing craft and amphibious vehicles. USS ESSEX' primary role is the flagship of an amphibious task group. USS ESSEX is the second ship of the WASP (LHD 1) class of multipurpose amphibious assault ships.

USS ESSEX is specifically designed to operate Landing Craft, Air Cushioned (LCAC) for waterborne assaults, carry Harrier II (AV-8B) jump jets for close-in air support of the assault force and a full range of helicopters for the deployment of troops and cargo. USS ESSEX' load-out consists of troops, tanks, trucks, armored vehicles, artillery, ammunition and supplies necessary to fully support an amphibious assault.

USS ESSEX is 844 feet long, with a beam of 106 feet. Two steam propulsion plants, capable of developing a combined 70,000 shaft horsepower, give the 40,500-ton ship the ability to sustain speeds in excess of 20 knots. USS ESSEX has more than 22,000 square feet of vehicle storage space and 100,000 cubic feet of cargo space. Living areas accommodate the 1,200 crewmembers and nearly 2,000 embarked troops and aircrews. To support combat as well as humanitarian missions, ESSEX has six fully equipped operating rooms, four dental operating rooms and hospital facilities capable of caring for 600 patients. The ship is the largest forward-deployed medical platform. USS ESSEX is forward-deployed to Sasebo, Japan.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: COMPHIBGRU ONE
 COMPHIBRON ELEVEN

COMMANDING OFFICER: CAPT SCOTT A. BERG, USN

Enclosure (1)

JANUARY 2001

12 Fast cruise in Sasebo.
13 HC-5 onload.
15 Underway for TRUEX, LCAC embark.
16 MEU fly-on, moor Okinawa.
17-19 HC-5 Deck Landing Qualifications (DLQs).
20-23 TRUEX (Training in an Urban Environment Exercise).
20 Small arms shoot, HC-5 DLQs, R&S insert for boat
raid, night LCAC ops.
21 Helo raid event, boat raid event, night well deck
training.
22 Integrated Training Team drill, helo raid event,
man overboard drill.
23 LCAC ops, media visit, DV embark, EOD live demo.
24 Weapons fire testing.
24-26 Port visit Guam.
25 Navy League luncheon and tour.
27-31 Enroute Okinawa.
27 Integrated Training Team drills.
31 Offload Okinawa.

FEBRUARY 2001

1-3 Enroute Yokosuka.
4-6 Inport Yokosuka.
7 Underway enroute Sasebo.
9 Moor Sasebo.
13-16 CART 2 East China Sea.
28 ECC Drills, Gun quarters

Enclosure (2)

MARCH 2001

1 Gun quarters, Engineering Training Team drills.
2 VTC (Ops, C4I), ATG out-brief, moor Sasebo.
3 VTC (CTF 76).
5 Underway, LCAC embark, DV tour, Safety Stand down.
6 Ops brief (Blue-Greens/SOCEX).
7 Air Combat Element fly-on, moor Okinawa
8 Onload, media visit.
9-21 Blue-Green Workups.
9 Search and Rescue training, underway.
10 Flight ops, SAREX with Medical, LCAC night
training
12 Arrive Iwo Jima sea echelon area, flight ops, LCU
ops.
13 Flight ops, LCU ops, EMCON drill.
14 Flight ops, Iwo Jima commemoration ceremonies
onboard and ashore, LCU ops, EMCON drill.
15 LCU/LCAC ops, NIXIE stream.
16 EMCON drill, Fastrope, Communications drills,
flight ops, SAR training.
17 ARGEX, .50 cal shoot, ECC drills, NEO walk-
through, flight quarters, DATF attack.
18 ARGEX, small boat ops, flight ops, media embark.
19 ARGEX, communications drills, NEO walkthrough,
flight ops, LCAC ops, floating mine drill.
20 ARGEX, communications drills, media embark, LCAC
ops, surface DATF attack.
21 VTC, moored Okinawa, fouled screw exercise, flight
ops.
22-28 SOCEX (Special Operations Capable Certification
Exercise)

23 Flight ops, GEN Ghormley visit.
24 LCAC ops, fast rope training, flight ops.
25 LCAC ops, CPG 1 arrives.
26 ESWS Awards ceremony, troop debarkation preps,
flight ops.
27 SOCEX debrief, ACE fly-off, media visit, moor
Okinawa, offload.
28 Refueling, SAR training.
30 Underway, Combat Systems Training Team (CSTT)
evolutions.
31 CSTT drill, engineering evolutions.

APRIL 2001

1 Engineering evolutions.
2 Flight ops, moor Sasebo.
3 NAVSEA representative visit.
6 COMPHIBRON ELEVEN Change of Command.
11 Essex ARG logistics meeting.
17 Fast cruise.
18 Underway, Engineering drills, Tandem Thrust Brief,
Condition III Weaponer training.
19 Moor Sasebo.
20 Nav/Ops/LCAC brief for Exercise Tandem Thrust, HC-
5 Det 6 embarkation.
23 Underway, flight deck scrub, ARG communications
check, LCAC embark.
24 ACE embark, communications drills.
26 LCAC ops, PHIBRON/MEU pre-sail brief, underway,
flight ops.
27 Engineering evolutions, JAMEX, WASEX, flight ops.

MAY 2001

- 2 Small arms shoot, RAS with HMAS SUCCESS, WASEX and JAMEX, flight operations
- 5 Flight ops, JAMEX/WASEX.
- 9 Moor Townsville, Australia, media visit.
- 10-12 Port call Townsville.
- 12 Open ship visit.
- 13 Underway.
- 14 RAS with HMAS SUCCESS, WASEX.
- 15 Rendezvous with MANOORA and KANIMBLA, rendezvous with JUNEAU, BRISBANE and J.S. MCCAIN.
- 16 Flight ops, amphibious rehearsal (Percy Island).
- 17 Flight ops, LCAC ops, stern gate marriage embark, Tandem Thrust brief.
- 18 LCAC touchdown Seahound Hard and Freshwater (Blue Beach and Green CLZ), beach assault, media visit, SAR training.
- 19 LCAC ops, VERTREP with NIAGRA FALLS.
- 21 Flight ops, LCM 8 alongside for passenger transfer, LCAC ops.
- 22 DV visit.
- 24 Flight ops, Photo ops maneuver.
- 28 Moor Brisbane, Australia.
- 29 Midshipmen embark, Australian-American Association reception.

JUNE 2001

- 1 Refueling.
- 2 Underway.
- 5 Small arms shoot, Jomard Passage transit.
- 6 Papua New Guinea Straits transit.

7 CIWS PACFIRE, Stream NIXIE, equator crossing.
8 Crossing the Line ceremony, stream NIXIE.
11 Safety Stand down.
13 Flight ops, LCAC ops, moor Okinawa, troop debark.
14 Equipment offload, ammo offload.
15 Underway.
16 Anchor Ammo Anchorage Sasebo, ammo movement.
17 Flight ops, moor Sasebo.
18-22 Crew move-off to berthing barge/GERMANTOWN.
26-27 Walk-through SRA.

JULY 2001

24 Amphibious Warfare Tactics Conference.
27 CINCPACFLT visit/all hands call.
31 Crew return from berthing barge/GERMANTOWN.

AUGUST 2001

2 CO/CINCPACFLT/CNSP Port Engineer Meeting.

SEPTEMBER 2001

5 CNO windshield tour of Sasebo.
10-11 Fast cruise.
12 Underway East China Sea.
13 General Quarters drill.
14 CPO transition ceremony, moor Sasebo, CPO pinning.
15 HC-5 onload.
20 Underway for ammo anchorage.

- 21 Ammo onload/stowage.
- 22 Underway.
- 24 General Quarters/Engineering Training Team, SESEF run.
- 25 CIWS shoot ICW General Quarters.
- 27 Moor Sasebo.

OCTOBER 2001

- 2 Underway for Blue-Green Workups/SOCEX.
- 3 LCAC launch and recover training.
- 5 Media visit, moor Okinawa.
- 6-7 31st MEU onload.
- 8 Underway.
- 9-12 Search and Rescue Exercises.
- 13 LCAC/Helo call-aways.
- 14 Helo call-aways.
- 18 NEO set-up and walk-through.
- 20-21 Helo serial call-aways.
- 23 Moor Darwin, Australia.
- 26 Pre-sail conference.
- 29-31 East Timor Humanitarian Assistance.
- 30 DV luncheon and tour.
- 31 Underway enroute Darwin.

NOVEMBER 2001

- 1 LCAC/LCU ops.
- 3 Moor Darwin.
- 6 Underway for East Timor.

8-10 East Timor Humanitarian Assistance.
9 DV visit.
10 Media visit.
11 Underway for Okinawa, rendezvous with W.S. DIEHL.
14 CIWS/.25mm/50 cal shoot, NIXIE stream.
18 LCAC offload, moor Okinawa.
20 Underway for Sasebo, harrier fly-off.
21 Moor Sasebo.

DECEMBER 2001

1-31 Upkeep, continuous maintenance, C5RA, and holiday stand-down.

NARRATIVE

January

Essex completed a rigorous maintenance period over the holidays. The ship departed Sasebo on Martin Luther King Day for a two-day on-load in Okinawa and then carried the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit/MSPF to Guam for Training in an Urban Environment (TRUEX). ESSEX supported TRUEX, executing four pre-exercise inserts and five tactical missions. ESSEX conducted LTT for combat systems and navigation en route to Okinawa. Once there, she conducted another safe yet rapid off-load of the 31st MEU/MSPF and Air Combat Element (ACE) and immediately on-loaded 600 Marines for an op-lift to Yokosuka. ESSEX also conducted and excelled in communications certification during this time. While pierside in Guam, ESSEX hosted 50 members of the Guam Navy League, and while off the coast of Guam hosted 25 distinguished visitors and media representatives from numerous local organizations.

February

ESSEX transited to Yokosuka for an op-lift of 600 Marines who were participating in Fuji-Ex, and conducted a mini-training availability and port call in Yokosuka. En route to Sasebo, ESSEX trained in preparation for CART 2, conducted CART 2 in mid-February and a post CART LTT for engineering and damage control later in the month. While underway, ESSEX served as the Naval Forces flagship during command post exercises, flexing her capability of C4I-C2PX.

March

ESSEX departed Sasebo early in March for Okinawa for a full MEU/ACE/BLT on-load for the Blue-Green interoperability sail to Iwo Jima for the Battle of Iwo Jima commemoration. ESSEX conducted Amphibious Ready Group Exercise (ARGEX) and Special Operations Capable Certification Exercise (SOCEX) 01-1, flawlessly executing support for nine missions during ARGEX and eight missions during SOCEX. CTF 76 noted ESSEX' outstanding operational performance during SOC-CERT, including DATF. Back in Okinawa, ESSEX off-loaded the MEU/ACE/BLT in two days and proceeded home to Sasebo. On 5 March, ESSEX hosted four distinguished visitors from the Sasebo area for a ship tour. RADM(Ret.) Yoshihiro Sakaue, JMSDF, along with his photographer and three members of the Japanese media, embarked ESSEX 18-19 March for a tour and interviewed crew members while the ship was off the coast of Okinawa. On 27 March, while ESSEX was off the coast of Okinawa, Stars & Stripes reporter Mark Oliva conducted interviews with five crew members for a feature about the Day in the Life of a Sailor.

Enclosure (3)

ESSEX also conducted video-teleconferences this month, and ran various C4I, Engineering, Air, Medical, Operations and Marine Corps drills in support of ARGEX/SOCEX.

April

Upon arrival in Sasebo, ESSEX conducted much needed repairs to the engineering plant and combat systems prior to her deployment to Exercise TANDEM THRUST. While in Sasebo, ESSEX hosted the Change of Command ceremony for COMPHIBRON ELEVEN and a visit by Naval Sea Systems Command. ESSEX then proceeded to Okinawa for a full on-load and headed to Australia, testing Blue-Green interoperability en route. The generosity of ESSEX crewmembers was noted as they contributed over \$29,000 to the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society Fund Drive, nearly tripling their contributions from the previous year. ESSEX crew member ABH1 [REDACTED] was among three U.S. Navy and three Japanese service members honored by the USO for their volunteer efforts in the local community.

May

ESSEX continued her transit to Australia, during which she conducted a replenishment with HMAS SUCCESS prior to arrival in Crowley Bay where she conducted Exercise TANDEM THRUST workups and amphibious rehearsals with the Royal Australian Navy. ESSEX made a port visit to Townsville, Australia and continued TANDEM THRUST, operating in a multi-ship amphibious task force including cruiser-destroyer assets from the Royal Australian Navy and U.S. forces. ESSEX then completed TANDEM THRUST with two more replenishments, with HMAS SUCCESS and USNS KISKA, and made a port visit to Brisbane. VADM James Metzger, COMSEVENTHFLT, visited ESSEX to get a view of the exercise from the amphibious command and control ship. His visit coincided with one by LTGEN Earl Hailston, Commanding General, III MEF. The intense operations tempo during the exercise offered increased opportunities for warfare training, and over 100 crew members earned their ESWS or EAWS designation. In May, ESSEX also hosted two groups of media and one group of Distinguished Visitors. On 9 May, members of the Australian media visited ESSEX while the ship was moored in Townsville. On 18 May, 18 members of the Australian media visited the ship. On 22 May, 26 Distinguished Visitors from Australia visited the ship for lunch and a tour.

June

ESSEX completed her Brisbane port visit and proceeded to Okinawa, conducting engineering underway demonstration preparations en route, as well as a Crossing the Line ceremony for 950 wogs. ESSEX lived up to her name, continuing a legacy left by the first frigate ESSEX, which, on 7 February 1800, became the first U.S. Navy ship to cross

the equator. U.S. Sailors and Marines participated in community relations in Brisbane, where 33 volunteers made short work of projects at three sites. Also while underway during this deployment, HMM 265 (REIN) celebrated their squadron's 50,000th mishap-free flight hour. ESSEX safely completed a full offload in Okinawa before conducting an Underway Demonstration and anchored for pre-SRA ammo offload in mid-June. She then moored and, on 21 June, commenced SRA, which required 600 male crew members to temporarily move to a berthing barge and 160 females to USS GERMANTOWN.

July

SRA involved a \$21 million maintenance period of over 500 jobs, including 50 significant alterations, some of which were equivalent to repair. It also included IT21 configuration and work on auto boiler controls and ballast tanks, re-surfacing of the entire flight deck and hangar bay, complete re-decking of over 85 percent of crew and troop berthing areas and wash rooms. In July, CAPT Tim Naple, SPAWAR 04F, and other SPAWAR personnel visited the ship. Out in the community, about 50 Sailors from ESSEX and other commands at Fleet Activities Sasebo participated in a beach cleanup project in the Sasebo area. ESSEX also held a command-wide retention stand-down which emphasized the importance of professional development and military benefits. ESSEX crew member ISSA Richard Serrano was honored by the local Japanese government and rescue service for his heroic efforts to save a young Japanese boy from drowning at a Sasebo beach on 21 July.

August

SRA also involved conducting engineering and combat systems testing and light-off at the end of August. After significant renovation projects, including repainting, repairing and deck re-surfacing, the ship's galley and mess decks re-opened for service.

September

SRA continued through Sea Trials, which were conducted 12-14 September. ESSEX conducted a full ammo on-load of over 1,100 ammo pallets and all RAM and NATO Sea Sparrow missiles. ESSEX completed a SESEF range run for TACAN certification, ULM-4 range and radar profiling and also completed phase I and II training with VMA-311 in preparation for Harrier embarkation and passed two MRAs with flying colors. During this time, ESSEX also completed an upgrade of the Collective Protection System.

October

ESSEX departed for Okinawa for the MEU/ACE/Battalion Landing Team (BLT) on-load for Blue-Green workups and ARGEX/SOCEX 01-2. However, the exercise ceased after a day and a half because of re-tasking to the Indonesian

archipelago for possible Non-combatant Evacuation Operation tasking. At that time, the ship also conducted mass casualty training, which tested her response to 20 simulated casualties. ESSEX conducted Blue-Green interoperability training en route and received tasking to conduct East Timor Humanitarian operations. ESSEX worked to master the fixed-wing/rotary-wing flight deck cycle in preparation for combat operations, then had an underway replenishment with USNS Diehl and a vertical replenishment with USNS KISKA. ESSEX then made a port visit to Darwin, Australia and spent a very productive three days in Dili, East Timor for humanitarian operations. ESSEX also hosted a media visit on 5 October for 11 members of the local Okinawan media, and a distinguished visitor embark on 30 October for a multinational group of foreign dignitaries while off the coast of East Timor.

November

ESSEX enjoyed another visit to Darwin and returned to East Timor for part two of the humanitarian operations. During the two visits to East Timor, a total of 175 ESSEX Sailors went ashore for medical, dental, engineering and other civic action and community relations projects. ESSEX Sailors were Site Leaders at four of the seven community relations sites, and her doctors saw 447 medical and 79 dental patients. ESSEX also generated \$6,134 in stores sales. ESSEX also hosted some distinguished visitors on 9 November and members of the media on 10 November while off the coast of East Timor. After departing East Timor, ESSEX conducted another successful underway replenishment with USNS Diehl and a Crossing the Line ceremony for 625 wogs. On the way home, ESSEX also conducted ITT scenario training exercises for all training teams and completed a very successful off-load before beginning an upkeep period in Sasebo.

December

ESSEX continued the upkeep period, with continuous maintenance and C5RA. ESSEX steamed a total of 26,891 miles in 2001, conducting 52 port visits while deployed for 178 days.