



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CG 57)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CG 57)
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Encl: (1) 1991 Command History

1. In response to reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted in accordance with reference (b).


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LAKE CHAMPLAIN 1991 COMMAND HISTORY

USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN (CG 57), Captain E. K. Kristensen commanding, began 1991 moored to Pier 8, 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego, CA. The ship had been in port since December 21 completing the Christmas leave and upkeep period.

Tensions in the Arabian Gulf caused by Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and the military buildup that followed increased during the last weeks of 1990. President Bush committed an ever-increasing number of troops and ships to Operation DESERT SHIELD, including many San Diego-based units. With each passing week it became more evident that LAKE CHAMPLAIN's scheduled mid-summer deployment would be affected by these events. Captain Kristensen accelerated the schedule of inspections and qualifications to prepare the ship for the possibility of an early deployment.

The holiday leave period ended and the inspection cycle began on January 7 with the Executive Officer's pre-Training Readiness Evaluation. He enlisted the services of many members of the chief's mess and Wardroom and completed all the departmental TRE check lists. The team identified and corrected many minor discrepancies, and everyone agreed that this greatly enhanced the ship's training readiness and chances for an evaluation of "Ready for Training" from Fleet Training Group observers.

On 7 January the Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification Team began conducting extensive over-the-horizon targeting training for the Combat Systems Department. LAKE CHAMPLAIN left the pier on 9 January for the southern California operating areas to conduct Phase III of Mobile Team Training. The Engineering Department benefitted most

from this training, as the numerous casualty control drills served as a dress rehearsal for the Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE) only two weeks distant.

The Combat Systems Training Review Maintenance Assist Team visited the ship from 14 - 16 January to evaluate the Combat Systems Department's maintenance and training requirements for the ship's upcoming Combat Systems Assessment. At 1600 on 15 January, Captain Kristensen gave the order to take in all lines and the ship departed underway en route the FTG anchorage in San Diego Bay. Following the 1700 anchoring, the ship commenced final TRE preparations and an extensive field day.

The following day began early for the crew. The Executive Officer mustered the division officers and CPOs for a shipwide Yoke check at 0615. Fleet Training Group observers boarded the ship at 0800 and promptly started the evaluation to see if LAKE CHAMPLAIN was ready for Refresher Training. The XO's morning Yoke check and the ship's overall emphasis on Damage Control paid off quickly; LAKE CHAMPLAIN passed Yoke on the first day. This early success continued throughout the evaluation, and every area scored grades of "outstanding", leading to an unquestioned overall assessment of "Ready for Training".

On 17 January word reached the crew that the Coalition Forces of Operation DESERT SHIELD had launched attacks against Iraq and Iraqi strongholds in Kuwait. LAKE CHAMPLAIN remained underway, the success of the Training Readiness Evaluation of minor significance when compared to the events shaping the future half a world away. The ship refueled alongside the USNS NAVASOTA on the morning of the 18th, and returned to port later that day.

The inspection cycle continued with the Operational Propulsion Plant Examination beginning on 23 January. Propulsion Examining Board personnel arrived at 0800 and promptly started with the Administrative Review. Cold checks followed, and the next day LAKE CHAMPLAIN pulled away from the pier to complete the underway portion of the examination in the SOCAL OPAREAS. The examination complete and successful, LAKE CHAMPLAIN returned to Pier 8 late on the 24th.

Beginning the next week on February 4, the Combat Systems Department hosted the Combat Systems Assessment Team. The assessment began with an administrative review followed by rating knowledge exams for nearly half the crew. CSA continued throughout the week and concluded on February 8; LAKE CHAMPLAIN received the highest possible grade of "above average". The results were so impressive that VADM Bennett, COMNAVSURFPAC, sent a congratulatory message saying "your attainment of a grade of 'above average' in this demanding assessment places you in a special category shared with only two other surface combatants during the last four years. Your commitment to combat systems excellence is truly noteworthy."

During the Combat Systems Assessment, LAKE CHAMPLAIN played host to a visiting dignitary. The Argentinean Chief of Naval Operations was visiting military installations throughout the United States, and as part of his visit to Southern California was the guest of RADM Olson, COMCRUDESGRU ONE, in a luncheon held aboard LAKE CHAMPLAIN on 5 February. The Argentinean admiral remarked on the "pristine" condition of the ship and the excellent luncheon, but above all noted the pride and enthusiasm of the crew who so proudly served aboard their ship. RADM Olson called it

"yet another outstanding performance" by the crew of LAKE CHAMPLAIN.

Now that the Engineering and Combat Systems Departments were finished with their individual inspections, it came time to get the whole crew involved: Refresher Training began on 11 February. A small group of navigation and seamanship observers boarded the ship at 0800, the Sea and Anchor Detail stationed at 0815, and LAKE CHAMPLAIN left Pier 8 to conduct a precision anchoring at Anchorage 216. While at anchor more observers embarked, and the next four days were filled with Sea and Anchor details, General Quarters drills, and selected training exercises of all sorts involving every member of the crew. By Friday the 15th, the crew was well worked and tired, and happy to have a three-day weekend to recover. Refresher Training continued the following week on 19 February, and included a live missile firing in which the ship fired two SM-2 missiles, and both daytime and nighttime underway replenishments with the USNS NAVASOTA. The morning of 22 February the mass conflagration drill was held, and in the afternoon, LAKE CHAMPLAIN returned to Pier 8.

After returning to San Diego, the ship received word that the Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney, had authorized all service members on active duty after 2 August, 1990, to wear the National Defense Service Medal. Although LAKE CHAMPLAIN did not participate in Operation DESERT SHIELD and would not become involved in the combat phase of Operation DESERT STORM, the battery of inspections and training were work enough, and the crew wore their medals with pride.

On 26 February LAKE CHAMPLAIN received notification of her selection as COMNAVSURFPAC's recipient for the prestigious ASW award. In the words of VADM

Bennett, "LAKE CHAMPLAIN's performance in the area of Anti-Submarine Warfare has been most impressive. You demonstrated the successful completion of complex and demanding Battle Group/Force operations, real world challenges, and flexibility in meeting the requirements of this award. The high standards set reflect the pride and professionalism we all must strive to achieve."

The training continued, and on 25 February through 1 March the gunnery team completed the NGFS Team Trainer. From 4 to 8 March the ship hosted the Shipboard Explosive Safety Inspection, the SQQ-89 Team Trainer, and the Combat System Mobile Team Trainer Cruise Missile Assist Team.

Of course all this training led somewhere, and between 11 and 15 March the ship completed the Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification. The importance of this qualification at this time could hardly be overstated; without this certification, LAKE CHAMPLAIN could not carry cruise missiles. But as before, LAKE CHAMPLAIN not only passed but excelled. The Combat Systems Department once again posted the highest score possible by earning grades of "satisfactory" across the board. RADM Olson congratulated LAKE CHAMPLAIN by saying "[your] exceptional performance exemplified your motto: Ingenuity, Daring, and Discipline. Ingenuity in your preparation, Daring to do it right, and the Discipline to carry out your plan ensured your success."

Beginning Monday, 18 March, LAKE CHAMPLAIN left Pier 8 to begin ASW REFTRA, stopping first at the North Island Ammunition Pier to onload an exercise torpedo. After completion of the onload, the ship anchored in the Bay to embark FTG observers, who immediately began a Total Ship Survivability drill, sending the ship to

General Quarters. Upon completion of the drill, the ship weighed anchor and travelled to the FLETA COLD operation areas, and conducted an extensive tracking exercise with the USS LA JOLLA.

While transiting to the ASW "Drag Strip" in the early morning hours of Thursday, 21 March, LAKE CHAMPLAIN received tasking to respond to a search and rescue mission some 150 miles to the southeast where two P-3 Orion aircraft had collided in midair. Under the tactical control of COMCARGRU THREE, who was embarked on USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN, and with USS MERRILL as On-Scene Commander, LAKE CHAMPLAIN remained on station for over 40 hours searching for debris and wreckage. Other ships involved in the effort included USS INGRAHAM, USS GARY, and USS FLORIDA, an SSBN which surfaced to join in the search. No survivors from the accident were found, and at approximately 1900 Friday evening COMCARGRU THREE detached the ship, which proceeded into port, mooring to Pier 8 at 2230 that night.

The weekend was a short one, however, as an early rendezvous for a missile exercise on 25 March required the ship to get underway Sunday, 24 March, at 1500. With the inspection and training cycle complete, LAKE CHAMPLAIN now operated as an element of Battle Group FOXTROT, with the primary role as "FW", the Anti-Air Warfare commander. The Battle Group was led by COMCARGRU THREE, embarked on USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN, and included the USS LONG BEACH, USS MERRILL, USS GARY, USS INGRAHAM, and USS ROANOKE.

The intent of nearly every exercise during COMPTUEX and READIEX 91-2 was to simulate conditions in the Arabian Gulf and test the Battle group's reactions. Each morning

and afternoon, "Purple" forces would fly simulated raids against the Battle Group to test command coordination and Rules of Engagement compliance. Another exercise simulated the transit through the Strait of Hormuz, and the possible threats there. On 5 April, LAKE CHAMPLAIN completed a Naval gunfire support exercise at San Clemente Island, scoring "outstanding" in all five events.

Welcome news arrived on 11 April, when the ship received notification of being selected as COMCRUDESGRU ONE's Battle Efficiency Award winner for 1990. Additional awards received included the ASW, EW, CCC, Supply, Navigation/Seamanship, DC, and Engineering departmental awards. RADM Wright, COMCARGRU THREE, noted LAKE CHAMPLAIN's Battle "E" "with particular pleasure; this is further evidence of the superior operational expertise and industry which will undoubtedly prove cornerstones of Battle Group FOXTROT's war fighting capabilities." LAKE CHAMPLAIN returned to port the following day, mooring again to Pier 8.

The morning of 29 April, the ship left port for READIEX 91-2B and Battle Group Evaluation. En route to the operational areas, the ship stopped at the Surface Ship Radiated Noise Measurement (SSRNM) Range, where engineers detected an unusual noise in the starboard shaft or screw, on which one of the blades had just been replaced. CAPT Kristensen took the ship back into port, where divers inspected the blades and shaft, finding no problem. In only a matter of hours, the ship returned to sea to continue with Battle Group operations. The culmination of the work-ups was the Battle Group Evaluation. For Battle Group FOXTROT's evaluation, observers from COMTHIRDFLT embarked on each of the ships of the Battle Group to grade the various exercises. They observed the Battle

Group's responses to simulated attacks from air, surface, and subsurface threats, and at the conclusion of the exercises stated that the evaluation was outstanding, and one of the best they had seen. LAKE CHAMPLAIN returned to port 9 May, ready for deployment.

An abbreviated Pre-Overseas Movement leave period began on the 9th of May, continuing until 24 May. On 24 May, the crew returned in force for the final underway prior to deployment, a one-day Dependent's Cruise. Family and friends of the crew were treated to high speed maneuvers, an air show, and the ever-popular flight deck picnic.

Promptly at 1000 on 28 May 1991, LAKE CHAMPLAIN took in all lines and departed on her second Western Pacific deployment. Battle Group FOXTROT began the deployment heading in different directions; USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN and USS LONG BEACH headed to Hawaii to complete their ORSE engineering examinations, and LAKE CHAMPLAIN joined with USS MERRILL, USS INGRAHAM, USS GARY, and USS ROANOKE for the trip across the Pacific Ocean. In an unusual role for Battle Group escorts, the four escorted an Amphibious Readiness Group comprised of the USS PELILIU, USS COMSTOCK, and USS BRISTOL COUNTY in a great circle transit to Iwo Jima. Along the way, the crew enjoyed a "steel beach" picnic on the flight deck, and LAKE CHAMPLAIN's first-ever Comedy Show and Lip-Synch Contest.

On 12 June the ships detached from the Amphibious Group and rendezvoused with the USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN and USS LONG BEACH some 200 miles west of Iwo Jima, again forming the complete Battle Group. The transit plan called for the group to transit north of Luzon and into Subic Bay, but a typhoon moving up the east coast of Luzon caused the group to divert to the south and plan a transit through the San Bernadino Strait. Battle

Group FOXTROT approached the straits with a formation speed of 16 knots, only to have the plan abruptly changed by the forces of nature a second time, this time by the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo, a volcano on the western side of Luzon. With only a fraction of the sea detail complete, LAKE CHAMPLAIN received orders to proceed with the rest of the Battle Group at 25 knots to Subic Bay to assist with the evacuation efforts which began in the aftermath of the volcanic eruption. Facilities at Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Station suffered extensive damage from the eruption, mainly from the ash which blanketed the area, and the personnel from both bases were being evacuated.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN arrived at Subic Bay mid-morning on 17 June, and tied up outboard USS LONG BEACH along Alava Pier. The devastation overwhelmed the crew, particularly the sailors who were familiar with Subic Bay. A heavy eight-inch coating of gray ash, resembling dry cement, covered everything in sight, and had crushed many of the light-weight structures on the base. A chalky film floated on the surface of the bay, which appeared a strange translucent shade of green; the formerly lush mountains surrounding the bay looked almost as if they had been devastated by fire. The base had gone without electricity and water for two days, and with the exception of a few trucks, nothing moved or showed any other signs of life. The initial shock wore off quickly, however, as LAKE CHAMPLAIN had to move quickly. Military dependents, mostly from Clark Air Force Base, were lined up and waiting before the ship completed tying up; 304 people, mostly women and children, came aboard with what few possessions they could carry, and in some cases with their family pets. With remarkable assistance and cooperation from the crew, the evacuees quickly found space in the after berthing compartments, and in less than two hours

after sending lines over, LAKE CHAMPLAIN took in all lines and departed en route to Cebu City, the second largest city in the Philippines, on one of the southern islands. With thousands of people remaining to be evacuated and the possibility of further eruptions, time was critical, and Captain Kristensen ordered the ship to proceed at 30 knots. After completing most of the 425 mile trip through the narrow channels between the islands at 30 knots, the ship slowed near Cebu, and after coordinating with COMCARGRU THREE, entered Magellan Bay and anchored at 1400, 18 June. Several ships were already waiting, and the next problem was how to transfer the evacuees to the airport. Cebu City had no facilities large enough to dock Navy ships, so small boat transfer was the only way. One of the participating amphibious ships provided landing craft, capable of taking all 304 people at once, and by 1930 the evacuees were on their way to the airport, and the waiting Air Force transport planes. Without hesitation, LAKE CHAMPLAIN weighed anchor and sped back through the islands for another trip. After a quick refueling with the USNS HASSAYAMPA, the ship arrived in the late afternoon, embarked another 302 evacuees, and left for Cebu. On 20 June the ship dropped anchor in Magellan Bay, debarked the personnel, and sped back for yet another load.

The third trip proved to be the final one, and after transferring 238 people to Cebu, LAKE CHAMPLAIN returned to the waters off Subic Bay while USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN recovered her air wing, which had been flown to Okinawa to make room for evacuees. All totalled, in the six day period LAKE CHAMPLAIN travelled 2500 miles at an average speed of over 25 knots, and evacuated 844 people and their pets. LAKE CHAMPLAIN distinguished herself as the only ship participating in the evacuation which

completed three round trips.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN's original deployment schedule called for a port visit to Penang, Malaysia, a city on the western coast of the Malay Peninsula. As these dates could no longer be met, the ship steamed in company with USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN and USS ROANOKE to Singapore for a quickly arranged six day visit beginning 30 June. Much of the upkeep work originally scheduled for completion in Subic Bay was rescheduled for the Singapore visit, but above all the crew looked forward to some rest after a full month at sea. Singapore, as always, welcomed the ships of the battle group and provided the crew with great shopping, food, and recreation.

On 5 July the ships weighed anchor and began the trip through the Malacca Strait toward the Arabian Gulf. The following day, the three ships rendezvoused with the USS LONG BEACH, USS MERRILL, USS GARY, and USS INGRAHAM, all of which had proceeded ahead and completed port visits in Malaysia or Thailand. The carrier dropped back with USS LONG BEACH to conduct some much-needed flight operations, leaving LAKE CHAMPLAIN in charge of the remaining units while they proceeded along track around India to the Gulf. On 11 July the USS MERRILL detached to meet with USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN and USS LONG BEACH, and the three ships sped ahead at 26 knots to reach the Gulf a day ahead of the remaining members of the Group. LAKE CHAMPLAIN remained with the others, and proceeded at sixteen knots, arriving at the Strait of Hormuz on the morning of 14 July. An Iranian warship crossed from the outbound lanes and passed in front of LAKE CHAMPLAIN during the transit, but aside from receiving a verbal lashing from the Omani authorities, the incident caused no additional

concern.

The waters of the Arabian Gulf were as smooth as glass, a marked contrast to the choppy seas in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman. A thick haze blanketed the area, a combination of the naturally high humidity over the warm water of the Gulf and the smoke from the oil well fires still burning in Kuwait; visibility in most areas rarely exceeded three miles. Despite the small area of the Gulf and the amount of shipping traffic, the effect of the visibility left the impression on many crew members that the ship was in a void, miles from anywhere or anything. The water teemed with snakes, and by 0800 each day the temperature was well on its way to reaching the midday high in the upper nineties.

USS MERRILL detached from the Group and proceeded north to the coast off Kuwait, assuming the duties as command ship of the mine sweeping operation which continued in the northern Gulf. USS GARY and USS INGRAHAM patrolled areas near the major shipping lanes, or escorted shipping in the central Gulf. USS LONG BEACH divided her time between carrier escort duties and remaining in port Bahrain, where she became the Flagship for the Commander, USNAVCENT. LAKE CHAMPLAIN remained in the central Gulf, sometimes assigned a small patrol sector, but more often assigned as close escort to the carrier, in addition to conducting endless hours of plane guard duties. The days quickly became weeks, and were filled with drills, gunfire exercises, General Quarters drills, UNREPs, more drills, and an occasional steel beach picnic. With many of the crew on two- or three-section watch rotations, the schedule left little time for inactivity, but the crew realized the importance of constant readiness, and lived up to the challenge.

One benefit of operating in the Arabian Gulf was the opportunity to meet with sailors

from other countries who were part of the multi-national peace keeping effort. LAKE CHAMPLAIN's first such chance came on 27 July, when Captain Kristensen flew to the FS MONTCALM, a French destroyer. The Captain enjoyed a truly outstanding lunch, prepared as only the French can, and extended an invitation for the French Captain to visit LAKE CHAMPLAIN. On 5-7 August a number of LAKE CHAMPLAIN's officers and enlisted traded places with crew members of the HMS COVENTRY, a British frigate. The British officers were impressed with the extensive combat capabilities of the Aegis cruiser, and the LAKE CHAMPLAIN crew members were impressed by the quiet efficiency of the British ship (not to mention the beer that came with lunch). In all, over a dozen sailors from each ship enjoyed this cultural exchange, earning LAKE CHAMPLAIN a reputation for being an effective American ambassador in the Gulf.

The ships earned a brief respite from the rigors of their underway schedules when the Group anchored for two days at "Bahrain Bell", an anchorage near the large buoy marking the entrance to the channel leading into Bahrain, on 1 August. This gave the ship time to conduct some overdue maintenance which could not be done underway, and allowed some of the watch standers a little rest. The break came close to being interrupted when helicopters spotted a drifting mine northwest of the group, with the current bringing it closer. USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN dispatched an EOD team which successfully destroyed the mine, preventing an emergency dispersal.

The rest was brief, and on 3 August the ships weighed anchor and returned to their stations. LAKE CHAMPLAIN held the first of many flight deck picnics on 4 August, but aside from that continued with the busy schedule of drills, patrolling, and UNREPS. On 10

August the ship enjoyed the opportunity to "hook up" with the RFA BAYLEAF, a Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship of the British Navy, and conducted a practice UNREP. LAKE CHAMPLAIN surprised the Captain of the oiler by becoming the first ship he had seen do a "reverse breakaway", a full-power crash back, instead of the standard full ahead breakaway.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN pulled into her first Gulf port on 12 August, mooring starboard side to the container pier at Mina Rashid Harbor, in Dubai, U.A.E.; the 37 day at-sea period became the second longest in the ship's history. The ship moored adjacent to USS SAMUEL GOMPERS, and took full advantage of the tender's presence to complete some repairs which had been postponed in either Subic Bay or Singapore. Dubai blended the unusual with the familiar, and provided the crew with the chance to ride camels or to relax and enjoy an authentic Mexican dinner at "Pancho Villa's", a popular local restaurant. Others enjoyed the shopping, which included the world-famous "Gold Souk", an area of seemingly endless streets of fine jewelry stores; carpets and cassette tapes also proved to be popular and affordable. Still others lounged at the warm beaches around the city, or played in sports tournaments with teams from the other ships, or even some local teams. In all, Dubai had just about everything if you knew where to look, and the six day visit proved to be a most welcome break.

News of events taking place in the Gulf kept the ships from relaxing completely, and in the early-morning hours of Saturday, 17 August, LAKE CHAMPLAIN received orders to leave port a day earlier than expected. President Bush continued to pressure Iraq with various ultimatums, the most recent pertaining to Iraq's refusal to allow United Nations

inspections team full access to munitions plants and possible nuclear sites. This served to keep the Navy forces on edge, as the possibility of additional strikes against Iraq still existed. When the order to leave port came, many in the crew felt that the fighting might start up again, and that LAKE CHAMPLAIN would be in the thick of it. Before the end of the day, however, the orders were received to continue with scheduled events, and the threat of resumed hostilities subsided.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN's scheduled events consisted of an important Naval Gunfire Support exercise at the Al Hamra range in the United Arab Emirates. Although the area had been used by amphibious ships, this represented the first time a combatant would take part. The track to the exercise area passed through a shallow region of the Gulf, with the only chart available having a single narrow surveyed channel leading to the exercise area. Visual fixes were not reliable, so the ship relied on electronic means alone, and on arrival at the site anchored as close to shore as possible. With limited room to maneuver and the amphibious ships remaining in the area, LAKE CHAMPLAIN conducted her gunfire from anchor, with the Officer of the Deck using the engines to twist around the anchor in order to maintain optimum firing capabilities from both mounts. The event conjured up images of the Battle of Lake Champlain for which the ship was named: an historic naval battle fought and won by ships at anchor. LAKE CHAMPLAIN met with great success in this exercise, firing dozens of missions with exceptional accuracy, even at the outer limits of the five-inch guns' range, and helped expand the role of surface combatants in the Arabian Gulf for years to come.

Following the successful operation at the Al Hamra range, LAKE CHAMPLAIN

returned to the familiar Central Gulf operating areas and continued her patrolling and carrier escort duties. On 20 August, LCDR Jeffrey R. Ginnow relieved CDR Kevin M. Quinn as Executive Officer, becoming LAKE CHAMPLAIN's third XO.

On 24 August, while patrolling in a sector away from the carrier, LAKE CHAMPLAIN received notice shortly before sunset that an F/A-18 from the USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN crashed on takeoff, and that LAKE CHAMPLAIN was to assist in the recovery of the wreckage. The pilot ejected safely and was recovered by the carrier, so the ship's search was limited to debris from the aircraft. The motor whaleboat was launched several times, and recovered several hundred pounds of wreckage, including the plane's landing gear and several large pieces of the carbon-fiber tail and wing control surfaces. The pieces were transferred to the carrier, and LAKE CHAMPLAIN resumed her patrols.

The days passed, filled with more patrols, escort duties, and UNREPs. In early September the ship received word that COMUSNAVCENT canceled the port visit scheduled for 8 September in Dubai; delegates from neighboring Arab states were meeting in Dubai, and the presence of an American aircraft carrier was deemed politically undesirable. LAKE CHAMPLAIN had scheduled important work for the inport period, and visited Jebel Ali on 9 September instead. Jebel Ali is a huge port facility carved from the sand some thirty miles southwest of Dubai, with only a tiny village nearby, and a large resort hotel adjacent. During the three day visit, crew members had the option of riding a bus or taxi to Dubai or staying at the resort hotel, whose restaurants and lounges proved quite popular.

The ship left Jebel Ali on 12 September, returned briefly to the central Gulf, then on

15 September pulled into Dubai for the delayed port visit. This time, the crew knew the city, and enjoyed the visit as experienced travellers.

On 21 September the ships left Dubai bound for the Central Gulf, and on 23 to 26 September participated in GULFEX V, a multi-national exercise with French, British, Omani, and Saudi Arabian forces. LAKE CHAMPLAIN assumed the role of Anti-Air Warfare Coordinator for the multi-national force, and air controllers aboard ship had the opportunity to work with aircraft and pilots from each of the participating countries. The work was far from over, however, and on 27 September LAKE CHAMPLAIN left the Arabian Gulf to participate in Operation BEACON FLASH, an exercise with the Omani forces in the Gulf of Oman. The exercises lasted six days, and on 4 October LAKE CHAMPLAIN returned to the Arabian Gulf, and on 5 October pulled into Dubai for a third and final port visit.

Admiral Wright made the decision to extend the port visit for one day, then on 12 October the ships of the Battle Group left Dubai, passed through the Strait of Hormuz the same day, and began the trip home. On 14 October LAKE CHAMPLAIN practiced an UNREP hookup with USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN, marking the first time USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN acted as a delivery ship during an UNREP. The practice was in anticipation of the 21st, when LAKE CHAMPLAIN actually did UNREP from the carrier in preparation for her final run to Subic Bay. An unexpected delay in outchopping from USNAVCENT caused LAKE CHAMPLAIN to need a faster transit than originally planned to arrive in Subic Bay to complete a required offload on 25 October. As a result, the fuel requirements meant the ship must refuel along the way, and the only ship available with the refueling

capability was the carrier. The refueling went smoothly, and LAKE CHAMPLAIN became a footnote in USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN's ship history as the first ship to be refueled by the carrier.

In the northern part of the Malacca Strait, LAKE CHAMPLAIN detached from USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN and USS LONG BEACH, who were scheduled to conduct an exercise with the forces of Thailand, and proceeded at high speed through the Strait en route Subic Bay. In the early morning hours of 22 October, the ship passed Singapore, which was obscured by haze, and continued northeast to the island of Luzon. Early on the morning of 25 October the ship pulled alongside Nabasan Wharf, completed the required offload, then moved to Alava Pier for the remainder of the visit. The first night was relatively quiet, as LAKE CHAMPLAIN was the only ship in port, and the crew fully enjoyed the night life in the town of Olangapo, which had somewhat recovered from the devastation of the volcano four months earlier. Many of the buildings on base remained crushed and abandoned, and piles of ash still dotted the landscape, but the base operations had begun to recover, and the crew took the opportunity to visit the exchange, catch a movie, or bowl a few lines.

On 30 October the ship left Subic Bay for the short trip to Hong Kong, arriving early on the first of November. LAKE CHAMPLAIN had been invited to stay at the HMS TAMAR pier, a British facility in the heart of the Hong Kong waterfront. LAKE CHAMPLAIN, USS GARY, USS INGRAHAM, and USS MERRILL all tied up at HMS TAMAR pier, and enjoyed the hospitality of the British. Hong Kong was as exciting as ever, with unmatched shopping, a vast assortment of restaurants, fun-filled nightclubs, and

one of the world's most dazzling night skylines, in which LAKE CHAMPLAIN was moored right in the middle. After six days, the ship was practically overflowing with sets of china, stereos, silks, suits, and countless other new treasures, but despite the good times the crew was ready to leave and anxious to get home.

The ship took in all lines on the morning of 6 November, and passed through the Bashi Strait north of Luzon into the Pacific Ocean. For four days, from 10 to 13 November, the ships of the Battle Group took part in ANNUALEX '91, an annual exercise with the Japanese forces. Battle Group FOXTROT participated with the USS INDEPENDENCE Battle Group, working jointly with both Japanese and American forces.

On 13 November the ships of the Battle Group chopped to THIRD Fleet, officially left the Western Pacific, and headed for home. LAKE CHAMPLAIN headed toward Pearl Harbor with USS LONG BEACH and USS MERRILL, who were all planning "Tiger Cruises", dependent's cruises with male family members riding the ship from Pearl Harbor to San Diego. The ships pulled into Pearl Harbor early in the afternoon on 19 November, then left shortly after noon the next day. The cruise was an enjoyable one for the family members and crew alike, as they were treated to a wide variety of maneuvering displays, gunfire exercises, tours and demonstrations, and of course the flight deck picnic.

But the excitement of the "Tiger Cruise" could hardly match the excitement of 27 November, when LAKE CHAMPLAIN passed Buoy "SD" and made the turn into San Diego Bay. The ship tied up to Pier 8 at the 32nd Street Naval Station, met by hundreds of delighted family members. There were balloons, bands, and new babies, and within a few hours nobody remained on the ship except the members of the duty section. LAKE

CHAMPLAIN's second WESTPAC deployment was complete.

For the remaining weeks of 1991, LAKE CHAMPLAIN conducted several holiday leave periods, and began the long process of preparing for her next deployment by saying good bye to many crew members and welcoming aboard over 40 new crew members who were delayed reporting during the deployment. The ship finished 1991 moored to Pier 8, 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego, California.

1991 USS LAKE CHAMPLAIN Command History

Time Line

01 JAN - 08 JAN	Moored Pier 8, 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego, holiday leave and upkeep period.
07 JAN - 11 JAN	Executive Officer's Pre-TRE Inspection.
07 JAN - 11 JAN	Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification Team Assist.
09 JAN - 11 JAN	<u>Underway</u> : MTT Phase III; SOCAL Opareas.
14 JAN - 16 JAN	CSTR Maintenance Assist.
15 JAN	<u>Underway</u> : anchored FTG anchorage; final TRE preps; underway SOCAL.
16 JAN - 17 JAN	Training Readiness Evaluation.
18 JAN	UNREP: USNS NAVASOTA; returned Pier 8, 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego.
23 JAN - 24 JAN	<u>Underway</u> : Operational Propulsion Plant Examination; returned Pier 8, 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego.
04 FEB - 08 FEB	Combat Systems Assessment.
05 FEB	Argentine CNO visit and lunch; COMCRUDESGRU ONE attends.
11 FEB - 15 FEB	<u>Underway</u> : Refresher Training (week one); returned Pier 8, 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego.
19 FEB - 22 FEB	<u>Underway</u> : Refresher Training (week two); returned Pier 8, 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego.
21 FEB	MISSLEX.
22 FEB - 23 FEB	Industrial hygiene inspection.
25 FEB	NGFS team trainer; Medical Readiness Evaluation.
01 MAR	Safety Stand down.

04 MAR - 08 MAR SESI; SQQ-89 team training; CSMTT Cruise Missile Assist.

06 MAR Environmental Health Training Assist Visit.

11 MAR - 15 MAR Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification team.

18 MAR - 22 MAR Underway: ASW REFTRA; Ammunition onload NAS North Island.

24 MAR - 12 APR Underway: MISSLEX; COMPTUEX; READIEX 91-2.

26 MAR UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

30 MAR UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

02 APR UNREP: USNS NAVASOTA.

05 APR UNREP: NGFS FIREX II, San Clemente Island.

07 APR UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

08 APR READIEX 91-2 Straits Transit Exercise.

11 APR LAKE CHAMPLAIN awarded Battle Efficiency "E" ribbon for COMCRUDESGRU ONE for 1990. Awarded ASW, CCC, ELW, Supply, Navigation/Seamanship, DC, and Engineering Departmental awards.

12 APR Returned Pier 8, 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego.

15 APR - 19 APR Supply Management Training Team Assist Visit.

17 APR Aviation Assist Visit (upgraded to Aviation Readiness Evaluation.)

25 APR Force Medical Officer visit.

29 APR - 05 MAY Underway: READIEX 91-2B.

30 APR Returned Pier 8, 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego unexpectedly due to unusual noise from starboard shaft. After inspection, resumed underway for READIEX 91-2B.

04 MAY UNREP: USNS NAVASOTA.

06 MAY - 08 MAY Underway: Battle Group Evaluation. Returned Pier 8, 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego.

09 MAY - 17 MAY Pre-Overseas Movement period number one.

17 MAY - 24 MAY Pre-Overseas Movement period number two.

24 MAY Underway: Dependent's Cruise, SOCAL. Returned Pier 8, 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego.

28 MAY Underway: WESTPAC '91.

29 MAY Ship Self-Radiated Noise Measurement Range.

30 MAY LAKE CHAMPLAIN, in company with USS MERRILL (DD 976), USS INGRAHAM (FFG 61), and USS GARY (FFG 51) begins escort of ARG "L" on great circle track to Iwo Jima. Remaining Battle Group "F" elements (USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN 72) and USS LONG BEACH (CGN 9)) transit separately by way of Pearl Harbor, scheduled for rendezvous near Iwo Jima.

31 MAY UNREP: USS ROANOKE. USS ROANOKE attached to Battle Group "F".

02 JUN First "Steel Beach" picnic of WESTPAC '91.

04 JUN UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

09 JUN LAKE CHAMPLAIN's first "Comedy Show and Lip Synch Contest" held in helo hangar.

10 JUN UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

12 JUN Battle Group "F" elements detach from ARG "L" and rendezvous with remaining Battle Group "F" elements off Iwo Jima.

13 JUN UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

13 JUN Battle Group "F" diverted south from Bashi Strait passage and directed to proceed to Subic Bay by way of San Bernadino Strait due to Typhoon "Yunya".

15 JUN UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

- 16 JUN Battle Group "F" receives word of eruption of Mount Pinatubo on Luzon, near Clark Air Force Base and Subic Bay Naval Station; directed to proceed through San Bernadino Strait at best speed to Subic Bay to assist in evacuation effort, dubbed Operation FIERY VIGIL.
- 17 JUN Arrived Subic Bay following 25 knot transit through island straits, moored Alava Pier outboard USS LONG BEACH. Embarked 304 personnel, mostly Air Force dependents from Clark Air Force Base (and their pets). Underway: en route to Cebu City, R. P.
- 18 JUN Arrived Cebu, anchored Magellan Bay. Debarked evacuees late in the day. Underway returning to Subic Bay to continue evacuation.
- 19 JUN UNREP: USNS HASSAYAMPA. Arrived Subic Bay, moored Alava Pier. Embarked 302 evacuees, mainly Navy dependents and non-essential active duty personnel from Subic Bay Naval Station. Underway returning to Cebu.
- 20 JUN Arrived Cebu, anchored Magellan Bay. Debarked evacuees. Underway returning to Subic Bay to continue evacuation.
- 21 JUN Arrived Subic Bay, moored Rivera Pier. Embarked 238 evacuees, mostly dependents of USNAVPHIL staff. Underway returning to Cebu.
- 22 JUN Arrived Cebu, anchored Magellan Bay. Debarked evacuees. Underway to South China Sea to rendezvous with USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN.
- 23 JUN UNREP: USNS PONCHATULA, South China Sea. Detached from participation in Operation FIERY VIGIL. LAKE CHAMPLAIN completed three round-trip transits from Subic Bay to Cebu in support of Operation FIERY VIGIL, covering over 2500 miles in six days (average speed 25 knots) and evacuated a total of 844 personnel.
- 24 JUN Remained on station in South China Sea while USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN recovers airwing.
- 26 JUN - 30 JUN Transit to Singapore in company with USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

30 JUN - 05 JUL Port visit: Singapore.

05 JUL - 14 JUL Underway to Arabian Gulf in company with USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN and USS ROANOKE.

06 JUL Rendezvous with remaining Battle Group "F" ships. USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN and USS LONG BEACH proceed separately to conduct flight operations.

11 JUL Chop to COMUSNAVCENT. USS MERRILL detaches to join USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN and USS LONG BEACH, and speed ahead at 26 knots to the Arabian Gulf.

14 JUL Transit the Strait of Hormuz; LAKE CHAMPLAIN enters the Arabian Gulf for the first time.

18 JUL UNREP: USNS ANDREW J. HIGGINS. VERTREP: USS WHITE PLAINS.

24 JUL UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

27 JUL Commanding Officer departs underway to visit FS MONTCALM, a French destroyer operating as part of the multi-national peace keeping force.

28 JUL UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

01 AUG Anchored Bahrain Bell.

02 AUG Report received of a drifting mine spotted northwest of the battle group, with current bringing it toward the ships. EOD from USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN dispatched, and destroys the mine.

03 AUG Underway: returning to central Arabian Gulf.

04 AUG Flight deck picnic; first in Gulf.

06 AUG UNREP: USS ROANOKE. Commanding Officer departs underway to visit the HMS COVENTRY, a British frigate operating as part of the multi-national peace keeping force.

09 AUG UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

10 AUG UNREP: RFA BAYLEAF (British auxiliary oiler).

12 AUG - 18 AUG Port visit: Dubai, United Arab Emirates; moored starboard side to container pier, berth 29, Mina Rashid Harbor. Begin tender availability with USS SAMUEL B. GOMPERS, also in Dubai. End of 37 day underway period, LAKE CHAMPLAIN's second longest to date.

17 AUG Underway: to central Arabian Gulf. Port visit cut short by one day in response to emergency sortie message received early Saturday morning.

18 AUG NGFS at Al Hamra range, U.A.E. Due to restricted waters and range requirements, LAKE CHAMPLAIN conducts firing exercise from anchor. First NGFS successfully conducted at this range.

19 AUG Underway: to central Arabian Gulf.

20 AUG UNREP: USNS PECOS. LCDR Jeffrey R. Ginnow relieves CDR Kevin M. Quinn as Executive Officer.

24 AUG UNREP: USS ROANOKE. Receive tasking to assist in the recovery of wreckage from a downed F/A-18 lost on launch from LINCOLN.

25 AUG "Hump Day" picnic celebrating half-way point in the deployment.

28 AUG UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

02 SEP USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN reports sighting mine in southern area of operations. Sighting cannot be verified in daylight. Later the same day, LAKE CHAMPLAIN finds a drifting hazard, a cylindrical tank about 20 feet in length. Remained on station until USNS SIOUX arrived to salvage the object.

04 SEP UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

05 SEP LAKE CHAMPLAIN finds drifting pontoon; again remained on station until USNS SIOUX arrives to salvage object.

06 SEP Tasked to destroy 55 gallon drum, another hazard. Four rounds of 25mm ammunition expended.

08 SEP UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

09 SEP - 12 SEP Port visit: Jebel Ali, U.A.E., moored port side to berth 28.

12 SEP Underway: central Arabian Gulf.

15 SEP - 21 SEP Port visit: Dubai, U.A.E., moored port side to container pier, berth 30, Mina Rashid harbor.

21 SEP Underway: central Arabian Gulf.

22 SEP UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

23 SEP - 26 SEP GULFEX V, multi-national exercise.

24 SEP UNREP: USNS PECOS.

27 SEP Transit Strait of Hormuz to Gulf of Oman.

28 SEP - 03 OCT Operation BEACON FLASH.

04 OCT Transit Strait of Hormuz, return to Arabian Gulf.

05 OCT - 12 OCT Port visit: Dubai, U.A.E., moored port side to container pier, berth 30, Mina Rashid harbor.

12 OCT Underway to Subic Bay, R.P. Transit Strait of Hormuz.

14 OCT UNREP: USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (practice hookup, no fuel taken.)

15 OCT UNREP: USNS PECOS.

17 OCT UNREP: USS ROANOKE. Chop to SEVENTH Fleet.

21 OCT UNREP: USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN. LAKE CHAMPLAIN detaches to proceed independently to Subic Bay.

25 OCT - 30 OCT Port visit: Subic Bay, R.P., moored starboard side to Nabasan Pier. Later in the day, move to Alava Pier, moored starboard side to.

30 OCT Underway to Hong Kong.

01 NOV - 06 NOV Port visit: Hong Kong, moored starboard side to North Arm, HMS TAMAR pier.

06 NOV Underway to Pearl Harbor.

10 NOV - 13 NOV Participate in ANNUALEX 91.

11 NOV UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

13 NOV Chop to THIRD Fleet.

15 NOV UNREP: USS ROANOKE.

19 NOV - 20 NOV Port visit: Pearl Harbor, moored starboard side to outboard USS CHOSIN, Bravo Pier. Embarked "tigers" for dependent's cruise.

20 NOV Underway to San Diego. LAKE CHAMPLAIN's first "Tiger Cruise".

27 NOV Arrive San Diego, second WESTPAC deployment completed.

27 NOV - 31 DEC In port San Diego, moored port side to pier 8, 32nd Street Naval Station, San Diego.

27 NOV - 09 DEC First holiday leave period.

19 DEC - 26 DEC Second holiday leave period.

28 DEC - 31 DEC Final holiday leave period.