



*Rec'd 4/16/96*  
**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
USS NASHVILLE (LPD-13)  
FPO AE 09579-1715**

5700  
Ser LPD13/PAO 094  
1 APRIL 1996

From: Commanding Officer, USS NASHVILLE (LPD 13)  
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVISNT 5750.12

Encl: (1) USS NASHVILLE Command History for 1995

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

*J. A. Bolcar*  
J. A. BOLCAR

**USS NASHVILLE (LPD-13) COMMAND HISTORY**

**1995**

**Encl (1)**

## CONTENTS OF USS NASHVILLE (LPD 13) 1995 COMMAND HISTORY

1. Command Composition and Organization
2. Ship's Mission
3. Chronology of Significant events for 1995
4. Narrative Report and Items of Interest
5. Supporting Documentation:
  - a. Photo of the USS NASHVILLE (LPD 13)
  - b. Welcome Aboard Pamphlet
  - c. News Releases, Supporting Messages, and Information

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

Commanding Officer: (from 03 APR) CAPT James A. Bolcar, USN  
(to 03 APR) CAPT Thomas G. Otterbein, USN

Executive Officer: CDR Paul A. Cruz, USN

Operations Officer: LCDR [REDACTED], USN

Engineer Officer: LT [REDACTED], USN

First Lieutenant: (from 08 DEC) LT [REDACTED], USN  
(to 08 DEC) LT [REDACTED], USN

Supply Officer: LT [REDACTED], USN

Chaplain: (from 08 DEC) LCDR [REDACTED], USNR  
(to 08 DEC) LCDR [REDACTED], USN

Air Officer: (from 24 OCT) LT [REDACTED], USN  
(to 24 OCT) LT [REDACTED], USN

Medical Officer: (from 12 AUG) LT [REDACTED], USNR  
(to 12 AUG) CDR [REDACTED], USN

Dental Officer: LT [REDACTED], USNR

Nav/Admin Officer: LT [REDACTED], USN

Command Master Chief: ABCM(SW/AW) James A. Welsh, USN

WARDROOM:

LT [REDACTED], USNR  
LT [REDACTED], USN  
LT [REDACTED], USN  
LT [REDACTED], USN  
LT [REDACTED], USN  
LTJG [REDACTED], USNR  
LTJG [REDACTED], USN  
LTJG [REDACTED], USN  
LTJG [REDACTED], USN  
LTJG [REDACTED], USN  
LTJG [REDACTED], USN

LTJG [REDACTED], USN  
LTJG [REDACTED], USN  
ENS [REDACTED], USN  
ENS [REDACTED], USNR  
ENS [REDACTED], USN  
ENS [REDACTED], USN  
ENS [REDACTED], USNR  
CWO3 [REDACTED], USN  
CWO3 [REDACTED], USMC  
CWO2 [REDACTED], USN

**SENIOR COMMANDS:**

COMPHIBGRU TWO:      RADM William R. Fladd, USN  
                             RADM Leonard F. Picotte, USN

COMPHIBRON EIGHT:    CAPT Jerome Schill, USN

USS NASHVILLE (LPD-13) Homeport: Norfolk Naval Base, Norfolk, VA

**SHIP'S MISSION:**

USS NASHVILLE (LPD-13), an Amphibious Transport Dock, is the thirteenth ship of her class. She combines the capabilities of the Amphibious Dock Landing Ship (LSD) and the Helicopter Assault Ship (LPH) into one unit. NASHVILLE's primary mission is to transport a landing force, utilizing helicopter and amphibious craft, for an initial amphibious assault and provide support for an extended period of time. NASHVILLE can embark up to 850 Navy and Marine Corps officers and enlisted personnel with all associated equipment required for a sustained Marine Amphibious Assault at the objective area. As a Flag Configured ship, NASHVILLE has the capabilities to act as primary control ship, allowing an embarked Amphibious Squadron or Group Commander to coordinate and control all air, sea, and ground force assets whose support is necessary to ensure the success of an amphibious operation.

## CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS FOR 1995

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SIGNIFICANT EVENTS</u>
01 JAN - 08 JAN	Holiday Leave and Upkeep
09 JAN - 10 JAN	Inport: Norfolk, VA
11 JAN - 16 JAN	OPPE preps - VCOA
17 JAN - 18 JAN	Inport: Norfolk, VA
19 JAN - 04 FEB	Exercise: JTFEX 95-2
05 FEB - 08 FEB	Inport: Norfolk, VA
09 FEB - 10 FEB	OPPE
11 FEB - 20 FEB	Upkeep: Norfolk, VA
21 FEB - 23 FEB	Ammo Onload: Yorktown, VA
24 FEB	Tiger Cruise/Transit: Norfolk, VA
25 FEB - 26 FEB	Inport: Norfolk, VA
27 FEB - 20 MAR	IMAV: Pre-Deployment
18 MAR - 21 MAR	Ammo Onload: Norfolk, VA
22 MAR	Deployed as a member of MARG 95-2
23 MAR	Onload: Morehead City, NC
23 MAR - 04 APR	TRANSLANT Voyage
03 APR	CAPT James A. Bolcar relieved CAPT Thomas G. Otterbein as Commanding Officer
04 APR	Exercise: SPANISH CAPEX 2-95
05 APR - 09 APR	Port Visit: Rota, Spain
10 APR	Transit: Malaga, Spain
11 APR - 15 APR	Port Visit: Malaga, Spain
16 APR - 23 APR	Exercise: SPANISH PHIBLEX 2-95
21 APR	RAS: USNS LEROY GRUMMAN (TAO 195)
22 APR	Visit: Honorable John Dalton, SECNAV
24 APR - 29 APR	Port Visit: Cartagena, Spain for IMAV
30 APR - 11 MAY	Exercise: DESTINED GLORY 95
05 MAY	RAS: USNS BIG HORN (TAO 198)
09 MAY	RAS: USNS BIG HORN (TAO 198)
12 MAY	Transit: Toulon, France
13 MAY - 16 MAY	Port Visit: Toulon, France
17 MAY	Transit: Capo Teulada, Italy
18 MAY - 23 MAY	Anchored: Capo Teulada, Italy
24 MAY - 26 MAY	Exercise: TRIDENTE 95
26 MAY	RAS: USNS LEROY GRUMMAN (TAO 195)
27 MAY - 28 MAY	Transit: Adriatic Sea
29 MAY - 08 JUN	Presence Operations: Adriatic Sea
05 JUN	RAS: USNS LEROY GRUMMAN (TAO 195)
08 JUN	Assist in rescue of Capt Scott O'Grady, USAF
09 JUN	Transit: Trieste, Italy

10 JUN - 13 JUN	Port Visit: Trieste, Italy
14 JUN - 18 JUN	Presence Operations: Adriatic Sea
19 JUN - 20 JUN	Transit: Naples, Italy
19 JUN	RAS: USNS LEROY GRUMMAN (TAO 195)
21 JUN - 28 JUN	Port Visit: Naples, Italy
29 JUN - 30 JUN	Transit: Adriatic Sea
01 JUL	Presence Operations: Adriatic Sea
02 JUL	RAS: USNS LEROY GRUMMAN (TAO 195)
02 JUL	Transit: Corfu, Greece
03 JUL - 06 JUL	Port Visit: Corfu, Greece
07 JUL	Transit: Adriatic Sea
08 JUL - 11 JUL	Presence Operations: Adriatic Sea
09 JUL	RAS: USNS LEROY GRUMMAN
10 JUL	RAS: USNS SIRIUS (TAFS 8)
12 JUL - 17 JUL	Port Visit: Bari, Italy
17 JUL	RAS: USS SEATTLE (AOE 3)
18 JUL - 25 JUL	Exercise: RESCUE EAGLE
24 JUL	RAS: USNS BIG HORN (TAO 198)
26 JUL - 01 AUG	Presence Operations: Adriatic Sea
28 JUL	RAS: USNS KANAWA (TAO 196)
02 AUG - 07 AUG	Port Visit: Rhodes, Greece
08 AUG - 09 AUG	Transit: Adriatic Sea
10 AUG - 20 AUG	Presence Operations: Adriatic Sea
14 AUG	RAS: USNS SIRIUS (TAFS 8)
15 AUG	RAS: USNS KANAWA (TAO 196)
18 AUG	RAS: USS SEATTLE (AOE 3)
21 AUG - 24 AUG	Port Visit: Zakynthos, Greece
25 AUG - 28 AUG	Transit: Ibiza, Spain
25 AUG	RAS: USNS JOHN LENTHALL (TAO 189)
29 AUG - 02 SEP	Port Visit: Ibiza, Spain
02 SEP	Transit: Rota, Spain
03 SEP - 08 SEP	Port Visit: Rota, Spain
09 SEP - 19 SEP	Transit: Morehead City, NC
20 SEP	Offload: Morehead City, NC
21 SEP - 22 SEP	Tiger Cruise/Transit: Norfolk, VA
22 SEP	Inport: Norfolk, VA
22 SEP - 22 OCT	Post Deployment Stand Down
23 OCT - 28 NOV	IMAV: Post-Deployment
28 NOV - 07 DEC	Exer: JTFEX 96-1
08 DEC - 10 DEC	Inport: Norfolk, VA
11 DEC - 14 DEC	Ammo Offload: Yorktown, VA
15 DEC - 18 DEC	Inport: Norfolk, VA
18 DEC - 31 DEC	Holiday Leave and Upkeep

## NARRATIVE OF EVENTS

After completing its Holiday Leave and Upkeep period, the crew of the USS NASHVILLE (LPD 13) returned to work and prepared the ship to get underway. The entire crew focused on the upcoming Operational Propulsion Plant Exam (OPPE). The ship spent the first half of January performing Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercise (BECCE) drills underway in the Virginia Capes Operation Area (VCOA), pierside at Norfolk Naval Station, and anchored in Lynnhaven Anchorage. Drills continued while the ship was off the coast of Onslow Bay, NC, participating in JTFEX 95-2. This exercise, from 19 January through 04 February, was the final opportunity for the NASHVILLE to conduct training with Marine Corps units that would embark for the upcoming six month Mediterranean Sea deployment.

Upon its return to Norfolk, the ship completed its final training period and conducted OPPE from 09-10 February. All the hard work and preparations paid off, as NASHVILLE received an overall score of GOOD, the highest grade given to any ship in the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG). NASHVILLE then returned to Norfolk and continued its deployment preparations.

From 21-23 February, the ship was at Yorktown Naval Weapons Station conducting a weapons onload. At the end of this period, the ship's brow was opened to family and friends of the crew for a Tiger Cruise during the ship's transit back to Norfolk. The one day event provided loved ones the opportunity to experience a day in the life of NASHVILLE Sailors.

Once back in Norfolk, the ship commenced its pre-deployment Intermediate Maintenance Availability (IMAV) to effect emergent repairs and equipment upgrades prior to deploying. Unfortunately, on the afternoon of 17 March, while conducting tests of the ship's ballast system, a leak caused major flooding in one of the ammunition magazines. The quick reaction by the crew secured the leak and prevented further flooding. The next morning, only four days prior to deploying to the Mediterranean Sea, the ship shifted berths to conduct repairs and offload damaged ammunition. Unselfish, round the clock efforts by the crew, ensured that the damaged ammunition was removed and replaced, allowing NASHVILLE to depart Norfolk on schedule.

On 22 March, NASHVILLE eased into the outbound traffic of the Elizabeth River, with USS KEARSARGE (LHD 3) and USS PENSACOLA (LSD 38), and disappeared over the horizon. On 23 March, after embarking her Marine Corps complement from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit Special Operations Capable (MEUSOC), NASHVILLE headed east toward the Mediterranean Sea for challenge and adventure abroad.

On 3 April, NASHVILLE held her sixteenth change of command ceremony as CAPT James A. Bolcar relieved CAPT Thomas G. Otterbein. CAPT Jerome Schill, Commander, Amphibious Squadron EIGHT, was the guest speaker.

Just two weeks after the ARG left Norfolk, NASHVILLE was hard at work conducting amphibious operations. The ARG joined forces

with Spanish Marines for the advanced force phase of SPANISH CAPEX 2-95 at Sierra de Retin on Spain's Atlantic coast near the Straits of Gibraltar. In the early morning hours, NASHVILLE launched two Special Boat Unit Twenty (SBU 20) fast reconnaissance boats with members of SEAL Team EIGHT aboard. The boat crews delivered the SEALs to a pre-determined point near the intended landing site to allow the SEAL's to swim ashore and survey the beach. The information the SEAL's provided was essential to the follow-on assault conducted by air cushioned landing craft (LCAC) from KEARSARGE. The LCAC's delivered the main force of Marines, and the exercise proceeded according to plan. This was a fine example of the teamwork necessary for safe, efficient amphibious operations.

Following the Atlantic crossing and the initial exercise with the Spanish Marines, NASHVILLE enjoyed a much needed port visit in Rota, Spain. While in port, the engineers ensured the safe onload of 365,000 gallons of fuel. A short transit through the Straits of Gibraltar found NASHVILLE making a stop in Malaga, Spain, on 11 April. The major attraction was Semana Santa--the Spanish celebration of Holy Week. The pageantry and festivity of the Holy Week celebration was most impressive, and the crew learned quickly to join their Spanish hosts in the spirit of the occasion.

After departing Malaga on 15 April, NASHVILLE returned to Sierra de Retin. Here, the ARG combined forces with the Spanish units SPS ARAGON and LCT A-06 while the USS AUBREY FITCH (FFG 34) was tasked to provide naval gunfire support for SPANISH PHIBLEX 2-95. Members of Tercio de Armada (Spanish Marines) embarked NASHVILLE. A rehearsal assault was performed on 17 April, with the final assault launched on 18 April, placing American and Spanish Marines ashore. Through the use of LCU-1661 embarked onboard NASHVILLE, all units arrived ashore in an expeditious and professional manner. During the next five days, 24 MEUSOC and Tercio de Armada conducted joint operations ashore as ARG ships remained nearby in a supporting role.

On 22 April, while waiting for the embarked troops to complete their joint training ashore, the ARG was visited by the Honorable John H. Dalton, Secretary of the Navy. While onboard NASHVILLE, the Secretary had the pleasure of recognizing three of the ship's finest sailors. Before the Sailors and Marines of NASHVILLE, he presented BT1(SW) [REDACTED] with the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for his selection as NASHVILLE's Sailor of the Year for 1994. Also recognized were ABH3(AW) [REDACTED] and Seaman [REDACTED] as Petty Officer of the Quarter and Sailor of the Quarter respectively for the First Quarter of 1995.

After completing the equipment back load on 23 April, NASHVILLE weighed anchor, and on 24 April passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, and arrived in Cartagena, Spain in company with PENSACOLA. Both ships were due for an IMAV with the USS SHENANDOAH (AD 44). The hard work and effort by the crews of both ships were the primary reasons the NASHVILLE-SHENANDOAH team

successfully completed nearly 200 work items in a five day period. These repairs were instrumental in maintaining the twenty-five year old NASHVILLE at the high state of material and operational readiness required to complete its multi-mission role. HTCS(SW) Richard Tredinnick, NASHVILLE's coordinator responsible for planning work packages with SHENANDOAH's crew, called the IMAV, "Surprisingly productive for the short amount of time available between exercises. The men and women of SHENANDOAH obviously went out of their way to provide total quality repair."

Underway from Cartagena on 29 April, the ship travelled to Capo Teulada, Sardinia, for exercise DESTINED GLORY 95. On 1 May, by 0415, both the boat deck and well deck were fully manned, and ready to launch SEAL insertion boats and Marine raiding craft. The SEAL teams covertly proceeded to the beach and provided surf observations and terminal guidance to the first waves of landing craft. Quickly, the focus shifted to the stern gate where Lima company marshaled its raiding craft for the assault on Red Beach. Like a well-oiled machine, at 0600, the Navy/Marine Corps team had 16 combat rubber raiding craft and 100 Marines in the water speeding through the darkness toward the objective. With the arrival of dawn, the men of NASHVILLE prepared to launch LCU-1661 to provide the logistical link supporting the shore maneuvering operational plan.

The next ten days proved to be equally challenging. This multinational, amphibious exercise combined American, British, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Greek, and Turkish units. DESTINED GLORY offered valuable cross training, both ashore and afloat, leading up to a rehearsal landing on 6 May. A prelude to this assault, however, was an underway replenishment with the USNS BIG HORN (TAO 198) on 5 May. Commodore Schill was assigned as the Advance Force Commander and cross-decked to NASHVILLE in order to carry out these duties. The main assault on 8 May was lead by a coordinated advance force operation launched from NASHVILLE, ITS SAN MARCO, HS NEARCHOS, and SNS INFANTA CRISTINA. The assault went smoothly and upon completion of back loading her embarked units, NASHVILLE headed back out to sea for another underway replenishment with the BIG HORN on 9 May. On 11 May, NASHVILLE departed Capo Teulada enroute for Toulon, France.

NASHVILLE arrived at France's largest naval base on 13 May. Local hospitality was readily apparent from the many well-wishers who came to visit the ship, as well as the various local tours that were offered to the crew. LT [REDACTED], NASHVILLE's Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) officer said, "I've never encountered such a friendly group of people who were so encouraging of NASHVILLE's Sailors and Marines to sample their local cuisine and culture and take in all of the historic sites."

On Monday, 15 May, twenty eight Sailors and Marines from NASHVILLE and PENSACOLA stormed the beachhead at the San Salvador Hospital for severely disabled children. The beach area had accumulated a vast amount of debris. Substituting wheel

barrows, rakes, and shovels for small boats and machine guns, the Marines and Sailors attacked the trash. After toiling for six straight hours to remove several tons of debris, the objective was finally completed. Speaking on behalf of the children, the hospital's director said, "Even though many of the children can not speak and others are unable to convey their thanks due to the language barrier, the smiles on their faces and the sparkle in their eyes will express it." The words of CPL ████████ of BLT 3/8 echoed the sentiment shared by all, "This is what life is all about, helping others."

On 19 May, the ARG again rendezvoused at Capo Teulada. Travelling to the north, the ARG commenced Exercise TRIDENTE 95 at Capo Pula, on 24 May, with multi-national forces from Britain, Italy, Spain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Turkey.

A combined rehearsal landing at Capo Teulada occurred on 25 May. Later that day, NASHVILLE had the opportunity to welcome aboard members of the media. Reporter John McWethy of ABC News came aboard with a small team. The media team used LCU 1661 for transportation to the beach, providing a vantage point to witness a simulated assault by a Navy SEAL Team. The media team was then off to visit the USS JAMES K. POLK (SSN 645) to continue with their stories. NASHVILLE, on the other hand, turned her bow seaward to rendezvous with the USNS LEROY GRUMMAN (TAO 195) for a scheduled refueling at sea on 26 May.

Back at anchorage, late on 27 May, LCDR Paul A. Cruz, NASHVILLE's Executive Officer, notified the crew that the ARG was to set sail for the Adriatic Sea as soon as possible in order to support U.S. interests in the former Yugoslavia. Two hours later, well ahead of schedule, the backload of troops and equipment was completed and NASHVILLE, KEARSARGE, and PENSACOLA commenced a high speed transit to the Adriatic Sea. Once again, NASHVILLE proved herself ready to respond to any real world contingency at a moment's notice.

NASHVILLE arrived on station the evening of 29 May. Things ashore started to really heat up as the fate of United Nations (U.N.) peacekeepers taken hostage remained unknown. Then, on 2 June, Air Force CAPT Scott O'Grady, was shot down while flying over Bosnia. Upon notification, the ARG was ordered to reposition to the eastern edge of the northern Adriatic Sea to prepare for a possible Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP) mission. Immediately assuming an alert status, the units began a long wait in international waters off the coast of Croatia. In order to maintain it's high level of readiness, the ARG took on fuel on 5 June from the LEROY GRUMMAN. After a long week of speculation and few clues, a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) aircraft patrolling the area established communications with the downed pilot early on the morning of 8 June. Although NASHVILLE's part in the rescue was as a support helicopter platform, it was nonetheless crucial to the overall success of the mission. "We were all thankful to be part of the

team," said CAPT Bolcar. "Greatful to have rescued an American serviceman from hostile territory, and most of all -- we were proud to be Americans."

On 10 June, NASHVILLE began a restful port visit in the northern Italian city of Trieste. The ship's crew and embarked troops enjoyed the opportunity for liberty call after a hard month at sea. Concluding the port visit early on the morning of 13 June, NASHVILLE returned to her station in the Adriatic Sea.

This time, the ARG experienced an uneventful period. With the U.N. hostages free and tensions reduced, the ARG was allowed to leave the Adriatic for its next port visit in Naples, Italy. Another refueling with the LEROY GRUMMAN occurred on 19 June. NASHVILLE arrived in Naples on 21 June and allowed her crew a chance to rest and relax. "I've been to Naples several times before," said BT2(SW) [REDACTED], "It has really improved and now offers a lot of things to do."

When the ship left Naples on 28 June, it headed back to the Adriatic in company with KEARSARGE. Shortly thereafter, NASHVILLE was bound for the Greek island of Kerkira (also known as Corfu). The ship refueled from LEROY GRUMMAN during the transit and arrived at Kerkira on 3 July.

Kerkira, a cosmopolitan resort island located on the northwest coast of Greece, attracts vacationers from the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Scandinavia, and the United States, who are looking for inexpensive fun in the sun. From mountain biking to sun worshiping, Kerkira offered it all. Crew members had the opportunity to visit historic sites such as the Achillion Place, shop for leather and olive wood goods in the open air market, or just relax on the beach and swim in the warm waters of the Ionian Sea.

NASHVILLE celebrated Independence Day on this Greek island. A day meant for remembering the birth of the democratic country of the People, by the People, for the People, this day was full of meaning for NASHVILLE. Her deployment involved multiple opportunities to display the Stars and Stripes to both military and civilian personnel throughout the Mediterranean, demonstrating her ability to project American Naval power 4000 miles from home.

As with all good things, the visit to Kerkira ended much too soon, and NASHVILLE weighed anchor on the morning of 6 July to resume her national tasking duties in the Adriatic Sea. Arriving there the next day, she joined KEARSARGE and commenced a week of exercises. While in company with the LEROY GRUMMAN, NASHVILLE participated in an underway refueling on 9 July. On 12 July, she pulled into Bari, Italy for another port call.

The Italian seaport of Bari, located on the eastern coast of Italy, offered a chance for the crew to rest and relax. A host of various restaurants were available for different appetites. Many stores sold gifts for loved ones to treasure. The town even had an old castle that could be explored.

The ship left Bari on 17 July and headed to a rendezvous

with the USS SEATTLE (AOE 3) for a refueling at sea. Upon completion of this event, NASHVILLE and KEARSARGE travelled straight across the Adriatic to participate in Exercise RESCUE EAGLE; a joint venture between the United States and Albania. On 21 July, LTJG [REDACTED], LTJG [REDACTED], and ENS [REDACTED] departed NASHVILLE not as junior officers, but as ambassadors to this former Communist country. During the next four days, they visited the capital city of Tirana, and the naval port of Duress while cross-decking to a variety of Albanian warships including: patrol torpedo boats, corvettes, and minesweepers.

The primary goals of the visit were to conduct training with the Albanian military, strengthen foreign relations with a strategic ally in the Balkans, and better understand the people of Albania. This was easily accomplished due to the good natured Albanian people's effort to support the Americans in every way possible. Albanian Navy visitors onboard NASHVILLE witnessed an underway refueling with BIG HORN.

After completing sixteen consecutive days at sea and a refueling with USNS KANAWA (TAO 196) on 28 July, NASHVILLE departed for a port call to the eastern Mediterranean Greek island paradise of Rhodes. NASHVILLE was anchored off the coast of Rhodes from 2 August until 7 August, during which time the officers and crew enjoyed some well deserved liberty. Rhodes has been a disputed territory between Turkey and Greece for centuries, however, no one could dispute that it was quite possibly the best port of the deployment. The climate, beautiful beaches, and inexpensive shopping were just a few of the attractions of Rhodes.

NASHVILLE continued her presence in the Adriatic Sea for the next two weeks. The final underway refueling in the Adriatic occurred on 18 August, with SEATTLE. On 20 August, NASHVILLE departed the Adriatic Sea for the last time and headed west for the Greek resort of Zakynthos for a visit from 21 to 25 August. Zakynthos, the last of the Greek visits, proved to all hands that Greece offers the best port visits in the Mediterranean. Once again, the Sailors and Marines enjoyed endless beaches and an exciting night life.

The next stop on the transit home was Ibiza, Spain. While enroute, the ship had its final refueling at sea in the Mediterranean on 25 August, with the USNS JOHN LENTHALL (TAO 189). The ship arrived in Ibiza on 29 August, affording the crew one final opportunity for sight seeing and last minute souvenir shopping.

Returning to sea on 2 September, for the final leg of her transit across the Mediterranean, NASHVILLE arrived in Rota, Spain, on 3 September. The ARG off loaded the Marine vehicles and performed a shipwide washdown. Once everything had passed a stringent agriculture inspection, a backload was completed. On 8 September, the KEARSARGE ARG completed its turnover with the newly reporting ships of the WASP ARG. The KEARSARGE ARG departed Rota and began its Atlantic transit home.

The voyage west was uneventful. Nonetheless, everyone kept busy finishing last minute details and preparing the ship for her homecoming. A final refueling at sea was performed with SEATTLE. During the deployment, NASHVILLE participated in 15 underway refuelings and onloaded over 3,000,000 gallons of fuel. On 21 September, the ARG made its final stop in Morehead City, NC. After a final farewell, the Marines debarked.

The first welcome home was delivered by crewmembers' families who would be overnight guests of the ship and participate in a "Tiger Cruise." These Tigers got to experience, first hand, the life their sons, brothers, and fathers had experienced the last six months. The event turned out better than anyone had expected, mostly due to the efforts of BTCS(SW) [REDACTED], the Tiger Coordinator.

Finally, on the morning of 22 September, the mighty NASHVILLE eased into its old berth in Norfolk and the brow was lowered. As families were reunited, it was time for the crew to reestablish ties with their loved ones. The deployment had ended.

The rest of 1995 was down hill in terms of underway time, but many challenges remained for NASHVILLE Sailors. Upon arrival in Norfolk, a one month stand down period commenced and crew members chose one of two, two week leave periods to have a chance to spend some time with family and friends. During this time period however, the ship began preparing for a Post-Deployment IMAV with SHENANDOAH. After running non-stop for six months, the machinery on the ship was in need of an overhaul.

A scheduled underway period shortly before Thanksgiving was planned to allow Army Helicopter pilots the opportunity to experience landing on a Navy ship. However, the training period was cancelled due to unfavorable weather conditions in the VCOA.

NASHVILLE's final exercise of 1995 was JTFEX 96-1, from 28 November to 07 December. This exercise was similar to the JTFEX 95-1 that NASHVILLE had participated in back in January. It provided useful training to the GUAM ARG preparing to deploy in the Spring of 1996. NASHVILLE served a supporting role, providing a platform to conduct Mine Sweeping training for HM 14. The period was less time consuming than past exercises and provided an opportunity for the crew to conduct general training and complete major career qualifications.

The final underway period of 1995 was a short trip to Yorktown and then back to Norfolk. At Yorktown, the ship completely off loaded all ammunition. Upon return to Norfolk, the crew started a holiday leave and upkeep period, thus bringing an end to the challenging and rewarding year of 1995.