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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS GRAPPLE (ARS 53)
C/O FPO AE NEW YORK 09570-3223

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From: Commanding Officer, USS GRAPPLE (ARS 53)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)

Subj: **COMMAND HISTORY**

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Post Salvage report of VF-33 F-14A
(5) Post Salvage Report of VF-101 F-14B
(6) Towing Performance Report for EX-USS RAY (SSN 653)
(7) Miscellaneous 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.

SHIP'S SCHEDULE (CONT)

02 JUN - 02 JUN	CMS ADVICE AND ASSIST VISIT
15 JUN - 19 JUN	PRE-DPMA DIESEL ENGINE INSPECTION
17 JUN - 17 JUN	RETENTION EVALUATION/INSPECTION
18 JUN - 18 JUN	NATO SECRET CONTROL INSPECTION
21 JUN - 21 JUN	U/W ISO NAVIGATION CERTIFICATION/SEA TRIALS
23 JUN - 25 JUN	U/W ISO USS PHEONIX SWT
28 JUN - 02 JUL	U/W SALVTNG/DORA: CHESBAY
03 JUL - 11 JUL	INPORT LITTLE CREEK, VA
06 JUL - 09 JUL	ETG VISIT
06 JUL - 09 JUL	TECRR INSPECTION
12 JUL - 13 JUL	ENR: CHARLESTON, SC
14 JUL - 15 JUL	IPT CHARLESTON, SC PRE-TOW PREPS FOR EX-USS RAY
16 JUL - 31 JUL	ENR RODMAN, PM W/ EX-USS RAY IN TOW
31 JUL - 02 AUG	IPT RODMAN, PM
03 AUG - 10 AUG	ENR LITTLE CREEK, VA
11 AUG - 06 SEP	INPORT LITTLE CREEK, VA
07 SEP - 12 SEP	U/W TO RECOVER GRAPPLE ANCHOR VCOA
13 SEP - 24 SEP	U/W ISO EXERCISE "VALIANT THUNDER"
25 SEP - 03 OCT	INPORT LITTLE CREEK, VA
04 OCT - 31 DEC	DPMA
04 OCT - 04 NOV	DRYDOCK IN SUSTAIN
05 NOV - 31 DEC	INPORT LITTLE CREEK. CONCURRENT IMAV W/ SIMA LITTLE CREEK

SHIP'S SCHEDULE

01 JAN - 10 JAN	INPORT LITTLE CREEK, VA
11 JAN - 11 JAN	U/W ISO JO SHIPHANDLING
12 JAN - 19 JAN	INPORT LITTLE CREEK, VA
20 JAN - 26 JAN	U/W ISO F-14 SALVAGE OPERATION
27 JAN - 13 FEB	INPORT LITTLE CREEK, VA
14 FEB - 22 FEB	U/W ISO F-14 SALVAGE OPERATION
23 FEB - 04 MAR	INPORT LITTLE CREEK, VA
05 MAR - 05 MAR	U/W ISO "UNIFIED SPIRIT 93" MINEX
06 MAR - 07 MAR	INPORT LITTLE CREEK, VA
08 MAR - 12 MAR	U/W ISO "UNIFIED SPIRIT 93" MINEX
13 MAR - 14 MAR	INPORT LITTLE CREEK, VA
15 MAR - 17 MAR	U/W ISO "US 93" MINE RECOVERY OPS
18 MAR - 21 MAR	INPORT LITTLE CREEK, VA
21 MAR - 01 APR	U/W ISO F-14 SALVAGE OPERATION
02 APR - 06 APR	INPORT LITTLE CREEK, VA
07 APR - 12 APR	U/W ISO F-14 SALVAGE OPERATION
13 APR - 26 APR	INPORT LITTLE CREEK
13 APR - 23 APR	SARP REVIEW/WORK DEFINITION CONFERENCE
27 APR - 28 APR	U/W ISO USS OAKLAHOMA CITY SEA TRIALS
29 APR - 05 MAY	INPORT LITTLE CREEK VA
06 MAY - 16 MAY	U/W ISO FMP W/USS SILVERSIDES AND SDVT2 AUTEC RANGE
17 MAY - 20 JUN	INPORT LITTLE CREEK, VA
17 MAY - 28 MAY	ON-SITE CALIBRATION INSPECTION
17 MAY - 21 MAY	LMA ASSIST
17 MAY - 14 JUN	IMAV, SIMA LITTLE CREEK
23 MAY - 06 JUN	CABLEWAY INSPECTION

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

GRAPPLE started out the new year in her home port of Little Creek, Virginia, while completing her post deployment standdown. Immediately following the completion of the standdown, GRAPPLE was called upon to recover an F-14 which had been lost off the Virginia Capes. The ship embarked EODMU TWO DET SIX ZERO side scan sonar team to help locate the wreckage. The wreckage was located in 190 FT of water, the limit of GRAPPLE's capability for diving. The recovery operation was extremely arduous due to the depth of the water and poor weather conditions experienced. The recovery was completed by the end of February. The post salvage report is included as enclosure (4). In addition in late February, GRAPPLE was awarded the Battle Efficiency "E" for calendar year 1992.

In March GRAPPLE was tasked to support Exercise "UNIFIED SPIRIT-93", a joint Nato exercise which demonstrated mine hunting and mine sweeping capabilities. GRAPPLE was tasked with laying and recovering the exercise mines.

At the end of March, VF-101 lost an F-14B off the coast of the Virginia Capes. Again GRAPPLE embarked EODMU TWO DET SIX ZERO side scan sonar team to help locate the wreckage. The exact location of the wreckage was unknown. After searching 300 square miles of the ocean floor over nine days pieces of the wreckage were found in 124 feet of water. The wreckage was recovered and GRAPPLE returned to port on 12 April. The post salvage report is included as enclosure (5).

GRAPPLE was underway 27-28 April in support of the sea trials of USS OKLAHOMA CITY. After another short week inport GRAPPLE was underway for from 06-16 May supporting a full mission profile SDV operation with USS SILVERSIDES and SDV Team Two. During this period GRAPPLE did get to stop one day off the Bahama islands to hold fish call and to have a fantail picnic.

From mid-May through mid-June GRAPPLE was inport to complete a series of inspections and assists to include: FCA Review, Command Retention Program, NATO Secret Control, Cableway Inspection, Boiler Inspection, Diesel Inspection and assists in Logistics Management and CMS. Additionally during this period, GRAPPLE completed and IMAV with SIMA Little Creek.

GRAPPLE conducted an ETG visit and a TECCR inspection from 06-09 July and was underway enroute Charleston, SC on 12 July. From 14-15 July, Grapple was inport Charleston to prepare the defueled nuclear submarine Ex-USS RAY for tow. The Ex-RAY was then towed to Rodman, Panama where it was turned over to USS BOLSTER to complete its final voyage to Bremerton, WA. After a week in Panama, GRAPPLE returned to Little Creek and remained inport until 06 September.

GRAPPLE got underway on 07 September to recover the anchor and chain which had been lost during the VF-33 F-14 salvage operation in February. After only a few hours the anchor was recovered and GRAPPLE continued on to the Cherry Point OPAREA in Onslow Bay to take part in exercise "Valiant Thunder". During the exercise GRAPPLE demonstrated its ability to conduct salvage operations in a combat environment. GRAPPLE returned to port on 25 September.

GRAPPLE entered the floating drydock SUSTAIN on 04 October to commence an extensive Depot Level Planned Maintenance Availability.

GRAPPLE undocked from SUSTAIN on 04 November and closed out the year by returning to Little Creek to complete the DPMA and a concurrent IMAV with SIMA Little Creek.