



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 (N09BH)

Subj: 2001 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) 2001 Chronology
(3) Narrative Summary
(4) Commanding Officer's Biography
(5) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet

1. Enclosures (1) through (5) are forwarded in accordance with reference (a).

P. C. RABUN

2001 CHRONOLOGY

January

01-10 Holiday Leave Period
01-31 PRAV/Smartship Install
19 Change of Command

February

01-29 PRAV/ Smartship Install
05-11 ICAS Training
12-18 SWO Detailer Visit

March

01-31 SRA
13 Flight Deck Drills
26 Main Space Light-Off

April

01-31 Smartship Testing
04 AEGIS Light-Off
11 Stores Onload
16 Berth shift from NASSCO to NAVBASE San Diego
20 Main Propulsion Light-Off
30 GQ/MSFD

May

01-29 Upkeep/Smartship Testing
22-24 Light-Off Assessment
29 Fast Cruise
30 U/W for Sea Trial

June

12 U/W in SOCAL for training
18 ENR Seal Beach, CA
19-20 Ammo Onload

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21 ENR Port Hueneme, CA

23-28 Combat System Groom

27 Sports Day

28 ENR San Diego, CA

29 XO Turnover

July

02 U/W SOCAL for training

16-25 FMAV- SIMA Availability

24 Force Protection Standown

25-27 U/W SOCAL for CORTRAMID

26 Leaders to Sea

August

01-02 U/W CART 2

13-16 U/W FIREX

20-24 U/W TSTA A

24-27 PVST Cabo San Lucas, MX

27-31 U/W TSTA A

September

11-30 U/W ISO OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE

28 ENR Everett, WA

October

02-08 INPT Everett, WA ISO OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE

09-12 U/W PACNORWEST OPAREA

13-15 INPT Everett, WA ISO OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE

15-18 ENR Long Beach, CA

19-22 PVST Long Beach, CA

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November

01-07 U/W TSTA

07-09 U/W Underway Demo

12-16 U/W FEP Preparations

19-21 U/W FEP

26-30 INPT Seal Beach, CA

26-28 Ammo Onload

December

03-07 U/W Underway Demo Preparations

10-13 U/W Underway Demo

15-31 First Holiday Leave Period

NARRATIVE:

During 2001, USS VALLEY FORGE (CG-50) participated in a wide variety of missions in diverse operational environments. The first part of the year was spent installing and testing the Integrated Ship Control and Integrated Bridge Systems; as well as numerous other engineering, C4I, and habitability upgrades. The latter half of the year focused on completing the basic training phase and preparing for a Carrier Battle Group deployment.

On 19 January, VALLEY FORGE conducted a change of command. CDR John S. Arbter relieved CDR Thomas Goodwin to become VALLEY FORGE's ninth Commanding Officer in a ceremony held at the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company. January, February, and March saw intense shipyard work while the ship completed the installation of the Integrated Ship Control System (SMARTSHIP) and the Integrated Bridge System/Voyage Management Systems, as well as a host of other material, habitability, and C4I upgrades and repairs.

As March approached, the crew of VALLEY FORGE could see the light at the end of the shipyard work tunnel. On March 13, flight deck drills were performed to ready the crew for air operations and on March 26, the ship's main engine engineering spaces were lit-off.

April began with testing of the newly installed Integrated Ship Control System and on April 4, the AEGIS Weapon System was energized for testing. As the time for going to sea approached, supplies were unloaded and on April 16, VALLEY FORGE shifted berths from NASSCO to 32nd Street Naval Station. Preparations for going to sea continued, and on April 20, the Main Propulsion Plant was lit off.

May 22 marked the beginning of Light-Off Assessment to certify the readiness of the propulsion plant and the Engineering Watch Teams. The crew conducted a fast cruise on May 29 to prepare for LOA and Aviation Certification. Finally, on May 30 the VALLEY FORGE got underway for sea trials.

More readiness training followed in June. On June 18, the ship traveled to Seal Beach, CA to unload weapons. This was followed by a trip to Port Hueneme, CA for a Combat Systems Groom to fine tune the AEGIS Weapons System. The crew enjoyed a sports day while in Port Hueneme and LCDR Van Durick was relieved by LCDR Cashman as Executive Officer.

In July, time was set aside to perform maintenance as VALLEY FORGE spent most of the month pierside. On July 24, the ship held a Force Protection Standdown. This was followed by an underway period on July 25 that included an opportunity for midshipman to see what the surface navy is all about, as well as a Leaders to Sea ship embark that enabled civilians to experience a day at sea with the Navy.

August marked the official start of VALLEY FORGE's basic training. VALLEY FORGE was underway August 1 and 2 with a team from Afloat Training Group for the Command Assessment of Readiness and Training. Following CART, a series of training availabilities were scheduled to meet the ship's basic training needs. Training time included a port visit to Cabo San Lucas, MX, where the crew enjoyed relaxation such as fishing and golf, as well as participating in a local community service project. The approach of Hurricane Flossie cut the visit short by a day and required a duty section to get the ship underway when the anchor began to drag. The crew was recovered over a period of several hours via small boat transfer.

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Originally, September was scheduled as a continuation of basic phase training. VALLEY FORGE was getting underway for a week of training when the September 11 attacks took place. VALLEY FORGE proceeded to sea as events in New York and Washington, D.C. unfolded and immediately took an air defense station off the coast of California and established communications with a rapidly developing command structure. VALLEY FORGE remained at sea for 13 days actively participating in homeland defense operations. Following four days in port San Diego, the ship departed for the Pacific Northwest on September 28.

October began as September had ended: with VALLEY FORGE underway enroute to the Pacific Northwest in support of homeland defense operations. After leaving the Puget Sound area, the ship traveled to Long Beach, CA anchoring in the harbor on 19 October to conduct the first non-Naval Station port visit by a U.S. Navy ship since the attacks in September. VALLEY FORGE hosted the Naval Order Congress at a reception on board. The Naval Order Congress, in turn, hosted the VALLEY FORGE sailors at a reception in downtown Long Beach the following night. Many crewmembers learned a great deal about their Navy heritage by visiting with the many war veterans of the Naval Order Congress.

In November, VALLEY FORGE began to make up for the training periods missed due to the events in September. November 1-9, the ship was underway for one final basic phase training period and preparations for Underway Demonstration, a final certification of the engineering watchteams and the propulsion plant. November 19-21, VALLEY FORGE participated in a Final Evaluation Problem (FEP) which marked the end of Basic Phase Training. This was followed by a trip to Seal Beach for ammunition onload. December began with preparations again for Underway Demonstration, which was completed successfully on December 13. On December 15 the first holiday leave period began and another year in the life of USS VALLEY FORGE came to an end.

COMMANDING OFFICER'S BIOGRAPHY

John S. Arbter
Commander, United States Navy

Commander Arbter received his commission in 1983 through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps at the University of Mississippi, having been awarded a regular USN commission. He attained initial warfare qualification in USS OLIVER HAZARD PERRY (FFG 7). Upon selection for the Personal Exchange Program, he attended eight months of language training at Defense Language Institute prior to reporting as Navigator in Federal German Ship SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN (D 182). During this two year assignment, he participated in Standing Naval Forces Atlantic, Naval On-call Force Mediterranean, TEAMWORK 88, and MAYFLY 89 deployments. He attained the unique qualification of Leistungsnachweiss Stufe II (Unrestricted Watch Officer) during this tour.

Following a one-year stint in the Naval Reserve, Commander Arbter returned to active duty as Operations Officer in USS ESTOCIN (FFG 15). A second department head tour in USS CHOSIN (CG 65) and deployment to the Arabian Gulf as a part of CONSTELLATION Battle Group followed. In 1996 he reported as Executive Officer in USS PORT ROYAL (CG 73), completing an Arabian Gulf deployment as a part of NIMITZ Battle Group.

After a brief temporary duty on the Staff of Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, he commenced studies as a Federal Executive Fellow at the Fletcher School of International Law and Diplomacy in Medford, Massachusetts. In 1999 he joined the staff of the Command Leadership School, Newport, Rhode Island as a course facilitator.

Commander Arbter took command of VALLEY FORGE in January 2001. He led the ship through an intensive 20 week SRA which included the first west coast cruiser installation of the Integrated Ship Control System. Following the SRA, the ship began the Inter Deployment Training Cycle in preparation for deployment as part of an Aircraft Carrier Battle Group. Basic training was interrupted on the 11th of September and the months following when the ship was called on to provide Homeland Defense.

Commander Arbter is authorized to wear the Meritorious Service Medal and various other individual and unit awards.