



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS THUNDERBOLT (PC 12)
FPO AE 09588-1971

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From: Commanding Officer, USS FIREBOLT (PC 10)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)
Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC 20374-0571

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY 1999

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

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

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are submitted to document FIREBOLT's command history for 1999.

John F. G. Wade
JOHN F. G. WADE

Copy to:
COMSPECBOATRON TWO

USS FIREBOLT (PC 10)
Command History 1999
Command Composition and Organization

Mission: Provide maritime support to Special Operations Forces, intelligence collection, Coastal Patrol and Interdiction (CP&I) and counter-narcotics operations.

Organizational Structure: Assigned to Commander, Special Boat Squadron TWO.

Commanding Officer: Lieutenant John F. G. Wade, U.S. Navy.

Permanent Duty Station: Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia.

USS FIREBOLT (PC 10)
Command History 1999
Chronology

28 JAN-18 FEB: Drydock repairs in Norfolk Ship Company (NORSHIPCO).

25 FEB: Change of command whereby LT David W. Haas relieved LCDR Daniel E. Voth.

24-26 MAR: Special Boat Unit TWENTY interoperability training/proof of concept for 11m RHIB support.

08-11 APR: Visit Ship and Participant, 1999 Azalea Festival, Wilmington, NC

10-13 MAY: Conducted maritime operations with Naval Special Warfare Development Group.

01 JUN-20 JUL: Executed SOUTHCOM Surge Deployment.

07-22 JUN: Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) 9377 with/Belize Defense Force (BDF), Maritime Wing.

28 JUN: Ship ran aground, Bajo Nuevo Shoals.

29 JUN: Moored Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for propulsion plant/shafting examination and testing.

09 JUL: Change of command whereby LCDR Daniel P. Shaw relieved LT David W. Haas.

19-31 AUG: BOBCAT Electronic Support Measures (ESM) install.

14-17 SEP: Emergency hurricane sortie to Annapolis, MD and further on to Philadelphia, PA for Hurricane FLOYD avoidance.

23 SEP-12 OCT: Entered USS DYNAMIC (AFDL-6) drydock for shafting repairs caused by grounding on 28 June.

25-27 OCT: Assessed by the Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) as "fit for further service."

29 OCT: Change of command whereby LT John F. G. Wade relieved LCDR Daniel P. Shaw.

29 NOV-17 DEC: Conducted Naval Special Warfare Tactical Training (NSWTT) Weapons Training, Fort A. P. Hill.

USS FIREBOLT (PC 10)
Command History 1999
Narrative

The last year of the millenium was very challenging and presented a variety of experiences for the officers and crew of FIREBOLT. 1999 commenced with the men of FIREBOLT enjoying the holiday season leave period and conducting final preparations for their journey up the Elizabeth River to the shipyards. On January 28th FIREBOLT entered Norfolk Ship Company (NORSHIPCO) for propeller and shaft replacement for three weeks. Upon completion of drydock repairs on 18 February, the ship had one week to do a complete rejuvenation and cleanup for FIREBOLT's second change of command. On February 25th, LT David W. Haas relieved LCDR Daniel E. Voth as Commanding Officer of USS FIREBOLT and became the ship's third captain.

Following a month of maintenance and upkeep, FIREBOLT departed Little Creek on March 24th to conduct interoperability training and proof-of-concept for long-range support of 11 meter Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RHIBs). Together with combatant crewmen from Special Boat Unit TWENTY 11m RHIB Detachment, the evolution was designed to determine the length of time an 11m RHIB and her crew can remain on station with a supporting ship or platform.

From April 8th-11th, FIREBOLT navigated the Cape Fear River to Wilmington, North Carolina where she moored center stage for the 1999 Azalea Festival and tribute to the armed forces services. During the three day port visit, FIREBOLT hosted over 2,000 tours including several celebrities and dignitaries.

After returning to Little Creek, the ship again began further maintenance and upkeep in anticipation of inter-operability training with other Naval Special Warfare assets. On May 10th-13th, FIREBOLT conducted night maritime operations with Naval Special Warfare Development Group in the Virginia Capes Operating Area. Immediately following the Development Group training, FIREBOLT commenced an abbreviated prior-to-overseas-movement (POM) leave period until May 31st.

On June 1st FIREBOLT deployed to the U.S. Southern Command Area of Responsibility (AOR) with her sister ship USS CHINOOK (PC 9) for a 56-day Surge Deployment. During this time FIREBOLT worked with Naval Special Warfare Unit FOUR and the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF)-EAST. Arriving in Belize City,

Belize after a brief stop in Key West, Florida, the ship commenced Joint Combined Exchange Training-9377 with the Belize Defense Force (BDF), Maritime Wing on June 7th. During the following three weeks, the crew of FIREBOLT trained the BDF Maritime Wing personnel on small boats repair, small boat handling, Search and Rescue planning, open ocean navigation and heavy weapons training. Upon completion of JCET training, the ship was ordered to return to Key West for refueling and further tasking.

Receiving orders to proceed south and rendezvous with USS THOMAS S. GATES (CG 51) in order to carry out counter drug operations in the central Caribbean. In the early morning hours of June 28th while maneuvering to investigate a suspect vessel in the vicinity of Bajo Nuevo Shoals, FIREBOLT ran aground. Immediately sounding general quarters for damage control, the crew reacted instinctively and discovered a slightly bent blade on number three shaft and a few cosmetic scraps down the hull on the port bow. Securing from general quarters and informing the chain of command, the ship proceeded to port in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Shortly after mooring, divers were over the side conducting a thorough underwater inspection of the entire length of the ship.

Unfortunately, on July 9th, LCDR Daniel P. Shaw relieved LT David W. Haas as Commanding Officer of USS FIREBOLT, now the fourth Commanding Officer of the ship. With further inspection and trials, the ship was ordered to return to Little Creek for drydock repairs.

Returning to Little Creek, FIREBOLT was the first Patrol Coastal ship to receive the BOBCAT ESM system install between August 19th-31st. This system replaced the older CONDOR system and provided more upgrades and capabilities. As this install was coming to a close, the ship simultaneously prepared for the change of command for Special Boat Squadron TWO on August 27th. With the honor of being dress ship for the Commodore's change of command ceremony that morning, CAPT Daniel C. Pattoon was relieved by CAPT Michael R. Howard as Commander, Special Boat Squadron TWO with RADM Richards and other senior SEALs in attendance.

With the threat of hurricane season in full swing and Hurricane FLOYD posing as an imminent threat to the Hampton Roads area, FIREBOLT sortied along with the remaining PCs on September 14th to Annapolis, Maryland. Upon arrival in Annapolis and further examination of revised hurricane models, the PCs

again got underway and headed to Philadelphia, PA to avoid higher storm surge and gale force winds.

Returning to homeport on September 17th, FIREBOLT commenced immediate preparations for entering drydock. On the morning of September 23rd the ship performed a deadstick berthshift to USS DYNAMIC (AFDL 6), a U.S. Navy drydock facility and commenced the first ever drydock of a Patrol Coastal ship in such a facility. After three weeks of repairs on her hull, drive train and struts, FIREBOLT departed DYNAMIC on October 12th for refueling, crank shaft deflection readings and sea trials.

Following successful sea trials, the crew focused their efforts toward an assessment by the Board of Inspection and Survery (INSURV). From October 25th-27th, FIREBOLT was inspected and assessed on all systems and programs culminating in the determination of "fit for further service".

On October 29th FIREBOLT underwent its third change of command for 1999, in a ceremony on Pier 61, NAB Little Creek. LT John F.G. Wade relieved Daniel P. Shaw as Commanding Officer of USS FIREBOLT and became the ship's fifth captain.

In late November, Naval Special Warfare Tactical Training (NSWTT) Weapons Training commenced at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. Including instruction in small arms and heavy weapons proficiency for the ship's upcoming SOUTHCOM deployment, the crew of FIREBOLT excelled at every challenge and were well prepared by the completion of the three week training course. Returning to Little Creek from Fort A.P. Hill, FIREBOLT enjoyed much deserved holiday leave and stand-down until the new millenium.