



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

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From: Commanding Officer, USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53)  
To: Director Naval Historical Center, Building 57, Washington  
Navy Yard, Washington DC

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY 1995

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization  
(2) Chronology  
(3) Narrative  
(4) Supporting Documents

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are submitted.

  
GARRY HOLMSTROM

## **MOBILE BAY (CG 53) COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION**

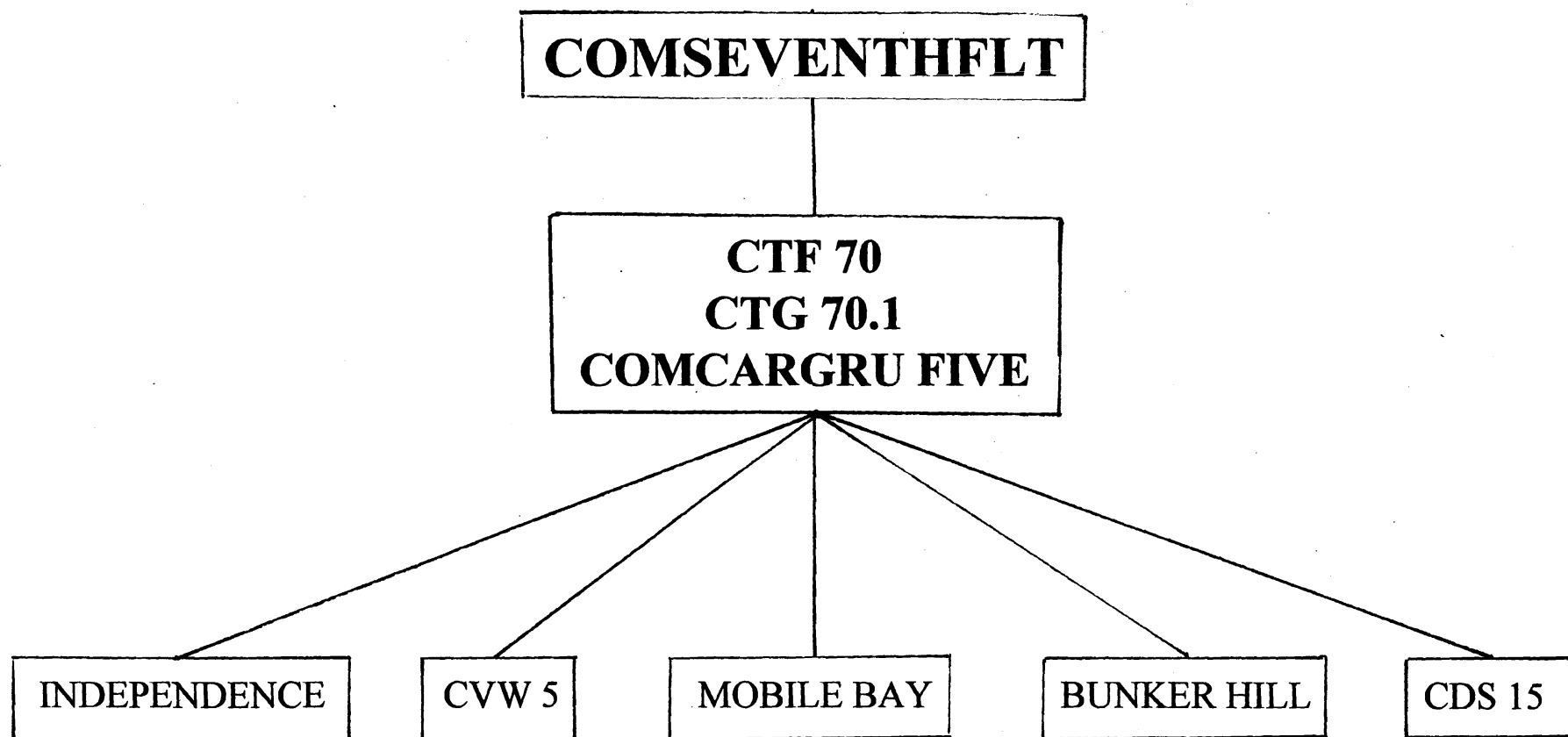
**MISSION:** MOBILE BAY IS A FORWARD DEPLOYED AEGIS GUIDED MISSILE CRUISER. WITH A STATE OF THE ART, FULLY INTEGRATED COMBAT SYSTEM, MOBILE BAY IS UNIQUELY EQUIPPED TO PROVIDE COMMAND AND CONTROL FOR MISSIONS RANGING FROM AIR WARFARE DEFENSE TO STRIKE WARFARE IN SUPPORT OF U.S AND ALLIED COALITION FORCES. ADDITIONALLY, FORWARD...FROM THE SEA, MOBILE BAY SUPPORTS THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY BY PROVIDING CONTINUOUS NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE SEVENTHFLT AND FIFTHFLT AREAS OF OPERATION.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:** CAPTAIN GARRY HOLMSTROM COMMANDS MOBILE BAY UNDER REAR ADMIRAL JAMES O. ELLIS --COMMANDER, BATTLE FORCE SEVENTH FLEET(CTF-70), COMMANDER, CARRIER GROUP FIVE, CTF(CTG-70.1)

**HOMEPORT:** YOKOSUKA, JAPAN

**AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED:** MOBILE BAY EMBARKED THE FOLLOWING SH-60B AND SH-60F AIRCRAFT IN 1995:

HSL-51 HELLFIRE 06 (11APR-02JUN)(04AUG-07DEC)  
HSL-51 HELLFIRE 00 (11APR-02JUN)  
HS-14 LIGHTNING 611 (11APR-16SEP)  
HS-14 LIGHTNING 613 (16SEP-16OCT)



### MOBILE BAY (CG 53) CHRONOLOGY 1995

01JAN - 21MAR	INPORT YOKOSUKA SRA-5
12JAN - 17JAN	CONDUCTED CART IIB
08FEB - 23FEB	USS HOLLAND AVAILABILITY
21MAR - 24 MAR	UNDERWAY FOR SEA TRIALS AMMUNITION ON LOAD
24MAR - 10APR	INPORT YOKOSUKA
07APR - 13APR	CONDUCTED TSTA I
11APR - 13APR	TRANSIT TO OKINAWA TO PICK UP DRONES FOR MISSILEX
13APR	BRIEF STOP AT OKINAWA FOR DRONES
14APR - 19APR	UNDERWAY FOR MISSILEX-95, 2 SM2'S FIRED
19APR - 23APR	TRANSIT FROM OKINAWA OPAREA TO HONG KONG
23APR - 27APR	INPORT HONG KONG MOORED TO BUOY
28APR - 11MAY	UNDERWAY TSTA II, TRANSIT TO GULF OF THAILAND
11MAY - 15MAY	INPORT PHATTAYA BEACH, THAILAND
16MAY - 22MAY	UNDERWAY GULF OF THAILAND FOR TSTA III
22MAY - 25MAY	UNDERWAY GULF OF THAILAND FOR FEP
25MAY - 02JUN	TRANSIT FROM GULF OF THAILAND TO YOKOSUKA, JAPAN
28MAY - 03JUL	USS HOLLAND AVAILABILITY
02JUN - 03AUG	INPORT YOKOSUKA
04AUG - 14AUG	TRANSIT FROM YOKOSUKA TO JAKARTA, INDONESIA
15AUG - 21AUG	INPORT JAKARTA
22AUG - 23AUG	TRASIT FROM JAKARTA TO SEMBAWANG PIER, SINGAPORE
24AUG - 27AUG	INPORT SINGAPORE
28AUG - 29AUG	ANCHORED AT SINGAPORE
29AUG - 09SEP	ENROUTE ARABIAN GULF W/ INDEPENDENCE BATTLE GROUP
10SEP - 12SEP	INPORT ABU DHABI, UAE
13SEP - 15SEP	INPORT DUBAI, UAE
16SEP - 26SEP	ARABIAN GULF OPERATIONS
27SEP - 03OCT	INPORT DUBAI, UAE
04OCT - 14OCT	ARABIAN GULF OPERATIONS
15OCT - 16OCT	TRANSIT FROM NAG TO ARABIAN SEA
16OCT - 18OCT	TRANSIT BACK TO ARABIAN GULF W/ FIFE
18OCT - 19OCT	ANCHORED AL MANAMA, BAHRAIN
20OCT - 28OCT	ARABIAN GULF OPERATIONS
29OCT - 03NOV	INPORT DUBAI, UAE
04NOV - 10NOV	ARABIAN GULF OPERATONS
11NOV - 13NOV	INPORT DUBAI, UAE
14NOV - 20NOV	TRANSIT FROM DUBAI TO PHUKET, THAILAND W/ FIFE
21NOV - 24NOV	ANCHORED PHUKET
25NOV - 26NOV	TRANSIT FROM PHUKET TO SEMBAWANG PIER, SINGAPORE
27NOV - 29NOV	INPORT SINGAPORE
30NOV - 06DEC	TRANSIT FROM SINGAPORE TO YOKOSUKA, JAPAN
07DEC - 11DEC	INPORT YOKOSUKA HARBOR MASTER PIER
11DEC - 12DEC	ANCHORED AMMO ANCHORAGE YOKOSUKA
12DEC - 31DEC	INPORT YOKOSUKA, HARBOR MASTER PIER

## SUMMARY

1995 was a highly dynamic and successful year for the MOBILE BAY, forward deployed to Yokosuka, Japan. Commencing with a Selected Restricted Availability, the crew worked extremely hard to make her ready for Spring Training, and a late summer deployment to the Arabian Gulf. Performing an important anti-air warfare mission or promoting international relations in a foreign port, MOBILE BAY set the highest standards. In the Arabian Gulf, MOBILE BAY operated with the INDEPENDENCE Battle Group and with multinational forces supporting operation Southern Watch, Vigilant Sentinel, and enforcing United Nations sanctions against Iraq. MOBILE BAY performed duties as Anti-air warfare commander, Maritime interdiction commander, Lamps Element coordinator, and Anti-surface warfare commander in the Northern Arabian Gulf for extended periods during Gulf operations. During 1995 MOBILE BAY visited Hong Kong, Phattaya Beach, Thailand, Jakarta, Indonesia, Singapore, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E, Dubai, U.A.E., Bahrain, and Phuket, Thailand and was visited by the Secretary of the Navy, Honorable John Dalton, Vice Admiral Redd(COMFIFTHFLT), Vice Admiral Clemens(COMSEVENTHFLT), as well as numerous dignitaries from foreign navies and countries. At the close of the 1995 MOBILE BAY was still working to improve and commenced Extended Dry Docking Selected Restricted Availability - 6, which will undoubtedly prepare her for even greater successes in the future.

On 01 January 1995 MOBILE BAY was at the early stages of her Selected Restricted Availability-FIVE (SRA-5) which began on 15 December 1994. Beginning January 6th scaffolding was erected around the deckhouses and the mast, allowing detailed preservation throughout the exterior of the ship. SRA-5 was a three month long pierside availability during which grooms, material condition assessments, ORDALTs, and field modifications were conducted. Additionally, shipwide preservation and habitability improvements were made. Among the more significant improvements were the "black switch" modification to the communications suite, complete renovation of the engineering, operations, supply, and Chief Petty Officer berthing, complete renovation of the massively corroded deck in the aft 400 Hz Converter Room, and material condition assessments and grooms to all major components of the Aegis Weapon System.

Between 14-18 January the engineers vacated Engineering berthing so that renovations could be conducted. PRC decking was removed by Ship's Repair Force (SRF) Yokosuka and racks and lockers were completely repainted, rendering a berthing that was quite similar to its commissioning appearance. These same renovations would occur in Operations and Supply and Chief Petty Officer berthings except that the PRC was not taken down to bare metal: a PRC tiger team spearheaded by GMG1 [REDACTED] sanded the top coat of the PRC down and replaced the top coat and clear sealant. (This

same tiger team re-PRC'd several spaces throughout the ship including the quarterdeck, the ship's office, and CCS). Operations and Supply department vacated their berthings between 01-04 February and 16-19 February, respectively, while the chiefs had vacated between 15-18 December. The crewmembers who lived off the ship stayed at either Temporary Placement Unit (TPU) or at the barracks on Fleet Activities Yokosuka. All crewmembers moved back aboard the ship between early February and early March.

During the month of January a number of dignitaries were entertained and treated to luncheons and tours aboard MOBILE BAY. The first of 1995 occurred on January 17th, with the visit of several high ranking dignitaries and supporters of the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force from Saitama Prefecture, who were given an extensive ship tour. On January 23rd MOBILE BAY hosted a sake keg breaking ceremony, a Japanese custom welcoming good fortune for the new year. The keg of sake was broken open with the traditional wooden mallets by MOBILE BAY's commanding officer CAPT Garry Holmstrom and the commanding officer of MOBILE BAY's sister ship HAMAGIRI, CDR Koichi Tashiro. The ceremony was conducted in MOBILE BAY's helo hangar, attended by members of MOBILE BAY's and HAMAGIRI's wardroom, and friends of both. The next dignitary visit was by the Japanese Joint Staff College, a group of forty Japanese military personnel who toured the ship on 27 January.

Also during January MOBILE BAY sailors led by the ship's chaplain, LT [REDACTED], initiated a program called the "MOBILE BAY Volunteer Reading Program". Several sailors spent time reading to children of various ages at the Yokosuka Fleet Activities elementary school, Sullivans. This popular program lasted until late March.

During the month of February MOBILE BAY conducted a tender availability with the USS HOLLAND between 08-23 February. During this relatively brief cross-pier availability, MOBILE BAY managed to complete over 350 jobs, all while simultaneously conducting a high-tempo SRA with SRF Yokosuka and performing an aggressive shipboard rehabilitation and preservation package.

Also during the month of February MOBILE BAY's "Top Mob" basketball team took home the base's Captain's Cup trophy. On February 10th RADM Fussell, CINCPACFLT's deputy fleet surgeon visited and toured the ship. The ship hosted a ship's picnic on February 15th, sponsoring softball games and providing barbecued hamburgers and hotdogs, soft drinks, beer, and pizza. On February 24th the scaffolding surrounding the ship was removed.

In March MOBILE BAY began to make final preparations to finish her SRA, conduct post-SRA sea trials, and get underway for SPRING TRAINING with the INDEPENDENCE Battle Group. Between 06-10 March MOBILE BAY conducted her Command Assessment for Readiness and

Training (CART) IIB, the final phase of assessment, assisted by the Afloat Training Group (ATG), before the Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA) period began. Administrative programs, watchbills, and watchstanders were reviewed to ensure the ship was progressing in an orderly and steady manner prior to getting underway. On 16-17 March the ship conducted a "fast cruise," simulating an underway period. On 21-22 March the ship got underway for sea trials to test all of her new modifications and to ensure she was 100% functional following this significant maintenance period. The ship and crew performed well and pulled into Yokosuka's ammunition anchorage on 23 March to onload VLS canisters and 5" projectiles and powders.

On 13 March the ambassador to Singapore, Timothy A. Chorba, visited the ship. Also, visiting the ship was Dr. Claude Buss, a Fellow at Stanford University and professor at the Naval Postgraduate School as well as a multi-decade diplomat. Dr. Buss stayed in Yokosuka for nearly a week, and also was the guest of honor at the wardroom's dining out at the New Sanno Hotel in downtown Tokyo on 17 March.

During April MOBILE BAY made final preparations to get underway for SPRING TRAINING. Between 03-05 April the ship had an environmental health survey. Between 07-13 April she conducted TSTA I. MOBILE BAY departed her homeport of Yokosuka, on 11 April en route Okinawa, for the first leg of her seven week Battle Group training.

Upon arriving at White Beach, Okinawa on 13 April, fourteen international orange drones were loaded aboard in preparation for Missilex 95-2. MOBILE BAY was the drone launching platform, Range Safety Officer, and drone recovery unit for this multi-ship missile firing event.

On 14 April, en route to the missile exercise, MOBILE BAY conducted an extremely successful naval gunfire support (NGFS) exercise off of the island of Okino Daito, in the Okinawa operating area. The ship's gunfire team conducted five total missions and scored an outstanding 95.2 Percent.

Missilex 95-2 was conducted between 15-19 April. Numerous drones were launched from MOBILE BAY's flight deck to provide targets for missile exercises conducted by USS INDEPENDENCE, USS BUNKER HILL, CARRIER AIR WING FIVE, and MOBILE BAY. MOBILE BAY fired two standard missiles during a tandem exercise with her sister ship BUNKER HILL on 19 April, scoring two mission kills.

Upon completing Missilex 95-2, MOBILE BAY departed the Okinawa operating area for her first port call of the underway period, Hong Kong. She moored to a buoy in Hong Kong harbor, following a foggy sea and anchor detail, with the rest of the INDEPENDENCE battle

group on the morning of 23 April. After five days in Hong Kong, she departed on the morning of 28 April.

MOBILE BAY and the rest of the INDEPENDENCE battle group then headed for the Gulf of Thailand. During this time, and for the duration of the deployment, the battle group participated in exercises for predeployment work-up and training. MOBILE BAY participated in numerous anti-air warfare (AAW), anti-submarine warfare (ASW), electronic warfare (EW), and anti-surface warfare (ASUW) exercises. Additionally, she held countless other drills on her own including ship handling, general quarters, man overboard, damage control, and total ship survivability (TSS) scenarios. These drills were conducted as training in preparation for TSTA II, III, and Final Evaluation Problem (FEP).

During TSTA II the ship conducted simulated combat scenarios, engineering casualty control drills, and damage control drills in addition to the previously mentioned TSS scenarios. TSTA was observed by riders from Yokosuka's Afloat Training Group (ATG), who assisted the ship's training teams to increase the level of combat readiness throughout the ship. At the completion of TSTA II MOBILE BAY was ready to commence the assessment phases of TSTA III and the Final Evaluation Problem. Ship's training teams and ATG would now evaluate ship's combat readiness instead of conducting training.

The ship made a port call at the city of Phattaya Beach, from 11-15 May, anchoring in Phattaya's harbor. While in Phattaya the ship's chaplain organized a community relations project conducted with her sister ship, BUNKER HILL. The project allowed numerous MOBILE BAY and BUNKER HILL sailors to spend valuable time playing sports and enjoying a beachside barbecue with the 150 boys from the Banglamung boys home.

MOBILE BAY departed Phattaya on 16 May, and conducted TSTA III from 18-22 May and FEP from 22-25 May. In these phases of the training cycle ATG observers evaluated all shipboard evolutions, engineering evolutions and casualty control procedures, and combat systems technical and tactical readiness. MOBILE BAY performed well during TSTA III and impressively in FEP to complete the training cycle in stellar fashion.

On 24 May MOBILE BAY departed the Gulf of Thailand, en route her homeport of Yokosuka. The ship continued to conduct daily training in the areas of AAW, ASW, ASUW, ship handling, engineering casualty and damage control drills, etc. On the morning of 02 June MOBILE BAY arrived in Yokosuka, greeted by hundreds of family members and friends.

Due to contingency operations, MOBILE BAY was placed in a twenty four hour readiness for sea (RFS) status beginning 05 June. This meant increased readiness for the ship and extra emphasis for



all hands to be ready to get underway. On 21 June 5 members of the Japanese Diet and 23 guests from the Japanese socialist party visited the ship and were given a ship tour. The RFS was lifted during the last week of June. Also during June, the ship began an availability with the tender USS HOLLAND. This availability ended on 03 July.

On 07 July the ship conducted a family member cruise which was also open to the many Japanese friends and guests of the Captain and crew. Over 130 guests enjoyed a balmy day on Tokyo Bay, featuring a sumptuous barbecue lunch, bilingual ship tours, an SH-60 helicopter flight display, and a high speed run by the ship. The cruise was a rousing success for family members and especially the Japanese guests who seemed exceedingly pleased by their day on the high seas. This event solidified the ship's already sterling reputation in the Yokosuka area community.

On July 12-14, MOBILE BAY completed the Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification with a grade of satisfactory, with special recognition for the Database Managers, who received a grade of outstanding. The qualification tested the operational performance of both the Tomahawk Strike team and the Harpoon team. It also required effective administration of doctrine, training programs and ordnance handling programs. A significant aspect of preparation was MOBILE BAY's participation in nine SLAMEXes and two TLAMEXes run by COMCARGRU FIVE. The rest of July was spent preparing for the Arabian Gulf deployment scheduled to begin in August.

On August 04, MOBILE BAY departed Yokosuka to begin an Arabian Gulf deployment. On board the 400 sailors looked forward to the adventures and missions ahead, but also back at the families being left behind. Embarked with MOBILE BAY were two helicopters, Hellfire 06 an SH-60B from HSL-51 and Lightning 613 an SH-60F from HS-14. This would be the first time a combined detachment of HSL and HS aircraft and pilots combined assets on a cruiser.

Her first mission was the show the flag in Indonesia and participate in the celebration of 50 years of Indonesian independence. On August 16, MOBILE BAY and USS RODNEY M. DAVIS sailed into the harbor of Jakarta, Capitol of Indonesia, and anchored in a formation of over 80 ships representing 24 nations around the globe. The nautical theme for the Golden Anniversary of the Indonesian Independence represented Indonesia's return to her rich seafaring heritage. MOBILE BAY, the largest and most capable combatant present, was symbolic of the role of the United States in the Indonesian Independence 50 years ago. Moreover, the presence of the two American ships demonstrated the commitment of the United States to stability in the region.

MOBILE BAY and RODNEY M. DAVIS moored in ranks at an anchorage

adjacent to the British Frigate HMS Sheffield and close to the Peoples Republic of China destroyer 168, Frigate 548 and oiler Dong Yun (AO-615). In this anchorage more than 30 warships were positioned in five rows. To seaward, a similar formation of 36 Indonesian warships were anchored. Eight tall ships moored pierside in the inner harbor. Overall, the assembly of multinational ships was the largest such gathering since World War II. The close proximity of the vessels reflected the spirit of friendship and hospitality present in the capitol city. Throughout Jakarta sailors from different cultures and walks of life, with little in common except the sea, formed many close friendships.

On Friday the 18th of August, Indonesian President Soeharto, with Admiral Ronald Zlatoper, CINCPACFLT, close by his side, and the heads of state from several nations passed through the anchorage aboard the presidential yacht Barracuda. In a tribute to President Soeharto and to the Indonesian Independence, MOBILE BAY's entire crew manned the rails in service dress whites. As Barracuda passed close aboard to port, all hands uncovered, hoisted their hats high over their heads and bid the official party "Happy Birthday".

Throughout the visit, Indonesians extended their hospitality to MOBILE BAY with invitations to the crew for a myriad of cultural and athletic events. Captain Garry Holmstrom made official calls on Rear Admiral Abdulah Meraxa, Commander of the Indonesian Southwest Naval Fleet and Rear Admiral Arief Kushariady, Commanding Officer of the Indonesian Naval Base in Jakarta. That evening five MOBILE BAY officers attired in mess dress attended a magnificent dinner showcasing the diverse cultures and dances of the Indonesian archipelago.

19 August was MOBILE BAY's first opportunity to reciprocate. 216 foreign dignitaries, military attaches and American Embassy officials and their families arrived aboard for a flight deck reception. The crew worked hard to prepare for the festive event and presented a flight deck in full dress, with signal flags carefully arranged around the deck. Both HSL-51 and HS-14 helicopters were on display, one in the hangar, and the with blades spread on the flight deck. While the Seventh Fleet band provided the mood, the Supply department, headed by LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] presented a feast that won't soon be forgotten. For most of the guests the highlight of the evening were the guided tours provided by MOBILE BAY's officers.

Jakarta offered magnificent liberty for the crew. The nightlife of the downtown area had the added excitement of fireworks and other celebrations of independence. The highlight event for the crew, however, was the City March. In full dress whites, with rifles and in true military style, fifty sailors from both MOBILE BAY and RODNEY M. DAVIS marched in an internationally

televised (including CNN) parade. After weeks of daily practice sessions prior to departing Yokosuka, the group felt nervous and uncertain as they rode a large diesel boat provided by the Indonesians from the anchorage to the pier at first light on the morning of 20 August. After an hour boat ride and another thirty minutes in buses to starting point for the parade, the marchers assembled for the event. The participants included representatives from every ship, all in Full Dress Uniforms. It started at 0930, proceeded through the heart of the Indonesian capitol and finished at the reviewing stand where the marchers rendered honors to President Soeharto. The excitement grew for the passage of each of the entrants. Finally, from the reviewing stand the announcement was made for the "last but not least" and above the roar of the crowd could be heard the Seventh Fleet band playing "Anchors Away". "The crowd was cheering for everyone, but when they announced the United States of America, the cheering was unreal," said Ensign [REDACTED]. FC1 [REDACTED] described "when we stopped at parade rest, people would run out in front of us to get their picture taken with us in the background". It was SK2 [REDACTED] who summed up the emotion of the day: "It is only once in a life time chance to be in an event with so many other countries and get to represent the United States. I felt proud to be marching for my country".

MOBILE BAY's drill team included: SK2 [REDACTED] SK2 [REDACTED]  
 SHSN [REDACTED], MS3 [REDACTED], DK3 [REDACTED], MS3 [REDACTED], SK2 [REDACTED]  
 GSM3 [REDACTED], DCFA [REDACTED], FN [REDACTED], EN3 [REDACTED], DC3 [REDACTED]  
 GSE1 [REDACTED], GSM2 [REDACTED], Ensign [REDACTED], OSSN [REDACTED], OSSN [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED], OS3 [REDACTED], SM3 [REDACTED], RM3 [REDACTED], OS3 [REDACTED], SN [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED], RMSN [REDACTED], SN [REDACTED], PNSA [REDACTED], QMSR [REDACTED], NC1 [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED], HM2 [REDACTED], QMSA [REDACTED], TMSN [REDACTED], STG1 [REDACTED]  
 Ensign [REDACTED], GMG1 [REDACTED], STGSN [REDACTED], GMM2 [REDACTED], FC2 [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED], FC2 [REDACTED], FC2 [REDACTED], FC3 [REDACTED], FC1 [REDACTED], and  
 FC2 [REDACTED]. Bringing up the rear were CW02 [REDACTED] and ICSN [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED] who caused much excitement with their Native American and cowboy costumes. At one time the police had to pull the crowd away to allow the march to continue.

Another group of MOBILE BAY sailors brought to Jakarta another image: American goodwill. For a community relations project in conjunction with Operation Handclasp, three MOBILE BAY officers and ten crew members went to the Jakarta Socila Insitute to provide the Jakarta community with clothing, school books, and sewing machines. The Jesuit Priests who worked at the Institute had been praying for a way to teach sewing to the young girls of the community. The new machines, they said, "are an answer to our prayers." Additionally, the MOBILE BAY volunteers renovated and painted a refuge built by Jesuit Priests which, until the arrival of our sailors, had been in shambles. Our sailors lifted the spirits of those in the community; it could be seen in the smiling faces and excitement of the children as they crowded around the MOBILE BAY sailors. The volunteers were: FCCS [REDACTED], FC1 [REDACTED], TM1 [REDACTED], GSE1 [REDACTED]

Ensign [REDACTED] Ensign [REDACTED] AMSC [REDACTED] MS2  
PNCS [REDACTED] SHI [REDACTED] MSI [REDACTED] and SKI [REDACTED].

With this final salute, MOBILE BAY wrapped up a week long port visit which was as busy as being underway. The professionalism the crew showed in each on of the events they participated in left a solid image of the United States as a strong, benevolent presence in Southeast Asia.

The next stop in Southeast Asia was Singapore, where the crew enjoyed liberty and repairs. Then on August 29, MOBILE BAY joined the INDEPENDENCE Battle Group in the Singapore Straits to begin the journey to the Arabian Gulf to participate in operations Southern Watch and Vigilant Sentinel. The group consisted of USS INDEPENDENCE CV 62, USS BUNKER HILL CG 52, USS FIFE DD 991, USS CURTS FFG 38, USNS GUADALOPE TAO 200, AND USNS KILAUEA AE 26. A storm in the Indian Ocean caused some excitement as the ships experienced heavy seas. It did not deter the group from reaching the Straits of Hormuz. As the Battle Group steamed through the straits, MOBILE BAY remained in the Gulf of Oman to escort USNS KILAUEA during her ammunition transfer with USS SACRAMENTO AOE 1. This put MOBILE BAY in position to answer the call for an emergency medevac.

On the morning of 7 September, MOBILE BAY received tasking for a medevac at sea from COMCARGRU FIVE. After careful contemplation of all tactical considerations, Captain Holmstrom gave the go ahead for the mission plan. HS-14 Det Alpha, stationed on MOBILE BAY, launched in Lightning 611 to complete the medevac. The crew consisted of LCDR [REDACTED], LTJG [REDACTED], AW2 [REDACTED] as hoist operator, AW2 [REDACTED] as rescue swimmer, and HMC [REDACTED] as chief medical representative.

The patient was located on Semac I, a semi-submersible oil drilling rig in tow, 180 nautical miles southeast of the MOBILE BAY. The teamwork concept was utilized throughout the mission as MOBILE BAY's crew provided radar surveillance and communications for the entire mission, and HSL Det One provided liaison from the Combat Information Center, flight deck support and obtained diplomatic clearance for the mission.

The SH-60F's GPS navigation enabled the crew to easily find Semac I in steadily decreasing visibility. LCDR [REDACTED] landed on the deck and crewman disembarked to transfer the patient. After 13 minutes on deck, Lightning 611 launched and returned to MOBILE BAY, which had maneuvered to a position between Semac I and Muscat, Oman at a distance of 118 nautical miles. Lightning 611 refueled aboard MOBILE BAY and received diplomatic clearance via radio before departing to Seeb International Airport in Muscat.

The patient was experiencing severe abdominal pains, and was

being transported for eventual emergency surgery. HMC [REDACTED] treated and stabilized the patient en route. The patient was delivered to medical personnel upon arrival in Muscat.

Friday, September 8, MOBILE BAY escorted USNS KILAHUEA, through the straits and into the Arabian Gulf. The first order of business after ensuring KILAHUEA's safe arrival in Jebel Ali was to conduct replenishment at sea for food, stores, and fuel. The afternoon of the 9th was spent alongside USNS SAN JOSE and then USNS PECOS, with the final breakaway at dusk, turning towards Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. for the first port visit in the Gulf and voyage repairs. Most notably, IC2 [REDACTED], IC3 [REDACTED], and ICFN [REDACTED] utilized some ingenuity to rebuild the starboard wind bird which had been damaged in high winds during the Indian Ocean transit. Due to port loading, MOBILE BAY shifted ports to Dubai, U.A.E. on 13 September and remained in port for three more days. However, most thoughts were on Yokosuka, which was enduring Typhoon Oscar, the largest typhoon to strike Japan since World War II.

Dubai offered some of the best liberty in the Gulf and a chance to enjoy Middle Eastern culture. Many sailors enjoyed the Dubai International Seaman's Center, which offered a swimming pool, phone services, restaurant, and a bar for use of all hands. The gold suq's offered an amazing assortment of jewelry at reasonable prices. For the adventurous, tours were offered for Camel riding, desert four-wheeling, and Arabian sunset watching.

Saturday September 16, MOBILE BAY was underway for operations in the Arabian Gulf. As MOBILE BAY left Dubai in her wake and headed north to rejoin USS INDEPENDENCE and the rest of the Battle Group conducting operations in the Northern Arabian Gulf. Additionally, MOBILE BAY's Chief's Mess welcomed six newly advanced Chief Petty Officers on September 16th - HTC [REDACTED], FCC [REDACTED], DCC [REDACTED], GMC [REDACTED], OSC [REDACTED], and GSEC [REDACTED]. On 17 September welcome news arrived that typhoon Oscar had come and gone and all were safe back in Yokosuka to the relief of many crewmen.

Upon arrival in the Northern Gulf the following day MOBILE BAY assumed duties as CV escort and AAW picket. Immediately, responding to all challenges and the faster paced actions of operations in support of Southern Watch. On September 21, MOBILE BAY was activated as the alternate Anti-Air Warfare Commander(XC), Maritime Interception Commander(XM), Anti-Surface Warfare Commander(XT), and Lamps element Coordinator. During this underway period MOBILE BAY participated in a TLAM exercise, a HARPOONEX, conduct countless hours of flight operations with both Lightning 613 and Hellfire 6, and executed the assigned warfare duties. On 25 September INDEPENDENCE, COMDESRON Fifteen, and BUNKER HILL returned to the Northern Gulf, and relieved MOBILE BAY on station. After the busy week in the Northern Arabian Gulf MOBILE BAY headed south for a refueling and a port visit to Dubai.



National commitment to the region. Admiral Ellis' personal delivery of the news to the crews of MOBILE BAY and FIFE brought a clear rationale to the extension and invoked the qualities that made MOBILE BAY his top choice for the job.

This unexpected change in schedule was handled almost as a matter of routine by the crew. Following their visits from Rear Admiral Ellis, MOBILE BAY and FIFE conducted dual day and night replenishment at sea before parting company with the battle group in the Gulf of Oman. MOBILE BAY conducted a well planned, highly realistic and innovative anti-air warfare exercise(AWEX). Also, Lightning 613 returned to HS-14 aboard the INDEPENDENCE for the return to Japan. The sudden return to duty in the Arabian Gulf postponed the return home of both ship's by approximately thirty days, but the presence MOBILE BAY and FIFE provide the U.S. and the United Nations with the options and capabilities they require in the region.

Upon MOBILE BAY's return to the Gulf, Vice Admiral Redd, Commander FIFTHFLT visited the ship and gave the crew his appreciation for the extra efforts that were required. He also presented EM3 [REDACTED] with a Navy Commendation Medal for his work aboard the ship during the deployment. The next stop was Bahrain for two days and then the ship was back underway. Upon getting underway from anchorage at Bahrain, the Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable John Dalton visited to give the crew strong words of appreciation. Both Admiral Redd's and the SECNAV's visits were great reminders of the importance of the mission which MOBILE BAY was assigned.

The ship, highly trained and experienced in the Gulf was ready to head north and resume duties as XM, XW, XH, XF and Duty Strike. Once back in the NAG, MOBILE BAY resumed high readiness condition and continued to conduct training while serving as the commander for almost all operations in the Gulf. Participating in exercises Reliant Gorilla allowed MOBILE BAY to hone joint Maritime Operations which are very important when an aircraft carrier is not available to provide air support. Also, MOBILE BAY participated in exercise Arabian Skies, which involved utilizing the SPY-1A radar in a special Theater Ballistic Missile Defense mode. Both exercises produced great success and on 28 October MOBILE BAY headed back to Dubai.

In Dubai, extensive work was conducted on the main deck. Contractors worked almost constantly taking up Non-skid from the rusty foc'sle and aft VLS deck to prepare for new non-skid. In addition, inside the ship more contractors worked to refinish and replace badly worn PRC decking. Completing this work in Dubai helped reduce the work load for the upcoming EDSRA and also prevented further deterioration of the main deck.

After six days in Dubai and with freshly non-skidded foc'sle and VLS deck MOBILE BAY returned once again to the Northern Arabian Gulf. Resuming warfare commander duties MOBILE BAY pressed on to maintain the high standards set on previous missions. The increased efforts to curtail the shipment of dates from Iraq increased the challenge of Maritime Interception Operations.

Late in the afternoon on 07 November, MOBILE BAY's SH-60B helicopter detected and queried a merchant vessel. It did not respond until MOBILE BAY closed in to inspect her cargo. This vessel was cleared to continue her voyage since she carried no illegal cargo.

That evening, MOBILE BAY's helicopter detected two vessels emerging from the Khawr abd Allah, a waterway leading to Iraqi ports. On the morning of November 8, WIELINGEN and the New Zealand frigate WELLINGTON subsequently detected, queried, and boarded three vessels proceeding into the Gulf. The first Al Rizwam, found to be empty, was cleared. The second vessel, Barakat, though possibly carrying illicit cargo, was cleared to continue because no documents tying the vessel to Iraq were found. The third vessel, Al Falaah, carried documents from the Iranian ministry of agriculture, possibly forged, while the ship's logs and interviews of the crew by the boarding team established her origins in Iraq. Analysis of the Iranian documents rekindled interest in the previous vessel, which had carried similar credentials. WELLINGTON's alert boarding crew observed inconsistencies between the vessel's master and navigator, who altered their stories before agreeing on a port of origin inconsistent with their charts and logs. Neither did their stated locations and track concur with statements made by crewmembers. Careful scrutiny of their navigational equipment further indicated that they obtained their cargo in Iraq.

MOBILE BAY, WIELINGEN, and WELLINGTON coordinated to guard Al Falaah, intercept and board Barakat for the second time, conduct a refueling at sea and still maintain their surveillance of the Northern Gulf. Expanding the effort later that evening, WIELINGEN intercepted two more vessels, which were boarded at dawn on November 9. With the discovery of this activity and the mounting pace of interdictions, USS CURTIS WILBUR (DDG 54) steamed north to join the effort.

MOBILE BAY's command and control capabilities suited her well in her role as the acting Maritime Intercept Operations Commander. With her deep draft and only one helicopter to support surveillance requirements, she employed WIELINGEN and WELLINGTON to intercept and corral vessels in the shallow coastal waters of the Northern Arabian Gulf. During the previous two weeks the three units conducted continuous joint operations and exercises. WIELINGEN had frequently controlled MOBILE BAY's helicopter, both units



practiced tactical procedures against one another, and all three conducted exchanges of officers and enlisted personnel to make the most of cross training opportunities. In addition, MOBILE BAY hosted an "international invitational" basketball tournament on November 7. WIELINGEN's "dream team" made a strong showing, and WELLINGTON challenged both crews, but found no takers, to a flight deck rugby match. MOBILE BAY won the tournament and the trophy was passed to COMDESRON FIFTY for future NAG invitational. The interaction of the crews, ashore and afloat, and the training performed together created a highly coordinated, efficient team. Joint tactics were thus well integrated, and the unusual logistical challenges posed by the two frigates, unique types in the U.S. Fifth Fleet, were handled as a matter of routine.

The operational harmony achieved in this joint task force set a standard for cooperation among allied units. It is a testament to the skill and professionalism of the sailors and officers from all three navies that their exchange of ideas, tactics and lessons learned have enhanced options available to the United Nations.

On November 10, MOBILE BAY turned over duties as XW, XM, XT, XF, and XG to the USS VICKSBURG and headed south for a last stop in Dubai for preparations for the voyage home to Japan. On November 14 MOBILE BAY was underway in company with FIFE and USNS PECOS for the transit of the Straits of Hormuz. With FIFE in the lead, ready to answer any query by the Omani Navy or Iranian Navy the ship's left the Gulf behind. PECOS stayed with FIFE and MOBILE BAY until the 16th of November when a final re-fueling was accomplished. Then PECOS headed out to refuel ship's of the AMERICA Battle Group transiting the Red Sea en route the Arabian Gulf.

With an approved excessive speed of advance, MOBILE BAY and FIFE proceeded rapidly towards the much anticipated liberty port of Phuket, Thailand. Both ship's anchored off the resort town of Patong Beach on Phuket Island the morning of 21 November. After two months in the Middle East, Phuket was a welcome sight and all hands were able to enjoy the beautiful beaches, festive atmosphere, and friendly people.

On 25 November, MOBILE BAY weighed anchor and proceeded towards the Strait of Malacca. On the afternoon of the 25th of November, MOBILE BAY had the fortune of conducting a PASSEX with two ships of the Royal Thai Navy, HTMS SONGKLA and HTMS TROYANCHON. LT [REDACTED] and OS2 [REDACTED] represented MOBILE BAY on the Thai ships and MOBILE BAY hosted a Thai officer. The ship's conducted an EMATEX, which is a submersible mobile acoustic target, that MOBILE BAY and HELLFIRE 06 tracked and fired reusable exercise torpedoes. The Thai ship's performed well and much experience was gained about operations with the Thai navy. The PASSEX concluded on the evening of the 25th and the ship's parted company.

On the evening of the 25th MOBILE BAY began the transit of the Strait of Malacca, the busiest waterway in the world. And on the following morning, the sea and anchor detail was set for Singapore, the last liberty port before homeport Yokosuka. Singapore, decorated with Christmas lights, provided another great liberty call for the crew. Most finished buying the last of their Christmas presents and deployment memorabilia. Then on 30 November, MOBILE BAY departed Singapore and commenced the final leg of the voyage to Yokosuka. Numerous storms were encountered while transiting and exercising with USS FIFE until arrival pierside Yokosuka on 7 December.

7 December was a joyous occasion and many of the crew were reunited with family members they had not seen since departing in August. A brief ceremony was held in the helo hangar and a great buffet was served by the mess specialists. But, quickly all hands not on duty were ready to go their separate ways to enjoy all the good things about being home in Japan.

On 9 December, MOBILE BAY hosted a Christmas Party for the Kobo Cottage Kids. The children had a wonderful time singing, playing, and meeting Santa Claus (FCC [REDACTED]), who presented gifts to all the children. But, the weekend would be a short respite before MOBILE BAY was underway to the ammunition anchorage on 11 December.

Underway early on the morning of 11 December, MOBILE BAY headed out the channel a short distance and anchored for ammunition off load. The offload was completed safely and efficiently. Late in the afternoon of 12 December MOBILE BAY weighed anchor and returned pierside. Upon return, the electricians mounted an all out campaign to bring holiday cheer to the MOBILE BAY. After some long hours MOBILE BAY was transformed into a spectacular light show for everyone to enjoy.

On 15 December, IX 503, "the barge" was pushed into position alongside the ship and the arduous process of moving off began. Systematically, berthings, stores, office equipment, and other equipment were transferred to make the barge a viable place to live and work. On 18 December, Submarine Group Seven Rear Admiral Konetzni joined the MOBILE BAY wardroom for an enjoyable lunch, the last meal to be served in the wardroom in 1995. Later on the 18th, MOBILE BAY's firemain, potable water, and sewage systems were secured in preparation for the start major ship alterations for hull strength and a new AFFF system.

The last meal served on the Mess Decks was 22 December for the NEY Memorial Award for food service excellence competition. Commander, Carrier Group Five nominated MOBILE BAY to compete for this prestigious award and the Electricians, Engineman, Mess Specialists, and Food Service Assistants worked diligently to prepare the ship's Mess Decks and galley for the judges. All were

up for the challenge and the meals served 22 December were outstanding. MOBILE BAY took second honorable mention in the medium ship category due to their efforts.

Christmas meal was served on the barge for Duty Section I and the rest of the crew enjoyed spending the holiday home with family and friends. It was nice to take advantage of being in homeport for the holidays. The remaining days of 1995 were spent making final preparations for dry docking and EDSRA-6. In reflection 1995 was a rewarding and highly successful year for MOBILE BAY.