DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS HALYBURTON (FFG 40)
FLEET POST OFFICE
AA 34091-1495

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From: Commanding Officer, USS HALYBURTON (FFG 40)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC 20374-0571

Subj: SUBMISSION OF COMMAND HISTORY FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1994

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) USS HALYBURTON (FFG 40) Command History for Calendar Year 1994
(2) Achille Lauro SAR: Commanding Officer's After Action Report
(3) USS HALYBURTON (FFG 40) Welcome Aboard Package

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1)-(3) are submitted.

R. D. REILLY, JR.

USS HALYBURTON (FFG 40)
COMMAND HISTORY FOR ~~1991~~ 1994

1. USS HALYBURTON's mission is to provide multi-role combat support to convoys and transports operating in hostile areas. It is primary mission areas are anti-submarine, anti-air, and anti-surface warfare. For ASW it is equipped with the FFG-7 version of the SQQ-89 system which provides a dynamic and advanced capability. For anti-air and anti-surface warfare, HALYBURTON uses the MK-92 Fire Control Radar to target air and surface contacts with the Standard Missile and the MK-75 76mm gun. The ship also carries Harpoon cruise missiles for use against enemy ships and the Vulcan Phalanx Close In Weapons System for anti-ship missile defense.

USS HALYBURTON is homeported at Charleston Naval Station, South Carolina. The embarked LAMPS MKIII helicopter is from HSL44 Detachment Eight, NAS Mayport, Florida.

2. 1994 Significant Chronology:

Jan 1	Dry-Docking Selected Restricted Availability started in 1993 continues.
Jan 26	Engineering Training Group (ETG) arrived and began assist visit
Jan 28	ETG visit concludes
Jan 31	Fast Cruise
Feb 2	Underway Charleston Operational Area (OPAREA) for sea trials, Detect-To-Engage (DTE) scenarios, and sonar testing
Feb 3	Returned to Charleston
Feb 28	Aviation Technical Assist Visit
Mar 7	Personnel Administration Training (PAT) Group Visit/Combat Systems Material Conditional Readiness Review (CSMCRR)
Mar 11	PAT Group Visit concluded
Mar 16	Swedish Naval Officer Tour
Mar 17	NATO Secret Inspection
Mar 22	Command Assessment for Readiness and Training (CART) II commenced
Mar 24	CART II completed
Mar 25	Underway to Naval Weapons Station Charleston for ammunition onload
Mar 28	Aviation Certification, Aviation Readiness Evaluation, and ammunition onload began
Mar 29	Underway to Naval Station Charleston Aviation Certification completed Aviation Readiness Evaluation completed
Apr 4	Underway from Charleston to Jacksonville OPAREA for ETG visit
Apr 8	Returned to Charleston-ETG visit concluded
Apr 11	Combat Systems Training Group (CSTG) visit and Industrial Hygiene Survey commence
Apr 12	Penguin Compatibility visit began

Apr 15	Penguin Compatibility visit completed
Apr 16	Industrial Hygiene Survey completed
Apr 21	CSTG visit completed
Apr 22	Underway-Enroute Guantanamo Bay, Cuba
Apr 24	Arrive Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (GTMO)
Apr 25	GTMO Tailored Ships Training Availability (TSTA) II began
May 13	Depart from GTMO. Underway-Enroute Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
May 16	Arrive Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
May 21	Underway for Whitbread Race duties/return same day
May 23	Underway-Enroute Charleston/TSTA II ETG visit began
May 27	Returned to Charleston/TSTA II ETG visit completed
May 31	20B5/CSTG Training began
Jun 9	COMDESRON FOUR Pre-Combat Systems Assessment (CSA) visit
Jun 10	Underway to Charleston OPAREA-Degaussing Range/Full Power Run/Enroute to OPAREA off St. Thomas, Virgin Islands for Opposing Force (OPFOR) Duties
Jun 13	Commence OPFOR duties
Jun 16	Complete OPFOR duties
Jun 18	Returned to Charleston
Jun 27	Underway to Charleston OPAREA
Jun 30	Returned to Charleston
Jul 5	Pre-Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE) Inbrief/Underway Charleston OPAREA
Jul 6	Commander In Charge of the Atlantic Fleet Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Team (OHSAT) visit
Jul 7	Returned to Charleston/Pre-OPPE completed
Jul 12	OPPE Inbrief/Underway Charleston OPAREA
Jul 14	Returned to Charleston/OPPE completed satisfactorily
Jul 26	CSA Inbrief/Underway Charleston OPAREA for Combat Systems Training Exercises (CSTE), Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification (CMTQ), Detect-To-Engage (DTE) exercises
Jul 27	CSA/CMTQ began
Jul 28	Returned to Charleston-CSA Debrief
Aug 3	Underway Charleston OPAREA for Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) Rehearsal/Returned to Charleston
Aug 9	Underway Charleston OPAREA-INSURV began/Returned to Charleston
Aug 12	INSURV completed
Aug 15	Combat Systems Readiness Review (CSRR) Phase I, Auxiliary Systems Readiness Review (ASRR), and a Propulsion Monitoring Team (PMT) visit began
Aug 19	CSRR/ASRR/PMT completed
Aug 30	CMTQ
Sep 6	Underway for Missile Firing Exercise (MEFEX) in Puerto Rico Operational Area

Sep 12	Torpedo exercise/SM-1 live fire/MEFEX completed
Sep 14	Fleet Exercise with EISENHOWER Battle Group
Sep 19	Returned to Charleston
Sep 20	Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) period began
Sep 26	Underway for Naval Weapons Station Charleston-Weapons Load Adjustment/Returned to Charleston
Sep 27	CSRR Phase II
Oct 17	POM period expires/Fast Cruise
Oct 21	Underway for Middle East Forces (MEF) 1-95 deployment
Nov 8	Arrive Simonstown, South Africa
Nov 10	Underway from Simonstown/Arrive Cape Town, South Africa
Nov 14	Underway from Cape Town/South African Passing Exercise (PASSEX)-Enroute Mombasa, Kenya
Nov 17	South African PASSEX completed
Nov 22	Arrive Mombasa, Kenya
Nov 26	Underway from Mombasa
Nov 29	INCHOP COMUSNAVCENT Area of Responsibility
Nov 30	Tasked to render assistance to cruise liner Achille Lauro, on fire of the coast of Somalia
Dec 1	Embarked 47 survivors from Achille Lauro disaster at sea
Dec 4	Arrived at Djibouti to debark Achille Lauro survivors/Underway-Enroute Bahrain
Dec 9	Arrived at Bahrain
Dec 12	Underway for North Arabian Gulf patrol duties in support of United Nations Sanctions against Iraq
Dec 27	On station Central Arabian Gulf for patrol duties. Remained on station into the New Year

3. JANUARY

The month of January and the new year began with a continuation of the Dry-docking Selected Restricted Availability (DSRA) that had begun in 1993. The DSRA evolution encompassed the majority of the month's activities. Toward the end of the month the Engineering Training Group arrived for their two day assist visit after the completion of DSRA repairs. HALYBURTON rounded out the month with a Fast Cruise enabling the crew to get reacquainted with their job assignments after an extended long inport period.

FEBRUARY

HALYBURTON kicked off the month of February with a one day underway period in the Charleston Operational Area (OPAREA) to test the operation of the many systems which were either upgraded or repaired during the recently completed DSRA. On the 28th, HALYBURTON completed the month with an Aviation Technical Assist Visit.

MARCH

During March HALYBURTON spent most of her time in port conducting inspections, tours and certifications. The month ended with a visit from COMDESRON Four and a four day round trip transit to Naval Weapons Station Charleston for an ammunition onload, Aviation Certification, and Aviation Readiness Evaluation.

APRIL

An underway period in the Charleston/Jacksonville OPAREA for an Engineering Training Group (ETG) visit started the month. A Combat Systems Training Group conducted an assist visit after returning to Charleston. Toward the middle of the month HALYBURTON was visited for a Penguin missile compatibility assessment. On the 22nd the ship was underway enroute Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for refresher training.

MAY

Refresher training continued through the 13th of May. Upon completion the ship was underway enroute Ft. Lauderdale, Florida for a liberty port visit. HALYBURTON got underway again on May 21st to conduct the restart of the Whitbread International Around the World Sailboat Race before her departure on the 23rd for Charleston. During the four day transit home a Tailored Ships Training Availability (TSTA) II ETG visit was conducted. The month was rounded off with a 20B5/CSTG training visit.

JUNE

The month of June was spent training and preparing for the upcoming Combat Systems Assessment (CSA). An Immediate Senior In Command (ISIC) Pre-CSA visit was conducted. After a practice CSA the ship completed the month with 3 days of underway time in the Charleston OPAREA conducting a full power run and assuming Opposing Force (OPFOR) duties as part of a multi-ship exercise off the coast of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands.

JULY

The early part of July contained a hectic schedule of ship visits and preparations for the CSA and Operational Plant Propulsion Exam (OPPE) scheduled later in the month. This ship got underway on the 12th to complete OPPE and returned with a satisfactory grade on the 14th. HALYBURTON got underway again from the 26th through the 28th conducting CSA as well as Combast Systems Training Exercises (CSTE), Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification (CMTQ), and Detect-To-Engage (DTE) exercises.

AUGUST

The primary focus of August, Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV), began on the 8th and concluded successfully on the 12th. The middle of the month continued the long line of inspections with a Combat Systems Readiness Review (CSRR) Phase I, Auxiliary Systems Readiness Review (ASRR), Propulsion Monitoring Team (PMT) visit, and Gas Turbine Readiness Review (GTRR). Upgrades of HALYBURTON's communications suite, including a new AN-GRC 211 VHF transceiver and an INMARSAT ship-to-shore telephone installation, was part of the preparation for the ship's overseas deployment in October.

SEPTEMBER

The first half of September was spent underway for Missile Firing Exerciser (MEFEX), a work-up to train and give crew members the opportunity to conduct a live fire exercise. Working closely with USS GETTYSBURG, HALYBURTON conducted shipwide training evolutions in all areas to ensure personnel were well prepared. Transitioning into FLEETEX on the 14th, HALYBURTON escorted USS DETROIT (AOE 4), defending her against simulated submarine and small boat attacks. On the 16th HALYBURTON was unexpectedly tasked to leave station and participate in a Search and Rescue (SAR) of a downed F-14 Tomcat; nothing was found. After the return to Charleston on the 19th, a Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) period began. Following a one day underway period to the Naval Weapons Station Charleston for a weapons load adjustment, CSRR Phase II began on the 27th and ended on 28 September.

OCTOBER

POM continued into the month of October. On the 17th all hands returned from pre-deployment leave and a Fast Cruise was conducted. On 21 October HALYBURTON got underway for MEF 1-95 and rendezvoused with GETTYSBURG and USNS JOSHUA HUMPHREYS the following day. All three ships crossed the equator on the 30th and conducted the traditional Crossing the Line Ceremony.

NOVEMBER

The month of November was historic for both HALYBURTON and GETTYSBURG. On November 8th, the ships made their first port visit to Simonstown, South Africa as the first United States Navy warships to come into a South African port in over 27 years. After a large and gracious welcome, the crew spent two days visiting with their South African naval counterparts and enjoying the relaxing surroundings. The next stop was Cape Town, South Africa for four more days of sight seeing and official visits. Upon leaving Cape Town on the 14th of November, both ships participated in a joint U.S. Navy/South African Navy PASSEX. During the next three days, the ships conducted joint operations involving tactical maneuvering and detection along with personnel crossdeck training. South African riders were debarked via HALYBURTON's embarked helicopter,

MAGNUM 454, to Durban, South African and the ship continued transitting to Mombasa, Kenya. HALYBURTON arrived in Mombasa on the 22nd of November for a four day liberty port visit. HALYBURTON then got underway on the 25th enroute to the Arabian Gulf, inchopping to COMUSNAVCENT on the 29th. On the 30th of November, HALYBURTON and GETTYSBURG were tasked by COMUSNAVCENT to render aid to the cruise liner Achille Lauro, on fire 300 miles to the south off the coast of Somalia.

DECEMBER

On the afternoon of the 1st HALYBURTON embarked 47 civilians from the Achille Lauro and headed north to Djibouti. HALYBURTON arrived in Djibouti on the 4th of December, debarked her passengers, then returned to sea enroute the Arabian Gulf on that afternoon. Later that night, HALYBURTON conducted a refueling at sea with the French oiler SOMME. After transitting through the Strait of Hormuz, HALYBURTON took station off the coast of Bahrain, escorting United Nations (UN) sanctions violator vessels. The ship then went into Bahrain for a one day INCHOP brief from COMUSNAVCENT on HALYBURTON's role while in the North Arabian Gulf. HALYBURTON then steamed toward the next tasking, support of UN sanctions against Iraq in the North Arabian Gulf. This area was the location for the majority of HALYBURTON's operations while in the region. At the conclusion of 15 days of patrol duties HALYBURTON moved south to the Central Arabian Gulf to once again escort UN sanctions violators awaiting diversion to neutral ports and remained on station through 01 January 1995.

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ACHILLE LAURO SAR: COMMANDING OFFICER'S AFTER ACTION REPORT

On the 30th of December at approximately 1030 in the morning, USS HALYBURTON (FFG 40), in company with and under the tactical command of USS GETTYSBURG (CG 64), was underway off the coast of Somalia enroute the Arabian Gulf when the ship was notified by Commander, U.S. Naval Central Command that the Italian Ocean Liner ACHILLE LAURO was on fire approximately 300 miles south of both ships' position. Once advised that the ships would be altering course to close the disaster scene at best speed, HALYBURTON proceeded to recover its LAMPS MKIII helicopter (call sign "MAGNUM 454"), altered course to 224, increased speed to 30 knots, and took position approximately four miles astern of GETTYSBURG. The ship would eventually cover the entire transit to the disaster scene at full power, arriving at midnight that same night.

Information relayed from COMUSNAVCENT and received over the ship's INMARSAT teletype system revealed that the Captain of the ACHILLE LAURO had elected to abandon ship, SAR operations in the vicinity of the stricken ship were in progress, and several civilian vessels were proceeding to the scene. As both warships closed the scene, plans were developed which called for GETTYSBURG launching her LAMPS MKIII helicopter when within 170NM range of ACHILLE LAURO for surveillance purposes. Once within

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100NM of ACHILLE LAURO, HALYBURTON would then launch her helicopter to provide SAR assistance and additional surveillance at the scene of the disaster.

Additionally, plans also called for having GETTYSBURG's Chief Engineer and Damage Control Assistant accompany their helo to the scene to embark either the ACHILLE LAURO or another vessel at the scene and ascertain if any firefighting/damage control assistance could be rendered by the warships in saving the ACHILLE LAURO. However, word was subsequently received during the transit south from a VP-47 P3 aircraft on the scene that the ACHILLE LAURO was totally engulfed in flames, rendering moot any thought of placing a Rescue and Assistance party aboard the ocean liner.

USS GETTYSBURG that evening launched her LAMPS MKIII helo at the 170NM point as planned. However, flight deck and environmental conditions required that the ship alter course in a direction away from the disaster scene to safely conduct flight operations. This maneuver subsequently caused HALYBURTON to pass and open GETTYSBURG to a range of approximately 30 miles while continuing the transit to the disaster scene and resulted in HALYBURTON being the first warship to arrive on the scene.

Once arriving on scene, GETTYSBURG's helo was advised that all ACHILLE LAURO passengers and crew had been able to evacuate their lifeboats/liferafts and had taken refuge aboard two

MAGNUM 454 arrived in the vicinity of the HAWAIIAN KING and BARDU at approximately 2100, lowered its cargo of first aid supplies and blankets from a hovering position, then returned to HALYBURTON, landing at 2222 for a hot pump and relaunch. At the same time, HALYBURTON's crew prepared the ship for NonCombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO Ops) by breaking out relief supplies, readying sick bay for casualties, and reconfiguring one of the ship's three berthing compartments for possible use by any survivors. Additionally, preparations for launching the ship's Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) the following day were made to support movement of survivors from HAWAIIAN KING and BARDU to other ships in the area for transportation to land.

HALYBURTON arrived on the scene at approximately 2315, passing the civilian vessel LIMA, the first of approximately 8 civilian vessels who had responded to the disaster scene. Motor Vessel LIMA, an oil tanker riding high in ballast, was acting in the capacity as SAR On-Scene Coordinator; however, keeping her distance from the other ships due to her inherit difficulty with maneuvering. It was apparent that while all the ships were on the scene to render assistance as necessary, all were maneuvering at will or attempting to remain dead in the water (DIW) in order to avoid collision. To avoid any confusion and facilitate closing the ACHILLE LAURO and vessels HAWAIIAN KING and BARDU, HALYBURTON announced her arrival on scene with a series of "Securite" calls over VHF Bridge-to-Bridge Channel 16, informed

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all vessels of her course and speed, then energized its Blue ASW beacon (Grimes Light) so that the ship could be readily identified by the surrounding vessels. This supported HALYBURTON safely maneuvering through the disorganized formation and closing the ACHILLE LAURO to within 3,000 yards by 302356 (local).

Upon arriving at the vicinity of the ACHILLE LAURO, HALYBURTON proceeded to orbit the burning ocean liner and verify visually that no one was left aboard, while at the same time continued to control MAGNUM 454 as the helicopter went from warship to warship to civilian vessel, obtaining and transferring relief supplies and medicine. MAGNUM 454 continued to safely and effectively collect and deliver (from the hover) over 1500 pounds of vital provisions and medicinals prior to securing flight operations at approximately 010400.

Once on the scene, USS GETTYSBURG coordinated with ACHILLE LAURO officials aboard HAWAIIAN KING plans for the daylight movement of survivors from HAWAIIAN KING and BARDU to the ships on the scene. The decision was made to commence small boat operations at 0730 that morning using U.S. Navy boat crews in the GETTYSBURG and HALYBURTON RHIBs, and aboard GETTYSBURG's Captain's Gig. GETTYSBURG was scheduled to be the first to embark survivors (approximately 150 personnel) and HALYBURTON would embark its survivors towards the end of the operation.

This would be no easy task, given the advanced age of the majority of the survivors, and the fact that HAWAIIAN KING, fully laden, could only slightly lower her accommodation ladder before it reached the waterline (leaving all the ladder's many steps pointed upwards instead of level). Additionally, some passengers had suffered serious injuries while abandoning ship and would require transfer via litter.

Given the need to organize the safe and timely transfer of nearly 1,000 survivors, GETTYSBURG and HALYBURTON also elected to embark boarding parties aboard the HAWAIIAN KING at first light to support organizing boat loads, coordinate requirements with the ACHILLE LAURO officials, and tend to any special needs. GETTYSBURG would lie to in the vicinity of HAWAIIAN KING to act as overall coordinator for boat transfer operations and provide communications connectivity ashore. In addition to small boat operations, HALYBURTON would launch MAGNUM 454 to conduct surface surveillance of the ACHILLE LAURO and surrounding waters to verify that all personnel had gotten out of the water. Additionally, MAGNUM 454 was tasked to hover above the ACHILLE LAURO lifeboats and liferafts adrift at the scene to ensure that they were empty of personnel.

At 010703, HALYBURTON positioned herself approximately 300 yards off the starboard quarter of the HAWAIIAN KING and launched her RHIB for survivor boat transfer operations. At the same time

GETTYSBURG had positioned herself off the HAWAIIAN KING's port quarter and had also launched her RHIB and Captain's Gig. Boarding parties subsequently embarked the HAWAIIAN KING, each equipped with walkie-talkies to maintain comms with their parent ship, while overall operational coordination was conducted over VHF BTB circuits.

To effect the numerous boat transfers in as timely a manner as possible, GETTYSBURG and the ACHILLE LAURO officials enacted a plan whereby designated vessels would approach the HAWAIIAN KING from astern, take position off the ship's starboard beam at approximately 200 yards, and lie to while the GETTYSBURG and HALYBURTON small boats moved passengers off the HAWAIIAN KING.

After approximately 90 minutes of small boat operations it was obvious from HALYBURTON's perspective that additional boats would be needed to be pressed into service to move survivors off the HAWAIIAN KING and onto the other vessels. This was because it took anywhere from 2-5 minutes to get an elderly survivor down the difficult accommodation ladder, loaded into a small boat, and also the fact that the collective capacity of the three USN small boats was only approximately 50 passengers.

Given these circumstances, HALYBURTON's RHIB was vectored to one of the ACHILLE LAURO's abandoned lifeboats, placed personnel aboard the boat to verify its seaworthiness, then brought the

lifeboat alongside HALYBURTON for refueling. Once a full boat crew had been placed aboard, the ACHILLE LAURO 30-person lifeboat (call sign "HALYBURTON-2") was pressed into service to move passengers.

Since the area adjacent to HAWAIIAN KING was quickly becoming congested with a wide variety of civilian vessels maneuvering to get in line to pick up their survivors, and since GETTYSBURG needed to remain in the vicinity of HAWAIIAN KING for communications connectivity purposes (as well as to embark its 150 survivors), HALYBURTON elected to make way and circle HAWAIIAN KING (while at the same time coordinate movements of its two small boats and continue flight operations). The flexibility of HALYBURTON's propulsion plant and inherent maneuverability of the FFG7 class surface combatant greatly supported this type of operation and this option also provided HALYBURTON the responsiveness needed to avoid numerous "in extremis" situations with vessels on the scene. (The utility of maintaining way on and water over the rudder would serve useful on two occasions, where due to the congested waters around the ACHILLE LAURO, heavily ladened oil tankers maneuvering around HAWAIIAN KING inadvertantly maneuvered onto collision courses with HALYBURTON. However, immediate recognition of the situation followed by a series of rapid course and speed changes ensured that HALYBURTON was never in any real danger.)

At approximately 0930, discussions with the ACHILLE LAURO officials aboard HAWAIIAN KING ensued over BTB concerning two fatalities during the fire and debarkation from ACHILLE LAURO. The first individual had suffered a massive heart attack when the ship's fire alarm had gone off and his body subsequently left aboard ACHILLE LAURO after abandoning ship. The second individual had been fatally injured when a portable containerized liferaft had been mistakenly dropped onto his lifeboat, striking him in the head. The second individual had expired while aboard the lifeboat and his body left there when its occupants boarded the HAWAIIAN KING. The ACHILLE LAURO officials therefore requested that an attempt be made by U.S. forces to retrieve the body for transportation and burial ashore.

Accordingly, HALYBURTON maneuvered away from HAWAIIAN KING and GETTYSBURG to close a number of adrift lifeboats and locate and retrieve the victim. Since MAGNUM 454 was engaged in surveillance operations in the vicinity of ACHILLE LAURO and the small boats under HALYBURTON control were needed to continue passenger transfer, HALYBURTON would need to individually approach each lifeboat close aboard to visually inspect its contents. Once the lifeboat containing the body of the deceased was alongside, grappling hooks would be tossed from the focsle area in an attempt to secure the boat alongside for boarding purposes.

As luck would have it, the first lifeboat HALYBURTON approached (lifeboat #12) contained the body of the deceased. HALYBURTON maneuvered to place the boat directly on the port bow, grappling hooks were lowered and attached fore and aft, and the boat was walked aft to the amidships area and boarded. A team consisting of the ship's Senior Corpsman, a crewmember trained in EMT procedures, and a Boatswain's Mate/qualified Coxswain went onto the lifeboat, placed the deceased in a body bag, then secured the body in a stokes litter. The deceased was then hoisted aboard HALYBURTON and placed in the ship's torpedo magazine. HALYBURTON then set the lifeboat adrift and maneuvered to close the HAWAIIAN KING to continue small boat operations and flight quarters.

As survivor boat transfer operations continued during the course of the day, HALYBURTON also was called upon to perform two other rescue-related functions. The first was to attempt to locate other operable ACHILLE LAURO lifeboats to be used as additional survivor transfer assets. The second requirement consisted of retrieving a number of drifting inflatable liferafts for use by the civilian rescue vessels on the scene, those ships which were embarking survivors and as such required additional emergency liferafts to augment their own assets for contingency purposes.

Between survivor transfer boat runs and during those times

when a civilian vessel was maneuvering to close the HAWAIIAN KING, HALYBURTON and/or her RHIB subsequently maneuvered to place boarding parties on each adrift ACHILLE LAURO lifeboat. Unfortunately, none of the other lifeboats were found to be operable. Retrieving the drifting inflatable liferafts, however, proved to be a different challenge.

The liferafts were generally lashed in groups of two or three, some partially filled with seawater, most containing a variety of abandoned personal belongings. The liferafts could not be hoisted aboard HALYBURTON due to their bulky size and risk of puncturing their hulls. Attempting to tow one or more liferafts to each of the vessels requesting them was also risky and potentially time consuming; particularly if an attempt was made to use the ship's RHIB, since the maximum towing speed of the bulky liferaft proved to be only 2 knots.

Since the majority of the inflatable liferafts had drifted well south of the HAWAIIAN KING, HALYBURTON devised a plan to simultaneously maneuver the warship into a position to recover liferafts alongside the ship for towing, while some of the civilian vessels were directed to proceed towards other drifting liferafts. Once the civilian tankers were adjacent to the liferafts, HALYBURTON's RHIB would take the liferafts under tow and maneuver them alongside, then assist with getting the liferafts out of the water and aboard the civilian ship.

In the meantime, HALYBURTON herself would secure the lifeboats recovered amidships with lines from her focsle and could safely maneuver to close other customer vessels at speeds of upwards 5-7 knots without damaging the liferafts alongside. Closing the customer vessel to within 100 yards, HALYBURTON's RHIB then returned to the ship to take the lifeboats in tow the short distance to the customer and assist in their recovery aboard. This process succeeded in safely delivering seven liferafts to three vessels in a period of approximately two hours.

At approximately 011530, following delivery of the last liferaft, HALYBURTON's RHIB also moved the body of the deceased passenger to the tanker who had embarked the man's widow, then maneuvered to close HAWAIIAN KING and take aboard its group of survivors for transport to the Republic of Djibouti. Again, the excellent shiphandling characteristics of the FFG7 surface combatant would prove beneficial, as HALYBURTON was required to close to within 150 yards of the HAWAIIAN KING to facilitate boat operations, while at the same time avoid three other civilian tankers DIW in close proximity.

At 011617 the first boatload of survivors boarded HALYBURTON via the ship's accommodation ladder, where they were immediately examined by medical personnel and routed to the helicopter hangar for administrative processing. The survivors were then sent

below for showers, provided clean clothes, and fed and put to bed in their own dedicated berthing compartment. At the same time, the CPO mess coordinated arrangements among the crew for "hotbunking" and other supplemental sleeping accommodations which would be in effect for the duration of the transit to Djibouti.

At 011642 HALYBURTON received alongside its second boatload of survivors, one of which was a female passenger who had suffered a significant back injury during the abandon ship evolution and was confined to a litter. This individual was moved via stretcher to the ship's sick bay for individual treatment and observation purposes. At approximately 1630 "HALYBURTON-2" made the last of its passenger transfer runs and was subsequently abandoned at the scene. As the sun set at 1717, HALYBURTON recovered its RHIB, containing the last of what would be 47 ACHILLE LAURO survivors accompanying the ship to Djibouti. Finally at 1732, HALYBURTON altered course to 000 and increased speed to 15 knots to depart the area as directed by GETTYSBURG and proceed along track towards Djibouti.

Over the course of the next three days, HALYBURTON's crew tended to the needs of the 47 survivors aboard ship. All passengers were regularly examined and treated for a variety of scratches, cuts and bruises suffered during the course of their ordeal. Special attention was provided to some of the more elderly individuals, including one female survivor who lacked her

glaucoma medicine. In addition to their own berthing, head and lounge facilities, the survivors were provided the run of the ship. Once rested and refreshed, they took advantage of the crew's hospitality by touring various areas of HALYBURTON, observing flight operations, and relaxing topside.

The health of the female passenger with the injured back improved significantly each day, as observed during my daily visits to sickbay. Once afforded the luxury of rest and medication to reduce inflammation and relax her back muscles, her mobility improved to the point where she was able to slowly move about the ship during the last day of the transit.

The hospitality, caring, and attentiveness of HALYBURTON's crew during the transit to Djibouti was highly commendable. Each crewmember did not hesitate to fully support each and every facet of the embarkation of survivors and their transport to Djibouti. These outstanding individuals treated each survivor with the utmost respect, attended to their every needs, and viewed each one of our guests (whose ages ranged from 9 years to 82 years old) as valued shipmates and family. HALYBURTON's participation in the ACHILLE LAURO rescue operations finished upon arrival in the Republic of Djibouti the morning of 4 December 1994, where all of the 47 survivors subsequently debarked for processing by local authorities and follow on transportation to their final destinations.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

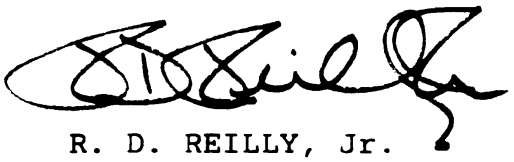
GETTYSBURG and HALYBURTON's participation in ACHILLE LAURO operations serves as an outstanding example of one of our navy's foremost and traditional missions, the rescue of those in peril on the sea. Modern technology, such as the rugged gas turbine propulsion systems which guaranteed continuous, reliable full power operations for nearly 12 straight hours; the flexible, sustained flight operations afforded by the SH-60B; and the impressive performance of the Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (which safely made numerous challenging approaches alongside a wide variety of vessels) all contributed significantly to a safe and highly successful rescue operation.

However, the major factor in HALYBURTON's successful performance can be properly attributed to the professionalism, dedication, and "esprit de corps" of its ship's company. I can unhesitatingly state with all respect and humility that in my almost 20 years of commissioned service I have never witnessed a better example of seamanship, airmanship, teamwork and compassion than that which I witnessed aboard HALYBURTON from the 30th of November through the 4th of December of 1994.

These impressive young men took to their duties as rescuers with unbridled enthusiasm, aware of the hazards involved but determined to not only meet, but moreover greatly surpass, any

conceivable challenge. Every evolution was executed with an excess of volunteers on the scene. No complaints were ever uttered, even from those faced with the prospect of sharing their bunk with another shipmate, or spending the night on an exercise mat in the helicopter hangar.

The crew of USS HALYBURTON upheld the finest traditions of the United States Navy during this exciting and personally rewarding operation. It was then, as it continues to be, a great privilege and high honor to serve as their Commanding Officer.



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CDR USN