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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS THACH (FFG 43)
FPO AP 96679 - 1498

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From: Commanding Officer, USS THACH (FFG 43)
To: Director of Naval History, Washington, D.C. 20374

Subj: SUBMISSION OF COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12

Encl: (1) Commanding Officer's Picture and Biography
(2) Organization and Mission
(3) Statistical Data
(4) Ship's Photograph

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are provided for additional background.

A. B. Elkins
A. B. ELKINS
By direction

Copy to:
COMNAVSURFPAC
COMDESRON FIFTEEN

DECLASSIFIED BY: CNO (N09N2)
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1. Command Composition and Organization

a. USS THACH is a Flight III Oliver Hazard Perry Class guide missile frigate designed to provide anti-surface, anti-submarine and medium range anti-air defense to battle group, amphibious or merchant convoys. THACH is a member of Destroyer Squadron FIFTEEN, Commanded by Captain Richard A. Robbins, United States Navy. THACH is homported in Yokosuka, Japan and is a member of the Overseas Family Residency Program. Commander Thomas A. Baker was the Commanding Officer for entirety of 1991. Two anti-submarine warfare helicopter detachments was embarked in THACH during 1991, HSL 43 det two and HSL 47 det one.

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3. Narrative

The year 1991, was an eventful one for USS THACH (FFG 43). The year began with a homeport shift to Yokosuka, Japan. THACH and USS McCLUSKY (FFG 41) left San Diego on 25 January 1991. After refueling in Hawaii, THACH and McClusky proceeded towards their new homeport. On 5 February, THACH elected to not refuel at Midway Island. This decision was based on the predicted weather for the ship's track and the knowledge that she would arrive in Yokosuka with approximately thirty percent of fuel. McClusky did stop for fuel. On 6 February, THACH was ordered back to Midway Island for refueling by CINCPACFLT over fleet SEVOX voice net. THACH returned to Midway Island and refueled.

On 15 February 1991, THACH and McCLUSKY arrived in Yokosuka, a day later than scheduled due to the stop at Midway Island. The arrival was marked by fan fair and ceremony.

March was the first full month THACH spent as permanent member of SEVENTHFLT. Vice Admiral Bennett, Commander Naval Surface Forces Pacific came aboard for a brief visit. THACH met her Japanese sister ship, JDS UMIGIRI (DD 158). UMIGIRI, who was commissioned 12 March 1991, was the newest edition to the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF).

In April, THACH conducted an SM-1 (MR) missile firing in the Republic of the Philippines operating area. The shot was evaluated as satisfactory.

The first joint ASW exercise with the JMSDF that THACH participated in was in May. ASWEX 91-2JA was a significant exercise in that THACH demonstrated her ability in anti-submarine warfare to both the JMSDF and the SEVENTHFLT units participating in the exercise. After the exercise, THACH held a dependent's cruise from Yokosuka to Shimoda where she was scheduled to participate in the 51st Shimoda Black Ship festival. This festival commemorates Commodore Matthew Perry's landing in Japan. THACH was unable to participate, however, because Typhoon Walt was scheduled to hit the mainland on 17 May. THACH was ordered to return to Yokosuka prior to the typhoon's arrival.

On June 2, 1991 4000 citizens of Japan toured THACH during Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka "friendship day." After a successful ASW exercise in April, THACH left Yokosuka on 17 June to participate in ASWEX 91-3JA, another joint JMSDF - USN anti-submarine warfare exercise. THACH was the sole USN representative during this exercise. Upon conclusion of ASWEX 91-3JA, THACH headed to Sasebo, Japan for a week of upkeep. Next, she headed to Chinhae, Republic of Korea for ASWEX 91-2K, a joint ROK Navy - USN ASW exercise. Commander, Destroyer Squadron

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Fifteen embarked THACH to assume duties as ASW Commander. The most significant result of ASWEX 91-2K was THACH learned ROK - USN procedures for ASW need considerable improvement. Based on the two JMSDF - USN exercises, Japanese-U.S. working procedures are much better than ROK-U.S.

THACH celebrated Independence day in Chinhae. After completing ASWEX 91-2K, she headed back to Yokosuka. Once in Yokosuka, the focus of the crew switched from operational to administrative matters. Fleet Training Group Western Pacific came aboard to conduct Training Readiness Evaluation (TRE), in preparation for Interim Refresher Training. THACH successfully completed TRE and the FAADCPAC audit which was held concurrently.

The Combat Systems Assessment Team came aboard in early August to conduct Combat Systems Assessment (CSA). The OPPE for Combat Systems department. CSA was heading for an above average grade when a casualty the 76 mm gun prevented completion of the CSA. Instead of a Combat Systems Assessment, the inspection was termed a Combat Systems Assist visit. On 14 August 1991, THACH headed for Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines to conduct Interim Refresher Training (IRFT). A major accomplishment by THACH was setting material condition Yoke and Zebra on the first day of IRFT.

After successfully completing IRFT, THACH was ordered by CTF 75 to conduct on search and rescue mission for the motor vessel HAND TAI, a Hong Kong registered log carrier with thirty-three personnel onboard. HAND TAI was disabled 60 nautical miles off the coast of the Philippines. From time of receipt of the mission, when THACH was in cold iron, pierside to underway was fifty-five minutes. THACH located HAND TAI in a dense fog and escorted the damaged merchant back to the mouth of Subic Bay where the tug COMMODORE escorted her to Manila. THACH returned to Yokosuka after evading typhoons Ivy, Henry, and Kay, and began final preparations for the Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE).

On 7 October 1991, OPPE inspectors came aboard. THACH's OPPE lasted sixty-eight hours (seventy-two max). Problems with the lube oil purifying system delayed completion. THACH passed OPPE but was placed on a reduced cycle program. After OPPE THACH got underway with USS INDEPENDENCE (CV 62) this was the first underway with INDEPENDENCE who replaced USS MIDWAY (CV 41) in September. THACH and INDEPENDENCE headed to Subic Bay for a week long port visit. Additionally, THACH brought relief stores for victims of MT Pinatubo eruption. After leaving Subic bay, THACH, with INDEPENDENCE headed to the Korean Straits to participate in Exercise Valiant Blitz 92. THACH's duties were

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primarily as planeguard. Upon completing Valiant Blitz, the battle group headed south to begin ANNUALX 03G. The Joint JMSDF-USN exercise was conducted in the Philippine Sea from Okinawa to Hokaido.

On 11 November 1991, THACH suffered a major catastrophe. Her sonar rubber dome would not maintain pressure. COMDESRON Fifteen ordered THACH to return to port for a dome inspection. THACH returned to Yokosuka, only ninety nautical miles from her location, at ten knots. Upon entering port, divers inspected the dome and found eleven inch by ten-half inch split located 040 degrees relative on the dome. SRF Yokosuka divers repaired the dome with a patch under the supervision of NAVSEA. The dome was repaired in time for dependent's cruise on 5 December. THACH took the crew's dependents on a short cruise up Tokyo Wan. On 9 December, THACH was underway with Battle Group Alfa for ASW week for eleven days, THACH participated in various ASW exercises. On December, THACH returned to port for holiday upkeep.

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