



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 (NO9BH)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR CY01

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Commanding Officer Biography
(5) USS MITSCHER 2001 Battle Efficiency and Command
Excellence Awards Package, 05 Dec 01

1. In accordance with reference (a), USS MITSCHER's command history for the calendar year 2001 is submitted.


M. R. BARCLIFT

**USS MITSCHER DDG-57
COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION**

Command Title: USS MITSCHER (DDG 57)

UIC: 21687

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

ISIC: 01 Jan - 30 Jun 02:
 Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWO

 01 Jul - 31 Dec 02:
 Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWO TWO

Commanding Officer: 01 Jan - 07 Mar: CDR Frank C. Pandolfe
 07 Mar - 31 Dec: CDR Michael R. Barclift

Homeport: Naval Station Norfolk, Norfolk, VA

Aircraft Assigned: None

**USS MITSCHER (DDG 57)
CHRONOLOGY**

JANUARY

01-09 Pre-Overseas Movement Leave Period
09 Distinguished Visitor: RADM Foley
10-11 Fast Cruise
10 Ammo Onload - SM2
11 Distinguished Visitor: VADM Mullen
12 Commence MED/MEF Deployment
12-20 Atlantic Transit
14 RAS w/USNS BIG HORN
17 RAS w/USNS BIG HORN
20 RAS w/USNS BIG HORN
21 INCHOP Sixth Fleet
21-22 Enroute Barcelona, Spain
23-26 Inport Barcelona, Spain
27 RAS w/USNS BIG HORN
27-04 Enroute Algiers, Algeria

FEBRUARY

2 5"/54 PACFIRE
3 RAS w/ USNS BIG HORN
4 Anchored Algiers, Algeria
DVs: Ambassador Sandersen & Members of Algerian Navy
5 Reception at US Embassy
Underway Mediterranean Sea
6 Algerian ASWEX
7 Anchored Algiers, Algeria
Underway Mediterranean Sea
8 DV: Ambassador Sandersen (Lunch)
Underway Mediterranean Sea
9 Enroute Valetta, Malta
10-13 Inport Valetta, Malta
14 Underway Mediterranean Sea
16 5"/54 PACFIRE (Killer Tomato)
17 RAS w/ USNS BIG HORN
15-23 Capo Teulada Exercise
24 Enroute Catania, Sicily
24-26 Anchored Catania, Sicily
26 PCO (CDR Michael R. Barclift) Arrives
27 Underway Mediterranean Sea
28-31 Underway Adriatic Sea

MARCH

1-6 Underway Adriatic Sea
4 RAS w/ USNS PATUXENT
5"/54 & CIWS PACFIRE
5 REXTORP Launch vs. EMATT
6 RAS w/ USNS PATUXENT
7-12 Inport Dubrovnik, Croatia
7 Change of Command
13 Underway Adriatic Sea
14 RAS w/ USNS PATUXENT
Underway Mediterranean Sea
16 5"/54 & CIWS PACFIRE
19-26 Inport La Maddallena, Sicily (FMAV)
Chess Challenge (MIT vs. CARR)
26 Underway Mediterranean Sea, Transit to Area 8
RAS w/ USNS BIG HORN
COMDESRON 22 Visit
29 GUNEX
COMDESRON 22 Departs via RHIB to PORTER
31 RAS w/ USNS BIG HORN

APRIL

1 Steel Beach Picnic
2 RAS w/ USNS BIG HORN
ENCOUNTEREX w/ NASSAU & PORTER
5 RAS w/ USNS BIG HORN
Iron Man Competition
6-9 Inport Gaeta, Italy (MCA)
DVs: VADM Habert, CECMED & VADM Johnson, C6F
10 Underway Mediterranean Sea
DV RHIB Transfer w/ USS NORFOLK
12 Inport Souda Bay, Crete (Ammo Onload)
13 Half-way Day
14 RAS w/ USNS LARAMIE
15 Steel Beach Picnic
16 Transit Suez Canal
17 Underway Red Sea
RAS w/ USNS CONCORD
19 Transit Strait of Bab El Mandeb
20 RAS w/ USNS KANAWHA
21 GUNEX
22 Transit Strait of Hormuz
23 RAS w/ USNS PECOS
WASEX
24-26 Inport Manama, Bahrain
27-30 Underway Arabian Gulf

MAY

1 SAREX
2 Anchored Muscat, Oman
COMEX Khunjar Hadd
3 Underway Arabian Gulf
4 RAS w/ RAF ORANGELEAF
8 RAS w/ RAF ORANGELEAF
9 FINEX Khunjar Hadd
11 RAS w/ USNS SAN JOSE
Turnover w/ KINKAID (NAG)
13 RAS w/ USNS SAN JOSE
RAS w/ RAF ORANGELEAF
17 RAS w/ USNS PECOS
19-21 Inport Jebel Ali, UAE
22 Underway Arabian Gulf
27 RAS w/ USNS PECOS
28 DVs: RADM Hart (CCDG 1) & CAPT Spicer (CDS 7)
31 RDVU for Training with Japanese Training ships
KASHIARI and YAMAGIRI and French Vessel LAFAYETTE

JUNE

1 MIO (Comiskey)
3 RAS w/ RAF ORANGELEAF
4-7 Inport Manama, Bahrain
8 Underway Arabian Gulf
9 Transit Strait of Hormuz
RAS w/ USNS PECOS
15 Transit Suez Canal
17 RAS w/ USNS BIG HORN & USNS SIRIUS
18 Inport Souda Bay, Crete
19 Underway Mediterranean Sea
25-30 Inport Palma de Majorca, Spain
25 Embark Midshipmen
30 Underway Mediterranean Sea

JULY

1 Fleet Family Support Center Visit
RAS w/ USNS BIG HORN
2 Footwear Quarantine
Transit Straits of Gibraltar
Inchop C2F
3 RAS w/ USNS BIG HORN
4 Steel Beach Picnic
6 Safety Stand-down
Customs Inspection

8 Steel Beach Picnic
Burial At Sea
10 Inport Newport, RI
Underway Atlantic enroute Norfolk, VA
11 Steel Beach Picnic
RAS w/ USNS BIG HORN
12 Homecoming
15-20 Fulton HS NJROTC Unit Visit
17 Midshipmen Visit from USS IWO JIMA
12-28 Post Deployment Standdown 1
28-13 Post Deployment Standdown 2
31 DK2 (SW) [REDACTED], Last PLANKOWNER, departs.

AUGUST

2 IMAV
2-3 MSI
13 Fast Cruise
14 Underway Atlantic Ocean
14-17 Inport Earle, NJ for Ammo Offload
18-19 Inport Norfolk, VA
20 Family Day Cruise
27 SEMAT/SISCAL
29 ILO
30 Transit to Moon Engineering
31 SRA Commences

SEPTEMBER

4 ATWCS L4 Upgrade
NTCSS Upgrade
11 World Trade Center/Pentagon Attack
13 DV: Commodore Holst
17 SISCAL Out
25 ORM Visit

OCTOBER

9-12 Command PRT
12 US Moment of Silence for USS COLE
31 Football Finals (MITSCHER Places 2nd overall)

NOVEMBER

13 AEGIS Light-off
28-30 LOA

DECEMBER

4 Fast Cruise
5 Transit NOB

6 Command Christmas Party
12-14 Underway VACAPES
PACFIRE
ASWEX w/ USS JACKSONVILLE
14 Precision Anchorage
Inport Norfolk, VA
17-23 Holiday Standdown 1
23-28 Holiday Standdown 2

NARRATIVE

After more than a year's worth of training, including a highly successful Final Evaluation Period (FEP), COMPTUEX, and JTFEX, MITSCHER entered 2001 as the most capable fighting ship in the United States Atlantic Fleet - primed for success for her third Mediterranean and first Arabian Sea deployment. The crew's consistent ability to excel in all areas had just earned her a second consecutive Battle "E" for 2000 from DESRON TWO. MITSCHER was also selected for a second successive COMSECONDFLT "Golden Anchor Award" for Retention.

The crew returned from their highly deserved Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) and Holiday Leave period on 9 January, eager to begin the journey across the Atlantic. After two more days packed with preparations including fast cruises, visits from VADM Mullen and RADM Foley, and a final load-out of SM-2's, it was finally time to deploy. On 12 January, MITSCHER said goodbye to friends, family, and loved ones, beginning yet another journey to the Old World. Leaving Norfolk as a late deployer of the USS HARRY S TRUMAN Battle Group, MITSCHER was joined by USS CARR, USNS BIG HORN, and HMCS CHARLOTTETOWN for the trip across the "pond."

The voyage proved highly successful. Contrary to the legendary tales of the ferocity of the North Atlantic in mid-Winter, temperatures were relatively mild and the seas remained fair for the entire trip. The calm weather afforded MITSCHER excellent opportunities to continue training and conduct various evolutions. Training included flag hoist and flashing light drills, leap frog exercises, small arms qualifications and 5"/54 gunfire exercises. Also, the Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) Team took the opportunity to practice transiting from ship to ship. Finally, on 21 January, MITSCHER transited the Straits of Gibraltar and became part of the Sixth Fleet.

MITSCHER's first order of business in the Mediterranean was to pay a port visit to Barcelona, Spain on 23 January. There the crew enjoyed skiing in Andorra, wines and champagne at the Cordonieu Winery, and the splendor of the monastery at Monserrat. MITSCHERMEN also visited a variety of museums, the cathedral of Sagrada Familia, and, a favorite stop, Las Ramblas!

Upon getting underway from Barcelona on 27 January, the ship continued its emphasis on drilling, including simulated floating minefields, simulated approaches to Algiers, anti-submarine tracking, and damage control. MITSCHER still was able to pause on 28 January, however, to see the Baltimore Ravens win Super Bowl XXXV live via Armed Forces Radio and Television Service.

Enclosure (3)

From 27 January to 4 February, MITSCHER made it a mission to ensure she was completely prepared for an upcoming Algerian Undersea Warfare Exercise. In addition, the crew practiced Naval Surface Fire Support, anchoring, streaming both TACTAS and NIXIE, and small boat operations. Then on 4 February, MITSCHER became one of only a select handful of U.S. Warships since the days of the Barbary Pirates to sail into Algiers. Greeting MITSCHER was U.S. Ambassador Sandersen and dignitaries from the Algerian Navy. After providing a tour of the ship and being guests at a dinner held at the American Embassy, the crew of MITSCHER participated in invaluable operations with Algeria's OSA II patrol craft and Kilo submarine, as well as USS NORFOLK. A passenger exchange crowned the multi-day event, facilitating superb relations between the two navies.

On 8 February, the Algerian USWEX successfully behind her, MITSCHER proceeded further east across the Mediterranean toward her next destination: Valetta, Malta on 11 February. After gracefully handling one of the more difficult-to-maneuver port entrances in the world, MITSCHER set off to enjoy a well-deserved visit ashore. Whether it was dinner in St. Julien's, a tour of Fort St. Elmo, or a trip through World War II history in the tunnels of Lascaris, Sailors had plenty of opportunities to relax and rest themselves for their next challenge: Capo Teulada.

After departing Valetta on 14 February, MITSCHER spent the next several days transiting and preparing for myriad exercises off Capo Teulada, which began in earnest on 18 February. This five-day exercise tested the merits of MITSCHER's combat and operational capabilities. The days were packed with exercises such as a high-speed Surface Warfare firing run vs. the Killer Tomato; Anti-Air Warfare firing vs. a Lear Jet with a Towed Drone Unit; and a detect-to-engage sequence with the Lear. Exercises vs. the EMATT flexed the ship's Anti-Submarine Warfare capability. The NSFS team excelled during several live fires. "Fly Catcher" operations, multiple passenger transfers by helicopter, a silent replenishment at sea with USNS PATUXENT, small boat operations, military deception exercises, and surface warfare exercises involving multiple ships also challenged MITSCHER's Bridge and Combat Watch teams. Additionally, the exercises served to engage MITSCHER in joint and multinational force exercises - fostering a spirit of teamwork vital to maritime operations in today's global world. And, again, MITSCHER "seized the day!"

Following the exercise, MITSCHER transited towards Catania, Sicily, anxious to meet her next Commanding Officer, Commander Michael Barclift, on 26 February. Although the ship anchored

out, the crew was still able to enjoy several days of liberty. Visits to the Ear of Dionysus and the Volcano, Mount Etna, proved most enlightening. Rough weather restricted liberty on the last day in port, but nonetheless, the time ashore was appreciated.

MITSCHER traveled into the Adriatic Sea on 28 February and during much of the transit, briefings and tours for the PCO occupied the days. On 5 March, however, the ASW team was able to flex their capabilities with a shot of their REXTORP.

On 7 March, during a ceremony held on the flight deck under a bright wide sky in the deep blue of the Adriatic, CDR Michael Barclift relieved CDR Frank Pandolfe as Commanding Officer, USS MITSCHER (DDG 57). CDR Pandolfe eloquently praised the ship and crew, thanking them for making his tour so fulfilling, and wishing the crew and CDR Barclift future success. CDR Barclift expressed gratitude to CDR Pandolfe for his service, recognizing his achievement on a very successful tour. That same afternoon, MITSCHER pulled into the beautiful port city of Dubrovnik, Croatia.

Dubrovnik, nestled on the eastern side of the Adriatic, is a beautiful seaport, though it is still recovering from the struggle of the Yugoslavian conflict. An intensely religious town, focused around their patron saint, St. Blaise, Dubrovnik offered MITSCHER sailors the opportunity to volunteer time at a nursing home to support Operation Handclasp. Dubrovnik is located in the land historically lodged between the former Ottoman Empire and Austro-Hungarian Empire. Therefore, always in danger, the town constructed huge walls to protect the people, walls that still stand as a testament to their time. Now a thriving tourist destination, Dubrovnik offered the crew all the conveniences of modern Europe with the charm of the Middle Ages. Overall a wonderful experience, though one could still get the sense of surrounding conflict.

On 13 March, MITSCHER was once again at sea. After transiting the Adriatic, complete with another gun firing exercise, the ship pulled in for a brief, event-filled maintenance availability in La Maddalena, Italy. The USS EMORY S. LAND attended to specific jobs utilizing the sub tender's sheet metal, woodworking, and canvas shops. A team from the LAND also worked to patch the aft VLS deck. Beginning 19 March, the biggest job accomplished during the FMAV was a ship's-force, top-to-bottom, foc'sle-to-stern topside preservation. During the stay, MITSCHER challenged the mental warriors on USS CARR to a chess competition, an event from which MITSCHER emerged victorious. On 26 March, as the FMAV was coming to an end,

Commodore Thompson, DESRON TWO, embarked MITSCHER. Remaining onboard MITSCHER just a short time, the Commodore shifted his pennant once again when he was transferred via boat to USS PORTER several days later.

The sweet winds of April brought warmer weather, and with it MITSCHER's first steel beach picnic of the year. Soon after, MITSCHER participated in an encounter exercise with USS NASSAU and USS PORTER, which included practice boardings for the VBSS teams on NASSAU, flashing light and flag hoist drills, and helicopter operations. On 5 April, the ship hosted an Iron Man Contest in a contest to determine our strongest Sailor.

On 6 April, the ship was brought into Gaeta, Italy for its Mid-Cycle Assessment. A successful evolution, the assessment brought about several important policy changes with respect to casualty control and safety programs. The feedback reports provided by the assessment team helped make an efficient engineering plant run even more effectively. While in Gaeta, the crew took advantage of the close proximity to Rome and Naples. Some went to tour the "Eternal City;" others just went to the Navy Exchange! An additional highlight: While moored in Gaeta, MITSCHER was honored by a visit from VADM Johnson, COMSIXTHFLT, and VADM Habert, CECMED. This visit segued into a challenging transit from Gaeta. MITSCHER's rigid hull inflatable boat (RHIB) was used to transfer VADM Johnson, COMSIXTHFLT, to the submarine USS NORFOLK. Then, after his visit, the RHIB returned to MITSCHER with the Vice Admiral, who finally departed MITSCHER, well out to sea at that point, via an SH-60 bound back to shore.

MITSCHER transited to Crete to load ammo at Souda Bay on 12 April and returned to sea that day, steaming towards the Suez Canal. The 13th, Halfway Day, was marked by Surf and Turf, followed by a steel beach picnic two days later. Also that day, at sunset, the ship traded the shores of the Med for the warmer waters and heavier responsibilities of the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, while USS ARLEIGH BURKE passed in the other direction. The morning of the 16th, MITSCHER began her transit through the Suez Canal and became a part of the Fifth Fleet. The transit, in company with USS CARR and HMCS CHARLOTTETOWN, was successfully accomplished.

Once into the Red Sea, the crew continued training on Rules of Engagement, VBSS, and Security Team procedures. The 19th brought a successful transit of the Straits of Bab el Mandeb. On the 23rd, MITSCHER flexed her Combat Systems capabilities again with a War at Sea exercise.

MITSCHER pulled into Manama, Bahrain with high hopes of visiting the Gold and Persian Rug Marketplaces. For a time,

that seemed possible, and many did escape into town to buy gold and rugs. Unfortunately, during the ship's visit a threat to the base cancelled all liberty outside the base walls. Also, one of the RHIBs developed a problem, but luckily, MITSCHER was able to borrow a RHIB from Fifth Fleet while the mechanics on shore repaired the damaged drive assembly, and MITSCHER was successfully able to execute numerous missions in the Persian Gulf. Also during this Bahrain visit, LCDR Patrick Kelly relieved LCDR Phil Vance as Executive Officer. The port visit was capped by a visit from COMCARGRU TWO, RADM Johnson, who flew from the carrier to MITSCHER in order to welcome MITSCHER to the area and participate in an Awards Ceremony.

On 27 April, MITSCHER was underway and began fulfilling her long-awaited missions in the Persian Gulf. Seamlessly spanning the varied mission areas of VBSS, Maritime Interdiction, and Guard Ship duties, MITSCHER's crew performed their duties with immense pride and professionalism. On 30 April, while acting as Guard Ship for the Merchant Vessel GEORGIOS, a suspected oil smuggler (which, after MITSCHER's deployment, would sink), two Iraqi crewmembers jumped into the warm, sea-snake infested waters of the Northern Arabian Gulf. Acting with speed and efficiency, MITSCHER launched her RHIB to recover the two men. Although resistant at first, the stranded men realized their peril and were ultimately returned safely to GEORGIOS.

Soon after this incident, guard ship duties were turned over to HMCS CHARLOTTETOWN, and MITSCHER transited south, responding professionally to Iranian Navy queries off the Straits of Hormuz, to Muscat, Oman. There, off the coast of Oman, an international collection of vessels from Germany, France, Great Britain, the United States, and Oman began exercise Khunjar Hadd, designed to reinforce the positive relationship between the Omani Navy and NATO.

From 3 to 9 May in the Batinah Areas (BATNAC) off the coast of Oman, MITSCHER participated in Exercise Khunjar Hadd. Participating ships from the Royal Navy of Oman consisted of RNOV QAHIR AL AMWAAJ, RNOV DHOFAR, and RNOV MUSSANDAM. Elements of the UK Navy involved were HMS LANCASTER (FFGH) and RFA ORANGELEAF (AOR). The French Navy sent FNS LA FAYETTE (FFG), and other vessels included CARR, CARDINAL, and COLUMBIA. Air assets included 2 RAF NIMROD's, French Atlantique's, elements of the Royal Air Force of Oman, and a U.S. P3C. The aim was to undertake Multi-threat training involving a Multinational Force within the Gulf of Oman. Exercise objectives included: Carrying out GCC operational and tactical procedures while using current EXTACs; Familiarisation of visiting participants with operations

within the Oman littoral; Providing procedural training in the employment of weapons, sensors and communications; Conducting ASW Training; Obtaining data to assist in determining the Gulf of Oman ASW environment; Conducting Visit, Board, Search and Seizure Training; Practising employment of generic Rules of Engagement; and bringing Multinational Forces together, through CROSSPOL visits, to learn in greater detail the shipboard life of sailors in other nations. All in all, the exercise was a tremendous success and one in which MITSCHER would gladly participate again.

Following Khunjar Hadd, MITSCHER traveled back to the Northern Arabian Gulf (NAG), commencing operations in one of several holding areas for suspected smugglers awaiting disposition. While in the NAG, MITSCHER's VBSS and security teams were especially busy. For days, MITSCHER's six security teams worked port and starboard shifts, twelve hours at a time, keeping an eye on vessels waiting to find out where their illegal cargoes would go. These vessels required guarding until they were cleared for further passage - which for some seemed to take a very long time. The VBSS "blue" and "gold" teams spent their days shuttling from ship to ship on MITSCHER's RHIBs, searching holds and containers for smuggled oil or other illegal cargo. Often, these ships would be miles apart, which meant MITSCHER had to sail between vessels, and transit at high speeds, to get to station on time. This period was a test of MITSCHER's mettle, a test for which the ship had spent the last IDTC preparing. The preparation paid off: MITSCHER excelled.

On 19 May, the ship made a brief port visit to Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates. This visit provided Sailors with more than a day to visit the gold marketplaces, and many took advantage of the opportunity. For nearly at-cost prices, pieces of gold jewelry, some beautiful works of art, were acquired with through the age-old practice of bargaining. Of course, many Sailors also stopped at the Western style mall located in the heart of a thriving business district, which seemed to rise from nowhere out of the desert.

MITSCHER was underway and back on station on 22 May. A week later, on 28 May, the ship received a visit from RADM Hart, COMCRUDESGRU ONE, and Commodore Spicer, former MITSCHER Commanding Officer, then serving as COMDESRON SEVEN. On 31 May, MITSCHER took time out from her maritime interdiction duties to train with the Japanese training vessels KASHIARI and YAMAGIRI, and the French Vessel LAFAYETTE, performing maneuvers and other drills.

On 4 June, MITSCHER's stint in the Arabian Gulf as an active MIO and VBSS force came to an end with a final port visit

in Manama, Bahrain. Although still not allowed out in town, MITSCHERMEN managed to relax and find a new appreciation for the base after the strain of high-tempo policing operations. Then, on 8 June, MITSCHER got back underway, transited the Straits of Hormuz on 9 June, and was through the Suez on 15 June. During the transit, the ship encountered heavy sea states through the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden, some swells approaching 15 feet in height - quite unexpected after the calm waters of the Arabian Gulf.

17 June, Fathers Day, was spent in typical fast-paced MITSCHER fashion. The day began with an underway replenishment with USNS BIG HORN, followed by a vertical replenishment with USNS SIRIUS, and then closed with a great steel beach picnic put on by the CPO Mess. On the 18th, MITSCHER's crew again found itself in Souda Bay, Crete, looking forward to a relaxing Mediterranean port visit after the high-stress operations of the last several months. These hopes were dashed, however, when MITSCHER received sudden tasking to head out again for the Eastern Mediterranean to perform a mission for Sixth Fleet. Understanding that mission comes first, MITSCHER's sailors leaped into their mission with vigor.

With the mission accomplished, MITSCHER transited straight across the Mediterranean to pay a port visit on 25 June to one of the resort capitals of the region: Palma de Majorca, Spain. Engaging in five days of fun in the sun on the beach was more than enough to relax the crew and prepare them for the transit across the Atlantic and the excitement of homecoming. A number of Midshipmen from across the nation also embarked MITSCHER in Palma, eager to begin learning their new trade and developing the skills they will need for success as Naval Officers.

Before completing her deployment, MITSCHER briefly stopped in Newport, RI to pick up family members eager to participate in MITSCHER's 2001 Tiger Cruise, riding with the crew to Norfolk. The next day, the crew gave the Tigers a good show with a full power run, gun shoot, underway replenishment, steel beach picnic, and much more.

Finally, early in the morning on 12 July, MITSCHER stationed her final sea and anchor detail of the deployment. Waiting at the pier were the family and loved ones who had seen MITSCHER off to sea six months before, bringing with them a happy reunion complete with roses for loved ones and tears all around. MITSCHER also said good-bye to COMDESRON TWO and was transferred to the command of COMDESRON TWO TWO.

After a well-deserved post-deployment leave and upkeep period, which included a ship visit by the NJROTC Unit of Fulton

High School; the departure of MITSCHER's last plank-owner, DK2 (SW) [REDACTED]; an IMAV; and a visit to the Marine Safety Institute for some practice in ship-handling for the wardroom, MITSCHER was ready for a brief underway to off-load ammunition.

On 14 August, MITSCHER made the day trip to Earle, NJ and pulled into the piers just south of New York City. There, in the distance, was the very visible skyline of southern Manhattan, a skyline that MITSCHER sailors would recall remorsefully less than a month later.

After successfully and safely completing the ammunition offload with time to spare, MITSCHER was underway again for home. After a brief weekend in port, family embarked for the Family Day Cruise of 2001. Once again, drills and demonstrations gave our families a sense of what life is like onboard a world-class naval vessel.

As the month wound on, time came for MITSCHER to head down the river to repair herself and receive several new installations and upgrades. From August 31 to December 12, MITSCHER was in Portsmouth, Virginia at Moon Engineering Company, undergoing a Selected Restricted Availability. The ship also conducted an Integrated Logistics Overhaul during this time - a total upgrade and verification of all ship's technical manuals. Additionally, MITSCHER had a SYSCAL visit, ensuring all Gage Calibration was up to date.

The events of 11 September struck MITSCHER with the same force they struck the rest of the world. It was a typical day in the shipyard, with DC, Engineering, and Warfare Training proceeding in parallel with the work of the availability, when the entire war fighting structure of MITSCHER changed. Suddenly, MITSCHER found herself back in the force protection posture left behind in the Persian Gulf during deployment. Suddenly this force protection posture became permanent and the threat all too real.

The SRA also brought exciting changes to MITSCHER. Contractors installed NAVSSI, a new electronic navigation suite. NTCSS and the Advanced Tomahawk Weapon Control System received upgrades. Other contractors made numerous modifications, alterations, and repairs to the ship's engineering plant to update MITSCHER's capability, efficiency, and survivability. The Steering Gear Room ventilation received a modification to allow the air conditioning re-circulation ducting to operate more efficiently to cool the steering gear Hydraulic Power Units. The Steering Gear Room also received an oily waste drainage modification, which added oily waste drain capability in the Steering Gear Room. This change was instituted to meet MARPOL regulations concerning the discharge of oily waste at sea. Fuel

oil service and transfer heater element replacements occurred, replacing a Chromalox welded fuel heater element to prevent problems with oil leakage into the heater end bell terminal boxes. The existing screens behind the GTM and GTG exhaust louvers were removed and replaced. An MRG lube oil pump seal modification changed the mechanical seal from the MRG electric lube oil pump to allow a seal which provides necessary piping and components to ensure an adequate supply of oil to seal and seal vent. An SSGTG fuel service heater element was replaced to eliminate possible future pitting and sheath corrosion problems. The anti-icing pipe hanger corrosion modification replaced the existing carbon steel rigid and spring-type hangers.

Also during the SRA, MITSCHER prepared for her first assessment of the IDTC, Light Off Assessment (LOA). Afloat Training Group Atlantic Engineering Readiness Team conducted the LOA onboard USS MITSCHER on behalf of COMDESRON TWO TWO. The assessment included a space and material safety walkthrough; selected material safety checks; a deckplate review of management programs; observation of a DCTT brief; and a main-space fire drill.

Other than LOA and SRA, MITSCHERMEN had other achievements. Members of the crew gathered together to rebuild a playground during the Day of Caring in October. And, stunning the naval base, MITSCHER's flag football team came in second in the base competition.

The year came to a close with the Command Christmas Party, held at the Waterside Sheraton on 6 December. Then, MITSCHER briefly got underway to stretch our legs after the availability. During this underway the ship exercised its ASW system with a P-3C and the USS JACKSONVILLE and MITSCHER calibrated antennas at the SESEF range.

Due to operational tasking, the ship's holiday leave was shortened, but MITSCHER did manage some time off between 17 and 28 December.

Thus ended an event-packed and highly successful year. A year during which MITSCHER deployed to the Mediterranean and Arabian Gulf, defending U.S. interests across the globe, doing our part to ensure stability. The next year promises to bring more excitement, and more adventures, and through it all, MITSCHER will always be ready to SEIZE THE DAY!