



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS NASSAU (LHA-4)

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From: Commanding Officer  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)  
Subj: COMMAND HISTORY  
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12D  
Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization  
(2) Chronological narrative  
(3) Statistical Summary  
(4) Supporting Documents  
(5) Familygrams for 1988

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (5) are forwarded.

F. M. DIRREN JR

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

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## Command Mission, Composition & Organization

1. MISSION. The mission of the LHA is to embark, deploy and land elements of a Marine landing force in an assault by helicopters, landing craft, amphibious vehicles or by a combination of these methods; thus possessing the capabilities of the LPH, LSD, LPD and LKA classes of ships. The LHA can operate independently or in conjunction with other units conducting heliborne and surface amphibious operations. The TARAWA class multipurpose amphibious assault ship was designed to maintain "tactical integrity" or to get a balanced force to the same point at the same time. The USS NASSAU can carry a complete Marine Battalion Landing Team (approximately 1800 men) along with the supplies and equipment needed in an assault, plus the vehicles to land them ashore either by helicopter and/or by small amphibious craft. Furthermore, NASSAU is capable of operating the Marine Corps AV-8B vertical take-off and landing jet for close-air support of an amphibious assault.

2. COMPOSITION & ORGANIZATION. The USS NASSAU is a unit of Commander, Naval Surface Force, Atlantic, and is commanded by Captain Robert P. Lucas, USN. The NASSAU's immediate seniors in the chain of command are Commander, Amphibious Squadron Twelve and Commander, Amphibious Group TWO. The NASSAU's internal organization is composed of twelve departments with their subordinate divisions as listed below:

### EXECUTIVE DIVISION/SPECIAL ASSISTANTS

Admin Office  
Personnel Office  
Captain's Office  
Public Affairs Office  
Chaplain's Office  
3-M Coordinator  
Legal Office  
Post Office  
Print Shop  
Security  
Safety Officer  
Career Counselor  
Combat Cargo Assistant

### AIRCRAFT INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

IM-1 Maintenance Admin  
IM-2 Aircraft  
IM-3 Avionics  
IM-4 Support Equipment

### AIR DEPARTMENT

V-1 Flight Deck/Crash & Salvage  
V-3 Hangar Deck  
V-4 Aviation Fuels

COMBAT SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT

CA Ordnance  
CD Data Systems Maintenance  
CE Electronics  
CF Fire Control  
CI Combat Information Center  
CO Gunnery  
CW Electronic Warfare

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

CR Radio  
CS Signals  
NLFS Nucleus Landing Force Staff (Marines)

DECK DEPARTMENT

First Division  
Second Division  
Third Division

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

A Auxiliaries  
AS Assault  
E Electrical  
MP-1 Main Propulsion I  
MP-2 Main Propulsion II  
R Repair

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

H Hospital

DENTAL DEPARTMENT

NAVIGATION DEPARTMENT

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

OA Aerography  
OC Helicopter Direction Center  
OP Photography  
OZ Intelligence

SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

S-1 Stores  
S-2 Food Services  
S-3 Sales and Services  
S-4 Disbursing  
S-5 Wardroom  
S-6 Aviation Supply  
S-7 Data Processing  
S-8 Stock Control

## USS NASSAU (LHA 4) COMMAND HISTORY FOR CALENDAR YEAR (CY) 1988

USS NASSAU (LHA 4) began 1988 finishing up a Christmas holiday port visit at Palma de Majorca, Spain, and was underway for Haifa, Israel, early on the morning of January 4th. The details of training conducted during the transit to Haifa is covered in detail in appendix A of enclosure (4) (OPREP FIVE DTG 112043Z JAN 88). NASSAU arrived at Haifa on the morning of 09 January and commenced an 18-day port visit and restricted availability. Highlights of the port stay included tours offered through the ship's Chaplain's Office to almost every corner of the tiny country while, at the same time, coordinating the donation of thousands of pounds of Project Handclasp materials to a local home for the elderly and doing repair work on three local orphanages.

NASSAU was also visited by a virtual stream of local VIPs and dignitaries. Among the local elected officials and business leaders, NASSAU was also visited by the Hon. Thomas Pickering, U.S. Ambassador to Israel, who was accompanied by his defense and naval attaches. The ship also hosted a very successful "open house" for the workers at the shipyards and their families. In the three days she was open for visiting, NASSAU hosted more than 8,000 Israeli visitors.

Other treats for the crew featured a DOD/USO show "Dorothy Doer and Doubletalk," a lively rock band from Salt Lake City which performed in the ship's hangar bay. Another hangar bay show featured the local touring troupe "Kiryat Motzkin," which featured dancers aged 18-25 who dazzled the crew with folk dancing representing the diverse background of Israel. The dances performed were indicative of those seen throughout Eastern Europe, North Africa and other regions.

NASSAU closed out the month of January as she set sail 27 January for Marseilles, France.

Immediately upon her arrival in Marseilles, NASSAU was again thrust into the limelight of national media attention as a request was granted to film a reunion of NASSAU crewmember DP3 Danny Brennenstuhl and an orphan boy who were profiled in a Thanksgiving, 1987, "Today" show. Appendixes B (USS NASSAU 041630Z FEB 88), C (TAG LINCOLN NE 261500Z FEB 88 "PERSONAL FOR") and D (USS NASSAU 261335Z FEB 88) of enclosure (4) detail the visit and the resulting media attention.

Again, NASSAU was the centerpiece for VIP visits and group touring. VIPs included MGen.(Sel) M.P. Sullivan, USMC, Commanding General, 2nd Marine Air Wing on 22 Feb., and Captain Oliveira Monteiro, Portuguese Navy, Commander (Portuguese) Marine Corps on 29 Feb. Group tours included the Marseilles Police department and Fire Brigade and the Marseilles General Council.

The month of February also held extreme highs and lows. The regrettable loss of an embarked Marine in a training accident marked a distinct ebb in the usually energetic NASSAU crew. But a high point was also achieved with the visit of Archbishop Justin A. Rigali, Papal Military Representative and Director of the Vatican Academy for Diplomats, who visited NASSAU on 14 February to conduct the Sacrament of Confirmation for 12 Navy and Marine Corps personnel assigned to the MARG.

From the 22nd to the 26th of February, NASSAU transited from Marseilles to Lisbon, Portugal. The training conducted during this brief transit is described in detail in appendix E of enclosure (4) (CTF SIX ONE 190910Z FEB 88). On the morning of 27 February, NASSAU arrived at Lisbon, Portugal, to conduct a seven-day liberty port visit.

On the morning of 6 March, Portuguese "Fuzileros" (Marines) were embarked and NASSAU got underway to participate in exercise "GALERA '88," an annual NATO exercise at Medonheira, Portugal. A VIP visitor onboard at the time was LtGen Cook, USMC, FMFLANT.

Upon completion of GALERA, NASSAU disembarked her "Fuzileiros" and weighed anchor for Rota, Spain, for a five-day washdown/turnover and embarked an Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE) Team for the transit back across the Atlantic. On 17 March, St. Patrick's Day, USS NASSAU got underway from Rota, "outchopped" and headed home. On 17 March, NASSAU made landfall at Morehead City, N.C., and began disembarking her Marines. The next day, busloads of "Tiger Cruise" participants embarked and NASSAU headed north again, arriving at Pier 7, Norfolk Operating Base, early the morning of 29 March.

To summarize NASSAU's performance during and after the deployment, appendixes F (CPR TWO 271150Z MAR 88) and G (TWO TWO MEU SOC 210832Z MAR 88) of enclosure (4) amplify.

The month of April was spent in a leave and upkeep status, with many of NASSAU's crewmembers spending time at home renewing ties with friends and families. On 22 April, a special VIP delegation of medical dignitaries from the People's Republic of China visited NASSAU and were given a complete tour of her extensive medical facilities. A list of Chinese dignitaries is included in appendix F of enclosure (4). On 30 April, another group of VIPs, this time a group of senior officer students from the U.S. Army War College, visited NASSAU and were given a complete tour.

The months of May and June were spent conducting training periods for Midshipman Training and Active Duty for Training (ACDUTRA) for NASSAU's reserve detachment. And, as INSURV preparations began, training was also conducted with the U.S. Army as Army "Blackhawks" and "Apaches" gained daylight qualifications in flight deck landings. From 20-24 June, NASSAU was visited by the Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) and passed with flying colors. And NASSAU went into the month of July (from 27 June until 17 July) in a post-INSURV IMAV.

The months of July and August were spent largely pierside, with VIP visits conducted by the Budget Analyst for the House Budget Committee for a military orientation on 20 July, a visit from VAdm. Joseph S. Donnell III, USN, COMNAVSURFLANT on 20 July and professional staff members of the House Armed Services Committee on 16 August. Also on 16 August, a pre-sail conference was held for "TEAMWORK 88." Over the weekend of 20-21 August, NASSAU held open ship visiting and on the morning of August 25 set sail for the North Atlantic.

August 25, 1988 was a cool and foggy day in Norfolk, Va., as NASSAU and several other amphibious ships of Amphibious Group TWO were making last minute preparations before getting underway. Two years of planning and preparation had gone into this event. Soon "Teamwork 88" would begin. After a brief delay due to heavy fog, the amphibious task force was underway for Morehead City, N.C.

NASSAU, as flagship for RAdm. David M. Bennett, USN, Commander Amphibious Strike Force and BGen John J. Sheehan, USMC, Commander, 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (4th MEB), paused briefly at Lynnhaven anchorage to embark the units of Assault Craft Unit TWO, Det E, and Beachmaster Unit TWO, Det E, before heading south to Morehead City to embark her Marines.

The following day, Marines embarked at Morehead City including Ground Combat Element (GCE), Regimental Landing Team EIGHT, Combat Service Support Element (CSSE), Brigade Service Support Group FOUR from Camp Lejeune, N.C., and the Air Combat Element (ACE) Marine Air Group 14 from Cherry Point, N.C. and Beaufort, S.C. It was long day's work as LCU's from ACU-2 shuttled back and forth and Marines seemed to be everywhere carrying green "cruiseboxes" throughout the ship.

With the onload complete, some very realistic training was obtained as the ships of the amphibious task force, USS INCHON (LPH 12), USS SAGINAW (LST 1188), USS PORTLAND (LSD 37), USS NEWPORT (LST 1179) and USS BOULDER (LST 1190) commenced to "break out" of a blockaded and mined port and channel. The "break out" was successful and set an early standard for performance in "Teamwork 88."

Several nights later, NASSAU joined up with ships of the mobile logistics force and several Canadian ships, making the first contact with NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) navy. When assembled, more than 150 ships from nine NATO nations, comprising more than 45,000 servicemembers, would make up the participants in "Teamwork 88." Almost all of the seaborne assets in the exercise were involved in the complex tactical training which was carried out throughout the transatlantic crossing.

One of the main objectives in the first phase of the exercise was the integration of two carrier groups based around the carriers USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN 71) and USS FORRESTAL (CV 59), which joined the task force from a Mediterranean deployment, and to practice emergency defensive measures of an amphibious task force while transiting the North Atlantic. All elements of an opposed crossing were simulated as realistically as possible.

During the crossing, NASSAU conducted 7 UNREPS (underway replenishments) receiving fuel and supplies from USS SAVANNAH (AOR 4) and USS DETROIT (AOE 4). NASSAU then assumed the role of replenishment ship when she refueled the USS FARRAGUT (DDG 37) and USS BOULDER, who were in company. Sometimes the weather was clear and glorious; other times it was cold, wet and drizzly, but throughout each evolution a consistent level of professional performance was displayed and a great deal of training in all phases of the procedure was obtained.

As NASSAU and the rest of the task group near the "gap" between Iceland and Great Britain, heavy fog set in. To avoid detection by opposing forces, NASSAU was in an emission control condition to limit the ability of the "enemy" to locate her. But this also offset the ship's ability to use radar to cut through the dense fog. Fortunately, with professional watchstanding and a bit of luck, the fog soon lifted and NASSAU approached the majestic fjords of Norway.

On the 11th of September, the amphibious task force arrived at Bode, Norway, for a rehearsal which would flex the assets to be brought into play during the assault north of the Arctic Circle. The rehearsal went smoothly and all of the ships of the task force began preparations for the final leg of the trip to the assault area.

On the night of the 11th, however, tragedy struck as an LST in the group ran aground on a shoal in one of the narrow fjords. NASSAU moved in close to lend assistance and soon took on a majority of the Marines and equipment of the disabled vessel. As a result of this unfortunate incident, NASSAU steamed north to her objective loaded not only with a full assault force, but also tasked with accomplishing the mission of a tank landing ship. "The Ship That Does It All" was about to do more than it bargained for.

As NASSAU headed north and approached the Arctic Circle, preparations were made to indoctrinate the sailors and Marines into the time-honored "Bluenose" fraternity. A feast of blue-tinted foods ranging from blue gravy over blue mashed potatoes and blue macaroni salad was served and rumors of running circles on the flight deck in one's underwear went around the mess deck faster than most meals. But in the end, the ceremony consisted of mustering the most junior Navy and Marine officers on the ship's forecastle and, after their noses were painted an appropriate shade of blue, instructing them in the proper procedures for painting the ship's "bullnose" a bright blue. And at 1634 on September 14 at 66 degrees north latitude and 009 degrees longitude, each member of the Navy & Marine Corps team aboard NASSAU became trusty Bluenoses.

When NASSAU arrived at Vestfjord, she was confronted with the unique task of an anchorage in the seemingly bottomless Norwegian waterway. Soon, what amounted to a submerged mountaintop was located and a precision anchorage was carried out. Next, a quick rehearsal of our "adopted" Marine units was flawlessly executed. Now Nassau and her Marines were ready for the assault. The morning of 16 September was cold, windy and miserable; perfect weather for an amphibious assault. Though delayed by 45 minutes, the landing went without a hitch and the Marines of Marine Striking Force were on the job. For the next five days, NATO forces fought a "war" in Norway.

The landing was witnessed by thirty-plus members of the international press, who later ventured out to NASSAU for a press conference. Among them was Mr. Terry Zahn of WAVY-TV 10 in Norfolk, Va., who spent the day with us filming a special series on "Teamwork."

Distinguished visitors and assorted VIPs were almost commonplace onboard NASSAU during the next week. Some of our guests included the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Al Grey, USMC, Commander Carrier Group SIX, RAdm. "Snuffy" Smith, USN, the Commanders of the combined United Kingdom/Netherlands Landing Force and Amphibious Group, Brigadier Andrew Whitehead and Commodore Brian Turner; the Chief of Defense, Norway, General Vigleik; and the Secretary General of NATO, Doctor Manfred Weirner.

After a successful but physically demanding exercise ashore was carried out ahead of schedule across the board, the Marines of 4th MEB staged their equipment and vehicles at Bjervik, Norway, for a quick washdown and inspection before being loaded back aboard NASSAU. Once this complex evolution was complete, the sailors and Marines of NASSAU were on their way to the historic port of Hamburg, West Germany.

Hamburg, West Germany, is located approximately 80 miles inland on the banks of the Elbe River. The approaches to the city for a ship the size of NASSAU made for a very challenging sea detail on our way in and out, but the liberty opportunities in this friendly port city more than offset the difficulties encountered. The spectacular arrival, complete with tugboats spraying plumes of water, banners on the pier and welcoming crowds was heartening. This beautiful city will celebrate its 800th birthday in 1990 and provided NASSAU sailors and Marines a glimpse of both the very old and very modern during the four-day stay. During our stay, sailors and Marines attended luncheons and receptions, acted as tour guides during open ship visiting (over 8,500 German visited NASSAU during the two days we were open for visiting!) and took advantage of the tours coordinated by the ship.

Many crewmembers enjoyed harbor cruises, sightseeing along the East-West border or visiting former concentration camps. In all, the people of Hamburg welcomed the ship and its sailors and Marines warmly.

As the ship cast off lines on the morning of the 2nd of October, the banks of the Elbe was crowded with the thousands of waving Germans who had come down to the waterfront to see NASSAU off. The send-off was complete with a brass band playing West German and American national anthems. It was one of the most spectacular send-offs ever witnessed by many in the crew or with the embarked Marines.

But our departure from Hamburg did not signal the end of the deployment. The "War at Sea" experienced during our transit over was re-enacted on the return trip, with additional training gained. Additionally, severe weather was experienced only days out of Hamburg, giving the "sea legs" of many a sailors and Marine a true workout.

Other evolutions during the transit included damage control training, flight operations and a shooting exercise by VMA's AV-8B Harriers. Throughout the trip Marines of the 4th MEB were repacking and stowing equipment, preparing for an effective off-load just days away. And, in mid-ocean, the ship diverted south to the Azores to MEDEVAC a crewmember. With the exercise behind her, NASSAU dropped anchor in Morehead City on the morning of the 13th and began disembarking her Marine shipmates.

On October 15th, 1988, NASSAU steamed into sight at the Norfolk piers where COMPHIBGRU TWO/4th MEB and remaining embarked personnel and crewmembers enjoyed long-awaited reunions with families and friends. The balance of the month was spent in homeport conducting ACDUTRA with NASSAU's reserve detachment from 17-28 October.

The month of November brought yet another milestone in NASSAU's history as she was called upon to assist in the devastation which followed in the wake of Hurricane Gilbert in Jamaica. NASSAU was underway on the morning of 03 November full of supplies, Project Handclasp materials and goods donated by the crew of NASSAU for the people of Jamaica. A total of 92 pallets (88,000 lbs) of goods were slated for distribution to the people of the island nation.

While in transit to Jamaica, on 6 November, NASSAU happened upon a boatload of Haitian refugees. Immediately all 172 refugees aboard the tiny craft were taken aboard NASSAU and given medical examinations while the craft was inspected for habitability and seaworthiness. Deemed unfit, the craft was searched and destroyed. The refugees, meanwhile, were fed and given medical treatment before being transferred to the Coast Guard Cutter TAMPA later that day. One refugee was MEDEVAC'd to a fixed medical facility.

NASSAU visited Kingston, Jamaica, from 7-11 November. In that time, all pallets of materials were turned over to relief officials, three area schools were re-roofed by ship's crewmembers/embarked Marines and Navy Seabees embarked to lend a professional hand to the repairs. While inport, the U.S. Marine Corps celebrated their birthday with a ball and NASSAU was visited by the Governor General of Jamaica. On November 18th, NASSAU returned to her homeport.

The month of December provided NASSAU's crewmembers a richly-deserved rest from the hectic pace that marked 1988 as they enjoyed a holiday standdown/upkeep period and readied themselves for the challenges of 1989.



The following is a statistical summary of activities of various departments aboard USS NASSAU (LHA 4) during calendar year 1988.

Number of days at sea for CY 88 129

#### SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

Total number of consumables and repair parts stocked	36,182
Total value	\$31,992,666
Total receipts	35,472
Value of receipts	\$35,763,238.77
Total issues	13,904
Gallons of JP5 received	1,239,745 gal
Gallons of DFM 76 received	6,975,724 gal
Total spent for parts & services	\$8,191,554.30

Sales in Ship's Store	\$810,000
Cans of soda sold	281,500 cans
Candy bars sold	183,609 bars
Number of haircuts given	19,750
Pounds of laundry washed	600,000 lbs

Food consumed (dollar value)	\$1,488,961
Bread flour used	62,790 lbs
Sugar	74,770 lbs
Milk	14,101 gal
Loaves of bread baked	119,098
Eggs used	9,733 dz

Funds disbursed by Disbursing	\$16,833,552.96
Funds collected by Disbursing	\$1,289,619.89
Funds deposited by Disbursing	\$8,309,745.36
Bad checks returned to Disbursing	\$37,807.39

Number of ADP jobs run	2,509
Number of ADP production hours	5,219
Cost of paper used	\$28,541.17

#### LEGAL STATISTICS

Powers of Attorney, including general and special	-	67
Admin discharges processed	-	27

#### POSTAL STATISTICS

Postage sold	\$48,221.00
Money orders sold - 6,997 -	\$1,156,870.00
Money orders cashed - 477 -	\$60,083.00
Amount of mail received, dispatched or transferred	81,587 lbs

#### PERSONNEL STATISTICS

Total separations	93
Number of RE-4's	22
Personnel transferred on PCS orders	143

**RELIGIOUS PROGRAM STATISTICS**

Divine services conducted by ship's Chaplain	59
Services conducted by other faiths	129
American Red Cross messages handled	602
Navy Relief cases processed	70

**SECURITY DEPARTMENT STATISTICS**

Total Incident/Complaint Reports (ICR) for CY 88	260
Total ICR's investigated	260
ICR's voided at Security Department level	8
Mast cases processed	256
Mast cases dismissed at Executive Officer's Investigation	67
Mast cases referred to Commanding Officer	189

**MEDICAL STATISTICS**

Sickcall patients	7,981
Admissions	86
Medical Evacuations (MEDEVACS)	37
Surgical cases	26

Conducted a medical screen of 172 Haitian refugees and medevac'd one female Haitian to a fixed treatment facility.

**AIR DEPARTMENT STATISTICS**

Fixed-wing landings	Day	1,118
	Night	47
Helicopter landings	Day	5,483
	Night	1,100
Embarked flight hours	Day	6,495.4
	Night	801.1
Number of mishaps		0

**AIMD DEPARTMENT STATISTICS**

Manhours expended in support of aircraft operation for CY 88.

Month	With Non-Aeronautical Maintenance	Without Aeronautical Maintenance
January	9,406.4	7,673.3
February	4,501.7	3,948.1
March	7,447.6	5,564
April	1,592.6	1,374.8
May	1,383.2	1,049.8
June	6,434.1	3,316.7
July	2,870.9	3,316.7
August	3,053.4	1,935.2
September	6,745.2	4,608.7
November	5,881.9	4,608.7
December	4,928.6	3,295.3
Totals	54,245.6	38,808.8