



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
USS TARAWA (LHA-1)  
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96622

1983



LHA1/00:thm  
5750  
Ser: C2  
1 March 1984

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From: Commanding Officer, USS TARAWA (LHA 1)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)

Subj: Command History (OPNAV Report 5750-1) (U)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C

Encl: (1) (U) USS TARAWA Officer Precedence List  
(2) (U) USS TARAWA Change of Command at Sea Information  
(3) (U) COMPHIBRON ONE Change of Command Information

1. (U) The calendar year 1983 Command History for USS TARAWA (LHA 1) is submitted in accordance with guidance contained in reference (a).

a. (C) Basic History

(1) (U) Command Organization

(a) (U) Commanding Officer

83JAN01-83SEP27: Kent R. Siegel, Captain  
U. S. Navy, III  
Lineal #001478-60  
DOR 79MAR01

83SEP27-83DEC31: Philip F. Duffy, Captain  
U. S. Navy, III  
Lineal #001720-60  
DOR 81OCT01

*for*

(b) (U) Mission and Function of Command:

The Amphibious Task Force, which executes tasks in support of the Navy's force projection mission, is composed of LHA, LPH, LPD, LSD, LKA, and LST class ships. TARAWA, the lead ship of the LHA class of General Purpose Amphibious Assault Ships, combines the functional capabilities of the LPH, LPD/LSD and LKA to deliver a balanced payload, by air and/or surface operations, in an amphibious assault. Explicitly, a former Chief of Naval Operations defined the LHA's mission: "To embark, deploy, and land elements of a Marine Landing Force, in an assault by helicopter, landing craft, amphibious vehicles, and by any combination of these methods."

(c) (U) Composition of Command:

The command is composed of USS TARAWA (LHA 1) and organic assets which include one UH-1H helicopter (BUNO 160830), two LCM-6 and four LCPL assault boats. Ships complement includes 69 commissioned officers and 865 enlisted personnel as of 83DEC31.

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(d) (U) TARAWA was homeported at Naval Station San Diego, California during calendar year 1983.

(2) (C) Summary of Operations and Special Events for Calendar Year 1983.

01 JAN - 17 JAN: Combat Systems Readiness Testing (CSRT)  
11 JAN - 14 JAN: At sea, SOCAL OP Area; Mobile Team Training, Operational Propulsion Plant Examination Phase TWO (MTT OPPE-PH II)  
17 JAN - 19 JAN: Inport, Naval Station San Diego, California  
20 JAN: At sea SOCAL OP Area for AV-8A flight operations  
21 JAN: Inport, Naval Station San Diego, California  
22 JAN - 28 JAN: At sea, SOCAL OP Area for Readix 83-2/Mobile Sea Range operations  
29 JAN - 06 FEB: Operational Propulsion Examination Preparations  
31 JAN - 01 FEB: At sea, SOCAL OP Area  
08 FEB - 09 FEB: At sea, SOCAL OP Area, gunnery exercises conducted.  
14 FEB - 25 FEB: At sea, SOCAL OP Area for Amphibious Refresher Training  
26 FEB - 21 MAR: Inport, Naval Station San Diego, Ca  
22 MAR - 30 MAR: At Sea, SOCAL OP Area for Amphibious Exercise KERNAL BLITZ 83-1  
01 APR - 11 APR: Inport, Naval Station San Diego, California  
12 APR: At sea, SOCAL OP Area for Dependents Day Cruise  
13 APR: At sea, SOCAL OP Area, gunnery drills conducted  
14 APR - 26 APR: Inport, Naval Station San Diego, California  
27 APR - 03 MAY: Underway for WESTPAC deployment  
04 MAY - 15 MAY: Inport, Pearl Harbor, HI  
06 MAY - 10 MAY: Deperming Operations  
16 MAY - 20 MAY: At sea, Hawaiian Op Area for Exercise Bell Volcano 83-1  
21 MAY: Inport, Pearl Harbor HI  
22 MAY - 02 JUN: Underway for Buckner Bay, Okinawa, Japan; TRANSITEX 83-14  
29 MAY: CHOP to Seventh Flt  
02 JUN: Surveilled by two TU-95 Bear-D aircraft  
03 JUN: Inport, Buckner Bay, Okinawa, Japan  
04 JUN - 13 JUN: At sea, Okinawa OP Area for Exercise Valiant Blitz 83-3  
13 JUN - 14 JUN: ARG Alfa Group Sail for Subic Bay, R.P.  
13 JUN: TARAWA surveilled by two TU-95 Bear-D aircraft  
15 JUN - 6 JUL: Inport, Subic Bay, R. P.; upkeep STAV (6-29 June) conducted  
07 JUN - 8 JUL: At sea, South China Sea for transit to Hong Kong, B.C.C.  
09 JUL - 13 JUL: Inport, Hong Kong, B.C.C.  
14 JUL - 17 JUL: At sea, South China Sea/Gulf of Thailand for transit to Phattaya Beach, Thailand  
18 JUL - 21 JUL: Anchored, Phattaya Beach, Thailand  
19 JUL: Repositioned ship due to dragging of anchor  
22 JUL - 30 JUL: Underway, Gulf of Thailand Operations for Exercise Cobra Gold 83  
31 JUL: Transit from Gulf of Thailand to the Republic of Singapore  
01 AUG - 07 AUG: Inport Sembawang Shipyard, Republic of Singapore for Port Visit and repairs  
08 AUG - 17 AUG: Underway for transit to Berbera, Somalia  
18 AUG - 24 AUG: Modloc off Berbera, Somalia for participation in Exercise Bright Star  
25 AUG - 29 AUG: Transit to Mombasa, Kenya  
28 AUG: Crossed equator at position 00'00'N/44'06.3'E  
29 AUG - 01 SEP: Port visit Mombasa, Kenya

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02 SEP - 12 SEP: Enroute to Beirut, Lebanon  
10 SEP Completed northbound passage of Suez Canal  
12 SEP - 10 OCT: Modloc Vicinity Beirut Lebanon, in support of the U. S.  
component of the Multinational Peacekeeping Forces  
27 SEP At-sea Change of Command, Capt. P. F. Duffy relieves Capt.  
K. R. Siegel as Commanding Officer, USS TARAWA  
11 OCT Completed southbound passage of the Suez Canal  
12 OCT - 27 OCT: Transit of Red Sea, Indian Ocean, South China Sea enroute Subic  
Bay, R. P.  
17 OCT TARAWA surveilled by two IL-38 May aircraft  
27 OCT TARAWA surveilled by one TU-95 Bear D, and one TU-95 Bear F  
aircraft  
28 OCT - 01 NOV: Inport Subic Bay, R. P.  
02 NOV - 13 NOV: Enroute from Subic Bay, R. P. to Pearl Harbor, HI  
11 NOV Crossed International Date line  
14 NOV - 15 NOV: Inport Pearl Harbor HI, off loaded BLT 3/3, HMM-165, MSSG 37.  
Embarked dependent Tigers for return trip to CONUS  
16 NOV - 21 NOV: Enroute to San Diego, California from Pearl Harbor, HI  
17 NOV Conducted Vertrep for off-load of MLA  
22 NOV Arrived Naval Station San Diego, California, moored pier 7  
06 DEC Repositioned USS TARAWA to pier 8  
16 DEC Change of Command for COMPHIBRON ONE conducted on  
TARAWA's flight deck. Captain D. R. Morris, USN relieved by  
Captain E. D. Deweese, USN.  
17 DEC - 31 DEC: Inport, Naval Station, San Diego: Holiday upkeep period

b. (c) Narrative History

TARAWA commenced operations in January 1983 with participation in Readix 83-2, during which TARAWA served as the Mobile Sea Range instrumentation ship and target drone recovery vehicle. This opportunity enabled TARAWA to fine tune her combat systems and aviation handling capabilities prior to Amphibious Refresher Training in February.

During her fourteen month long Complex Overhaul (completed 27 Aug 1982) TARAWA's flight and well decks were not exercised. This inactivity combined with a large crew turnover, posed a true test for TARAWA during AMPHIB REFTRA, which was successfully completed on 25 February. March 1983 found TARAWA engaged in Exercise Kernel Blitz 83-1, a MAB (Marine Amphibious Brigade) sized exercise conducted along the coast of Southern California at Camp Pendleton. Gunnery exercises, a dependents day cruise, and SOCAL embarkation of Marine and Navy assets (four AH-1J Cobras from HMA-169, six AV-8A Harriers from VMA-231, one LCU, four LCM-8's, five M60-1A tanks, and a TOW detachment) occupied much of April.

TARAWA, the flagship for PHIBRON ONE (composed of one LHA, one LPH, two LPD's, one LSD, and two LST's) began the first leg of her record setting deployment on 27 April, when accompanied by LPH-10 (USS TRIPOLI) she slipped her berth at pier seven, NAVSTA San Diego and began her transit to Pearl Harbor, HI.

After an uneventful crossing to Pearl Harbor, HI TARAWA then underwent a complete deperrying in a record 96 hours. TARAWA then embarked two companies from BLT 3/3, HMA-269, (12 CH-46E's, 4 CH-53D's, 2 UH-1N's and 4 AT-1T's) and VMA-231 (6 AV-8A's). The Marine air assets were composited to form Marine Medium Helicopter

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Composite Squadron 165 Reinforced (HMM (C) - 165 BEIN). Beginning on 16 May, TARAWA spent four days at sea in the Hawaiian Op Area conducting operations for exercise Bell Volcano 83-1. This exercise was the first cohesive testing of the embarked units TARAWA was to carry with her throughout the next seven months of forward deployment. The Marine Landing Plan was confirmed and TARAWA's embarked air assets were utilized in surface and heliborne assaults at Red Beach, Barkings Sands Kauai. Following one day in port in Pearl Harbor, HI, TARAWA and the remainder of PHIBRON ONE on 22 May began TRANSITEX 83-14 bound for Buckner Bay Okinawa, Japan. On 29 May TARAWA chopped to COMSEVENTHFLT and became the flag ship for CTF 76.3. This was quickly followed on 02 June by TARAWA's first overt Soviet surveillance when two TU-95 Bear Delta aircraft overflew CTF-76.3. Alert deck launched AV-8A's from TARAWA successfully intercepted the Soviet aircraft, and escorted them until they turned away from the flag ship and accompanying shipping. This use of embarked marine AV-8A's as interceptors in a self defense role, is the first know self- protection intercept ever conducted by a non-CV air capable ship.

Upon arrival at Buckner Bay, Okinawa, Japan on 03 June and after the presail brief, TARAWA began participation in Exercise Valient Blitz 83-3, a three-phase Marine Amphibious Brigade level operation conducted under the direction of CTF-76, Commodore Klee (CATF) and CTF 79, Brigadier General Gary (CLF). During the exercise utilization of the Sea Echelon concept for control of amphibious shipping was proved feasible. At the conclusion of the exercise, TARAWA debarked the 37th MAU, and embarked the 31st MAU, which was to remain on board until 25 October.

TARAWA's 13-14 June transit from Okinawa to the Republic of the Philippines gave LHA-1 another opportunity to react to events, as alert deck launched AV-8A's were again called upon to intercept Soviet reconnaissance aircraft. Despite 50 knot over-the-deck winds, AV-8A's from VMA-231 intercept two TU-95 Bear Delta aircraft on 13 June.

Upon arrival in Subic Bay R. P. on 15 June, TARAWA again utilized her wet well capability as 31 MAU elements took advantage of an opportunity to conduct LANDEX 83-4 at Green Beach, Zambales. Although limited in scope, the LANDEX allowed the newly embarked MAU staff to work with TARAWA and to standardize landing procedures.

Subic Bay was a working port for TARAWA, and during the period of 16 June -06 July the ships Technical availability (STAV) was utilized to maximum benefit. Liasion with CTF 73 and COMFAIRWESTPAC DET Cubi Pt Supply and Operations personnel by TARAWA's counter-parts went far towards ensuring material and operational readiness during up-coming out-of-area periods.

Upon departure from Subic Bay, PHIBRON ONE split into two Amphibious Ready Groups (ARG's) with TARAWA becoming the flagship for ARG ALFA (TG-76.3), comprised of LHA-1, USS Duluth LPD-6, and USS Fredrick LST -1184.

An uneventful South China Sea transit was conducted on 7 and 8 July. On 9 July during its initial mooring evolution in Hong Kong, TARAWA's mooring buoy failed, placing the vessel in imminent danger within the confined harbor. Luck, able assistance from accompanying vessels, and the true professionalism of TARAWA's bridge, were complimenting factors in preventing tragedy and a probable international incident. Following subsequent relocation to anchorage near Green Island, TARAWA's crew enjoyed an incident free visit to this remarkable liberty port.

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After a transit of the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, TARAWA's crew again enjoyed an incident free port visit, in Pattaya Beach, Thailand. While anchored at Pattaya, TARAWA conducted face to face briefings with her Royal Thai Navy counterparts in preparation for Cobra Gold 83.

Cobra Gold-83 (23-31 July) consisted of an opposed transit with AAW and ASW vulnerability periods (Royal Thai A. F. and USN assets utilized). On D-Day, mine counter-measure and UDT operations were followed by a heliborne and surface simultaneous assault over Thepha Beach in Songkhla province, Thailand. The Cobra Gold exercise series is of increasing importance, and in 1983 it received high level media and military attention. A final wrap up event was hosted by COMSEVENTHFLT (VADM Hogg) onboard LHA-1.

TARAWA transited to the Republic of Singapore and berthed at Sembawang shipyard for repairs, upkeep, and crew liberty. After 7 days in Singapore TARAWA began a westward transit of the Indian Ocean which would bring her to MODLOC off Berbera Somalia. On 18 Aug, a record setting +20 knot SOA transit of the Indian Ocean was completed, and TARAWA began her participation in Exercise Bright Star/Eastern Wind 83. For six days TARAWA supported this JCS directed, USCINCCENT executed, major field training exercise by utilizing all warfare elements of her class design; aviation and surface assault, communication, combat direction, medical, logistical, and supportive capabilities.

At the conclusion of Bright Star 83 TARAWA headed towards her next port of call Mombasa, Kenya (enroute to Mombasa, TARAWA crossed the equator (00°00'N/44°06'.3E) on 28 August, however due to foul weather the traditional crossing-the-line ceremony was not observed). At the conclusion of her four day port visit in Mombasa, Kenya, TARAWA received new tasking; to proceed at best speed via the Suez Canal to join the U. S. Naval Element of the Multi-National Forces, Beirut Lebanon.

On 07 September TARAWA chipped to CINCUSNAVEUR as it passed through the Bab-El-Mandeb Straits on a north-bound transit of the Red Sea, and on 10 Sep, TARAWA became the first Pacific Fleet based amphibious ship to complete a north-bound transit of the Suez Canal. On 11 September TARAWA became CTE 61.8.3 as it reported for duty with CTF 61, Commander Amphibious Task Force Sixth Fleet, and joined the U.S. Navy Element of the Multinational Peacekeeping Forces, Lebanon.

For the next thirty days TARAWA was integrated into support operations for the U. S. MNF, Beirut Lebanon. TARAWA rapidly and extensively became involved in the following activities; Combat Sar, CAS/Cobra alert duties, Medvac and VIP alert logistic transfer, and NEO planning. While on station TARAWA was visited by numerous VIP's including CNO, COMSIXTHFLT, COMNAVSURFLANT, CTF 60, CTF 68, various congressional delegations, and numerous media representatives. TARAWA also conducted her change of Command Ceremony under condition III watches with Zebra condition set main deck and below; such battle readiness being maintained throughout the period of operations near Lebanon.

With the political and military situation stabilized in Lebanon, TARAWA commenced a homeward transit and passed southward through the Suez Canal on 11 October. On 14 October TARAWA underway replenished the USS FIFE with needed fuel near the straits of Bab El Mandeb, and chipped to COMSEVENTHFLT. On 17 October, while engaged in underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN, TARAWA again launched AV-8A Harriers and conducted an intercept of two Soviet IL-38 May reconnaissance aircraft. On 25 October TARAWA crossed decked the 31st MAU to USS PELILU in the

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Singapore straits, and on 27 October TARAWA's AV-8A's again intercepted two Soviet Reconnaissance A/C; one Bear Delta and one Bear Foxtrot. TARAWA arrived at Subic Bay R. P. on 28 October after having completed 54 continuous days at sea. After four days of upkeep in Subic Bay, TARAWA began her transit to Pearl Harbor, HI and chopped to 3rd Fleet on 8 November. At Pearl Harbor, HI (14-15 NOV) TARAWA offloaded BLT 3/3, HMM-165 and MSSG 37, and embarked her dependent tigers for the final leg of her 1983 deployment. On 22 November, TARAWA berthed at pier 8 Naval Station San Diego, having completed a 210 day deployment, 70% of which was spent underway in defense of freedom.

c. (C) Stastical and Mission High lights

1. Supply Department supported TARAWA with services in the following manner;

Meals served	1,282,764
Provisions Consumed;	\$1,452,932
Eggs	44,252 dozen
Bread	17,227 lbs
Flour	151,740 lbs
Milk	43,339 gal

Fund Distribution

Checks issued	\$12,704,704.01
Gross Disbursements	7,567,598.25
Collections Accomplished	1,497,593.31

Travel Claims Processed	594
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Canal Tolls paid	\$220,000.00
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Operation Hand clasp Materials Distributed: 15 Pallets

Supply Department SMI (Supply Management Inspection) was conducted 14 March, 1983 and a grade of satisfactory was recieved in all three functional areas (Material Support, Stock Control, and Aviation Material).

2. Deck Department received the Assault Boat "E" in 1983, (a major accomplishment in view of the fact that TARAWA's boats had been unused for over 18 months due to the Complex Over Haul which was completed on TARAWA in Oct 1982) and the Damage Control (DC) during the 1983 competitive cycle. During TARAWA's Combat Systems Readiness Test in January one Sea Sparrow was fired from the forward launcher and a "near bullseye" was scored on the target. TARAWA's boat crews performed superlatively under trying conditions during Bright Star/Eastern Wind 83 (40 knot winds, 110°F temperature), and conducted a night backload necessitated by beach conditions. In 1983 TARAWA's 5'54 gun mounts fired 298 rounds of five inch ammunition.

3. Air Department assets were utilized at an unprecedented rate during CY 1983. The following statistics were noted on 14 February 1984 when TARAWA was awarded the Admiral Flatly Memorial Award for Safety during the prevision year.

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Helicopter Landings Completed	12,097
AV-8A Landings Completed	1,116
Carrier Controlled Approaches Completed	2,505
Gallons of JP-5 Pumped	1,390,435

TARAWA deployed with twenty nine aircraft embarked, five in excess of the normal load out for LHA deck loading. During Lebanese contingency operations TARAWA's own UH-1A Eagle One crews logged 122 flight hours in the 30 day period of operations. Total flights from TARAWA's deck moved 3,361 passenger's and 1,468,755 lbs of cargo in 755 sorties flown. During TARAWA's Pearl Harbor to San Diego transit, 735 pallets of LFORM and MLA were offloaded in less than fourteen hours which not only set a new record for this type of operation, but also precluded the necessity for a sortie to Seal Beach, Ca. Air Department received it's fifth consecutive Battle Efficiency Award, making it the holder of the permanent gold "E".

4. The Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD) received two advisory team visits (COMFAIRWESTPAC) and two major inspections; COMASWWINGPAC Pre-deployment Aircraft/Support Equipment Material inspection, and the COMFAIRWESTPAC mid-deployment Aircraft/Supply Equipment Material inspection, in 1983. AIMD received satisfactory grades for both inspections. The satisfactory grade for the mid-cruise inspection was the first received by an LHA CLASS SHIP. AIMD received the Battle Efficiency "E" in 1983.

During CY-83 TARAWA's UH-1H "Eagle One" flew at total of 1024.7 flight hours. Mission capable (MC) and full mission capable (FMC) rates of 85.2% and 77.8% were amassed respectively.

5. The Executive Department provided services to the following personnel in 1983;


<b>Ships Company</b>		
	Officers	69
	Enlisted	865
<b>Embarked Staffs</b>	(83 May 12 - 83 Nov 15)	
	Officers	102
	Enlisted	950
<b>Administrative actions completed are as follows;</b>		
	Reenlistments	77
	Reenlistment rate for those eligible	54.5%
<b>Personnel Awards</b>		
	Navy Achievement Medals	15
	Letters of Commendation	24
	Court Martials Completed	52
	NJP's Awarded	268

6. Communications Department supplied services to the ship and embarked staffs throughout the deployment and five major exercises with the following volume of messages recieved and transmitted.

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Visual Messages 2,461  
(Flag Hoist msgs) (1,239)  
Electronically Processed msgs during deployment 114,758  
(Daily Average) (675)

TARAWA's Communication Department received two Signal Bridge of the Quarter, and one Radio Shack of the Quarter from COMPHIBRON ONE.

7. TARAWA's Engineering Department successfully completed its Operational Propulsion Examination on her first attempt (83 FEB 07 - 83 FEB 09) following her 14 month 1981/2 Complex overhaul (COH); a major milestone and a tribute to Engineering Departments professionalism and pride. The propulsion plant compiled the following statistics in 1983;

Hours Steamed	
#1 Boiler	4910.3
#2 Boiler	5136.1
Gallons of fuel consumed	10,190,584
Shaft Revolutions Utilized	21,271,210
Gallons of Lube Oil Consumed	7,961
Gallons Of Potable Water Produced	13,163,206
Gallons of Feed Water Consumed	8,707,829

TARAWA completed 89 ballast/deballast operations in support of her Amphibious Mission in 1983.

As a measure of TARAWA's Engineering plants reliability, it should be noted that her boiler were steamed for 141 consecutive days between 83 JUL - 83 NOV 22.

8. TARAWA's Medical Department provided services to assigned and embarked personnel with the following records compiled;

Out-patients visits	
U.S. Navy	3443
USMC	2820
In-patient visits	
U.S. Navy	77
USMC	59
Laboratory Tests Conducted	13,598
Audiograms Completed	869
Electrocardiograms Completed	110
Prescriptions/Pharmacy units released	9,339
X-Rays Exposed	1,770
Physical Exams Conducted	338
Immunizations Given	1,858
Spectacles Ordered	163

A major evolution for TARAWA's medical personnel was the providing of medical services to virtually the entire community of Berbera, Somalia and its environs, as a Medical Civic Action Program was conducted during Operation Bright Star 83.

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9. TARAWA's Dental Department provide services to 2,113 patients 1983, and maintained a 98. % dental health readiness for the year. A field detachment was established during Bright Star 83, and over 200 Somalia civilians were treated, with extractions and minor oral procedures being the most common procedures. This Civic Action was accomplished under trying conditions of 110°F heat 40 knot winds, and no electrical power being available for dental equipment.

10. Operations Department provided a comprehensive tactical and strategic picture to the ship and two embarked staffs through five major exercises, and contingency operations in the Eastern Mediterranean. TARAWA's AIC personnel performed superlatively during the five occasions that her embarked Marine Harriers intercepted Soviet Reconnaissance aircraft in the vicinity of AGR ALFA. Her Electronic Warfare suite received the E.W. Battle "E" award for superior performance during the 1983 competitive cycle. Operations high state of readiness in maintaining continuous data-link operations (in excess of 90% time while operating in the Eastern Mediteranean), is indicative of the overall combat readiness of TARAWA's combat systems.

11. Navigation Department performed flawlessly throughout the entire year, with its most challenging task being the safe and rapid transit of the Suez canal in September (northward) and October (southward) in response to contingency operations.

3. (U) Specific Visitors

In her own right, and as the flagship for PHIBRON ONE, TARAWA hosted the following visitors;

ADM WATKINS  
VADM HOGG  
VADM MARTIN  
LTGEN KINGSTON  
VADM SCHRADER  
VADM METCALF  
COMO BOLAND  
COMO KLEE  
BGEN GARY  
RADM CHANG  
COMO FRANCE

CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
COMSEVENTHFLT  
COMSIXTHFLT  
COMUSCINCCENT  
COMNAVSURFPAC  
COMNAVSURFLANT  
COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC  
CTF 76  
CTG 79  
CTF 60  
CTF 61

TARAWA also hosted large parties of media representatives during exercise in Thailand and Somalia, and a continual flow of media representatives and congressional representatives crossed the decks of the Eagle of the Sea during contingency operations in the Eastern Mediterranean.

4. (U) Change of Command(s)

USS TARAWA and PHIBRON ONE observed the changing of command on TARAWA's decks. Enclosure (2) and (3) are official programs for these two events.

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P.F. DUFFY

