



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS MOBILE BAY (CG-53)
FPO AP 96872-1173

*Rec'd 3/30/98
w/o dish*

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5750

Ser N-02/072

12 Mar 98

From: Commanding Officer, USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53)

To: Director of Naval History (N09BH)

Subj: 1997 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53) 1997 Command History

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.


J. M. VOLPE

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53), commanded by CAPT Joseph M. Volpe, Jr., USN, is an asset of Battle Force Seventh Fleet, Forward Deployed Naval Force, Yokosuka, Japan. MOBILE BAY reports to immediate senior in command Commander, Carrier Group Five, RADM Charles W. Moore, Jr.

Our mission is to enhance regional stability, promote cooperative security and to deter aggression with capable, flexible and mobile U.S. Naval Forces, cooperating closely with U.S. military services and the forces of allied and friendly nations. Independently or as a part of a Joint, Combined or Multinational Force execute military and humanitarian operations as tasked by higher authority. If necessary, terminate hostilities on terms favorable to the United States and its Allies.

USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53) CY 97 HISTORICAL SCHEDULE

24 JAN - 31 JAN	Escort CV 62
15 FEB - 29 FEB	ASWEX97-2JA
18 FEB - 23 FEB	TSTA II
24 FEB - 26 FEB	Inport Steam GUAM
27 FEB	ECERT
01 MAR - 02 MAR	NSFS Farallon de Medellina, GUAM
14 MAR - 22 MAR	TANDEM THRUST 97
26 MAR - 02 APR	Inport Sydney, AUSTRALIA
02 APR - 10 APR	Enroute GUAM/LTT E-D
11 APR - 20 APR	GUAM TAV
20 APR - 25 APR	LTT E-D ECERT Preparations
26 APR - 28 APR	Inport Steam GUAM
29 APR - 26 MAY	Enroute HONG KONG, LTT E-D ECERT Preparations
27 MAY - 29 MAY	Inport HONG KONG
30 MAY - 02 JUN	Enroute OKINAWA
02 JUN - 02 JUN	BSP OKINAWA
03 JUN - 04 JUN	Enroute SASEBO - ECERT
04 JUN - 06 JUN	Inport SASEBO - ECERT
07 JUN - 10 JUN	Enroute YOKOSUKA
10 JUN - 27 JUN	Inport YOKOSUKA/LMA
28 JUN - 01 JUL	Enroute VLADIVOSTOK, RUSSIA
01 JUL - 05 JUL	Inport Steam VLADIVOSTOK
16 JUL - 17 JUL	INSURV Preparations
20 JUL - 24 JUL	INSURV
28 JUL - 01 AUG	CMTQT
04 AUG - 07 AUG	TSTA III
11 AUG - 13 AUG	CMTQ
25 AUG - 25 AUG	BSP OKINAWA
26 AUG - 27 AUG	FEP
28 AUG - 31 AUG	Upkeep YOKOSUKA
01 SEP - 04 SEP	Enroute OTARU, JAPAN
05 SEP - 08 SEP	Inport Steam OTARU
09 SEP - 13 SEP	Escort CV 62
14 SEP - 16 SEP	ASWEX 97-6JA
17 SEP - 18 SEP	Escort CV 62
19 SEP - 22 SEP	Battle Group Operations OKINAWA OPAREA
23 SEP - 25 SEP	VALIANT BLITZ OKINAWA
28 SEP - 13 OCT	Inport YOKOSUKA
14 OCT - 16 OCT	Enroute PUSAN, KOREA
17 OCT - 19 OCT	Inport Steam PUSAN
21OCT - 23 OCT	Escort CV 62
24 OCT - 04 NOV	FOAL EAGLE 98
05 NOV - 12 NOV	ANNUALEX09G
06 NOV - 11 NOV	COPE NORTH 98-1
15 NOV - 31 DEC	Upkeep YOKOSUKA

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE 1997

On 01 January 1997, MOBILE BAY was inport, enjoying a much needed holiday stand-down prior to work ups and the upcoming deployment. Many of the crew took leave, both in Yokosuka and back in the States. In January the Combat Systems Department completed a CSRR to help them groom all portions of the Combat System. When completed, the technicians found the least amount of discrepancies ever for MOBILE BAY.

MOBILE BAY was again underway with INDEPENDENCE on 24 January for carrier qualifications, allowing the crew to train and prepare for the deployment. After returning to Yokosuka on 31 January, the crew continued to put the final touches on deployment preparations and on 14 February, MOBILE BAY was underway on the deployment known affectionately as "Southern Swing".

Immediately upon getting underway, MOBILE BAY was involved in an ASW exercise with the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force known as ASWEX 97-2JA. Upon completion of the ASW exercise, the ship conducted TSTA II with members of ATGWP observing, passing all portions and concluding the short underway with a brief stop in Guam to prepare for ECERT on the 26-27 February. When the INDEPENDENCE Battle Group pulled into Guam, it was the first time in over thirty years a Battle Group had been in Apra Harbor.

Though the ship made all the preparations possible, PEB came onboard on 26 February and found serious deficiencies that precluded a successful Engineering Certification. Nevertheless, MOBILE BAY got underway on 28 February for MISSILEX 97-2.

On 01 March, with USS CURTS and USS RODNEY M DAVIS in formation, MOBILE BAY successfully splashed a supersonic high altitude drone at 43nm. Though the exercise was an overall success, there were some tense moments. Initially, the drone fired at MOBILE BAY by the F-4 failed motor startup and splashed immediately upon separation from the launch platform. But the drone that was intended for RODNEY M DAVIS was used and the exercise was completed successfully, skin-to-skin.

During a brief stop back in Guam after the missile shoot, The Honorable Robert A. Underwood, Congressman to the Territory of Guam, came onboard MOBILE BAY for a tour and to meet with some of the ship's crew from Guam. During his tour, Senator Underwood was escorted by Capt Volpe and was

briefed on many of the capabilities of the AEGIS Combat System. After the brief stop, the ship was again underway en route for the Great Barrier Reef and Exercise Tandem Thrust.

During the transit to Australia, the ship was delayed in the Coral Sea due to Cyclone Justin. After a delay of about 48 hours, on 10 March, the Battle Group completed their transit to the oparea and the exercise was kicked off at full speed.

During Tandem Thrust, MOBILE BAY was AW, responsible for the defense of the IBG and control of all of the Naval air assets airborne. MOBILE BAY performed superbly. During the numerous raids by Orange forces, the team in CIC performed admirably, never allowing the opposing forces to close within weapons release range of the battle group undetected or unopposed. On 24 March, the exercise was completed and MOBILE BAY commenced her transit toward Sydney Australia for some much needed rest and relaxation.

On 26 March, MOBILE BAY pulled into Sydney Harbor and moored at Garden Island Naval Facility right in the heart of downtown Sydney. During the inport period the crew was afforded 8 days of liberty in Sydney before getting back underway for Guam. Once underway again, the ship was focused on completing one thing, ECERT. During the 8-day transit back to Guam, MOBILE BAY conducted numerous engineering tasking evolutions and main space fire drills in preparation for another look by PEB.

Through the months of April and May, MOBILE BAY continued to flex the engineering department through multiple sets of drills and evolutions. By the end of May, MOBILE BAY was again ready to rejoin the Indy Battle Group and did so prior to Hong Kong. This port visit marked the last time a battle group would visit Hong Kong prior to the July 1st turnover back to China. Following Hong Kong, MOBILE BAY was en route Okinawa to embark PEB to complete ECERT.

In the crew's typical fashion, they performed superbly. PEB came onboard and made particular note of the level of training and proficiency of the entire crew to ensure that MOBILE BAY passed ECERT with flying colors, and she did. PEB debarked in Sasebo, and the crew was able to spend a few days of rest before finally returning to Yokosuka.

On June 10th, MOBILE BAY pulled into to Harbor Master Pier West and was greeted by many of the crew's family and friends. Almost immediately upon return to Yokosuka, the

Supply Department commenced their own major inspection, the Logistics Management Assessment (LMA). For the week of 16 June, the Supply Department showed their ability to procure parts, cook meals for the entire crew and provide for the daily needs of everyone onboard. By the end of the week Supply Department had earned its 5th consecutive "E" for supply excellence.

Just prior to MOBILE BAY's return to Yokosuka, the crew was informed that they would be heading toward Vladivostok, Russia. MOBILE BAY would have RADM Charles W. Moore Jr., Commander Battle Force Seventh Fleet, embarked for the momentous trip. MOBILE BAY was in port Vladivostok to help celebrate the city's Founder's Day holiday on July 2nd, in commemoration of the founding of the city on the site of a sleepy fishing village in 1846 and our Independence Day on the fourth.

The MOBILE BAY arrived early in the morning on the first of July in very foggy and damp conditions, only to be greeted by the warm smiles and friendly people of Vladivostok. Many of the crew took part in tours of the city and events to commemorate Founder's Day and our own Independence Day. On the 2nd and 3rd, MOBILE BAY was open for general visiting and even with rain on the 3rd, over 2500 visitors came aboard for tours.

Some of MOBILE BAY's crew toured the Makarov Academy, the Russian equivalent of the U.S. Naval Academy, and also took part in basketball and volleyball games with students of the Academy. Other crewmembers were given the rare opportunity to tour an Udaloy class destroyer, the MARSHAL SHAPOSHNIKOV, MOBILE BAY's host ship for the visit. While aboard MARSHAL SHAPOSHNIKOV, U.S. sailors gained an insight as to how the Russian sailors live and work. The next day, MOBILE BAY hosted some of the MARSHAL SHAPOSHNIKOV sailors for an American style "steel beach" picnic, on the flight deck.

The highlight of the port visit was a 4th of July reception on MOBILE BAY's flight deck, hosted by RADM Moore and the Honorable Jane Miller Floyd, US Consul General. The reception dinner prepared by MOBILE BAY's Mess Specialist's and Food Service Attendant's was a huge success. With over 250 people on the flight deck toasting the occasion, and musical entertainment provided by the Seventh Fleet band, the guests enjoyed an event they won't soon forget.

Upon returning to Yokosuka on the 9th of July, MOBILE BAY had less than two weeks to be fully prepared for the

arrival of the Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) on the 21st of July. INSURV is the most comprehensive inspection any ship in the Navy is subject to and yet again, the crew of MOBILE BAY rose to the challenge. The entire crew was flexed, cleaning spaces, repairing and documenting equipment, and displaying operational use of every facet of the ship. By the end of the week, the INSURV inspection team was to remark that the Combat System was the best they had seen to date. MOBILE BAY had yet again defeated the odds and successfully completed another major inspection with little to no formal preparation.

The first three weeks of August were particularly trying for the Combat System department. No sooner had MOBILE BAY finished INSURV, than TSTA III came around the corner. Again the entire crew was flexed in the areas of Damage Control and Combat Systems utilization and Integrated Training Scenarios. Again, MOBILE BAY came through with flying colors and was ready to continue on toward the final stage in the training cycle, Final Evaluation Problem (FEP). Once back in Yokosuka, the Combat Systems department was preparing for the upcoming Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification, signifying MOBILE BAY's ability to properly plan and employ her Tomahawk and Harpoon cruise missiles. For the week prior to TSTA III and for two days afterward, the Strike Team rehearsed and exercised to ensure their ability to complete this important milestone for the ship. On the 13th of August, the Strike Team was evaluated as Satisfactory in all areas and MOBILE BAY's certification to employ her cruise missiles was again validated.

On the 22nd of August, MOBILE BAY was underway for a short run down to Okinawa to pick up the ATG riders to conduct the Final Evaluation Problem and complete the Training Cycle. On the 26th, MOBILE BAY was underway from White Beach and by the 28th, with the intention to complete FEP. After only two days, the ATG had seen enough and MOBILE BAY was assessed as completing the FEP. The training cycle was over and MOBILE BAY pulled in early on the morning of the 28th.

No sooner had MOBILE BAY pulled into port, and she was underway again - this time in company with USS INDEPENDENCE for a Goodwill Port visit to the port city of Otaru on the island of Hokkaido, the northern most of the Japanese main islands. During the visit from 5-9 September, the Officers and Sailors of MOBILE BAY were able to visit the beautiful countryside surrounding Otaru. Sailors were also able to

visit the bustling city of Sapporo, fifth largest city in Japan and the site of the 1972 Winter Olympics and the annual Snow Festival. Many of the crew that visited Sapporo enjoyed the city's rich history, striking natural beauty, and abundance of attractions.

On the 6th and 7th, MOBILE BAY was open to general visiting for the people of Otaru, during which time she hosted over 7000 people onboard for tours of the topside spaces, the pilothouse, helicopter hanger, and the embarked helicopters of HSL-49 from San Diego.

By the 9th, MOBILE BAY was on her way to the waters off Tokyo for ASWEX 97-6JA, a bilateral exercise with the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force stressing the ship's Anti-submarine Warfare capabilities. By the 17th, she was done with ASWEX, but had to transit to the Okinawa operating area for Exercise Valiant Blitz, an exercise that pitted the INDEPENDENCE Battle Group against the NIMITZ Battle Group, who was transiting the Pacific on her way to the Arabian Gulf. The exercise was designed to have each CVBG attempt to locate and target the other. Needless to say, INDY Battle Group was more than the NIMITZ Battle Group could handle.

By the 26th, MOBILE BAY was back inport Yokosuka for two weeks of much needed R&R. During the two weeks off, the crew spent a lot of time fixing necessary equipment and spending quality time with family and friends. On October 11th, MOBILE BAY made a strong showing at the 222nd Navy Birthday Ball. With over 80 members of the MOBILE BAY family in attendance, EXCALIBUR left her mark on the evening.

On the 14th of October, MOBILE BAY was underway, yet again, for Pusan, South Korea, in company with USS INDEPENDENCE as AW, the Air Warfare coordinator for the Battle Group. Inport Pusan on the 18th, the crew was exposed to some of the best shopping available in the Far East. By the time MOBILE BAY got underway on the 21st, the crew had bought piles of leather jackets, mink blankets, stuffed animals, and other sporting goods in preparation for the upcoming Holiday season.

Following the highly successful port visit in Pusan, MOBILE BAY participated in FOAL EAGLE (FE 97), an annual rear area field training exercise, from October 27 to November 6. FE 97 was the 36th in a series of this regularly scheduled, routine training exercise. The exercise was held at a variety of locations throughout the

Republic of Korea (ROK) and involved the majority of ROK forces, approximately 33,000 US forces on the Korean peninsula and augmentation forces from the U.S. and Pacific region. FE 97 was designed to test rear area protection operations and major command, control and communications systems. It also provided hands-on field experience for forces of both nations.

Immediately following FE 97, MOBILE BAY participated in one of the largest maritime exercises in the Pacific, ANNUALEX. The exercise was an annual, routine bilateral exercise designed to improve the capabilities of both U.S. and Japanese Naval forces involved. Approximately 9,000 U.S. Navy Sailors and Marines participated in the exercise in waters surrounding Japan.

Upon returning to Yokosuka on 14 November, some crewmembers were afforded the opportunity to take some leave and the remainder of the crew proceeded to make the ship ready for the Holidays. On 18 December, a Christmas party was held at Club Alliance and all hands that attended had a terrific time. The crew also enjoyed preparing for the holidays and dressed the ship in an amazing display of lights and decorations. MOBILE BAY would remain in Yokosuka through the end of the year.