



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS NASSAU (LHA-4)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS NASSAU (LHA 4)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), Naval Historical
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Washington, D.C. 20374-5060

Subj: 2002 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) 2002 Command History
(2) Organizational Chart
(3) Information Pamphlet
(4) 24 MEU Information Pamphlet
(5) Commanding Officer Biography
(6) Unit Photo

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (6) are forwarded.


R. P. TJEPKEMA

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

1. The Ship's Mission: The mission of USS NASSAU (LHA 4) 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. NASSAU can operate independently or in conjunction with other units conducting heliborne and surface amphibious operations. The TARAWA class multi-purpose Amphibious Assault Ship was designed to maintain "Tactical Integrity" or to get a balanced force to the same point at the same time.

NASSAU carries a complete Marine Battalion Landing Team (approximately 1,800 personnel), supplies and equipment required for an assault and vehicles to land the team ashore either by helicopter and/or small amphibious craft.

A secondary mission of NASSAU is 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, NASSAU is capable of providing fresh water and electricity from the ship's engineering plant until restoration of domestic services. NASSAU's medical facilities provide hospitalization for up to 300 patients (including intensive care) and outpatient treatment.

24 Marine Expeditionary Unit, including the battalion's supporting elements, Battalion Landing Team 2/2, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 263 and MEU Service Support Group 24, were embarked on board USS NASSAU for the ship's 2002-2003 deployment. Aircraft flown by Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 263 (Rein) included 10 CH-46E Sea Knights (Tailcodes 00, 02, 04, 05, 07, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14), six AH-1W Super Cobras (Tailcodes 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35), two UH-1B Huey Iroquois (Tailcodes 40, 41), six CH-53E Sea Stallions (Tailcodes 21, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29), and six AV-8B Harriers (Tailcodes 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55). Also embarked was Helicopter Combat Support Squadron SIX, Detachment SEVEN with two HH 46D helicopters (Tailcodes 74 and 75) to primarily provide Search and Rescue, Logistics and Force Protection operations. Beach Master Unit TWO provided Landing Craft Unit support.

NASSAU is attached to Commander, Amphibious Squadron TWO, commanded by Commodore Terry O'Brien. USS NASSAU is commanded by CAPT Russell P. Tjepkema. The Executive Officer is CAPT John L. Green. An organizational chart is attached as enclosure (2).

Enclosure (1)

2. Chronology of significant events January - December 2002

01 JAN - 07 JAN INPORT NORFOLK, VA. HOLIDAY STANDDOWN
08 JAN - 14 JAN UNDERWAY, VIRGINIA CAPES OPAREA
15 JAN - 10 FEB INPORT NORFOLK, VA.
11 FEB - 15 FEB UNDERWAY, VIRGINIA CAPES OPAREA
16 FEB - 22 FEB INPORT NORFOLK, VA.
23 FEB UNDERWAY, ENROUTE EARLE NWS, N.J.
24 FEB - 27 FEB INPORT EARLE NAVAL WEAPONS STATION, N.J.
28 FEB ENROUTE NORFOLK, VA.
01 MAR - 07 MAR INPORT NORFOLK, VA.
08 MAR - 13 MAR UNDERWAY, PUERTO RICAN OPAREA
14 MAR - 16 MAR INPORT ST. THOMAS, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
17 MAR - 20 MAR UNDERWAY, PUERTO RICAN OPAREA
21 MAR - 01 APR INPORT NORFOLK, VA.
02 APR - 03 APR INSURV, UNDERWAY, VIRGINIA CAPES OPAREA
04 APR - 10 APR INPORT, NORFOLK, VA.
11 APR FEP, UNDERWAY, VIRGINIA CAPES OPAREA
12 APR - 15 APR INPORT, NORFOLK, VA.
16 APR - 24 APR PMINT, UNDERWAY, CHERRY POINT OPAREA
25 APR - 02 JUN INPORT, NORFOLK, VA.
03 JUN - 12 JUN MEUEX/ARGEX, UNDERWAY, CHERRY POINT OPAREA
12 JUN - 18 JUN INPORT NORFOLK, VA.
19 JUN - 27 JUN SOCEX, UNDERWAY, CHERRY POINT OPAREA
28 JUN - 02 JUL INPORT, NORFOLK, VA.
03 JUL - 18 JUL FIRST POM PERIOD, INPORT NORFOLK, VA.
19 JUL - 21 JUL INPORT, NORFOLK, VA.
22 JUL - 25 JUL UNDERWAY, VIRGINIA CAPES OPAREA
26 JUL UNDERWAY, FAMILY DAY CRUISE
26 JUL - 08 AUG SECOND POM PERIOD, INPORT NORFOLK, VA.
09 AUG - 25 AUG INPORT, NORFOLK, VA.
26 AUG UNDERWAY, MARG DEPLOYMENT 03-02
26 AUG - 28 AUG ANCHORED, ONSLOW BAY (24MEU ONLOAD)
29 AUG - 06 SEP UNDERWAY, ENROUTE ROTA, SPAIN
07 SEP - 09 SEP INCHOP SIXTH FLEET, ANCHORED, ROTA, SPAIN
10 SEP TRANSIT, STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR
10 SEP - 15 SEP UNDERWAY, ENROUTE THESSALONIKI, GREECE
16 SEP - 17 SEP INPORT, THESSALONIKI, GREECE (24MEU OFFLOAD)
18 SEP - 26 SEP UNDERWAY, ENROUTE RIJEKA, CROATIA
27 SEP - 30 SEP INPORT, RIJEKA, CROATIA
28 SEP RECEPTION HOSTED BY AMBASSADOR H. E. LAWRENCE G. ROSSIN
01 OCT - 04 OCT CROATIAN PHIBLEX, UNDERWAY, ADRIATIC SEA
05 OCT - 10 OCT UNDERWAY, ENROUTE MARMARIS, TURKEY
11 OCT - 14 OCT INPORT, MARMARIS, TURKEY
15 OCT - 19 OCT UNDERWAY, ENROUTE, THESSALONIKI, GREECE
20 OCT ANCHORED, THESSALONIKI, GREECE (24MEU ONLOAD)

21 OCT - 22 OCT INPORT, THESSALONIKI, GREECE (24MEU ONLOAD)
 23 OCT - 25 OCT UNDERWAY, ENROUTE SUEZ CANAL
 26 OCT INCHOP FIFTH FLEET
 26 OCT TRANSIT SUEZ CANAL
 27 OCT - 25 DEC UNDERWAY, GULF OF OMAN
 07 NOV - 16 NOV IMAGE NAUTILUS
 27 NOV - 11 DEC EDGED MALLETT
 26 DEC TRANSIT, STRAIT OF HORMUZ
 26 DEC - 27 DEC UNDERWAY, ENROUTE MANAMA, BAHRAIN
 28 DEC - 31 DEC INPORT, MANAMA, BAHRAIN

3. Narrative. Upon completion of the ship's Holiday Standdown on 8 January 2002, USS NASSAU began a very busy year. During the first months of 2002, USS NASSAU's deployment dates were uncertain due to world events. NASSAU successfully completed an accelerated schedule for all certification exercises to be ready to deploy early if necessary to support Operation Enduring Freedom.

The ship completed a Weapons Onload at Earle Naval Weapons Station, N.J. from 24-27 February 2002, returning to Norfolk for only one week, before getting underway again for the Puerto Rican operating area to complete their missile exercise.

Taking a break during the busy underway period, the crew enjoyed three days visiting the island of St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands, where the crew relaxed by playing golf, snorkeling and scuba diving thanks to tours set up by the ship's Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Department.

After returning to Norfolk, NASSAU's crew completed and passed their Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) Inspection from 1-4 April 2002. The following week, the ship's crew continued to excel during their successful Final Evaluation Period (FEP). After only a few days in port, the crew of USS NASSAU was once again underway from 16-24 April to complete their PHIBRON/MEU Integration (PMINT) exercise. This exercise was followed by a Marine Expeditionary Unit/Amphibious Readiness Group Exercise (MEU/ARGEX) from 3-12 June 2002 and a Special Operations Capability Exercise (SOCEX) from 19-27 June 2002.

USS NASSAU returned to port, enabling part of the crew to take leave during the ship's first Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) period from 3-18 July 2002. Before the second POM period, NASSAU spent four days underway once again, serving as a platform for Marine pilot qualifications. Returning to port on the evening of 25 July 2002, NASSAU was once again underway early the following

morning for a Family Day Cruise. Crewmember's families and friends had the opportunity to see NASSAU's crew in action. Families and friends enjoyed a day filled with activities, including tours of the ship's Bridge, Combat Information Center and Main Control. They also experienced an aerial demonstration of the ship's aircraft, viewed a gunnery exercise and marveled as Marines repelled from the air onto NASSAU's flight deck. After returning to port, the ship completed its second POM period from 26 July to 8 August 2002.

USS NASSAU departed Norfolk to begin the Mediterranean Amphibious Readiness Group (MARG) 03-02) Deployment on Monday, 26 August 2002. The other ships making up the NASSAU Amphibious Readiness Group were USS AUSTIN (LPD-4) and USS TORTUGA (LSD-46). From Norfolk, the ships transited to Onslow Bay, N.C., to onload the Marines of 24 Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) from 26-28 August.

On Thursday, 29 August, the ships of NASSAU Amphibious Readiness Group departed Onslow Bay and began the transit across the Atlantic Ocean. Arriving in Rota, Spain, on 7 September 2002, the ships inchooped into Sixth Fleet. Due to the unavailability of pier space because of the number of ships from the Spanish fleet currently inport, USS NASSAU remained at anchor throughout inport period.

Getting underway on the evening of 9 September 2002, USS NASSAU transited the Strait of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean Sea enroute to Thessaloniki, Greece. Arriving in Greece on 16 September, USS NASSAU offloaded the Marines 24 MEU (SOC) in preparation for their participation in Dynamic Response, a training exercise in Kosovo.

After completing the offload, USS NASSAU transited into the Adriatic Sea for a port visit to Rijeka, Croatia, from 27-30 September 2002. Among the highlights of the visit was a reception held onboard hosted by the American Ambassador to Croatia, Ambassador H. E. Lawrence G. Rossin on Saturday, 28 September 2002. The MWR Department also gave NASSAU Sailors the opportunity to explore by sponsoring tours to historical archaeological sites throughout the region. In addition, NASSAU crewmembers helped foster good will by visiting a school for children with mental and physical handicaps in a town near Rijeka. The Sailors and Marines spent Sunday morning at the school, visiting and playing with the children.

Leaving Rijeka, USS NASSAU participated in a training exercise, Croatian PHIBLEX, with the Croatian military from 1-4

October. After completing the exercise, the ship transited to Marmaris, Turkey, for the ship's second port visit from 11-14 October 2002. One of the highlights of the port visit was the opportunity to explore the Turkish bazaar and haggle with the shopkeepers for bargains on gold jewelry, Oriental rugs and leather. The ship's MWR Department once again provided a wide variety of activities for the crew to participate in during their days off, including scuba diving, horseback riding and visiting historic sites.

From Marmaris, USS NASSAU transited back to Thessaloniki, Greece, where the Marines of 24 MEU (SOC) rejoined the ship. The onload took place from 20-22 October 2002 in preparation for the ship's transit through the Suez Canal.

USS NASSAU inchooped to Fifth Fleet on 26 October 2002 and proceeded to transit the Suez Canal to begin its tour of duty as part of U.S. Central Command. During the months of November and December, USS NASSAU remained on station in the Gulf of Oman off the coast of Horn of Africa. The Marines of 24 MEU (SOC) went ashore in Djibouti to participate in two exercises, Image Nautilus from 7-16 November 2002 and Edged Mallet from 27 November to 11 December.

On 26 December 2002, USS NASSAU transited the Strait of Hormuz into the Persian Gulf, enroute to Manama, Bahrain, where the ship's crew rang in the New Year during a well-deserved port visit from 28 December 2002 to 1 January 2003.

USS NASSAU received the Medical Department Green "H" Award and the Commander, Atlantic Fleet Excellence Award for Retention for 2002.

AE1 (AW/SW) [REDACTED] was selected as NASSAU's Sailor of the Year for 2002. PC3 (SW/AW) [REDACTED] was selected as NASSAU's Junior Sailor of the Year for 2002.

USS NASSAU (LHA-4) ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

