



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS TRENTON (LPD-14)
FPO AE 09588-1716

Rec'd 2/24/98
W/o disk
5757
Ser PAO/066
5 Feb 98

From: Commanding Officer, USS TRENTON (LPD-14)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, DC 20374-0571

Subj: 1997 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5150.12F

Encl: (1) Photograph and Biography of Commander Stephen P.
Curtis, USN
(2) 1997 Chronology
(3) 1997 Command Narrative

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following is submitted:

a. Background: USS TRENTON (LPD 14), an amphibious transport dock, is named for the capital of the state of New Jersey.

The present USS TRENTON is the third United States warship to bear the name. The first was a steam sloop of war commissioned in 1884. The second was a light cruiser, CL-11, commissioned in 1924, which served with the Asiatic, Caribbean, and Southwest Pacific Fleets during World War II. The keel for the present TRENTON was laid on 8 August 1966. She was christened on 3 August 1968 by Mrs. Richard J. Hughes, wife of the governor of New Jersey. TRENTON was commissioned 6 March 1971. The amphibious transport dock (LPD) is a very versatile amphibious ship. TRENTON can transport, land, and support a Marine force on a hostile shore. TRENTON is capable of carrying over 900 troops plus their vehicles, equipment, weapons, ammunition and supplies. She also carries landing craft such as LCACs (Landing Craft Air Cushion), LCUs (Landing Craft Utility) and AAVs (Amphibious Assault Vehicle) in her floodable well deck. Her flight deck allows her to operate all Navy and Marine Corps helicopters and VTOL aircraft (harriers).

TRENTON participated in the 1983 liberation of Grenada, was a member of the multinational force off the coast of Beirut, Lebanon in 1983-84, and was a participant in Operation Praying Mantis in April, 1988, during a six month deployment to the Persian Gulf.

TRENTON played a supporting role in the presidential summit at Malta in December 1989, participated in Operation Just Cause in Panama in June, 1990, and deployed on short notice to the Middle East as a member of the amphibious task force during Operation Desert Shield (January 1991) and Operation Desert Storm (January - April 1991). In 1992, TRENTON participated in Operation Provide Promise as the sea and air rescue platform for humanitarian relief flights into the former Yugoslavia.

TRENTON was deployed in January 1994 back to the Mediterranean Sea in support of Operation Continue Hope off the coast of Somalia (February

- March 1994). After only 10 days post deployment, TRENTON was called upon again to deploy in support of Operation Support Democracy off the coast of Haiti for six weeks (July - August 1994).

TRENTON's most recent deployment was from January 26 to July 24, 1996. During this deployment, she participated in Operation Joint Endeavor off the coast of Bosnia, Operation Assured Response off the coast of Liberia, Africa, and in three NATO exercises (Destined Glory, Matador, Alexander the Great).

Almost immediately upon returning home from deployment in 1996, TRENTON was tasked as the command ship for the TWA Flight 800 Recovery Operation off the coast of Long Island, N.Y., from 9 September to 19 October 1996.

b. TRENTON has developed and now operates under the following Mission:

To conduct sustained amphibious combat and special operations safely and efficiently.

c. Commanding Officer: Commander Ronald W. Zaperach, USN, 1 January to 28 March 1997; Commander Stephen P. Curtis, USN, 28 March to 31 December 1997.

d. Homeport: Norfolk, Virginia.

e. Command Association:

97Jan01-Dec31: Commander, Amphibious Group TWO/
Commander, Second Fleet

f. Deployments: None.

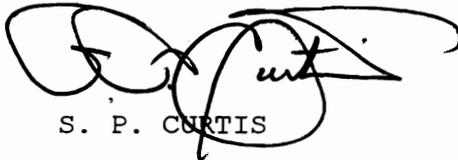
g. Exercises and Operations: None.

h. Embarked Units: During Exercises October - December 1997: MSSG-26 (Camp Lejeune, NC), BLT 3rd BN 2nd Mar (Camp Lejeune), ACU Det 2 (Little Creek, VA), SEAL Team 2 (Little Creek), and SBU 20 (Little Creek).

i. Statistics:

- (1) Fuel consumed: 1,680,732 gallons.
- (2) Refuelings at sea: 0.
- (3) JP5 aviation fuel received: 335,024 gallons.
- (4) MOGAS delivered: 558 gallons.
- (5) Large caliber ammunition expended: None.
- (6) Underway replenishments: Three.
- (7) Aircraft landings: 487.
Life time total landings: 41,629.
- (8) 1997 Budget: Repair parts - \$ 686,400.00
Consumables - \$ 682,438.57

- j. Biography and photo of Stephen P. Curtis is attached as enclosure (1)
- k. Chronology is attached as enclosure (2).
- l. Narrative is attached as enclosure (3).



S. P. CURTIS

1997 CHRONOLOGY

97JAN01- PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY (PMA) AT
MAR03 NORFOLK SHIPBUILDING AND DRYDOCK COMPANY
(NORSHIPCO) SHIPYARDS.

97FEB12-14 LIGHT-OFF-ASSESSMENT (LOA).

97FEB20 DOCK TRIALS.

97FEB21-22 FAST CRUISE.

97FEB22 GATOR BALL.

97MAR03-04 DEPART NORSHIPCO FOR TWO DAYS OF SEA TRIALS.

97MAR04 RETURN TO NORFOLK NAVAL BASE.

97MAR05-09 AMMUNITION ON LOAD AT NORFOLK NAVAL BASE.

97MAR28 CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY HELD ON FLIGHT DECK OF
TRENTON, AS CDR S. P. CURTIS RELIEVES CDR R. W.
ZAPERACH.

97APR7-11 CART II EVALUATIONS.

97APR21-25 ENGINEERING TRAINING GROUP ASSESSMENTS.

97APR24-27 UNDERWAY VIRGINIA CAPES OPERATING AREA.

97APR25 FIRST-EVER LCAC DOCKING IN TRENTON WELL DECK.

97MAY02 UNDERWAY TO MAYPORT, FL FOR REFRESHER TRAINING.

97MAY04 ARRIVE MAYPORT, FL.

97MAY05 REFRESHER TRAINING COMMENCES.

97MAY21 DEPART MAYPORT, ENROUTE TO MIAMI FOR MEMORIAL DAY
WEEKEND.

97MAY23 ARRIVE MIAMI.

97MAY23 TRENTON OFFICERS AND CHIEFS ATTEND RECEPTION AT
MIAMI YACHT CLUB.

97MAY25 FIRST CLASS PETTY OFFICERS SPONSOR PICNIC WITH
INNER CITY CHILDREN.

97MAY26 MEMORIAL DAY. TRENTON OPEN FOR CIVILIAN VISITORS -
MORE THAN 2000 PEOPLE VISIT SHIP.

97MAY27 DEPART MIAMI ENROUTE MAYPORT TO CONTINUE REFTRA.

97MAY29 ARRIVE MAYPORT. REFTRA RESUMES.

97JUN04 REFTRA COMPLETE. DEPART MAYPORT ENROUTE TO NORFOLK.

97JUN06 ARRIVE NORFOLK.

97JUN16-26 UNDERWAY VIRGINIA CAPES OPERATING AREA.

97JUN23-26 ENGINEERING CERTIFICATION (ECERT).

97JUN30 REAR ADMIRAL FLADD VISITS SHIP TO PRESENT CREW WITH BATTLE "E".

97JUN27-
JUL18 MIDSHIPMEN ON BOARD FOR SUMMER TOUR.

97JUL09-11 UNDERWAY VIRGINIA CAPES FOR FINAL EVALUATION PHASE (FEP) PREPARATIONS.

97JUL14-18 UNDERWAY VIRGINIA CAPES FOR FINAL EVALUATION PHASE.

97AUG FINAL INSURV PREPARATIONS.

97AUG07 UNDERWAY VIRGINIA CAPES FOR NAVIGATION CHECK RIDE.

97SEP08-12 INSURV INSPECTION.

97SEP10 UNDERWAY VIRGINIA CAPES FOR INSURV UNDERWAY MATERIAL INSPECTION (UMI).

97SEP22-
OCT03 CSSR PHASE I/TARGET EVALUATIONS.

97OCT09-14 DEPART NORFOLK, ENROUTE ONSLOW, NORTH CAROLINA FOR PMINT EXERCISES WITH MARINES.

97OCT09 TRENTON CONDUCTS BURIAL AT SEA FOR THREE U.S. VETERANS.

97OCT10 ARRIVE ONSLOW BAY AREA. USMC ORIENTATION COMMENCES.

97OCT13 DEPART ONSLOW, NC ENROUTE TO NORFOLK.

97OCT14 ARRIVE NORFOLK.

97OCT20-
NOV07 INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE SURVEY.

97NOV10-14 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SURVEY / CSSR PHASE II EVALUATIONS.

97NOV12 MEDICAL READINESS INSPECTION.

97NOV17-21 LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT.

97DEC03 DEPART NORFOLK ENROUTE ONSLOW AREA, NC FOR MARINE
EXPEDITIONARY UNIT EXERCISES (MEUEX).

97DEC04 ARRIVE MOREHEAD CITY FOR MARINE ON LOAD.

97DEC11 DEPART NORTH CAROLINA, ENROUTE YORKTOWN, VA.

97DEC12 ARRIVE YORKTOWN.

97DEC15-16 AMMUNITION ON LOAD, NAVAL STATION YORKTOWN.

97DEC16 DEPART YORKTOWN, ARRIVE NORFOLK.

97DEC17-31 STANDDOWN FOR HOLIDAYS. FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR UPCOMING
DEPLOYMENT IN FEBRUARY 1998 TO THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA.

COMMAND NARRATIVE 1997

The new year started off on a very busy note. All hands were busy continuing projects from the Preventive Maintenance period started in October 1996 at the Norfolk Shipbuilding and Drydock Company (NORSHIPCO) Shipyards. The all-important engineering Light-off Assessment was successfully completed 14 February, and TRENTON left the yards on the 3rd of March for two days of sea trials. Immediately upon returning to Norfolk Naval Base on 4 March, she underwent an ammunition on load at the pier, which was completed 7 March.

The 28th of March marked the beginning of a new era for TRENTON, as CDR S. P. Curtis relieved CDR R. W. Zaperach as commanding officer in a ceremony held on the flight deck, while pierside in Norfolk.

The month of April was highlighted by two inspections. The Command Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART II) was conducted 7 through 11 April. This was a review of the numerous TRENTON training programs, and, after successfully completing this review, TRENTON was certified as "ready to train." The 21st through the 25th of the month was dominated by an Engineering Training Group (ETG) assessment.

TRENTON steamed in the Virginia Capes area from 24 through 27 April to test her new well deck, which had been modified during the shipyards. During this underway, TRENTON conducted her first-ever Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) docking, on the 25th.

May was spent in sunny Florida, undergoing Refresher Training (REFTRA) in Mayport. The month was filled with exercises as each training team was evaluated. REFTRA lasted one week longer than anticipated, as an engineering casualty kept the TRENTON pierside for one week. TRENTON steamed to Miami for Memorial Day weekend, 23-26 May. On the evening of the 23rd, the officers and chiefs were treated to a reception at the Miami Yacht Club, sponsored by the Yacht Club and the Miami Chamber of Commerce. On the 25th, the First Class Mess sponsored a picnic at a nearby park for Miami inner-city children. The petty officers held sporting events, cooked for the children, and gave away many TRENTON memorabilia. The picnic was enjoyed by all who attended. On Memorial Day, TRENTON staged an "open house", providing tours to more than 2000 visitors. TRENTON returned to Mayport on the 27th, to continue with REFTRA. TRENTON successfully completed REFTRA on the 4th of June, and was back in Norfolk on the 6th.

From the 16th through the 26th of June, TRENTON was underway again in the Virginia Capes area, practicing well deck and flight deck operations. From the 23rd to the 26th, the ship's Engineering Certification (ECERT) was completed, as TRENTON earned her Engineering Plant recertification for the next 18 months. On 30 June, RADM Fladd, Commander, Amphibious Group TWO visited the ship to present TRENTON with the Battle "E" for her tremendous performance during 1996.

The month of July involved two brief underway periods. The first was 9-11 July, for the Final Evaluation Phase (FEP) preparations; and, the second underway was from the 14th through the 18th for the actual inspection, which was essentially TRENTON's final exam in the "basic phase." TRENTON was now certified as "deployable."

The remainder of the summer was dedicated to making final preparations for the Board of Inspection Survey (INSURV), a material inspection which occurs every three years to determine a ship's fitness for continued service. TRENTON had only a one-day underway during August (on the 7th), for a navigation check ride. The INSURV inspection was conducted from 8 through 12 September, and TRENTON was considered suitable for further sea service.

October marked TRENTON's first reunion with Marines since the 1996 deployment. The 9th through the 14th of October was spent underway off the coast of North Carolina, conducting Phibron-MEU Integration Training (PMINT) with the Marines, providing them with an indoctrination of the TRENTON. TRENTON conducted a burial at sea, on the 9th, for three U.S. Armed Forces Veterans. The Industrial Hygiene Survey was initiated on the 20th of October and completed on the 7th of November.

The month of November was highlighted by the Logistics Management Assessment (LMA), an evaluation of TRENTON's Supply Department and material management. The inspection was conducted 17-21 November, with TRENTON receiving outstanding scores in both areas. The Environmental Health Survey and the Medical Readiness Inspection were also conducted during November, with the Medical Department receiving a C-1 status (no discrepancies, ready for deployment).

TRENTON spent Thanksgiving in port, and on the 3rd of December, she got underway for 10 days to complete her last evolution of the year: MEUEX (Marine Expeditionary Unit Exercise). TRENTON spent the time in Onslow Bay, North Carolina with the Marines. During this time, the Marines practiced raids and other special operations missions, into the coast of North Carolina. Instead of returning to Norfolk, TRENTON pulled into Yorktown, VA to onload ammunition, from the 12th through the 16th of December, returning to Norfolk on the 16th. Upon return to Norfolk Naval Base, TRENTON commenced a holiday leave and upkeep period to give the crew an opportunity to rest. With only two months remaining before deployment, TRENTON used this time for final preparations.