



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS MOBILE BAY (CG-53)
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53)
SHIP'S HISTORY 2002

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Against the backdrop of America's new war on terrorism, MOBILE BAY emerges to meet new challenges and answer any calling as "Freedom's Flagship." As a participant in the Optimal Manning Experiment, MOBILE BAY aggressively set higher standards and lead the way towards the Navy of the future. MOBILE BAY was the first ship to conduct a full deployment in the Fifth Fleet AOR with the SMARTSHIP Engineering Control System Upgrade, S/A CG47-586K, installed. The purpose of the SMARTSHIP Upgrade was to allow a cruiser to reduce manpower, upgrade technology, increase survivability, allow embedded training, and increase information resources through the Interactive Equipment Technical Manual. MOBILE BAY has embraced these innovations and proven the SMARTSHIP Upgrade is an integral part of the Navy's future.

MOBILE BAY sprinted into the New Year and a compressed training cycle. Set to deploy with the LINCOLN Battlegroup, MOBILE BAY participated in COMPTUEX from January 18, 2002 to February 7, 2002. Over the course of three weeks, MOBILE BAY flexed each warfare area throughout a multitude of exercises ranging from Tomahawk strikes to anti submarine warfare exercises and air defense exercises. The Battle Group exercise culminated in a final battle problem and MOBILE BAY proved herself to be a formidable asset to bring to any fight. After three weeks of flexing the mighty MOBILE BAY's combat abilities, the crew welcomed the sight of Point Loma on the horizon and looked forward to some time inport to gear up for the challenges ahead.

From February 11, 2002 to March 8, 2002, the ship was pierside for an Intermediate Maintenance Availability to make repairs for upcoming operations and evaluations. MOBILE BAY completed a successful Engineering Underway Demonstration from April 4th and 5th, making significant improvements in engineering material and operational readiness. Engineering was certified for unrestricted operations with all operations assessed as "effective." The Engineering Training Team (ETT) was deemed effective and capable of supporting all engineering training. Afloat Training Group (ATG) evaluators consistently commented on the positive attitudes and motivation of engineering watchstanders in correcting discrepancies and conducting operations.

On April 10, 2002 MOBILE BAY said farewell to Captain Peter B. Opsal at a Change of Command ceremony held at Pier Two, Naval Station San Diego and hailed Captain W. James Kear. It was a memorable closing to a successful tenure for Captain Opsal, while also serving as an inspirational beginning for MOBILE BAY and her new Captain.

The Combat Systems and Weapons Department underwent Combat Systems Command, Control, Communications, Computer Readiness Assessment (C5RA) from April 8, 2002 through April 25, 2002 where they identified discrepancies throughout the systems and were challenged to correct the discrepancies.

On April 19, 2002 MOBILE BAY made her way to Seal Beach, California for her ammo onload prior to participating in the Joint Force Training Exercise (JTFEX). Following three intense weeks of participating in Battle Group exercises and advanced battle problems, MOBILE BAY completed the Battle Group Force Protection Inspection from May 14 through May 16, 2002. The crew was inspected on their abilities to react to situations posed by the evaluators simulating terrorist threats they might experience overseas to include chemical and biological attack and suspected bomb threats. Following the inspection, MOBILE BAY also completed a successful NAVOSH Safety Survey on May 21, 2002 in preparation for the upcoming INSURV. In just eight weeks, MOBILE BAY held numerous zone inspections to identify thousands of discrepancies to be corrected prior to INSURV.

MOBILE BAY completed the INSURV Inspection on June 14, 2002 with a flawless performance. The senior inspector was extremely pleased with MOBILE BAY and wrote, "MOBILE BAY was well prepared for this inspection." The shipwide and engineering preparations allowed MOBILE BAY to meet minimum acceptable propulsion equipment by 0800 on Day 2 of the inspection. Across the board, engineering scored extremely well with a full power grade of 90%, a quick reversal grade of 90%, a steering grade of 97%, a propulsion grade of 86%, an auxiliaries grade of 80%, an electrical grade of 79% and a damage control grade of 75%.

With INSURV behind them, the crew turned towards making preparations for their upcoming Western Pacific deployment in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. The crew went directly into Pre Overseas Movement (POM) while accomplishing major milestones in material readiness prior to departure.

On July 18, 2002 families and friends were invited on board MOBILE BAY for the Family Day cruise. The demonstrations included a five-inch gun shoot, CIWS gun shoot, full power demonstration, and a fly by from Battlecat, HSL 43 Detachment ONE, who would be joining the crew for deployment. Along with the demonstrations and walking tours that continued all afternoon, crewmembers and their families enjoyed a barbeque on the flight deck accompanied with face painting for the kids and a DJ.

On July 24, 2002, a Navy band lined the pier as friends and families gathered teary eyed as they said their final goodbyes before the ship pulled away to embark on a deployment in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). Eight days later, MOBILE BAY pulled into Pearl Harbor, Hawaii for a short port visit. Transiting independently from the rest of the Battle Group, MOBILE BAY made port visits in Guam, Singapore and Thailand before entering the Fifth Fleet AOR.

MOBILE BAY's performance during deployment to the 5th Fleet served as the Ticonderoga Cruiser class example of multi-mission warfare. MOBILE BAY flawlessly executed a wide variety of missions including 122 boardings in a 35-day period in support of Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO). While enforcing United Nations Resolution 986 sanctions, MOBILE BAY discovered and confiscated over 12 thousand metric tons of illegally smuggled crude oil from Iraq valued at well over 2 million dollars. MOBILE BAY further demonstrated her flexibility and tactical acumen by performing impeccably as Air Defense Commander (ADC) for CTF 50 in the Persian Gulf, flagship for CDS 50 and as a Straights of Hormuz (SOH) escort unit. MOBILE BAY was innovative in every warfare area capitalizing on the benefits and tactical advantages inherent to the Smart Ship and OME concepts.

MOBILE BAY executed all tasking in support of OEF with unimpeachable professionalism and tactical excellence. Setting the standard for tenacity and readiness, MOBILE BAY's efforts in OEF MIO set new standards for query procedures and data collection processes. MOBILE BAY surpassed all others with over 220 queries while on station in the Gulf of Aden/Horn of Africa (GOA/HOA) operating area.

Leaning forward at every opportunity, MOBILE BAY coordinated and executed two multinational Surface Warfare training exercises with coalition partners from France, Germany, and Spain while assigned to CTF 150. MOBILE BAY also carried out an emergency MEDEVAC from a French flagged tanker significantly reducing the medical response time for a patient in critical need of care.

MOBILE BAY's continuous readiness and reliability as the HOA Tomahawk Shooter in support of National Tasking was unsurpassed. Throughout the competitive cycle, the MOBILE BAY Strike Team elevated the ship to be recognized as the premier Strike platform for the ABRAHAM LINCOLN BATTLE GROUP (ALBG). Demonstrating remarkable readiness and expertise through the performance of top operators and technicians, MOBILE BAY's performance in Texas Thunder, Fortress Archer, Babylon Express, and Nimble Havoc exercises was extraordinary. From July 24 to November 15, 2002, MOBILE BAY successfully completed thirty-six Strike scenarios with a total of one thousand eighty simulated missile launches. While deployed in support of OEF and Southern Watch, MOBILE BAY has routinely been the only unit in ALBG fully Strike mission capable for every exercise and all mission tasking.



W. JAMES KEAR