



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS MOBILE BAY (CG-53)
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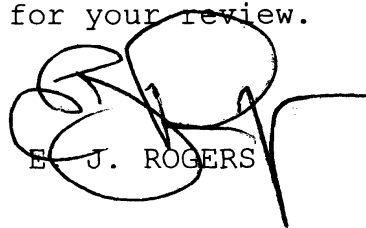
9 June 2000

From: Commanding Officer, USS MOBILE (CG 53)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (N09BH)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR 1999

Encl: (1) USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53) Command History for 1999

1. Enclosure (1) is forwarded for your review.


E. J. ROGERS

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE 1999

USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53) began 1999 in a holiday standdown as a part of a leave and upkeep period. Beginning on January 4, MOBILE BAY became the first ship on the Yokosuka waterfront to have eight inport duty sections. Many MOBILE BAY sailors attended Fire Fighting School for Repair Locker Training while others attended CIC Team Training classes. On January 7, LTJG [REDACTED] earned his Surface Warfare Qualification. Also on the 7th, a Hail and Farewell was conducted to say farewell to the Operations Officer, LCDR [REDACTED], and the Supply Officer, LCDR [REDACTED]. On January 12, the Wardroom conducted Sail Training at the CFAY Sailing Center. On January 14, MOBILE BAY participated in Exercise FORTRESS PREDATOR. On Friday, February 05, 1999, MOBILE BAY was underway to Okinawa, Japan to conduct Naval Surface Fire Support qualifications. After much hard work and training, MOBILE BAY earned its NGFS qualification. Following the NSFS FIREX, MOBILE BAY took time to conduct a TORPEX. On February 18, a celebration honoring the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. was held on the messdecks. After a brief stay in Okinawa, the ship was soon underway again, this time for MISSILEX 99-1A with USS THACH (FFG 43) on January 21. Also on that day, the CPO exam was administered to many of MOBILE BAY's First Class Petty Officers. Following the exercise, a TOWEX was conducted where MOBILE BAY towed the THACH. It was good to be able to practice an evolution that is not often conducted. The next day, MOBILE BAY conducted a High-Line Transfer with THACH. Personnel transferred were OS1 [REDACTED], ENS [REDACTED], LTJG [REDACTED], and the Operations Officer from THACH. The MOBILE BAY and THACH conducted much seamanship training before returning to Okinawa. After weekend liberty in Okinawa, MOBILE BAY was underway to Hong Kong. While enroute, the ship conducted many drills. On January 28, MOBILE BAY moored to Buoy A-41. While in Hong Kong, the crew enjoyed great liberty through shopping, dining at good restaurants, and experiencing the exciting Hong Kong nightlife. Others participated in community relations projects and Meals in the Home.

On February 1, MOBILE BAY departed Hong Kong and headed to Yokosuka, Japan. While enroute, ATG WestPac conducted Combat Information Center team training with multiple watch teams. The crew also conducted Engineering Casualty Control and Main Space Fire drills in preparation for CART II and ECERT. On February 4, the ship transited the Van Dieman Straits. MOBILE BAY returned to Yokosuka on February 5. MOBILE BAY continued preparations for CART II and ECERT among many other activities, which included SRTT, Industrial Hygiene Survey, BLUE DART

Exercise. The Wardroom also conducted sailing training in order to help the junior officers to develop a better understand the forces that act on a ship.

On February 14, the crew MOBILE BAY received the sad news that one of their shipmates had died unexpectedly. Memorial services for ENFA Joseph Mentler were conducted on February 17 on the flight deck of USS MOBILE BAY. The service, which was very moving, was video taped for his immediate family.

On February 18, MOBILE BAY celebrated both the 12th anniversary of its commissioning (which was actually on 21 February 87) and African American History Month. Nearly 100 crewmembers crowded onto the messdecks to attend the celebration an to see the presentation which emphasized the many contributions of African Americans to the Navy in general and MOBILE BAY, in specific. The ceremony was topped off with a delicious southern style meal and a ceremonial cake.

MOBILE BAY began a week of Engineering Certification (ECERT) with the arrival of the ATG CART II Engineering Team. MOBILE BAY passed the ATG portion with flying colors. On February 24, PEB arrived, received a turnover from ATG, and began evaluating MOBILE BAY's engineering evolutions. The ship got underway on February 25 for one day so that the Engineering Department along with the rest of the crew could be put through their paces at sea. Many Engineering evolutions were conducted along with a Main Space Fire Drill. MOBILE BAY returned to a well-deserved weekend of rest for the Engineering Department, especially.

Leading up to March 15, MOBILE BAY sailors worked hard preparing the ship for what was expected to be a three-month Spring Deployment. Schools, preservation and repairs were scheduled to work the ship up to maximum readiness prior to leaving port. MOBILE BAY departed Yokosuka on schedule, and proceeded to Guam to take part in MTX 99 and Tandem Thrust 99. During MTX, Naval forces from the United States, Australia, Canada, Singapore, and the Republic of Korea conducted numerous live fire exercises against airborne drones and the WWII Cruiser (and former SEVENTH FLEET flagship) Ex-USS OKLAHOMA CITY (affectionately known as the OKI BOAT). Throughout MTX MOBILE BAY was proud to be host to Royal Australian Midshipman Dean Battilana. Unfortunately, the HARPOON shot that was to be the highlight of the exercises did not take place due to excessive range fouling surface contacts. Overall however the exercise was a success, and the OKI BOAT was eventually sent to the bottom via submarine launched torpedoes. Exercise Tandem Thrust followed directly on the heels of MTX. During Tandem Thrust, American and Australian forces contested Canadian OPFOR in a

simulated defense of a notional island nation faced with unprovoked aggression from a neighboring state. MOBILE BAY defended both the USS KITTY HAWK and the FORT MCHENRY Amphibious Operating Group against Canadian Naval forces.

The rest of the planned spring deployment did not follow the expected path however, as events in the Balkans had ramifications in the SEVENTH FLEET AOR. Several elements of BATTLE FORCE SEVENTH FLEET, including the USS KITTY HAWK, were tasked with emergent operations due to a shift in global force positioning required by the intensifying conflict in Kosovo. After a post-exercise Guam port-call, MOBILE BAY was directed to return early to Yokosuka on April 15 for a ten day stop in homeport, so that her operational tempo could support a deployment later in 1999 originally scheduled for a ship that had been tasked to support the KITTY HAWK. MOBILE BAY took advantage of the inport period to conduct a brief stand down for the crew, and to conduct additional topside preservation and repairs. On 26 April, MOBILE BAY departed Yokosuka for Singapore to show the U.S. Flag in support of the 1999 International Maritime Defense Exhibition. Enroute, MOBILE BAY carried riders from the Yokosuka Aegis Training Readiness Center Detachment Yokosuka. ATRCD was requested to provide tailored training for MOBILE BAY watchstanders; part of MOBILE BAY's efforts to aggressively pursue the "pull" vice "push" training philosophy.

The beginning of May found MOBILE BAY inport Singapore. There the MOBILE BAY proudly served in the role of ambassador for the IMDEX '99 conference. The nations of France, Canada, Great Britain, Indonesia, and India had visiting warships for the conference, and representatives from numerous other nations were present including the Netherlands, Germany, and the Republic of China. As well as formal defense industry presentations, the conference included several social receptions - the most remarked upon being the Seventh Fleet reception held onboard MOBILE BAY. Honorable guests included Commander of Seventh Fleet, Vice Admiral Dorn and former Secretary of State General Al Haig.

Upon completion of the conference, the MOBILE BAY transited to The Gulf of Thailand to participate in the COBRA GOLD '99 exercise. After a week long port visit in Pattaya, the MOBILE BAY effectively executed operations with the Royal Thai Navy during COBRA GOLD '99 from 18 May to 23 May. The exercise included a Visit, Board, Search and Seizure, several air defense exercises, a torpedo launch and recovery and an exchange program bringing Thai officers to the ship to see first-hand how the MOBILE BAY does business. The MOBILE BAY even found an

opportunity for a swim call during a special steel beach picnic held in honor of the Thai officers' visit. The fare at the picnic included seafood from the Gulf of Thailand purchased by the ship from the local fishing fleet.

After COBRA GOLD '99, the MOBILE BAY continued deployment with a transit to the Philippine Islands in company with the replenishment oiler USNS YUKON. Always in training, the MOBILE BAY made the most of the transit with the YUKON and executed a towing exercise, and special day and night ship-driving operations for refueling alongside and another exchange of personnel. The highlight of the training with the YUKON, however, was an extremely rare astern fueling dry hook-up.

During the last days of May the MOBILE BAY conducted operations with the Philippine Navy in Manila Bay, upon the completion of which the ship made her voyage back to homeport through the Straits of Taiwan. The MOBILE BAY stopped in Okinawa prior to heading home to pick up members of the Afloat Training Group and the Carrier Group Five Chief of Staff to assess the ship's engineering readiness. MOBILE BAY demonstrated capable watch teams and an outstanding plant, and was well on her way to her EQUAL assessment scheduled in July. Upon return to port Yokosuka, the members of the MOBILE BAY crew took a much-deserved stand down from June 6th to June 14th.

Not long after the stand down, however, MOBILE BAY was called again to perform what she does best: contingency operations at sea. This time, the call was to calm a fishing area dispute in North Korean fishing waters. MOBILE BAY sailed from Yokosuka on 17 June within twenty-five hours of notification to join VINCENNES enroute to Korea. MOBILE BAY was provisioned within nine hours of the call with a thirty days' stores onload, 250 thousand gallons of fuel and ordnance including SM-2 missiles. Although MOBILE BAY was on a ninety-six hour RFS (ready for sea) until repairs were complete to a bank of fuel oil tanks, the extraordinary efforts of the crew made it possible for MOBILE BAY to sail in less than half the time. On her way to Korea, MOBILE BAY made a port visit to Sasebo, Japan followed by a four-day port visit in Pusan, South Korea.

The no notice CSOFEX 99-2A proved to be mutually beneficial for joint American Forces and ROK Naval and Air Forces. Three Korean riders and two U.S. riders embarked, this two day event improved the understanding between our combined forces in maritime counter-SOF tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPS) and command and control systems architecture. The ROKN officers were invaluable in passing information from MASOC to the ROKN

ships and ROKAF aircraft. MOBILE BAY returned to Yokosuka on July 2nd after fifteen days' underway time.

Continuing with an all-around highly successful month for both operations and training, MOBILE BAY crushed the engineering qualification on 15 July. The engineering team displayed the type of training and readiness expected from MOBILE BAY sailors as each crewmember contributed in making this significant milestone a team accomplishment. During 19-22 July, MOBILE BAY completed the Logistics Tactical Training cycle by successfully passing the Supply Management Inspection (SMI). MOBILE BAY's sales, food service and pack-up kit management converted the Supply Management Assessment to a successful SMI earlier. The Stores Division closed out the SMI by posting an overall score of 96.77%. ATG inspectors remarked on S-1's superb and impressive efforts, which sealed MOBILE BAY's Supply Department's reputation as among the best in Seventh Fleet.

Following suit, the Combat Systems Department successfully completed the Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification on August 9. The tomahawk and harpoon strike teams displayed outstanding levels of training and readiness. Also, Naval Surface Fire Support was completed on 18 August with an excellent score of ninety-four percent out of 75 percent needed to pass. Finally, MOBILE BAY enjoyed another important pre-deployment stand down before leaving behind family members during the deployment for exercise Crocodile '99.

Throughout this time leading to and during the qualifications, the Yokosuka Ship Repair Facility (SRF) was busy working in MOBILE BAY to ensure she would be ready for the upcoming Crocodile '99 exercise in Australia. In just seven short weeks SRF completed what was essentially half of a Selected Restricted Availability. And all while MOBILE BAY pushed through to achieve high marks in the qualifications.

On August 23, MOBILE BAY set sail for Townsville, Australia with the OBRIEN to participate in the much-anticipated Crocodile '99 exercise. MOBILE BAY never made it to Townsville, but was instead directed to Darwin. After four days of operations with OBRIEN and Australian vessels HMAS ANZAC and HMAS SUCCESS, OBIREN was detached and MOBILE BAY was ordered to return to Darwin to prepare for operations within Dili Harbor in East Timor. While inport Darwin, MOBILE BAY maintained a twenty-four hour RFS. While deployed to the Timor Sea, MOBILE BAY took on many roles to include: lily pad operations for Australian Black Hawk helicopters, escort operations, Dili guardship operations, air and surface surveillance and sanctuary for U.S. Air Force Intel personnel.

Perhaps one of the more memorable projects MOBILE BAY sailors participated in was the "Handyman Team." During operations in support of Operation Stabilize, MOBILE BAY supported United States Forces ashore with a "Handyman" team, which performed plumbing, electrical and general repairs to the U.S. Headquarters in the East Timor capital of Dili. The Command Center was the former Department of Labor building, which was destroyed during the chaos that followed the vote for independence. The MOBILE BAY "Tool-Timers" (EM's and HT's) conducted numerous repairs to make the new command center livable and functional, to include: installed water pump for drinking water, replaced water faucets and modified piping to accommodate a two-shower assembly, conducted electrical repairs to the building to provide lighting and assisted in modifying a flagpole to accommodate a whip antenna to extend range of saber communications. These efforts were vital to the success of U.S. Forces INTERFET and the accomplishment of their mission in East Timor.

Following MOBILE BAY's almost four-week straight underway time near East Timor, she was detached as Commander, INTERFET Forces and granted to visit liberty ports Singapore, Pattaya, Thailand and Kagoshima, Japan. After a four-day stay in both Singapore and Pattaya, MOBILE BAY continued her journey north to Japan in preparation for the up-coming ANNUALEX USW joint exercise with the Japanese Navy.

MOBILE BAY's port visit to Kagoshima, packed with formal intercultural events, was extremely successful. Upon arrival, MOBILE BAY hosted approximately thirty media personnel (including five television stations) for a question and answer session, capabilities and limitations presentation and ship tour. Captain Rogers conducted a one-hour interview with Asahi Shinbum, and made courtesy calls on Treasurer Morikuni Takada of Kagoshima Prefecture, Admiral Minoru Aoki, Chief of 10th MSO regional headquarters and Mr. Katsuo Morinaga, managing director of Kagoshima Chamber of Commerce. The commanding officer, executive officer and department heads attended a dinner hosted by SDF supporting association (Navy League equivalent) on Thursday evening, while MOBILE BAY hosted a reception for thirty VIP guests on Friday, 29 October. The ship was open to the visiting public on Friday and Saturday, and over 3000 visitors toured the ship. The MOBILE BAY COMREL team donated \$200 to a local orphanage while the soccer and softball teams found opportunities for play times against local area teams. Finally, a phenomenal fifty graduates (fifteen percent of the crew) launched on the town speaking rudimentary Japanese after

completion of a shipboard administered course, where over ninety percent of the crew received A's or B's.

MOBILE BAY returned to homeport Yokosuka on 9 November after completing the USW exercise ANNUALEX 11G. ANNUALEX provided good training for the SUW and USW teams, as it was discovered the LNO program was vital to the success of the exercise, especially in overcoming the language barrier. MOBILE BAY conducted a four-hour planning meeting with the Japanese staff in Sasebo and relayed changes to all U.S. commands inport.

Before pulling into homeport Yokosuka, MOBILE BAY hosted Rear Admiral Keating, CTF 70, for lunch and a brief on operations in East Timor on 6 November. Rear Admiral Keating spoke with the wardroom during lunch and addressed the crew via the 1MC. During his visit Rear Admiral Keating also observed the shiphandling prowess of MOBILE BAY's Junior Officer shiphandler of the year nominee during a man-overboard drill.

MOBILE BAY conducted a post deployment stand down from 10 November to 21 November. The stand down provided a chance for the crew to reconnect with families after the two and a half-month deployment. A significant number of the wardroom and crew joined in the celebration of the Navy's 224th birthday at Yokosuka's Thew Gym on 20 November. The ball was a huge success and greatly appreciated by all who attended.

On November 17th and 18th, MOBILE BAY hosted the Yokosuka Naval Base Fire Department for two days of shipboard fire fighting training. With expanded duty sections, the quick response of the base fire department will be crucial to back up the duty section fire party.

On 25 November, MOBILE BAY sponsored a Thanksgiving dinner at the Kobo Cottage orphanage. The event was an outstanding success, solidifying the true meaning of the Thanksgiving holiday. Just one more example of how the COMNAV for Japan 1999 COMREL Ship of the Year continued to lead the way in giving back to the community.

MOBILE BAY successfully completed the Afloat Training Group Yokosuka's inspection, CART II, on 29 November to 3 December. Additionally, on 8 December MOBILE BAY aced the ship's safety survey, making a tremendously positive impression on the safety inspectors who arrived from Norfolk, Virginia. In the final weeks of 1999 from 11 December to 4 January 2000, MOBILE BAY took a much-deserved stand down, spending quality time with family and friends. 1999 was an extremely successful year for MOBILE BAY. She was awarded all departmental excellence awards; the officer and enlisted surface warfare excellence pennants, named Community Relations Ship of the Year by Commander Naval Forces Japan and runner up for the CNO Good Neighbor Flagship

award, Commander Carrier Group Five self-sufficient ship of the
quarter three times, the CINCPACFLT Retention Award and the
Chief of Naval Information Best Familygram. DAMN THE TORPEDOES,
FULL SPEED AHEAD!!!