

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS VALLEY FORGE (CG 50)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS VALLEY FORGE (CG 50)

To: Director of Naval History (OP 09BH)

Subj: 1996 USS VALLEY FORGE (CG 50) COMMAND HISTORY

- Encl:
- (1) Ship's Chronology 1996
 - (2) Command Composition and Organization
 - (3) Narrative Summary
 - (4) Commanding Officer's Photo
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 - (10) USS VALLEY FORGE BATTLE EFFICIENCY AWARD INPUT FOR 1995
 - (11) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 282002Z JAN96
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 - (13) NAS NORTH ISLAND RMG 071351Z FEB96
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 - (16) (C) COMNAVSURFPAC RMG 220620Z MAR96 *[IN CLASS FILE]*
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 - (18) PHOTOGRAPH OF CDR KEAR ASSUMING COMMAND OF THE USS VALLEY FORGE, 29MAR96
 - (19) COMMAND PHILOSOPHY
 - (20) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 021842Z APR96
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 - (24) CTG ELEVEN PT ONE RMG 191616Z APR96
 - (25) (C) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 192038Z APR96 *[IN CLASS FILE]*
 - (26) (C) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 250050Z APR96 *[IN CLASS FILE]*
 - (27) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 260317Z APR96

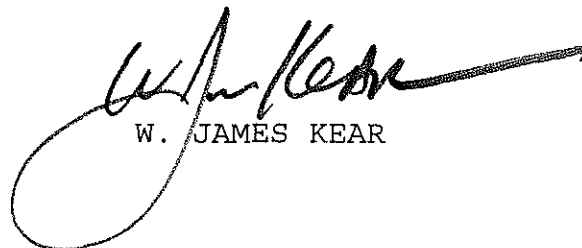
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- (28) SECRETARY OF THE NAVY LETTER OF COMMENDATION FOR THE
USS VALLEY FORGE, DTD 29 April 1996
- (29) SHIP'S SURFACE RADIATED NOISE MEASUREMENT CHECKLIST
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- (32) COMAFLOATRAGRUPAC RMG 101400Z MAY96
- (33) COMAFLOATRAGRUPAC STANDARD TSTA II DEBRIEF SHEET
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- (37) USS VALLEY FORGE MEMORANDUM DTD 22 Jun 1996 FOR GUEST
CRUISE '96
- (38) (C) NWADIV REP PT MUGU RMG 271200Z JUN96 [IN CLASS FILE]
- (39) (C) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 282230Z JUN96 [IN CLASS FILE]
- (40) USS VALLEY FORGE OPERATIONS OFFICER ATGPAC LESSONS
LEARNED INPUT FOR 1996 TRAINING CYCLE
- (41) MRS JULIA VADALA TAFT LTR DTD 03 Jul 1996
- (42) (C) COMDESRON TWO ONE RMG 082230Z JUL96 [IN CLASS FILE]
- (43) USS VALLEY FORGE SUMMER EDITION OF THE FAMILYGRAM
- (44) DMA NAVSAFETY BETHESDA MD RMG 091240Z AUG96
- (45) COMDESRON TWENTY-ONE LTR DTD 09 Aug 1996
- (46) COMNAVSURFPAC RMG 151117Z AUG96
- (47) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 152347Z AUG96
- (48) COMDESRON TWO ONE RMG 180015Z AUG96
- (49) USS VALLEY FORGE MEMORANDUM DTD 19 Aug 1996
- (50) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 190210Z AUG96
- (51) COMSEVENTHFLT RMG 250135Z AUG96
- (52) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 260003Z AUG96
- (53) COMNAVSURFPAC CCAT SAN DIEGO RMG 261816Z AUG96
- (54) COMNAVSURFPAC RMG 280324Z AUG96
- (55) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 040830Z SEP96
- (56) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 101229Z SEP96
- (57) REPUBLIC OF THE PHILLIPINES QUARANTINE CLEARANCE DTD
07SEP96
- (58) PORT OF SEMBAWANG, SINGAPORE, PILOT'S MOVEMENT
CHECKLIST
- (59) COMDESRON TWO ONE RMG 112220Z SEP96
- (60) (C) COMFIFTHFLT RMG 140830Z SEP96 [IN CLASS FILE]
- (61) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 160330Z SEP96
- (62) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 161535Z SEP96
- (63) (C) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 231600Z SEP96 [IN CLASS FILE]
- (64) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 231740Z SEP96
- (65) USS VALLEY FORGE FY 96 GOLDEN ANCHOR PKG DTD 30 Sep
96

- (66) (C) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 071045Z OCT96 [IN CLASS FILE]
(67) CHINFO WASHINGTON DC RMG 101212Z OCT96
(68) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 200632Z OCT96
(69) (C) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 231240Z OCT96 (IN CLASS FILE)
(70) SECNAV WASHINGTON DC RMG 241513Z OCT96
(71) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 172040Z NOV96
(72) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 18XXXXZ NOV96
(73) (C) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 231504Z NOV96 [IN CLASS FILE]
(74) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 231548Z NOV96
(75) COMNAVSURFPAC RMG 271117Z NOV96
(76) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 291610Z NOV96
(77) (C) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 291907Z NOV96 [IN CLASS FILE]
(78) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 011343Z DEC96
(79) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 021156Z DEC96
(80) CINCPACFLT PEARL HARBOR RMG 021200Z DEC96
(81) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 04XXXXZ DEC96
(82) COMDESRON TWO ONE RMG 052340Z DEC96
(83) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 06XXXXZ DEC96
(84) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 07XXXXZ DEC96
(85) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG (A) 09XXXXZ DEC96
(86) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG (B) 09XXXXZ DEC96
(87) (C) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 141540Z DEC96 [IN CLASS FILE]
(88) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 181405Z DEC96
(89) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 181615Z DEC96
(90) (C) USS VALLEY FORGE MEF 96-3 TURNOVER BRIEFING [IN CLASS FILE]
PACKAGE PREPARED FOR THE USS PAUL HAMILTON, 26 DEC96
(91) USS VALLEY FORGE 1996 WINTER EDITION OF THE
FAMILYGRAM
(92) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 281525Z DEC96
(93) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 281545Z DEC96
(94) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 291746Z DEC96
(95) (C) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 300727Z DEC96
(96) COMFIFTHFLT RMG 301310Z DEC96
(97) USS VALLEY FORGE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 1997
(98) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 011010Z JAN97
(99) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 041931Z JAN97
(100) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 061625Z JAN97
(101) COMDESRON TWO ONE RMG 151729Z JAN97
(102) (C) USS VALLEY FORGE RMG 212130Z JAN97
(103) COMDESRON TWO ONE RMG 091111Z FEB97
(104) COMNAVSURFPAC RMG 100200Z FEB97
(105) USS VALLEY FORGE WELCOME ABOARD PAMPHLET
(106) USS VALLEY FORGE WELCOME ABOARD PAMPHLET
(107) USS VALLEY FORGE CHANGE OF COMMAND PAMPHLET
(108) USS VALLEY FORGE CHANGE OF COMMAND INVITATION

(109) USS VALLEY FORGE DINING OUT PAMPHLET
(110) USS VALLEY FORGE DINING IN PAMPHLET
(111) PHOTOGRAPH OF THE USS VALLEY FORGE

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (111) are submitted.



W. JAMES KEAR

USS VALLEY FORGE

1996 CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

JAN 01-15 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
JAN 01-07 - COMPLETE HOLIDAY LEAVE AND UPKEEP
JAN 01-05 - CORROSION CONTROL AVAILABILITY
JAN 08-12 - AEGIS TRAINING SUPPORT GROUP (ATSG) TRAINING SUPERVISOR COURSE
- AVIATION SHIP INSPECTION FOR READINESS (ASIR)
JAN 09 - SURFACE RESCUE TEAM TRAINER
JAN 10 - AVIATION ASSIST VISIT (AAV)
JAN 12-14 - EMBARK SEA CADETS FOR FAMILIARIZATION
JAN 16-18 - UNDERWAY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
- DAYTIME LANDING QUALIFICATIONS (DLQ'S) WITH HS-6
- EMBARK SCIENTISTS TO SEA
JAN 18 - USS VALLEY FORGE'S TENTH BIRTHDAY
JAN 19-31 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
JAN 20-21 - EMBARK SEA CADETS FOR FAMILIARIZATION
- LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT (LMA) ASSIST VISIT
JAN 23-24 - MEDICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE VISIT
JAN 24 - SAFETY STAND DOWN
JAN 29-FEB 02 - COMMAND ASSESSMENT READINESS FOR TRAINING (CART IIA)
FEB 05 - MK 38 25MM GUN INSTALLATION
FEB 05-23 - INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY (IMAV) WITH SHORE INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE ACTIVITY (SIMA) SAN DIEGO
FEB 05-09 - NAVAL GUNFIRE SUPPORT (NGFS) TEAM TRAINER
- HULL CLEANING
FEB 07 - AVIATION READINESS (ARE) VISIT
FEB 10-11 - EMBARK SEA CADETS FOR FAMILIARIZATION
FEB 12 - UNDERWAY ENROUTE SEAL BEACH CA
FEB 12-16 - INDUSTRIAL HEALTH SURVEY
- HEARING CONSERVATION SURVEY
FEB 13-15 - INPORT SEAL BEACH CA
FEB 13-14 - AMMUNITION ONLOAD SEAL BEACH CA
FEB 15-16 - UNDERWAY ENROUTE SAN DIEGO
FEB 16-25 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
FEB 17 - EMBARK SEA CADETS FOR TRAINING
FEB 20-23 - TAILORED SHIP'S TRAINING AVAILABILITY (TSTA I) INPORT
- CRUISE MISSILE TEAM QUALIFICATION (CMTQ) TEAM TRAINING

- AEGIS TRAINING SUPPORT GROUP (ATSG) ELECTRONIC WARFARE/COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER TEAM TRAINING
 FEB 22 - MEDICAL TYPE COMMANDER ASSIST VISIT
 FEB 22-23 - DOCKSIDE UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT SIMULATION (DUS) TRAINER
 FEB 23 - SURFACE SHIP RADIATED NOISE MEASUREMENT (SSRNM) RANGE BRIEF
 FEB 26-MAR 01 - TAILORED SHIP'S TRAINING AVAILABILITY (TSTA I) UNDERWAY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
 FEB 26 - UNDERWAY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
 FEB 26-27 - DAYTIME LANDING QUALIFICATIONS (DLQ) READY DECK
 FEB 28-29 - NAVAL GUNFIRE SUPPORT FIREX II SPOTTER SERVICES
 MAR 02-04 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
 MAR 04-08 - AEGIS TRAINING SUPPORT GROUP (ATSG) RSC ENHANCEMENT
 - 3M ASSIST VISIT
 MAR 05-06 - TAILORED SHIP'S TRAINING AVAILABILITY (TSTA I) UNDERWAY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
 MAR 06-26 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
 MAR 11-15 - TAILORED SHIP'S TRAINING AVAILABILITY (TSTA I) INPORT
 MAR 25-27 - AEGIS BASELINE 1.4.3 COMPUTER SYSTEM UPGRADE
 MAR 25-APR 12 - IMAV SIMA SAN DIEGO AVAILABILITY
 MAR 26 - MEDICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE VISIT
 - USS VALLEY FORGE WARDROOM DINING OUT
 MAR 27 - UNDERWAY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
 MAR 28-APR 14 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
 MAR 29 - CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY
 CDR W. JAMES KEAR RELIEVED CAPT R. JAMES ABBOTT IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR IN COMMAND SHIFTS FROM COMMANDER, CRUISER-DESTROYER GROUP ONE TO COMMANDER, DESTROYER SQUADRON TWENTY-ONE
 APR 01-05 - SHIPBOARD EXPLOSIVES SAFETY INSPECTION
 - LOGISTICS ASSESSMENT TRAINING REVIEW
 - HARPOON LAUNCHER TEAM TRAINER
 APR 08-12 - TAILORED SHIP'S TRAINING AVAILABILITY (TSTA II) INPORT
 APR 10 - SHIPHANDLING SIMULATOR TRAINING
 APR 10-11 - CRUISE MISSILE TEAM QUALIFICATION
 APR 15-19 - UNDERWAY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
 - TAILORED SHIP'S TRAINING AVAILABILITY (TSTA II) UNDERWAY
 - AEGIS TRAINING SUPPORT GROUP (ATSG) COMBAT SYSTEMS OPERATIONAL SEQUENCING SYSTEM (CROSS) PHASE II, COMBAT SYSTEM TEAM TRAINING (CSTT)

APR 20-21 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
 APR 22-25 - ATSG LINK TEAM TRAINER
 APR 24 - SURFACE SHIP RADIATED NOISE MEASUREMENT RANGE,
 SAN CLEMENTE COASTLINE
 APR 26-28 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
 APR 29-MAY 03 - UNDERWAY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
 - TAILORED SHIP'S TRAINING AVAILABILITY (TSTA II)
 UNDERWAY
 - EMBARK HSL 47, DET 7; SABERHAWK 60/68
 MAY 01 - SM II/BLK II MISSILE SHOOT - USS VALLEY FORGE,
 USS FITZGERALD, USS SIDES
 MAY 04-14 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
 MAY 06-08 - RADAR NAVIGATION TEAM TRAINER
 MAY 06-10 - INCLINE TRIALS
 MAY 06-17 - COMBAT SYSTEMS READINESS REVIEW (CSRR)
 - IMAV SIMA SAN DIEGO
 MAY 15 - UNDERWAY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FOR CSRR
 MAY 16-21 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
 MAY 22-23 - TAILORED SHIP'S TRAINING AVAILABILITY (TSTA II)
 UNDERWAY
 - ENGINEERING CERTIFICATION
 MAY 24-JUN 02 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
 MAY 27-JUN 21 - PACTRAMID I - EMBARK TWO FIRST CLASS MIDSHIPMEN,
 FOUR SECOND CLASS MIDSHIPMEN
 JUN 03-07 - UNDERWAY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
 - TAILORED SHIP'S TRAINING AVAILABILITY (TSTA III)
 UNDERWAY
 - INTEGRATED TRAINING TEAM (ITT) SOUTHERN
 CALIFORNIA
 JUN 08-10 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
 JUN 11-13 - UNDERWAY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
 - FINAL EVALUATION PHASE (FEP)
 JUN 14-23 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
 - IMAV SIMA SAN DIEGO
 JUN 17-19 - HULL CLEANING
 JUN 18-20 - MIDDLE EAST FORCE EXERCISE
 - MEFEX 96-3 PHASE I
 - INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE SURVEY
 JUN 24-28 - UNDERWAY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
 - MEFEX PHASE II
 - EMBARK COMDESRON 21
 - PMTC CDS-21 MEFEX 96-3
 JUN 29-JUL 07 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
 JUL 01-05 - LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT (LMA)
 JUL 02-10 - PMT ASSIST

JUL 08 - UNDERWAY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
 - GUEST CRUISE '96
 JUL 09-AUG 07 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
 JUL 09-AUG 12 - IMAV SIMA SAN DIEGO
 JUL 11-AUG 06 - PRE-OVERSEAS MOVEMENT STAND DOWN
 JUL 18-19 - MEDICAL READINESS EXAM
 JUL 19 - SHIP SIMULATOR TRAINING
 AUG 01 - SHIP SIMULATOR TRAINING
 AUG 08 - UNDERWAY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
 - SEA TRIALS
 AUG 09-11 - INPORT SAN DIEGO
 AUG 12-17 - UNDERWAY, WESTERN PACIFIC/ARABIAN GULF
 DEPLOYMENT 96-97
 - MEFEX 96-3 PHASE III
 - ENROUTE PEARL HARBOR ICW USS JARRETT, USCGC
 MORGENTHAU
 AUG 12-17 - EMBARK COMDESRON TWENTY ONE
 - PMT
 AUG 17 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USS CIMARRON
 AUG 18-19 - INPORT PEARL HARBOR
 - PACTRAMID III; EMBARK ONE FIRST CLASS
 MIDSHIPMAN, ONE SECOND CLASS MIDSHIPMAN
 AUG 20-SEP 02 - UNDERWAY, ENROUTE MANILA, REPUBLIC OF THE
 PHILIPPINES
 AUG 24 - MEDEVAC BY SABERHAWK 68 OF USCGC MORGENTHAU
 CREWMEMBER TO WAKE ISLAND
 AUG 26 - CHOP TO SEVENTH FLEET
 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS YUKON
 AUG 31 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS YUKON
 SEP 01 - TRANSIT THE SAN BERNADINO STRAITS
 SEP 02-06 - ANCHORED, MANILA BAY, REPUBLIC OF THE
 PHILIPPINES
 SEP 07-10 - UNDERWAY, ENROUTE SINGAPORE
 SEP 08 - PASSEX WITH PHILIPPINE NAVY
 SEP 11-15 - INPORT SINGAPORE
 - MAINTENANCE UPKEEP, SEMBAWANG TERMINAL
 SEP 16-25 - UNDERWAY ENROUTE ARABIAN GULF
 - RENDEZVOUS WITH USS OBRIEN, MIDDLE EAST FORCE
 SURFACE ACTION GROUP 96-3 FORMATION COMPLETE
 SEP 16 - TRANSIT THE STRAITS OF MALACCA
 SEP 18 - RENDEZVOUS WITH USS JARRETT, USS OBRIEN
 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS PECOS
 SEP 22 - CHOP TO FIFTHFLT
 SEP 23 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USS SUPPLY
 SEP 24 - TRANSIT THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ

SEP 25 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS NIAGARA FALLS
 SEP 26-27 - AT ANCHOR, SITRAH ANCHORAGE, BAHRAIN
 SEP 28-30 - UNDERWAY W/USS ENTERPRISE-CENTRAL ARABIAN GULF
 SEP 28 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS TIPPECANOE
 OCT 01-05 - AT ANCHOR, SITRAH ANCHORAGE, BAHRAIN
 OCT 06-18 - MARITIME PRE-POSITIONING SHIP PROTECTION
 OPERATIONS, M/V PHILLIPS
 - PLANE GUARD FOR USS ENTERPRISE
 - SEARCH FOR M/V NAOMI
 - KANGAN GAS FIELD PATROL
 OCT 11 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS NIAGARA FALLS
 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USS SUPPLY
 OCT 18 - CROSSDECK JUNIOR OFFICERS TO USNS PECOS
 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS PECOS
 OCT 19-23 - AT ANCHOR, SITRAH ANCHORAGE, BAHRAIN
 OCT 24-NOV 11 - UNDERWAY, NORTH ARABIAN GULF OPERATIONS
 - INTERCEPT OPERATIONS-NAG
 - KANGAN GAS FIELD PATROL-CAG
 OCT 25 - SH-60B, RED LION 614, FROM USS ENTERPRISE,
 LOST AT SEA; USS JARRETT SAR COMMANDER
 OCT 26 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS PECOS
 OCT 28-29 - PLANE GUARD USS ENTERPRISE
 OCT 30 - USS VALLEY FORGE ASSUMED DUTIES OF SAR COMMANDER
 - LAST BODY RECOVERED FROM WRECKAGE OF RED LION
 614
 - CROSSDECK JUNIOR PERSONNEL WITH USS DEXTROUS
 OCT 31-NOV 07 - EMBARK COMDESRON FIFTY
 OCT 31 - HALLOWEEN-HAUNTED RADAR ROOM
 NOV 02 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS PECOS
 NOV 05 - BOARDED, CLEARED M/V AL MARIA
 NOV 06 - BOARDED, CLEARED M/V SIDDIQI
 NOV 07 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USS SUPPLY
 NOV 09 - TRANSIT THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ
 NOV 09-11 - GULFEX 97-1, UNITS PARTICIPATING:
 USS ENTERPRISE HMS BAYLEAF USS GETTYSBURG
 HMS OAKLEAF HMS INVINCIBLE HMS SHEFFIELD
 HMS EXETER HMS FORT GRANGE HMS EDINBURGH
 USS VALLEY FORGE USS PITTSBURGH
 NOV 11 - TRANSIT THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ
 NOV 12 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS PECOS
 NOV 12-15 - PIERSIDE, BERTH NINE, MINA SALMAN, BAHRAIN
 NOV 16-DEC 10 - UNDERWAY, INTERCEPT OPERATIONS NAG/CAG/SAG
 NOV 17 - RECEIVED M/V MANATO FROM USS OBRIEN
 - BOARDED M/V MANATO
 NOV 21 - BOARDED, DIVERTED M/V PORNIROO

- UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS SIRIUS
 - RECEIVED MAIL FROM USNS CATAWBA
 NOV 26 - TURNED OVER M/V MANATO TO UAE COAST GUARD
 NOV 27 - PROVIDED FRESH WATER M/V PORNIROO
 NOV 28 - USS VALLEY FORGE FIRST ANNUAL TURKEY SHOOT
 NOV 29 - TURNED OVER M/V PORNIROO TO USS REID
 DEC 01 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS SIRIUS
 DEC 02 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS PECOS
 DEC 05 - BOARDED/DIVERTED M/V AL FAUIER 3
 DEC 06 - TURNED OVER M/V AL FAUIER 3 TO USS CUSHING
 DEC 07 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS PECOS
 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS SIRIUS
 DEC 09 - BOARDED, DIVERTED M/V NAWAF
 - BOARDED, DIVERTED M/V TASOULIS K
 DEC 10 - TURNED OVER M/V TASOULIS K TO USS CUSHING
 - TURNED OVER M/V NAWAF TO USS CUSHING
 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS PECOS
 DEC 11-20 - INPORT, BERTH NINE, MINA SALMAN, BAHRAIN
 DEC 21-23 - UNDERWAY, ENROUTE MUSCAT, OMAN
 DEC 22 - TRANSIT THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ
 DEC 23-26 - INPORT, MUSCAT, OMAN
 DEC 26 - MEF 96-3 TURNOVER TO USS PAUL HAMILTON, MEF 97-1
 DEC 26-31 - UNDERWAY, ENROUTE BALI, INDONESIA
 DEC 28 - UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USS RANIER
 DEC 31 - CHOP TO SEVENTHFLT, NEW YEAR'S EVE DICK CLARKE

Enclosure (1)

USS VALLEY FORGE 1996 COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

USS VALLEY FORGE (CG 50) was commissioned on 11 January 1986 as the fourth TICONDEROGA class AEGIS guided missile cruiser. VALLEY FORGE possesses a potent array of radars and weapons systems that when fully combined make her one of the deadliest warships to ever sail the sea. The cornerstone of these systems is the MK 7 AEGIS Weapons System. This multifaceted radar enables VALLEY FORGE to carry out her primary mission of Anti-Air Warfare and protection for all units in the carrier battle group.

During 1996, VALLEY FORGE was homeported in San Diego, CA. On March 29th CDR W. James Kear relieved CAPT R. James Abbott as Commanding Officer. While CAPT Abbott was in command, VALLEY FORGE was assigned to Commander, Cruiser Destroyer Group ONE, but shifted to Commander, Destroyer Squadron Twenty One, the Rampant Lions, in conjunction with change of command.

The Executive Officer who started out 1996, LCDR Eric J. Kasiski, was relieved on 06 May 1996 by LCDR David C. Hulse. The ship's company consisted of 28 officers and 354 enlisted, organized into six departments: Operations, Combat Systems, Weapons, Engineering, Supply, and Navigation/Administration.

The Combat Systems Department is comprised of the Electronics and Fire Control divisions, who operate, maintain and repair the ship's extensive complement of electronic equipment including radar and navigational electronics, communications equipment, computer and control equipment, and the calibration lab. They maintain the AEGIS Combat System, consisting of a phased array radar and highly advanced weapons control, information and display systems. Additionally, they maintain a Military Affiliated Radio Station (MARS).

Weapons Department is responsible for ensuring that VALLEY FORGE can track and prosecute any threat, be it from the air, surface, or sub-surface. Its three divisions; Undersea Warfare Division, the Gunnery Division, and the Missiles Division maintain and operate 5"/54 Cal guns, Surface Vessel Torpedo Tubes, Anti-submarine rockets, and Standard Missiles for air or surface engagement.

Engineering Department is comprised of the Main Propulsion Division, Electrical Division, the Auxiliaries Division, and Repair Division. The Engineers operate, maintain and repair a vast array of main propulsion and auxiliary equipment designed to

provide the ship with all the propulsion, power, and support systems it needs to complete her mission.

The Supply Department has four divisions that ensure material, parts and supplies for repair and maintenance of our systems are on ready hand. They feed the crew, do their laundry, and cut their hair. Disbursing makes sure that we all get paid, and the ship's store provides the amenities that make life at sea bearable.

The Operations Department is comprised of four divisions and is the largest onboard. The variety of billets includes Communications, Electronic Warfare, Cryptology and Intelligence, and Deck evolutions to include small boat operations, underway replenishment, and aviation support.

The Navigation/Administrative Department is responsible for a wide array of functions, including the safe navigation of the ship, visual communications, all administrative support for the crew, medical services, Maintenance Coordination, the Master-at-Arms, and the Command Master Chief.

The Air Department, which embarks periodically for deployments and major exercises, consists of two SH-60B Light Airborne Multi-Purpose System (LAMPS) Mk III aircraft. The complement includes six officers and sixteen enlisted personnel to operate and maintain assigned aircraft.

USS VALLEY FORGE (CG 50) NARRATIVE SUMMARY

1996 saw the swift transformation of VALLEY FORGE from a ship just completing a yard period to a forward deployed unit implementing the foreign policy of the United States. Beginning with the Aegis Training Support Group (ATSG) initial Training Supervisor Course on 08 January 1996, VALLEY FORGE commenced her intensive work-ups for her August deployment. The ship conducted her Aviation Ship Inspection for Readiness (ASIR) that second week of January. This inspection was the preliminary step in recertifying VALLEY FORGE's flight deck for aviation operations.

During this certification, the inspectors surveyed the flight deck, its associated helicopter control and recovery equipment, the Crash and Salvage Team equipment, and the personnel qualifications for those individuals assigned to the flight deck team.

Following the ASIR was the Aviation Assist Visit (AAV), designed to provide additional training in shipboard launch and recovery of aircraft. The assist team provides the crew with training in many areas, and provide specific recommendations for improvements. All of this was in preparation for initial Deck Landing Qualifications (DLQs) that were to take place the following week.

On the ninth of January, Deck Division was also involved with the Surface Rescue Team Trainer (SRTT). This required VALLEY FORGE's ready lifeboat, the RHIB (Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat), to be placed in the water and the crew's ability to maneuver for the recovery of an individual in the water was assessed. Inspectors also evaluated the rescue swimmer's skill in approaching someone who has fallen overboard, and rescuing a pilot that has become entangled in his parachute. The shipboard recovery gear, the J-bar davits on the fo'c'sle, and personnel qualifications are also inspected.

In support of the Navy's program to educate younger people with aspects of the Navy's mission and life aboard ship, VALLEY FORGE embarked Sea Cadets from the 12th to the 14th of January. The cadets are high school students who receive basic training and familiarization with the Navy's enlisted community. Upon graduation from high school, they may join the Navy and receive training credit for the time they have spent as Sea Cadets. VALLEY FORGE took this opportunity to integrate them fully into the crew by assigning running mates (E-4/E-5). The running mates

introduced the cadets to daily shipboard life, and demonstrated the various jobs associated with operating a modern naval vessel.

From the 16th to the 18th, VALLEY FORGE was underway in the Southern California (SOCAL) operating area to conduct DLQs with HS-6, a helicopter squadron based at North Island Naval Air Station. This evolution afforded the crew a chance to put to practical use all the training that they had received the previous weeks. Not only did it aid in training the ship's crew, but it also afforded an excellent opportunity for the helicopter pilots and crew to practice landing on the deck of cruiser, rather than a the stable runway that they were accustomed to.

The following week, the 20th to 24th of January, VALLEY FORGE again was preparing for assist visits. The Supply Department was looking forward to a preliminary Logistics Management Assessment (LMA) Assist Visit. The LMA involves assessing the entire Supply Department's ability to meet the needs of the ship, ranging from providing repairable parts in the stock system to proper preparation of meals for the crew. Additionally, the LMA team inspects the ship's 3M Preventive Maintenance System to verify proper execution and recording of maintenance accomplished. The Assist provided extremely useful information for correcting discrepancies and preparing for the actual LMA scheduled for the first week of July.

The last week of January also saw the Medical Quality Assurance visit for the ship's Independent Duty Corpsman (IDC). This assist was designed to verify the condition of the Medical spaces and equipment as the first of several visits in preparation for the Medical Readiness Evaluation (MRE) scheduled for the third week of July. The ship's IDC was well prepared, and the visit served to point out minor flaws that were readily fixed.

The Command Assessment of Readiness for Training (CART) IIA commenced on the 29th of January. It involved the Afloat Training Group (ATG) coming onboard to conduct an administrative review of all training areas, and assess the level of each one. This procedure allows for the tailoring of subsequent training evolutions to the needs of the ship.

VALLEY FORGE remained inport to allow for the installation of the MK 38 25mm chain gun. This installation significantly enhanced the ship's capability to defeat smaller craft without having to rely on .50 cal machine guns or resorting to the 5"/54 main battery guns.

From 05-09 February, the ship's Naval Gunfire Support team was deeply involved in the team trainer. This trainer is

designed to hone their skills in preparation for qualification firing during the last week of February.

The 7th of February was the date for the Aviation Readiness Evaluation (ARE). VALLEY FORGE's team was well prepared, and ensured that the material condition of spaces and equipment was top-notch. The ship's team smoothly passed this evolution and was certified for all flight deck operations.

During the third week of February, VALLEY FORGE conducted two surveys designed at improving the working conditions for all personnel onboard. The Industrial Health Survey inspects all working spaces for material condition, proper safety gear and equipment maintenance, and that training is being held for all hands concerning the safest way to conduct all evolutions. The Hearing Conservation Survey was not just an Engineering evolution, focusing on all areas of the ship to ensure that signs were posted and hearing protection available. Medical records were also reviewed to verify that all personnel were subject to entry level and annual hearing tests. The focus of both of these surveys was to ensure that the highest standards of safety were being maintained aboard VALLEY FORGE.

From the 13th to the 15th, VALLEY FORGE was moored at Seal Beach for an ammunition onload to restock all ammunition that had been removed for the yard period. This was a two day evolution that required all hands to load everything from small arms ammunition to standard missiles.

VALLEY FORGE then headed back to San Diego to continue the training cycle. The 20th through 23rd was devoted to a Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA) I. The goal of TSTA I was to have ATGPAC personnel train the ship's Engineering, Combat Systems, Damage Control, and Seamanship Training Teams. These teams would then take the lead in preparing the crew for all upcoming evolutions and drills. The training teams were in their formative stages and received sound instruction in planning, briefing, executing and debriefing drills. The Commanding Officer was briefed daily on the status of training. Upon completion of this phase, VALLEY FORGE was recommended for TSTA II.

The cruise missile team training was aimed at preparing the ship's Combat Information Center and Weapon's Department personnel to maintain and operate the Harpoon anti-ship cruise missile system. From detailed equipment and administrative inspections to complex tactical scenarios, the ship was thoroughly prepared to conduct their own training in preparation for the final qualification.

The Surface Ship Radiated Noise Measurement (SSRNM) brief was held to brief the Commanding Officer and crew with what was involved with this complicated evolution, which involves numerous passes close by an underwater hydrophone array at different speeds. Runs are also made with the Prairie/Masker system on and off. The noise emitted at each speed is then measured and logged to determine the quietest speeds and configurations. This evolution was scheduled to be held during the next underway period, but was canceled due to a no-show of the recording boat.

The last week of April was spent underway for TSTA I to conduct further training. On the 28th and the 29th, VALLEY FORGE also conducted NGFS FIREX II, and achieved a grade of OUTSTANDING based on a 97.2% accuracy for the exercise.

VALLEY FORGE was then inport for the next three weeks to complete TSTA I, conduct a 3M Assist visit, and receive an AEGIS Baseline computer upgrade. VALLEY FORGE was evaluated as ready to continue training, and start TSTA II by ATGPAC. The 3M Assist visit was requested by the ship in order to further prepare all departments for a comprehensive review during the LMA. VALLEY FORGE also received the latest upgrade to its AEGIS computer system.

The VALLEY FORGE Wardroom enjoyed a dining out on the 24th of March. This formal affair was held to farewell the outgoing Commanding Officer CAPT R. James Abbott and hail CDR W. James Kear, the prospective Commanding Officer. With the exception of the Command Duty Officer, all officers of the wardroom were present for this festive occasion. The guest of honor was Rear Admiral Schmidt, Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Group One. Also in attendance was CAPT Lundquist, Commander, Destroyer Squadron Twenty One.

The actual turnover of responsibilities occurred during the 29 March change of command. Months of planning had gone into this event and great care was taken to ensure everything was ready to happen on time. CAPT R. James Abbott was relieved by CDR W. James Kear, and the Immediate Senior In Command shifted from COMCRUDESGRU ONE to COMDESRON TWO ONE. There were over three hundred guests present, excluding the crew, and a reception was held onboard afterwards for all hands.

01-05 April saw VALLEY FORGE immediately get back into the work-up cycle with a Shipboard Explosive Safety Inspection designed to ensure that the ship is complying with all safety standards and procedures for maintaining ammunition onboard. Due to the preparation and expertise of the crew, VALLEY FORGE passed with flying colors.

TSTA II commenced on 08 April 1996. The initial phase was conducted inport to define guidelines and goals of this training period, namely to assess how the training teams were conducting briefings, debriefings, and grading evolutions. The 8th of April was the second SSRNM range brief for the run to be conducted on the 24th. Safety concerns were examined and final preparations made.

10 April saw VALLEY FORGE officers taking advantage of the invaluable training offered by the MSI Shiphandling Simulator. This multi-functional simulator allows junior officers the chance to drive the ship in close quarters with other ships or in restricted waters without ever leaving the building, saving thousands of dollars for underway time.

While some of the officers were practicing conning in and out of port, others were aboard going through their comprehensive final qualification for cruise missile certification. With the weeks of preparation and emphasis on proper procedures, VALLEY FORGE's CMTQ qualification went smoothly, and the ship was certified for Harpoon stowage and use.

The 15th through the 19th saw VALLEY FORGE underway for TSTA II and the Combat Systems Operational Sequencing System (CSOSS) Phase II. These evolutions concentrated on the Combat Systems Training Team and their ability to accurately assess the capabilities of all CIC watchstanders.

The next week, ATSG focused on VALLEY FORGE's ability to maintain the effective data link, and conducted exhaustive drills and evolutions towards this end. The ship was also able to complete the SSRNM range run on the 24th.

The 29th to 3rd of May VALLEY FORGE was underway again for TSTA II. This time the concentration was on the Damage Control and Engineering Training teams in their preparation for Engineering Certification. Numerous Engineering Casualty Control drills and taskings were conducted around the clock as the Engineer and his team focused themselves for that final qualification.

This underway period also saw VALLEY FORGE conduct its first Standard Missile firing of the year. While in company with the USS FITZGERALD and USS SIDES, VALLEY FORGE formed a column, tracked, targeted and destroyed the inbound simulated cruise missile. Later evaluations indicated that the SM II BLK II detonated 97 ft away from the drone target.

From 06 to 10 May, Incline Trials were conducted onboard VALLEY FORGE to verify the stability tables and to help identify what may be causing the slight port list. These trials involved pulling the ship away from the pier. and placing weights at

various distances from the centerline. The angle of list was then measured and recorded. The CIC Navigation Team also attended the Radar Navigation Team Trainer. This training ensures that the watchstanders in CIC during restricted maneuvering have the skills necessary to navigate the ship safely through low visibility situations.

Combat Systems Department was also busily engaged conducting the inport phase of their Combat Systems Readiness Review. This review focused on the equipment, operating, maintenance and repair skills of the Combat Systems team. It was followed up by an operational review while underway on the 15th of May.

The final week of May involved the last phase of TSTA II, as well as the Engineering Certification. All of VALLEY FORGE's training teams were assessed as "ready for the next phase" by ATG. The engineering plant was certified for unrestricted operations and integrated training.

On the 27th of May, VALLEY FORGE embarked six midshipmen for the first phase of PACTRAMID; two first class midshipmen, and four second class. Thorough briefings for each running mate were conducted prior to the midshipmen's arrival. The midshipmen were then introduced to their running mates the next day, and fully integrated into the ship's work routine.

VALLEY FORGE entered a new and more complicated phase of training on the 3rd of June. TSTA III involved Integrated Training Team evaluations. Integrating all of the training teams into one comprehensive unit created some growing pains initially.

Through hard work and perseverance, the ITT was rated at the Final Evaluation Phase level by the end of the week.

The Training Team leaders met over the weekend to prepare themselves for the Final Evaluation Phase (FEP), conducted by ATG 11-13 June. Again, through expert planning and skillful execution, VALLEY FORGE's Integrated Training Team was able to complete the training phase and achieve certification.

Once all the work-up training was complete, VALLEY FORGE began her mission specific training coordinated by COMDESRON TWO ONE. Entitled MEFEX (Middle East Force Exercise), Phase One involved attending a series of lectures prepared by the most recent returnees from the Arabian Gulf. Principle watchstanders from each of the ships deploying (VALLEY FORGE, JARRETT, MORGENTHAU) were in attendance. The lectures and scenarios provided were informative and helpful in VALLEY FORGE's own preparations for Gulf Operations. Another industrial hygiene survey was conducted during this time frame.

24-28 June was MEFEX Phase II. This underway time involved numerous scenarios for all three ships, as well as multi-ship

maneuvering. COMDESRON TWO ONE embarked VALLEY FORGE for the week with his staff to coordinate the events. The 27th of June also saw VALLEY FORGE conduct another SM II BLK II missile firing. This time around, results indicate that a direct "skin-to-skin" hit on the target was achieved, thoroughly destroying it.

Once VALLEY FORGE returned to port, it was time to clean up and make final preparations for the Logistics Management Assessment. While this was mainly a Supply Department inspection, the 3M side involved all hands, as qualifications were verified and tests administered. It was especially critical for the Food Service organization, as this was the initial look for the NEY Award competition for Food Service Excellence. As a direct result of their hard work and preparation, Supply passed with flying colors and an overall score of OUTSTANDING. This enabled VALLEY FORGE to receive an unprecedented seventh straight Blue "E" for Logistics Excellence, as well as qualify for the final round of competition for the NEY Award.

The 8th of July was a special day for the crew, as it was the day to get underway for GUEST CRUISE '96. All personnel were encouraged to invite their family and friends to come aboard for a chance to see exactly what their loved ones do when the ship leaves port. This day had been weeks in the planning and execution and commenced early in the morning with check in on the pier. Once underway, a professional tour guide pointed out interesting historical facts about San Diego bay for the enjoyment of the guests and crew alike. Once out to sea, a full day's worth of evolutions exhibited the impressive capabilities of VALLEY FORGE. A 5" gunnery exercise, helicopter in-flight demonstration, and tours of the entire ship were available for all hands. The fair weather was enjoyed on the flight deck during a Steel Beach picnic, which included a DJ, face painters and a cartoonist. Everyone returned to port tired, but full of excitement from the day's events.

Although the period from 11 July to 06 August 1996 was the stand down period prior to deployment, Medical faced their final inspection. The Medical Readiness Exam was conducted from 18-19 July, with no discrepancies noted.

The 8th of August saw the ship underway for one last sea trial prior to our departure on the 12th of August for PACMEF 96-3. Hundreds of well wishers were on the pier to see VALLEY FORGE off. COMDESRON TWO ONE was embarked for the last phase of MEFEX, which would take place enroute to Hawaii and involved numerous scenarios that might be encountered in the Arabian Gulf. VALLEY

FORGE, JARRETT and MORGENTHAU would join up with the USS OBRIEN once past the Straits of Malacca.

Once the ship reached Hawaii, the final loadout of supplies and equipment came aboard. The ship also received two detachments: one was a group of Cryptographers, and the other was a two man Meteorological Detachment that would embark for the six month deployment to assist the ship in weather forecasting. VALLEY FORGE also embarked its last group of midshipmen for the summer. One first class and one second class midshipman would ride the ship from Pearl Harbor to Singapore.

While in Hawaii, VALLEY FORGE also hosted CINCPACFLT, Vice Admiral Zlatoper, for a tour of the ship, a small luncheon, and an Admiral's Call on the flight deck. The crew enjoyed meeting the Admiral and showing off the ship.

VALLEY FORGE got underway and proceeded to the first port enroute the Arabian Gulf, Manila. Enroute, numerous drills and training evolutions took place to further hone the ship's combat skills prior to entering the Arabian Gulf.

On the first of September, VALLEY FORGE stationed the modified navigation detail to transit through the San Bernadino Straits. The entrance was made just after sunrise, and the scenery was breathtaking. Once through the narrowest part, VALLEY FORGE conducted a steel beach picnic on the flight deck and also held a beard judging contest. During the two week transit from Pearl Harbor to Manila, the Commanding Officer challenged the crew to see who could grow the best beard. All beards had to be shaved off prior to quarters the next morning.

VALLEY FORGE pulled into Manila Bay early in the morning on the 2nd of September, and anchored four miles away from the boat landing. Despite the long water taxi rides, all hands were able to go ashore and enjoy some hard earned liberty. There were numerous scenic river and countryside tours. After six days, most of the crew was ready to head back to sea.

The transit to Singapore was uneventful for most of the crew, although several foreign navies were conducting exercises of great interest to the Ship's Signals Exploitation Shack (SSES). The 2 1/2 hour sea and anchor detail produced a smooth transit to Sembawang Terminal. Once there, the ship was able to accomplish various voyage repairs and also disembark the PACTRAMID III midshipmen.

VALLEY FORGE was underway on the 16th, enroute the Arabian Gulf. In order to get there, the ship transited through one of the narrowest and most heavily traveled waterways in the world, the Straits of Malacca. A thorough Navigation brief was held the day prior, and reviewed again that morning. Once VALLEY FORGE

had merged with the fast-moving merchant traffic, she came up to 25kts to complete the narrowest part of the transit while it was still early evening. VALLEY FORGE rendezvoused with USS OBRIEN and USS JARRETT on the 19th, and commenced the remaining phase of the transit to the Gulf.

VALLEY FORGE chopped into the FIFTHFLT AOR on the 22nd, and commenced the transit through the Straits of Hormuz on the 25th in company with the MORGENTHAU, JARRETT, and OBRIEN. One of VALLEY FORGE's helicopters was airborne through the straits, exercising the ship's right of transit passage. MORGENTHAU joined the SAG after a quick stop in Bombay, India to do local operations with the Indian Coast Guard.

The VALLEY FORGE then proceeded into Sitrah Anchorage at Bahrain. From the 26th to the 27th, the crew was able to get in-briefed at the USNAVCENT compound, and received administrative and operational briefings on current intelligence and Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO OPS). The ship weighed anchor on the 28th, and was proceeding to join the USS Enterprise for plane guard duties, when a casualty to the SPY-1A radar system occurred. VALLEY FORGE returned to anchorage at Sitrah 01-05 October while the ship's technicians feverishly sought to correct the problem as they were awaiting outside technical assistance. During this time, the ship was able to get the Navy's Mast Mounted Sight installed. This system was a camera with zoom and infra-red thermal imaging sight that was installed on the forward mast to assist in identifying contacts at night.

Upon correction of the casualty to SPY, VALLEY FORGE received new tasking to escort the M/V PHILLIPS from anchorage in Dahrain, Qatar to Jebel Ali in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The PHILLIPS is a Maritime Pre-positioning Ship (MPS) that carries millions of dollars of military hardware to equip ground forces. Should the need arise, these ships are already in place to supply the personnel of the armed forces with all the gear needed to conduct a prolonged conflict until lines of resupply can be fully established. They have a civilian crew onboard with a military detachment. Because they are lightly armed and have great deal of expensive gear, U.S. Navy ships provide protection for them while transiting from port to port.

The ship was at anchor in Sitrah from the 19th to the 23rd of October, but plans were already being made to assess the feasibility of taking the ship pierside in Bahrain. Soundings taken by the ship's Boatswain's Mates and other vessels indicated that there was sufficient depth that would permit VALLEY FORGE to go pierside. This would mean that VALLEY FORGE would be the

first AEGIS cruiser to go pierside at the Mina Salman Deepwater Jetty in over three years.

From the 24th of October until the 11th of November, VALLEY FORGE was underway in the Central and Northern Arabian Gulf for Intercept Operations. This involved patrolling known areas through which smugglers attempted to evade United Nations sanctions enforcers, including the Kangan Gas fields, through which many of the merchants traveled. During this time, VALLEY FORGE was sometimes assigned "Shotgun" and plane guard duties for the USS Enterprise. The ship confidently steamed into position, and was permitted to come 500 yards off the port beam during one launch and recovery cycle to witness flight operations up close.

This was the first opportunity for many of the crew to see this complex evolution, since VALLEY FORGE was deployed with a Surface Action Group.

COMDESRON FIVE ZERO embarked VALLEY FORGE on the 31st of October. Commodore Herger brought a small staff to continue his duties as the MIO OPS coordinator. He was treated to a wild costume party at dinner, and then witnessed one of the scariest "haunted radar rooms" in the Arabian Gulf. Several Fire Controlmen dedicated countless off-duty hours in preparing a mock haunted house for the enjoyment of the crew.

The VALLEY FORGE transited through the Straits of Hormuz on the 9th heading towards the North Arabian Sea in preparation for GULFEX 97-1. This exercise involved British and American naval units. The ship's mission was to locate and prosecute the USS PITTSBURGH, an SSN that was designated as a hostile force. Despite the crew's valiant efforts, the PITTSBURGH was able to fire a few green flares before VALLEY FORGE could "kill" her.

Upon completion of the exercise, VALLEY FORGE proceeded back into the Arabian Gulf. After waiting an hour and a half for a pilot, VALLEY FORGE transited the narrow channel to go pierside in Bahrain. The ship never observed less than 10 to 11 feet beneath the sonar dome. The ship was pierside from the 12th to the 15th. VALLEY FORGE was underway a day earlier than expected based on intelligence that a suspected smuggler was heading for the UAE.

VALLEY FORGE proceeded to the Southern Arabian Gulf, this time to intercept vessels prior to completing their run from Iraq to the UAE. There is a 12 nm gap that the vessels must cross just south of the Western Traffic Separation scheme. VALLEY FORGE's plan was to stay outside of visual range from the suspect vessel and wait until they penetrated international waters. Once they were 4-5 nm inside international waters, the VALLEY FORGE commenced a high speed run at the suspect and proceeded to query.

This tactic resulted in VALLEY FORGE intercepting its first suspected smuggler, the "MANATO".

Once intercepted, the vessel was diverted to anchor in MIO OPAREA 6, where a security detail was placed aboard. VALLEY FORGE continued to patrol the OPAREA, and eventually took custody of the M/V PORNIROO, diverted by the USS OBRIEN. On the 26th on November, the M/V MANATO was turned over to the UAE Coast Guard, and VALLEY FORGE escorted the M/V PORNIROO north to the FENWAY holding area.

Thanksgiving was on the 28th of November. In celebration, VALLEY FORGE hosted the first annual Thanksgiving Day Turkey Shoot. The ship's Hull Technicians (HT's) spent numerous off-duty hours creating a mock turkey five feet tall. It stood upon pallets with cartons for flotation, and was launched off the fantail. The RHIB towed it into position, and individuals that had won a chance to shoot at it with the M-14, the .50 cal machine gun, or the M-60 took turns until all the allocated ammunition was gone. The uniqueness of the event allowed the crew a welcome break in the tireless efforts supporting United Nations sanctions.

On the 29th, VALLEY FORGE turned over the M/V PORNIROO to the USS CUSHING in the FENWAY holding area. Once turnover was complete, the ship began to patrol the eastern side of the North Arabian Gulf, slowly working south. As the ship headed towards Bahrain, expert lookouts spotted a suspicious looking vessel just outside Iranian territorial waters. Once the merchant was further inside international waters, VALLEY FORGE maneuvered at high speed to place herself between the suspect and Iranian waters, cutting off her escape. As the boarding began with this vessel, the aft lookout spotted another dhow that had turned around and was heading away from the area at high speed. Saberhawk 60 was in the air covering the Visit Board Search and Seizure Team on the M/V TASOULIS K, so VALLEY FORGE turned and intercepted the smaller craft before they could escape.

The ship had intercepted two sanctions violators in a little over one and a half hours, bringing to four the total number of sanctions violators for VALLEY FORGE. Once the ships had been inspected and security teams were in place, both vessels were escorted back to FENWAY and turned over to the USS CUSHING. VALLEY FORGE had accounted for 20% of the vessels diverted in 1996, while only assigned intercept operations for four weeks.

The ship spent the 11th through the 20th in port, berth nine, Mina Salman, Bahrain making final preparations for the journey home. Supplies were loaded, and the mast mounted sight removed to be placed on another ship. On the 21st, VALLEY FORGE was

underway, enroute for Muscat, Oman for the Christmas Holiday and to conduct turnover with the USS PAUL HAMILTON. The ship transited through the Straits of Hormuz for the last time on the 22nd of December, and pulled into Muscat on the 23rd.

Compared to the port (Bahrain) VALLEY FORGE had seen in the Arabian Gulf, Muscat was almost like the French Riviera. The city was more modern, and thoroughly enjoyed by the crew. The ship's band put on an evening show at the U.S. Embassy for the crew and any U.S. Nationals interested. It was extremely well received, with standing room only. On Christmas, Santa Claus magically appeared and provided every crew member with a stocking in celebration of this happy occasion. He even stopped by to see U.S. Ambassador and provide a turkey dinner for her. All the festivities heightened morale, but made the longing for home all the greater.

On the 26th of December, VALLEY FORGE conducted an official turn over with the USS PAUL HAMILTON. A thorough brief on powerpoint was prepared by the Operations Department, and an information packet was put together as well. Once the brief was complete, everyone found their counterpart and conducted a more specific turnover and briefing.

At 1415, VALLEY FORGE was underway, enroute Bali, Indonesia and on the return transit home. On the last day of the year, VALLEY FORGE chopped to SEVENTHFLT at 0001 ZULU, and prepared for the DICK CLARKE. This evolution took place at midnight, and involved a large lighted ball dropped from the forward mast, and a gunnery shoot with tracers and illumination rounds to light up the night sky. The event highlighted the successes of VALLEY FORGE throughout this busiest of years.