



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS GUARDIAN (MCM-5)
FPO AP 96686-1825

5750
Ser MCM 5/060
04 Aug 04

From: Commanding Officer, USS GUARDIAN (MCM-5)
To: Director of Naval History, Naval Warfare Division
Navy Yard, 1242 10th Street, SE, Washington, DC 20374-5059

Subj: CY 2002 COMMAND HISTORY FOR USS GUARDIAN (MCM-5)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12H

Encl: (1) Command History covering period of 01 JAN 02
through 31 DEC 02

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is
submitted.


D. G. YORDY

USS GUARDIAN (MCM 5) COMMAND HISTORY

1. Command Composition and Organization. USS GUARDIAN (MCM-5) UIC 21406

Mission: To conduct minehunting, minesweeping and mine neutralization operations against moored and bottom mines of contact, magnetic influence, acoustic influence and combination influence varieties.

Organizational Structure: GUARDIAN's Immediate Superior in Command is
COMMANDER, MINE COUNTERMEASURES DIVISION ELEVEN
Sasebo, Japan.

Name of Commanding Officer: LCDR Stanley O. Keeve (28 MAY-31 DEC)
CDR Bernard M. Gately, Jr. (01JAN-28MAY)

Units under GUARDIAN's operational/administrative command: None.

GUARDIAN is home-ported at Commander Fleet Activities Sasebo (CFAS), in Sasebo, Japan.

2. Chronology.

01JAN-11JAN:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN. Holiday Upkeep.
11JAN-03FEB:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN
04FEB-07FEB:	U/W EAST CHINA SEA
08FEB-10FEB:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN
11FEB-13FEB:	ENR KURE, JAPAN
14FEB:	IPT KURE, JAPAN
15FEB-27FEB:	U/W SUO NADA BAY, JAPAN. MINEX/EODEX 02-1JA.
28FEB-01MAR:	ENR KAGOSHIMA, JAPAN
02MAR-05MAR:	IPT KAGOSHIMA, JAPAN
06MAR-07MAR:	U/W EAST CHINA SEA
08MAR-15MAR:	UPK SASEBO, JAPAN
16MAR-17MAR:	ENR POHANG, KOREA
18MAR:	IPT POHANG, KOREA
19MAR-25MAR:	U/W FOAL EAGLE '02
26MAR-27MAR:	IPT POHANG, KOREA
28MAR:	ENR PUSAN, KOREA
29MAR-01APR:	IPT PUSAN, KOREA
02APR:	U/W EAST CHINA SEA
03APR-22APR:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN
23APR-25APR:	U/W SOUTH CHINA SEA
25APR:	IPT OKINAWA, JAPAN
26APR-30APR:	ENR HONG KONG, CHINA
30APR-05MAY:	IPT HONG KONG, CHINA
05MAY-09MAY:	ENR KOTA KINA BALU, MALAYSIA

09MAY:	BSF, KOTA KINA BALU, MALAYSIA
09MAY-16MAY:	ENR SATTAHIP, THAILAND
16MAY-21MAY:	IPT SATTAHIP, THAILAND
22MAY-26MAY:	U/W COBRA GOLD '02
27MAY-30MAY:	IPT SATTAHIP, THAILAND
31MAY-06JUN:	U/W MINEX, GULF OF THAILAND
07JUN-09JUN:	IPT SATTAHIP, THAILAND
10JUN-13JUN:	U/W MINEX, GULF OF THAILAND
14JUN:	IPT SATTAHIP, THAILAND
15JUN-18JUN:	ENR SEMBAWANG, SINGAPORE
19JUN-21JUN:	IPT SEMBAWANG, SINGAPORE
22JUN-27JUN:	U/W SOUTH CHINA SEA
27JUN:	BSF KOTA KINABALU, MALAYSIA
28JUN-29JUN:	ENR SUBIC BAY, PHILIPPINES
30JUN-12JUL:	IPT SUBIC BAY, PHILIPPINES
13JUL-17JUL:	ENR OKINAWA, JAPAN
18JUL:	IPT OKINAWA, JAPAN
19JUL-22JUL:	ENR SASEBO, JAAPAN
23JUL-25JUL:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN
26JUL-20SEP:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN. SRA.
21SEP:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN. SRA. Fast cruise.
22SEP-24SEP:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN. SRA.
25SEP-26SEP:	U/W SASEBO OPAREA. Sea Trials.
27SEP-30SEP:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN.
01OCT-07OCT:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN.
08OCT-09OCT:	U/W ECHISEA. Type Training.
10OCT-13OCT:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN.
14OCT-18OCT:	ENR YOKOSUKA, JAPAN.
19OCT-20OCT:	IPT YOKOSUKA, JAPAN.
21OCT-23OCT:	IPT YOKOSUKA, JAPAN. CART-II.
24OCT-26OCT:	IPT YOKOSUKA, JAPAN. IA.
27OCT:	IPT YOKOSUKA, JAPAN.
28OCT-08NOV:	IPT YOKOSUKA, JAPAN. TRAV.
09NOV-13NOV:	ENR SASEBO, JAPAN.
14NOV-17NOV:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN.
18NOV-23NOV:	U/W ECHISEA. TSTA I
24NOV-03DEC:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN
04DEC-05DEC:	U/W ECHISEA. Type Training.
06DEC:	U/W ECHISEA. NAVCERT.
07DEC-08DEC:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN.
09DEC-11DEC:	U/W ECHISEA. Type Training.
12DEC-31DEC:	IPT SASEBO, JAPAN. Holiday Upkeep.

3. The following Command History for USS GUARDIAN (MCM-5) has been recreated from the Deck Log, Engineering Logs, and PODs.

01 January to 31 January

The first two weeks of January marked the second half of a month-long holiday upkeep period that saw a considerable number of repairs onboard the ship. Half of the crew was on leave during this time, while the other half was arranged into three duty sections. Signifying the conclusion of the upkeep period, SEMAT II and C5RA teams arrived from the United States on the 10th to inspect and assist in raising the material condition of the ship. Although many discrepancies were identified by these experts, the shortening of the visit due to operational commitments and funding limitations left many of them unresolved. Preparation for and completion of the ship's first 3M (Maintenance Material Management) Baseline Assessment (BLA) as required under the new Navy-wide 3M program dominated the end of the month. Despite the ship's apprehension in light of 3M discrepancies that the previous year's INSURV inspection had revealed, GUARDIAN fared well and benefited from the experience by establishing improved maintenance and equipment validation procedures. Although the inspectors could not certify GUARDIAN's 3M program based on the need to see a follow-on 3M Inspection to properly evaluate the effectiveness of the Navy's new 2-stage inspection progress, the ship felt confident as it awaited the inspection team's return in April. As the month rolled to an end, GUARDIAN commenced the CART-I (Command Assessment of Readiness to Train) administrative self-assessment of its readiness to begin the Interdeployment Training Cycle in the Fall. Binders containing checklists, training records, exercise requirements and material readiness inspection sheets soon proliferated in every work center. At the same time, the ship inventoried all spaces and equipment in preparation for the upcoming MINEX/EODEX and FOAL EAGLE '02 exercises. As part of these preparations, the crew completed installation of the Klein 5000 side scan sonar system and operationally tested it in the waters surrounding Sasebo.

01 February to 28 February

The ship left Sasebo on the 4th enroute to Japan's Inland Sea. The first night underway was extremely rough, and after a meal of spicy curry and 35-degree rolls the ship reeked of vomit. While the transit through the Shimoneski Strait was smooth, the eddy currents that the bridge team witnessed attested to the fact that the strong tidal currents could have overpowered the ship if it had tried to transit the straits during a tidal shift. GUARDIAN pulled into Kure without incident to refuel and attend the MINEX/EODEX inbrief. The port encouraged the crew to focus on the exercise by offering extremely limited entertainment options that did not extend far beyond a small bar at the end of the pier. The ship got underway shortly thereafter, and proceeded to the exercise area in Suo Nada Bay. As the exercise unfolded, daytime operations involved a lot of minesweeping for the GUARDIAN, PATRIOT and thirteen participating Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) mine warfare vessels. Leaks in its minesweeping winches' hydraulic lines and shorts in its acoustic influence sweeping devices hampered GUARDIAN's minesweeping efforts, but the engineers repeatedly rose to the occasion by completing emergent repairs that kept the ship on task. For GUARDIAN, the highlight of the exercise came on the final day, the 27th, when within a 24-hour period the crew mine hunted, employed a Mission Package-1 (MP-1, a device deployed by the mine neutralization vehicle to cause a moored mine to surface), vectored an EOD team to successfully neutralize a located mine, mine swept with a 6H (combination magnetic and

Encl (1)

acoustic influence sweep), and then performed a challenging late evening alongside mooring and replenishment with the JDS BUNGO. In the course of the highly successful exercise, the ship successfully deployed 5 MP-1 devices, although only 3 actually cut mines due to a fault in the cutter arms.

01 March to 31 March

March began with an enjoyable port call to Kagoshima, Japan. Many of the crew traveled to the nearby active volcano and perused the city's large shopping arcade. Over 300 Japanese citizens took advantage of the first time since the 9/11 terrorist attacks that the ship had been open to the public by touring GUARDIAN. The ship returned to Sasebo on the 8th for a brief week spent making repairs to minesweeping equipment and preparing for the next exercise in Korea. On the 16th, the ship left for Pohang, South Korea. Pulling in only long enough to refuel, the ship expeditiously commenced bottom mapping of the port area using the new side scan sonar system. After viewing the excellent results of the new sonar's survey, the crew put a great deal of effort into adding newly-identified bottom contacts to GUARDIAN's existing database. Although fishing markers were dense around the area, the ship persevered and was able to accomplish a great deal of mapping by operating 24 hours a day. (By the end of the exercise, GUARDIAN had hit a confirmed 60 markers, quite a few of which the crew later disentangled from the SQQ-32 sonar and side scan sonar "fish.") Following the mapping exercise, the ship simulated mine hunting by reacquiring the same contacts using its SQQ-32 sonar and newly-updated database. Along with numerous South Korean vessels, PATRIOT and GUARDIAN worked together to hunt the area sector by sector. Towards the end of the exercise, GUARDIAN also employed its 6H combination influence mine sweep for embarked ATG personnel to evaluate the fantail crew and train them on how to deploy the gear more safely and efficiently. ATG and ship's force identified both the Acoustic Power Cable and TB-26 towed body acoustic device as requiring replacement. Engineering difficulties deepened on the 25th, when 1B main engine suffered a major casualty that would necessitate the engine's complete replacement. On the 26th, however, GUARDIAN once more proved its mettle by successfully exploding a Mission Package-2 (MP-2) bottom mine neutralization charge with the Korean Admiral in charge of the naval exercise Capt. Young, COMCMRON ONE, COMCMDIV ELEVEN, and the future commodore of MINEDIV ELEVEN Cdr. Tokarik looking on. GUARDIAN left for Pusan, Korea on the 28th and arrived the next day to conduct a 3-day port call that resulted in overflowing sea lockers full of faux-mink blankets and genuine leather products.

01 April to 30 April

GUARDIAN transited to Sasebo on the 2nd and spent the next two jam-packed weeks preparing for summer deployment. The Enginemen replaced and conducted the ensuing Diesel Engine Inspection on 1B main engine, while the Electricians replaced the Acoustic Power Cable and TB-26. The 3M Inspection began on the 8th and continued through the 12th. Many of the items identified in the initial inspection had been corrected, and the ship did very well. All-too-soon for crew members who had already spent considerable time away from their families, the ship departed on the 23rd for its summer deployment. The transit began with a stop in Okinawa. Due to a high turn over in

personnel and anticipated further loss of experience and proficiency during the upcoming SRA, the training team placed a high emphasis on main space fire drills during the transit. The ship stopped overnight in Okinawa to refuel on the 25th, and the next morning it began the 7-day transit to Hong Kong. The Kitty Hawk battle group was also in port when GUARDIAN and PATRIOT arrived, and the two small crews quickly became absorbed into the throng of U.S. Navy Sailors that dispersed throughout the city. Many enjoyed trips to the top of Victoria Peak, shopping in the markets, eating local cuisine and sampling the nightlife in Wan Chai and Lan Quai Phong.

01 May to 30 May

GUARDIAN pulled out of Hong Kong on the 4th after concluding a port call that all wished would last longer. The ship steamed to Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. After a great deal of engineering, firefighting, and live fire .50 cal. training, the ship arrived in Malaysia on the 10th for refueling. The ship remained in port only long enough to refuel, and then continued towards Thailand. The seas during the 6-day transit from Malaysia to Thailand were incredibly calm. Large open blocks of time during the transit allowed significant opportunities to conduct watch qualification and Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist training. Six sailors earned their ESWS pins during this transit. The ship arrived in Sattahip, Thailand on the 16th anxious to receive repair parts and mail. After a long weekend in port, the ship got underway to commence the COBRA GOLD '02 exercise. On the 23rd, GUARDIAN garnered the distinction of successfully completing the first ever operational detonation of the Mission Package-3 (MP-3) exploding moored mine neutralization system. Technical representatives from MP-3 designer Costal Sea Systems Panama City who witnessed the demonstration gave high praise for the professional way in which GUARDIAN carried out this complicated evolution. COBRA GOLD '02 also saw the first integration of the Mobile Command Center system into Guardian's operations. Using the Iridium satellite system, GUARDIAN passed and received information from all the ships in the USS ESSEX (LHD-2) Amphibious Ready Group. The ship returned to port on the 26th, and hurriedly prepared to welcome its new Commanding Officer, LCDR Stanley Keeve. CDR Gately officially turned over command to LCDR Keeve during a short ceremony on the messdecks on the 28th. The ship got underway for the first time with its new Commanding Officer on the 31st.

01 June to 30 June

With its new CO and a full team of ATG members from Texas observing, GUARDIAN began the second phase of operations in the Gulf of Thailand with a 2-week mine exercise. This Mine Warfare "Refresher Training" (REFTRA) marked the unofficial beginning of an intensive year-long series of inspections known as the "Interdeployment Training Cycle." During REFTRA GUARDIAN conducted several successful double "Oropesa" mechanical sweeps and streamed the 6H combination magnetic-acoustic influence sweep before hydraulic leaks on the stern cranes precluded further minesweeping operations. The REFTRA also assessed the crew's proficiency at conducting mine hunting operations, and completed an administrative review of the ship's mine warfare programs. After finishing the REFTRA on the 13th, the ship pulled into the inner harbor of Sattahip for an evening to refuel. The next morning GUARDIAN finally departed what for many had been an outstanding liberty port as well as working

port, and steamed towards Singapore. The ship spent 3 days in port in Singapore prior to getting underway once more in the South China Sea. During this transit, the ship was able to complete a "crossing the line," or "shellback" ceremony. This was the first time that the majority of sailors onboard had passed over the equator on a Navy ship, and consequently served as an excellent opportunity to rid the ship of slimy "wogs," as sailors who have not been initiated into the "Royal Order of King Neptune" during such a ceremony are called. On the way back to Sasebo, the ship once more made a brief stop for fuel in Kota Kinabalu before continuing to the Philippines. GUARDIAN then pulled into Subic Bay, Philippines on the 30th to conduct a final brief stop for fuel prior to reaching Okinawa. A series of typhoons and resultant high seas, however, forced GUARDIAN to remain in port and delayed its return to Sasebo.

01 July to 31 July

The first 12 extremely rainy days of the month were spent in anxious anticipation of when the weather would finally permit GUARDIAN to sail for home. Many of the more senior sailors had been stationed in Subic Bay, and lamented that the base was an empty shell of its glorious past. The stringent force protection-related liberty restrictions and bad weather certainly restricted anything glorious that the crew could have experienced there, although the ship's Supply Officer did later get engaged to a woman he met during GUARDIAN's unexpected stay. To make matters more undesirable, the ship had to conduct two berth shifts in the middle of driving rain. Mooring lines became short in supply after several parted in the high winds and heavy seas, and shore power remained unreliable. The rain worked its way through previously unknown cracks in the ship's superstructure, and soon the crew was soon scrambling to prevent the uninterruptible power supply (UPS) units in the IC-Gyro room from shorting out. After what seemed like an eternity, the ship made its way towards Okinawa through rough but passable seas. By the time GUARDIAN arrived on the 18th, all hands were ready for a night ashore. Finally, GUARDIAN arrived home in Sasebo on the 22nd. Fire engines on the pier sprayed colored water from their hoses as GUARDIAN and PATRIOT pulled into the basin. Immediately upon tying up pierside, however, all hands toiled at making up the week of Selected Restrictive Availability (SRA) that the storm delay had robbed the ship of along with its planned five-day stand-down. The next 8 weeks were spent overhauling the ship. Due to limited funding, the crew completed a great deal of the required work itself. Amidst the busy industrial environment, 10 percent of the crew was able to take leave at a given time, while the ship used the prolonged time in port to send others to required schools. One of these schools that took place the final week of the month, the Shipboard Training Team class, indoctrinated GUARDIAN training team members on the requirements and elements of the "new" Interdeployment Training Cycle that GUARDIAN would officially begin in October. Required or not, the drain of available personnel strained duty sections that already faced increased watches based on SRA requirements.

01 August – 31 August

GUARDIAN spent the entire month pierside conducting maintenance. Contractors commenced painting the ship's superstructure, but the crew's own Deck Division received the task of completely sanding and repainting the ship's hull and all of

the deck gear. Nearly everything metallic that could be unbolted was removed for powder coating, including every aluminum hatch, scuttle and door (not until many pieces came back warped from the process did the ship question the wisdom of powder coating such fittings). Due to a high rate of personnel turnover, supervisors spent a large amount of time counseling, training and indoctrinating newly-reported personnel. Local members of ATG conducted an LTT-E early in the month to review the ship's 17 engineering programs and all engineering logs. The crew came in early on Tuesdays and Thursdays to conduct fire drills. PT was held on Mondays and Wednesdays for everyone except the engineers, who conducted engineering casualty control drills at these times. The engineers had a tough time conducting realistic drill sets, since the engineering spaces were in a state of disarray commensurate with a major industrial availability. Contractors were fitting all of the main engines with walker breather modifications and rebuilding two of the generators, while, the crew was overhauling numerous valves in various systems. In between training and maintenance, the engineers attempted to correct the many administrative discrepancies identified during the LTT. As a result of the large crush of work caused by the confluence of the ship's training and maintenance cycles, the crew was able to spend little time at home. Discontent mounted among the most junior sailors when the Commander, Seventh Fleet imposed a comprehensive midnight curfew on all E-4 and below (Petty Officer Third Class and more junior) sailors due to a rash of liberty incidents in Japan. This curfew required all sailors of these pay grades to return to their place of residence by midnight unless they were enrolled in the narrowly-defined "Exceptional Sailor" program. Commander, Seventh Fleet revamped this program several times as new incidents revealed the shortcomings of its criteria. One of GUARDIAN's sailors, MN3 [REDACTED], became so upset that he decided not to return to the ship. After he had been Unauthorized Absent (UA) for 2 days, the Command Senior Enlisted Advisor ITC (SW) [REDACTED] and LTJG [REDACTED], who had only recently reported to the ship, apprehended him in his automobile. When LTJG [REDACTED] proceeded to escort him back to the ship, Petty Officer [REDACTED] decided that he would not return to the ship and drove off with LTJG [REDACTED] in the passenger seat. Following an eventful night of pursuit and negotiation, ITC [REDACTED] retrieved LTJG [REDACTED] from the top of Mount Yumihari and let Petty Officer [REDACTED] continue to evade the Command. Some time early the next morning, Petty Officer [REDACTED] wrecked his automobile and was transferred to Navy custody in the hospital. Episodes such as this one illustrate the climate in which 100 mast cases took place and ten sailors were administratively separated from the Navy amid an 84-person crew in less than a year. On a brighter note for the command's junior members, GUARDIAN E-4 and below sailors enjoyed moving into the newly constructed Barracks. Each sailor was given his own portion of a room that includes a refrigerator, television and couch.

01 September – 30 September

As the SRA drew to a close during September, the ship pushed to finish ahead of schedule. The engine rooms slowly became passable, and therefore capable of conducting cold plant drills in. Several more LTT-D/Es took place during this period. The aggressive schedule of painting and sanding the hull continued despite frequent discipline problems, paint and equipment shortages, and visits by Commander, Amphibious Group ONE RADM Ruehe and Commander, Naval Surface Forces VADM

LaFleur. Before long, it was time for a crew that had changed significantly since returning from deployment to fast cruise and shake off the cobwebs from sitting in port for 8 weeks. On the 22nd, GUARDIAN got underway ahead of schedule to onload ammunition and complete sea trails. The underway was successful, but not without hiccups. The ship went to General Quarters in the narrows of Maebata due to a major fuel oil leak on the Magnetic Minesweeping Gas Turbine Generator supply line while approaching for an ammunition onload. The watch standers quickly isolated the leak, however, and the ship completed its onload and returned to the pier without further incident.

01 October – 31 October

GUARDIAN spent most of October away from home. The month began with a week in port and a short underway tailored to prepare for the impending CART II and Initial Assessment (IA) assessments. The IA had originally been scheduled for the first week of the month, but had been postponed to give the ship more time to prepare. All hands took careful stock of such material condition items as valve labels, missing screws and lagging. Underway, supervisors trained newly-reported personnel in their stations during both special evolutions and regular underway watches. Many individuals had never been to sea before, so training was difficult. The ship left on Columbus Day for Yokosuka. Immediately upon arrival four days later, the ship dove into CART II. Confusion on what standard to use while conducting the assessment frustrated inspectors and ship's force alike. No tailored objective criteria for MCM class ships existed in the newly-implemented ATG WESTPAC Training Cycle curriculum, and the inspectors were utterly unfamiliar with the Atlantic Fleet standards that all of the Texas and Arabian Gulf-based MCM class ships use. After three days of rather exhausting determination of exactly what the standards should be and how GUARDIAN measured up to them, ATG and GUARDIAN's ISIC Mine Countermeasures Division ELEVEN gave the ship approval to continue with the Interdeployment Training Cycle by scheduling TSTA-I for the following month. Immediately following the CART-II outbrief, IA commenced. For the remainder of the week, the N82 Engineering Inspection Team from San Diego recorded numerous items ranging from material and administrative discrepancies to inadequate training that required attention. Faced with demands for immediate results, the engineering department was torn between utilizing experienced people to restore deficient equipment or train new personnel who were having difficulty mastering operating and maintenance procedures. With the start of GUARDIAN's second week in Yokosuka, the Training Availability (TRAV) commenced. Whereas the curfew during the week of assessments had been 2200 for all hands, it was extended until 2400 for all hands, and on the weekends E-5 and above could stay off the ship until 0200. Many crew members attended Petty Officer First Class Leadership, Force Protection Team Trainer, General and Advanced Shipboard Fire Fighting, and Anti-Terrorism Training Officer, among other courses not available in Sasebo. In the shadow of the major assessments, however, the ship had difficulty maximizing the training opportunities in Yokosuka. In addition to reserving engineers during working hours to resolve documented discrepancies, the crew conducted evening Inport Emergency Team fire, flooding and toxic gas drills nearly every evening.

01 November – 30 November

The TRAV, together with its engineering workdays and evening drills, continued in Yokosuka during the first week of November. By the end of the week ATG had certified most of the Inport Emergency Team drills required for assessment during the Interdeployment Training Cycle. An LTT-E and all-hands damage control drills conducted during the transit back to Sasebo demonstrated the pressure to show progress within the Engineering Department and throughout the ship. GUARDIAN arrived in Sasebo on the 14th in time to spend the weekend preparing drill packages for the next week's Tailored Ship's Training Availability-I (TSTA-I). Despite the short period of time separating CART-II and TSTA-I, the ship showed marked improvement. Engineering plant concerns caused the final 3 days of the 6-day event to take place in port with the brow secured. The crew lamented the fact that they were unable to leave the ship, but the presence of all hands onboard until Saturday night reinforced the focus on ship-wide teamwork in completion of all of the requirements. The completion of 70% of all Interdeployment Training Cycle requirements by the conclusion of TSTA-II placed the ship well on track to complete the Training Cycle with a successful Final Evaluation Problem the following spring, even as it further shifted the spotlight onto the Engineering Department to complete the Underway Demonstration and achieve certification. After a Sunday off, the ship headed into the Thanksgiving holiday week and shifted its focus briefly to force protection. On Wednesday the 27th, the ship successfully completed FP Exercise '03, thwarting a full days worth of surveillance, bomb threats, unauthorized entries and small boat attacks organized by Commander, Fleet Activities Sasebo. The crew enjoyed the next day with family before reporting back onboard for Friday and Saturday to conduct more engineering drills.

01 December – 31 December

December started off with a string of assessments and ended with a holiday upkeep period. Based on concerns regarding the ship's readiness, GUARDIAN's Underway Demonstration was moved from December to February to give the engineers more time to prepare. On the first two days of the month, the ship certified the few remaining required Inport Emergency Team drills. During the next two days, GUARDIAN's navigation personnel conducted an LTT while the engineers continued practicing their drills and completing required maintenance. The LTT enabled the Combat Information Center and Bridge watch teams to conduct final preparations for the annual ISIC Navigation Certification. On Friday the 5th, Commander, Mine Countermeasures Division ELEVEN and members of ATG got underway with GUARDIAN to conduct the Navigation Certification. While GUARDIAN passed the certification with flying colors, LTJG [REDACTED] represented GUARDIAN's wardroom in the Junior Officer Shiphandling competition by being evaluated while conning the ship underway from the pier, through a man overboard drill and bringing the ship alongside the pier. The second week, local members of ATG conducted another LTT-E from Monday through Wednesday. COMCMRON ONE visited the ship on the 12th of December. The holiday upkeep period began on the 13th, signifying the start of the time when half of the crew was allowed to take leave for each of the two-week periods. The ship's Christmas Party took place at Galaxies on the night of the 13th. Despite the provision of live music, free food and drinks and a large number of door prizes, a

combination of scheduling the ship's Christmas Party following the start of the holiday upkeep period and a majority of the command's simply having seen too much of each other recently restricted the party's attendance to approximately 12 crew members and their guests. While many crew members spent time with their families or traveled to the United States, those who remained collapsed into 3-section duty and oversaw the completion of a large amount of maintenance. The Engineering Department purposefully divided the personnel taking leave to ensure that all of each of the 2 drilling watch sections was present for 1 of the leave periods. This arrangement enabled its members to more efficiently continue improving the material condition of their spaces and training for the Underway Demonstration. Additionally, the enginemen completed two diesel engine overhauls and conducted the ensuing diesel engine inspections with the assistance of the local Diesel Engine Inspector.