

Classification (when filled in): UNCLAS

## Command Operations Report

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This report is **required** by commands listed in **SNDL Parts 1 & 2** and all operational **Task Forces, Groups and Units** temporarily established to meet operational requirements.

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The report format is divided into six sections: Command Data, Commander's Assessment, Chronology and Narrative, Supporting Reports, Published Documents, and Photographs. Required information is identified in specific sections of the form. See instructions appendices for assistance in compiling and on submitting this form and any attachments.

Electronic documents should be in a Microsoft Office format (Word, Excel, Power Point, or Access), HTML, PDF, JPG, GIF or plain text. Documents in electronic format are to be submitted via e-mail or on CD-ROM as explained at the end of this form. It is unnecessary to convert non-electronic documents to electronic format. List any enclosures that are not electronic and submit in hardcopy in the same manner as a CD-ROM. Photographs submitted electronically should be in JPG, TIFF or GIF format.

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### 1. Command Data (Boxes will expand as information is typed)

Name of your Command or Organization: USS WASP

Unit Identification Code (UIC), per the SNDL: 21560

Name and Rank of Commander/Commanding Officer/Officer in Charge:

Last: BOARDMAN First: GARY M.I.: M Rank: CAPTAIN

Date Assumed Command (date format YYYY-MM-DD): 2011-12-13

Mission/Command Employment/Area of Operations:

Mission: Embarkation, deployment, landing, and support of a Marine Landing Force. Specifically designed to accommodate Air Cushion Landing Craft (LCAC), a full range of Navy and Marine Corps helicopters, conventional landing craft, amphibious vehicles, Osprey MV-22 Tilt Rotor aircraft, Harrier II AV-8B STO/VL jets, and Medical/Dental facilities capable of providing intensive medical assistance to 600 humanitarian or combat casualties.

Command Employment: Non-deployed operations, exercises and visits.

Area of Operations: Western Atlantic / CONUS

Permanent Location (Home Port for deployable units): NORFOLK NAVAL STATION

Immediate Superior In Command:

Operational: COMPHIBRON 6

Administrative: COMNAVSURFLANT

Identify your assigned Task Force/Group/Unit name(s) and mission(s). Include OPLAN(s) and or named operations you participated in during Task Force assignment (if applicable):

TG 20.9 JAN-SEP 2012

TG 80.9 OCT-DEC 2012

CTU 183.1.6 – 26-31 OCT 2012 (HURRICANE SANDY SORTIE)

Name(s) of Forces, Commands, Ships, Squadrons or Units assigned or under your operational control (if applicable):

TU 183.1.6 – 26-31 OCT 2012: USS WASP, USS TAYLOR, USNS KANAWA, USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN, USNS MEDGAR EVERS, USNS PATUXENT, USS ROSS, USS GONZALEZ, USS BARRY

Type and number of Aircraft Assigned and Tail Codes, if applicable: See Attached Files

Commands, Detachments or Units deployed on board or stationed aboard as tenant activities (as applicable):

ESG-2, Elements of 26<sup>th</sup> MEU, 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR, ACU-4, ACU-2, HSC-26, HSC-84, HSC-28, HM-14, HSC-2, HSC-22, COMPHIBRON-6, Elements of 2nd MEF, Fleet Surgical Team Eight

Number of Personnel Assigned:

Officers: 77    Enlisted: 836    Civilian: 1

Command Point of Contact (required entry, complete in full):

Name (Rank, First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name): LT [REDACTED]

Job Title/Office Code: METOC

E-mail (both classified and unclassified, if available): [REDACTED]

Phone number(s): 757-443-7520

Command Mailing Address: USS WASP

FPO AE 09556-1660

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## 2. Commander's Assessment

2012 was a very rewarding and challenging year for the officers and crew of USS WASP (LHD-1). We executed a complex and aggressive schedule encompassing traditional amphibious exercises, Special Forces training, multiple War of 1812 Commemoration celebrations, maintenance periods, a hurricane sortie and a Defense Support of Civil Authorities mission in New York City following Hurricane SANDY. WASP's 2012 schedule stands as a testament to the tremendous flexibility of our Navy's expeditionary forces.

2012 began with preparations to become the command ship for the largest Amphibious Task Force assembled in the Atlantic Fleet in several decades as Exercise BOLD ALIGATOR 2012 was held in the early weeks of February. In addition to the embarked Flag / General officers and staffs, WASP enjoyed visits from a large number of U.S. and foreign V.I.P military and civilian guests. Detailed in the chronology, these visitors included the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, several U.S. congressmen, Commander Naval Surface Forces, and Commander Marine Forces. It was an exciting time to be in command of WASP as we executed traditional amphibious warfare maneuvers in addition to a unique blend of "Distinguished Visitors Warfare".

In early March we embarked elements from Special Operations Command to participate in Exercise VITAL ARCHER in the Bahamas operating area. It would become the first of three significant interactions with SOCOM forces WASP would have in 2012. During this exercise we conducted initial LHD well-deck and flight deck work with the SOCOM High Speed Assault Craft (HSAC) and helped lay the groundwork for all future SOCOM / amphibious ship operations.

April brought the start of a near back-to-back series of War of 1812 commemoration events in New Orleans, Fort Lauderdale, New York, Norfolk and Boston which began with an onload of an LCU, LCAC and numerous USMC gear and personnel as we transited to New Orleans. Following the very busy New Orleans visit, WASP re-transited the Florida Strait and moored in Port Everglades, FL for Fleet Week. After offloading USMC gear and pax at Onslow Bay, and a low visibility offload of LCU and LCAC in Chesapeake Bay, WASP returned home to Norfolk in early May.

Late May saw WASP underway again as we sailed for Fleet Week New York to continue the War of 1812 Commemoration. The evening of 22 May and morning of 23 May brought a thick, dense fog that jeopardized both our aircraft fly-off and the much anticipated Parade of Ships which included warships from 12 nations. Fortunately the fog lifted just enough, at just the right time, for the decision to be made to execute the Fleet arrival as scheduled. By mid-day, WASP was moored at pier 92 in Manhattan and the week-long festivities began.

OPSAIL Norfolk would bring WASP back to Hampton Roads in early June as we brought the 1812 celebration to our own "back yard." As we watched those impressive sailing vessels pass, it was hard not to think about Master Commandant Jacob Jones and his USS WASP, a sloop of war with 28 guns, and their victorious battles over HMS Dolphin and HMS Frolic during the War of 1812.

Early June also brought unique in-port flight operations as we launched MH-60's and CH-53's from our berth at Norfolk Naval Station. Mid thru late June WASP was underway once again as a centerpiece of the 1812 Fleet Exercise including warships of five nations. On 20 June WASP hosted the FLEETEX commander's conference hosted by Commander, Carrier Strike Group TEN. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of June WASP moored in Boston, MA for our final War of 1812 Commemoration port visit. Highlights of the week in Boston included visits by Governor Devel Patrick and Senator John Kerry along with a 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration on the flight deck with Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus in attendance.

In mid-July WASP entered a five-week maintenance availability, taking advantage of time in homeport to make important repairs. The crew enjoyed a well deserved and very well-attended ship's picnic on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August. Also in early August, WASP hosted the Surgeon General of the Netherlands who visited to see the impressive medical capabilities that reside in an LHD.

Our next underway, in late August, was dedicated to working with Seal Team Eight on a SOCOM training exercise. One of the secondary effects of the military withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan is the SEAL communities' commitment to reemphasize their traditional missions involving tactical operations launched from the sea. In 2012, WASP was very proud to be part of that commitment as we hosted numerous SEAL teams and Joint Special Forces aviation units. During this week-long underway we were also able to fully test the engineering plant and combat systems to assist in determining work candidates for the upcoming lengthy maintenance period scheduled September 2012 to June 2013.

Engineering problems on USS KEARSARGE (LHD-3) would cause ripples through the amphibious community. Of particular impact to WASP was that our scheduled maintenance would be delayed in order for us to retain the duty of USNORTHCOM ATF-LIFT Ready Duty LHD. This ATF-LIFT requirement places significant expeditionary force assets in a 96hr status for use in response actions for domestic disasters.

At sea again in mid-September, WASP worked with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Air Wing from Cherry Point Air Station. Flight operations with AV-8B Harriers, MV-22 Ospreys and AH-1W Super-Cobras helped flex our flight deck teams. We also had a large contingent of Sailors working on flight deck qualifications from the pre-commissioning LPD-24 ARLINGTON. Following a quick in-port period, WASP sailed again on the first of October for a five day mission in support of another SEAL training event with a new team from Naval Special Warfare Development Group out of Virginia Beach.

A short, dignified event while pierside on 18 October would foretell a major event of the next underway. WASP had the solemn honor of on-loading 17 remains of service members and family for burial at sea. On 23 October, approximately 100 miles East of Cape Hatteras, WASP slowed for several hours as we conducted the committal service in accordance with Naval tradition. By evening, we were at normal cruising speed as we returned to our familiar Onslow Bay operating area to work with Marines from 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Air Wing and 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division. In addition to the familiar AV-8B and MV-22 flight operations, we spent two days working LCACs and Light Assault Vehicles to and from Onslow Beach. The Marines received valuable experience working on and around an LHD. I was very happy to receive 2<sup>nd</sup> MARDIV Assistant Division Commander BGEN Burke Whitman on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October as he visited to observe his Marines training at-sea.

After an uneventful transit back to the Virginia Capes, we prepared to return to Norfolk on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October by flying off our SAR helo detachment at first light. We spent several morning hours conducting Electronic Warfare testing at the off-shore Shipboard Electronic Systems Evaluation Facility (SESEF) range to the West of Chesapeake Light. Following the testing, we conducted well-deck operations to off-load our two LCACs back to JEB Little Creek. Once the well deck was secure, we began making turns towards the Cape Henry pilot pickup area as we prepared to station the Sea and Anchor Detail for return to port.

Only one hour from pilot pickup, Combat Information Center informed me that we received an order from the Fleet Commander to remain at sea and await further orders. After a flurry of phone calls and emails, we learned that the Norfolk fleet was making preparations to sortie to sea in advance of Hurricane SANDY. Our initial orders were to begin taking tactical control of individual ships as they sortied from port and create order from chaos. Ships began standing out to sea and I ordered WASP to proceed East at slow speed, giving tactical orders to the Task Group as necessary. While an all-out fleet sortie was not eventually ordered, the sortie group consisted of eleven ships. As the senior officer in the Task Group, I was ordered to take command of the TG and execute a sortie track to minimize damage to the group.

After nearly 5 days of leading this sortie group on a very circuitous route East and North of Bermuda, I received another order that would alter the course of our next couple weeks. WASP was ordered by the fleet commander to transfer Task Group command to Commander, Destroyer Squadron Twenty Six (embarked on a DDG in the TG) and proceed independently at best speed to the coast of New York City. Leaving the Task Group slowly off our quarter, we turned North-North-West towards the southern edge of SANDY and proceeded at best possible speed to New York.

Arriving at Ambrose Precautionary Area in the approaches to New York City harbor mid-morning on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, our preparations to render aid to the State and City New York began in earnest. Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) is a military mission where Title 10 forces are used on U.S. soil in a supporting role to State and other Federal authorities. Embarking elements of 26 MEU Air Combat Element, the MEU Commander, and numerous Navy air and staff assets including Commander, Amphibious Squadron SIX, WASP was joined by USS CARTER HALL and USS SAN ANTONIO as forces flowed into the ARG to begin assisting in the wake of SANDY destruction. In the 11 days ahead, Sailors and Marines from the newly created WASP ARG would go ashore to assist in debris clearance, USCG Station rebuilding, heavy lift capacity, and numerous dewatering projects including at the Statue of Liberty and Rockaway Beach, Queens.

Receiving distinguished visitors is something WASP grew accustomed to during 2012, and this operation was no different. The Chief of Naval Operations, Commandant of the Marine Corps, Commander, NORTHCOM, and Commander, Coast Guard Atlantic were a few of the many visitors WASP hosted during the SANDY DSCA operation.

On a chilly Veterans Day, the 12<sup>th</sup> of November, the recently formed WASP ARG disbanded and returned home to Norfolk. Fleet Commander ADM Gortney welcomed the ship back and spoke to the crew on the LMC expressing his gratitude for their important work. Then he personally put down a well-deserved "Liberty call!" to a tired and proud crew.

Returning our attention to the work at hand - beginning the long delayed maintenance period - the combined team from WASP, Norfolk Ship Support Activity, Norfolk Naval Shipyard, and BAE Systems worked in earnest to make up for the lost time. This is a significant work package for an availability not labeled as a "CNO Avail". Nearly 40 million dollars will be spent in a pierside continuous maintenance period nearly unprecedented in fleet history.

WASP celebrated the approaching holiday season with a command holiday party, held on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December at a hotel in downtown Norfolk. Early December also brought a visit from the primary resource sponsor for amphibious ships and all expeditionary Naval forces, Major General Timothy Hanifen, USMC, OPNAV N95 Expeditionary Warfare. It was an excellent visit and the General was very inquisitive about our Joint Strike Fighter experiences, future of WASP's combat systems upgrades and what capability improvements the LHD Mid-Life Upgrade program will provide.

So 2012 came to a close with WASP in Norfolk, in week 7 of a 26-week maintenance availability. With a future in 2013 remaining uncertain due to budgetary impacts to Fleet scheduling priorities, at least the Officers and Crew of WASP could look back with pride on a year well-executed. And to cap it off, WASP was selected as the winner of the Norfolk NavSta holiday lights contest.

As I reflect on WASP's 2012, I remain very proud of the hard work and dedication of her crew and of those who embarked and sailed on her. This crew met all tasking with enthusiasm and hard work. Every bell was answered and not a single commitment was missed due to equipment or training deficiencies. Again I believe our schedule in 2012 stands as a remarkable testament to the flexibility and capability of our Navy's Expeditionary Forces.

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### 3. Chronology

06 JAN - Fast Cruise  
09 JAN - Underway for Bold Alligator 2012 (BA12) Deck Landing Qualifications (DLQ) and Amphibious Warfare (AMW) Certification, received Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) 83 and 85, received Search And Rescue (SAR) Detachment (Det) (Chargers 31 and 32)  
10 JAN - LCAC OPS in Onslow Bay  
11 JAN - LCAC OPS  
11 JAN - Phalanx Close-in Weapons System Pre-Action Calibration Firing (CIWS PACFIRE)  
12 JAN - Streamed NIXIE, Torpedo evasion maneuver, UNREP with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN  
Flight OPS  
13 JAN - Flight OPS, EMCON A Exercise  
14 JAN - Anchored in vicinity of Red Beach, NC to support AAV OPS  
15 JAN - Continued AAV OPS, weighed anchor for return to homeport (RTHP)  
16 JAN - Moored, Naval Station Norfolk (NSN)  
22 JAN - 2<sup>nd</sup> MEB embarked for Bold Alligator  
23 JAN - ESG 2 embarked for Bold Alligator  
25 JAN - Bold Alligator Fast Cruise  
30 JAN - Underway for Bold Alligator  
Embarked ACU-4 (83, 85, 87)  
Embarked HSC-26 - (Chargers 66, 32, 72)  
01 FEB - Exercise Bold Alligator CPOA, LCAC OPS and Flight OPS  
Anchored off of New River Inlet, NC. Weighed anchor  
02 FEB - Anchored and brought onboard 9 AAVs  
03 FEB - Flag Officer visits - ESG2, 2<sup>nd</sup> MEB, EWTGLANT, Maj Gen Israeli, CTF20, CJF New Zealand, Deputy Marine Forces Command, CMDR UK Task Group, Rear Admiral Canadian Navy, CMDR Netherland Forces Caribbean, Commodore Indian Navy, Brigadier 3 Commander 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Royal Marines  
04 FEB - Congressional visit - Mr. McKeon (R-CA), Mr. Wittman (R-VA), Mr. Forbes (R-VA), Mr. Riggell (R-VA), Mr. Kingston (R-GA)  
04 FEB - CNO visit  
05 FEB - CNSF and CSFTL visit, Exercise Straits Transit  
06 FEB - MARFORCOM visit  
07 FEB - Launched AAVs, Small boat attack as part of the exercise, French LCAT brought onboard  
10 FEB - RAS with USNS LARAMIE  
11 FEB - Finished Bold Alligator, Moored NSN  
23 FEB - CPR6 Change of Command  
24 FEB - NJROTC Tour  
25 FEB - Boy Scout tour - Troop 737

02 MAR - Underway for Vital Archer, onload of SAR Det and High Speed Assault Craft (HSAC), CIWS PACFIRE  
05 MAR - Gunshoot, Well Deck OPS with HSAC  
08 MAR - Onload of 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment  
09 MAR - Well Deck OPS with HSAC  
11 MAR - UNREP with USNS PEARY  
13 MAR - Completed degaussing range run, Moored NAVSTA Mayport  
16 MAR - Underway from NAVSTA Mayport  
17 MAR - Streamed NIXIE  
18 MAR - UNREP with USNS JOHN LENTHALL  
19 MAR - Disembarked HSAC, Moored NSN  
30 MAR - ESG 2 Commander's Conference  
10 APR - Underway for transit to New Orleans, LA, Onload of LCU 1659, LCAC 46, and HSC-26 aircraft 64 and 65  
11 APR - Onload of USMC gear and personnel in Onslow Bay  
13 APR - RDVZ with MITSCHER, and DEWERT  
14 APR - Transit of Florida Straits  
16 APR - UNREP with USNS BIG HORN  
17 APR - Moored New Orleans, LA for Fleet Week  
23 APR - Underway from New Orleans, LA  
24 APR - Florida Straits transit  
25 APR - Moored Port Everglades, FL for Fleet Week  
30 APR - Underway from Port Everglades, FL, onload of 2 CH-47's from 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR  
01 MAY - Transit to Onslow Bay  
01 MAY - Flight Ops with 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR using CH-47s  
02 MAY - Conducted LCAC and LCU operations to offload Marine gear from NOLA and PEV, conducted flight ops with 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR  
03 MAY - Replenishment At Sea (RAS) with USNS SACAGAWEA, CIWIS PACFIRE, offload of 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR  
04 MAY - Offload of LCU and LCAC, RTHP under low visibility conditions, Moored NSN  
14 MAY - Underway for SOCOM services, received HSAC, received 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR aircraft and HSC-26 SAR aircraft  
15 MAY - Low visibility transit, DLQs with HSC 26  
16 MAY - Low visibility during exercise conducted within W-50  
17 MAY - RTHP with low visibility, Moored NSN  
17 MAY - FPCON C drill  
18 MAY - Secured from FPCON C drill  
21 MAY - Underway for Fleet Week New York City, Flight Ops during low visibility, RAS with USNS BIG HORN during low visibility  
22 MAY - Flight Ops in fog  
23 MAY - Flight Ops prior to pulling in to NYC, Moored Pier 92 South in New York City  
25 MAY - CNO arrived to conduct reenlistment ceremony  
30 MAY - Underway from New York  
31 MAY - RAS with USNS BIG HORN

01 JUN - LCAC Ops for offload to Joint Expeditionary Base Little  
 Creek - Fort Story (JEBLC-FS), Moored NSN  
 08 JUN - Underway and moored for Norfolk OPSAIL 2012  
 11 JUN - Flight Ops inport to launch MH-60S and CH-53E  
 18 JUN - Underway for FLEETEX, received LCAC 46, and 3 HSC 26 SAR  
 Det Helicopters  
 19 JUN - CCSG 10 arrived  
 20 JUN - Commanders conference onboard  
 21 JUN - Detect to Engage (DTE) event, LCAC Ops, DLQs with  
 Marine Cobras  
 22 JUN - LCAC Ops, RAS with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN, NIXIE Stream  
 23 JUN - CIWS shoot  
 24 JUN - FLEETEX Strait transit  
 25 JUN - Landed two MV-22's (Oasis)  
 26 JUN - Zigzag plan after RDVZ  
 26 JUN -RAS with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN  
 27 JUN - PHOTOEX  
 28 JUN - Moored Boston, MA, Governor of MA visit  
 04 JUL - Hosted 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration on Flight Deck with  
 Secretary of the Navy  
 05 JUL - Senator Kerry's visit  
 06 JUL - Underway from Boston  
 07 JUL - VERTREP training with HSC 26  
 08 JUL - Marine fly off and offload  
 09 JUL - SAR Det and LCAC offload, Moored NSN  
 03 AUG - Ship's MWR summer picnic  
 09 AUG - Surgeon General of Netherlands Military visits  
 15 AUG - CPR6 visit  
 16 AUG - Fast Cruise  
 23 AUG - Underway, embarked SAR Det  
 24 AUG - RAS with USNS PATUXENT  
 24 AUG - Boiler Flex test, Flight Ops with HSC 84 (Red Wolves)  
 25 AUG - NIXIE Stream, Boiler Flex test #1 Boiler  
 25 AUG - Counter Measure Washdown (CMWD) system test  
 25 AUG - CIWS PACFIRE  
 26 AUG - Small arms shoot (M240), Boiler Flex #1 Boiler, LCAC Ops  
 (Hoppers 67 and 39)  
 27 AUG - Anchored near Chesapeake Light, conducted well deck ops  
 with HSAC, DLQs with MH-53Es (Hurricane 540 and Argus 17)  
 28 AUG - Full Power Run  
 29 AUG - Commenced NSW exercise  
 30 AUG - RAS with USNS PATUXENT  
 31 AUG - Moored NSN  
 14 SEP - Underway  
 15 SEP - Crew Served Weapons gunshot, Flight ops with Charger  
 66/74 and AV-8B DLQs  
 16 SEP - MWR Skeet Shoot, Boiler Flex test, Flight Ops with AV8B  
 DLQs

17 SEP - Lear DTE/Flight Ops with AV-8Bs and Charger 66/74  
 18 SEP - Condition 1A (Ballast), MV-22 DLQs, General Quarters (GQ)-TSSE  
 19 SEP - Flight Ops AH-1W and Charger 66/74  
 20 SEP - MK-58 Gunshoot, RAS with USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN, SAR Det off load  
 21 SEP - Moored, NSN  
 25 SEP - COMEX HVU-C, FPCON C drill  
 01 OCT - Underway from NSN, Soot Blow NR 1 and NR 2 Boiler  
 02 OCT - BECCES, Flight Ops with Bayraider MH-60 and MH-47/CSW Gunshoot  
 03 OCT - BECCES, HSAC Operations, Flight Ops MH-47/MH-60  
 04 OCT - RAS with USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN, CIWS PACFIRE  
 05 OCT - Moored, NSN  
 18 OCT - Receive caskets and cremains for Burial at Sea  
 22 OCT - Underway, Anchored for Sea Lion operations, Well Deck Ops to receive LCAC, Flight Ops to receive Charger 71/74  
 23 OCT - CIWS PACFIRE, Burial at Sea, Flight Ops for Spade AV-8 and Legacy MV-22  
 24 OCT - LCAC Ops in Onslow Bay, Flight Ops for Spade AV-8 and Legacy MV-22  
 25 OCT - STT MOB Drill, LCAC Ops Onslow Bay, Flight Ops for Spade AV-8  
 26 OCT - Well LCAC Ops for offload to Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek - Fort Story (JEBLC-FS), ULM-4 Range, Flight Ops for Legacy 02  
 27 OCT - Conducted Trends on Ships Service Electric Diesel Generators, Flight Ops for Charger 70  
 30 OCT - Flight Quarters - cancelled flight ops due to excessive pitch and roll  
 31 OCT - Conducted Steering Checks / Conducted Soot Blow NR 1 and NR 2 Boilers  
 01 NOV - Arrived at anchorage in Ambrose Precautionary Area, Flight Ops for Charger 70  
 02 NOV - Flight Ops, CPR6 arrives, CG District 1 visits  
 03 NOV - CO, 26 MEU arrives, weighed anchor  
 04 NOV - UNREP with USNS KANAWHA, anchored in Ambrose Precautionary Area  
 05 NOV - Flight Ops at anchor for Hurricane Sandy Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA), CNO and Coast Guard Atlantic Area visit  
 05 NOV - Flight Ops at anchor for Hurricane Sandy DSCA, RHIB Ops  
 07 NOV - Flight Ops at anchor for Hurricane Sandy DSCA, Low Visibility  
 08 NOV - Flight Ops at anchor for Hurricane Sandy DSCA, ETT Drills  
 09 NOV - Flight Ops at anchor for Hurricane Sandy DSCA, Well Deck Ops for U63, BGEN NY National Guard and COMNECC visit

10 NOV - Flight Ops at anchor for Hurricane Sandy DSCA, Well Deck  
Ops for U55  
11 NOV - Underway from Anchorage  
12 NOV - Moored, Norfolk; ADM Gortney, CUSFF visits  
28 NOV - BGEN Crowe, USMC visits  
05 DEC - HVU C drill, RHIB Ops  
10 DEC - MGEN Hanifen, OPNAV N95, visits  
11 DEC - Fast Cruise  
20 DEC - CO NSN visits

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#### 4. Narrative

USS WASP (LHD 1) began 2012 by conducting Amphibious Training Group qualifications to certify in multiple areas including Amphibious, Air, Surface, Undersea, Electronic Warfare, Cryptology, and Intelligence. Achieving these certifications involved an at-sea period from January 9<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup>. While underway, WASP conducted well deck and flight operations to provide essential training and experience for the upcoming Bold Alligator 2012 exercise. This was one of the most intense training environments WASP's Air Department has had in recent years as over 270 take-offs and landings were performed for pilot qualification.

Exercise Bold Alligator 2012 (BA12) began on January 30<sup>th</sup> and focused substantially on the Amphibious Force readiness for maritime operations. BA12's purpose was to train Expeditionary Strike Group 2 (ESG 2), Carrier Strike Group 12 (CSG 12), and 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) in a "medium land-and-maritime threat environment to improve naval amphibious core competencies." WASP and numerous friendly ships conducted coordinated assaults in a simulated hostile environment while also serving as flagship.

WASP embarked the Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC)s from ACU-4 and a Search and Rescue Detachment from Norfolk's Helicopter Squadron HSC-26 on January 30<sup>th</sup> while transiting to Onslow Bay, North Carolina near MCAS Cherry Point and Camp Lejeune. WASP's operational tempo doubled for BA12 with the onload of over 800 personnel, 11 Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAV), 10 Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacements (MTVR), 10 MV-22 Ospreys, and 10 helicopters. The importance of this exercise was highlighted by the at-sea visits of 15 U.S. Flag/General Officers, five Congressmen, the U.S. CNO and Flag Officers from seven countries.

"D-Day" operations began February 6<sup>th</sup> as BA12 switched from its initial stages into full exercise combat operations. "D-Day" marked the transition to land operations, where more than 3,600 Marines, Sailors and Coast Guardsmen representing 11 countries took back beaches in Virginia and North Carolina during the complex training scenario in which parts of the United States belong to hostile forces. Bold Alligator was the largest amphibious exercise conducted by U.S. forces in the last decade and since it was based on real-world situations, the exercise ran in real time and did not end until the mission was complete. WASP Sailors had the opportunity to work with a French landing craft as they loaded and launched a French Navy landing catamaran (L-CAT) on February 7<sup>th</sup>.

"We are here to train like we fight," said Rear Adm. Kevin D. Scott, ESG-2 Commander, in a ship-wide address over the ship's intercom system. "I know we are ready; to not only learn but to strike. Give it everything you've got and we will be victorious." While the embarked ESG-2 handled command and control operations during the first day of D-Day operations, the WASP crew launched LCACs and AAVs, coordinated efforts with international forces and carried out normal day-to-day evolutions. "It's the most amphibious operations the ship's done in two years," said Boatswain's Mate 1st Class [REDACTED], a member of WASP's well deck control crew. "This allows the junior sailors to see how their efforts contribute to the ship's larger mission." The overall exercise involved 24 ships at sea conducting operations as well as numerous synthetic ships and personnel that aid in the overall training. The BA12 exercise continued until February 11 when WASP moored at Naval Station Norfolk.

Shortly after returning to home port, WASP had a brief maintenance availability (CMAV) period which ended early March. This short in port period also left time for the Commander, Amphibious Squadron 6 change of command ceremony to be held on WASP on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Exercise Vital Archer occurred from March 2<sup>nd</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>. During Vital Archer WASP embarked special operations personnel and tracked and followed a simulated suspected hostile vessel, eventually capturing the ship and apprehending the personnel onboard. The Air Department tested their skills with the majority of the flight ops taking place at night, and while Deck Department was testing their skills conducting Well Deck operations involving Special Operations Forces (SOF) High Speed Assault Craft (HSAC). The superb work and dedication of each crew member toward the ship's mission resulted in a successful operation.

April 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, WASP supported 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) in conduct of day and night Deck Landing Qualifications (DLQ) in support of Marine Air Combat Element (ACE) 26<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) aircraft. USS WASP was instrumental in ability of ACE to meet training requirements in preparation for their next deployment.

As part of the War of 1812 Bicentennial, WASP participated in four Fleet Weeks between April and June; New Orleans, Port Everglades, New York City, and Boston.

The people of New Orleans and visitors to the city were able to tour 11 ships from six nations that arrived in New Orleans on April 17<sup>th</sup>, to participate in the War of 1812 Bicentennial Commemoration and the "Star Spangled Banner" Navy Week 2012. The ships moored at several piers along the east bank included the USS WASP, the destroyer USS Mitscher, and the frigate USS De Wert. FS Germinal from France, HMS Montrose from Great Britain, and HMCS St. John's from Canada made up the international naval contingent, along with the tall ships Dewaruci from Indonesia and BAE Guayas from Ecuador. WASP had embarked 300 Marines, and loaded numerous vehicles and craft for the event. Water craft included an LCAC and an LCU, and the sampling of vehicles included an M1A1 tank as well as the eight wheeled Light Armored Vehicle (LAV).

The opportunity to visit the historic city of New Orleans for the Bicentennial Commemoration of the War of 1812 was a once in a lifetime experience for WASP and the crew. The commemoration in New Orleans was an opportunity for Sailors and Marines to engage the American public to increase awareness and knowledge of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard, and the vital role these services play in defense of the nation and the projection of the maritime power and security. WASP Sailors competed in athletic events such as soccer, softball, basketball and tug-of-war with sailors from Ecuador, Indonesia, France, Canada, and Great Britain. Other events throughout the week included a seafood cook-off competition featuring local celebrity chefs teamed with military culinary specialists at Woldenberg Park. WASP Sailors participated in numerous community relation projects from cleaning up parks to passing out ball caps to children in local hospitals. "I'm looking forward to helping those who need assistance," said Marine Corps Lance Cpl. [REDACTED], from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit. "That is what the military is all about, it's not about helping yourself, but giving back to people that need your help." While in New Orleans, WASP crew members gave tours to over 15,000 visitors and held three receptions for distinguished guests.

April 24<sup>th</sup> found the USS WASP conducting a Florida Straits Transit on her way to Port Everglades. More than 800 Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen participated in the Community Relations Event (COMREL) that officially began the U.S. Navy's largest community outreach effort in south Florida on April 25<sup>th</sup> at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Hollywood, Florida. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Fleet Week Port Everglades was a weeklong event hosted by Broward Navy Days and local Navy Leagues, and was designed to showcase the sea services. It honored the men and women of the sea services through public events and recognition, and provided an opportunity to showcase the capabilities of surface platforms, equipment and the skills of the men and women serving aboard these vessels.

Service members from the USS WASP along with those from the Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruisers USS San Jacinto (CG 56) and USS Gettysburg (CG 64), Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate USS DeWert (FFG 45), U.S. Coast Guard cutter Bernard C. Webber, the Los Angeles-class fast attack submarine USS Dallas (SSN 700), as well as U.S. Marines from the 26th MEU participated in a number of community outreach activities from speaking to middle school students and distributing command ball caps to children in hospitals. Service members were also able to enjoy the hospitality and tourism of South Florida during Fleet Week Port Everglades.

Upon departure from Port Everglades, USS WASP Sailors were once again training along side SOF. The 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Air Regiment (SOAR) conducted four days of flight operations with CH-47 helicopters while LCAC-46 and LCU-1659 offloaded the USMC and their gear in the vicinity of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. After a short homeport visit from May 4<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>, USS WASP sailors were assisting the Special Operations Command with small boat operations and conducting flight operations with the 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR. These operations were taking place all while the Navigation and Operations departments were earning their stripes in low visibility conditions including the conditions on the day of May 17<sup>th</sup> upon the return to homeport.

USS WASP along with USS San Jacinto (CG 56) and the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers USS Mitscher (DDG 57), USS Gonzalez (DDG 66), USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) and USS Roosevelt (DDG 80), three U.S. Coast Guard cutters and 12 coalition ships from around the world sailed into New York harbor to commence Fleet Week New York 2012, May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Fleet Week, New York City, was a rewarding experience for the WASP. WASP participated in multiple Memorial Day ceremonies while also conducting numerous

professional tours and several receptions for distinguished guests. Additionally, WASP hosted a visit from the Chief of Naval Operations for a reenlistment ceremony. Approximately 6,000 Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen descended upon the city to celebrate the 25th Fleet Week New York. This year the sea services joined together to commemorate the Bicentennial of the War of 1812.

Fleet Week has been New York City's celebration of the sea services since 1984. It is an unparalleled opportunity for citizens of New York and the surrounding area to meet Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, as well as, see firsthand, the latest capabilities of today's maritime services. "I'm glad to be here with the WASP to commemorate the War of 1812 and to get to be home and see my family since I haven't seen them in quite some time," said Aviation Support Equipment Technician 2nd Class [REDACTED], from The Bronx, N.Y. and currently stationed aboard USS WASP (LHD 1).

WASP participated in the 1812 Fleet Exercise from June 18<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> to commemorate the War of 1812 and to establish multinational interoperability between allied nations. Throughout this time, the WASP and her crew were able to help improve the competency and qualifications of all participating units within the exercise by participating in joint force tactics and maneuvering drills. WASP also conducted ASUW and SUW operations, and a mock straits transit. June 20<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>, WASP supported 2<sup>nd</sup> MAW for Helicopter and Harrier DLQs in support of the 26<sup>th</sup> MEU, and supported 4<sup>th</sup> MAW for HMM-774 DLQs in prep for Operation Continuing Promise.

USS WASP pulled into port for Navy Week Boston directly after the conclusion of FLEETEX to celebrate the War of 1812 Bicentennial. Continuing the celebration of the nation's sea services, Boston Navy Week provided an opportunity for the citizens of Boston and New England to meet Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, as well as see the latest capabilities of today's maritime services firsthand. WASP's participation in Boston Navy Week gave her Sailors the opportunity to tour the city, interact with locals, and volunteer their time to help with community relations events from mentoring young children to participation in an age old tradition of Blessing the Sails at the Old North Church. Sailors were treated to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Boston Pops Concert and had the opportunity to be reenlisted by Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jonathan Greenert in WASP's hangar bay. Other COMRELS in Boston that the WASP crew participated in were located at Fenway Park, USS Constitution, and Boston Memorial Hospital. WASP crew members also took part in numerous parades on July 4<sup>th</sup> and gave several tours to civilian

and distinguished groups including Governor Deval Patrick, and Senator John Kerry.

The trip home to Norfolk included Vertical Replenishment training with the Search and Rescue Detachment from HSC-26 on July 7<sup>th</sup>, and a final SAR certification for 2012 was awarded on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. July 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> brought HM-14 and HM-15 who were supported for MH-53E DLQs, the 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR for DLQs, and HX-21, VMX-22 for Wind Envelope Expansion for MV-22, AH-1Z and UH-1Y and Flight Control Software Regression testing for the MV-22 Osprey. Significant increases to the wind envelopes were made for the MV-22 to include night landings added for spots 5-6 and significant expansion to all three aircraft envelopes for day and night operations.

After arrival in homeport the crew enjoyed some much needed down time at home with their families from July 9<sup>th</sup> - August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

August 23<sup>rd</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> the USS WASP found the time to conduct a number of evolutions that there was not time for during the business of the 1812 Celebrations. A Level I flex test was conducted on both boilers, the Counter Measure Washdown (CMWD) system was tested, and a full power run was conducted. The crew established a precision anchorage near Chesapeake light in order to conduct Small Boat Ops, supported DLQs for MH-53 pilots, and concluded the week with NSW support. During the flight operations on the 23<sup>rd</sup> through the 27<sup>th</sup> HX-21 had continued wind envelope expansion while 2<sup>nd</sup> MAW performed DLQs for training of 22<sup>nd</sup> MEU ACE to prepare for their upcoming deployment.

Two weeks in port led to the USS WASP being underway from September 14<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> supporting DLQs for AV-8 Harrier pilots and MV-22 Osprey pilots in Onslow Bay. The crew conducted a General Quarters drill, and the operations department conducted a successful Detect to Engage (DTE) training.

October 1<sup>st</sup> WASP was underway again, this time to conduct Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises (BECCEs). After two days of successful training evolutions for the Engineering Department, and flight ops with MH-47 Chinooks and MH-60s, WASP was headed back to homeport, but not before Replenishment at Sea (RAS) with the USNS William Mclean and CIWS PACFIRE.

It was a short two week period at home port in Norfolk before WASP had another mission. Other items would be accomplished while at sea, but the one that got a Sailor's attention was executing a burial at sea. Shipmates and authorized family members had requested to be buried at sea and USS WASP volunteered to perform this solemn task. The caskets

and cremains were loaded onboard on October 18<sup>th</sup>. Also scheduled during this underway were a CIWS PACFIRE, LCAC operations in Onslow Bay and flight operations for AV-8 and MV-22 pilots. On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, WASP conducted a ceremony for 17 people, to include Captain Paul Arthur Romanski, U.S. Navy, retired. Captain Romanski had most recently been serving our country as professor of operations and as deputy director for the Maritime Advanced Warfighting School at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.

WASP was headed into port following the five days at sea when she was ordered to head back out to sea to avoid Hurricane Sandy. WASP CO served as Officer in Tactical Command (OTC) for Task Group 183.1.6 in order to avoid any damage to the fleet. After storm evasion, WASP, the amphibious transport dock USS San Antonio (LPD 17), and the dock landing ship USS Carter Hall (LSD 50), all headed to the New York coast following the destruction wrought by Hurricane Sandy. The three ships, under the control of Commander, Amphibious Squadron 6, were leading the Defense Support to Civilian Authorities (DSCA) off the coast of New York City. WASP embarked 6 MH-53, 6 CH-53, 6 MH-60S, and 4 UH-1N to provide relief to NYC and New Jersey. While at anchor, WASP served as a landing pad to helicopters and personnel from FEMA and USCG, who were carrying high demand supplies and conducting search and rescue operations. WASP contributed further by sending dewatering and debris removal teams to provide relief to damaged areas. "This team had a short amount of time to plan, and execute the mission at hand. We came to help the people affected by Hurricane Sandy and we did an outstanding job at working with federal, state, and local authorities," stated Captain Tim Spratto, Commodore, WASP Amphibious Ready Group. "Nobody can replace what the hurricane took away; I just hope our actions helped out those in need."

Sailors from all three ships and Marines embarked from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) provided support throughout the affected region. They assisted with repair of the Hoboken Ferry Terminal and the Sandy Hook Coast Guard Station; emergency clearance and restoration efforts in Staten Island, N.Y., and New Jersey's Barrier Islands; dewatering efforts at Rockaway Beach, N.Y., Staten Island, Ellis Island, and at locations in the vicinity of the World Trade Center Memorial.

USS WASP moored at pier 10, Naval Station Norfolk for the last time of 2012 on November 12. This began a seven month CMAV period. During this time the ship has had a myriad of contractors on board from Norfolk Naval Shipyard and BAE Systems. Norfolk Naval Shipyard focused on boiler inspections, while BAE

began several ship alterations to accommodate the Joint Strike Fight F-35B. In 2011, USS WASP hosted the JSF F-35B at-sea trials to study its effect on current ship systems. Those effects were analyzed and alterations have begun in earnest. The crew completed ship's force work items, attended schools and training, and maintained professional and tactical proficiency. Much of the shipboard training was focused on Damage Control and fire fighting, to include daily duty section fire drills, weekly main space fire drills and General Quarters drills. 2012 concluded with a holiday leave and upkeep period, with Sailors divided into two groups with each receiving time for a well-deserved leave period.

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## 5. Supporting Reports (Refer to specific guide for Ship/Shore/Aviation or Fleet Command)

See Attached CD Files

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## 6. Published Documents

See Attached CD Files

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## 7. Photographs

See Attached CD Files

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