



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 CY03

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G, Command Histories

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Commanding Officer Biography

1. As per reference (a), USS MITSCHER's command history for calendar year 2003 is submitted.


D. A. SCHMIELEY

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

Command Title: USS MITSCHER (DDG 57)

UIC: 21687

Missions: Anti-Air Warfare, Anti-Submarine Warfare,
Anti-Surface Warfare, Strike Warfare, and
Maritime Interdiction Operations

ISIC: Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-TWO
(COMDESRON 22)

Commanding Officer: Commander D.A. Schmieley, USN

Homeport: Naval Station, Norfolk, Virginia

Aircraft Assigned: None (Not Capable of Embarking
Helicopters)

**USS MITSCHER (DDG 57)
CHRONOLOGY
CY03**

JANUARY

02 TLAMEX RIPTIDE

03 UNREP with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN (T-AO 195)
-PACFIRE for Mk 45 5" and Mk 15 CIWS

06 UNREP with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN (T-AO 195)

-Exercise Caesar's FURY

07 SLQ-25 STREAM EX

11 UNREP with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN (T-AO 195)

-Deceptive Lighting exercise AURORA DELTA

13-20 Inport Souda Bay, Crete

20 UNREP with USNS KANAWHA (T-AO 196)

21 Exercise Juniper Cobra begins, operation conducted in the Eastern
Mediterranean Sea.

22 UNREP with USNS KANAWHA (T-AO 196)

23 Commander Joint Task Force COBRA Major General Green arrives for
ship tour.

25 Pacfire for Mk 45 5" and Mk 15 CIWS

27 SAREX
-UNREP with USNS KANAWHA (T-AO 196)

28 USW PUBEX

31 Burial at Sea for SK2 Ivey, Mrs. Simpkins, TM3 Nicholson, and Mrs.
Yarski

FEBRUARY

03 UNREP with USNS KANAWHA (T-AO 196)

04-08 Inport Souda Bay, Crete

12 UNREP with USNS JOHN LENTHALL (T-AO 189)

17 FAMFIRE

Enclosure (2)

22 UNREP with USNS JOHN LENTHALL (T-AO 189)
24 TLAMEX
28 TLAMEX
-UNREP with USNS KANAWHA (T-AO 196)

MARCH

19 OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM commences with the HARRY S TRUMAN, THEODORE ROOSEVELT, CONSTELLATION, KITTY HAWK, and ABRAHAM LINCOLN Battle Groups in the Mediterranean Sea and Persian Gulf. Coalition Ground Forces in the Middle East include Army V Corps and 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). 400,000 ground troops already on scene. MITSCHER in the eastern Med to provide spotlight duties with Joint Task Force COBRA in Israel.

27 MITSCHER launches Tomahawk Cruise Missiles (RGM-109) against Iraqi Targets,
-VERTREP with USNS MOUNT BAKER (AE 34)

28 UNREP, VERTREP with USNS ARCTIC (AOE 8)

30 Suez Canal transit (Egyptian chokepoint) into the Red Sea with USS ANZIO (CG 68) and USS CAPE ST GEORGE (CG 71), USS MITSCHER enters 5th Fleet, Commander Task Force 50 (CTF 50) AOR

31 UNREP with USNS GUADALUPE (T-AO 200)

APRIL

01 Bab al Mandeb Strait (Southern Red Sea chokepoint) transit into Gulf of Aden with USS ANZIO (CG 68) and USS CAPE ST GEORGE (CG 71)

02 PACFIRE for Mk 45 5" Gun / Mk 15 Phalanx CIWS

03 PACFIRE for Mk 45 5" Gun / Mk 15 Phalanx CIWS

04 UNREP with USNS PATUXENT (T-AO 201), Gulf of Oman and Strait of Hormuz transit with USS ANZIO (CG 68) and USS CAPE ST GEORGE (CG 71)
-Photo Exercise (PHOTOEX) with USS ANZIO (CG 68) and USS CAPE ST GEORGE (CG 71)
-NIMITZ Battlegroup relieves ABRAHAM LINCOLN Battlegroup in the Persian Gulf

05 First Quarter FY03 Senior Sailor of the Quarter (SSOQ), Junior Sailor of the Quarter, and Bluejacket of the Quarter selected by the CoC. Recipients are: OS2 (SW/AW) [REDACTED] (SSOQ), SK2 (SW) [REDACTED] (JSOQ), and FN [REDACTED] (BJOQ).

07 VERTERP with USNS NIAGARA FALLS (T-AFS 3)

11 UNREP with USNS YUKON (T-AO 202)

16-18 Inport Bahrain for AMMO OFFLOAD

18 UNREP with USS BRIDGE (AOE 10),
Straight of Hormuz transit into the Gulf of Oman.

21 21-Gun salute (Mk 45 5") for victims of the USS COLE (DDG 76)
attack in Yemen with MITSCHER, USS DEYO (DD 989), USS DONALD COOK
(DDG 75), and USS CAPE ST GEORGE (CG 71),
-Bab al Mandeb Strait (Southern Red Sea chokepoint) transit
into the Red Sea with USS DONALD COOK (DDG 75), USS DEYO (DD
989), and USS CAPE ST GEORGE (CG 71)

26 Suez Canal (Gulf of Suez Chokepoint) Transit into the
Mediterranean Sea with MITSCHER, USS DEYO (DD 989), USS DONALD
COOK (DDG 75), and USS CAPE ST GEORGE (CG 71)

27 UNREP with USNS JOHN LENTHALL (T-AO 189)

30 VERTREP/UNREP with USNS SPICA (T-AS 9)

MAY

01 Straits of Messina (Italian-Sicilian) transit with USS HARRY S
TRUMAN (CVN 75) and USS SAN JACINTO (CG 56)

05-09 Inport Lisbon, Portugal

14 UNREP with USNS JOHN LENTHALL (T-AO 189)

15 ASW-EX

17 CDS 22 CAPT O'Bryan arrival via helo

18 UNREP with USNS JOHN LENTHALL (T-AO 189)

20 Inport Mayport, Florida for TIGER cruise pickup (42) and EARLY
BIRD drop-off. Mayport based naval vessels saluted MITSCHER's
return to the U.S. with a 10 minute ship's whistle blast.

22 UNREP with USNS JOHN LENTHALL (T-AO 189)

23 Return to Norfolk Naval Base for HARRY S. TRUMAN Battlegroup,
ending their six-month deployment of the Mediterranean Sea, Red
Sea, and the Persian Gulf. End of Interdeployment Training
Cycle(IDTC) for 2002-03 tour and beginning of IDTC for 2003-04.
POM I Leave begins.

JUNE

- 04 BFTT System Training with Combat System personnel.
- 09 Training Team meetings with ETT, DCTT, SNTT, CSTT, MTT, and ATT.
-POM I leave ends and POM II leave begins.
- 11 Afloat ashore Commander's conference (MITSCHER CO).
- 13 Detect-to-Engage exercise with the Combat System Training Team.
- 18 MDU exercise with Combat Systems personnel.
- 24 POM II leave ends.
-Assessment maintenance meeting with the CO, CHENG, and Port Engineer.
- 30-03Jul IDTC event Engineering Tailored Ship Training Availability (TSTA) inspection week with Afloat Training Group Atlantic team begins.
- 30 Engineering TSTA I inbrief.

JULY

- 01 Assessment Maintenance Meeting with Systems Test Officer(STO) and the Main Propulsion Assistant(MPA), offship.
- 02 Fast Cruise, ITT scenario with all training teams.
- 03 Engineering TSTA ends. ATG assesses the ship as ready to train.
- 04 4th of July holiday.
- 07-11 IDTC event Command Assessment for Readiness and Training (CART II) inspections by ATG Atlantic week.
- 07 CART II begins.
- 09 Underway from Norfolk Naval Base, Virginia for CART II U/W exercises.
- 10 Precision anchorage exercise.
-Return to Norfolk Naval Base, Virginia from CART II U/W exercises. ATG evaluates CART II as a success for the ship.
- 12 USS RONALD REAGAN (CVN 76) commissioning ceremony from Norfolk Naval Base, Virginia. Ship sponsor, former First Lady Nancy Reagan, orders the crew "Bring her to life".
- 14-01Aug IDCT event Fleet Maintenance Activity Verification (FMAV) workups by Fleet Technical Support Center Atlantic (FTSCLANT) and Ship

Intermediate Maintenance Activity (SIMA) period.

- 14 FMAV assessment and repair begins.
- 16 40 officers and sailors from various USN reserve groups visit for a warship indoctrination tour.
- 21-25 IDTC event Damage Control Tailored Ship Training Availability (TSTA) I by ATG Atlantic begins. Overall SAT.
-Force Protection Training Team Phase II exercises assessed by ATG Atlantic. Overall SAT.
- 23-18Aug Seven midshipmen(2/C) arrived onboard for Phase III Midshipmen Training.
- 24 19 members from the Delaware Employer Support Group Reserve (ESGR) arrive for a warship indoctrination tour. Notable dignitaries include Mr. Eugene Hebert, Chairman ESGR and Brigadier General Ronald Stewart, Delaware National Guard.
- 28-01Aug IDTC event 3M Baseline Assessment conducted by ATG Atlantic. MITSCHER passes with a 95% completion rate.
- 28 Major Dave Hensley and family arrive for the ship tour. Major Hensley is the grandnephew of Admiral Marc Andrew Mitscher.

AUGUST

- 04-08 IDTC event Initial Assessment(IA) by ATG Atlantic for the Engineering Department. ENG dept. passes with an "above average" rating and is ready to train.
- 09 U/W for training from Norfolk Naval Base, Virginia.
- 10-14 Engineering TSTA I assessment by ATG Atlantic for the engineering department. ATG assesses the dept. as passable and to "continue training".
-Deck TSTA I assessment by ATG Atlantic for the Operations department. ATG assesses the ship as ready to train.
-ASW TSTA I conducted by ATG Atlantic for the Combat Systems department. ATG assesses the ship as ready to train.
- 11 Vessel, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) certification Phase I assessed by ATG Atlantic for the Combat Systems department. ATG assesses the ship as ready to train.
-UNREP/CONREP with USNS JOHN LENTHALL (T-AO 189).
- 13 VBSS Self-boarding exercise II for Combat Systems department, assessed by ATG Atlantic. ATG assesses the ship as ready to train.
- 14-18 Inport NAS Pensacola, Florida for AFTP phase II event, DCTT phase exercises, and OCS ship tours (300 visitors).

- 18-21 Engineering TSTA II assessed by ATG Atlantic for ENG Dept.
 -VBSS certification phase III evaluated by ATG Atlantic for CSTT.
 ATG evaluates the ship as ready for MIO.
 -Crash and Smash Team certification assessed by ATG Atlantic for
 the Aviation training team. ATG evaluates the ship as ready to
 combat helo emergencies.
- 21 Burial At Sea for PNCS George Burns USN, Ret., Edwina Burns, MR2
 Harold Hamby USN, Vet. and ADJC Nathaniel Young.
- 22 Inport Norfolk Naval Station, Virginia.
- 25-29 Damage Control (DC) TSTA II evaluated by ATG Atlantic for the
 Engineering Department.
 -ATFP FPTT phase III certification evaluated by ATG Atlantic for
 the command. ATG evaluates the ship as ready to defend.
 -Supply Management Assessment (SMA) assessed by ATG Atlantic for
 the Supply Department. ATG assesses the department as certified
 and validates Supply Management Inspection (SMI).

SEPTEMBER

- 02-05 ENG TSTA III evaluated by ATG Atlantic for the ENG Dept.
 -Deck TSTA II evaluated by ATG Atlantic for the OPS Dept.
- 08-12 DC TSTA III evaluated by ATG Atlantic.
 -Fast Cruise
- 08 Ship tour for 30 visitors from the US Joint Forces Command
 Defense Intelligence Agency (USJFCOM DIA).
- 15-23 Underway from Norfolk Naval Station, Virginia
 -ENG TSTA IV evaluated by ATG Atlantic for the ENG Dept.
 -Hurricane Isabel Sortie.
- 18 UNREP with USNS KANAWHA (T-AO 196).
- 23 Underway Demonstration for Engineering Department evaluated by
 ATG Atlantic (N82). MITSCHER scores a SATISFACTORY evaluation
 and is given the green light for the Final Evaluation Period
 (FEP).
- 29-01Oct Final Evaluation Period (FEP) evaluated by ATG Atlantic for all
 ship's training teams. ATG evaluates the ship as SATISFACTORY
 with an overall grade of B-.

OCTOBER

- 01-03 Inport Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown, VA. for ammo offload.

- 05 Second Quarter FY03 Sailor of the Quarter(SSOQ), Junior Sailor of the Quarter(JSOQ), and Bluejacket of the Quarter(BJOQ) selected by the CoC. Recipients are: IT2 (SW/AW) [REDACTED] (SSOQ), FC3 (SW) [REDACTED] (JSOQ), FA [REDACTED] (BJOQ).
- 08-09Jan04 Inport NORSHIPCO, Norfolk, VA. for Dock Selected Restricted Availability (DSRA) workups.
- 31 LCDR Cary Krause turns over Executive Officer duties to LCDR Douglas McGoff.

NOVEMBER

- 26 Thanksgiving

DECEMBER

- 06 MITSCHER Christmas party for the crew and their families held.
- 16 3rd quarter Sailor awards presented to the following: Senior sailor to Hull Technician 2nd Class (SW) [REDACTED], Junior sailor to Electrician's Mate 3rd Class (SW) [REDACTED], and Bluejacket to Seaman (SW) [REDACTED].
- 19-29 1st holiday POM for the crew.
- 25 Christmas
- 29 Holiday POM turnover.
- 29-08Jan 2nd holiday POM for the crew.

USS MITSCHER (DDG 57) 2003 NARRATIVE

The New Year began with MITSCHER underway in the Mediterranean Sea as part of the HARRY S TRUMAN Battle group, just at the halfway point of her six-month deployment. MITSCHER was also continuing numerous combat drills and exercises in the Eastern Mediterranean, in support of her allies in the region. The ship's combat systems training teams excelled in undersea, surface fire, and missile defense exercises. The drills and exercises continued as Iraq's relationship with the NATO countries was rapidly deteriorating. In response to the political situation at the time the U.S. embarked in exercise JUNIPER COBRA, which prioritized the defense of our major Eastern allies. Once again MITSCHER answered the call and became an integral part of said exercise.

MITSCHER in conjunction with other allied warships conducted various tactical and strategically effective missions in support of exercise JUNIPER COBRA. On January 13th, the ship made their first visit to Souda Bay, Crete, southeast of the mainland of Greece. The crew used the time to relax and enjoy the city's cuisine and tour sites. The most frequented city was Hania, a 20-minute bus ride from the Souda Bay Naval Base. Hania was a true Mediterranean town, established next to the coastline and neighboring an old military fortress, which fortified the waterside access to the town and protected its inhabitants through centuries past. Most popular Greek food among the crew was the Gyro sandwich, pita bread filled with sliced lamb meat, onions, and their special cucumber sauce. The pita bread delicacy was affordable and tasty, making it the number one choice for the Mitschermen. The following week underway, MITSCHER welcomed Major General Green of Joint Forces Command (JTFCOM) for a visit of the ship's capabilities and a demonstration of her abilities. The last day of the month brought with it a burial-at-sea ceremony, held on the flight deck for the following Naval personnel: SK2 Ivey (USN, Ret.), TM3 Nicholson (USN, Ret.), Mrs. Simpkins, and Mrs. Yarski.

February began much like the last, with several more underway replenishments (2) and a continuation of Exercise JUNIPER COBRA. The first week marked MITSCHER's second trip to Souda Bay, Crete, on February 4th for much needed time-off for the officers and crew. Once again, the crew took

Enclosure (3)

advantage of the town's great food and atmosphere. It was during this stay that MITSCHER received the Sixth Fleet Commander, VADM Frye for a luncheon and tour of the ship's spaces. One lucky sailor, Gas Turbine Specialist Mechanical 2nd Class (Surface Warfare) [REDACTED] [REDACTED], had the honor of receiving the Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist pin from the Admiral, who was more than happy to award it. It was a great day for the ship and her crew. MITSCHER would leave the following week, on Feb. 10th, and held several exercises to finish the month of in a manner appropriate to a destroyer, to include Tomahawk cruise missile, CIWS MK 15 gun, and 5-inch gun exercises.

The month of March would soon be the ship's most eventful of the entire deployment. After her third stop in Souda Bay, Crete, on March 10th, MITSCHER went underway on March 13th, with a heightened alert status as she and the rest of the TRUMAN battle group joined the US led coalition offensive strike against Iraq in what soon became known as OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. Leading up to this event, the battle groups of carriers USS HARRY S TRUMAN (CVN 75), USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN 71), USS CONSTELLATION (CV 64), USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN 72), and USS KITTY HAWK (CV 63) maneuvered to position in both the Mediterranean and Arabian Gulf for offensive air attacks and cruise missile strikes against Iraq. MITSCHER did her part by providing eastern Mediterranean defense with assistance from other coalition warships. It was here on March 19th that MITSCHER launched tomahawk cruise missiles towards targets of interests in Iraq with deadly accuracy. For the latter half of the month, MITSCHER along with USS ANZIO and USS CAPE ST GEORGE transited to the Arabian Gulf via the Suez Canal. This route, popularly referred by the sailors as "the ditch" due to its narrow channels and surrounding desert landscape, was a first for many of the MITSCHER crew experiencing their first deployment as well as their first overseas experience. The crossing from the Suez Canal to the Red Sea marked the change of operational authority as the 5th Fleet took command of MITSCHER from the 6th Fleet.

In April, MITSCHER entered the Arabian Gulf via the Straits of Hormuz for continued participation in OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. During the one-month stay in the Gulf, MITSCHER conducted several 5-inch gun exercises (PACFIRE) to further hone the crew's ability in Naval Surface Fire Support (NSFS) operations. On April 4th, MITSCHER participated in a photo exercise

with the cruisers USS ANZIO (CG 68) and USS CAPE ST GEORGE (CG 71), the same ships that had traveled with her from the Eastern Mediterranean. It was during this time that the USS NIMITZ battle group relieved the ABRAHAM LINCOLN battle group as well, allowing the latter to finally return home after a long 10-month deployment. By the end of the first week on April 5th, MITSCHER selected her first quarter 2003 sailor awards. Senior sailor of the quarter went to Operation Specialist 2nd Class (Surface Warfare / Air Warfare) [REDACTED], Junior sailor to Storekeeper 2nd Class (Surface Warfare) [REDACTED] and Blue jacket to Fireman [REDACTED]. These awards honor those sailors who, through a period of three months (one quarter), stand out from amongst their shipmates due to their superior work and effort, going beyond the regular standard.

On April 16th, MITSCHER pulled into Manama, Bahrain, to offload ammunition. Though the stay only lasted two days, this short stopover gave the crew a break from the month long stay in the Arabian Gulf. On her return to the sixth fleet area of operations, MITSCHER, along with destroyers USS DEYO (DD 989), USS DONALD COOK (DDG 75), and cruiser USS CAPE ST GEORGE (CG 71), coordinated a 21-gun salute in honor of the sailors killed and injured in the USS COLE terrorist attack. The USS COLE was attacked on April 21st, 2000 by terrorists, killing 17 sailors and injuring 37 others. This event was particularly emotional for one of the Officers embarked onboard, ENS [REDACTED] who was a Chief Petty Officer onboard the COLE at the time of the attack. The memorial event was held off the coast of Yemen. On April 26th, MITSCHER returned to the Mediterranean Sea via the Suez Canal and resumed her operations with the HARRY S TRUMAN battle group. The transit back to the Med also signified 45 days of straight underway time for the MITSCHER. The crew had the traditional two beers and a steel beach picnic on the flight deck to relax from the month and a half stay underway.

May was the most anticipated month for MITSCHER's crew for it signaled the end of an eventful six-month long deployment. Even with the end of deployment looming over their shoulders, MITSCHER stayed focused on the missions at hand and conducted drills and evolutions within each department to retain proficiency amongst her sailors. MITSCHER, escorting USS HARRY S TRUMAN in the Mediterranean, transited through the Straits of Messina, between Sicily and the lower western half of Italy, to begin the way back

home. On May 1st and with clear weather, MITSCHER's crew was given a spectacular view of the Italian coastlines. The coastlines were filled with towns and beaches that stretched the entire strait for as far as the eye could see. This spectacular view lifted the crew's morale for their upcoming visit to Portugal. On May 5th, MITSCHER visited Lisbon, Portugal, for a week of recreation and sightseeing. This was the last port visit of the deployment, and the crew was going to make the most of it. Out of all the amazing sights Lisbon had to offer, downtown Lisbon and the *Castelo St Gorge* were the two best places for tourists. Downtown Lisbon had a very relaxed atmosphere, with the myriad of open markets to choose from and the flocks of tourists that were found all around. *Castelo St Gorge* is a medieval era castle nestled on the between the mountainsides in the middle of Lisbon. With the spring season rolling in, the crew and officers enjoyed the cool climate of the town and the relaxed atmosphere shared by its people. All were satisfied with the port stay, as MITSCHER ended her brief R&R stopover on May 9th and made her way east across the Atlantic Ocean with the rest of the TRUMAN Battle group.

On May 20th, MITSCHER along with the rest of the DESRON22 ships finally returned to the United States after six months underway. Her first stop, prior to returning to homeport in Norfolk, VA, was Mayport, Fl. At the Naval base there, MITSCHER did a quick replenishment of stores and picked up some of the crew's family members who came, not only see their loved ones, but to also ride out the last few days onboard with their favorite sailors. This short ride is also called a Tiger cruise, a long standing tradition carried in the Navy, and the tigers (family members) were excited to enjoy the last few days of MITSCHER's deployment with the Mitschermen. For the next two days, the tigers were shown a taste of the MITSCHER experience, including underway replenishments, small boat operations, and tactical ship handling. To top off the stay onboard, a big dinner of steak and lobster was served to both crew and Tigers.

On Friday May 23rd, MITSCHER with the rest of the HARRY S TRUMAN battle group returned to the Norfolk Naval Base amid a wave of excitement from the crowds waiting. This being Memorial Day, provide a perfect background for many of the sailors to reflect back on the deployment and their participation in the 2nd Iraqi war. In keeping with naval tradition, at

the end of deployment one sailor was selected to be the first one off the ship to meet his loved ones. That lucky sailor was the Deck division's Seamen (SN) [REDACTED], who also happened to be the second Seaman ever onboard to qualify the Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist pin. From the Main Propulsion division of the Engineering department, Gas Turbine Specialist Electrical 2nd Class [REDACTED] became the second sailor off the ship. He had learned in early February while underway with the MITSCHER that he had become a father. Another well known naval tradition pertains to those who become fathers underway. These lucky individuals get to be one of the first off the ship so they can be properly introduced to their new sons and daughters. The rest of the crew was just as eager to leave the ship to meet their loved ones, who had braved the afternoon rain to see them return. Thus ended the Interdeployment Training Cycle for the year and began the much needed POM leave for the month of June.

For the month of June, MITSCHER's crew was in the middle of a POM leave period where they used the time to relax after a very long six-month deployment schedule. By June 9th, the crew returned and began the new Interdeployment Training Cycle (IDTC) for the upcoming summer. Unlike previous years where the first three months after a deployment was considered down time for the crew, this time the IDTC would be earlier and bring the crew right back into the training cycle. Upon completion, MITSCHER would be designated as a surge deployer, meaning that at any point prior to a scheduled deployment, the warship could be called to service. MITSCHER prepped for the cycle by holding meetings all month with the ship's training teams.

The first week of July was the beginning of the IDTC with the Engineering department's first Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA). It consisted of a week of assessments of the department's ability to conduct drills for casualty scenarios and evolutions. Inspectors from the Afloat Training Group Atlantic Command (ATG) supervised the assessment and gave the engineering department the thumbs up. This was officially a satisfactory grade, allowing the department to continue into the next step in the inspection cycle, the Initial Assessment (IA). Ship wide, other members from ATG Norfolk conducted the Command Assessment for Readiness and Training (CART) II inspection. For this command assessment, ATG reviewed each

department's administrative and training programs. One particular area reviewed was the Damage Control program, to check the ship's ability to conduct firefighting training for all personnel. ATG concluded the ship's CART II inspections, noting the ship was not deficient in its training and giving MITSCHER a passing grade.

July 14th was the start of the Fleet Maintenance Activity Verification (FMAV) period where the ship would undergo a repair period with outside civilian contractors from the Fleet Technical Support Center Atlantic (FTSCLANT) and the Shore Intermediate Maintenance Availability (SIMA). The last half of July was a high visibility period as the ship held many tours. On July 16th, 40 officers from various Naval Reserve stations throughout the country came aboard to tour the ship. A week later, on the 23rd, seven 2nd class midshipmen, from various NROTC programs as well as the Naval Academy, came for a three-week stay as part of their summer training program. The midshipmen were paired with enlisted sailors to get a taste of the enlisted life onboard. The next day, on the 24th, 19 senior officials from the Delaware Employer Support Group Reserve (ESGR) took a tour of the ship to learn more about the destroyer life. To round out the tours in July, MITSCHER welcomed a distant relative of the ship's namesake when Major Dave Hensley (USMC) and family arrived on the 28th. Major Hensley is the great grandson of Admiral Mitscher's brother. The engineers continued their IDTC preps with the Damage Control TSTA to be assessed by ATG Norfolk. Inspectors looked at the equipment and spaces associated with the DC personnel. They also graded firefighting drills from ship wide fire drills to helicopter crash and smash response. Engineering department received a satisfactorily grade for the event.

Next on the IDTC cycle was the Maintenance and Material Management (3M) baseline assessment for the entire ship. On July 28th inspectors from ATG Norfolk reviewed PMS records, Cycle schedules, and conducted spot checks to verify if the ship's crew was in tune with the 3M program. The ship did well, as it received a 95% rating for 3M-baseline from ATG, allowing the program to continue for the next two years.

As August rolled around, the basic phase continued for the MITSCHER with the Initial Assessment (IA). IA is ATG's first major

inspection of the engineering department to determine if they are capable of conducting basic engineering drills and evolutions and to what extent. On August 4th, various drills, evolutions and reviews of engineering's programs were assessed to determine the first evaluation score. MITSCHER's engineering department received an "above average" score from ATG inspectors, allowing the department to continue tracking right along with their training schedule and into the next inspection, Underway Demonstration (UD).

From August 5th to the 20th, all crewmembers were extremely, busy as ATG inspectors reviewed three of the ship's departments in different TSTA's. For the engineers, the first of the four new assessments was held to build the department's proficiency towards the Underway Demonstration (UD). The operations department conducted a Deck TSTA where the ship's ability to conduct anchoring, helicopter, and emergency rescue evolutions were tested. And in Combat Systems, the ATG inspectors reviewed the ship's two boarding teams for Vessel, Boarding, Search and Seizure (VBSS) abilities. As part of her mission to defend U.S. assets abroad and at home, MITSCHER has the capability of boarding other international vessels to search for possible illegal cargo. For the MITSCHER, those three department's assessments were highly successful, achieving passing grades on all of them, and giving her the green light to continue on with the next step in the training cycle.

On August 14th, MITSCHER pulled into Pensacola, Florida, the place where she was commissioned nine years prior. The local residents were able to visit the ship, as various members of the local Navy League and Admiral's Circle came aboard for a luncheon. Three hundred officer candidates from the Officer Candidate School (OCS) came aboard during the stopover to learn about the destroyer Navy; all came away impressed. On her return trip to Norfolk, MITSCHER paid their last respects to the following personnel: PNCS George Burns (USN Ret.), Edwina Burns, MR2 Harold Hamby (USN Vet.), and ADJC Nathaniel Young (USN Ret.).

September was a wrap-up of sorts for the ship as the basic phase of the IDTC was coming to a close. For the engineering department, TSTA's III and IV were held, which focused that department to the Underway Demonstration on the 23rd. Both TSTA's were passed in a satisfactory manner, making the department ready to conduct the final UD test as assessed by ATG

Norfolk. It was also during this time that MITSCHER was underway (as was most Norfolk based ships) for storm evasion, as Hurricane Isabel made her way to the eastern coast of the United States with devastating force and speed. MITSCHER was able to avoid the storm safely and no one onboard suffered major casualties to their properties or injury to their loved ones during their absence. During this forced underway period, as well as during the subsequent time in port, MITSCHER's crew continued training ceaselessly in preparation for the last two major basic phase inspections. UD involved the inspection of MITSCHER's ability to conduct engineering drills and evolutions while underway, evaluated as always by the ever-watchful eye of inspectors from ATG Norfolk. Upon completion of the UD, ATG Norfolk certified the engineering department with a satisfactory grade. This meant the end of that department's inspections cycle for this round of the ship's certification process.

The Final Evaluation Period (FEP) occurred on September 29th and was the final certification for the ship's basic phase of IDTC. Every department had to showcase their abilities to the ATG inspectors in the areas of firefighting, ship handling, navigation, and combat. The successful completion of this final evaluation will serve as proof that the ship could perform in any environment, at anytime, during any circumstances and be successful at it. The three-day event saw the crew go underway to test every training team on the ship. The ship did well, receiving a B- for her display of good work and ability to sail, combat, and defend her. With FEP under her belt, MITSCHER was successfully certified as "surge" ready.

After a brief stay at Naval Weapons Station in Yorktown, VA, on October 1, MITSCHER presented her 2nd Quarter Sailors Awards to those Mitschermen who were outstanding in all aspects their shipboard jobs during the previous quarter. Senior Sailor, Junior Sailor, and Blue jacket of the second quarter awards were handed to Information Technician 2nd Class (Surface Warfare/Air Warfare) [REDACTED], Fire Controlman Third Class (Surface Warfare) [REDACTED], and Fireman Apprentice [REDACTED] respectively. From Yorktown, MITSCHER transited over to NORSHIPCO Naval shipyards on October 8th for three months of repair and overhaul. This is known as Dock Selected Restricted Availability, or DSRA. On October 8th the annual workup began, marking the first time in nine years in which the ship was literally

lifted above the waterline and placed in a specially built platform called a dry dock. Every aspect of the ship was either removed for repair or replaced altogether. To round out the month, the crew said farewell to the Executive Officer as Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) Cary Krause turned over the job to LCDR Douglas McGoff on October 31st.

In November, MITSCHER was near the halfway point of their DSRA workup in NORSHIPCO. With the ship in the dry dock, the crew used the opportunity to catch up on training for all departments. Several of the wardroom's officers spent a few days of ship handling training at the Maritime Seamanship Institute (MSI) in Norfolk Naval Base. There, the officers were able to command simulated ships through various events and situations using the facility's enormous, state-of-the-art computer simulators.

December was the next to final month for the MITSCHER in the shipyards; even then the crew was working to bring the ship back to life by the end of the month. On December 16th, the ship acknowledged the 3rd quarter sailors who were outstanding in all aspects of their Navy work: Senior sailor went to Hull Technician 2nd Class (Surface Warfare) [REDACTED], Junior sailor was Electrician's Mate Third Class (Surface Warfare) [REDACTED] [REDACTED], and the Bluejacket to Seaman (Surface Warfare) [REDACTED]. And with that on December 19th, the ship began their Holiday POM leave to end January 9th, 2004.