



USS NASSAU (LHA-4)
FPO NEW YORK 09557

1983

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From: Commanding Officer, USS NASSAU (LHA 4)
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Encl: (1) Command History for USS NASSAU (LHA 4) for period
1 Jan - 31 Dec 1983

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


R. H. JESBERG

Copy to:
Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)

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COMMAND HISTORY OF USS NASSAU (LHA-4) - 1 JANUARY THROUGH 31 DECEMBER 1983

The onset of 1983 saw NASSAU enter the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for a Selected Restricted Availability (SRA). NASSAU sailed into the shipyard on Jan. 4 and, for the next two months, received modifications to major engineering and assault systems along with installation of an improved first-of-a-kind intelligence center.

NASSAU departed the shipyard and set sail for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on March 11 to undergo her first Interim Refresher Training period. She left Gitmo on April 2. In the interim, NASSAU's Engineering Department attained certification in the Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE); her flying squad, the at-sea fire-fighting team, scored successes in graded exercises and repair parties rated high in damage control evaluations.

On the way back to Norfolk, coordination between NASSAU's Combat Systems and Navigation Departments led to Naval Gunfire Support qualification at Vieques, Puerto Rico.

NASSAU sortied south from Norfolk on April 23, heading toward Morehead City, N.C., to commence participation in Exercise Solid Shield '83. After embarking Marines there, NASSAU returned to waters off Virginia Beach, Va., to conduct rehearsal amphibious landings at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Phase II of Solid Shield saw NASSAU subjected to simulated attacks from Coast Guard and Navy ships, submarines and assorted aircraft. NASSAU's bridge, combat information center (CIC) and tactical action officer (TAO) coordinated a response. NASSAU launched an amphibious assault on the first of May, supporting Marine landing forces. Phase II ended when NASSAU embarked COMPHIBGRU TWO and prepared to depart North Carolina's waters for Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Phase III provided a stern test for NASSAU's command and control systems. As a whole, Solid Shield '83 offered NASSAU an opportunity to conduct some elaborate amphibious operations.

NASSAU sailors enjoyed a port call in Fort Lauderdale from May 6 through May 8 en route to Norfolk. Shortly after arriving in her home port, NASSAU underwent in-service inspection.

In mid-July, NASSAU participated in a Reserve Amphibious Exercise (RES-PHIBLEX), assisting nearly 600 Navy and Marine Corps Reservists in making an amphibious assault. NASSAU took part in the Supporting Arms Exercise (SACEX) at Vieques Island, Puerto Rico, shortly thereafter. She served as command and control ship for SACEX, embarking more than 1,400 Marines and pounding Vieques Range with gunfire.

On the return to Norfolk, NASSAU pulled off a coup when an OV-10A Bronco landed on an LHA for the first time. It was the first of 31 landings and takeoffs completed on NASSAU during the first three days of August.

Captain Ronald H. Jesberg relieved Captain Thomas J. Johnson as NASSAU's commanding officer on Aug. 10. Captain Jesberg reported to NASSAU from duty as commanding officer of USS GUAM (LPH-9) and Captain Johnson left to assume command of Amphibious Squadron 12.

Amid much attention from the media, NASSAU embarked 180 vehicles and more than 1,000 Army troops on Aug. 20 for transport to Central America in support of Exercise Ahuas Tara (Big Pine) II. NASSAU debarked the majority of soldiers and their equipment on Aug. 25 and 26 at Puerto Cortes and Puerto Castilla, Honduras. Several Army LCUs and the remaining soldiers were debarked in Colon, Panama, on Aug. 28.

The transit to Honduras marked the first time NASSAU transported Army units for military exercises. In addition, NASSAU shouldered the largest equipment load she'd ever carried. The 180 vehicles took up 33,283 square feet with 33 CONEXs taking up 5,000 square feet. Twenty-four UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters rode NASSAU's decks along with jeeps, trucks, water trucks, and Gamma Goats.

NASSAU returned to Norfolk on Sept. 2.

On Nov. 9, NASSAU embarked nearly 1,500 Marines from the 28th Marine Amphibious Unit for another trip to Honduras. Following rehearsal of the amphibious operation, NASSAU weighed anchor for the final exercise assault on Nov. 18 at Puerto Castilla, Honduras. Boats filled with tanks and other vehicles exited NASSAU's well deck while the Air Department operated helicopters, packed with Marines, from sunrise until dusk.

In late November, NASSAU received some good news. She was informed that she had captured a Battle Efficiency "E"--the competitive period ending Oct. 31, 1983--her first. Demonstrated excellence in the areas of anti-surface, ant-air and electronic warfare; CIC/CC communications; engineering; damage control; seamanship, communications and AIMD paved the way for NASSAU's honor.

For NASSAU, the year was wound down at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, where the installation of a Vulcan Phalanx anti-missile system promised to enhance the ship's combat capabilities. The Phalanx is a close-in weapons system (CIWS) which spits out 20mm rounds so rapidly that a barrier of bullets intercept any incoming missiles or aircraft.

The yard period also saw the installation of the SNAP (Shipboard Non-tactical Automated Data Processing) system. The two new, sophisticated computers, using discs instead of key punches, will keep tabs on everything from basic supplies and surface and aviation 3M to payroll records.