



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS VALLEY FORGE (CG 50)

FLEET POST OFFICE

SAN FRANCISCO, CA 96682-1170

IN REPLY, REFER TO:

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From: Commanding Officer, USS VALLEY FORGE (CG 50)

To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B11)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750

Encl: (1) USS VALLEY FORGE Command History for 1987

1. Enclosure (1) is submitted in accordance with reference (a).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. C. Lockhart".

T. C. LOCKHART

COMMAND HISTORY - 1987
USS VALLEY FORGE (CG 50)

A. COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

USS VALLEY FORGE is the fourth ship of the TICONDEROGA (CG 47) Class of AEGIS Guided Missile Cruisers. These ships are truly multipurpose, possessing significant anti-air, anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare capabilities. The MK 7 AEGIS Weapons System, the world's most capable shipboard air defense radar and missile system, enables VALLEY FORGE to provide protection for units of a carrier battle group in extreme threat environments. Hostile targets may be engaged with a variety of weapons: surface-to-air missiles, surface-to-surface missiles, ship and air-launched torpedoes, anti-submarine rockets, guns, rapid fire close-in-weapons, electronic jammers and decoys. VALLEY FORGE is well able to counter all current and projected threats to the U.S. Navy.

USS VALLEY FORGE, homeported in San Diego, CA, is a unit of Cruiser-Destroyer Group THREE under Naval Surface Force U.S. Pacific Fleet. Captain Theodore C. Lockhart is the Commanding Officer, with Lieutenant Commander James A. Hazlett as Executive Officer. Ship's company consists of 26 officers and 370 enlisted crew members divided up into four major departments: Operations, Engineering, Combat Systems and Supply. Lieutenant Commander William V. Johnson was the Officer in Charge of HSL-43's Detachment Eight, which was embarked onboard, from January to October 1987. Detachment Eight consisted of two LAMPS MK III helicopters, Oceanlord 30 and 32, 6 pilots and 18 enlisted crew members.

During the period of 23 JAN to 11 FEB (READIEX 87-2) and the period of 13 APR to 13 OCT (Western Pacific and Indian Ocean Deployment), VALLEY FORGE was under the operational and tactical control of Carrier Group Seven as a unit of Battle Group Delta, which included USS CONSTELLATION (CV 64), USS FOX (CG 33), USS WORDEN (CG 18), USS CAMDEN (AOE 2), USS NIAGARA FALLS (AFS 3), USS CROMMELIN (FFG 37), USS COOK (FFG 1083) and USS OUELLET (FF 1077). VALLEY FORGE served as battle group Anti-Air Warfare Commander (DW), alternate Composite Warfare Commander (DV) and alternate Anti-Surface Warfare Commander (DT).

B. CHRONOLOGY

05-21 JAN	Dry docking at Long Beach Naval Shipyard for hull painting
23 JAN-11 FEB	Underway - READIEX 87-2 with Battle Group Delta
12 FEB	Weapon's Onload Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station
17-19 FEB	Shipboard Explosive Safety Inspection (SESI)
17-19 FEB	Supply Management Inspection (SMI)
18-20 FEB	COMNAVSURFPAC 3M Inspection
24-26 FEB	Nuclear Weapons Acceptance Inspection (Nwai)
01 MAR	Commenced Pre-overseas Movement Period (POM)
10 MAR	Medical Readiness Evaluation (MRE)
11 MAR	Environmental Health Survey (EHS)
11 MAR	Postal Assist Visit

20 MAR Personnel Inspection and Awards Ceremony
 25 MAR Captain T. C. Lockhart checked into Balboa Naval Hospital
 01 APR Captain G. M. Gee (RADM Selectee) assumed temporary command of VALLEY FORGE
 02 APR Port Visit to Avalon Bay, Catalina Is, CA
 03 APR Weapons Onload at Seal Beach/Dependents Cruise to San Diego
 13 APR Departed San Diego for deployment (TRANSITEX 87-16)
 28 APR CHOP to Seventh Fleet
 28 APR-01 MAY INCHOPEX
 02-08 MAY Port Visit Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines
 03 MAY Captain T. C. Lockhart reassumed command of VALLEY FORGE
 05 MAY NEY Award Final Inspection
 06 MAY Visit by COMSEVENTHFLT
 08 MAY LCDR J. A. Hazlett relieved CDR P.A. Fraser as Executive Officer
 08 MAY Underway for Indian Ocean
 12 MAY Passed through the Strait of Malacca
 16 MAY Crossed the Equator - held "Crossing the Line" ceremony
 19 MAY Arrived Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territory/Commenced HUBOPS
 24-30 MAY Underway - Indian Ocean Operations
 03-04 JUN Underway - "Operation Busy Customer"
 08-12 JUN Inport Diego Garcia "Professional Week"
 22-23 JUN Underway - "Weapons Week"/Depart Diego Garcia
 24 JUN Commenced Transit to North Arabian Sea
 30 JUN Commenced North Arabian Sea (NAS) and Gulf of Oman (GOO) OPS
 11 JUL "Earnest Will - Reef Point OPS" (Rehearsal)
 14 JUL "Earnest Will - Reef Point OPS"
 22 JUL "Earnest Will - Reef Point OPS"
 23 JUL "Earnest Will - Reef Point OPS"
 25-28 JUL Anchored at Masirah
 29 JUL Visit by COMSEVENTHFLT
 01-02 AUG Anchored at Masirah
 03 AUG NEY Award Winner
 05 AUG Best Ship's Store Sales and Service Award Inspection
 07-08 AUG Anchored at Khor Fahkan
 Opcon shift to COMMIDEASTFOR
 08 AUG "Earnest Will - Transit Strait of Hormuz
 Opcon shift to Battle Group Delta
 18 AUG Visit by CINCPACFLT
 25 AUG Turnover with USS RANGER Battle Group completed North Arabian Sea Operations/Began transit to Australia
 PASSEX with USS MISSOURI Battle Group
 26 AUG PASSEX with USS MISSOURI Battle Group
 05-06 SEP Australian PASSEX
 07-14 SEP Port Visit Fremantle/Perth, Australia
 14 SEP Underway for Subic Bay
 17 SEP Passage through Lombok Strait/Ceremony honoring bicentennial of U.S. Constitution
 19 SEP Crossed the Equator - held "Crossing the Line" ceremony
 21-25 SEP Port visit Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines
 25 SEP Underway (TRANSITEX 87-29)/Passage through San Bernadino Straits
 27 SEP PHOTOEX
 01 OCT OUTCHOP 7TH FLT, INCHOP 3RD FLT

01 OCT Detached from Battle Group to proceed with CONSTELLATION to Midway Island
03 OCT Local OPS vicinity of Midway Island
06 OCT Arrived Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
07 OCT Ney Award Preliminary Inspection
08 OCT Departed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii/Commence Tiger Cruise
12 OCT Picked Up Floating Drone
13 OCT Arrived San Diego, California
13 OCT-16 NOV Post Deployment Leave and Upkeep Period
08 NOV Visit by Senator Moynihan
16-20 NOV Underway SOCAL OPAREAS for training
23-25 NOV ASIR
30 NOV AAV (upgrade to ARE)
01-04 DEC Underway SOCAL OPAREAS for training
10 DEC Onboard Filming for Recruiting Commercial
13-14 DEC Best Ship's Store Sales and Service Award Final Inspection
16-31 DEC Holiday Leave and Upkeep Period

C. NARRATIVE

1987 was a busy year for USS VALLEY FORGE. It was a year that saw the ship complete extensive predeployment work-ups and its first deployment, marking the first use of an AEGIS Cruiser as a dedicated AAW asset in a Pacific Fleet Battle Group. Battle Group Delta was the first battle group to operate in the North Arabian Sea after the USS STARK incident and the first to be involved in the "Earnest Will" - reflagged Kuwaiti tanker escort operations. VALLEY FORGE was an active participant in all phases of the operations.

The year started off with VALLEY FORGE in dry dock having her hull repainted at Long Beach Naval Ship Yard. Upon completion of dry docking, VALLEY FORGE quickly prepared for, and participated in, "READIEX 87-2" which was the final pre-deployment work up for Battle Group Delta. During the READIEX, the ship participated in live missile firings, naval gunfire support, ASW exercises and numerous air tracking events. Throughout the READIEX, VALLEY FORGE was the AAW Commander and the primary ASW defense for the carrier. Prior to returning to port, upon completion of the READIEX, the ship stopped at Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach to load weapons in preparation for deployment.

In the period between the READIEX and deployment, VALLEY FORGE underwent an extensive battery of inspections and assists to ensure the ship was completely ready. VALLEY FORGE passed all inspections and assists with outstanding grades. Of special note were the NWAI and SMI which were considered the best seen by the inspectors.

In late March, the Commanding Officer, Captain T. C. Lockhart, became ill and was taken to Balboa Naval Hospital, [REDACTED]. On 01 APR 87 Captain George M. Gee (formerly CO of USS VINCENNES (CG 49) and a RADM selectee) assumed temporary command while Captain Lockhart recovered.

The ship conducted a brief underway in early April to Avalon Bay, Catalina Is, California for crew training and relaxation. The next day the ship transited to Seal Beach for a final deployment weapons load out and a dependent's cruise back to San Diego.

VALLEY FORGE departed San Diego on 13 April for its first deployment. The entire transit to Subic was devoted to training and preparing for Indian Ocean Operations. Numerous exercises were conducted and group deception tactics employed. Battle Group Delta and VALLEY FORGE chopped to Seventh Fleet on 28 April. TRANSITEX 87-19 culminated with an INCHOPEX, during which the Battle Group's preparedness was tested with numerous anti-air, anti-submarine, anti-surface, terrorist aircraft and anti-ship missile defense exercises.

VALLEY FORGE entered Subic Bay on 02 May where Captain Lockhart rejoined the ship and reassumed command the following day. During the course of the port visit the ship was visited by COMSEVENTHFLT, VADM Paul D. Miller, who discussed the upcoming deployment with the crew. The ship also hosted a visit by the Ney Award Inspection Team which was onboard to look at the ship as a finalist for Best Mess (Afloat) in medium ship category.

VALLEY FORGE got underway on 08 May and proceeded quickly into the Indian Ocean, passing through the Strait of Malacca on 12 May. The ship crossed the Equator for the first time on 16 May and held its inaugural "Crossing-the-Line" ceremony in which over 230 crew members were initiated as "Shellbacks". Battle Group Delta continued to conduct extensive exercises to increase readiness with VALLEY FORGE playing a major role in each event.

VALLEY FORGE arrived in Diego Garcia on 19 May and commenced a forty day period of HUB operations. These operations involved maintaining a heightened state of readiness in crew and ship training while remaining in port. Exercises and missions were planned and executed as if the ships were underway. VALLEY FORGE maintained almost a continual air picture around Diego Garcia, while USS CONSTELLATION conducted flight operations using Diego Garcia's air strip and her own flight deck, while at anchor. During this period of operations, "Busy Customer", a joint exercise between the Navy and Air Force was conducted for the mutual training of both services. During this period, a successful program, called "Professional Week" was initiated by VALLEY FORGE for the Battle Group. "Professional Week" permitted the crews of the ships and air wing to visit each other and find out "what the other guy does for a living." Battle Group Delta's stay in Diego Garcia ended with "Weapons Week" in which VALLEY FORGE demonstrated her wide ranging abilities in several exercises, including two successful missile firings.

Upon completion of "Weapons Week", VALLEY FORGE and Battle Group Delta proceeded to the North Arabian Sea for a long stay. The ship did not see port for another 77 days. This phase of the deployment was the busiest and most important part. Several members of the Battle Group including USS FOX, USS WORDEN and USS CROMMELIN were detached and proceeded into the Persian Gulf to augment COMMIDEASTFOR. This meant that VALLEY FORGE and the remaining ships had to pick up the departed ships' duties and add them to their own. VALLEY FORGE became essentially the sole AAW ship in the Gulf of Oman from the North Arabian Sea to the Strait of Hormuz, sorting out a cluttered air picture. The AEGIS Weapon System and SPY-1A radar responded well to the challenge, maintaining a clear picture supporting effective command and control.

Throughout the ship's stay in the North Arabian Sea area, the environmental conditions were severe. Temperatures ranged in the 90's to 100's. Blowing dust and winds created by the southwest monsoon coated the ship in dust and salt requiring the use of filters over air intakes and frequent scrubblings. The equipment on the ship performed well under these conditions with very little down time.

Battle Group Delta was the first carrier battle group to become involved with the reflagged Kuwaiti tanker escort operations. VALLEY FORGE played a major role in the successful "Earnest Will" escort operations, and the associated "Reef Points" operations, by maintaining the air control and AAW posture on the Gulf of Oman side of the Strait of Hormuz. VALLEY FORGE was ready to provide AAW protection against Iranian Forces for tankers and escort ships on the southern side of the Strait. VALLEY FORGE participated in one escort mission, providing air cover for the escort group transiting the Strait of Hormuz into the Persian Gulf. The ship also assisted in the development of interoperability procedures with French and British naval units present in the area.

VALLEY FORGE's presence in the North Arabian sea ended when Battle Group Delta was relieved by Battle Group Echo (RANGER Battle Group) after a brief turnover. On the way back to San Diego, VALLEY FORGE made port visits to Fremantle, Australia where the ship was visited by over 2,000 guests; Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines; and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii where 40 male guests and dependents were embarked for a "Tiger Cruise". The ship returned to San Diego on 13 October. VALLEY FORGE's maiden deployment was six months long (180 days); of which 136 were spent underway. The ship travelled over 38,000 miles and made 5 port visits. HSL-43 Detachment Eight embarked onboard during the entire deployment and flew a total of 1,446 hours setting a new record for a two plane LAMPS detachment.

VALLEY FORGE finished the year with a Post-Deployment leave and Upkeep period and two short underway periods for training. During this time an Aviation Assist Visit (AAV) was conducted that was upgraded to an Aviation Readiness Evaluation (ARE), certifying the ships aviation facilities for another cycle. VALLEY FORGE was also named as a semi-finalist for 1988 Ney Award Competition. Having won last year's competition, the ship is going for two years in a row. The year closed out with VALLEY FORGE hosting a film crew for a Navy Recruiting commercial in which several crew members participated.

During the year VALLEY FORGE received several awards for excellence. Most notably was the Ney Award for best food service on a medium sized ship. Battle Group Delta, of which VALLEY FORGE was Anti-Air Warfare Commander, received the Seventh Fleet AAW award. VALLEY FORGE was also a finalist in the "Best Ship's Store Sales and Service" award for medium sized (command) afloat and was Cruiser-Destroyer Group Three's nominee for the Golden Anchor Award. It is anticipated that VALLEY FORGE will also receive some end of cycle awards, but as of this writing they have not been announced. Those awards will be submitted as a supplemental enclosure at a later date.

D. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- (1) 1987 copies of "Spirit" (Ship's Monthly Newsletter)
- (2) "The First Year of Life" (Yearbook)
- (3) Ney Award Messages
- (4) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet
- (5) Press releases and new paper clippings