



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS FORD (FFG 54)
FPO AP 96665-1508

*Rec'd 5/4/98
w/o disk*

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5700
Ser FFG54/026
21 Apr 98

From: Commanding Officer, USS FORD (FFG 54)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), Washington DC 20374-0571

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR 1997

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Commanding Officer's Biography and Photographs
(5) USS FORD Welcome Aboard Booklet

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (5) are forwarded.

G. A. McCaffrey
G. A. McCAFFREY

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COMDESRON NINE

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

a. USS FORD (FFG 54) is the forty-eighth of the fifty-one ship Oliver Hazard Perry Class Guided Missile Frigates. The Oliver Hazard Perry Class is the largest frigate class ever built. Its mission is to provide detailed anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine protection for military and merchant shipping and to ensure continuous use of the sea lanes of communications for the United States and its allies.

b. FORD's Combat System suite utilizes a computerized command and control system to integrate ship sensors and weapons. Its weapons include Harpoon surface to surface and Standard SM-1 surface to surface and surface to air missiles, a 76mm rapid fire gun, 20mm Close In Weapons System, Mark 46 and Mark 50 anti-submarine torpedoes and the LAMPS MK III helicopter/weapons system.

c. The propulsion system is a computer controlled LM 2500 gas turbine power plant which utilizes jet engines similar to those found on commercial airliners. FORD's propulsion system can be brought on line in less than five minutes.

d. Despite the advanced systems onboard, FORD's backbone is the crew. Each member has been highly trained and is an expert in his field, always able to operate, monitor and repair his equipment. FORD's crew consists of 17 Officers, 15 Chief Petty Officers and 177 junior enlisted personnel. When assigned a dual aircraft LAMPS MK III detachment; 6 additional Officers, 1 Chief Petty Officer and 14 enlisted are added to the crew.

CHRONOLOGY

01-07 JAN Inport, NAVSTA Everett. Holiday Standdown
08-12 JAN Inport, NAVSTA Everett
13-17 JAN Underway, Puget Sound.
18-20 JAN Inport, NAVSTA Everett.
21-24 JAN Underway, Puget Sound. TSTA II
25-26 JAN Inport, NAVSTA Everett.
27 JAN Inport, NAVSTA Everett. TSTA II Inport
28-31 JAN Underway, Puget Sound. TSTA II
01-09 FEB Inport, NAVSTA Everett.
10 FEB Inport, NAVSTA Everett. TSTA II Inport
11-12 FEB Underway, Puget Sound. ECERT
13-23 FEB Inport, NAVSTA Everett.
24-25 FEB Inport, NAVSTA Everett. TSTA III Inport
26-28 FEB Underway, Puget Sound. TSTA III
01-03 MAR Inport, NAVSTA Everett.
04-07 MAR Underway, Puget Sound. FEP
08MAR-15APR Inport, Everett, WA. Upkeep.
16-17 APR Inport, Indian Island, WA. Ammo onload.
18-27 APR Inport, Everett, WA. Upkeep.
28APR-01MAY Transit to San Diego, CA.
02-09 MAY Underway, San Diego OPAREA. COMPTUEX
10-11 MAY Inport, San Diego, CA.
12-19 MAY Underway, San Diego OPAREA. COMPTUEX
20-23 MAY Transit to Everett, WA.
24MAY-15JUN Inport, Everett, WA. IMAV
16-19 JUN Transit to San Diego, CA.
20JUN-03JUL Underway, San Diego OPAREA. FLEET-EX
04-13 JUL Inport, San Diego, CA.
14-24 JUL Underway, San Diego OPAREA. JTF-EX
25-29 JUL Transit to Everett, WA.
30 JUL Underway, Puget Sound.
31JUL-13AUG Inport, Everett, WA. First POM period.
14-25 AUG Inport, Everett, WA. Second POM period.
26AUG-01SEP Inport, Everett, WA.
02 SEP Underway, WESTPAC 97-2.
03-06 SEP Transit to San Diego, CA. Air Det pick up.
07-12 SEP Transit to Hawaii. BG RNDV.
13-14 SEP Underway, Pacific Ocean. ASWEX MIDPAC.
15-20 SEP Transit to Yokosuka, JA.
21-23 SEP Inport, Yokosuka, JA. Port visit.
24-27 SEP Transit to Hong Kong.
28SEP-02OCT Inport, Hong Kong. Port visit.
03-06 OCT Transit to Straits of Malacca.
07 OCT Straits of Malacca transit.
08-16 OCT Transit to Persian Gulf.
17 OCT Transit Straits of Hormuz.
18 OCT Transit to Bahrain.
19-20 OCT Anchored, Bahrain.
21 OCT Transit to Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates.
22-25 OCT Inport, Jebel Ali, UAE.
26-27 OCT Transit to North Arabian Gulf.
28OCT-24NOV Underway, NAG. MIO OPS/UN Sanction enforcement.

25 NOV Transit to Doha, Qatar.
26-30 NOV Inport, Doha, Qatar. Port visit.
31NOV-14DEC Underway, Persian Gulf.
15-16 DEC Underway, NAG. Eager Mace 97.
17-19 DEC Inport, Kuwait. Port visit.
20-21 DEC Underway, NAG. Eager Mace 97.
22-23 DEC Transit to Abu Dhabi, UAE.
24-26 DEC Inport, Abu Dhabi, UAE. Port visit.
27-31 DEC Underway, Persian Gulf. MIO OPS.

NARRATIVE

1. Under the command of Stephen W. Keith, CDR, USN, FORD began 1997 in the middle of a holiday stand down period in cold and snowy Everett, WA. FORD's crew safely enjoyed the holidays and began work again on 08JAN97. January saw the continuation of the training process as the ship geared up for the three week Total Ship Training Assessment II (TSTA II) which was scheduled for 21JAN-10FEB97. TSTA II continued to meld the crew into an efficient team, teaching them the unit level skills they would need for the later challenges they would face. FORD did extremely well during TSTA II, but had very little time to enjoy their success as they also had to concentrate their energies on the upcoming 11-12FEB97 Engineering Certification (ECERT). ECERT comprised of two rigorous days of engineering drills, training and inspections. The crew responded well and FORD received high marks.

2. After a two week break, FORD started TSTA III on 24FEB97. TSTA III continued the unit level training started in TSTA I and II but at a much more advanced pace. The TSTA process culminated in the Final Evaluation Problem (FEP) on 06-07MAR97. FEP consisted of shipwide scenarios, utilizing all aspects of FORD's Integrated Training Teams. FORD performed admirably in all areas of the examination and was assessed as deployment ready and fully prepared for battlegroup level training. The remainder of March and much of April was spent in a limited availability and upkeep period. This was an excellent chance for the crew to spend some badly needed family time as the last eight weeks had virtually been spent completely underway. FORD utilized a Puget Sound trip to Indian Island for an ammunition onload as a community day cruise for Hawthorne Elementary School. It was highly successful and helped to further the public affairs mission within the Everett community. In addition, FORD held the annual Captain's Cup, sparking competition and high morale within the crew.

3. On 28APR97, FORD got underway for San Diego, CA to participate in Comprehensive Unit Training (COMPTUEX), the first phase of battlegroup workups. The three week exercise gave FORD her first opportunity to work in a multi-ship task force, focusing on the skills she would need for the September deployment. FORD practiced the base level battlegroup skills and developed the confidence that she would need for the more advanced exercises that would come later in the year. FORD returned to Everett, WA 23MAY97 and began another four week upkeep period.

4. On 20JUN97, FORD left once again for San Diego, this time for a six week stint comprised of Fleet Exercise (FLEETEX), Joint Taks Force Exercise (JTFEX), Missile Exercise (MISSLEEX), and VALIANT BLITZ 97. FORD performed remarkably, proving her professionalism and high level of performance during all

events that ultimately demonstrated battlegroup communication weaknesses. During the six weeks of exercises, FORD proved that they were an integral and key part of the Nimitz Battlegroup team and that they were fully prepared for their upcoming Persian Gulf deployment.

5. After three and a half weeks of stand down, FORD left for her six month deployment on 02SEP97. The initial transit across the Pacific was relatively routine in terms of training and exercises. The weather, however, was anything but routine. Due to heavy storms, including hurricane force winds and seas, the Nimitz battlegroups track was altered and the first port visit, Yokosuka, was threatened to be cancelled if the weather would not cooperate. In the end, the weather calmed enough for FORD to meet her Japan port call on time and pulled into Yokosuka on 21SEP97. After three rainy days spent there, FORD got underway for her next port visit in Hong Kong. FORD pulled into Hong Kong harbor on 28SEP97 and spent five days of liberty and relaxation. Hong Kong turned out to be the last liberty port that FORD saw as the political situation in the Persian Gulf started to intensify. FORD bypassed her next port, Singapore, in favor of arriving in the Persian Gulf early to add to the U.S. presence in hopes to quell the tension created by Saddam Hussein's refusal to cooperate with UN inspection teams.

6. The primary duties of FORD in the Gulf was to enforce UN sanctions through Maritime Intercept Operations (MIO). The primary MIO intercept areas are in the North Arabian Gulf (NAG), therefore FORD spent most of her time cruising the NAG looking for and boarding suspected UN sanctions violators. In between stints as a MIO platform, FORD visited Jebel Ali, UAE (22-25 OCT97), Doha, Qatar (26-30 NOV97) for Thanksgiving and Abu Dhabi, UAE (24-26 DEC97) for Christmas. FORD performed her duties without flaw and was the most successful MIO platform in the Gulf during her tenure. This success was a definite reflection of the dedication and professionalism that FORD put into all of her duties.

7. FORD ended 1997 on station in the Persian Gulf, ready for any challenge that might present itself. FORD is looking forward to the promise of 1998 and hope to make that year as successful and professionally rewarding as this year.

Encl (3)