



Rec'd 4/9/92  
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
USS TARAWA (LHA 1)  
FPO AP 96622-1600

5750  
Ser D33/0425  
[APR 03 1992]

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) ~~USS TARAWA Officer Precedence List~~ [NOT RETAINED]

The calendar year 1991 Command History for the 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 a combination of these methods."

b. **Commanding Officer:**

Nigel E. Parkhurst, Captain  
U.S. Navy,  
Lineal Number: 001868-10, DOR: 01 August 1984

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

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company included 61 officers and 866 enlisted as of 31 Dec 91.

## 2. Chronology.

01 Jan Inport Subic Bay, Phillippines for upkeep.  
02 Jan Underway for Southwest Asia, Condition IV.  
06 Jan Transited Singapore Strait and Malacca Strait 06-17 Jan. Underway enroute southwest Asia.  
17 Jan Hostilities commenced at 0400D between U.S. and Iraq. Anchored at Masirah, Oman at 0802D.  
20 Jan Underway for Southern Oman for amphibious assault exercise Sea Soldier IV.  
24-30 Jan Anchored and underway several times off Southern Oman in conjunction with Sea Soldier IV.  
02 Feb Underway for Northern Oman.  
04 Feb Anchored vicinity Fujayrah, Oman.  
05 Feb Underway and transited Strait of Hormuz.  
06 Feb Anchored in Southern Arabian Gulf (SAG) "box" vicinity Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).  
08 Feb Ship dragged anchor due to high winds. Underway and reanchored. Underway for UAE training area.  
09-14 Feb Anchored UAE training area for FIFTH MEB training.  
14 Feb Underway for Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia.  
15 Feb Moored, Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia to off-load AV-8B support personnel and equipment.  
16 Feb 0207-Base sirens sounded. 0208-Sighted approaching Scud missile and heard explosion off port side. Manned General Quarters stations. 0251-Secured from General Quarters. 1214-Underway for operations in the Central Arabian Gulf.  
16-24 Feb Operated in the Central Arabian Gulf.  
24 Feb Ground action commenced between US and Iraqi forces. Anchored vicinity Ras Al Mishab and commenced landing FIFTH Marine Expeditionary Brigade into Saudia Arabia.  
27 Feb Underway for underway replenishment.  
01 Mar Anchored Ras Al Mishab to support FIFTH MEB ashore  
06 Mar Hostilities against Iraq ceased. Commenced backload of FIFTH MEB.  
10 Mar Underway for Al Jubayl, Saudi Arabia.  
16 Mar Moored Al Jubayl, Saudia to backload AV-8B support personnel and equipment and transfer PHIBRON ONE Staff to USS DENVER.  
18 Mar Underway for SAG.  
19 Mar Moored, Dubai, UAE for port visit.  
24 Mar- Underway and anchored operations in SAG and SAG  
2 Apr ATF box.  
03 Apr Moored Mina Zayid shipyard, Abu Dhabi, UAE for port visit.

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08 Apr Underway for, and anchored in, SAG ATF Box.  
11 Apr Underway for underway replenishment and anchored in SAG ATF Box.  
12 Apr Underway for Bahrain Bell.  
14 Apr Arrived vicinity Bahrain Bell.  
15 Apr Enroute SAG ATF Box.  
16-24 Apr Anchored and underway several times SAG ATF Box.  
27 Apr Moored Dubai, UAE for port visit.  
05 May Underway for local operations.  
07 May Ordered to depart Arabian Gulf. Transited Strait of Hormuz enroute Bay of Bengal.  
08-14 May Underway enroute Bangladesh.  
15 May AV-8B Harrier in water while conducting DLQ's on USS VANCOUVER. Anchored vicinity Kutubdia Island, Bangladesh to provide humanitarian relief (Operation Sea Angel) to victims of typhoon 02B.  
17 May Underway due to difference in winds and tidal currents in vicinity. Remained underway throughout relief effort.  
22 May Presidential mission with Mrs. Quayle arrived.  
23 May Presidential mission departed.  
29 May Departed vicinity of Bangladesh enroute Subic Bay.  
02 Jun Transited Strait of Singapore.  
06 Jun Moored Subic Bay for port visit and stores on-load.  
09 Jun Underway for Pearl Harbor.  
10-21 Jun Underway enroute Pearl Harbor.  
21 Jun Moored Naval Station Pearl Harbor.  
22 Jun Underway for Del Mar Boat Basin, San Diego, California.  
22-29 Jun Underway enroute Del Mar Boat Basin.  
29 Jun Anchored vicinity Del Mar Boat Basin to off-load FIFTH MEB. Underway for Naval Station San Diego.  
30 Jun Moored Naval Station San Diego.  
30 Jul Captain W. R. Fladd properly relieved by Captain N. E. Parkhurst as Commanding Officer.  
26 Aug ISE SOCAL OPAREA.  
28 Aug Anchored vicinity Camp Pendleton to complete VERTREP off-load of LFORM.  
29 Aug Underway for San Diego.  
30 Aug Moored Naval Station San Diego.  
06 Sep ISE SOCAL OPAREA.  
10 Sep Anchored vicinity Coronado Roads.  
11 Sep ISE SOCAL OPAREA.  
13 Sep Moored Naval Station San Diego.  
24-26 Sep OPPE.  
29 Sep Commenced PRAV91.  
13 Dec Conducted Fast cruise.  
16 Dec Underway for Sea Trials.  
17 Dec Moored Naval Station San Diego. Completed PRAV91.

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### 3. Narrative.

January, 1991 found TARAWA pierside at Subic Bay Naval Station, Republic of the Philippines unloading fuel and stores while enroute the Arabian Gulf and Operation Desert Shield. TARAWA was the flagship of the thirteen ship Amphibious Task Group THREE with RADM S.S. Clarey, COMPHIBGRU THREE, and BGEN P.J. Rowe, C.G. FIFTH MEB embarked.

Between 2 and 17 January, TARAWA was underway on the final leg of her transit enroute to the Arabian Gulf.

TARAWA arrived in the southwest Asia theater of operations the same day Operation Desert Storm commenced. Between 24 and 30 January, TARAWA participated in Amphibious Assault Exercise Sea Soldier IV with PHIBGRU THREE and PHIBGRU TWO in southern Oman. This was the rehearsal for the proposed landing in Kuwait.

On 5 February, TARAWA and ATF transited the Strait of Hormuz and anchored in an area off the Southern Arabian Gulf (SAG) north of Dubai, UAE, referred to as the "SAG ATF Box."

TARAWA proceeded to western Oman on 8 February in support of FIFTH MEB training remaining until 14 February when she got underway enroute to the northern Arabian Gulf.

On 15 February TARAWA moored without the rest of the ATF at Al Jubayl, Saudia Arabia to off-load embarked AV-8B Harrier support personnel and equipment. Early in the morning of 16 February, base sirens were heard prior to the sighting of an incoming Scud missile that landed approximately 300 meters off the port quarter. This was TARAWA's only hostile action of the war and the only such attack on Al Jubayl. Later in the day, TARAWA got underway, joined the remainder of the ATF and resumed operations in the Central Arabian Gulf.

On the evening of 23 February orders were received to proceed north. Early in the morning of the 24th, U.S. and Allied ground forces commenced offensive operations against Iraqi forces in Kuwait and Iraq. In the afternoon of the 24th TARAWA anchored in the vicinity of Ras Al Mishab, Saudia Arabia and commenced landing the FIFTH MEB. TARAWA remained at anchor to support operations ashore except for one day underway for a stores VERTREP. Offensive operations ceased on 6 March and the backload of FIFTH MEB began soon thereafter. TARAWA completed the backload and got underway for Al Jubayl on 10 March after almost three weeks under the smoke of oil well fires.

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TARAWA moored at Al Jubayl on 16 March to backload AV-8B personnel and equipment and also transfer PHIBRON ONE personnel to USS DENVER.

18 March TARAWA got underway and moored in Dubai, UAE, for the first port visit in seventy-six days. On 24 March, TARAWA returned to operations in the SAG. For the next eight days TARAWA operated either underway in the SAG or at anchor in the SAG ATF Box before mooring at Abu Dhabi for another port visit. TARAWA got underway on 8 Apr resumed operations in the SAG making a brief trip north to Bahrain 12-15 April and where COMPHIBGRU THREE and CG FIFTH MEB met with COMNAVUSCENT.

A second port visit to Dubai was made between 27 April and 5 May. TARAWA returned to operating in the SAG on 5 May and on 7 May was ordered to depart the Arabian Gulf transiting the Strait of Hormuz that evening. A few days later new orders were received to proceed to Chittagong, Bangladesh to provide humanitarian relief assistance to the victims of Typhoon 02B. Just before arriving off Bangladesh, one of the embarked AV-8B Harriers went into the water while conducting DLQ's on USS VANCOUVER. That afternoon, TARAWA anchored in the vicinity of Kutubdia Island, Chittagong, Bangladesh. Rather than remain at anchor while conducting air and amphibious operations in support of Operation Sea Angel, TARAWA was forced to remain underway due to strong tidal currents that were generally out-of-phase with the winds which made conducting flight operations at anchor impossible. Over the next two weeks, helicopters and landing craft embarked from TARAWA and the ATF moved over 2000 tons of rice to the typhoon ravaged residents of Chittagong and outlying areas. TARAWA would later be awarded the Joint Meritorious Unit Award and Humanitarian Service Medal for this effort. During the relief effort, TARAWA hosted the Vice President's wife, Mrs. Marylin Quayle, for an overnight visit.

On 29 May, TARAWA got underway and headed for Subic Bay for a three day port visit from 6 to 9 June. Between 9 and 21 June, TARAWA transited enroute Pearl Harbor. After an overnight port visit, TARAWA continued her eastward transit arriving at the Del Mar Boat Basin on 29 June to off-load the FIFTH MEB.

On the morning of 30 June, TARAWA moored at Pier 2, Naval Station San Diego, seven months after departing San Diego on 1 December 1990.

A leave and upkeep period was held for the next month. On 30 July 1991, Captain Wirt R. Fladd was properly relieved as Commanding Officer by Captain Nigel E. Parkhurst.

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TARAWA was underway in August between the 26th and 30th to off-load LFORM at Camp Pendleton and conduct ECC Drills in preparation for OPPE.

On 6 September, TARAWA got underway for SOCAL operations. On 10 September, TARAWA anchored in the vicinity of Coronado Roads to commence hot checks in conjunction with MTT Phase III. TARAWA got underway from anchor on 11 September to conduct ECC drills and returned to San Diego on 13 September. OPPE commenced pierside on 25 September. Due to uncorrectable material discrepancies, OPPE was terminated and rescheduled.

TARAWA commenced a three-month planned restricted availability (PRAV91) on 29 September. Various structural and mechanical work was accomplished. The LN-66 radar was replaced by an A/N SPS-64. Sea trials were conducted on 13 December prior to the conclusion of the availability with a holiday standown period commencing 17 December. On 31 December, TARAWA was pierside at Naval Station San Diego.

  
N. E. PARKHURST