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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
U.S.S. TARAWA (LHA 1)
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96622-1600

5750
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From: Commanding Officer, USS TARAWA (LHA-1)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)
Subj: COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAV REPORT 5750-1)
Ref : (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E
Encl: (1) Commanding Officers' Biography and Photograph
(2) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet
(3) Ship's Photograph

The calendar year 1990 Command History for USS TARAWA (LHA-1) is submitted in accordance with reference (a).

1. Command Composition and Organization.

a. **Mission and Function of the Command:** The Amphibious Task Force, which executes its 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 the LKA to deliver a balanced payload, by air 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."

b. **Commanding Officer:**

Wirt R. Fladd, Captain
U.S. Navy,
Lineal Number: 001907-80, DOR: 01 June 1985

c. **Command Structure:**

Amphibious Group Three
Amphibious Squadron Nine
USS TARAWA (LHA-1)

d. **Home Port:** TARAWA was homeported in San Diego, California for the year.

e. **Command Composition:** The command was composed of USS TARAWA (LHA-1) and organic assets which included one UH-1N Helicopter (buno 160832). Ship's company included 61 officers and 816 enlisted as of 31 December 1990.

2. Chronology.

01 Jan Inport Naval Station San Diego, California for upkeep.
30 Jan Fast cruise

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAV REPORT 5750-1)

31 Jan Independent Steaming Exercises (ISE) in Southern California operation area (SOCAL OPAREA) 02 Feb Moored San Diego

05 Feb ISE SOCAL OPAREA--Battalion Fire Exercise/Battalion 2/9 Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation System

09 Feb Moored San Diego

10 Feb Hosted visit of Supreme Soviet delegation

20 Feb ISE SOCAL OPAREA

24 Feb Moored San Diego

06 Mar ISE SOCAL OPAREA

08 Mar Moored San Diego

09 Mar Conducted COMPHIBRON NINE change of command

12 Mar ISE SOCAL OPAREA

16 Mar Moored San Diego

23 Mar Conducted COMPHIBRON ONE change of command

27 Mar ISE SOCAL OPAREA with COMPHIBGRU THREE Flag embarked in support of Fleet Exercise RIMPAC-90

Conducted Operational Propulsion Plant Examination

29 Mar Moored San Diego

30 Mar Conducted COMPHIBRON THREE change of command

09 Apr ISE SOCAL OPAREA--Commenced RIMPAC-90

22 Apr Moored San Diego

27 Apr Enroute Pearl Harbor, Hawaii (RIMPAC)

14 May Moored Pearl Harbor

17 May Enroute San Diego

24 May Moored San Diego--Completed RIMPAC-90

04 Jun ISE Enroute Seal Beach Naval Weapon Station and anchored San Pedro Bay

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAV REPORT 5750-1)

05 Jun Offload Marines Camp Pendleton
07 Jun ISE enroute San Diego
08 Jun Moored San Diego
15 Jun ISE enroute Naval Shipyard Long Beach and moored for Selected Restricted Availability (SRA) period.
02 Oct Post SRA Sea Trials.
04 Oct Moored Naval Shipyard Long Beach
16 Oct ISE SOCAL OPAREA
21 Oct Anchored Seal Beach Naval Weapon Station for ammo onload 22 Oct. Aft aircraft elevator sustained casualty
26 Oct ISE San Diego
27 Oct Upkeep San Diego
19 Nov Air Amphibious Refresher Training, SOCAL
21 Nov Upkeep San Diego
30 Nov Embarked Commander, Amphibious Group Three and Commanding General 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade
01 Dec Underway for Arabian Gulf in conjunction with Operation Desert Shield
08 Dec Moored Pearl Harbor.
10 Dec Underway enroute Subic Bay, Philippines.
27 Dec Conducted amphibious landing exercises
Moored Subic Bay Naval Station

3. Narrative.

January, 1990 found TARAWA pierside at Naval Station San Diego, California conducting a period of upkeep and maintenance (01 Jan - 23 Jan) after returning from a very successful Western Pacific deployment in December.

TARAWA participated in Surface Warfare Training Week from 24 to 26 Jan and conducted a fast cruise on 30 Jan. Between 05 and 07 Feb TARAWA conducted independent steaming exercises (ISE) in the Southern California Operation Area (SOCAL OPAREA) for a Battalion Fire Support Exercise off Camp Pendleton, California.

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAV REPORT 5750-1)

TARAWA supported the Battalion 2/9 Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation System (MCCRES) from 7 to 9 Feb while ISE in SOCAL.

During her Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE) (27-29 Mar) TARAWA scored above average in the areas of engineering operations and level of knowledge and average in the areas of firefighting, material, and administration.

Between 07 and 25 May TARAWA participated in Fleet Exercise RIMPAC-90, serving as flagship for Commander, Amphibious Group Three (CPG3) and the Fifth Marine Expeditionary Brigade (5th MEB). In the largest peacetime ship movement since World War II, TARAWA provided command and control facilities and logistical support during the exercise. TARAWA acted as senior HDC and maintained control over all rotary wing traffic in the Amphibious Operation Area while supporting TARAWA's role as logistical coordinator for the Amphibious Task Force. During this exercise, TARAWA logged just under 1800 landings which also included the successful landing of the Radio Piloted Vehicle (RPV). Throughout the exercise, as well as the entire year, TARAWA met all operational commitments without the loss of a single aircraft or crewmember. Between 5 and 7 June, 5th MEB was offloaded at Camp Pendleton.

As a result of extensive planning and an outstanding effort on the part of the crew, TARAWA completed SRA 90 (18 Jun to 12 Oct) in Long Beach Naval Shipyard on time and ready to begin preparations to deploy to the Arabian Gulf in support of operation Desert Shield. TARAWA's SRA was historically the first west coast LHA to complete an availability on time and under budget. An aggressive and highly cooperative working relationship between ships force engineers and shipyard personnel enabled TARAWA to complete significant engineering repairs during the short availability and to successfully complete the Light-Off Assessment (LOA) on time. Significant installations included a helicopter bridge crane, aircraft pod storage system for AV-8B's, and halon firefighting system.

A two-day fast cruise was conducted on 1 and 2 Oct which included a satisfactory LOA. This was followed 3 and 4 Oct by post SRA sea trials. While preparing to light off, TARAWA experienced an actual major fuel oil leak. Engineers and emergency response teams performed in an outstanding manner to control the casualty. This forced TARAWA to delay sea trials over thirty-six hours and subsequently completing a four-day schedule of tests in only two days.

Tasking was received to prepare for contingency operations in support of Operation Desert Shield precluding a normal refresher training (REFTRA) schedule. Subsequently, TARAWA received a Fleet Training Group Assist for engineering and damage control between 17 and 19 Oct effectively completing REFTRA in two days.

Between 19 and 21 Nov, TARAWA was underway in SOCAL to conduct Air/Amphibious Refresher Training. The flight deck was certified for flight operations and all flight personnel were fully trained in preparation for the impending deployment.

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAV REPORT 5750-1)

On 1 Dec TARAWA deployed to the Arabian Gulf in support of operation Desert Shield with Commander, Amphibious Group Three, RADM S.S. Clarey, USN, and Commanding General, 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, BGEN P.J. Rowe, USMC, embarked. Along with the twelve other ships of Amphibious Group Three, TARAWA comprised the largest amphibious task force to deploy from the west coast since the Viet Nam Conflict in August 1965. Enroute to the Arabian Gulf a brief port call was made in Pearl Harbor between 8 and 10 Dec.

Due to the accelerated deployment schedule, formal refresher training was not possible. Therefore, a tailored, ship's force coordinated REFTRA was conducted enroute utilizing observers from Fleet Training Group, San Diego, CA. Dozens of general quarters and exercises were conducted to attain a high level of readiness.

Prior to arrival at Subic Bay, a combined air and seaborne amphibious assault exercise was conducted on Luzon. The exercise was successful and the lessons learned were invaluable for future amphibious task force operations. Following the exercise on 27 Dec, TARAWA moored at Subic Bay Naval station and concluded the year inport in a short upkeep period.


W. R. FLADD