From: Commanding Officer, USS GRAPPLE (ARS-53)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-098H)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5/50.12E

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.

W. P. Orr
By direction
Command Composition and Organization

**Commanding Officer:** William T. Crooks, CDR, USN

**ISIC:** Commander, Combat Support Squadron Eight

**Mission:** GRAPPLE’s mission is to provide rescue and salvage service to the fleet. Her capabilities include:

**Towing:** GRAPPLE is capable of rescue and open ocean towing. The ship can develop a bollard pull of 131,000 lbs with an installed double drum towing machine rove with 3000 feet of 2 1/4 inch wire rope on each drum.

**Salvage:** GRAPPLE carries transportable cutting and welding equipment, hydraulic and electric power sources, dewatering equipment and hull repair materials to effect temporary hull repairs on stranded or otherwise damaged ships. GRAPPLE also has a 5 ton boom forward and a 40 ton boom aft to off-load a disabled ship and handle heavy equipment during salvage operations.

**Beach Gear:** A stranded vessel may be extracted from the beach using six sets of beach gear carried by GRAPPLE. Two beach gear ground legs can be rigged on GRAPPLE and four beach gear ground legs can be rigged on the stranded vessel.

**Off Ship Fire Fighting:** There are four fire monitors mounted on board GRAPPLE. These fire monitors are supplied with up to 1000 gallons per minute of sea water or aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) to fight fires on other ships.

**Heavy Lift:** A dynamic lift of 300 tons can be made using the main bow and stern rollers simultaneously.

**Diving:** The MK12 and MK21 air diving systems on board GRAPPLE provide divers with capability of tethered dives to 190 feet of seawater. GRAPPLE has a recompression chamber for treatment of decompression sickness or for routine surface decompression. GRAPPLE’s recompression chamber is also designed to mate with a portable recompression chamber at the outer lock entry door.

Encl (1)
**SHIP'S SCHEDULE**

01 - 06 JAN  
HOLIDAY UPKEEP

06 - 26 JAN  
READY DUTY SALVAGE

10 JAN - 03 FEB  
INPORT LITTLE CREEK

16 JAN  
2M CERTIFICATION

22 JAN  
TEMPEST INSPECTION

22 - 23 JAN  
DIVERS OPERATIONAL READINESS ASSESSMENT

03 - 24 FEB  
PREDEPLOYMENT IMAV

04 FEB  
IMAV ARRIVAL CONFERENCE

03 - 24 FEB  
IMAV

19 - 21 FEB  
3M ASSIST VISIT

24 - 28 FEB  
TEST EQUIPMENT CALIBRATION READINESS REVIEW

03 - 16 MAR  
INPORT LCRK

02 - 06 MAR  
SQUADRON ENGINEERING ASSIST VISIT

09 - 23 MAR  
MICROSNAP II SOFTWARE IMPLEMENTATION

09 - 20 MAR  
RESERVE ACTIVE DUTY TRAINING

09 - 12 MAR  
DRYDOCK COLONNA'S SHIPYARD NORFOLK, VA FOR REPORT OF PORT KORT NOZZLE STRUT

12 - 13 MAR  
U/W FOR OP-TEST OF KORT NOZZLE STRUT AND ENG BILGE MAINTENANCE

16 - 20 MAR  
INPORT LITTLE CREEK

21 - 22 MAR  
INPORT LITTLE CREEK

23 - 27 MAR  
U/W FOR OPPE PREPS

27 MAR - 07 APR  
INPORT LITTLE CREEK

08 - 10 APR  
ISE LITTLE CREEK

11 - 12 APR  
INPORT LITTLE CREEK

13 - 16 APR  
ISE: CHES BAY OPPE PREPS

Encl (2)
SHIP'S SCHEDULE (CONT)

17 APR  INPORT LITTLE CREEK
20 - 24 APR  ISE: CHES BAY OPPE PREPS
21 APR  EMERGENT DIVE OPS - PRECOMUNIT ANZIO (CG-68) REMOVAL OF SPAN WIRE
24 APR  SESEF RANGE CHECKS
24 - 28 APR  ISE: CHES BAY OPPE PREPS
29 APR - 02 MAY  OPPE
04 - 08 MAY  CSRR
08 MAY - 01 JUN  PRE-DEPLOYMENT STANDBOY (POM) LEAVE PERIOD
11 MAY  CAT
12 MAY  CRAT
14 MAY  CMS ADVICE AND ASSIST
19 MAY  NATO SECRET CONTROL INSPECTION
27 MAY  DIVE SAFETY SURVEY

Encl (2)
USS GRAPPLE MED ARS 2-92 HISTORY

03 JUN U/W ENR ROTA, SP
15 JUN ARR ROTA, SP INCHOP SIXTH FLEET
16 - 18 JUN ENR ALICANTE, SP
18 - 22 JUN IPT ALICANTE, SP FOR SPANISH FIESTA
22 - 24 JUN ENR LA MADDALENA, IT
24 JUN - 01 JUL IPT LA MADDALENA, IT
28 - 30 JUN YFNB-42 MOORING LOAD TEST, 3-POINT MOOR, SURFACE-SUPPLIED DIVE OPS
01 - 03 JUL ENR IBIZA, SP
02 JUL ASSISTANCE AT SEA OF TWO DISTRESSED VESSELS
03 - 08 JUL IPT IBIZA, SP
05 JUL INDEPENDENCE DAY PICNIC WITH USS SAN DIEGO
05 JUL RECEIVED BZ FROM UCT-ONE FOR ASSISTANCE WITH MOORING LOAD TEST AND DIVE SUPPORT
08 - 10 JUL ENR PORT VENDRES, FR
10 - 17 JUL IPT PORT VENDRES, FR
14 JUL BASTILLE DAY PICNIC HELD FOR GRAPPLE BY CITIZENS OF PORT VENDRES
17 - 22 JUL ENR SOUDA BAY, GR
22 JUL BSF SOUDA BAY, GR
22 JUL EMERGENT DIVE SUPPORT SERVICES FOR USNS HENRY J. KAISER
22 - 24 JUL ENR ISTANBUL, TU
24 - 29 JUL IPT ISTANBUL, TU
29 JUL ENR SOZOPOL, BU
31 JUL COMMAND FUNCTION WITH SOZOPOL NAVAL BASE COMMANDER

Encl (2)
USS GRAPPLE MED ARS 2-92 HISTORY (CONT)

29 JUL - 02 AUG IPT SOZOPOL, BU
03 - 05 AUG HF MMUL PROFICIENCY TRNG
02 - 06 AUG ENR AUGUSTA BAY, IT
06 AUG ARR AUGUSTA BAY, IT
07 - 15 AUG IMAV W/ USS YELLOWSTONE/WORK DEFINITION CONFERENCE FOR DPMA
15 - 16 AUG ENR NAPLES, IT
14 AUG RECEIVED BZ FROM NCTAMS MED FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE WITH HF MMUL TRAINING EXERCISE
16 - 24 AUG UPKEEP IPT NAPLES, IT
24 AUG - 01 SEP ENR ROTA, SP
27 - 31 AUG HF TERMINATION WITH NAVCOMTELSTA ROTA
02 - 07 SEP IPT ROTA, SP
02 SEP BZ FROM NCTAMS MED FOR 1% CIM RATE
01 - 06 SEP IPT ROTA, SP
07 - 12 SEP U/W WMED ISO SORBET ROYAL - 92 LIVE SUB RESCUE EXERCISE W/ USS BILLFISH ITS DI COSSATO, HMNLS ZWAARDVIS AND SPS GALERNA W/ DSRV - 2 AVALON
13 - 24 SEP IPT ROTA, SP
24 - 28 SEP ENR AUGUSTA BAY
28 SEP IPT AUGUSTA BAY, EMBARKED ENGINEERING TRAINING GROUP
28 SEP - 02 OCT ENGINEERING TRAINING GROUP ASSIST VISIT
02 - 05 OCT IPT VENICE, IT
06 - 13 OCT ENR SETE, FR

Encl (2)
USS GRAPPLE MED ARS 2-92 HISTORY (CONT)

07 OCT
TARGET TOW SERVICES ISO OTRANNO CUP
GUNNERY EXERCISE W/USS JOHN L. HALL,
HMS GLOUCESTER, HMNLS VAN KINSBERGEN,
ITS AUDACE

08 OCT
U/W HIGLINE TRANSFER W/USS JOHN L. HALL
REARM SELEX ALSO CONDUCTED

13 OCT
ARR SETE, FR. ASSISTED EODMU EIGHT IN
RECOVERY OF 11 MINE SHAPES ISO MINEX
OLIVES-NOIRES-92

16 OCT
DEP SETE, FR ENR AUGUSTA BAY

19 OCT
ARR AUGUSTA BAY, IT/DEP AUGUSTA BAY, IT
ENR ALMERIA, SP

23 OCT
ARR ALMERIA, SP. IMAV W/USS PUGET SOUND
24 OCT - 01 NOV

02 NOV
DEP ALMERIA, SP ENR CARTAGENA, SP

03 NOV
RCVD BZ FROM CO, USS PUGET SOUND FOR
ACCOMMODATING STRANDED SAILORS

03 NOV
RCVD BZ FROM EODMU EIGHT FOR ACTIVE
PARTICIPATING IN DIVE OPS/ASSISTANCE IN
MINEX OLIVES-NOIRE-92

05 NOV
RAS (S) W/USNS SIRIUS. CONDUCT VERTREP
TO RECEIVE STORES

07 NOV
ARR CARTAGENA, SP. CONDUCT HULL SURVEY
AND DIVE OPS ON YC-1377 FOR PREPS TO TOW
TO ROTA, SP

12 NOV
ENR ROTA, SP WITH YC-1377 IN TOW

14 NOV
ARR ROTA, SP TURNOVER

19 NOV
TURNOVER W/USS RECOVERY

20 NOV
DEPART ROTA, SP, OUTCHOP

22 NOV
RCVD BZ FROM CINCUSNAVEUR FOR OUTSTANDING
SERVICE AND CONDUCT IN MED.

23 NOV
DIVERTED TO AZORES ISO SAREX S/V COYOTE
SKIPPER MICHAEL PLANT

Encl (2)
**USS GRAPPLE MED ARS 2-92 HISTORY (CONT)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 Nov</td>
<td>ARR AZORES. REFUELED. MAKING PREPS FOR HIGH SEAS AND SAREX OF S/V COYOTE. PM SEARCH CALLED OFF.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 Nov</td>
<td>MESSAGE FOR SHORT NOTICE OPPE.</td>
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<td>30 Nov</td>
<td>RCVD BZ FROM CNSL VADM REASON FOR EFFORT DISPLAYED DURING SAREX</td>
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<tr>
<td>01 Dec</td>
<td>RCVD BZ FROM CLG-2 FOR EXEMPLARY DEPLOYMENT</td>
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<tr>
<td>02 Dec</td>
<td>ARR BERMUDA TO EMBARK PEB AND CSR-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>05 Dec</td>
<td>ARR LITTLE CREEK, VA</td>
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<tr>
<td>05 Dec - 31 Dec</td>
<td>POST DEPLOYMENT STANDDOWN</td>
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Encl (2)
Grapple started out the new year in its home port of Little Creek, Virginia. In January GRAPPLE underwent a 2M Certification, Tempest Inspection and a Diver’s Operational Readiness Assessment.

In February, deployment preparations began with a pre-deployment Intermediate Maintenance Availability with SIMA Little Creek from 03 through 24 February, during which a 3M Assist Visit and a Test Equipment Readiness Review were conducted. A Change of Command was held on 28 February. Commander Honey was relieved by Lieutenant Commander Crooks.

In March GRAPPLE entered drydock at Collona's Shipyard Norfolk to repair a crack in the port kort nozzle strut which was discovered during a routine cleaning of the running gear. In addition, while in drydock, GRAPPLE began installation of the Micro Snap II system. Grapple was tasked with validating this prototype system for the fleet. Upon completion of repairs to the port kort nozzle, GRAPPLE was underway 12 and 13 March for sea trials and to perform engineering plant grooming. Also during the month of March GRAPPLE was host to several reservists. Not only did the reservists gain valuable experience working in their rates, but GRAPPLE assisted in training and predeployment preparations by the reservists.

At the end of March and after a brief period inport, GRAPPLE was back underway to prepare for the upcoming OPPE. On 17 April, GRAPPLE returned to port for a PQS Assist Visit after which she returned to sea. During the 20 through 24 April underway period, GRAPPLE conducted emergent dive ops to free a span wire from the running gear of PRECOMUNIT ANZIO (CG 68). A successful OPPE was conducted in Chesapeake Bay 30 April through 02 May.

GRAPPLE’s Pre Overseas Movement stand down period began 02 May. Also completed during this period were an Industrial Hygiene Survey, CSRR/ASRR, SMI Assist, Aviation Certification, AEC/PMT Visit, CAT, CRAT, CMS Assist Visit, NATO Secret Control Inspection, Diving Safety Survey, and a CMS Inspection. After successfully completing this arduous schedule of inspections and assist visits, GRAPPLE was ready to deploy.

On 03 June GRAPPLE left Little Creek to begin MED ARS 92-1. After a two week transit of the Atlantic, GRAPPLE arrived in Kota Spain on 16 June. After a brief stop in Kota to inchop to the Sixth Fleet and turn over with USS HOSLT, GRAPPLE was en route to Alicante, Spain. GRAPPLE’S visit to this port from 18 to 22 June coincided with their Fiesta of Saint John, which gave the crew an opportunity to experience the customs of Spain first hand.

Encl (3)
From Alicante, GRAPPLE transitted to La Maddalena, IT to assist Underwater Construction Team ONE in laying a mooring system for YFN-42. This assistance included surface-supplied diving operations and a load test on each leg of the moor.

After leaving La Maddalena on 01 July, GRAPPLE went on to Ibiza, one of the Balearic islands. Here the crew enjoyed some of the most beautiful beaches in the Mediterranean. The GRAPPLE joined forces with USS SAN DIEGO and celebrated the Fourth of July on the beaches of Ibiza.

En route to Port Vendres, France, GRAPPLE rendered assistance to two vessels in distress. The first vessel had run out of fuel and GRAPPLE was able to give them enough diesel fuel to get them to the nearest port. The search for the second vessel began after the sailboat had been caught in a storm and was several days late returning to port. GRAPPLE found the vessel. It had lost all communication and was unable to tell the authorities of their delay. GRAPPLE relayed to the authorities the location of the vessel and that all were well.

GRAPPLE arrived in Port Vendres, France on 08 July in time to join in the Bastille Day celebrations. The crew participated in receptions, dinners, dances, and barbecues. Port Vendres is thought to be the port from which the French Navy sailed to aid the colonists at the battle of Yorktown.

GRAPPLE departed from Port Vendres on 17 July and arrived in Souda Bay, Greece on 22 JUL just in time to assist the USNS HENRY J. KAISER, which had a mooring line fouled in her screws. Upon completion of the emergent dive operation and loading of fuel and stores, GRAPPLE was underway again en route to Istanbul, Turkey.

After a short visit to Istanbul, Turkey from 24 to 29 July, GRAPPLE continued on to Sozopol, Bulgaria. GRAPPLE was the first American ship ever to visit Sozopol. The Bulgarian Navy hosted a large reception, which was a great opportunity for the sailors of GRAPPLE to swap stories with the Bulgarian sailors. GRAPPLE reciprocated with a reception for the officers of the Bulgarian Navy and ship's tours for the people of Sozopol.

From 02 through 06 August, GRAPPLE was en route to Augusta Bay, Sicily. During this transit, GRAPPLE conducted HF MMUL proficiency training.

After an IMAV from 07 to 16 August in Augusta Bay with USS YELLOWSTONE and a short visit in Naples, Italy from 16 to 24 August, GRAPPLE was underway in the western Mediterranean in
GRAPPLE stopped briefly in Augusta Bay, Italy on 28 September to embark the Engineering Training Group and was underway again en route to Venice it. On 02 October, after completing the successful Engineering Training Assist, GRAPPLE arrived in Venice for a three day port visit.

GRAPPLE was underway 05 October en route Sete, France. GRAPPLE provided target tow service in support of the Otranto Cup Gunnery Competition, in which the USS JOHN L. HALL, HMS GLOUCESTER, HNMLS VAN KINSBERGEN, and ITS AUDACE participated. Also during this transit, GRAPPLE conducted a highline transfer and rearming exercise with USS JOHN L. HALL. After arriving in Sete on 13 October, GRAPPLE assisted EODMU EIGHT in the recovery of eleven mine shapes in support of HNEX OLIVES-NOIRE 92.

On 16 October, GRAPPLE departed Sete en route Almeria, Spain with a brief stop in Augusta Bay for fuel. GRAPPLE arrived in Almeria on 23 October and began an IHAV with USS PUGET SOUND. During this availability, GRAPPLE provided meals and shelter to 30 PUGET SOUND sailors, who were stranded due to inclement weather. On 02 November GRAPPLE, completed the availability and departed Almeria and began transit to Cartagena, Spain, during which GRAPPLE conducted a VERTREP with USNS SIIRIUS to receive stores.

GRAPPLE arrived in Cartagena on 07 November to conduct dive ops and tow preparations on YC-1377 and on 12 November, departed Cartagena with the YC in tow. On 14 November GRAPPLE arrived in Rota, Spain to drop YC-1377 and turn over with USS RECOVERY.

On 20 November, GRAPPLE departed Rota en route Little Creek and outchopped from Sixth Fleet. On 23 November GRAPPLE was diverted to conduct a SAREX in search of the Sailing Vessel CAYOTE and arrived in Ponta del Gada, Azores on 25 November to refuel. The search was called off and GRAPPLE departed the Azores the same day to continue transit to Virginia. GRAPPLE was diverted again to Bermuda to embark COMSUPPON EIGHT and the Propulsion Examination Board to conduct a "No Notice" Operational Propulsion Plant Examination. On 04 December, GRAPPLE completed the highly successful OPPE. GRAPPLE received a two year certification and the highest overall grade of any Logistics Group Two command during the 1992 calendar year. On 05 December GRAPPLE arrived in its homeport of Little Creek, Virginia.

On 05 December, GRAPPLE commenced its post deployment and holiday leave stand down period to close out the year.