



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS MOBILE BAY (CG-53)
FPO AP 96672-1173

Rec'd 1/23/95

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5752
Ser N-52/544
30 Dec 94

From: Commanding Officer, USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (N09BH), 2000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-2000

Subj: ANNUAL COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) CNO ltr 5752 Ser 09BH/SH/4U507523 of 2 Dec 94
(b) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) USS MOBILE BAY Command History 1991
(2) USS MOBILE BAY Command History 1992
(3) USS MOBILE BAY Command History 1993
(4) USS MOBILE BAY Command History 1994

1. In response to reference (a) and per reference (b), enclosures (1) through (4) are submitted.
2. The delay in providing the enclosed information is inexcusable. Thank you for bring this oversight to my attention.


GARRY HOLMSTROM

Copy to: (w/o encls)
COMCARGRU FIVE

USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53)

Early January found MOBILE BAY on station with Battle Group ALFA in support of Operation Desert Shield. The Battle Force steamed into the Gulf as international tensions increased. As successive high-level diplomatic efforts failed to extract Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces from Kuwait, MOBILE BAY underwent a brief (four day) maintenance period outboard the destroyer tender USS ACADIA (AD-42) at anchor off the coast of Oman. This was followed by additional battle group operations in the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Gulf.

As tensions continued to build, MOBILE BAY steamed through the Straits of Hormuz with MIDWAY on Friday, 11 January. On the morning of 12 January, MOBILE BAY assumed duties as Alternate Anti-Air Warfare Commander ("ZC") battle force ZULU, which was later to grow into a four-carrier battle force comprised of warships from many nations. On 15 January, MOBILE BAY detached of the MIDWAY battle group, proceeded north to assume a picket station in the northern Arabian Gulf near Farsi Island. Arrayed to our east, forming a "cruiser line" of AAW defense across the northern gulf for the battle force, were USS BUNKER HILL (CG-52) and USS WORDEN (CG-18). On 15 January the RANGER battle group entered the Arabian Gulf, thereby doubling the size and firepower of Battle Force ZULU.

Operation Desert Shield became Desert Storm in the early hours of 17 January, with a combined TOMAHAWK strike from a number of ships in the Red Sea and Central Arabian Gulf. On the 18th of January, MOBILE BAY joined in the TOMAHAWK shooting, firing a total of 22 TOMAHAWKS in missions against targets in Iraq over the period from 18 through 20 January. On 19 January, as the tempo of the war against Iraq intensified, the THEODORE ROOSEVELT battle group also joined Battle Force ZULU in the Gulf. The battle force now had three carriers and associated escorts, each actively involved in air strikes on a near continuous basis.

Meanwhile, MOBILE BAY, by virtue of her location as the AAW unit closest to Kuwait and her SPY-1 radar capability, was assigned additional tasking as Anti-Surface Warfare Air-Control Unit (ACU) for Battle Force ZULU. In her role as ASUW ACU from 21 Jan through 11 March 1991, MOBILE BAY operated in mine-infested waters of the extreme Northern Gulf. There she successfully detected and destroyed 38 of Iraq's principal naval vessels, including all but one of their anti-ship-missile firing boats (one "escaped" to Iran)! In a little more than two weeks, MOBILE BAY had completely eliminated the Iraqi Navy as a serious threat to the battle force.

On 14 February, the 29th day of the Gulf War, MOBILE BAY relieved the BUNKER HILL as the Battle Force ZULU Anti-Air Warfare Commander (called "ZW"). The next day, the AMERICA Battle Group passed through the Straits of Hormuz, arriving on station in the central Arabian Gulf to become the fourth carrier battle group to join Battle Force ZULU--the largest combined multinational strike force put together in active combat since the Korean War. As "ZW," MOBILE BAY continued to operate in the Northern Arabian Gulf until the end of the war. On 24 February the ground war offensive was launched, including intense, continuous air strikes from all four Battle Force ZULU carriers. At 0800 local time on 28 February, President Bush announced that our initial objectives had been achieved and that all hostilities were to cease.

While acting as Battle Force AAWC during four-carrier battle group flight operations, MOBILE BAY tracked, identified, and deconflicted a daily average of over 2,500 strike, fighter, surveillance, and C³ aircraft in the skies over the Arabian Gulf. Additionally, she controlled an average of twelve pairs of armed surface reconnaissance aircraft per day while conducting air/surface combat operations. The AAW sortie rate over the North Arabian Gulf produced a constant average track load on the AEGIS system of 120 air contacts for the duration, often with much higher peaks. Often, the number of contacts requiring identification and tracking closely approached the limits of system capacity. For the duration of the war, MOBILE BAY successfully correlated these transits (comprising hundreds of aircraft) simultaneously over the Gulf, and successfully prevented any blue-on-blue engagements.

When hostilities ceased after the surrender of the Iraqi Army, MOBILE BAY and Battle Group "Alpha" turned east for homeport. The Battle Group stopped in Phattaya, Thailand, Hong Kong, and Subic Bay for some much-deserved liberty. The battlegroup arrived at homeport to a heroes' welcome on April 15th.

Once back in Yokosuka, MOBILE BAY enjoyed a somewhat abbreviated stand-down period, as she still had much to do to make Yokosuka her home. The entire crew became a quick-study in how to things the "PACFLT Way," and in settling families in the ship's new homeport.

In late May, MOBILE BAY embarked the Propulsion Examining Board (PEB) for a demanding Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE). The ship successfully completed OPPE on June 5th, and then was called away on less than 24-hours notice to join the forces converging on Subic Bay to evacuate American servicemen and their families from bases in the Philippines ravaged by the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo.

Steaming at high speed, MOBILE BAY arrived in the vicinity of Subic Bay on 21 June. USS MIDWAY loaded the last of the evacuees at Cubi Point, then sailed with MOBILE BAY as her escort to the Philippine Island of Cebu, where the evacuees were picked up by Air Force transports for further transport to CONUS. Our participation in Fiery Vigil completed, we returned home to Yokosuka, arriving on 1 July.

July was spent in preparing for upcoming inspections and in presenting the numerous awards to MOBILE BAY crewmembers. In all, crewmembers earned 21 Navy Commendation Medals (with Combat "V"), 78 Navy Achievement medals, and 87 Flag letters of Commendation. In addition, the ship was awarded the Navy Unit Citation and the Joint Meritorious Unit Commendation for heroic action in Desert Storm, and all the crewmembers earned the Southwest Asia Service Medal (with two campaign stars), the National Defense Medal, and the Kuwait Liberation Medal.

From mid-July through the end of August, MOBILE BAY was busy with the successful completion of a number of key inspections. These included various weapons proficiency inspections, a Supply Management Assessment, and a Combat Systems Assessment. Upon completion of the last inspection, in August we off-loaded ammunition in Guam in preparation for our September/November Drydocking Selected Restricted Availability (MOBILE BAY's second SRA) in Yokosuka. After entering drydock on 1 September, MOBILE BAY accomplished a significant amount of vital maintenance. In addition, there were numerous key upgrades, including improvements to the TOMAHAWK and CIWS weapons systems and major communications capability improvements. The ship was undocked on 1 November.

With DSRA-2 completed, we departed 2 December for the Philippines. Arriving in the vicinity of Subic Bay on 6 December, MOBILE BAY successfully completed her Naval Gunfire Support (NGFS) Qualification with outstanding results. We then conducted a smooth ammunition onload at Naval Magazine, Subic on 12 December. We departed Subic on 12 December to conduct a highly successful low- and high-altitude SM-2 MissileEx: two targets, two missiles, two kills!

After the missile shoot, we steamed north to a point east of Okinawa, we joined USS INDEPENDENCE (CV-62) and the rest of Battle Group ALFA for some pre-deployment workups. MOBILE BAY joined in, conducting anti-submarine warfare and other exercises with our sister ships in the battle group. Exercises completed, we returned to Yokosuka on 20 December to begin a well-deserved Christmas holiday period.

USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53)

January found MOBILE BAY in homeport Yokosuka, Japan. Following the Christmas holiday standdown period, the crew's efforts were turned toward the numerous repairs and upgrades necessary for the upcoming deployment and other taskings, additionally, MOBILE BAY successfully completed several important inspections, including a Supply Management Assessment.

MOBILE BAY got underway February 10th for carrier quals with USS INDEPENDENCE. extensive Air-Intercept Controller (AIC) operations were conducted between MOBILE BAY and CVW-5. This provided a much-needed training opportunity for MOBILE BAY, as the ship had experienced greater than 70% turnover since returning from Desert Storm less than a year earlier.

Following carrier quals, an Aviation Assist Visit (AAV) Team came aboard to train MOBILE BAY's helicopter Crash and Rescue Team, which had not conducted flight ops for the previous five months. The ship's success in the subsequent Aviation Readiness Evaluation (ARE) clearly indicated the team's dedication and hard work in training themselves.

MOBILE BAY spent the remainder of the Spring in preparation for her upcoming deployment. In mid-March, the battle group sailed for Subic Bay, the Philippines, to assist in the transfer of materials from that once-vital base to other regions in the Pacific. Liberty ashore was completely overshadowed by the impending closure of both Subic Bay Naval Station and Cubi Point Naval Air Station. All personnel sensed the ending of an era. The visit proved historic for the arrival MOBILE BAY and the other INDEPENDENCE battle group ships marked the last time any U.S. battle group would visit the Philippines.

On 15 April, exactly one year since her return from the Gulf War, MOBILE BAY set sail for the Arabian Gulf as part of the INDEPENDENCE Battle Group. After spending two days in the local operating area off the coast of Japan, the battle group headed south towards Australia to take part in ceremonies commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea. On April 25th, MOBILE BAY was purged of all "Slimy Wogs" in the traditional "Crossing the Line" ceremony in the vicinity of Papua New Guinea.

MOBILE BAY entered Sydney harbor on May 1st as the city turned-out for the Coral Sea celebration. We entered port in a dramatic column formation in which the battle group ships, including MOBILE BAY, were interspersed with ships of the Royal Australian Navy. MOBILE BAY crewmembers participated in parades, and were invited to scores of public festivities and parties during the four-day visit.

Following the all-too-short Sydney port call, MOBILE BAY crossed the Great Australian Bight and the Indian Ocean to inchope to the Navy Central Command.

MOBILE BAY steamed continuously in the Arabian Gulf for 56 days, sharing "ALFA WHISKEY" responsibilities with USS BUNKER HILL and USS GRIDLEY.

MOBILE BAY finally made its first port call in the Gulf on July 6th, at Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The visit to Abu Dhabi was significant not only because of the long time since the last port call, but also because MOBILE BAY held a Change of Command with Captain Steven G. Smith relieving Captain Stephen R. Woodall on July 8th.

MOBILE BAY operated in the central Arabian Gulf for several weeks before entering Jebel Ali, U.A.E., on 27 July for an 8-day TAV with USS ACADIA. She then steamed in the Northern Gulf for two weeks before visiting Ad Damman, Saudi Arabia, for a four-day diplomatic visit. Following several more weeks of Gulf Ops, MOBILE BAY again made for Jebel Ali for a week-long availability with USS DIXON.

MOBILE BAY remained in the Arabian Gulf until September. As part of the INDEPENDENCE Battle Group, MOBILE BAY supported the Air Wing in the initial imposition of the United Nations "No Fly" Zone in Southern Iraq. In addition, the Tomahawk missiles carried by MOBILE BAY and other INDEPENDENCE Battle Group ships helped to deter any possible Iraqi reaction.

Throughout the time in the Gulf and transit back to WESTPAC, MOBILE BAY's engineers prepared for an Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE). MOBILE BAY was one of the first ship's to undergo an "Out-Chop" OPPE in many years. In spite of our operating at the farthest end of the logistics pipeline, and with only two maintenance availabilities since the Spring, MOBILE BAY passed the OPPE with outstanding results. The Snipes' preparation efforts were so thorough while still in the Gulf that the engineers were granted full liberty during a four-day portcall in Phuket Thailand.

Following OPPE, MOBILE BAY made her next port visit to Hong Kong on October 8th. MOBILE BAY conducted a "Tiger Cruise" from HONG KONG to Yokosuka. We arrived home to Yokosuka on 13 October, and immediately commenced a short standdown period for rest, leave, and maintenance.

The post-deployment standdown was all too short, as MOBILE BAY was underway again in early November as the main USN participant in ANNUALEX-92, a major exercise with the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces. MOBILE BAY served as Anti-Air Warfare Commander for a flotilla of JMSDF escorts. The exercise included a number of memorable social events hosted onboard ships of both Navies, contributing greatly to the growing sense of friendship and inter-operability between the USN and JMSDF.

In December, MOBILE BAY was again underway-- this time to Okinawa to participate in a missile exercise. MOBILE BAY was the range safety ship for a major exercise involving missile firings from various surface ships and the air wing. MOBILE BAY fired two SM-2 missiles, both of which were successful hits. While inport White Beach, crewmembers toured many sites of historical importance, and relived the sobering memories of hard-fought World War II victories there.

Returning home to Yokosuka for Christmas, MOBILE BAY was able to enjoy a short period of maintenance time, and the opportunity for the crew to take leave. The Christmas season was highlighted by numerous events, including a base wide Christmas Ball and ship sponsored Christmas party. The latter was held onboard for the children of our adopted Japanese orphanage, the Kobo Cottage.

At year's end, MOBILE BAY looked back over the demanding and varied activities of 1992 with great pride of accomplishment. It was a year in which MOBILE BAY was recognized by COMCARGRU Five for Excellence in all Battle Readiness Mission Areas. Having steamed many thousands of miles in support of our national defense, many of the crew, looked upon 1992 as the most successful year of MOBILE BAY's life to date.

USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53)

Following a restful standdown period over the Christmas and New Years holidays, MOBILE BAY embarked the Aegis Training Support Group (ATSG) to sharpen the warfighting skills of personnel newly-reported since her last deployment. After a few days of inport classroom training, ATSG got underway with MOBILE BAY for the transit to Nagasaki, Japan, her first portcall of 1993.

MOBILE BAY arrived in Nagasaki on January 15th, the first visit there by a U.S. warship in several years. The day was marked by the sounds of "The Stars and Stripes Forever" played on speakers by members of the Japan-American Society, as well as by the chants of small protest groups, camera flashes and media questions. Overall, the ship's four-day visit was received very positively, and the number of those who did not support the visit were far outweighed by those who did. At the beginning of the Nagasaki port visit, both Japanese and United States officials were somewhat concerned about the perceptions and the feelings of apprehension emanating from citizens of both countries. But any concerns were quickly mitigated as MOBILE BAY began hosting ship tours, luncheons and receptions for members of Nagasaki's community. New friendships were made and new ideas flowed freely as cultural exchanges took place and mutual understanding developed.

MOBILE BAY's ATSG training continued through the return trip to homeport Yokosuka, Japan. On January 25th, Naval Ship Repair Facility Yokosuka hosted the Work Definition Conference for MOBILE BAY's fourth Selected Restricted Availability. Major upgrades during SRA-4 included adding HALON fire protection for the Number Three Gas Turbine Generator Room, the addition of full GPS capability to the ship's navigation suite, installation of SSEE LMS Phase I, and installation two additional AN/SLQ-49 Mk 50 Decoy Launchers.

On February 22nd, MOBILE BAY hosted the assessment team for the Ney Award Semi-Finalist competition. The team liked what they saw, and advanced MOBILE BAY to the Final Round of the Ney competition. Although MOBILE BAY did not win the competition, it did receive Honorable Mention for achieving Semi-Finalist Status.

On 29 March, the Board of Inspection and Survey hosted the INSURV pre-brief in Yokosuka. The upcoming July INSURV would be MOBILE BAY's first since her commissioning inspection.

SRA-4 wrapped up with Dock Trials on 30 March, followed by Sea Trials from 31 March to 2 April. At the same time (beginning 28 March), MOBILE BAY conducted a 12-day TAV with USS JASON to accomplish some much-needed crew habitability projects.

The month of March was spent conducting a multitude of inspections, including the Aviation Readiness Exam and Command Inspection. MOBILE BAY also conducted CART Phase II from 5 to 16 March, the first WestPac ship to undergo this newly revised post-availability training program. In-depth AAW training continued with TSTA Phase I from 19 to 30 March, with the primary emphases being on FAAWC and Integrated Casualty/Damage Control training.

Inport training continued through May with TSTA Phase II, with its emphasis on intermediate-level Engineering Casualty Control, Damage Control, and other mission area training.

On May 10th, MOBILE BAY departed with the INDEPENDENCE Battle Group on a two-month deployment to the west coast of Australia as part

of SPRING TRAINING-93. During this mini-deployment, MOBILE BAY participated a wide range of essential air-wing, surface, and sub-surface exercises. Her involvement included controlling aircraft for nearly 500 mission-hours; firing over 250 rounds of 5-inch ammunition while conducting naval gunfire support (NGFS) at Western Australia's Lancelin Range; controlling the movement of four Royal Australian Navy ships during shiphandling and basic Surface Warfare evolutions; and extensive Anti-Submarine Warfare training with a U.S. submarine. Additionally, MOBILE BAY's embarked helicopter detachment, HSL-51, logged over 260 flight hours.

On May 17th, MOBILE BAY was purged of all "Slimy Wogs" in the traditional "Crossing the Line" ceremony in the vicinity of the Indonesian Archipelago.

Following an outstanding port call to Perth, MOBILE BAY turned north towards the Royal Australian Navy's operating area off the coast of the Northwest Territory. While enroute, ASW exercises continued with HMS TRIUMPH. Once in the OpArea, MOBILE BAY linked up with Royal Singaporean Navy corvette RSS VALIANT for the first-ever joint HARPOON firing with Singaporean forces on June 7th. The ships conducted a near perfect simultaneous time-on-top firing, with both missiles right on target. On June 12th, MOBILE BAY entered Darwin harbor for another fantastic port visit. Following the Darwin port call, MOBILE BAY and the rest of the battle group turned north to return to Yokosuka. The inestimable value of the SPRING TRAINING cruise, which had begun with CART and progressed through the phases of TSTA, was borne out June 15th through 17th, as MOBILE BAY successfully completed the Final Evaluation Problem (FEP) period.

Returning to homeport July 1st, MOBILE BAY began immediate preparations for her first INSURV since her acceptance trials. During this preparation period, MOBILE BAY became the second ship in the fleet to receive the Block-III upgrade to its TOMAHAWK weapons system, adding significantly to that battle-proven weapon system's capability. The INSURV, which began July 19th, was successfully completed July 23rd.

The rest of the summer was spent in Yokosuka, conducting various mission-area assists and inspections. Among them was a very productive Cruise Missile Assist Team visit followed only two weeks later by a rigorous Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification. Other inspections included Combat Systems Readiness Review.

In September, MOBILE BAY made a historic port visit to Vladivostok, Russia. This visit was hosted by the Russian Federation Navy. Of tremendous diplomatic and military value, it fostered greater understanding and established common ground for future exchanges. Captain Smith was invited to the datcha of the Governor General of Privmeda Province. Tours of Russian ships and reciprocal tours of MOBILE BAY filled the schedule, in addition to the numerous civilian functions normally associated with such a visit. Open visiting by the public gave them a rare opportunity to tour an American warship and to talk with our sailors.

Departing Vladivostok on September 21st, MOBILE BAY turned towards the Okinawa operating area to rendezvous with the INDEPENDENCE Battle Group and units of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force for ANNUALEX-93. Over the course of this three-week exercise, MOBILE BAY played a key role in a myriad of multi-warfare, bilateral and joint events. ANNUALEX also provided several cross-deck opportunities with our Japanese "Sister-Ship" JDS HAMAGIRI, forging even greater USN-JMSDF interoperability.

MOBILE BAY returned to Yokosuka October 15th to begin preparations for her upcoming deployment. During this time, MOBILE BAY successfully passed her Logistics Management Assessment (LMA) and a Shipboard Explosive Safety Inspection (SESI). Having complete all Plan of Overseas Movement (POM) requirements, MOBILE BAY was ready in all respects to deploy to the NAVCENT AOR.

On the morning of 17 November, MOBILE BAY, with HSL 51 Detachment One embarked, departed Yokosuka for her deployment to the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. During the 2-day carrier qualification period in the local operating area, MOBILE BAY assumed duties as Force Anti-Air Warfare Commander.

On December 1st, MOBILE BAY arrived in Singapore for an enjoyable five-day port visit. Underway again on the 5th, the ship transited the Straits of Malacca and the Bay of Bengal enroute to the Arabian Gulf. Prior to our inchoop with CENTCOM, however, the ship made a rare port visit to Karachi, Pakistan, December 16-19th. Pakistani Navy representatives were hosted onboard for a reception, and on the last day MOBILE BAY officers were invited to PNS TAIMUR for a luncheon of traditional Pakistani food. Immediately following the visit, MOBILE BAY steamed through the Strait of Hormuz on 21 December.

Upon our inchoop, MOBILE BAY assumed the duties as Battle Force ZULU Anti-Air Warfare Commander ("ZW"), Strike Patrol Platform, and Joint Link-11 Coordinator for all allied naval units in the Gulf.

MOBILE BAY entered Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on the 22nd for a week-long Christmas holiday period. Underway again on December 28th, MOBILE BAY, with Battle Force ZULU, steamed to station in the North Arabian Gulf, where she operated through year's end.

USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53)

January 1st found MOBILE BAY steaming with the INDEPENDENCE Battle Group (Battle Force "ZULU") in the North Arabian Gulf in support of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH. During this deployment, MOBILE BAY's primary area of responsibility included her duties as Anti-Air Warfare Commander ("AW" and "ZW") and TLAM Strike Platform.

On January 7-12, MOBILE BAY visited Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Following this port call, MOBILE BAY was again underway with Battle Force ZULU in the North Arabian Gulf. She returned to port January 26th for an extensive 11-day, 400+ jobs TAV with USS ACADIA while inport Jebel Ali.

Getting underway again on February 4th, MOBILE BAY made her final NAG Patrol for the deployment, stopping at Bahrain before her outchop February 14th.

MOBILE BAY's next portcall was to have been Manila, Republic of the Philippines, but the ship developed a serious problem in her 60 hertz distribution system which required extensive troubleshooting pierside. A ground had developed somewhere within the enormous 60 hertz distribution system causing the ship to loadshed at times, and lose all power at others. The ship was diverted to Singapore in order to call in technical representatives to assist ship's force in troubleshooting. A significant area of concern was the mandatory transit through the dangerous Straits of Malacca: if power was lost to the steering gears, a major calamity could result. The ship's generators and switchboards were configured for maximum redundancy, and the ship made the transit through the Straits between 21-22 February without incident.

The ship stayed pierside at Port Sembawang in Singapore from 22 February - 01 March. The crew enjoyed the extended liberty time in Singapore and the contingency of personnel working on the ship's electrical problem were successful in locating and isolating it. The extended time period in Singapore, however, rendered a port visit to Manila impossible.

MOBILE BAY departed Singapore on 01 March enroute Hong Kong. On 07 March MOBILE BAY moored in Hong Kong harbor, moving pierside to HMS Tamar on the following day. The ship enjoyed five days of liberty in Hong Kong, getting underway again on the morning of 12 March.

On the morning of 17 March, MOBILE BAY returned to her homeport of Yokosuka, four months to the day after she departed. She was greeted on the pier by hundreds of family members and friends waving banners and carrying balloons. Following her return to port, the ship enjoyed a two week stand down period in which the ship was primarily manned by the duty section, thereby allowing families to spend some quality time with their loved ones following a several month separation.

Several significant events occurred in the 17 March - 23 April timeframe. The ship completed an availability period with the USS ACADIA which had started during her Gulf deployment in Jebel Ali, UAE. Over 300 additional jobs were completed, making the combined

Jebel Ali/Yokosuka availability the most productive of the year for both ACADIA and MOBILE BAY. Additionally during this period MOBILE BAY completed her Command Assessment. Two noteworthy public affairs events occurred during this period: on 13 April MOBILE BAY hosted award winning journalist Elizabeth Farnsworth and her television crew from the McNeil/Lehrer Newshour. Ms. Farnsworth and her crew obtained film footage for a television special documenting forward deployed force readiness with regard to the North Korean threat. On 18 April the ship also hosted Ambassador Walter Mondale and his personal guests, who were treated to a wardroom luncheon and a tour of the ship.

On 23 April the ship departed for Okinawa to participate in MISSILEX 94-2. For this live firing exercise, MOBILE BAY served as ALFA WHISKEY, range safety, and launching platform for this highly successful event in which 24 air-to-air missiles were fired from CVW-5 aircraft at drones launched from MOBILE BAY. MOBILE BAY received a personal "WELL DONE" from Commander CARRIER AIR WING FIVE for her superb coordination of MISSILEX 94-2.

From 02 - 05 May MOBILE BAY served as OCE and OTC for a Maritime Air Support Operation Center Exercise (ASOCEX) in the Sea of Japan, the first ship ever to conduct an exercise of this nature, in which the efforts of the U.S. Navy and Air Force were combined with the ROK Air Force. As OCE/OTC, MOBILE BAY assumed tactical command of 27 USAF aircraft, 12 ROKAF aircraft, and a P-3 for SSC. MOBILE BAY effectively supervised these assets as well as ownship's LAMPS helicopter to conduct 8 sorties against 11 targets. After the ASOCEX she conducted extensive exercises with the South Korean Navy, including various shiphandling drills and tactical signal drills, as well as a coordinated simulated HARPOONEX, fostering good relations between the United States and South Korea.

On 05 May MOBILE BAY began a four day port visit in Pusan, South Korea. While pierside in Pusan, MOBILE BAY received a request for assistance to combat an out of control fire on a U.S. flagged merchant, the M.V. President Washington. After obtaining approval from her chain of command, MOBILE BAY took the role of on scene commander aboard the President Washington, coordinating efforts of crew members from MOBILE BAY, the USNS A. J. HIGGINS, and the local South Korean Marine firefighting division. After over 200 of her crew members fought the blaze for over 20 hours, the fire was brought under control. Her efforts in this endeavor brought great credit upon the United States Navy, and was covered by CNN, Navy and Marine Corps News, and the Navy Times. The ship received the Meritorious Unit Commendation Medal, presented by CINCPACFLT, VADM Kelley, for her efforts in fighting this fire. (The medal was presented later on that summer, in June, while the ship was making a port visit to Pearl Harbor.) Additionally, the ship received personal congratulations from the Chief of Naval Operations, Commander SEVENTH FLEET, Commander CARRIER GROUP FIVE, and Commander MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND.

MOBILE BAY departed Pusan on 09 May, returning to Yokosuka on 11 May. Because of a weakness in the hull in Main Engine Room Number 2, the ship was required to go into drydock in Yokosuka on

14 May in order to replace a section of steel on the hull. The ship was undocked on 28 May.

On 31 May, MOBILE BAY departed Yokosuka to participate in RIMPAC-94. MOBILE BAY again served as ALFA WHISKEY, this time for a multi-national battlegroup including U.S., Japanese, and South Korean units. With this diverse battlegroup, MOBILE BAY had the distinction of being the first U.S. ship to operate with the Japanese Aegis ship, the JDS KONGO. On numerous occasions the MOBILE BAY-KONGO team displayed innovative tactics while showing off their capable AAW defense of the INDEPENDENCE Battlegroup. After the tremendous success of RIMPAC, the ship enjoyed a port visit in Pearl Harbor from 18 - 22 June. During this port visit, on 21 June, the ship was presented the Meritorious Unit Commendation by VADM Kelley, CINCPACFLT.

On 22 June the ship departed for the Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF), where she participated in MISSILEX 94-3. During this exercise she conducted a successful SM-2 engagement against the most difficult drone profile, the Vandal. MOBILE BAY successfully detected, engaged, and received a mission kill against this multi-mach, low-flying drone.

MOBILE BAY celebrated Independence Day in grand style, firing off numerous illumination and tracer rounds in unison with other ships in company, USS RODNEY M. DAVIS, USS HEWITT, and USS CURTS, completely lighting up the moonless sky.

During the period 22 June - 05 July enroute Yokosuka, MOBILE BAY also conducted LTT(E) in preparation for her upcoming OPPE. MOBILE BAY returned to Yokosuka on the morning of 05 July.

Three noteworthy events occurred during the remainder of the month of July: the ship conducted preparations for the upcoming OPPE, successfully completed a combat systems alignment verification, and witnessed the arrival of her perspective Commanding Officer, CAPT Garry Holmstrom.

From 09 - 11 August MOBILE BAY successfully completed her OPPE, receiving grades of satisfactory in all areas. Nearly a year of preparation culminated in the all hands support of this critical milestone. MOBILE BAY's engineers and firefighters shared an intense moment of satisfaction following literally hundreds of engineering casualty control drills and scores of main space fire drills. Less than a week following the OPPE, on 17 August, MOBILE BAY conducted a memorable change of command ceremony, with CAPT Garry Holmstrom relieving CAPT Steven Smith.

On 20 August the ship got underway for the Okinawa oparea. On the way down to that vicinity and on the way back she was chased by two different storms close to the typhoon classification. Seas of up to 16 feet were recorded but the ship managed to avoid both storms. The ship returned to Yokosuka on 26 August.

In September MOBILE BAY had an extremely productive availability with the USS SAMUEL GOMPERS completing over 300 maintenance actions, significantly more than any other CG or DD on the waterfront.

Between September and November MOBILE BAY steamed independently on two separate occasions. The first was for an

underway period from 12 - 26 September, in which the ship was one of the last U.S. Navy vessels to moor pierside in Hong Kong. The ship took with her to Hong Kong a Navy supporter, Mr. Don Yeaman, who is heavily involved with the Seattle Navy League. Mr. Yeaman stayed with the ship until she arrived at Hong Kong's HMS Tamar pier on 17 September. The ship spent four days of liberty in Hong Kong, departing on 21 September. On the way back to Yokosuka the ship successfully conducted NGFS qualifications at Okino Daito, Okinawa. She returned to Yokosuka on the afternoon of 26 September.

On 03 October MOBILE BAY hosted PMS 400, RADM George Huchting, presenting 19 point papers during a coffee and pastries breakfast. The Admiral and his staff seemed genuinely impressed by the presentation and promptly took for action several of the Forward Deployed Naval Forces (FDNF) unique problems.

Between 03 - 07 October the ship underwent the Afloat Training Group Assessment CART IIA, generally receiving favorable comments as well as important feedback.

On 08 October the ship hosted its adopted orphanage, the Kobo Cottage from Hayama for hamburgers and pizza on the messdecks. The children were then taken to the base skating rink, Skateland. It appeared obvious to all who attended that the kids and adults had a great time.

The second occasion of independent steaming during the September - November period was in support of the commemorative ceremonies for the 50th anniversary of General MacArthur's landing at Leyte Gulf. MOBILE BAY departed Yokosuka for the Philippine island of Leyte on 14 Oct, dropping anchor on 18 October less than eight thousand yards from where General MacArthur had landed 50 years before, near the city of Palo. While enroute to Leyte, the ship was designated by CTF 76 to be OCE for the Commemorative Assistance Program (CAP). As OCE of CAP, the ship was tasked with coordinating the efforts of four ships, including herself, to provide assistance to hundreds of U.S. and Filipino WWII veterans who had gathered in the Leyte area to observe and participate. LT Quast, the ship's Public Affairs Officer, was designated as Officer In Charge, and was first ashore to organize and glean more details from the satellite CTF 76 detachment which had been pre-staged in the nearby city of Tacloban. CAPT Holmstrom was taken ashore with the ship's Operations Officer, LCDR [REDACTED], in the ship's helicopter so that he could deliver a speech at a seahut dedication in downtown Tacloban. In addition to the CAP program and the participation in the seahut dedication, the ship provided small boat transportation for the U.S. Secretary of Defense and the Republic of the Philippines president, Fidel Ramos, who were in Tacloban to witness a reenactment of General MacArthur's landing on Leyte. Finally, the ship hosted the Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable John Dalton, to tour the ship and deliver a brief speech to the crew on the foc'sle.

The ship weighed anchor after dark on 20 October, enroute to her next portcall, Manila. The ship traversed the San Bernadino Straits on 21 October, and dropped anchor in Manila's harbor on 22

October. On 25 October MOBILE BAY hosted a gala event in her helicopter hangar for dozens of Philippine dignitaries, and guests from the U.S. embassy in Manila. The event included a live band and a sumptuous variety of foods. On 27 October MOBILE BAY weighed anchor for her next port visit, Kota Kinabalu of the province of Sabah, Malaysia, on the island of Borneo.

The ship pulled into the picturesque port of Kota Kinabalu on the morning of 29 October. She was greeted by a contingency of indigenous dancers, dressed in multicolored costumes. In the helicopter hangar the troupe put on an impressive variety of dances, representing the many different cultures of Sabah. Many crew members were encouraged to join in the dances; the sliding bamboo stick dance proved to be the most challenging for the neophyte MOBILE BAY dancers. The port of Kota Kinabalu proved to be very memorable for many crewmembers who took advantage of the many outdoor opportunities, in particular, white water rafting and scuba diving/snorkeling. However, two crewmembers were injured in scuffles instigated by gangs of locals. One crewmember, STGSN Mills, broke his jaw and was flown back to Yokosuka, and another, OS1 Hurst, was punched from behind and suffered a severely bruised face. MOBILE BAY departed Kota Kinabalu on the morning of 01 November, enroute Penang, Malaysia.

On 03 November MOBILE BAY traversed south of the equator, necessitating a ridding of the slime from some proverbial polliwogs, the name (image, rather) assigned to those poor souls that have never sailed south of the equator. In a time honored ceremony that was completely voluntary and in perfectly good taste (verified by the ship's Executive Officer), the ship initiated dozens of "wogs," transforming them into trusty shellbacks. That same night at 2300, the ship set the navigation detail to upgrade its readiness for safe passage through the Straits of Mallacca. After safely sailing through the Straits of Mallacca on 04 November, the ship arrived in Penang on 05 November, again anchoring out.

On 07 November VADM Philip Quast, MILITARY SEALIFT COMMAND, and father of crewmember LT [REDACTED], visited the ship and dined in the Unit Commander's Cabin with the CO and XO. The ship also sponsored a well-received party on 08 November in her helicopter hangar for local dignitaries as well as for personnel from ships in company for the Southeast Asian Commander's Warfare Symposium.

Among the ships in company were the Australian ships HMAS BRISBANE and HMAS ADELAIDE, with whom the MOBILE BAY developed a special rapport. Earlier during this underway period in Palo, for the Leyte festivities, MOBILE BAY had provided small boat transportation for the BRISBANE whose small boat had been temporarily out of commission. As a token of gratitude the BRISBANE wardroom invited the MOBILE BAY wardroom to a champagne brunch on 07 November. Both ADELAIDE and BRISBANE were well represented at MOBILE BAY's party on 08 November.

Sadly, on 08 November a tragedy befell the ship: two of her crewmembers were involved in an accident in which the moped they were riding collided with an oncoming car. DC3 Craig Shortridge

had been driving the moped and absorbed the brunt of the collision. His passenger, EN3 [REDACTED], was thrown clear of the car and moped. Despite valiant first aid efforts by other crewmembers who arrived on scene within minutes, DC3 Shortridge quickly lapsed into a coma and ultimately died from his injuries on 10 November. EN3 [REDACTED] suffered a fracture to his leg.

The ship provided 34 blood donors for Petty Officer Shortridge and put forth a great deal of effort in an attempt to get Shortridge's parents to his bedside. Numerous shipmates paid visits to DC3 Shortridge as he lay in the intensive care unit. By early morning on 09 November, Shortridge was given a 5% chance for recovery. CAPT Holmstrom felt as though the ship had accomplished as much as it could. Designating the ship's chaplain, LT [REDACTED], and a friend of Shortridge's, EM2 [REDACTED], to stay behind to support whatever the outcome of the situation would be, the ship got underway on the morning of 10 November for Singapore.

MOBILE BAY traversed the Straits of Mallacca again from 10 - 11 November and moored at Port Sembawang in Singapore on the morning of 11 November. During her four day stay in Singapore the ship completed over 80 jobs or maintenance actions with civilian contractors via COMLOGWESTPAC. Also, the ship hosted another gala event in her helicopter hangar attended by numerous dignitaries from Singapore. The evening was capped off with coffee and desert in the ship's pilothouse. The ship departed Singapore on the morning of 15 November.

On the way back to Yokosuka, MOBILE BAY conducted numerous Aegis Combat Training Scenarios (ACTS), integrating them with General Quarters (GQ). The ship fit in as much training as it could, taking heed of the Captain's advice that it was one of the last opportunities to conduct training before the ship entered her Selected Restricted Availability in December. In addition to conducting ACTS and holding GQs, the ship conducted 5"54cal/25mm/and M60 gunnery training against inflatable orange targets called "killer tomatoes," as well as ASW training, Helo crash and smash drills, man overboard drills, abandon ship drills, etc. After seven days of productive, and at times intense training, the ship made her return to Yokosuka on 22 November.

MOBILE BAY conducted a final underway period in CY 1994 between 06 - 14 December, for the purpose of operating with the CONSTELLATION Battlegroup in order to maximize training before beginning SRA. After numerous productive training evolutions culminating in a ship-wide integrated training scenario, the ship returned to Yokosuka's ammunition anchorage 13 December and offloaded all ammunition on 13 - 14 December. The ship began her SRA on 15 December.