



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDING OFFICER

USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7)

FPO AA 34094-1800

5750

Ser EXEC/076

1 Mar 16

From: Commanding Officer, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7)  
To: Naval History and Heritage Command (Ships History)  
Subj: 2015 COMMAND OPERATIONS REPORT (COR)  
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12K

1. Per reference (a), amplifying information for each section is as follows:

a. Command Data.

- (1) Name of your command or organization: USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7)
- (2) Unit identification code, per the SNDL: 23027
- (3) Name and rank of Commanding Officer: Captain Dana R. Gordon
- (4) Last/first/middle initial: Gordon, Dana R.
- (5) Rank: 06
- (6) Date assumed command: 2014-12-09
- (7) Mission, command employment or area of operations: Multi-Purpose Amphibious Assault Ship/U.S. Fleet Forces, C5F and C6F
- (8) Permanent location (homeport for deployable units): MAYPORT, FL OPNAVINST 5750.12K 21 May 2012 2 Enclosure (1)
- (9) Immediate superior in command: Amphibious Squadron EIGHT, CAPT Michael M. McMillan
- (10) Operational superior in command: (while deployed to C5F) CTF 51, MG Carl E. Mundy III
- (11) Administrative superior in command: Expeditionary Strike Group TWO/Amphibious Squadron EIGHT
- (12) Identify your assigned task force, group or unit name(s) and mission(s). Include operation plan(s) and or named operations you participated in during task force assignment (if applicable): CTF 51.1  
Operations DECISIVE STORM and RESTORE HOPE  
Iranian Lethal Aide Convoy Deterrence Operations

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(13) Name(s) of forces, commands, ships, squadrons or units assigned or under your operational control (if applicable): USS FORT MCHENRY (LSD-43)  
USS NEW YORK (LPD-21)

(14) Type and number of aircraft assigned and tail codes. During the last deployment the following aircraft were assigned to IWO JIMA (NOTE: MV-22s were split between IWO and the NEW YORK and interchanged often):

- 6 AV-8B (51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56)
- 4 CH-53E (20, 21, 22, 23)
- 4 AH-1W (30, 31, 32, 33)
- 3 UH-1Y (40, 41, 42)
- 12 MV-22 – (00, 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11)
- 2 MH-60S (40, 42)

(15) Commands, detachments or units deployed on board or stationed aboard as tenant activities (as applicable): Amphibious Squadron EIGHT

Tactical Air Squadron 22  
Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron TWO EIGHT (HSC 28)  
24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (24<sup>th</sup> MEU)  
Fleet Surgical Team EIGHT (FST 8)  
Beachmaster Unit TWO (BMU 2)  
Assault Craft Unit TWO (ACU 2)  
Strike Group Oceanography Team Norfolk (SGOT Norfolk)

(16) Number of personnel assigned: 2,718 (as of 02 Jan 2015); 1,152 (as of 01 Jan 2016)

(17) Officers, enlisted, or civilian:

- Enlisted: 961      Officers: 85      Civilians: 8 (as of 02 Jan 2015)
- Enlisted: 1,074      Officers: 78      Civilians: 0 (as of 01 Jan 2016)

(18) Command point of contact (required entry, complete in full):

- (a) Name: MCC(SW/AW) [REDACTED]
- (b) Job title or office code: Public Affairs Officer, Leading Chief Petty Officer
- (c) E-mail: [REDACTED]
- (d) Phone number(s): [REDACTED]
- (e) Command mailing address: USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7), FPO AA 34094-1800

b. Commander Assessment.

The year 2015 was a very busy, but rewarding year for USS IWO JIMA (LHD-7) and her crew. USS IWO JIMA set sail for an arduous 7 ½ month deployment on 11 December 2014, from Mayport, FL. While deployed, the ship and crew spent 164 days in C5F and 149 days at sea. We conducted a mid-deployment voyage repairs in Duqm, Oman and conducted our

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Agriculture wash-down in Jordan. The crew enjoyed three ports while deployed: Civitavecchia, Italy; Eilat, Israel; and Valencia, Spain.

While deployed, 428 Sailors were able to earn their Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) qualification and 434 earned their Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist (EAWS) qualification. Along with these qualifications, a total of 276 Sailors were promoted in 2015. Most notably, out of 57 eligible Chief Petty Officer candidates, 21 were selected; 36.8% in comparison to the Fleet average of 23.64%.

My proudest accomplishment is our impeccable safety record as we did not have any ship, aircraft or personnel related mishaps and brought everyone, along with all our equipment, home safely. This was crucial as we conducted flight operations nearly every day of deployment and culminated our journey back to America by conducting our Ammunition Offload of 1,046 Tons of Ammunition via connected and vertical replenishment. This three day evolution involved a lot of moving parts and required coordination and close attention to detail from all hands onboard.

Lastly, we had the incredible opportunity to host a Tiger Cruise for the final three days of the deployment. The Tiger Cruise enabled friends and families of Sailors to see what life is like out to sea, with a great time had by all who came out.

Upon returning from deployment on 21 July 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) and her crew enjoyed a month long Post-Operational Movement period where Sailors were able to rest, reunite with family, and re-energize prior to beginning an extensive 11-month CNO Maintenance Availability.

Some of the highlights from the deployment were as follows:

- From 11 December 2014 until 21 July 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) and her crew were deployed from Mayport, FL to the C6F and C5F Areas of Responsibility (AOR). The ship in-chopped C6F on 20 December 2015 and in-chopped C5F on 9 January 2015, spending 164 days in theater; 149 were high-tempo and underway at sea.
- Throughout the cruise, the 24<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit and HSC-28 conducted over 3,600 flight hours, with zero Class "A" Safety Mishaps.
- Additionally, there were over 84 Well Deck operations and more than 165 hours of Well Deck evolutions, which included the movement of an estimated 500 personnel, 350 vehicles/trailers, and 187,000 pounds of cargo.
- A total of 27 combined underway replenishments (UNREPS) were successfully completed with the ship receiving over eight-million gallons of DFM and over two-million gallons of JP5.
- Flight Deck operations were conducted with the movement of approximately 1.25 Million pounds of cargo and mail.

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USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) and her crew hosted several distinguished visitors and dignitaries to include: CENTCOM – VADM John W. Miller; CTF51 – MG Carl E. Mundy III; Commander, French Maritime Reaction Force – RADM Eric Chaperon; US Ambassador to Djibouti – Mr. Tom Kelly; US Ambassador to Yemen – Mr. Matthew H. Tueller; Commanding Officer, Camp Lemonnier – CAPT Matt O’Keefe; and T-Pain, a musical entertainer provided through the Navy MWR Entertainment.

- The Marines of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit completed the following exercises:
  - Djibouti Sustainment 2015
  - Exercise Iron Magic 2015 (UAE)
  - Exercise Eagle Resolve 2015 (Kuwait)
  - Exercise Sea Soldier 2015 (Oman)
  - Exercise Eager Lion 2015 (Jordan)
  - Bilateral Exercise (Greece)
  - Operation Yemen Response (Evacuation of Yemen Ambassador)
- The Chaplains provided more than 5,100 hours of pastoral, professional, and financial management advice through counseling for the Sailors and Marines. They distributed more than 400 care packages and spearheaded two community relation projects for the crew. One of which was the opportunity to visit with survivors of the Holocaust and the other was the opportunity to visit a mosque in Aqaba, Jordan where the crew interacted with Key Religious Leaders.
- USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) Medical Department received her 14th consecutive Green “H” award and 5th Blue “H” Award for excellence in shipboard health care and delivery.
- The Dental Department achieved and sustained an incomparable 100% ship’s Operational Dental Readiness. This is the highest among all East Coast ships and the highest in IWO JIMA’s history.
- Executive Department received the 2015 Retention Excellence Award.
- In 2015, Safety Department received the 2014 CNO Safety Award. There were zero Class A mishaps during the homeport shift, deployment, and associated workups while operating with 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit. The Safety Department also received the highest INSURV scores to date for a big deck Naval Ship in Safety and Environmental Protection programs.
- Air Department conducted over 31,000 flight deck evolutions, issued and received over 2.4 Million gallons of JP-5 fuel and conducted over 1,800 hours of flight support operations to ensure the safe execution of 3,500 flight hours flown by VMM-365 (REIN) and HSC-28 Det 5 during FIFTH and SIXTH Fleet Operations.
- Weapons Department issued and the crew of Navy and Marines released and/or fired 107 general purpose bombs, 34 Air-to-Air and Air-to-Ground missiles, 542,000 rounds of small arms and 362 (2.75 inch) rockets.

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c. Chronology.

Dates	Employment	Location
09 DEC14	Change of Command Ceremony	Mayport, FL
11 DEC 14-21 JUL 15	Deployment	Various
12 DEC 14-25 DEC 15	Transit	Atlantic Ocean
20 DEC 14-09JAN 15	In-Chop C6F	45 degree longitude
26 DEC 14-27 DEC 14	Refuel In-port	Rota, Spain
30 DEC 14-3 JAN 15	Port Visit	Civitavecchia, Italy
09 JAN 14-14 JUN 15	In-Chop C5F	Suez Canal
1 FEB 15	DITS - Program Reviews	Gulf of Aden
5 FEB 15	Electrical Safety And Procedural Compliance Stand-down	Gulf of Aden
7 FEB 15	All Hands Call w/CTF 51	Gulf of Aden
3 MAR 15	Change of Command Ceremony (COMPHIBRON 8)	Gulf of Aden
15 MAR 15	Meritorious Mast	Gulf of Aden
20 MAR 15-1 JUN 15	Djibouti Sustainment Exercise	Djibouti
25 MAR 15-29 MAR 15	Port Visit/ Mid-Deployment Voyage Repairs	Duqm, Oman
11JUN 15 -15 JUN 15	Port Visit	Eilat, Israel
15 JUN 15-19 JUN 15	Agricultural Washdown/Port Visit	Aqaba, Jordan
19 JUN15	Out-Chop C5F/In-Chop C6F	Suez Canal
28 JUN 15-03 JUL 15	Port Visit	Valencia, Spain
11 JUL15	Out-Chop C6F/ In-Chop CTF 80	45 degree longitude
11 JUL 15-13 JUL 15	Ammunition Offload	Atlantic Ocean
15 JUL 15-17 JUL 15	Marine Expeditionary Unit Offload	Radio Island, NC
17 JUL 15-20 JUL 15	Tiger Cruise	Atlantic Ocean
20 JUL 15	Return To Homeport	Mayport, FL
21 JUL 15-20AUG 15	Continuous Maintenance Availability	Mayport, FL
21 JUL 15-04 AUG 15	Post Operational Movement I	Mayport, FL
04 AUG-17 AUG 15	Post Operational Movement II	Mayport, FL
31 AUG 15-JUL 15	Planned Maintenance Availability (PMA)	Mayport, FL
03 SEP 15-08 SEP 15	LAN Migration	Mayport, FL
29 SEP 15	Presentation of CNSL Safety and Logistics Excellence Awards	Mayport, FL
10 Oct 15	Navy Ball	Jacksonville, FL
03 Dec 15	Holiday Party	Jacksonville, FL
12 Dec 15 – 27 Dec 15	Christmas Leave Period I	Various
29 Dec 15 – 13 Jan 16	Christmas Leave Period II	Various

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d. Narrative.

- On 11 December 2014, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) and her crew pulled away from their homeport of Mayport, Florida and began a 7 ½-month journey to the C5F and C6F Areas of Operation.
- During the period of 12 December 2014 through 19 December 2015, IWO JIMA operated in the C2F AOR and in-chopped to C6F on 20 December 2015. The crew had a brief stop in Rota, Spain on December 26-27 for re-fueling and last minute supplies and then continued on for a port visit to Civitavecchia, Italy, from 30 December to 3 January 2015 for a few days of respite and the opportunity to experience some of the fine Italian culture and cuisine.
- Shortly after the port visit, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) and her crew departed 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet (Naples, Italy) and continued on her voyage and in-chopped into 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet (Manama, Bahrain) on 9 January 2015 transiting the Suez Canal and continuing on to the Gulf of Aden.
- The Marines of the 24<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted two exercises over deployment: Djibouti Sustainment 2015 and Operation Decisive Storm. USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7)'s Deck Department played a vital role orchestrating a successful on-load and off-load of 187,000 pounds of Marine vehicles and cargo in direct support of the 24<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit during these exercises.
- Throughout the month of February 2015, we remained on station in the Gulf of Aden. One of the major missions the IWO and 24<sup>th</sup> MEU supported was the evacuation of the US Ambassador and staff of Yemen during a time where there was a civilian uprising and government turmoil in Yemen
- In February, the crew began the Division in the Spotlight (DITS) program which inspected the specific workcenter and division's Command Career Counselor, Drug and Alcohol Program Advisor, Safety, Mentorship and Sponsorship programs. Operational Procedural compliance, a material condition of spaces via zone inspection and a personal and workspace electrical safety check and training were also conducted.
- On February 7, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) and her crew hosted CTF 51, Maj. Gen. Carl F. Mundy III and his Staff. CTF 51 and Staff were embarked for two days before departing February 9, 2015.
- On 22 February 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) commenced an underway replenishment at sea with HMAS Success (AOR 304), an Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment from the Australian Navy.
- On 26 February 2015, we had our first of many underway replenishments consisting of both connected replenishment and vertical replenishments with USNS Laramie (T-AO 203). Fuel was replenished along with supplies, food, parts, and bulk mail.

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- On February 28, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) hosted to a concert by rapper and entertainer T-Pain. The concert was promoted by both the USO and the Morale Welfare Entertainment organization. T-Pain and his entertainment crew signed autographs for 2 hours and then performed a 2-hour concert for the entire crew on the flight deck.
- On March 3, 2015, Captain Michael McMillan relieved Captain Timothy Schorr as Commander, Amphibious Squadron EIGHT on board USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7).
- On March 11th and 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) commenced two more underway replenishments at sea with USNS Laramie (T-AO 203). Fuel, food, parts, and supplies were brought on board.
- From March 20, 2015 through early June 2015, the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted numerous Djibouti Sustainment Exercises off the coast of Djibouti. These exercises included events conducted by both air and land forces in which IWO JIMA utilized both her aviation capabilities as well as her well deck and LCUs.
- From March 25-29, 2015, the USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) pulled into Duqm, Oman to conduct mid-deployment voyage repairs. Numerous repairs were made to ensure the ship was prepared for the second half of the deployment and the crew was able to enjoy some respite.
- On April 1, 2015, the Chief Petty Officer's celebrated their 122nd birthday.
- On April 4th and 6th, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) commenced two more underway replenishments at sea with USNS Laramie (T-AO 203) and USNS Charles Drew (T-AKE 10). Fuel and stores were taken onboard.
- On April 11, 2015, the crew had its first of two Swim Calls in the Gulf of Oman. Over half the crew took advantage of the opportunity and enjoyed swimming in the Gulf of Oman.
- On April 13, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) commenced an underway replenishment at sea with RFA Wave Ruler (A390), a Wave-Class fast fleet tanker with Royal Fleet Auxiliary of the United Kingdom. We received fuel necessary for flight operations.
- On April 18, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD7) commenced another underway replenishment at sea with USNS Charles Drew (T-AKE 1) taking on even more fuel and stores.
- On April 20, 2015, the first of several Petty Officer Selectee Leadership classes were held. The first of which was for those Sailors who would put on Petty Officer Third Class crowns. This was followed closely by the Petty Officer Second Class Leadership and Petty Officer First Class Leadership courses.
- Throughout the month of May 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) commenced several underway and vertical replenishments at sea with USNS Carl Brashear (T-AKE 7), USNS Walter S. Diehl (T-AO 193), USNS Charles Drew (T-AKE 10), and USNS John Lenthall (T-AO 189), receiving fuel, parts, mail and supplies for the crew.

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- On June 11, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) and her crew pulled into Eilat, Israel for a port visit. Sailors were able to go on tours to visit Jerusalem, Masada and swim the Dead Sea. Many enjoyed the culture and cuisine. Regardless of the Sailor or Marines choice, they enjoyed the respite while in Eilat.
- In the mid morning hours of June 15, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) and her crew departed Eilat, Israel and a few hours later pulled into Aqaba, Jordan for the MEU equipment agricultural washdown. While inport the Sailors and Marines were able to take a tour to Petra. After a few days in Aqaba, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) and her crew began their departure from CF5 (Manama, Bahrain).
- On the early morning hours of June 21, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) Sailors and Marines began their transit through the Suez Canal.
- Upon completing the Suez Canal transit, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) commenced an underway and vertical replenishment at sea with USNS Big Horn (TAO 198) taking on more fuel, necessary parts and supplies for the crew.
- On June 28, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) Sailors and Marines pulled into Valencia, Spain for their last port visit. The crew enjoyed visiting several local attractions, absorbing the culture and eating.
- On July 3, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) Sailors and Marines departed Valencia, Spain and C6F (Naples, Italy). Plans and preparations were initiated for an upcoming Tiger Cruise. The Tiger Cruise would commence from Radio Island, NC approximately three days before the end of our deployment and end on the day of our return from deployment.
- On July 11, 2015, Sailors and Marines in-chopped into CTF 80 (Norfolk, VA) and continued on the last leg of their journey. In addition, IWO JIMA's Weapons Department began their Ammunition Offload
- On July 16, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) Sailors and Marines began offloading the Marines and their equipment. Again, the process went smoothly and lasted approximately two and a half days.
- July 16, 2015 was a busy day for both the Sailors assigned to Assault Craft Unit Two and Beachmaster Unit Two. Not only were they responsible for assisting in getting the Marines and their equipment back to Radio Island, NC, but they were also responsible for getting the "Tigers" and their gear back on board USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7). It was an extraordinary evolution that was executed with professionalism, ease, and efficiency.
- On July 17, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) Sailors and crew hosted more than 275 Tigers for an amazing three-day voyage from Radio Island, NC to Mayport, FL. DC Olympics, Steel Beach Picnics, and Movie Night were all key activities that kept the Sailors and their Tigers engaged and amused.



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- On the early morning hours of July 20, 2015 and after a grueling 7 ½-month deployment, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) Tigers and her crew sailed into the Mayport, FL to a huge crowd of family and friends awaiting pier side to greet them.
  - On July 21, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) began their month long Post-Operational Movement period. The crew used the time to unwind, relax and visit with family and friends.
  - On August 31, 2015, USS IWO JIMA (LHD 7) began her 11-month CNO Maintenance Availability in Mayport, FL.
  - On September 3 through September 8, 2015, LAN Migration was executed. Both NIPR and SIPR networks were shifted from the ship to the barges.
  - On September 29, 2015, COMNAVSURFLANT, RADM Christopher W. Grady visited the USS IWO JIMA and presented both the CNSL Safety and Logistic Excellence Awards.
  - On October 10, 2015, the annual Navy Ball was held at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Jacksonville, FL.
  - On December 4, 2015 the USS IWO JIMA held a Holiday Party at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Jacksonville, FL.
  - There were two Christmas Holiday leave periods for the crew. The first was held December 12-27, 2015. The second period was December 29, 2015 through January 13, 2016. Sailors were able to spend time with their family and re-energize themselves in preparation for the next phase of the maintenance availability.
- e. Supporting Reports. None
- f. Published Documents. Added as separate documents and included on the enclosed disk.
- g. Photographs. Attached to enclosed disk.



D. R. GORDON