**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**
USS MOUNT WHITNEY (LCC 20)
FLEET POST OFFICE
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From: Commanding Officer, USS MOUNT WHITNEY (LCC 20)
To: Director of Naval History (N-09BH)

Subj: 1996 COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAV REPORT 5720-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Supporting Document: Upgraded Equipment List
(5) Supporting Document: Ship's Photo, 1996
(6) Commanding Officer's Biography
(7) Supporting Document: Welcome Aboard Brochure, 1996
(8) Supporting Documents: Mountain Signal Newspapers and Stargazer Family Newspaper

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (8) are forwarded.

R. H. ENDERLY

## COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

A. MISSION: USS MOUNT WHITNEY is the Flagship for Commander Second Fleet. With upgraded capabilities in Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence (C4I), USS MOUNT WHITNEY has served as the focal point in several joint/combined operations in the Atlantic Fleet Area of Responsibility. The berthing and dining facilities on board can accommodate over 1400 personnel and have been fully utilized for various exercises by thousands of service members and civilians from the United States as well as NATO countries.

B. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: ISIC - Commander Amphibious Group Two.

C. COMMANDING OFFICER: CAPTAIN RICHARD H. ENDERLY, USN

D. PERMANENT DUTY STATION: NORFOLK, VA

E. TYPE AND NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED: N/A

## CHRONOLOGY

| DATES OF EVENT | EVENT |
|---|---|
| 06 Jan | MOUNT WHITNEY 25th Birthday |
| 10 Jan | Underway for CPG-2 60 Day INSURV Assessment |
| 11 Jan | Returned to port (RTP) Norfolk |
| 22-26 Jan | Engineering Training Group (ETG) Visit |
| 26 Feb | Environmental Health/Industrial Hygiene Survey |
| 06 Mar | Underway for Underway Material Inspection (UMI) Rehearsal |
| 07 Mar | RTP Norfolk |
| 11-15 Mar | INSURV |
| 13 Mar | Underway for UMI |
| 14 Mar | RTP Norfolk |
| 18-29 Mar | CINCLANTFLT/FAADCLANT Disbursing Audit (Grade: Satisfactory) |
| 01-05 Apr | ETG Visit |
| 01 May | Underway for CJTFEX 96 |
| 17 May | RTP Norfolk |
| 03-07 Jun | ETG Visit |
| 04 Jun | Underway for Mid-Cycle Assessment (MCA) Preps |
| 05 Jun | RTP Norfolk |
| 19 Jun | RAD Health Internal and External Audit |
| 21 Jun | Deratization Certification |
| 24-28 Jun | ERAT Visit |
| 01 Jul | Audiobooth Survey Inport Certification |
| 08 Jul | Underway in VACAPES for MCA |

| | |
|---|---|
| 08 Jul | Heat Stress Readiness Survey (in conjunction with MCA) |
| 10 Jul | RTP Norfolk |
| 10 Jul | Underway for Hurricane Bertha evasion |
| 14 Jul | RTP Norfolk |
| 15 Aug | Underway en route Halifax, NS |
| 17 Aug | Arrived in Halifax, NS |
| 20 Aug | Underway en route Reykjavik, Iceland |
| 27 Aug | Arrived in Reykjavik, Iceland |
| 30 Aug | Underway for Exercise NORTHERN LIGHT/BRIGHT HORIZON 96 |
| 13 Sep | Arrived in Portsmouth, UK |
| 18 Sep | Underway from Portsmouth, UK, en route Norfolk |
| 29 Sep | RTP Norfolk |
| 11 Oct | Underway for CJTFEX 97-1 |
| 22 Oct | RTP Norfolk |
| 29 Oct | Medical Readiness Evaluation (Grade: C1 Status) |
| 30 Oct | Commenced 16 Week Phased Maintenance Availability, Norfolk Naval Shipyard (Completion scheduled for 5 February 1997) |

**NARRATIVE**

The 60 Day INSURV Assessment was conducted by COMPHIBGRU TWO to evaluate the ship's readiness for the March INSURV. The inspection team found various discrepancies; electrical safety, HAZMAT management and safety were specifically graded as unsatisfactory. Immediately, a shipwide standdown was initiated to rectify all discrepancies and to target for a successful INSURV.

The March INSURV was very successful and minimal discrepancies were found throughout the ship. The senior inspector gave high accolades to the ship, stating the MOUNT WHITNEY was the most prepared ship he had ever inspected. LESSONS LEARNED: The two month preparation was a grueling experience with long hours and endless shipwide inspections. More preparation during the holiday stand could have avoided this last minute shuffle, but the greatest lesson learned was that these shipwide programs should be continually executed, monitored and maintained, regardless of future inspection status.

During INSURV preparations, the Engineering Department had a successful Engineering Training Group (ETG) visit which thoroughly reviewed all aspects of engineering readiness, including material readiness and administrative programs. LESSONS LEARNED: Personnel training in realistic casualty control drills was found to be at a minimum (due largely to MOUNT WHITNEY's unique deployment schedule). In order to train engineering personnel while also meeting COMSECONDFLT's schedule requirements, a weekly light off schedule was administered for realistic drills and training. During later ETG visits and the Mid-Cycle Assessment (MCA) this was found to be a valuable training tool.

Also during INSURV preparations the Environmental Health/Industrial Hygiene Survey was conducted with minor discrepancies and satisfactory results.

The CINCLANTFLT/FAADCLANT Disbursing Audit was conducted with minor discrepancies and a grade of satisfactory.

The April ETG visit showed improvements in engineering personnel training and it was evaluated as Satisfactory. LESSONS LEARNED: More shipwide attention was necessary for Main Space Fire Drills. Walk-through drills were scheduled weekly and realistic Main Space Fire Drills were conducted during JTFEX 96-2.

In May 1996, MOUNT WHITNEY got underway for Combined Joint Task Force Exercise (CJTFEX) 96. More than 53,000 military service members from the United States and the United Kingdom participated in the exercise on military installations in the southeastern United States and in littoral waters along the Eastern Seaboard. Participants included the USS ENTERPRISE Battle Group (26 ships), UK Task Group (27 ships), 8th Air Force (191 aircraft), Carrier Air Wing 17 (80 aircraft), Royal Air Force (56 aircraft), XVIII Airborne Corps (82nd Division), II Marine Expeditionary Force Forward, 24 Marine Expeditionary Unit,

and UK 3 Commando Brigade. Overall the exercise was very successful.

The June ETG visit showed further improvements on engineering personnel training and also shipwide Main Space Fire Drills. The evaluation was Satisfactory and the ship was on track for the July Mid-Cycle Assessment.

The annual RAD Health Internal and External Audit was conducted by COMPHIBGRU TWO and the results were Satisfactory. The Deratization Certification, a requirement for port visits, was conducted by Navy Environmental Preventive Medical Unit Two (NEPMU-2) and found MOUNT WHITNEY rat free.

The Engineering Readiness Assessment Team (ERAT) from COMPHIBGRU TWO made the final engineering evaluation prior to the MCA. The visit found the training and material readiness to be at optimum levels. The extensive classroom training, weekly hot plant casualty control training and shipwide Main Space Fire Drill training proved effective when the MCA was completed successfully. LESSONS LEARNED: Training should be a realistic and ongoing process with frequent outside evaluation; fortunately this lesson was learned early.

The ship returned to port for only a few hours after the assessment then quickly redeployed with 44 other ships to avoid Hurricane Bertha. Hurricane avoidance operations continued for four days.

MOUNT WHITNEY deployed in August to participate in Exercise NORTHERN LIGHT/BRIGHT HORIZON. On 17 August 1996, the ship visited Halifax, Nova Scotia for a four-day port call. Halifax is an active city with many things for sailors to experience and was a good port visit for morale.

Joining up with Canadian naval ships, MOUNT WHITNEY sailed into Reykjavik, Iceland for another four-day port visit and to rendezvous with other NATO ships in preparation for the exercise. Iceland had many geographical attractions but was very expensive, which limited sailor activities.

Following Reykjavik, MOUNT WHITNEY proceeded to the exercise operating area near the coast of Norway and the Shetland Islands, where she joined with NATO ships from nine other nations. The exercise involved more than 70 ships, 20,000 American Sailors, and about 12,000 service members from Britain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain. For the exercise, involving two opposing forces, MOUNT WHITNEY served as the strategic joint operations command and control platform for one force. As a tactical maneuver during the exercise, MOUNT WHITNEY anchored in a Norwegian fjord, successfully hiding from opposing forces.

The exercise concluded with a five day visit to Portsmouth, England for a commander's debrief of the exercise. On the 11-day transit across the Atlantic, the MOUNT WHITNEY crew continued to sharpen their damage control, fire fighting, and main engineering casualty drills. The transit was also an excellent opportunity for crew training on Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialty (ESWS) qualifications.

Two weeks after returning from the North Atlantic cruise, MOUNT WHITNEY returned to the Virginia Capes Operating Area for

JTFEX 97-1. More than 15,000 service members from all branches of the armed forces participated in the exercise. Participating units included the USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN-71) Carrier Battle Group and USS NASSAU (LHA-4) Amphibious Ready Group; elements of the II Marine Expeditionary Force; elements of the U.S. Air Force's Air Combat Command and Air Mobility Command; and units from Mine Warfare Command, Special Operations Command, Space Command, U.S. Coast Guard, and both Canadian and Netherlands patrol aircraft. This exercise was also highly successful.

The Medical Readiness Assist Visit in October found the Medical Department fully operational and was graded with a C1 Status and upgraded to a Medical Readiness Evaluation.

Early preparation for the 16 week Phased Maintenance Availability made for a smooth transition to the Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) and the industrial environment. The end of the year found MOUNT WHITNEY more than half way through the Phased Maintenance Availability, starting to prepare for sea trials scheduled for January 1997.

## UPGRADES/CAPABILITIES

MOUNT WHITNEY continued to upgrade C4I equipment and to improve the material condition of the ship throughout the year.

1. Permanent installations/upgrades included:

Communications:

-- Global Broadcast System (GBS) was installed. This system provides data capability for the Air Tasking Order (ATO), Common Operational Picture (GCCS), primary and secondary imagery, IMACTS imagery, TRAP/TIBS/BINOCULAR, Army Common Ground Station, DMA maps, Navy METOC, AF Global Weather, INTELINK-S, Army Intel, and Tomahawk MDU data. It also provides video capability for Tomahawk tail-fin video, Tomahawk chase plane, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), CNN, medical imagery, FEMA Scrolling Scenario, "canned" JICPAC intel briefing, JWID brief, GBS brief, and GBS tutorial.

-- NAVMACS II was updated.

-- TRI-TAC System was installed. This includes switch multiplex unit, digital small switch, remote access unit, group logic unit, and Command Net radio interface.

-- Digital Wideband Transmission System was installed. This resolves shipboard VHF, HF, and SHF congestion, demand, and delay.

-- A seven-foot SHF antenna system was installed to increase SHF transmit/receive capability.

-- The Contingency Theater Automated Planning System (CTAPS) was installed to enable real-time transmission of Air Tasking Order data.

-- The Common Operational Modeling, Planning, and Simulation Strategy was installed for interoperable, distributed collaborative planning in the combined arms environment.

-- Naval EHF Command Console provides the capability to transmit MDU's over EHF.

-- A JMCIS 2.2 upgrade completed the integration of the JMCIS network.

-- The External Communications Control Terminal was installed to control secure EXCOMM circuit connectivity using either a conventional keyboard/mouse or LCD touch screen.

-- The Shipboard Meteorological and Oceanographic Observation System provided upgraded capabilities to the AN/UMK-3 Tactical Environmental Support System (TESS).

-- A GTE SATCOM software upgrade improved the pitch/roll response of the satellite antenna.

-- The Mission Data System (MDS) was upgraded with Version 3.0.8.2 software.

-- Navy Global Command and Control System (GCCS) was installed to provide global status of forces information in common operating environment; common core functionality in crisis planning force employment/deployment, fire support, personnel, and narrative information.

-- The Air Defense System Integrator (ADSI) was installed to provide a complete tactical picture of air, surface, and subsurface contacts.

-- An SHF SATCOM multi-function card was installed, enabling the AN/WSC-6 to operate at higher bandwidths with reduced power output.

-- The GENSER Joint Deployable Intel Support System (JDISS) was installed to provide automated intelligence support to the JTF Commander using existing Theater communications via DSNET III.

-- Refurbishment of the SRA-62 antenna commenced. Several radials were broken off and required replacement, and the entire unit required sand blasting and painting.

-- High Frequency Radio Group (HFRG) installation commenced. This system routes HF transmit signals to a series of common antennas without the requirement for narrowband multicouplers, and replaces existing antennas with upgraded 2-30MHz units.

Radar:

-- An AN/SPS-40E radar upgrade resolved EMI RF problems with non-hardened communications systems.

Engineering:

-- The entire ship's phone system was overhauled and replaced with a new AT&T system.

-- A fresh water drain tank pump was repaired underway in October.

-- A major repair was conducted on the main steam line 10 August 1996.

-- Two main condensor casualties, caused by ruptured tubes, were repaired by ship's force during the NORLANT.

-- Overhaul of the main condensor began in December.

-- The #2 Evaporator third state ruptured tube was repaired and overhauled during the NORLANT.

-- A major repair was made to the 1C SSTG trip throttle valve during the NORLANT, clearing underway restrictive.

-- The main engine lube oil purifier was overhauled using decommissioned ship parts in December.

-- A new crossover valve was installed in the anchor windlass hydraulic system in December.

-- The CHT system was overhauled, to include: Four CHT air blowers, four CHT pumps, four communators, 23 remote operators and 23 CHT plug valves.

-- A new sheet metal shearer and pipe bender were installed in the HT shop.

Other:

-- Three NTDS consoles were removed in D & T to make more room for an embarked JFACC GAT cell.

-- During the Phased Maintenance Availability (PMA), the NAVSEA self-help program produced four new berthing areas and four heads. Numerous pieces of new equipment were installed throughout Supply, including washers, dryers, refrigerators and freezers, steamers, griddles, and a new PRC on the mess decks. The mess decks and lower wardroom were redecorated. Two three-man staterooms increased officer berthing by six.

2. Temporary installations were as follows:

-- U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force Command Tactical Terminals were installed in support of CJTFEX 96.

-- The Remote Joint Tactical Air Ground Station provided temporary joint communications capability.

-- Generic Area Limitation Environment Terminal provided geographic displays for MDU generation.

-- The Command and Control Integrated Planning System was used to develop flight planning for Air Mobility Command.

-- A prototype of the Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System provided targeting information to ground stations.

-- A temporary personal computer data system work station was used to collect exercise data for post-exercise debriefs.

-- A preliminary Joint Operations Center System was used as an ASA United Kingdom message server.

-- The installed LAN was reconfigured to support releasable and non-releasable (NATO) networks.