



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS ESSEX (LHD-2)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS ESSEX (LHD 2)
To: Director, Naval Historical Center

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY 2002

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

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are forwarded.


R. R. EVANS

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

COMMAND SHORT TITLE AND UIC: USS ESSEX (LHD 2)/21533

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 1,300 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:

- ISIC: COMPHIBGRU ONE

COMMANDING OFFICER: CAPT RONALD R. EVANS, USN

PERMANENT DUTY STATION: SASEBO, JAPAN

COMMAND HISTORY 2002 CHRONOLOGY

JANUARY

1-15 Inport Sasebo
9 Japanese Ground Self Defense Force visit
14 Fast Cruise
16 Enroute Yokosuka
19-31 Inport Yokosuka for Training Availability

FEBRUARY

1 Inport Yokosuka.
2-4 Tailored Ship Training Availability (TSTA 1):
 Philippine Sea
3 Rendezvous, Leapfrogs & Fueling-at-Sea Training
 with JMSDF SAGAMI
5-8 Missile Exercise (MISSILEX 02): Philippine Sea
6 Underway replenishment with USNS JOHN ERICSSON
 (T-AO 194)
9 Enroute Sasebo
10-28 Inport Sasebo
28 Fast cruise

MARCH

1-2 Enroute Okinawa
2 Distinguished visitors from the Okinawa area
 visit ESSEX
3-6 Inport Okinawa for 31st MEU Onload

Enclosure (2)

5	Commander, Amphibious Group ONE Change of Command on board ESSEX
7-12	Amphibious Training: Philippine Sea
13-14	Blue-Green Workups/Operations off coast of Iwo Jima
14	Iwo Jima Commemoration Ceremony on board ESSEX
15-17	Amphibious Training: Philippine Sea
15	Enemy Prisoners of War Training
18-19	Exercise Schedule of Events: East China Sea
20	Inport Pohang
21-29	Exercise FOAL EAGLE: East China Sea
21	Fueling-at-Sea with USNS ERRICSON
22	Commander, Flotilla 5 embark
23	Eight flag/general officers visit ESSEX
23,25	ROKN and Army Deck Landing Qualifications and ammunition transfer
25	BGEN Williams (CG 3 rd FSSG) visit
30-31	Amphibious Ready Group Exercise: Philippine Sea

APRIL

1-2	Amphibious Ready Group Exercise: Philippine Sea Inport Kagoshima
3-4	Rolling Airframe Missile Exercise (RAMEX 02): Philippine Sea
5-9	Special Operations Capable Exercise: Philippine Sea
10-11	Inport Okinawa

11 Okinawa International Women's Club members visit
ESSEX

12-13 Enroute Sasebo: East China Sea

14-29 Inport Sasebo

17 ESSEX Change of Command

19 USO Gala on board ESSEX

23 Archbishop, Archdiocese of Military Services
visit

24 Graduation Ceremony for Iron Gator Graduates

29 Fast Cruise

29 Small arms qualifications

30 Enroute Okinawa: East China Sea

MAY

1 Enroute Okinawa: East China Sea

2-3 Inport Okinawa

3 E-8 Frocking Ceremony

4-9 Enroute Thailand: South China Sea

10-13 Inport Pattaya, Thailand

12 Community Relations (COMREL) project at
Rehabilitation Center in Thailand

14 Operations: South China Sea

15-20 Anchored Sattahip, Thailand

20 Forty-eight distinguished visitors, including a
5-star Thai admiral, visit ESSEX

21-28 Exercise COBRA GOLD: Gulf of Thailand

25 SN [REDACTED] receives Nippon Zenkokai
Association Good Conduct Award for heroism

27 VIP visit

29 Asian Pacific Heritage Celebration

29-31 Enroute Hong Kong: South China Sea

JUNE

1-2 Enroute Hong Kong: South China Sea

2-7 Inport Hong Kong

7 ESSEX open for guided ship tours for selected
Hong Kong residents

8-13 Enroute Singapore

13-16 Inport Singapore

16-21 Enroute Okinawa

22-23 Inport Okinawa

24-25 Enroute Sasebo

26-30 Inport Sasebo

JULY

1-31 Continuous Maintenance Period: Sasebo

6 ESSEX Sailors participate in local Japanese beach
cleanup

18 ESSEX Sailors participate in COMREL project at
Japanese elementary school

24-26 Naval Safety Center Safety Survey on ESSEX

AUGUST

1-11 Continuous Maintenance Period: Sasebo
9 Fast cruise
12-20 Commanding Officer's Time: Underway
21-31 Maintenance: Sasebo
22-23 Afloat Training Group Western Pacific Limited
Team Trainer: Sasebo

SEPTEMBER

1-3 Maintenance: Sasebo
4 Enroute Pohang
5 Anchored Pohang
6-7 Enroute Okinawa; transporting III MEF Marines
8-9 Inport Okinawa
10-14 Blue/Green Workups: Philippine Sea
11 9/11 Memorial Service on board ESSEX
11 New Zealand documentary film crew visit
13 Ten VIPs visit ESSEX while in the vicinity of
Okinawa
15-19 Amphibious Ready Group Exercise: Philippine Sea
20-21 Operations: Philippine Sea
22-26 Special Operations Capable Exercise: Philippine
Sea
23 VIP Visit
27-30 Inport Okinawa
30 Enroute Sasebo

OCTOBER

1-2 Enroute Sasebo: East China Sea
3-10 Maintenance: Sasebo
7 Pacific Fleet Command Master Chief (FLTMC) visit
11-12 Enroute Yokosuka
12 Hispanic Heritage Ceremony
13-26 Inport Yokosuka for Training Availability
15-17 Supply Management Assessment/Inspection
25 Commander, Seventh Fleet and entourage visit
27-28 Enroute Sasebo: Iron Gator Cruise
29-31 Inport Sasebo

NOVEMBER

1-31 Maintenance: Sasebo
2-3 Commanding Officer's Time: East China Sea
4-6 Tailored Ship Training Availability (TSTA
 III)/Final Evaluation Period: East China Sea
19 ESSEX Brig was inspected and certified by Mr.
 Bill Crow (COMPACFLT) to confine male prisoners
25-27 Force Protection Certification

DECEMBER

1-31 Maintenance: Sasebo
9-13 3M Baseline Assessment/Certification
16 Native American Heritage Ceremony

- 23 ESSEX Sailors visit JDS KURAMA (DD 144) for
 holiday gift exchange
- 27 KURAMA Sailors visit ESSEX for gift exchange

COMMAND HISTORY 2002 NARRATIVE

January

On 9 January, ESSEX Chief Petty Officers invited soldiers from the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force (JGSDF) for a ship tour. The tour was the first for the soldiers stationed at Camp Takematsu and Camp Ainoura in Nagasaki Prefecture.

On 19 January, ESSEX arrived in Yokosuka for Training Availability. The Yokosuka schoolhouses supported ESSEX by providing 35 Courses of Instruction (COIs) for 535 billets, and an additional six COIs for 47 quotas were obtained through direct liaison with NSGA Yokosuka for a total of 41 COIs and 582 quotes for nine training days. For those not in school, ESSEX capitalized on the training focus and held "ESSEX University" by conducting onboard training on a wide range of subjects, including: rights and responsibilities, basic firefighting and first aid training, casualty control procedures, education programs and leadership/retention seminars. Additionally, Afloat Training Group Western Pacific (ATGWP) supported a Damage Control Limited Training Team (DC LTT) from 29 January to 1 February, which focused on Damage Control Training Team and repair locker responsibilities.

On 22 January, ESSEX celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr., Day on the mess decks. ESSEX Commanding Officer CAPT Ronald Evans was the keynote speaker.

In January, C4I's CA Division installed a Ship Training and Education Program that provides CBT for 3M and Damage Control qualifications.

February

On 3 February, ESSEX rendezvoused for a Fueling-at-Sea (FAS) with JDS SAGAMI. The Afloat Training Group Western Pacific was on board to assess and evaluate various drills as part of a two week Tailored Ship Training Availability. The FAS was a lesson in international communication and was the first time ESSEX conducted this type of evolution with a Japanese ship. The language barrier, the difference in sizes of the two ships, and the less than favorable weather presented a challenge. Though the weather ultimately precluded the two ships from conducting the replenishment, the event provided valuable experience to both crews.

During February, ESSEX' Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Depot Department weight tested and certified the aircraft crash and salvage crane.

Enclosure (3)

March

Beginning in March and continuing through June, ESSEX' AIMD Department provided aircraft general support equipment rate training to personnel aboard USS FT MCHENRY. Additionally, they provided one AS3 and several pieces of support equipment to USS JUNEAU in support of contingency operations for Exercise COBRA GOLD 02.

ESSEX, led by the Operations Department, achieved the following while underway in March and early April for Exercises FOAL EAGLE, ARGEX and SOCEX:

- Approximately 1,450 rotary landings/recoveries
- 155 AV-8 landings/recoveries, all with safe control while working with U.S. Army and ROK helicopters
- More than 70 LCAC ins/outs and 35 LCU ins/outs
- Shot weapons systems including Super Rapid Blooming Outboard Chaff (SRBOC), Rolling Airframe Missile (RAM), Close-in Weapons System (CIWS), .50 cal/25mm, and small arms
- Successful underway replenishments and vertical replenishments
- Hosted 11 flag officers for visits and hosted the Commander, Amphibious Group ONE Change of Command
- Collected signals and gathered intelligence both for real world and exercises
- Conducted a successful Non-combatant Evacuation Exercise and Enemy Prisoner of War Exercise
- Supported numerous FAST rope training opportunities and small arms shoots for embarked Marines
- Supported the Iwo Jima 57th Commemoration Ceremony, a successful assault with ROK Sailors and Marines during Exercise FOAL EAGLE, and conducted 11 missions during Amphibious Ready Group Exercise (ARGEX) and Special Operations Capable Exercise (SOCEX)
- Contributed photos and stories published on the Navy, Seventh Fleet, and Pacific Fleet websites, as well as Stars & Stripes newspaper.
- Conducted numerous communications exercises and led the way in many warfare commander and coordinator roles
- Safely sailed approximately 5,291 nautical miles

On 2 March, ESSEX hosted distinguished visitors from the Okinawa area for a tour and command brief.

On 5 March, ESSEX hosted the Commander, Amphibious Group One Change of Command ceremony in which RADM Rick Ruehe relieved RADM P.S. Schultz. This included a reception for 250 guests.

On 14 March, while Marines were ashore on the island of Iwo Jima, Sailors on board ESSEX were honoring their fallen comrades in their own way during a ceremony in the ship's hangar bay. Marine Corps MAJ [REDACTED], of ESSEX' Operations Department, was the guest speaker at the shipboard ceremony. ESSEX Command Master Chief (AW/SW) Kevin Haun, who also spoke at the event, recalled the important role that the amphibious Navy played in the historical event. "The amphibious ships played an integral role in sending troops ashore 57 years ago," he said. "It shows what the Navy-Marine Corps team was capable of doing. The remembrance of what they did gives us a greater appreciation for what we are doing now on board ESSEX."

On 16 March, ESSEX conducted an Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW) Exercise. ESSEX Security set out to determine how best to house and process prisoners of war. Security drafted an instruction to meet those requirements, and more than 50 people augmented the brig staff for the evolution. Security Department personnel led the way by staffing the interrogation room, leading escort teams and coordinating the overall process.

On 23 March, during Exercise FOAL EAGLE, GEN Thomas Schwartz, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Forces Korea/Combined Forces Command, visited ESSEX for a tour of the ship. He was accompanied by VADM Moon, Commander, Naval Component Command/Combined Forces Command; BGEN Mangum, Commander, Special Operations Command, Korea; RADM Chang, DCCATF/Commander, Flotilla FIVE; RADM Ruehe, Commander, Amphibious Force SEVENTH FLEET; RADM Jones, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea; and RADM Allan, Commander, Naval Logistics Forces Korea. As overall commander of the exercise, GEN Schwartz watched the amphibious assault from the shore before embarking ESSEX to witness the action where it began - from the sea. GEN Schwartz described ESSEX as "power and might at its greatest," and added, "I am very impressed with the command and control aspects of the ship. This is the greatest collection of professionals I have ever seen."

On 23 and 25 March, Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy pilots conducted deck landing qualifications on board ESSEX. During the air operations involving ROK aircraft on ESSEX, two Korean pilots and an interpreter were on hand at all times in primary flight control to assist with communications. The ESSEX Air Boss gave directions to the interpreter, who translated it to the two pilots in primary flight control, who then passed the directions to the pilots in the helicopters.

In March, ESSEX was presented the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet Retention Excellence Award for 2001, signifying the command's proactive program that is convincing Sailors to further their Navy careers.

April

On 1 April, SKCS [REDACTED] and HMCS [REDACTED] were promoted to Master Chief Petty Officer in a ceremony held on the ship's mess decks.

On 2 April, ESSEX was formally recognized for her Wellness and Preventive Health Care program by receiving the 2001 Commander, Surfaces Forces U.S. Pacific Fleet (SURFPAC) Force Commander Annual Health Promotion Unit Award. The award was in recognition of the efforts of the Medical Department and other command components that contributed to the safety, health and welfare of the command.

On 3 April, ESSEX, along with USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42) and USS FORT MCHENRY (LSD 43), completed a successful Rolling Airframes Missile (RAM) Guided Missile Weapon System Exercise. The exercise marked the first time any Forward Deployed Naval Force ship tested the system in the open ocean. ESSEX Combat Systems Officer LCDR [REDACTED] said, "This was an evaluation of potential cost savings by testing the system in the open ocean instead of on a controlled range where a lot more support is required." Several months of planning went into the exercise, with the final three weeks spent preparing the Letter of Instruction and the script for the scenario, as well as uploading a missile equipped with a telemetry package and setting up associated data extraction equipment for future analysis of the system's performance. The actual firing exercise took about five hours for the three ships to complete. The exercise is normally conducted at a missile range. This was the crew's first opportunity to test the system since ESSEX arrived in Sasebo in July 2000.

On 11 April, ESSEX hosted thirty members of the Okinawa International Women's Club for a tour and lunch.

On 12 April, AD1(AW/SW) [REDACTED], Leading Petty Officer for ESSEX AIMD, was formally recognized as the Commander Amphibious Group ONE Sailor of the Year. [REDACTED] credited his success to being involved in every aspect of the command.

On 17 April, CAPT Ronald R. Evans relieved CAPT Scott A. Berg as Commanding Officer of ESSEX. CAPT Berg's tenure as Commanding Officer began in October 2000, shortly after completion of the hull swap between ESSEX and USS BELLEAU WOOD (LHA 3). He was tasked with taking nearly an entire crew of

1,200 through the transition on a new ship to prepare ESSEX for her mission in the Forward Deployed Naval Forces.

On 19 April, shortly after returning from underway exercises and completing a Change of Command ceremony, the ESSEX crew turned the hangar bay into a formal dining atmosphere as ESSEX hosted the 2002 USO Gala, which highlighted the continued partnership between various organizations on and off base, and honored service members who volunteered their time and talents to the community. The Supply Department led the effort in coordinating the dinner event for 400 people.

On 24 April, ESSEX hosted Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, Archdiocese for the Military Services.

In April, C4I's CA Division installed a Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS), which provides immediate online access to post personnel administration (Source Data Systems, Diary Message Reporting System functions, such as Selective Reenlistment Bonuses, Page 2s, and advancements).

May

On 2 May, ESSEX Commanding Officer CAPT Ronald Evans pinned five new Senior Chief Petty Officers during a ceremony in the ship's hangar bay.

On 12 May, more than 40 volunteers from ESSEX and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) Special Operations Capable (SOC) gave up liberty time while the ship was in Pattaya, Thailand to visit with the 340 children at a rehabilitation center. The children at the rehabilitation center ranged in age from seven to 18, and most were in the center for drug-related problems. At the end of the visit, several of the service members received awards from the King of Thailand for their volunteer efforts.

On 20 May, Royal Thai Navy sailors visited ESSEX to cross-train and learn more about the capabilities of the forces and how they can best complement each other in a time of crisis. The visit was one of several in which more than 60 Thai sailors visited ESSEX over seven days of training. The first of the Thai sailors were medical personnel from the Sattahip Royal Thai Naval Hospital, and following visits included Thailand military Combat Systems and Engineering personnel, training teams and junior officers. ESSEX crewmembers had the chance to demonstrate not only their professional skills but also their multilingual capabilities. Three of the crewmembers served as translators and enjoyed the chance to showcase their ship and interact with the Thai sailors.

On 21-28 May, ESSEX participated in Exercise COBRA GOLD, a joint-combined exercise with the forces of Thailand. ESSEX Air

Department conducted a total of 895 landings and 51 vertical replenishments.

Landing statistics included the following:

	Day	Night	NVG
• HH-46D		167	21
• CH-46E	212	5	40
• CH-53E	59	2	30
• AH-1W	45		25
• UH-1N	69	2	45
• AV-8B	68	9	7
Thai S-70			
• Navy Hawk	9		
Thai Bell 212			
• Kraben	9		
Thai Bell 214			
• Sea Knight	3		

On 21 May, ADM Yuthavong Narong, Royal Thai Supreme Commander, a five-star Thai admiral, visited ESSEX and addressed the crew and the embarked 31st MEU and Amphibious Squadron 11 staff members. ADM Narong was accompanied by 25 other flag officers. "I am a naval officer, and I have spent most of my career on board a ship," ADM Narong said. "To be on board this impressive vessel has brought back fond memories of my time and life at sea."

On 23 May, Sailors and Marines on ESSEX enjoyed a taste of home when 1,500 boxes of Girl Scout cookies were distributed as part of "Operation Thin Mint," an initiative created by the Girl Scouts' San Diego-Imperial Council to show appreciation for the sacrifices made by deployed service members in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

On 25 May, ISSN [REDACTED], who was formally recognized by the city of Sasebo, Japan the previous year for saving the life of a drowning Japanese boy, was again honored for his heroic act during a ceremony in Tokyo. He received the Nippon Zenkokai Association Good Conduct Award for 2002. The annual award is presented to people whose gallant or benevolent acts are remarkably beneficial to their neighbors or the general public.

On 30 May, ESSEX closed out Asian Pacific Heritage Month with a ceremony in the ship's hangar bay while en route from Thailand to Hong Kong. The ESSEX crewmembers trace their roots to countries all over the Asia-Pacific region, from Hawaii to India, including places like Vietnam, Cambodia, Burma, Palau and

the Federated States of Micronesia, and this diversity in language and customs was highlighted during the event.

On 31 May, as part of Exercise COBRA GOLD, ESSEX served as the platform for a Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) Exercise conducted by the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and Thai Marines. ESSEX crewmembers were again called upon to translate as Thai Marines were taken through the checkpoints on the ship during the exercise. The five checkpoints included Security, Personnel, Disbursing, Medical and Intelligence. The five stations are designed to help the crew better provide for the evacuees, but are also in place to ensure the security and safety of the ship.

In May, C4I's CA Division completed a Computer Network Vulnerability Assessment (CNVA), which provided an assessment of the ship's Integrated Shipboard Network System (ISNS) and Network security training for all ADP personnel.

June

On 2-7 June, after operating in the South China Sea, ESSEX made a port call to Hong Kong. On 7 June, selected residents of Hong Kong were invited for a ship tour.

On 8-13 June, ESSEX made a port call to Singapore before returning to Okinawa to offload the 31st MEU and transit back to Sasebo.

On 19 June, while en route from Singapore to Okinawa, ESSEX conducted an advancement ceremony for Sailors being promoted to Petty Officer First, Second and Third Class. Third Class Petty Officers attended Petty Officer Indoctrination at the U.S. military facilities in Sembawang, Singapore.

The Supply Department also on-loaded scores of pallets of material to support a potential Non-combatant Evacuation Operation tasking in India.

On 20 June, C4I's CE Division upgraded the OL-530A(V)2 to implement an additional function called "full flow control." This feature added increased reliability and stability of data flow between PC exchange services by providing a connectivity of the patch panels and allowed the ability to perform system isolation with the install of interconnect patch panels.

On 26 June, ESSEX returned to Sasebo and entered a two-month maintenance and upkeep period.

July

From 1-25 July, C4I's CE Division did a Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System (SINCGARS) upgrade. This upgrade consisted of an entire systems overhaul, groom and

testing of the units listed below. The system supports secure, anti-jam VHF transceivers, which support Over-the-Horizon (OTH) communications links from the ship at sea to the amphibious forces ashore on a single channel VHF-FM Electronic Counter-countermeasures (ECCM) equipment.

Equipment installed included:

- 16 AN/SRC-54C Transceiver Radios
- 8 AS-4366A/VRC Antennas
- 4 TD-1456/VRC VHF Multiplexers
- 16 AM-7238B/VRC RF Amplifiers
- 16 AM-7556/SRC Amp adaptors
- 8 AN/SRC-54A/B Auxiliary Interconnecting Groups
- 16 J-6435/SRC Dual SINCGARS Interface Units
- 8 LS-67/VRC loudspeakers
- 8 MT-6352/VRC Mounts
- 16 MT-6352/VRC Mounting Bases
- 8 MT-6576/VRC Mounting Base Electrical Equipment
- 4 MT-6845/VRC Mounting Bases
- 8 MX-10862/VRC Power Supply Adapters
- 5 OK-637/SRC Power Supplies
- 8 PP-8421/SRC Power Supplies
- 2 SB-973/SRR Switchboards

Training was conducted with three maintenance technicians and a complement of system operators on board ESSEX, to include the basic operation and maintenance of the SINCGAR System.

On 9 July, in an ongoing effort to give back to the community, 20 Sailors and family members from ESSEX participated in a beach cleanup at Shirahama Beach in Sasebo.

On 15 July, C4I's CE Division began an upgrade of the Digital Wideband Transmission System (DWTS). The upgrade served to enhance antenna control systems, increase radiated output power, and improve interconnect facilities for signal processing. Specific improvements to the antenna system included the installation of an antenna controller and addition antennas that significantly reduced blockage zone areas and improved control capabilities. A pre-amplifier stage and a solid-state amp (SSPA) was installed in order to increase power and effective range of the system to 30 nautical miles. A system laptop PC was also installed for order-wire capability.

On 19 July, C4I's CE Division upgraded the Global Command and Control System (GCCS). The upgrade added more storage space (2.36gb) for the computers and processor speed to increase the efficiency of the system. They also removed seven TAC-4 servers and replaced them with more efficient HF-C3600 CPUs, and they

installed and configured a stand-alone HP-3600 CPU to serve as JOTS 3 Gale Lite Server in the Joint Information Center.

On 24-26 July, a team of surveyors from the Naval Safety Center in Norfolk visited ESSEX at the request of the ship's Commanding Officer, who emphasized the importance of safety in the ship's overall mission. The surveyors primarily reviewed Combat Systems and Deck Department spaces, while reviewing safety practices in the ship's galley, laundry and barbershop.

On 25 July, Sailors from the ESSEX First Class Association volunteered to teach conversational English to a group of local Japanese elementary school students in Sasebo.

During July, ESSEX received the first place Gold Star Award for the Year 2002 Command Excellence in Health Promotion Award. The award recognizes Navy and Marine Corps commands that have implemented successful health promotion programs.

In July, C4I's CA Division performed a Navy Tactical Command Support System II Upgrade, which provided for additional functionality to Relational Supply (RSUPPLY), Naval Aviation Logistics Command Management Information System (NALCOMIS), Organization Maintenance Management System (OMMS), and Relational Administrative Data Management System (RADM). They also installed an Integrated Network Manager Professional (INMPRO), which provides the ability to detect network problems (IP conflicts, driver problems, etc.) before damage is done.

August

On 2 August, 17 ESSEX crewmembers were informed of their selection for advancement to Chief Petty Officer, thereby beginning the transition season.

On 28 August, ESSEX completed Radiological Hazard (RADHAZ) certification.

September

On 4 September, both Typhoon Rusa and Typhoon Sinlaku influenced the ship's schedule. The ship was scheduled to get underway on 4 September to embark the 31st MEU in Okinawa for Blue/Green Workups, but Typhoon Sinlaku delayed the trip. While the decision was being made to postpone the trip, to the west a related event further altered the ship's schedule. Marines of the Third Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF), who had been participating in Exercise ULCHI FOCUS LENS, a combined U.S.-Republic of Korea exercise, were stranded in Pohang, Korea because of the effects of Typhoon Rusa. Extenuating circumstances required assistance from ESSEX, who arrived

shortly thereafter to transport the grateful Marines back to Okinawa. Upon arrival in Okinawa, ESSEX and the 31st MEU managed a quick turnaround to on-load another 1,200 Marines from the 31st MEU Marines along with 100 vehicles and 300 pieces of equipment and get underway for Blue/Green Workups.

On 8 September, Fleet Surgical Team Seven (FST 7) embarked ESSEX for Blue/Green Workups and Special Operations Capable Exercise. FST-7 is comprised of seven officers and more than a dozen corpsmen. While on board, they participated in numerous mass casualty drills.

On 11 September, in a solemn ceremony in the ship's hangar bay, ESSEX honored those who lost their lives in the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon a year prior.

On 11 September, ESSEX hosted three members of a New Zealand documentary crew to support an hour-long documentary about "The Devil's Sea" to the South and Southeast of Japan. The area has been dubbed the "Bermuda Triangle of the Pacific" because of the unusually numerous disappearances of ships and aircraft over the years.

On 13 September, ESSEX hosted 10 distinguished visitors while in the vicinity of Okinawa. They included RADM Rick Ruehe, Commander, Amphibious Force SEVENTH FLEET; CAPT Masanao Shimamoto, JMSDF, Commander, VP9; CDR Kunio Kida, JMSDF, Executive Officer, Sub-Area Activity, Okinawa; COL Dave Rao, USAF, Vice Commander, 18th Wing, Kadena; Mr. Takeshi Akamatsu, Deputy Chief/Special Advisor, Okinawa Liaison Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; COL Gerry Turnbow, USA, Chief, Okinawa Area Field Office; Ms. Pat Stigliani, Political Military Officer, American Consulate General Naha; Mr. Stephen Town, Deputy of Marine Corps Base G-5; Mr. Blinde, Director, Foreign Broadcasting Information Service; and CAPT Patrick Kluckman, USN, Commander, Fleet Activities, Okinawa.

During September, AIMD Department provided aircraft support equipment to USS HARPERS FERRY in support of contingency operations in South East Asia.

October

On 6 October, C4I's CE Division installed a Theater Battle Management Control System (TBMCS). This installation consisted of a new hard drive assembly for the computer system that was loaded with a software upgrade. The system provides for coordinated communications with Army, Air Force, and Korean components for joint/combined exercises.

On 7 October, ESSEX hosted Pacific Fleet Command Master Chief FLTCMC(SW/AW) Manuel Rodriguez for an all hands call in the hangar bay.

On 12 October, ESSEX held a Hispanic Heritage ceremony in the ship's hangar bay.

On 15-17 October, ESSEX' Supply Department successfully completed a Supply Management Assessment (SMA) while in Yokosuka. An overall SMA grade of satisfactory was assigned. All 23 storerooms received a 100 percent location and inventory accuracy score, contributing to an overall general stores score of 99.1 percent, the highest score recorded in recent Pacific Fleet history. The SMA was upgraded to a full Supply Management Inspection (SMI).

On 15-25 October, more than 140 ESSEX Sailors attended the Navy course Personal Responsibility and Values: Education and Training (PREVENT) while the ship was in Yokosuka for a training availability. The two-week training availability in Yokosuka offered nearly 50 classes for a total of more than 700 crewmembers. Besides PREVENT, the courses attended included shipboard and aircraft firefighting, Leadership Continuum, Second-Class Swimmer, and in-rate classes. ESSEX also took advantage of the availability of the Branch Medical Clinic in the Yokosuka area, as well as computer and AIMD training courses in Atsugi.

On 25 October, ESSEX hosted Commander, Seventh Fleet, VADM Willard. VADM Willard toured ESSEX and addressed the Chief's Mess and the Wardroom.

In October, AIMD hosted a Technical Assist Team (TAT) comprised of aviation maintenance specialists from MALS-12 and MALS-36. The team assessed ESSEX ability to provide aviation maintenance support for the embarked Air Combat Element.

November

From 2-6 November, ESSEX got underway for a Tailored Ship Training Availability (TSTA III) conducted by Afloat Training Group Western Pacific. The overwhelming success of the assessment resulted in ESSEX fulfilling requirements for the Final Evaluation Period (FEP). This upgrading from TSTA III to FEP was unprecedented and the first time ever accomplished in the Seventh Fleet.

On 15 November, ESSEX MWR, in conjunction with Fleet Activities Sasebo, launched Midnight Madness, a program designed to provide a positive alternative to the normal nightlife activities in Sasebo, while promoting morale and physical fitness.

On 21 November, Olympic Greco-Roman Wrestling Gold Medalist Rulon Gardner visited ESSEX to meet Sailors and Marines as part

of a holiday tour at U.S. military installations throughout the world.

From 25-27 Nov, ESSEX successfully completed the Commander Seventh Fleet (C7F) Force Protection (FP) Certification. The C7F FP Certification is an annual requirement that tests the ship's ability to deter, detect, defend and mitigate a number of terrorist type threats. Scenarios consisted of bomb threats, pier and shipboard penetration attempts, waterborne threats, suspicious packages and shipboard and ship's self defense force (SSDF) knowledge and actions.

In November, AIMD hosted a technical team from MALS-12 and NAVAIR in support of upgrades to the Consolidated Automated Support System (CASS) high power test bench. This upgrade expanded onboard capability to troubleshoot and repair avionics weapons repairable assemblies for the AV-8B Harrier.

In November, C4I's CA Division upgraded the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS) by installing a new server to provide a more robust system with additional memory.

December

From 9-13 December, ESSEX received a successful 3M Baseline Assessment from Afloat Training Group Western Pacific. The assessment reviewed spot checks, maintenance, administrative programs and personal qualification standards. The 3M Baseline Assessment was upgraded to full 3M certification.

On 16 December, after being postponed due to a compressed operational schedule, ESSEX held a ceremony in honor of Native American Heritage Month.

On 23 December, ESSEX crewmembers visited ESSEX' sister ship, JDS KURAMA (DD 144), for a holiday décor exchange. ESSEX crewmembers brought a wreath and Christmas tree to display on KURAMA.

On 27 December, Sailors from KURAMA visited ESSEX to set up traditional Japanese New Year's decorations as part of the annual exchange of holiday decorations. This was one of several events throughout the year that bring the two ships together.

In December, AIMD received a software upgrade for the CASS high power test bench that further expanded maintenance support capabilities for the AV-8B Harrier radar system.

Supply's Sales division breaks \$1 million in sales for the calendar year (\$1,004,012.00).

Year 2002 Highlights

The Training Division of the Operations Department researched, scheduled and filled over 650 exportable quotas, spending about \$495,000; saving money by use of NALO flights, coordinating with local commands to share training opportunities vice sending personnel to the United States, at the same time re-introducing about \$135,000 into the budget for additional training. They also researched and scheduled personnel for 24 critical NEC-awarded courses, coordinated with ATGWP for PREVENT courses to be offered quarterly to 300 local personnel throughout the year. The entire January-February training cruise, including the pre-TRAV TSTA "A", TRAV, ESSEX University, DC LTT and TSTA "B," was a rewarding training period, increasing the overall training for required shipboard basic qualifications. Based on typical TAD costs, equivalent TADTAR expenditures to conduct training on this scale by sending teams via NALO or commercial air, has been estimated at a cost savings of \$365,000.00.

The ESSEX reenlistment rates for 2002 were as follows:

Zone A	50%	82 reenlisted of those eligible
Zone B	92%	11 reenlisted of those eligible
Careerist	97%	58 reenlisted of those eligible

USS ESSEX safely facilitated the execution of 3,203 mishap-free flight hours in support of Marine Special Operations Capable (SOC) Certification and SEVENTHFLT exercises, including 5,960 landings (2,802 day, 1,630 night, and 1,656 Night Vision Goggle). Air Operations included the complete integration of the AV-8 into all Marine Air Combat Element (ACE) operations. Additionally, USS ESSEX expanded her joint/combined interoperability by safely conducting day landing qualifications for Republic of Korea Naval Air, Royal Thai Naval Air, Hong Kong Maritime Air and U.S. Army Air assets during FOAL EAGLE '02 and COBRA GOLD '02 exercises. In demonstrating our amphibious lift capability, ESSEX moved 8,967 passengers, hauled 139,610 pounds of cargo internally and 10,000 pounds of cargo externally via her assigned U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy air assets.

C4I's CF division successfully conducted a NATO Sea Sparrow missile firing exercise from the aft launcher, successfully conducted a Rolling Airframe Missile firing exercise from the forward launcher; scoring a skin-to-skin precision engagement, and successfully conducted four pre-action calibration checks on Close-in Weapons System (CIWS) Mounts 21, 22, and 23. Two OJ-451 consoles were overhauled, and an Advanced Combat Direction System was installed, as was Command/Control Processor (C2P/Link 16) equipment and an Enhanced Position Location Reporting System (EPLRS). C4I also overhauled 22 copiers.

In 2002, Dental Department saw 3,203 patients. They performed 812 cleanings, 503 restorations, 225 sealants, and 87 extractions. ESSEX is the only forward deployed ship in the Navy to have a registered Dental Hygienist onboard. The department has treated Sailors, Marines, U.S. civilians, and even Japanese nationals. They have also arranged for personnel to receive specialty treatment in Yokosuka and Okinawa Naval Dental Centers.

Notable accomplishments of Supply's S-9 Division included \$356,689.78 in savings from Free Issue, 134 pallets of hazardous waste offloaded, and 18 pallets of excess offloaded. Total paint requests processed were 6,115 paint chits.

Supply's S-4 Division accomplished the following in 2002:

Number of pay documents processed:	28,000
Total amount of payroll processed:	\$1,307,720.00
Number of people enrolled in ship's ATM	247
Number of U.S. Treasury checks issued:	214
Number of public vouchers transacted:	315
Number of collection vouchers transacted:	78
Number of travel claims process:	1,727
Number of TSP enrollments	294

ESSEX traveled a total of 6,186 miles in 2002.