



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS KITTY HAWK (CV-63)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63)
To: Director of Naval History, Office of the Chief of
Naval Operations (OP-09BH), Washington, D.C. 20350-2000

Subj: USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63) COMMAND HISTORY FOR CALENDAR
YEAR 2001

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Supporting Documents
(a) Published documents
(1) Welcome aboard brochure
(2) KITTY HAWK Flyers
(3) Press releases not published in Flyers
(4) KITTY HAWK news clips
(5) CO's 40th Anniversary Announcement
(6) CO's 40th Anniversary Speech
(7) Change of Command program
(8) Task Force SWORD Welcome Aboard
(9) Video compilation tape
(b) Biographies of Commanding Officers
(c) Photographs
(5) KITTY HAWK OPSUM and OPREP messages dated
21 SEP 01 - 20 DEC 01 covering the ship's
participation in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM
(sep cover)

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are forwarded.
Enclosure (5) was submitted via SIPRNET Email.

T. A. Hejl
T. A. HEJL

Copy to:
COMNAVAIRPAC

Command Composition and Organization

1. Mission. USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63) is an aircraft carrier with an operational mission of power projection and control of the sea-lanes in support of U.S. national Policy. The ship is permanently forward deployed to Yokosuka, Japan.
2. Organizational Structure
 - a. Immediate Operational Senior in Command: COMCARGRU FIVE; Battle Force Seventh Fleet; Commander, Task Force 70
 - b. Immediate Administrative Senior in Command: COMNAVAIRPAC
3. Commanding Officer. CAPT Allen G. Myers, 01 Jan 2001 to 01 Aug 2001. CAPT Thomas A. Hejl, 01 Aug 2001 to 31 Dec 2001.
4. Homeport. Forward deployed, operating out of Yokosuka, Japan.

Chronology

- 1-31 Jan. USS KITTY HAWK is in port at Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan. Capt. Allen G. Myers is the Commanding Officer.

- 1-5 Feb. Inport Yokosuka

- 1-15 Feb. Underway-Material Assessment Team
 - 6 Feb. Inport Yokosuka, Fast Cruise
 - 7 Feb. Inport Yokosuka
 - 8 Feb. Underway for sea trials, Philippine Sea
 - 9 Feb. Underway, Philippine Sea, sea trials, replenishment at sea with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204), carrier quals.
 - 10 Feb. Deck certification
 - 11 Feb. Underway, Philippine Sea
 - 12 Feb. Underway, Philippine Sea, Fuel RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204), ammo vertical replenishment with USNS KISKA (T-AE 35)
 - 13 Feb. Underway, Philippine Sea

- 14-28 Feb. Pierside Yokosuka
 - 1 Mar. Inport Yokosuka
 - 2 Mar. Underway, Philippine Sea
 - 3 Mar. Underway, Philippine Sea, carrier quals, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)
 - 4-5 Mar. Underway, Philippine Sea
 - 6 Mar. Underway, Philippine Sea, carrier quals
 - 7 Mar. Underway, Philippine Sea, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)
 - 8 Mar. Underway, Philippine Sea, carrier quals

9 Mar. Underway, Philippine Sea, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

10 Mar. Okinawa OPAREA, carrier quals

11 Mar. Okinawa OPAREA, CIWS PAC fire

12 Mar. Okinawa OPAREA, carrier quals

13 Mar. Okinawa OPAREA, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204), French SUW PASSEX/WASEX

14 Mar. Enroute Singapore

15 Mar. Enroute Singapore SCS, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204), enter SCS via Luzon Strait/Bashi Channel

16 Mar. Enroute Singapore, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

17-18 Mar. Enroute Singapore

19 Mar. Enroute Singapore, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204), PASSEX/Maritime interdiction exercise with Singapore Navy

20-21 Mar. Enroute Singapore

22 Mar. Changi Pier dedication with CNO

22-25 Mar. Inport Singapore

26 Mar. Underway SCS, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

27-30 Mar. Underway SCS, Exercise Merlion

31 Mar. Enroute Thailand, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

1 Apr. Enroute Thailand

2 Apr. PASSEX with Thai Navy, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

4 Apr. Enroute Thailand

5-8 Apr. Anchored, Pattaya, Thailand

9 Apr. Underway, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

10-11 Apr. Enroute Guam OPAREA

12 Apr. RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

13-14 Apr. Enroute Guam, transit Balabac Straits

15 Apr. Transit Suriago Strait

16 Apr. Philippine Sea, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

17 Apr. Philippine Sea

18 Apr. Philippine Sea, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204), USNS NIAGARA FALLS (T-AFS 3)

19 Apr. Philippine Sea

20 Apr. 40th anniversary reception

20-26 Apr. Inport Guam

27 Apr. Underway

28 Apr. Begin TSTA III

29 Apr. Philippine Sea, TSTA III, carrier quals, RAS with USNS KISKA (T-AE 35)

30 Apr. Philippine Sea, TSTA III, carrier quals

1 May FEP

2 May Enroute Tandem Thrust OPAREA, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

3-5 May Enroute EXERCISE TANDEM THRUST, CPX

6 May Enroute EXERCISE TANDEM THRUST, CPX, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

7 May Enroute EXERCISE TANDEM THRUST, CPX

8 May Enroute EXERCISE TANDEM THRUST, CPX, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

9 May Enroute EXERCISE TANDEM THRUST, CPX,

10 May CTX, CIWS TDU shoot

11 May EXERCISE TANDEM THRUST OPAREA, CTX, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204), USNS NIAGARA FALLS (T-AFS 3)

12-13 May EXERCISE TANDEM THRUST OPAREA, CTX

14 May EXERCISE TANDEM THRUST OPAREA, FTX, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

15-17 May BGSIT, EXERCISE TANDEM THRUST OPAREA, FTX

18 May BGSIT, EXERCISE TANDEM THRUST OPAREA, FTX, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

19-20 May BGSIT, EXERCISE TANDEM THRUST OPAREA, FTX

21 May BGSIT, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204), USNS NIAGARA FALLS (T-AFS 3)

22-23 May Enroute Sydney, Australia/BGSIT

24-28 May Inport Sydney

29 May Underway

30 May Enroute Guam, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

31 May Enroute Guam, HULKEX with USS REEVES

1 Jun. Enroute Guam

2 Jun. Enroute Guam, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)

3 Jun. Enroute Guam

4 Jun. Enroute Guam

5 Jun. Enroute Guam, RAS with USNS RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204), USNS KISKA (T-AE 35)

6 Jun. Enroute Guam
 7 Jun. Inport Guam, picked up tigers for cruise
 8 Jun. Enroute Yokosuka, Air power demo,
 9-10 Jun. Enroute Yokosuka
 11-30 Jun. Inport Yokosuka
 1-31 Jul. Inport Yokosuka
 1-31 Aug. Inport Yokosuka
 1-9 Sep. Inport Yokosuka
 10-11 Sep. Inport Yokosuka, threat condition Delta due to
 terrorist attacks on the U.S.
 12 Sep. Inport Yokosuka, threat condition Charlie
 13-20 Sep. Inport Yokosuka, Standby Ready Alert Condition
 Charlie
 21 Sep. Underway, Philippine Sea
 22 Sep. Sea trials, Philippine Sea, RAS with USNS
 RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)
 23-24 Sep. Sea trials, Philippine Sea
 25 Sep. Sea Trials, Philippine Sea, RAS with USNS
 RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204), Flint
 26 Sep. Sea Trials, Philippine Sea, RAS with Flint
 27-28 Sep. Sea Trials, Philippine Sea
 29 Sep. Sea Trials, Philippine Sea, RAS with USNS
 RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)
 30 Sep. Inport, Yokosuka
 1-5 Oct. Underway, Philippine Sea
 6 Oct. South China Sea
 7 Oct. Strait of Malacca

8-11 Oct. Enroute Masirah, Arabian Sea
12-14 Oct. Task Force SWORD onload
15-31 Oct. Operational tasking, Arabian Sea
1-30 Nov. Operational tasking, Arabian sea
1-5 Dec. Operational tasking, Arabian Sea
6 Dec. Loiter off the coast of Masirah, RAS with USNS
RAPPAHANNOCK (T-AO 204)
7 Dec. Enroute Phuket, Thailand, RAS with USNS DETROIT (AOE
4), USNS NIAGARA FALLS (T-AFS 3)
8-12 Dec. Enroute, Phuket, Thailand
13-16 Dec. Inport Phuket
17 Dec. Strait of Malacca
18-19 Dec. South China sea
20 Dec. Taiwan Strait
21-22 Dec. Enroute Yokosuka
23-31 Dec. Inport Yokosuka, SRA commences

Narrative

The year 2001 began with USS KITTY HAWK in port, Yokosuka, completing the latter half of a three-month availability that started in late November 2000. The crew completed a routine schedule of exercises in 2000 during two at-sea periods, one each in the spring and fall seasons, and looked forward to a very similar schedule during 2001. While the first half of the year went as planned, the second half of the year - as it did for the rest of the world - contained far more than they could have expected.

HAWK's winter Ship's Restricted Availability that began in November 2000, continued into early February. Major jobs included rehabilitation of 112,000 square feet of flight deck non-skid, boiler work that included replacement of the number 4A boiler tubes and number 4B boiler strength and integrity inspection and the replacement of the number 3 catapult launch valve.

HAWK got underway February 9 for a five-day sea-trial period, including flight deck certification and a brief carrier qualification for a few select pilots of Carrier Air Wing FIVE. A team from Naval Air Forces, Pacific Fleet, inspected several departments, most significantly Air and Engineering Departments for their ability to work the deck and provide steam, hydraulic and electrical power ship wide. HAWK returned to port February 14, HAWK Sailors took the remaining 2½ weeks to complete last-minute preparations for their upcoming 3½-month underway period.

One of the final preparations that struck home most with Sailors was the replacement of every existing foam core mattress with an improved innerspring mattress in every rack ship wide. A Navy-wide initiative, the mattresses were a big hit with the majority of Sailors. Only one disadvantage was found in the new mattresses, they were over twice the thickness of the older foam core models, yielding a net loss of nearly four inches of headroom - a precious commodity in racks stacked three high.

Underway March 2 for a journey that would last 102 days traversing nearly 15,000 miles, HAWK Sailors quickly ramped up to speed with life underway. Other ships deploying with KITTY HAWK included USS CHANCELLORSVILLE (CG 62), USS VINCENNES (CG 49), USS GARY (FFG 51), USS VANDEGRIFT (FFG 48) and USS JOHN S. MCCAIN (DDG 56). Major goals for the deployment included providing for advanced integrated training and battle group operations using multiple members of the task force, and

conducting interoperability training with allies throughout the Western Pacific. Upon getting underway, CVW 5 pilots completed carrier qualifications quickly and the HAWK/FIVE team commenced a period of undersea warfare training with Destroyer Squadron 15 ships and Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 14 (HS-14) aircraft, in addition to P-3Cs from CTF 72 and Japan. A Japanese submarine played the role of "enemy."

Following battle group training of increased intensity, KITTY HAWK and her surrounding armada steamed southward. After a few days of training with Singaporean armed forces in a maritime interdiction exercise, HAWK pulled into Changi Naval Base as the first carrier to go pierside in Singapore. The ceremony on Changi Pier was presided over by Singapore's First Permanent Secretary of Defense Mr. Peter Ho and Chief of Navy RADM Lui Tuck Yew along with their American counterparts Chief of Naval Operations ADM Vern Clark and the U.S. Embassy (Singapore) Charge d' Affaires Herbert Schulz. Several hundred other local Singaporean dignitaries attended. Press coverage was extremely wide and plentiful, noting the strategic implications for both Singapore and the United States.

With Singapore as home to the Commander, Logistics Force Western Pacific, Singapore's Changi Pier offers carriers a unique opportunity to load aboard stores and complete maintenance work mid-transit "between" the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The base, with yet-developing infrastructure, provides Sailors the opportunity to walk ashore, rather than taking liberty boats, and is slated to provide Sailors expanded on-base recreational options in the future.

KITTY HAWK stood up a new division in the Engineering Department during the month of March. ER09, as it became known, assumed responsibility for preventive and corrective maintenance action on all the ship's damage control systems as well as providing for HAWK's inport emergency team.

Departments contributed Sailors on a six-month TAD basis to the division for a total of 109 people, overseen by the Damage Control Assistant and seven personnel from Engineering's Repair Division.

From March 27 through April 4, KITTY HAWK conducted training with various units of both the Thai Royal Navy and Royal Singapore Navy. KITTY HAWK dropped anchor off Pattaya Beach, Thailand, April 5, staying through April 9. After a front-burner, high visibility port call in Singapore, the visit

provided an opportunity for nearly all of the ship's company to relax, with little media coverage and a minimum of dignitaries visiting the ship.

Upon departing Thailand, KITTY HAWK proceeded toward Guam. As this was mere days after the collision of a Chinese MiG with a U.S. Navy EP-3, KITTY HAWK was rumored to be headed toward the South China Sea. Pentagon officials refused to comment on the tasking of KITTY HAWK or the direction in which she was headed. In reality, the ship, after turning east, kept on course toward Guam as originally planned, not deviating to the north. Nonetheless, media speculation suggested the carrier could be used to pressure Chinese authorities to release the crew of the downed EP-3 from Hainan Island.

Upon arriving in the Guam operating area, KITTY HAWK conducted a variety of training, including launching CVW 5 aircraft against targets at Farallon de Medinilla (FDM). FDM provides the U.S. military its only target range in the Pacific suitable for training with laser-guided air-to-ground weapons. As with other ranges, environmental impact of training exercises is a concern. CVW 5 used the opportunity at FDM for realistic training, flying a variety of mission profiles from KITTY HAWK.

HAWK pulled into Apra Harbor, Guam, April 20 for an eight-day port visit that gave the ship the opportunity to perform maintenance, enjoy a unique American island and share the Navy experience with locals. The first evening, HAWK hosted over 500 locals to celebrate the ship's 40th birthday. CAPT Myers chronicled the ship's four-decade history that night to the delight of local dignitaries. As with many of HAWK's port visits, Sailors participated in a variety of liberty activities ranging from community relations (community service) projects to SCUBA diving, tours and shopping.

Pulling out of Guam April 29 allowed HAWK's crew to celebrate her birthday in style, at sea, where she was designed to be. Sailors went about their daily activities in regular fashion, marking the historic day modestly by enjoying a Sunday evening meal of steak and lobster followed by a slice of the galley's best birthday cake.

HAWK proceeded south toward Australia, readying herself for her biggest exercise of the 2001 spring underway period. While en route, the crew undertook the daunting challenge of TSTA/FEP (Tailored Ship Training Availability and Final Evaluation Period), having embarked inspectors from Afloat Training Group

Western Pacific. TSTA/FEP encompassed nine days with the goals of training the crew through complex unit-level exercises and evaluating it on its competency to perform those exercises. Focusing on damage control in battle scenarios, TSTA/FEP proved to be the culmination of 17 General Quarters training drills performed earlier in the underway period. HAWK passed the FEP with flying colors, receiving extraordinarily positive feedback from the ATG team.

On May 5, HAWK celebrated the crossing of the equator following Navy tradition with a "crossing of the line" ceremony throughout the ship. During this ceremony, thousands of "pollywogs" -- including Commanding Officer CAPT Myers -- became "shellbacks," marking a career highlight for many.

Passing through the historic Coral Sea and pressing on toward the coast of Queensland and the Shoalwater Bay Training Area, the crew of HAWK prepared for the challenges of Exercise Tandem Thrust '01 with Australia and Canada. The combined exercise involved more than 27,000 personnel, beginning May 3 and ending May 29. HAWK's participation began May 10 and ended May 21.

Perhaps the most significant challenge of Tandem Thrust was meeting the stringent environmental regulations stipulated by the Australian government to protect the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. HAWK rose to the task of meeting those requirements, which greatly exceeded standard Navy waste disposal techniques. Indeed, absolutely no waste left the ship until HAWK exited the designated GBRMP area, an effort that involved nightly transits of greater than 100 miles.

HAWK's mission with CVW 5 in Tandem Thrust was to provide control of the sea and power projection in support of amphibious landings, air supremacy and air-to-ground interdiction. The ship's crew did so with several Australians embarked, offering a valuable, cross-cultural training experience.

During the same time HAWK engaged in Tandem Thrust, not even two weeks after TSTA/FEP, HAWK engaged in a weeklong Battle Group Systems Integration Test. A team of 63 BGSIT experts embarked HAWK and other battle group and amphibious ready group ships, plus USS Blue Ridge (LCC 20), to test several key systems. These included the Advanced Digital Control System (ADNS), Global Command and Control System (GCCS), both classified and unclassified Information Technology for the 21st Century (IT-21) Secret/Non-Secret Internet Protocol Networks (SIPRNET/NIPRNET) and various radar systems.

HAWK ended Tandem Thrust with many Sailors and officers feeling the exercise signified the height of HAWK's accomplishment and readiness level for the underway period. Having honed unit-level skills early on, the ship/air wing team proved their ability to integrate into a much larger, combined and joint effort across countries and force components.

As a well-earned award for their hard work, HAWK pulled into Sydney's Woolloomooloo Bay May 25 for a five-day port visit, indulging them in Australian hospitality. Besides enjoying some of the best liberty available, HAWK represented the U.S. in a reception on the ship's hangar bay that celebrated the 50th anniversary of the ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand and the United States) Treaty. Attended by the U.S. Ambassador to Australia and the Australian Director of Veteran's Affairs, the gala event proved to be a great kickoff to the weekend.

On both weekend days, HAWK opened up its brows to locals. Some 46,000 Australians boarded HAWK to see her decks and aircraft. Along with the people, in conjunction with the ANZUS anniversary celebration, came hordes of positive media coverage. When HAWK slipped out of her berth, through Sydney Harbor into the Pacific, it wasn't without a tremendous emotional sigh from many Sailors who made new friends and absorbed the warmth of the Australian people.

Leaving Australia behind in early June, HAWK quickly retraced its steps northward toward Guam, wrapping up after-action reports and preparing for summer maintenance availability in Yokosuka. Prior to arriving, however, the ship made a brief stop in Guam to pick up 279 "Tigers" for an experience long treasured by those lucky enough to participate. Each Tiger rode the ship three days, from Guam to Yokosuka, completing a Personnel Qualification Standard (PQS), touring the ship and watching Sailors in action, and experiencing the thrill of homecoming from the crew's point of view June 11.

KITTY HAWK entered into a major Ship's Restricted Availability upon her return to Yokosuka. Major jobs included 23,000 square feet of non-skid material applied to the flight deck in addition to new non-skid on the entire forward hangar bay, replacing super heater tubes in the number 1B boiler, completing the number 2B boiler strength and integrity inspection, and the both the upgrade of existing - and the installation of new - Consolidated Automated Support System benches in the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department.

Perhaps most notable hardware installation was that of the Rolling Airframe Missile (RAM) on the starboard bow. Replacing both a NATO Sea Sparrow Missile System and Close-in Weapons System, the RAM boasts an improved ability to defend the ship from incoming cruise missiles.

CAPT Tom Hejl relieved CAPT Al Myers August 1, in a ceremony in Hangar Bay Two. Myers summed up his 14-month tour by proudly thanking his crew.

"You, the Sailors of HAWK are the focus of my thanks today - you are HAWK," he said. "You are the spirit, intellect and personality of a ship that works harder than any other carrier in the fleet ... and your efforts contribute to greater peace and stability wherever we sail."

HAWK experienced September 11 exactly three months after returning to Yokosuka. Overnight, the crew was recalled to the ship. Most Sailors returned immediately, others, on leave and overseas, returned only after waiting days for airlines to recommence flights that had been cancelled in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

Force protection instantly became a buzz phrase around the ship. While force protection measures had increased following the year 2000 attack on USS COLE (DDG 67), they rocketed forward after September 11. Sailors and officers remained on base overnight for three days following the attack, with only short periods away from the ship for necessary purchases from the Navy Exchange or a trip to an off-base residence to secure it. On the weekend immediately following the attack, those with homes in-town Yokosuka were allowed off the base with the clear understanding that they were not to stray from their residences.

HAWK immediately began to ready the ship for sea, wrapping up jobs quickly and eventually getting underway nearly two weeks earlier than planned September 22. The ship conducted sea trials in the Phillipine Sea, certifying the flight deck and testing systems that hadn't been engaged during the ship's in-port time.

After nine days of shakedown and the successful carrier qualification of CVW 5 pilots, HAWK returned to Yokosuka September 30. Crewmembers departed for their homes to see their families for precious hours, and to tell them they'd be departing the very next morning, early. Indeed, HAWK pulled out

of Yokosuka October 1, returning to sea, but with only a fraction of her air wing.

Fifteen aircraft embarked HAWK as a CVW 5 detachment. Eight F/A-18 Hornets, three S-3B Vikings, two C-2A Greyhounds and two SH-60B Seahawks flew aboard the ship, with a minimum number of support personnel.

Shortly before noon October 1, HAWK secured her unclassified (NIPRNET) computer network and telephone system from its satellite connection to shore. Operation "River City" began. Only secure STU III telephones, SIPRNET email and traditional radio message traffic and the U.S. Postal Service were to be used as communication channels off the ship. OPSEC became the buzzword shipwide. HAWK began its mission as the "stealth" carrier.

Steaming on all eight boilers, HAWK rapidly proceeded southward. The crew only knew the ship was headed toward the North Arabian Sea to participate in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and would be embarking a joint task force consisting of a variety of special operations personnel. In six days, HAWK was transiting the

Strait of Malacca at 27 knots, while at General Quarters and in Mission Oriented Protective Posture III, with personnel above decks in full chemical protective outer-garments. Pressing on westward, HAWK made it the coast of Masirah, embarking Task Force SWORD.

KITTY HAWK crewmembers knew very little about the makeup of SWORD, other than the fact that they'd consist of a variety of services and agencies and dress in a wide array of uniforms and civilian clothes. Arriving with the nearly 600 members of SWORD were a mix of 20 helicopters consisting of MH-60 Blackhawks and CH-47 Chinooks.

With the "War on Terrorism" monopolizing available news sources and their support for a high-value unit of special operations personnel, the reality of combat readiness became greatly apparent to HAWK Sailors. General Quarters drills and damage control training took on a higher degree of seriousness among many.

On the bridge and throughout the ship's Combat Direction Center, the "five-mile bubble" became a frequently used phrase used to describe the ship's effort to keep all vessels outside a five-mile radius. The paralleling demands of force protection and

operational security precipitated that requirement. Task Force SWORD wanted no one to know their whereabouts, composition or readiness, and the Navy wanted no warship damaged from any threat. Leadership even directed HAWK to keep non-HAWK Battle Group assets outside of the five-mile radius, as they worried about Sailors from other warships photographing the assets on HAWK and emailing them off their ship.

HAWK began a steady diet of operations in its assigned operating area, rarely straying from its well-marked areas. Launching SWORD was a night activity, and the ship's crew commonly had minimal notice prior to the launch time, often having to transit at speeds greater than 24 knots to get to an assigned launch point on time.

On October 18, 23 and 30, VADM Charles Moore (COMFIFTHFLT), Army GEN Tommy Franks (CENTCOM) and the Honorable Gordon England (SECNAV) visited KITTY HAWK. Each brought similar messages, thanking Sailors for their devotion to duty, serving in an unconventional mission for a carrier and exhibiting patience in the light of uncertainty.

Although blacked out of the hourly media coverage provided USS ENTERPRISE (CVN 65) and USS CARL VINSON (CVN 70), much speculation about KITTY HAWK circulated in the press. Meanwhile, United States citizens - and indeed people from many countries around the world - poured support into HAWK. Letters and email from schools and small towns all over the U.S. and around the world poured into the ship, some entirely written in German, Spanish, Italian or French with no accompanying translation. The surge of patriotic support inspired many Sailors.

As the calendar rolled toward the month of November, speculation and uncertainty about the length of HAWK and SWORD's mission in country ran rampant about the ship. The adjustment to River City continued to be a thorn in the side of many Sailors, especially first-term Sailors who'd not known the Navy prior to the age of email and Internet service at sea.

As a result, HAWK introduced "Freedom Email" November 1. The system allowed HAWK Sailors the opportunity to send email off the ship via two designated shipmates who screened the message for operational security criteria. Once properly screened, the message was released. Originally, Sailors were allowed only three Emails per week. Approximately two weeks into the program, that rate increased to one Email per day.

On November 7, HAWK Sailors were saddened to lose a shipmate. Machinist's Mate Fireman Apprentice Bryant Leroy Davis was officially declared dead, lost at sea, 48 hours after an exhaustive search and recovery effort led by HAWK/FIVE assets and assisted by USS CURTIS WILBUR (CG 54). His shipmates honored Davis in a ceremony November 11.

HAWK maintained a vigilant watch as the Afloat Forward Staging Base for Task Force SWORD throughout the month of November. A full month into the operation, Sailors found themselves in a groove of steady operations.

Thanksgiving, November 22, was a grand event celebrated in the Mess Decks, Chief's Mess and Wardroom. The Supply Department made sure every Sailor enjoyed the holiday by preparing a superb meal, and many Sailors found the holiday especially meaningful following the September 11 terrorist attacks.

One day after the holiday, the Miami Dolphin Cheerleaders visited the HAWK/FIVE/SWORD team. It was the first visit to the ship by non-DOD personnel since HAWK got underway Oct. 1, demonstrating a slight relaxation of the emphasis on secrecy. The cheerleaders were immensely popular with the crew, performing cheer routines in two separate shows on the hangar bay and signing autographs at several locations in the ship.

In another of a string of morale-boosting events at the end of the month, HAWK held a Steel Beach Picnic and swim call November 27. The series of events helped the HAWK Sailors relax a bit from the daily grind of continuous operations and intense focus on operational security.

On November 29, Electrician's Mate Fireman Michael Jamel Jakes, Jr. sustained serious injuries in a fall from his rack. He was medically evacuated from the ship to Bahrain for advanced medical care. After an initially positive report from the physicians, Jakes died December 4 in the Bahrain Navy Hospital. He was memorialized in a ceremony December 9.

On December 6, HAWK was given the official order to disembark SWORD and head home. Originally scheduled to complete their planned fall exercises in mid November, the ship was still scheduled to return to the CENTCOM AOR in early 2002. HAWK leadership felt relieved knowing they could complete valuable time in repair availability in preparation for a longer underway period of conventional operations. HAWK Sailors, meanwhile,

were thrilled to find out they'd be home in time for the Christmas holiday.

Once SWORD disembarked the ship, OPSEC relaxed. Sailors once again had full access to Email and Internet services in addition to calling card-operated "Sailor phones" to communicate with the outside world.

HAWK visited Phuket, Thailand, December 13-16 for some well-deserved rest and relaxation following 74 days at sea. Sailors relaxed in town, relieved to know they'd be home soon. Christmas shopping was popular.

Leaving Phuket and once again transiting the Strait of Malacca, HAWK continued her homeward journey. On December 23, she pulled pierside in Yokosuka, ending her historic 83-day underway period in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

Sailors with local families celebrated joyously in Yokosuka. Many single Sailors flew out of Japan December 24 for an extra special holiday with loved ones in the states. At the same time, shipyard workers came aboard, connecting power and ventilation systems, beginning in-depth maintenance availability in preparation for the challenges of 2002.