



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS NASSAU (LHA-4)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS NASSAU (LHA 4)

To: Director of Naval History (OP 09BH)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY 1997

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) USS NASSAU Command History for period 01JAN⁹⁷-31DEC⁹⁷.
(2) Familygram
(3) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet
(4) Ship's Photo
(5) Change of Command Program

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

[Signature]
J. J. WAICKWICZ

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

1. The Ship's 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 and LPD class ships. The USS NASSAU 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.

USS NASSAU can carry a complete Marine Battalion Landing Team (approximately 1,800 personnel), supplies and equipment needed in an assault, and vehicles to land the team ashore either by helicopter and/or small amphibious craft. Furthermore, USS NASSAU routinely operates with the Marine Corps AV-8B vertical take-off and landing jet for close air support of an amphibious assault.

USS NASSAU's ability to do this was clearly demonstrated during GTMO REINFORCEX '79 when the President of the United States ordered the Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to be reinforced by a Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU). This evolution was the first test of this class ship in full scale landing operation.

The ship's capabilities were further demonstrated during OPERATION DESERT STORM when USS NASSAU deployed with only eight days notice. As Flagship for the Commander of the Amphibious Task Force and the Commanding General of the Marine Expeditionary Brigade, USS NASSAU flew the first combat sorties from an LHA platform. More than 250 combat missions were flown with a record 56 flown in one day.

A secondary mission of USS NASSAU is that of evacuation and civilian disaster relief. Hundreds of tons of relief materials can be carried aboard and delivered to disaster victims within hours of the ship's arrival on the scene. Additionally, fresh water and electricity could be provided from the ship's engineering plant until restoration of domestic services. USS NASSAU's full medical facilities can provide hospitalization for up to 300 patients (including intensive care) and provide out-

patient treatment for hundreds of additional sick or injured personnel.

USS NASSAU is attached to Commander, Amphibious Group TWO.

2. CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS JANUARY - DECEMBER 1997.

1-6 Jan: In port Trieste, Italy.
9 Jan: UNREP with USNS DETROIT. Received 295,000 gallons of diesel and 3,500 gallons of JP-5.
12 Jan: Transit Straits of Gibraltar.
13 Jan: Heavy weather delays start of Spanish Amphibious Exercise.
14 Jan: Conducted Flight Operations off coast of Rota, Spain.
15 Jan: Conducted air assault exercise at Sierra de Retin, Spain.
16 Jan: Arrived Rota, Spain to off-load Marine vehicles to continue Spanish Phiblex.
19 Jan: Departed Rota, Spain. Commenced back-load of Marines via LCU and LCAC.
22-28 Jan: In port Barcelona, Spain.
29 Jan: Conducted "leap frog" seamanship exercises with HMS GLOUCESTER and HMS RICHMOND.
31 Jan: Arrived Marseille, France.
5 Feb: Crewmembers participated in community relations project at Notre Dame De Saleron School.
7 Feb: Underway from Marseille, France.
8 Feb: UNREP with USNS KANAWHA. Received 500,000 gallons of diesel and 150,000 gallons of JP-5. Lt. Gen. Dake, U.S. Army visits ship in preparation for Operation ISLAND THUNDER.
10 Feb: Operation ISLAND THUNDER begins.
15 Feb: CDR Rowland relieves CAPT Waickwicz as Executive Officer.
18 Feb: CONREP with USNS CONCORD. Received 113 pallets.
19 Feb: UNREP with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN. Received 300,000 gallons of diesel and 107,000 gallons JP-5.
20 Feb: Arrived Naples, Italy.
26 Feb: 350 crewmembers attend Papal audience in the Vatican.
27 Feb: Underway from Naples.

4 Mar: UNREP with USS DETROIT. Received 400,00 gallons of diesel and 150,000 gallons of JP-5.
 8 Mar: Arrived Valetta, Malta.
 9 Mar: Ship open for general visiting. Received 2,005 visitors.
 10 Mar: Reception held for Malta VIPs.
 13 Mar: Departed Malta. Received orders to proceed at 20 knots to Albanian Coast to participate in Operation SILVER WAKE. Visit to Haifa, Israel cancelled.
 14 Mar: Commenced Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO). Evacuated 360 people before operation halted due to hostile fire.
 15 Mar: NEO resumed.
 16 Mar: Rescued 85 refugees at sea from two boats in distress. One of the boats capsized and sank.
 18 Mar: UNREP with USNS KANAWHA. Received 250,000 gallons of diesel, 150,000 gallons of JP-5 and 37 pallets.
 20 Mar: CONREP with USNS CONCORD. Received 122 pallets.
 21 Mar: Completed NASSAU's direct participation in Operation Silver Wake. Over 800 evacuees were processed. Received orders to proceed at full speed to coast of Zaire to prepare for potential non-combatant evacuation operation, departed Adriatic Sea and commenced split ARG operations.
 25 Mar: UNREP with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN. Received 750,000 gallons of diesel, 85,000 gallons of JP-5 and 45 pallets.
 26 Mar: CONREP with USNS BIG HORN. Received 60 pallets.
 31 Mar: Crossed Equator at 00.00" lat., 00.00" long.
 2 Apr: Arrived Simba Station off Pointe Moire, Congo.
 5 Apr: UNREP with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN. Received 950,000 gallons of diesel, 100,000 gallons of JP-5 and 78 pallets.
 16 Apr: UNREP with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN. Received 250,000 gallons of diesel, 150,000 gallons of JP-5 and 24 pallets.
 1 May: USS KEARSARGE arrives SIMBA Station to relieve NASSAU. Turnover process begins.
 3 May: Departed Simba Station. UNREP with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN.
 5 May: Crossed Equator at Prime Meridian.
 14 May: UNREP with USNS LARAMIE.

15 May: Arrived Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico following 62 consecutive days at sea. Commenced agricultural washdown.

17 May: Completed washdown, ship underway for North Carolina.

20 May: Rendezvous with USS NASHVILLE and USS PENSACOLA for Amphibious Ready Group photo opportunity.

21 May: Marine off-load at Morehead City, NC.

23 May: Returned to Norfolk, VA commenced POM period.

5 Jun: Change of command. CAPT John J. Waickwicz relieved CAPT Allan D. Wall.

15-19 Jun: NASSAU becomes first ship to host Commander Naval Reserve Intelligence Command Fleet Orientation.

23 Jun: Midshipman summer cruise begins.

25 Jun: Underway for Pre-INSURV evaluation. Two NJROTC units from Kingsport, TN underway for orientation. NASSAU agrees to "adopt" the two high school NJROTC units.

1-3 Jul: Command Inspection.

7-31 Jul: Commander Amphibious Squadron SIX embarked as Naval Force Commander for Joint Warrior Interoperability Demonstration (JWID).

9-16 Jul: Type Commander's Amphibious Training (TCAT) conducted off Onslow Bay and Camp Lejeune, NC.

17 Jul: Hosted 42 Capstone Course students and Commander Amphibious Group TWO.

18 Jul: Commander Amphibious Squadron EIGHT disembarks.

28 Jul: 18th Anniversary of ship's commissioning.

7 Aug: Boy Scout Troops 1121 and 1122 from Toledo, OH visit ship.

18-21 Aug: First ever LHA/LHD at sea ammunition off-load completed.

25-29 Aug: Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) Inspection.

3 Sep: Dead stick move to Norfolk Naval Shipyard to commence Selected Restricted Availability (SRA).

24 Sep: Commanding Officer travels to Tennessee to adopt Sullivan North NJROTC and formalize agreement.

25 Sep: Hosted 25 Senior Executive Service (SES) personnel. Visit hosted by RADM Gordon S. Holder, Commander Amphibious Group TWO and attended by CAPT Kenneth Golden, Commander Amphibious Squadron EIGHT.

25 Sep: NASSAU 'adopts' Sullivan North NJROTC unit in Kingsport, TN.

1 Oct: C5I Department established. Communications and Combat Systems Department disestablished.

7 Oct: RADM Gordon S. Holder, Commander Amphibious Group TWO presents Amphibious Squadron EIGHT Meritorious Unit Commendation.

7 Oct: Ship's new Educational Services Office opened.

3-6 Nov: Pre-Light Off Training II (PLOT II).

8-15 Dec: Light Off Assessment.

15 Dec: Commenced first holiday standdown leave period.

20 Dec: NASSAU crewmembers featured by local television stations during volunteer effort at Norfolk Share warehouse.

24 Dec: Received Atlantic Fleet Golden Anchor Award in the large ship category.

29 Dec: Commenced second holiday standdown leave period.

3. Narrative: The year 1997 began with NASSAU in port Trieste, Italy. After the holidays NASSAU proceeded west to conduct amphibious training exercises off the coast of Sierra de Retin, Spain. The Spanish PHIBLEX was the first of several opportunities for the NASSAU and 26 MEU to conduct operations with allied forces.

In February, following a visit to Marseille, France, the ship proceeded to the island of Sardinia, Italy, to participate in Operation ISLAND THUNDER. The operation involved units from all of the military services from the United States and Italy. A non-combatant evacuation operation practiced during Operation ISLAND THUNDER helped NASSAU and 26 MEU prepare for subsequent operations in Albania and Zaire.

In addition to the major exercises with Spain and Italy, the ship also conducted seamanship operations with several British Royal Navy ships, further demonstrating the United States Navy's ability to operate with our allies' military forces.

In between operations, the ship's Sailors and embarked Marines enjoyed port visits in Rota and Barcelona, Spain; Marseille, France; and Naples, Italy. On 8 March, the NASSAU made a rare visit to the island nation of Malta.

While inport, Sailors and Marines of the NASSAU and 26th MEU helped maintain positive relations in every port visited by doing volunteer work at several schools, orphanages, and parks.

The ship received more than 2,000 visitors during general visiting in the port of Valetta. On 13 March, the ship departed Malta and proceeded at top speed to the coast of Albania. On 14 March, the ship began processing evacuees. During Operation SILVER WAKE the NASSAU and the embarked Marines of the 26th MEU, evacuated more than 800 American and third country nationals from Albania's capital, Tirana.

On the evening of 16 March, while on station off the coast of Albania, NASSAU rescued 85 refugees from two overloaded and sinking boats. One of the boats capsized, throwing 55 Albanians into the cold Adriatic Sea. The boat crews and specially trained swimmers saved their lives. The refugees were fed, given warm

clothes and were flown to Italy the next day for further processing.

The ship remained on station to support operations in Albania until 21 March, when again NASSAU was directed to prepare for a possible non-combatant evacuation operation more than 5,000 miles away in Zaire. The ship set a course for Africa, leaving PENSACOLA and NASHVILLE behind to support the Amphibious Ready Group operations in the Mediterranean theater.

The ship tested its endurance by steaming at 20 knots for the entire 5,000 mile journey south of the equator to Simba Station off the coasts of Congo and Zaire.

By sailing at full speed, the ship was able to take about three days off the normal sailing time from the Adriatic Sea to Simba Station. NASSAU remained on Simba Station until 3 May, when it was relieved by KEARSARGE which deployed two weeks early to ensure NASSAU could return to Norfolk on time.

After departing Simba Station, Commander, Amphibious Squadron EIGHT, CAPT Kenneth E. Golden commended the ship's performance. "Response to back to back national tasking captured the attention of the entire United States Navy and Marine Corps as well as the Army and Air Force," said CAPT Golden. "The NASSAU's accomplishments reached every corner of the United States bringing renewed faith and confidence in our maritime forces."

Prior to spending 62 consecutive days at sea in support of Operations off Albania and Zaire, the NASSAU and 26 MEU participated in routine joint operations in the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas with allied forces.

Upon return to Norfolk, 23 May, the NASSAU began a 30-day Post Deployment standdown. During the standdown, Command of the NASSAU changed hands Thursday, 5 June when CAPT John J. Waickwicz relieved CAPT Allan D. Wall.

After taking command, CAPT Waickwicz instituted a number of new policies designed to improve the quality of life for NASSAU's crew, including a command physical fitness program, weekly awards quarters, and weekly scheduled training sessions.

Physical fitness also was incorporated into the NASSAU's Department in the Spotlight Program (DITS). On Wednesday mornings the department being spotlighted conducts their third weekly physical fitness period by running a physical readiness test. This enables the Sailors to benchmark their progress and prevent failures during the semi-annual test.

On 15 June, NASSAU became the first ship to host the Commander Naval Reserve Intelligence Command Fleet Orientation. The orientation consisted of ten newly recruited intelligence reservists and their instructors from Reserve Intelligence Area 15 for the course held 15-19 June. This was the first exposure the intelligence officers and intelligence specialists had to fleet capabilities.

The course is designed to enhance the student's understanding of and appreciation for the fleet they are being trained to support. The reservists had a full week of tours and lectures throughout the Norfolk area, and aboard NASSAU. While aboard ship, they received a general shipboard orientation, which included an orientation of amphibious Naval intelligence operations and a tour of the Joint Intelligence Center. They were able to benefit from the crew's first-hand experiences of tactical intelligence support during real-world operations including non-combatant evacuation operations in Albania and preparations for an evacuation in Zaire.

In addition to the intelligence orientations, the students were exposed to the conditions faced by all fleet Sailors. The shipboard environment provided an ideal setting for two days of damage control and firefighting training.

CAPT Steve Warren, Course Supervisor, commented how impressed he was with the "exceptional support from berthing to training to the hospitality provided by the entire crew."

It was an extremely informative week that gave the reservists valuable knowledge to provide the best possible intelligence support to the fleet.

On 23 June, 14 midshipmen reported aboard for their Summer Cruise. They had developed skills in seamanship, engineering,

and operations along with more typical college courses at the Naval Academy, but this was their first shot at the real thing.

After a whirlwind introduction from the ship's Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and Department Heads and a series of introduction and safety briefs, the midshipmen were introduced to the crewmember who would be their main source of information on the ship, their running mate. Showing the midshipmen every facet of the ship's busy routine was no small job. The First Class Midshipmen (college seniors) were expected to act as junior officers and the Second Class Midshipmen (college juniors) were to take on the role of a division's Leading Petty Officer (LPO).

One month after returning from deployment, NASSAU returned to sea 25 June. During one busy day at sea, the ship's Navigation Department and Combat Information Center Team proved that they are among the Navy's finest.

The annual navigation check-ride came in conjunction with a pre-assessment for the Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) inspection, just two days after the end of a 30 day post-deployment standdown.

After the successful navigation checks, the Amphibious Group TWO assessment team concentrated on helping NASSAU prepare for its INSURV inspection. The team looked at most spaces aboard the ship and tested many of the ship's major systems. This included the ability to steam and maneuver at full power, a self defense system detect to engagement sequence, and an anchor drop test.

When the NASSAU went to sea 25 June with 23 Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) cadets from two Tennessee high schools embarked, the seeds of a new partnership were planted.

The cadets from Sullivan North and Sullivan East High Schools departed Kingsport, TN aboard a U.S. Military C9B on 24 June. Even though the visit was the third time aboard NASSAU for the two NJROTC units, the 25 hours at sea aboard the ship represented the first time they had the opportunity to get underway aboard a Navy ship. Previously the units visited the ship in New Orleans, LA during Mardi Gras '96 and in port in Norfolk August, 1996.

Soon after arriving, CAPT Waickwicz welcomed the cadets as part of the crew and challenged them to learn as much as possible and to take back to their hometown good words about NASSAU and the Navy.

For the cadets, the experience of getting underway helped them to understand the lessons learned in the classroom. "We were aboard a ship in port for a short tour, but it was nothing like this," said Cadet Senior Chief [REDACTED] from Sullivan East High School in Bluff City, TN. "The best part about being here underway was we saw how things we learned in class work, and what they are used for."

Each cadet was matched up with a crewmember to serve as a running mate to show the cadets around the ship. Once running mates were assigned, they were off to explore the vast world of amphibious warfare and given relatively free run of the ship.

Even though the ship was underway for only 25 hours, this period allowed the cadets to observe and participate in shipboard activities experienced daily by members of the crew.

Cadets from both schools have been aboard NASSAU on other occasions, but according the Naval Science Instructors, this visit marked the first underway period for most and allowed them to earn their sea cruise ribbon.

The NJROTC program helps high school students make informed decisions about career plans. The underway experience aboard NASSAU provided training and insight that the cadets will be able to use in charting their own lives. Many of the Sullivan North and Sullivan East students have already decided to join the military. "Eight out of the 15 graduating seniors have already committed to a branch of the armed forces," said CDR [REDACTED]. "Each of the youngsters were more than pleased with the hospitality, the level of training, the number of things they got to see and experience from our arrival to our departure."

To commemorate the visit, CAPT Waickwicz presented each unit with a large framed photograph of the ship. The Captain closed by answering questions about the ship. "I hope to see you in the fleet soon," he said.

On 28 June, several crewmembers volunteered their time to help distribute food at the Self Help And Resource Exchange (SHARE) warehouse in Norfolk, VA.

The volunteers spent several hours on that Saturday morning loading food into vehicles bound for various regional food distribution points located at more than 250 churches, community organizations and day care centers throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

SHARE is a non-profit food and community network, which opened in the Mid-Atlantic region in 1989 to help people save on their grocery bills while helping their community through volunteer service.

The NASSAU volunteer effort was spearheaded by Command Master Chief, MMCM(SW) Bernard Heffernan, who has a long history of community involvement. "I like to introduce people to community service," he said. "It's a warm feeling for the person who is just starting out, it awakens him and makes him want to do it again."

On 9 July, NASSAU got underway for Type Commander's Amphibious Training (TCAT) in Onslow Bay and at Camp Lejuene during July 9-16. TCAT provides an opportunity for the ships of the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) to practice their skills and for the Marines to embark in amphibious shipping, learn about shipboard life, and practice basic amphibious warfare skills, including a surface and heliborne amphibious assault.

The Marine training was scheduled with a crawl, walk, then run mindset because many of the Marines had little or no shipboard experience. The Marine requirements were integrated with ship specific training requirements into a combined schedule of events (SOE) by Commander, Amphibious Squadron Eight. Each ship was requested to provide an input to the process. "My Planning Board for Training carefully reviewed NASSAU's exercise status and our turn-around training plan to determine what training we wanted to accomplish, then submitted it to COMPHIBRON EIGHT for inclusion in the SOE. Once the TCAT SOE was published, we reviewed it thoroughly and packed in as many additional events

as possible to maximize our training during the underway period," according to CAPT Waickwicz.

NASSAU embarked part of the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) TWO command element (from the 2nd Marines) in Norfolk prior to sailing to provide time to get organized for the general onload following the ARG's arrival in Onslow Bay. NASSAU sailed the morning of 9 July, completed an underway recovery of four Landing Craft Utility (LCU) from ACU TWO, conducted a mass personnel casualty drill in the well deck, conducted a swept channel exercise, landed two search and rescue helicopters from HC-8, then steamed south to Onslow Bay, conducting AV-8B carrier qualification launches and recoveries en route.

NASSAU, NASHVILLE, and PENSACOLA arrived at Onslow Bay the next day to embark the Marines and their equipment by LCU, Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC), Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV), and helicopters. Most of the Marine equipment and personnel embarked in NASSAU via LCU's. "The LCU's started the backload of 133 Marine vehicles on the 10th," EN2 (SW/AW) [REDACTED], Chief Engineer aboard a LCU, said.

The assaults went well with no problems. "MAGTF TWO developed a landing plan and we supported it," CAPT [REDACTED], Combat Cargo Officer, said. "The Marines calculated how long it would take for the LCU's to load serials and hit the beach. The Marines wanted to make sure enough preparation time was given so everything was done safely. After all that was figured out we rehearsed the assault and debriefed it to find out what we could do better next time. This rehearsal/debrief process was completed twice and proved to be very successful. LCU operations went well," [REDACTED] said. The four LCU's logged over 300 nautical miles during TCAT.

TCAT also provided an opportunity for the Marines to complete basic flight qualifications and practice a heliborne assault. "TCAT was a very successful nine days for the Air Department," LT [REDACTED] said. "The deck crew executed 2,518 flight evolutions and pumped over 60,000 gallons of JP-5 under day and night vision goggle conditions. These numbers eclipsed the highest total deck landings for any monthly total in the last year, including the intensive operations NASSAU conducted in support of Operations SILVER WAKE (Albania) and GUARDIAN

RETRIEVAL (Zaire)." Pilots also familiarized themselves with ship landings and flight deck awareness. "TCAT not only allowed Marine pilots to get their initial or refresher qualification, but also to work the deck and flight pattern environment gaining safety awareness and confidence," [REDACTED] said.

"TCAT was a chance for Marines to practice what they are trained to do," [REDACTED] said. "This is what we do, this is how we get to the beach. By ship, landing craft, or aircraft, we have to practice. We had to practice getting on and off the ship tactically, and I think we demonstrated that very well," Cochran said.

But without the help of the NASSAU this evolution would not have been complete. "The 2nd Marines will not deploy off a ship unless we come down here and give them the training aboard a Navy vessel," CAPT Kenneth E. Golden, COMPHIBRON EIGHT, said. "The Marines were trained how to land and take off from a ship if they had to, and we let them execute the plan from a ship just like a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) would. I think it has been a productive time for them and for us. The Navy and Marines by themselves are not very powerful but if you put them together they are pretty formidable." CAPT Golden said.

While TCAT was time for training it was also time for some Marines to get acquainted with shipboard life. The Marines went through an orientation, which included NASSAU's command presentation video and information that outlined rules and guidelines of shipboard life. "After showing them the video I found they were very motivated," [REDACTED] said. "They asked Sailors questions, they really wanted to know what happens on board a ship and they adapted really well," [REDACTED] said.

"With the exception of the older Marines most of them have never been on a ship before," CAPT Golden said. "They don't know how to embark, go to general quarters stations, they have never seen a ship's berthing, they don't know where to go to eat or how to call things off in serials. We are training the Marines in shipboard life in case they have to go to the field, they don't go anywhere without us," CAPT Golden said.

NASSAU hosted 42 Capstone Course students 17 July while participating in TCAT off the coast of North Carolina. These

students visited NASSAU to see some of the capabilities inherent in an Amphibious Ready Group (ARG). The students consisted of flag officers or prospective flag officers from all military branches including the Coast Guard.

The students witnessed first-hand how an amphibious assault ship operates, and how the Navy/Marine Corps team works together. The students were accompanied by GEN Richard Neal, the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, LT GEN Charles Wilhelm, Commander Marine Forces Atlantic and two retired four star officers. Arriving via helicopters early in the morning, they were greeted by Rear Admiral Gordon Holder, Commander Amphibious Group Two and Captain Golden, Commander Amphibious Squadron Eight. Immediately following their arrival, the visitors viewed from the flight deck the launch and recovery of two AV-8B Harriers. They were then given a tour of NASSAU's extensive medical complex, which includes a triage area, operating rooms, intensive care unit, and the primary ward. From there the visitors were taken to a troop berthing space, which normally is home to up to 296 Marines, but can also serve as a medical overflow during a mass casualty situation.

TCAT was COMPHIBRON EIGHT's last operation with the NASSAU ARG, disembarking on 18 July. Commodore Golden gave a farewell to NASSAU over the LMC just before departing the ship. "I was very proud that the NASSAU was my flag ship. It has shown itself time and time again. It was very kind to my staff and my family. I can't say enough about the crew of NASSAU. It has been my pleasure and my hats off to everyone, and I thank you for your support."

While underway for TCAT, NASSAU was also one of four ships based in Norfolk that participated in the fourth annual Joint Warrior Interoperability Demonstration (JWID) '97. Other ships that participated included the USS JOHN C. STENNIS (CVN 74), USS SAN JACINTO (CG 56), and the USS ATLANTA (SSN 712).

JWID '97 was conducted from 7-31 July at specific U.S. military, NATO and Allied nation sites throughout the world, including: Norfolk, VA with the four ships and the Joint Training Analysis and Simulation Center (JTASC); Fort Gordon, GA; Barksdale Air Force Base, LA, Camp LeJeune, NC; and the Joint Demonstration Evaluation Facility in Arlington, VA. Allied

countries participating included the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Spain, France, and New Zealand.

The Navy/Marine Corps team demonstrated how JWID better supported Naval Surface Fire Support. "JWID allows us to coordinate and deconflict supporting arms coordination," LCDR [REDACTED], COMPHIBRON SIX Operations Officer said. Overall, JWID '97 was an opportunity not only to test and display information technology demonstrations, but also proved the Navy and its ships as a unique and effective player in fast-growing world of Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence (C4I) interoperability in a joint and coalition environment.

Starting 28 July, VIPs visited the ship to discuss and evaluate JWID's information systems. They viewed numerous demonstrations. "One of the demonstrations this week showed how integrated amphibious and battle group operations effectively support real time exchange of information," Intelligence Officer, LCDR [REDACTED] said.

JWID '97 is a Joint Staff-sponsored, USACOM-hosted and Navy-led technology demonstration involving specific military, NATO and Allied nation sites. JWID is designed to produce solutions to Joint Warfighter command and control interoperability problems and assess technologies that will provide solutions in a low risk environment. Efficiency and low cost is also a priority for conducting JWID. Commercial vendors, government command and control system developers were invited to demonstrate new equipment and capabilities in a Joint Task Force environment that replicates phases of simulated exercise conflicts.

The NASSAU with embarked Amphibious Squadron Six, as the Naval Force Headquarters (NAVFOR), had the unique opportunity to conduct the testing of JWID upon returning from a six-month deployment where the ship conducted real-world operations in support of peacekeeping in Bosnia, and non-Combatant evacuation operations (NEO) in Albania and off the coast of Zaire.

The experience gained by NASSAU's crew provided the ability and knowledge to flex the demonstrations to there full potential. NASSAU's mission as an amphibious assault ship also directly

benefited the testing by applying the demonstrations to ship-to-shore command and control and amphibious landings.

NASSAU tested JWID's capabilities while underway for Type Commander's Amphibious Training (TCAT) exercises. "NASSAU put tracking devices on a Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) and a HUMVEE to track and locate their positions," [REDACTED] said.

The final week of JWID, Observer Week, is the culmination of testing and execution of the demonstrations by displaying and demonstrating the technology to a host of visitors representing key positions and commands within the U.S. military and government, U.S. corporations, foreign militaries and the press.

During the week, NASSAU hosted a luncheon for the Turkish delegation led by MAJ GEN Okan, Turkish Air Force. It was not only an opportunity for the Turks to see JWID and a U.S. naval ship, but also a chance for the crew and the Turkish officers to interact and exchange ideas. "The Turkish Delegation was very pleased with the hospitality and the effort of NASSAU's crew," CAPT Waickwicz said. "They received a very in depth, lengthy tour of the ship."

The NASSAU hosted over 400 visitors throughout the week. Visitors received a warm "Gator" welcome as they viewed the demonstrations and toured the ship.

On 28 July, the crew celebrated the ship's 18th birthday with a special meal and ceremony held on the mess decks. Representing the ship's rich history, the oldest and youngest member of the ship's crew participated in a cake cutting ceremony. LCDR [REDACTED], the ship's Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Officer and Airman Apprentice [REDACTED], a food service attendant, cut the cake with a ceremonial saber. The cake was then served with ice cream to the crewmembers present.

On 7 August two Boy Scout Troops from Toledo, Ohio arrived on board NASSAU. Boy Scout Troops 1121 and 1122 visited NASSAU as part of their visit to the Virginia area. The Boy Scouts were in Virginia for a National Jamboree, a national convention of Boy Scouts. Tour guides from NASSAU gave the group an in-depth orientation of the ship, including a tour of the Well Deck/Upper

Vehicle Stowage, Hangar Bay, Medical Triage, Flight Deck, Bridge, Combat Information Center, and the Signal Bridge.

On 21 August, NASSAU completed the first ever LHA/LHD at sea ammunition off-load 21 August. Unlike aircraft carriers, ammunition on-loads and off-loads for large deck amphibious ships are usually conducted at Gulf Anchorage in Norfolk or craned directly to/from the pier at Naval Weapons Station Earle, New Jersey. NASSAU was tasked by Commander, Amphibious Group TWO to demonstrate that amphibious ships can efficiently off-load at sea too, as part of an effort to determine if any cost or time savings could be obtained in the future.

NASSAU departed Norfolk at 0900, 18 August to rendezvous with the USS SUPPLY (AOE 6) the following morning to begin the off-load. Initially, three full days were allocated for the transfer of ammunition. However, nearly 50 percent of the ammunition was off-loaded on the first day with 87 connected replenishment (CONREP) and 407 vertical replenishment (VERTREP) lifts. It became apparent that a third day would not be necessary. On the second day there were 108 CONREP lifts and 396 VERTREP lifts. This totaled over 1350 tons of ammunition with an estimated dollar value of \$36 million.

CAPT Waickwicz congratulated all hands involved for accomplishing the transfer safely and ahead of schedule. LTJG [REDACTED], the Ship's Gunner, was responsible for scheduling, organizing and orchestrating the evolution. He was assisted by AOC(AW) [REDACTED] and the professional Aviation Ordnancemen in his division as well as the Gunner's Mates, Fire Controlmen and Electronic Warfare technicians in the Combat Systems Department.

Air Department and HC-8 Detachment 4 executed the VERTREP while Deck Department operated the CONREP station. The ship's Combat Cargo Officer, Marine Capt. Ronald Cochran directed the pallets on the flight deck and AO1 [REDACTED] kept the pace going in the hangar bay.

During the ammunition off-load, the ship used the extensive alongside time to train prospective master helmsmen and conning officers.

The SUPPLY played an important role in helping the NASSAU plan and execute the off-load. The teamwork between the two ships was described in SUPPLY's comments in its daily operational report: "Excellent work by all hands on NASSAU. It looks like you do this as a primary mission area."

On 29 August, NASSAU completed what is considered the granddaddy of all inspections. A Board of Inspection and Survey inspection "INSURV" is a very rigorous five day material inspection of the ship. NASSAU's previous inspection was in 1992.

NASSAU began preparing for the inspection in 1996. Initial planning included a review of the previous INSURV report and governing instructions, followed by development of an extensive plan of action and milestones. According to Captain Waickwicz, the purpose of establishing the plan that far out was to ensure a steady strain approach and avoid crisis management as the inspection neared. Preparations continued throughout the ship's six month Mediterranean Amphibious Ready Group (MARG 97-1) deployment to the Mediterranean Sea and south Atlantic Ocean and throughout the summer following return from the deployment at the end of May.

A key element of NASSAU's preparation was the assessment of the material condition of the ship early on so that unsatisfactory conditions could be improved where possible, and other deficiencies documented for future correction. This was accomplished through a rigorous zone inspection process, which included inspections targeted at specific spaces such as fan rooms and weekly through the Department in the Spotlight Program. Although painful at times, this yielded great dividends through improved cleanliness, stowage, material condition, and documentation. If you don't know what's wrong, you can't fix it. Good documentation is an indication that the ship is a good steward of the taxpayer's assets.

As the INSURV approached, NASSAU initiated contact with the INSURV team, which is based at Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek. During the post-deployment standdown, LT [REDACTED], the ship's INSURV Coordinator, drafted a detailed agenda for the five day inspection. This was necessary to deconflict the numerous demonstrations, both in terms of physically completing them at the same time and in terms of having the right people there to

safely do it. The agenda was reviewed by the department heads, adjusted, and finally sent to the INSURV Board for their comments and suggestions. This resulted in an agenda that was put to the test during a Commander, Amphibious Group TWO Pre-INSURV Assessment, which was conducted the week of 23 June. This produced many useful lessons learned that were incorporated into the agenda and the ship's preparations for the actual INSURV. NASSAU was able to practice the underway agenda a final time in mid-August to ensure that the schedule was feasible.

The final preparations for the 25-29 August INSURV started early Saturday morning after returning from an ambitious underway off-load of 1300 pallets of ammunition to USS SUPPLY (AOE 6). The crew began to lay out gear that would need to be seen by the inspectors and continued to steam the engineering plant throughout the weekend. As some crewmembers laid equipment out still others continued to clean the ship in anticipation of the visitors that were to arrive on Monday morning for the "mother of all inspections." "The crew takes great pride in their ship, and they wanted to show it off," stated MMCM(SW/AW) Heffernan, NASSAU's Command Master Chief.

Early Monday morning the security/electrical safety desk on the pier was manned at 0500 and the ship was titivated for the last time prior to the arrival of the board. The majority of the INSURV team, consisting of more than 80 Navy, Marine Corps, and civilian experts, assembled on the pier by 0730. At precisely 0745, Captain Etter, Commanding Officer, Board of Inspection and Survey, Atlantic, was rung on board, letting the entire crew know that the inspection had started.

The INSURV team was led to staterooms to change into coveralls then back to the hangar bay for a quick briefing to introduce key players and kick off the inspection. Captain Waickwicz welcomed the team aboard, telling them among other things that "we want to take this opportunity to learn from you, the experts, so that we can better maintain the ship."

The first day progressed well as the crew showed their gear and their style to the inspectors. At the end of the first day there were no underway restrictives and the ship was cleared to get underway on Tuesday morning to conduct the underway portion of the inspection.

On Tuesday morning, reveille was passed at 0330, the ship went to Sea and Anchor Detail at 0415, and NASSAU was underway on time precisely at 0530. RADM H.F. Herrera, President, Board of Inspection and Survey embarked with the INSURV team to see an LHA up close for the first time. The grueling underway schedule is designed to demonstrate equipment supporting a wide variety of mission areas. These included an aircraft detection to engagement sequence, ballasting operations, anchor drop test, communications checks, full power ahead and astern, full power steering checks, a countermeasures washdown system demonstration, and activation of the AFFF sprinkler systems in the hangar bay, vehicle decks, flight deck, and other spaces. At 2206, some 94 events later, NASSAU moored at pier 11, about an hour earlier than planned.

On Wednesday morning NASSAU started the open and inspect phase of the inspection, during which the INSURV team looks at the internal components of selected machinery and equipment to determine its condition. This day is also used to accomplish any checks that could not be completed the first two days. The individual department heads were briefed by their INSURV counterparts on Thursday and the inspection concluded on Friday with a formal briefing of the results. The INSURV team was complimentary of the ship's cleanliness, orchestration of the inspection, and the fact that very few deficiencies were identified that the ship did not know about already. Captain Waickwicz thanked the INSURV team and stated, "the INSURV was very beneficial to NASSAU and will make her a better ship."

Friday did not mark the end of the story. INSURV inspections always produce long lists of things that need to be done. NASSAU developed a comprehensive plan of action and milestones to ensure correction of as many deficiencies as possible during the five month Selected Restricted Availability (SRA), which started 3 September. Steady strain is the name of the game and the key to success!

On 3 September, NASSAU was moved by tugs to Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) to begin a Selected Restricted Availability (SRA) period.

The "dead stick" move was necessitated by the fact the ship was defueled prior to going down the river to the shipyard. The ship was moved under the power of five tugs pushing along side, however the NASSAU remained in control.

The ship may have been under the power of five tug boats, but the NASSAU still used its own rudders and navigational aids in the current waters of the narrow and winding channel leading to the shipyard.

During NASSAU's Selected Restricted Availability at NNSY, the ship received many upgrades, including a new navigational system in the Combat Information Center and on the Bridge.

One of the more visible jobs completed during NASSAU's Selected Restricted Availability (SRA) period at Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) was the resurfacing of the flight deck. For the second time in two years that task, with assistance from Shore Intermediate Maintenance Activity (SIMA) Portsmouth, fell to the capable hands of the Air Department.

Led by the flight deck CPOs ABHC(AW) [REDACTED] and ABHC(AW) [REDACTED], the Air Department enthusiastically took on the job. Department LCPO ABHCS(AW) [REDACTED], a veteran of the last non-skid job, was on deck daily providing guidance. The non-skid crew was made up of personnel from the flight deck, hangar deck, aviation fuels, and weapons divisions. The crew worked 12 to 16 hours a day, seven days a week with only the occasional rain day off for the three week duration of the job. Despite the hard work of the Air Department's Petty Officers and Airmen, NASSAU couldn't have done it alone. SIMA Portsmouth provided the materials, technical expertise, and personnel for the operation and maintenance of the shot blasting machines, generators, and air compressors.

NASSAU's flight deck has roughly 90,000 square feet of operating area. It includes two aircraft elevators, a bomb build up area and the top of the hangar to flight deck vehicle ramp. On the large deck amphibious assault ships, as well as aircraft carriers, flight deck resurfacing is usually done by civilian contractors.

The flight deck was last resurfaced during NASSAU's SRA in the fall of 1995. Since leaving the yards the deck has withstood the rigors of over 19,700 launches and recoveries and 4,700 aircraft moves while participating in a variety of workups, exercises, and a six month Mediterranean/West African deployment. In addition to helicopter and fixed wing operations, the deck has hosted assemblies, drills, physical training for ship's company and embarked Marines, small arms training, stores onloads, countless flight deck scrubs, steel beach picnics and one very politically correct "Crossing the Line" ceremony.

On Thursday, 25 September, 24 Senior Executive Service Apex Course participants were welcomed aboard the amphibious assault ship NASSAU for a tour and a working luncheon.

The Senior Executive Service (SES) Apex Course students are civilian government employees who are equivalent in grade to flag/general officers. As part of the Apex Course, the students travel to numerous facilities and commands to learn about military capabilities.

The Apex Course students included senior Department of Defense leaders from jobs including the Deputy Director of Naval Training and General Counsel for the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization. The course is run by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and is open to new SES personnel in all Department of Defense agencies.

The students came to NASSAU to learn how an amphibious assault ship operates and how the Navy and Marine Corps team works together. The visitors were welcomed aboard the ship by Commander Amphibious Group TWO, RADM Gordon S. Holder; Commander Amphibious Squadron EIGHT, CAPT Kenneth Golden; and NASSAU's Commanding Officer, CAPT John J. Waickwicz. During the luncheon, the officers introduced the future government leaders to the amphibious elements of the U.S. Navy.

Following lunch, RADM Holder presented a briefing on the mission of the Amphibious Ready Group using NASSAU's recent Mediterranean deployment as a model to explain how the Navy and Marine Corps team integrates to conduct a variety of missions ranging from amphibious assault to non-combatant evacuation operations. He also explained the flexibility of amphibious

forces by discussing how the NASSAU Amphibious Ready Group was able to simultaneously conduct operations off the coasts of Africa and Albania.

Upon completion of the Apex course, the Senior Executive Service students have a better understanding of the capabilities of each of the military services and how they work together during joint operations.

October 1st brought significant changes to the command structure. Advances in technology, particularly in computers and computer networks have brought changes in the ways of doing business in combat systems, command and control, and communications. New information systems with both tactical and nontactical applications are based on computer local area networks(LAN). For large deck ships, it came to follow that a restructuring of the departmental organization might enhance overall operations. Aircraft carriers were the first to implement a C4I Department (Command & Control, Communications, Computers and Information).

NASSAU conducted a comprehensive review of the goals of implementing a C4I Department, lessons learned from the KEARSARGE in its implementation of a C4I Department and the baseline NASSAU departmental organization. This review resulted in development of an alternative approach to the KEARSARGE model. The NASSAU C5I department combines the communications and combat systems departments and pulls significant resources from the operations and supply department. It realigns a number of other divisions work centers based on functionality and future Navy ratings conversions such as the RM/DP, FC/DS and ET/DS mergers.

The C5I Department in NASSAU consists of a Data Processing Division (DPs), an Electronics Division (ETs, DSs), a Communication Division (RMs), a Combat Systems Division (DSs, EWs, Fcs) and a Marine Communications Division.

The Data Processing Division is responsible for the network administration of the ship's nontactical LANs (SNAP/SUADP/OMMS).

The electronics division maintains NASSAU's extensive communications gear, search and air traffic control radars, and

tactical LANs (JMCIS). Included also are the microminiature lab and the PC/XEROX repair shops.

The Communications Division are the men in radio that ensure that NASSAU remains in the KNOW. They are responsible for the numerous circuits ranging from EHF to HF that support a flag command ship.

The Combat Systems Division operates and maintains NASSAU's point defense weapons systems, Advance Combat Direction System (ACDS) and electronic warfare systems. They are the most diverse in rating structure and focus on the ship's self defense capabilities.

The Marine Communications Division conducts liaison with embarked Marines to ensure Marine connectivity. They are involved in creating the architecture for the IT-21 LAN being installed on NASSAU which incorporates a permanent infrastructure for a Marine LAN.

It has been an exciting start for C5I Department with many new systems being installed on NASSAU during its SRA period. NASSAU will be the first ARG to deploy with IT21, which will support both a classified and unclassified LAN not only for ship's force but, as mentioned earlier, for embarked Marines. NASSAU's command and control systems is undergoing a complete upgrade with the installation of ACDS, BFTT/RESS, NAVSSI and JMCIS 2.2.

"The challenges are there for this new department. But it has been a good start. The key will be to harness the talents of the DPs, DSs, ETs, EWs, FCs and RMs so that they complement and strengthen each other. We are an extremely technical department and fortunately we have very talented and dedicated Sailors." said C5I Officer, LCDR [REDACTED].

On 7 October, Commander Amphibious Group TWO, RADM Gordon S. Holder, visited the NASSAU to present the ship with the Amphibious Squadron EIGHT Meritorious Unit Commendation. The commendation was awarded for meritorious service in support of the Joint Task Force SILVER WAKE off the coast of Albania. While aboard NASSAU the Admiral participated in the grand opening of the ship's new Educational Services Office.

As the Navy continues to design and build "smarter" ships, and use technological advances to upgrade the fleet, the requirement for better-educated Sailors continues to grow. During the ship's Selected Restricted Availability (SRA) at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, NASSAU received improvements that will help make the ship and its crew smarter.

While new electronic gear installed in the ship's Combat Information Center (CIC) will give the ship better command and control capabilities, the new Education Services Office along with a newly certified Test Control Officer will give the ship's crew the resources needed to keep pace with an increasingly competitive career work force.

With the opening of the ship's new Educational Services Office and certification of a Test Control Officer, crewmembers can make arrangements to take college-level exams aboard ship. Previously these services could only be provided at shore-based education facilities.

During the summer the ship's Dental Officer, LT [REDACTED] received certification to serve as a Test Control Officer (TCO), which gives the NASSAU the ability to administer various tests aboard ship. "I have been approved by DANTES to administer college-level exams," [REDACTED] said. "These exams include almost everything but the GED."

NASSAU crewmembers are fortunate to have such complete educational services. "Usually ships this size don't have a TCO," [REDACTED] said. "It's something usually reserved for aircraft carriers."

Oddly enough, new methods of logistics management allowed the addition of the Educational Services Office. Finding space for the new office was made possible by the "Remove" Program, which mandates that excess items be removed from ship's storerooms and returned to shore supply facilities. In complying with the Remove Program, the ship was able to completely clear out several stowage areas, including one storeroom located adjacent to the Command Career Counselor's Office.

Previously, if NASSAU Sailors wanted to complete correspondence courses or work on a college degree, there was no central location to assist them with their needs. Understanding the ship's need for educational services, NASSAU's Commanding Officer decided to convert the recently emptied storeroom into a combined Career Counselor and Educational Services Office.

The conversion of the two spaces was completed entirely by ship's force personnel. NCC(AW) [REDACTED] and NC1(SW) [REDACTED] coordinated the effort, which required the removal of the bulkhead that separated the two spaces. Much of the work was completed on a voluntary, after hours basis, including the resurfacing and tiling of the office deck.

After inspecting the new Educational Services Office, RADM Holder said that he was pleased with the way the former storeroom was turned into a space that will benefit the crew. "This is why the Remove Program has to work," he said.

A portion of the new space was turned into an education library. The office will stock courses for every rating aboard ship, as well as specialty courses.

With the new Educational Services Office now open, many services have been centralized. "It makes us a 'one stop shopping' office for information, retention and education," [REDACTED] said.

On Saturday, 25 October, the NASSAU engraved a new name into its ship's bell. [REDACTED], daughter of LCDR(SEL) and Mrs. [REDACTED] became the second child to be baptized on board NASSAU. The first baptism was held in 1988.

LCDR(SEL) [REDACTED] was the Safety Officer in NASSAU from August 1996 to October 1997, which included the non-combatant evacuation of Albania and operations off the coast of the former Zaire. He is currently Flag Lieutenant to Commander Amphibious Group TWO and Commander Naval Doctrine Command, RADM Gordon S. Holder.

The ceremony was held inside the ship's Hangar Bay behind a large American flag. Signal flags in the overhead spelled out the name "[REDACTED]."

The crew of the NASSAU spent many hours transforming the ship from an industrial area into a place of worship. Much work was required to prepare the ship's bell. The bell had to be removed from its position near the bow and placed in a ceremonial bell stand. Although the outside of the bell is always polished, the inside required some attention. After much work by the ship's Supply Department, the bell shined like new inside and out.

LCDR [REDACTED] NASSAU's Chaplain, and Reverend Keith Almond, pastor at Community United Methodist Church, conducted the ceremony, which lasted about 30 minutes. More than 50 family members, friends and crewmembers were present for the ceremony.

A week later on 1 November, another ceremony took place. LT [REDACTED], the Dental Officer, married [REDACTED]. In a ceremony that took 40 minutes, NNSY base Chaplain, CDR [REDACTED] married the couple.

The month of December began with the crew making final preparations for the Light-Off Assessment conducted 8-15 December by the COMPHIBGRU TWO Engineering Readiness Assessment Team (ERAT). This inspection is designed to ensure the safety of the ship's main propulsion equipment and the effectiveness of its engineering management after an industrial period.

During the inspection process, ship's force and SIMA teamed with the shipyard to quickly correct any small problems found by the inspection team and continued to ready the forward plant for inspection.

The NASSAU's crew diligence and enthusiasm combined with exemplary knowledge resulted in the prompt certification of the Aft Main Machinery Plant. Simultaneously, three fire drills were conducted by two separate duty sections during the assessment. Months of prior practice paid off as the duty sections demonstrated the proper actions for the drills.

Throughout the assessment, NASSAU took every advantage to glean a wealth of knowledge from the ERAT. For example, oral boards ended with teaching sessions. Additionally, program inspections paid off with additional suggestions to implement. Finally, evolutions provided another avenue of learning. Thus,

the LOA was not just an assessment, but a vigorous enhancement of the NASSAU collective.

Recognizing the level of effort that is required to be successful in LOA, "TEAM NASSAU" went into action to assist their shipmates in engineering as they focused on preparations for LOA. Specifically, four weeks prior to LOA, teams were formed from outside of the engineering department to tackle the formidable tasks of cleaning, preservation, valve and system labeling, gage calibration, and flange shield installation. The goal was to allow the engineers to focus on system verifications, refueling, cold and hot checks, and basic casualty control training in the fourteen days between the Production Completion Date (PCD) and LOA.

"You're a Sailor first, so what better way for the Operations Department to contribute to the LOA," ISC (SW/AW) [REDACTED] said. "I'm heading the effort to clean and preserve the Aft Main Machinery Room, and it's a great opportunity for Operations Department personnel who are going up for their Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist pins to get up close and personal with the engineering systems and equipment."

Other major contributors to "TEAM NASSAU" included the Air Department with the responsibility for the Forward Main Machinery Room and flange shield repairs or replacements. The Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department renovated both Main Machinery Room access trunks and provided critical gage calibration services.

On Saturday, 20 December, 60 Sailors and spouses were recognized by local television stations while volunteering their time to help distribute food at the Self Help And Resource Exchange (SHARE) warehouse in Norfolk, Va.

The volunteers spent several early morning hours on loading food into vehicles bound for various regional food distribution points located at more than 250 churches, community organizations and day care centers throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

For many of the Sailors, volunteering at the SHARE warehouse has become part of their monthly routine. Since June, the number of NASSAU volunteers has grown from 17 to about 60, with more

attending every month. NASSAU's efforts have not gone unnoticed, recently several NASSAU Sailors were interviewed on location by two local television stations.

Several Sailors and one Marine who used the holiday season as a reason to volunteer, have decided that they will volunteer again in the upcoming months. "We decided that since it was Christmas time, we needed to be there," said Marine CAPT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who volunteered along with his wife, [REDACTED]. "We've been blessed all year, so now we want to try to help somebody else out."

As long as the ship's schedule permits, NASSAU plans to continue sending volunteers to the SHARE warehouse on a monthly basis. "Hampton Roads has done so much for the United States Navy over the years." said NASSAU's Sailor of the Year, AK1(AW) [REDACTED]. "This is an opportunity to give something back to the community."

For the NASSAU 1997 was truly a "golden" year, on 24 December, Commander U.S. Atlantic Fleet announced NASSAU as the winner of the Golden Anchor Award in the large ship category.

The award recognizes the outstanding command retention and personnel programs that helped the ship stand out above all other large ships in the Atlantic Fleet. This was the first time in the ship's history that one of NASSAU's anchors was painted gold.