



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS MITSCHER (DDG 57)
FLEET POST OFFICE
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From: Commanding Officer, USS MITSCHER (DDG 57)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (N09BH)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR CY99

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G, Command Histories

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Commanding Officer Biographies
(5) USS MITSCHER 1999 Battle Efficiency and Command Excellence Awards Package, 30 Nov 99

1. In accordance with reference (a), USS MITSCHER's command history for calendar year 1999 is submitted.

F. C. Pandolfe

F. C. PANDOLFE

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

Command Title: USS MITSCHER (DDG 57)

UIC: 21687

Missions: Anti-Air Warfare, Anti-Submarine Warfare, Anti-Surface Warfare, Strike Warfare

ISIC: Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWO (COMDESRON TWO)

Commanding Officer: Commander Frank C. Pandolfe, USN

Homeport: Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia

Aircraft Assigned: None

CHRONOLOGY

01 Jan Inport Naval Station, Norfolk, VA (homeport).
Continue post-deployment upkeep period.

11 Jan Post-deployment leave period ends.

12 Jan Transit Naval Weapons Station (NWS), Yorktown, VA.

12-14 Jan Inport NWS, Yorktown, VA, for post-deployment
ammunition off-load.

15 Jan Complete ammunition off-load. Transit to
homeport.

15 Jan-04 Apr Inport homeport.

20 Jan Commence Selected Restrictive Availability (SRA).

25-29 Jan Pre-Light-Off Training (PLOT) Period I.

08-12 Feb PLOT Period II.

22-26 Feb PLOT Period III.

17-19 Mar Light-Off Assessment (LOA).

26 Mar Complete SRA.

29 Mar-02 Apr Fleet Maintenance Availability (FMAV).

05-08 Apr Underway in Virginia Capes Operating Area (VCOA)
and Jacksonville Operating Area (JAXOA) for
training.

09-11 Apr Port visit to Port Canaveral, FL.

12-13 Apr Underway en route NWS, Yorktown, VA.

14-15 Apr Inport NWS, Yorktown, VA, for ammunition on-load.

16 Apr Transit to homeport.

20 Apr Aviation Readiness Evaluation (ARE).

23 Apr Aviation Certification (AVCERT).

26-27 Apr Underway in VCOA for training.

03-14 May Advanced Tomahawk Weapons Control System (ATWCS) Material Certification.

17 May Commence trans-Atlantic voyage en route Exercise Marvika 99, in company with USS HUE CITY (CG 66), USS VICKSBURG (CG 69), and USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51).

25 May Transit English Channel.

28-30 May Port visit to Oslo, Norway.

31 May-03 Jun Exercise Marvika 99.

1-2 Jun Command Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART) II.

4-6 Jun Independent steaming en route port visit.

7-11 Jun Port visit to Portsmouth, England.

12-22 Jun Trans-Atlantic voyage en route port visit, in company with USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51).

20-22 Jun COMDESRON TWO embarked in MITSCHER for Engineering Qualification (E-Qual).

23-25 Jun Port visit to Halifax, Nova Scotia, with USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51).

26-27 Jun Underway en route homeport.

28 Jun Arrive homeport.

28 Jun-16 Jul FMAV.

29-30 Jun Ammunition off-load, pierside Norfolk, VA.

2-16 Jul COMDESRON TWO embarked in MITSCHER.

19-20 Jul Underway in VCOA with Prospective Commanding Officer, CDR Frank C. Pandolfe, onboard.

21-27 Jul Inport homeport. Commanding Officer turn-over in progress.

28 Jul Transit to Nauticus Maritime Museum, Norfolk, VA, for change of command.

28 Jul-01 Aug Inport Nauticus.

30 Jul Change of command. CDR Frank C. Pandolfe relieves CDR Philip H. Cullom.

02-08 Aug Inport homeport.

09-12 Aug Underway in VCOA for training.

13-22 Aug Inport homeport.

23-26 Aug Underway in VCOA for training.

27 Aug Transit Chesapeake Bay en route port visit.

27-30 Aug Port visit to Annapolis, MD.

31 Aug-01 Sep Port visit to Baltimore, MD, for Hurricane DENNIS evasion.

02 Sep Transit Chesapeake Bay en route homeport.

03-14 Sep Inport homeport.

15-17 Sep Second Fleet Hurricane FLOYD sortie. Underway in VCOA for storm evasion.

18-21 Sep Inport homeport.

22-29 Sep Underway in VCOA for USS HARRY S TRUMAN Battle Group (HSTBATGRU) Group Sail.

30 Sep-24 Oct Inport homeport.

5-22 Oct SECNAV Capital Investment for Labor Initiative (CILI) preservation availability number one.

12-15 Oct Logistics Management Assessment (LMA).

13 Oct Visit by the Honorable Richard Danzig, Secretary of the Navy, and VADM Henry Giffin, COMNAVSURFLANT.

18-19 Oct Pierside ammunition on-load.

21-22 Oct Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification (CMTQ).

25 Oct-4 Nov Underway in VCOA for HSTBATGRU Group Sail.

3-4 Nov Final Evaluation Period

5-7 Nov Port visit to New York City, New York.

7 Nov Pierside ammunition on-load.

8 Nov Underway en route homeport.

9-12 Nov Inport homeport.

13-15 Nov Underway with HSTBATGRU in VCOA for VANDALEX.

16 Nov-31 Dec Inport homeport.

16 Nov-10 Dec Fleet Maintenance Availability.

17 Nov Begin Command, Control, Computer, Communications, and Information (C4I)/Information and Technology - 21st Century (IT21) equipment installation availability.

29 Nov-12 Dec CILI preservation availability number two.

13-26 Dec Holiday leave and upkeep period one.

28 Dec Begin holiday leave and upkeep period two.

NARRATIVE

After a highly successful deployment to the Mediterranean in 1998, MITSCHER entered 1999 ready to face the many challenges ahead. The crew continued to train while tackling numerous exercises, qualifications, inspections, assessments, and certifications in preparation for the next deployment, still two years away. Throughout the year, MITSCHER led DESRON TWO in all warfare areas while winning awards and early certifications in every department.

MITSCHER began 1999 fresh from a post-deployment leave and upkeep period. All hands returned for work on 11 January, ready and motivated for the work awaiting them, beginning with the first major project: off-loading all ammunition which MITSCHER had carried through the 1998 deployment. On 12 January, the ship transited to NWS Yorktown, Virginia, and began to remove nearly every piece of ammunition from the magazines. Having successfully completed the off-load after three days of long, cold hours moving weapons, MITSCHER returned to Norfolk for another two-and-a-half months inport.

A great deal of activity filled the lengthy inport period as MITSCHER entered a Selected Restrictive Availability (SRA). The SRA provided an opportunity for many repairs, replacements, and installations to be completed within a single period of time. This was an especially busy SRA, encompassing an amount of work usually scheduled for a four-month availability. Through skilled planning, complex coordination, and hard work, MITSCHER completed all of the scheduled jobs on time. Some of the major installations included JTIDS/LINK-16, Advanced Tomahawk Weapons Control System (ATWCS), and reverse-osmosis water distillation plants. MITSCHER also removed Tomahawk Mission Distribution System (MDS) for turnover to COMSECONDFLT, to be installed as a shore-based Forward Pass console. MITSCHER's engineers finished the SRA by completing a highly successful Pre-Light-Off Training period and Light-Off Assessment.

Just days after completing the SRA and a short follow-on Fleet Maintenance Availability (FMAV), with a great deal of new equipment onboard, MITSCHER got underway for training and a port visit to Port Canaveral, Florida. While the ship's technicians tested new equipment, MITSCHER provided a group of four scientists and engineers employed by the Department of Defense and its contractors a chance to learn about life underway through the Navy's Scientists to Sea program.

The visit to Port Canaveral, Florida, MITSCHER's first port visit of 1999, was a great chance for the crew to enjoy some warm weather and great liberty. Most MITSCHERMEN spent the majority of their time visiting nearby Cocoa Beach, Daytona Beach, or the NASA facility at Port Canaveral.

After a two-day transit back to Hampton Roads, MITSCHER once again moored at Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown. This time, the ship on-loaded ammunition in support of upcoming Exercise Marvika 99.

On 16 April, MITSCHER returned to homeport, focusing the following inport period on the preparation for and conduct of the Aviation Readiness Evaluation (ARE) and Aviation Certification (AVCERT). MITSCHER completed both successfully.

Later that same month, 26-27 April, MITSCHER got underway in the Virginia Capes Operating Area (VCOA) for exercises with Naval Special Warfare Development Command. The crew had the opportunity to get a fascinating look at the cutting edge of Navy Special Warfare forces.

Upon returning to homeport on 28 April, the ship began preparations for the approaching month-and-a-half underway period. The two-week Material Certification of ATWCS was completed on 14 May, a significant milestone, certifying MITSCHER to launch Tomahawks.

MITSCHER's longest underway of 1999 began on 17 May with a trans-Atlantic voyage en route to the English Channel. Steaming in company with MITSCHER were USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG 51), USS HUE CITY (CG 66), and USS VICKSBURG (CG 69). MITSCHER and ARLEIGH BURKE were headed for Exercise Marvika 99, while HUE CITY and VICKSBURG were beginning a three-month Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) deployment. The voyage was filled with training, including Tomahawk exercises, maneuvering drills, underway replenishments, flashing light drills, and many more.

MITSCHER and ARLEIGH BURKE arrived at the western end of the English Channel on 25 May, beginning a two-day transit which culminated in an exciting surface warfare exercise, called an ENCOUNTEREX. Both vessels spent 26 and 27 May carefully hiding among the many ships and oil platforms in the North Sea while simultaneously searching for each other. MITSCHER emerged victorious, evading ARLEIGH BURKE for the full two days, despite ARLEIGH BURKE's advantage of air assets.

The transit from Norfolk ended with a lengthy and complex sea and anchor detail through the beautiful fjords of Norway, on the way to Oslo. MITSCHER spent three days moored in downtown Oslo, Norway. The crew enjoyed many tours of downtown Oslo.

Leaving the fjords of Norway behind, MITSCHER headed back into the North Sea on 31 May, underway for Exercise Marvika 99. Before beginning the exercise, MITSCHER had the opportunity to demonstrate the AN/SPY-1D phased array radar system to the Norwegian CNO. The demonstration was a great success, allowing Norway's naval leaders a first-hand insight into the power and flexibility that SPY gives to a modern Aegis destroyer.

Marvika was a multi-national Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) event, involving ships and submarines of German, British, French, Norwegian, Dutch, and United States navies. MITSCHER took the opportunity to hone skills not only in ASW, but also in operating and communicating with other NATO units.

Marvika ended on 3 June. MITSCHER and ARLEIGH BURKE began transiting to their post-exercise port visits 4 June. While ARLEIGH BURKE made her way to France, MITSCHER entered the English Channel again, en route to Portsmouth, England.

During the transit, the British Coast Guard called upon MITSCHER to assist in an apparent rescue operation. A catamaran had been discovered capsized and adrift near the southern coast of England. Having no prior information regarding the vessel, other than a report of a sailboat adrift, Coast Guard authorities operated under the assumption that there were people onboard the boat. MITSCHER spent the first few hours standing by to act as a "lily pad," or refueling deck, for the Coast Guard helicopter. After preliminary investigations were complete, MITSCHER volunteered to send two of her highly trained Search and Rescue (SAR) swimmers in a small boat to take a closer look at the vessel. The Coast Guard agreed, and MITSCHER put one of her rigid-hull inflatable boats (RHIBs) in the water with the SAR swimmers. Once the swimmers arrived on scene, they were able to get in the water and check to see if anyone was onboard the sailboat. After 30 minutes of thoroughly searching the vessel, it was determined that there were no people on the boat.

The only issue remaining was what to do with the sailboat, which was now a hazard to navigation. Through some further investigation, the Coast Guard determined that the catamaran had capsized during a storm in a nearby harbor a few days earlier. All of the passengers had managed to get ashore, but the sailboat drifted out to sea. After consulting with the owner and insurer of the vessel, the Coast Guard decided to scuttle it. Once again, MITSCHER took the initiative and offered to do the scuttling using her small arms. MITSCHER gunner's mates and midshipmen were mustered on the forecandle and allowed to fire at the catamaran, sinking it.

On 7 June, MITSCHER made another highly complex sea and anchor transit into the historic town of Portsmouth, England. The ship enjoyed a five-day stay there. Many of the crew made trips to Stonehenge and London.

ARLEIGH BURKE rejoined MITSCHER on 12 June to commence the ten-day transit back across the Atlantic. COMDESRON TWO and his staff embarked on 20 June to conduct an Engineering Qualification (E-Qual). The qualification was completed over two days with no major discrepancies.

MITSCHER and ARLEIGH BURKE celebrated the completion of Exercise Marvika 99 and E-Qual with a port visit to Halifax, Nova Scotia, 23-25 June. The crew was glad to have the chance to see the sights of Canada. While in Nova Scotia, MITSCHER hosted the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia for an onboard reception with other local dignitaries.

MITSCHER left Halifax on 26 June and spent two days steaming with ARLEIGH BURKE en route to Norfolk. The ship arrived to a warm reception from families and friends at Naval Station Norfolk on 28 June.

The first week at home marked the beginning of a three-week Fleet Maintenance Availability (FMAV), as well as a two-day ammunition offload at the pier. The crew turned their attention to the task of preparing MITSCHER for the upcoming change of command. COMDESRON TWO embarked in MITSCHER 2-16 July.

The Prospective Commanding Officer (PCO), CDR Frank C. Pandolfe, arrived onboard on the morning of 19 July, as MITSCHER prepared to get underway for two days of training and PCO familiarization in VCOA. After returning on 21 July, the PCO and CO continued the turnover process.

MITSCHER got underway to Nauticus Maritime Museum, downtown Norfolk on 28 July. The ship remained at Nauticus for five days, hosting tours and preparing the ship for the ceremony.

On 30 July, CDR Frank C. Pandolfe relieved CDR Philip H. Cullom as Commanding Officer, USS MITSCHER (DDG 57). The ceremony took place at Nauticus on the Norfolk waterfront. The weather was warm and sunny. MITSCHER was at full dress ship, with bunting from stem to stern.

MITSCHER returned to Naval Station Norfolk on 2 August. After a week inport, the ship got underway on the 9 August for four days of training in VCOA, returning to homeport on 13 August.

On 23 August, MITSCHER was underway for port visits to Annapolis, Maryland, and Gloucester, Massachusetts. After four days of training in VCOA, MITSCHER made the planned transit to Annapolis, anchoring approximately one mile from the downtown

area and the United States Naval Academy. The four-day visit offered Midshipmen the opportunity to experience a ship first-hand. The visit also offered the crew the opportunity to see the many sights of Annapolis.

During the Annapolis port visit, Hurricane DENNIS arrived off the mid-Atlantic coast of the United States. Deciding that it was too risky to leave the ship at anchor in an unprotected harbor such as Annapolis, the Commanding Officer got MITSCHER underway on the morning of 30 August to head to Baltimore, where MITSCHER was able to safely moor pierside at a merchant terminal. The ship spent two days in Baltimore, making the most of the situation by enjoying the sights of the city's Inner Harbor area.

On 2 September, MITSCHER commenced transiting southward to the Chesapeake Bay, intending to head out to sea enroute Gloucester. While the ship was still transiting the Chesapeake Bay, COMSECONDFLT made the call that it was too dangerous due to weather, ordering MITSCHER to return to homeport. Later that afternoon, the ship arrived pierside at Naval Station Norfolk in heavy rain and wind.

The hurricane season changed MITSCHER's plans again time just two weeks later. Hurricane FLOYD began to threaten the mid-Atlantic coast. As it came closer, all of Second Fleet was ordered to sortie on 15 September. Every ship that was able got underway for an area in VCOA that was determined to be safely out of the path of Hurricane Floyd. MITSCHER returned on 18 September after three days of steaming in the rough, stormy seas caused by Hurricane Floyd.

After four days inport, MITSCHER returned to sea on 22 September, in company with HARRY S TRUMAN Battle Group (HSTBATGRU), for the first of several battle group sails. Lasting eight days, this experience provided many opportunities for battle group assets to operate together and learn to function as a unit.

The group sail was followed by an extended 26-day inport period. The focus of this period was preparations for MITSCHER's Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification (CMTQ), scheduled for the end of the month. During this inport period, the Secretary of the Navy's Capital Investment for Labor Initiative (CILI) preservation team came aboard for fleet testing. Their advanced preservation techniques were applied to six corrosion-intensive areas in MITSCHER. Their effort promised to save MITSCHER Sailors many man-hours of painting and preservation time in the months to come. Halfway through the three-week CILI availability, 13 October, the Honorable Richard

Danzig, Secretary of the Navy, visited MITSCHER to check the progress of his initiative. After touring the ship's weatherdecks, he arrived on the flight deck to speak to MITSCHER's crew. The Secretary was joined by Vice Admiral Henry C. Giffin, Commander, Naval Surface Forces Atlantic. Both expressed their admiration for the work that had been accomplished in MITSCHER.

Throughout this inport period, MITSCHER's Supply Department was preparing for a Logistics Management Assessment (LMA). This rigorous inspection of the ship's management of disbursing, sales, and supplies was completed successfully 12-15 October.

MITSCHEr's Strike Warfare team completed a complex CMTQ assessment on 22 October.

MITSCHEr was underway on 25 October for its second HSTBATGRU Group Sail. The first two days at sea were taken up with some Special Warfare small boat operations. Once again, MITSCHER's crewmembers were treated to new war fighting techniques. The remainder of the group sail consisted of more in-depth battle group operations, including exercises in all warfare areas. The final event of the underway, MITSCHER's Final Evaluation Period (FEP), was an opportunity for the ship to demonstrate to COMDESRON TWO and his staff that MITSCHER had successfully completed the Basic Phase of the Inter-deployment Training Cycle.

MITSCHEr celebrated the completion of FEP by paying a visit to New York City 5-7 November. The ship moored at the Navy pier on Staten Island. The crew enjoyed liberty in all the boroughs of New York, as well as New Jersey and Long Island. Many were able to visit nearby family and friends, while local families "adopted" others, taking the Sailors into their homes for meals and hospitality.

After a daylong transit, MITSCHER returned to Norfolk on 9 November. The ship spent one week in homeport, getting ready for the final underway exercise of the year, VANDALEX. This event allowed surface ships an opportunity to practice Anti-Air Warfare (AAW) against a live target, fired from a facility on Virginia's Eastern Shore. MITSCHER was underway on 13 November and spent the next day preparing for the event with the other participating units. During the actual event, MITSCHER achieved a skin-to-skin hit against the drone target.

The ship returned to homeport on 17 November. The following day, MITSCHER began the Command, Control, Computer, Communication, and Information (C4I) and Information Technology - 21st Century (IT-21) equipment installation availability. This initiated a long period during which the ship would receive

upgrades to nearly all of its information systems. A second FMAV began on 18 November. On 29 November, a second, two-week CILI availability commenced.

MITSCHER's officers and crew celebrated the end of a long and triumphant year with the Command Holiday Party on 9 December. The party was a great success.

1999 came quietly to an end onboard MITSCHER, as all hands commenced the holiday leave period on 13 December.