



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41)
FPO NEW YORK 09591-1729

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From: Commanding Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41)
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Encl: (1) Command History for 1985

1. In accordance with requirements set forth in reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted for the period 9 February 1985 to 31 December 1985 (dates inclusive).


P.M. MULDOON

Command History for 1985

February

At 1231 Pacific Standard Time (PST), 9 February 1985 USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41), first in a new class of Dock Landing Ships, was commissioned at Lockheed Shipbuilding Corporation, Plant Two, 2330 South West Florida Avenue, Seattle, Washington. Guests of Honor were the ship's sponsor, Mrs Sally GORTON; her husband, the principal speaker, Senator Slade GORTON (R-WA); their daughters Rebecca and Sarah GORTON; Rear Admiral Robert ROGERS, Commander, Amphibious Group TWO; Rear Admiral Laverne S. SEVERANCE, Jr., Commander, Naval Base, Seattle; Captain Charles H. PIERSALL, Jr., Navy Amphibious Ship Acquisition Project Manager, (PMS-377); Captain Joseph F. BRENNON, Chaplain, Naval Base Seattle; Mr Lawrence A. SMITH, President of Lockheed Marine Systems Group; Whidbey Island County's Superior Court Judge Howard PATRICK; and Mrs Cathy MULDOON, wife of WHIDBEY ISLAND's first Commanding Officer. The two hour ceremony in WHIDBEY ISLAND's well deck climaxed with a cake cutting ceremony by Fireman Recruit Donald D. PEED, the junior member of the crew and Commander Patrick M. MULDOON, the senior member of the crew. The entire ceremony was filmed by a detachment from the Pacific Fleet Audio Visual Command in San Diego led by Photographer's Mate Chief John V. KRISTOFFERSEN.

This commissioning was the culmination of some seven years of naval planning that began in March 1978 with the US Navy's competitive solicitation of a new class of amphibious landing ship. In February of 1981, the US Navy awarded Lockheed Shipbuilding Company of Seattle, Washington a contract to construct LSD 41, first of a new class of Dock Landing Ship to replace the aging Thomaston class LSD's. At the 4 August 1981 keel laying ceremony, the Honorable John F. LEHMAN, Secretary of the Navy, affixed his signature to the LSD 41 keel, the first keel of an amphibious ship to be laid in over five years and the first LSD in over ten. An additional Guest of Honor at this historic keel laying was the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert H. BARROW. During the ceremony, Secretary LEHMAN announced that the ship's sponsor was to be Mrs Sally GORTON, wife of Washington Senator Slade GORTON, and that LSD 41 would be named WHIDBEY ISLAND, after the nation's largest island, nestled in Washington State's own Puget Sound. Though this is the first ship to carry the name WHIDBEY ISLAND, in the late 1940's USS WHIDBEY (AG 141), a small transport purchased from the US Army, served the US Trust Territories.

On 10 June 1983, LSD 41 was launched and christened by Mrs Sally Clark GORTON. The Principal Speaker at this historic ceremony was the Honorable James F. Goodrich, Under Secretary of the Navy.

Encl (1)

WHIDBEY ISLAND's first reenlistment was the reenlistment of Engineman Chief Donald G. LEONARD on 2 January 1984 by Commander P. M. MULDOON, prospective Commanding Officer. On 18 September 1984, LSD 41 went to sea on her maiden voyage to conduct Builder's Trials. In December 1984, LSD 41 again went to sea, this time for Acceptance Trials. On 8 January 1985 WHIDBEY ISLAND was delivered to the United States Navy and the commissioning crew moved aboard. This day also marked the first day of WHIDBEY ISLAND'S Post Delivery Availability (PDA) period at Lockheed's West Seattle Shipyard. On 10 January 1985 Commander, Naval Surface Force, Pacific Fleet, Vice Admiral Harry C. SCHRADER, Jr. toured WHIDBEY ISLAND, "The Fast Attack Gator Freighter". 9 February 1985 marked the commissioning of United States Ship (USS) WHIDBEY ISLAND.

Following the rigors of commissioning the first in the WHIDBEY ISLAND class, the crew celebrated on the evening of 9 February with their much deserved commissioning party at the Seattle-Tacoma Airport Hilton. During the timeframe 10-22 February Naval Material Support Systems Office, Norfolk (NAVMASSO) initialized the SNAP II computer and trained members of the Wardroom, Chief's Mess and select crew members in the intricacies of this shipwide computer system. 13 February marked the first Pre-Combat System Shipwide Qualification Test (CSSQT) meeting with senior engineers from the Naval Ship Weapon System Engineering Station, Port Hueneme. Navy divers surveyed WHIDBEY ISLAND's underwater hull section during the period 18-20 February. During the remainder of the month, 20-28 February, the crew continued extensive training, working six day weeks, preparing their ship for her first commissioned voyage. Training included Condition IA and General Quarters walk-throughs to determine required watchstations and their manning; lookout and stretcher bearer training; Officer of the Deck (OOD) (inport and underway), Junior Officer of the Deck (JOOD), Engineering Officer of the Watch (EOOW), Quartermaster of the Watch (QMOW), Petty Officer of the Watch (POOW), Engineman of the Watch (ENOW), Main Machinery Room (MMR) Supervisor, Electrical Plant Control Panel (EPCP) Operator, Sounding and Security patrol, Ballast Control Operator and Wardroom Mess Captain training. It included training for bridge crane operators, maintenance men, after steering watchstanders, low visibility lookouts, and boat coxswains.

During the week of 25 February - 1 March, Naval Electronics Center, San Diego assisted senior maintenance personnel in understanding and testing the Total Ship Test Program (TSTP) maintenance package. During the same week Naval Electronic Systems Engineering Activity, St Inigoes, Maryland conducted operational and equipment performance acceptance testing and training for the radiomen and electronic technicians on the Automated Single Line Audio System (SAS). WHIDBEY ISLAND received her first non-plankowner when Hospitalman Third Class

Paul E. KLIMKOWSKI reported on 25 February 1985. Also on this day, the first coordination meeting for the upcoming WHIDBEY ISLAND Shock Test was conducted by David Taylor Naval Ship Research and Development Center (DTNSRDC) engineers and WHIDBEY ISLAND personnel. On 27 February twenty-five crewmembers went to the local reserve center for use of the Wet Damage Control Trainer. On 28 February a "cost plus fee" contract (number N00024-85-C-8575) was awarded to Metro Machine Shipyard in Norfolk, Virginia for Phased Maintenance Program Work on USS WHIDBEY ISLAND.

March

The month of March began with anticipation of leaving Lockheed Shipyard. 1-10 March WHIDBEY ISLAND trained, preparing for final Crew Certification and Light-Off Examination (LOE). During the week of 4-6 March, Naval Sea Support Center, San Diego conducted a Shipboard Explosive Safety Inspection to certify the Super RBOC system and inspect the handling procedures for both Close-In Weapon System (CIWS) mounts. Monday and Tuesday (4-5 March) were occupied by oral boards in preparation for final Crew Cert and LOE. On 6 March WHIDBEY ISLAND transferred her first plankowner, when Navy Career Counselor First Class Craig L. NORRIS detached with orders to USS NIMITZ. 6-8 March had Naval Surface Weapons Command, Dahlgren onboard conducting a HERO certification. On 8 March, the Executive Officer and Commanding Officer attended a dinner party given by Seattle's Hospitality Chairman, Mrs DUNN, in honor of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND. 8-11 March marked WHIDBEY ISLAND's first HF Training Termination. Appropriately, this event was held with the Naval Communication Detachment at NAS Whidbey Island. On Saturday, 9 March the first official tour of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND was conducted. This was appropriate for an amphibian, as this was a group of fifteen senior Marine Corps NCO's and officers. On Sunday, 10 March, the crew loaded their motorcycles and cars for the voyage to Little Creek, Virginia. 11 March saw the onload of a sailboat and some Handclasp material, a total of 50 tons of cargo, destined for San Diego. This same day marked the arrival of the Propulsion Examining Board (PEB) and the start of the LOE. Naval Electronic Systems Engineering Center, Portsmouth began a three day testing and training program on the AN/SSQ-88 Quality Monitoring Communications Systems package. On 13 March Commander, Amphibious Squadron TEN, Captain J. J. KINGSTON conducted the final Crew Certification of LSD 41. For the remainder of the day and all of the following day (14 March) WHIDBEY ISLAND and her crew prepared to leave Seattle and Lockheed Shipyard. At 0823 PST, 15 March USS WHIDBEY ISLAND set sail for the Manchester Fuel Piers. After an hour and a half transit WHIDBEY ISLAND began to onload some 650,000 gallons of Diesel Fuel Marine (DFM) and 40,000 gallons of JP-5.

On Saturday, 16 March, LSD 41, fully fueled, set sail for her first port visit, appropriately at her namesake, Whidbey Island.

After anchoring in Oak Harbor anchorage the crew prepared for the evening, when the local Whidbey Island Namesake Committee hosted a dinner for the crew at the Nor'wester Club on NAS Whidbey Island. The crew reciprocated on Sunday by opening their ship for tours to all the inhabitants of "The Island". After "Cinderella Liberty" WHIDBEY ISLAND set sail Monday morning (18 March) for Indian Island. After four hours of unloading ammunition at Indian Island, LSD 41 finally set sail for open ocean and San Diego. In the vicinity of Port Angeles, Washington, WHIDBEY ISLAND swung ship to adjust the compass. The remainder of the week (19-22 March) the crew adjusted to their at-sea routine. For many this was their first time at sea. During this same week the Naval Surface Weapons Command, Dahlgren conducted a SEMCIP technical assist visit locating and assigning corrective action for areas of Intermodulated Interference (IMI). On Friday, 22 March, while transiting through the Pacific Missile Test Range CWO4 Wayne BRAXTON, Ship's Damage Control Assistant, sighted an orange naval test drone adrift. WHIDBEY ISLAND maneuvered and recovered this costly, wayward drone.

While entering San Diego Harbor on Saturday, 23 March, LSD 41 received a bridge-to-bridge radio transmission from the local Coast Guard requesting assistance for a red and white pleasure craft that was experiencing engine trouble. Directed to the scene by an SH-2F helicopter (call sign Mangus 40) from HSL 35, WHIDBEY ISLAND found an 18 foot motor boat with three people on board that had run out of gas. At 1406 PST WHIDBEY ISLAND finally moored starboard side to pier N-11 after her LCPL towed this motor boat into San Diego Harbor and turned her over to the Coast Guard. Shortly after mooring, Commodore B.R. BOLAND, Commander, Amphibious Group THREE and various other distinguished guests arrived to tour the newest addition to the "Gator Navy."

The divers that had conducted the underwater hull inspection in Seattle were on hand to make a follow-up dive. Sunday, 24 March was reserved for offloading the Opportune Lift sailboat, holiday routine and individual ship tours for select guests. During 25-27 March the crew finalized CSSQT and LOE preparations. Monday marked the onload of the stores that would last the crew until Little Creek. On Tuesday, 26 March, the crew offloaded the Handclasp material. Wednesday the PEB examiners returned for a follow-up LOE and the Navy divers completed their hull inspection. Thursday, 28 March, WHIDBEY ISLAND sailed for a position off the coast of La Jolla (MODLOC at 32-56N 117-22W) to begin Standardization Trials, directed by DTNSRDC, Bethesda, MD. This day also marked the successful

completion of LOE and the first day that WHIDBEY ISLAND's own television station (CCTV), call sign NNWI, began transmitting. On the 29th the PEB members departed and Standardization Trials continued. Sunday, 31 March, marked the work definition conference for WHIDBEY ISLAND's Intermediate Maintenance Availability (IMAV) scheduled for arrival in Little Creek. Standardization Trails continued until the morning of 1 April.

April

The month of April symbolized the return trip--inching into Atlantic waters, transiting the Panama Canal, and finally, the arrival in Homeport. Early on the morning of the 1st, with Standardization Trials complete, WHIDBEY ISLAND went port side to pier N-11 at 1200. To assist in training the boatswain's mates, a dockside underway simulator (DUS) barge had been reserved for underway replenishment training and was waiting by the pier. Pre-CSSQT PMS began in anticipation of CSSQT and the Combat System Operability Test (COMMSOT) by Naval Electronic Center, San Diego. During 1-3 April the Aviation Fuel Oil and Cargo Fuel Oil Sequencing Systems (AFOSS and CFOSS respectively) were installed. On 2 April the first Post Shakedown Availability (PSA) conference was conducted on board with PMS 377 and SUPSHIP Seattle, Portsmouth and Boston in attendance. Fleet Training Group, San Diego was also given a detailed tour so as to prepare for training USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42). With 3 April came the completion of the first LSD 41 PSA work definition conference. Thursday, 4 April, marked WHIDBEY ISLAND's first real day of amphibious operations. In a graded exercise LSD 41 conducted a precision anchorage in Anchorage 160 off the coast of San Diego (Silver Strand Amphibious Landing Area). While at anchor WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted wet well operations with one LCU and two LCM 8's from Assault Craft Unit (ACU) ONE. The following morning (5 April) LSD 41 weighed anchor and set sail for the Southern California Operating Area (SOCAL). During the day, LSD 41 conducted flight quarters with over fifty touch-and-go's, and nineteen simulated vertical replenishments. The first helicopter onboard was a CH-46 from HC 11 (call sign Side Player 55) with a female pilot. The second helicopter was a Marine CH-46E from HMM 211 (call sign Greyhawk 04). The third helicopter was a UH-1N from USS OKINAWA (call sign Okie 3) with Commodore BOLAND embarked. The final helicopter, and the highlight of the day, was a Marine RH-53E from HMM 466 (call sign Wolfpack 10).

After completion of flight operations WHIDBEY ISLAND returned to port, mooring starboard side to Broadway Pier at 1745 PST as the San Diego Weekend Guest Ship. Saturday morning (6 April) saw some twelve hundred Navy recruits from the San Diego Recruit Training Center tour the ship. In the afternoon an additional 2153 visitors toured USS WHIDBEY ISLAND, "The Fast-Attack Gator Freighter". Sunday, during her visit ship,

LSD 41 received an additional 1772 visitors. Monday morning (0717 PST, 8 April) saw WHIDBEY ISLAND underway again for SOCAL to conduct CSSQT and COMMSOT. From 8-10 April LSD 41 conducted tracking exercises with CIWS, a long haul communications reliability exercise and various additional communication exercises with USS VANCOUVER (LPD 2), the COMMSOT assist ship. Late Wednesday afternoon (1600, 10 April), upon mooring to pier 6, WHIDBEY ISLAND began preparations for the Panama Canal transit. On 11 April the onload began with 20 pounds of blasting caps (Class A ordnance) and 56 pallets of Handclasp material for a total of 83 tons of cargo. The onload continued with a sailboat and a car destined for Little Creek, Virginia. The day finished with yellow fever immunizations for the crew. On the 12th, the crew finalized arrangements for getting underway for Rodman and enjoyed their last night ashore. Saturday morning (13 April) WHIDBEY ISLAND embarked LEDET ONE of the Coast Guard's Pacific Area Law Enforcement Agency (LEDET) led by LT YOUNG (USCG). At 0832 PST, LSD 41 set sail for the next leg of her trip to Little Creek, Virginia.

Shortly after leaving the mouth of San Diego Harbor the LEDET spotted a category 3 suspected drug smuggler, "Brisette", inbound for San Diego. San Diego Coast Guard was notified and WHIDBEY ISLAND continued on her way. Sunday, 14 April through Friday, 19 April was highlighted by various LEDET sightings, all of which proved to be negative drug suspects; by various Guantanamo Shakedown training exercises; and by the frocking of four new senior chief petty officers. The new E-8's were FCCS GREGOIRE, MACS(SW) HORNOR, OSCS(SW) REED and HTCS(SW) SMITH. On 20 April, as WHIDBEY ISLAND crossed over the 92 west meridian she outchopped from the Pacific Fleet (TE 31.8.6.8 and CTU 36.0.2) and inchooped into the Atlantic Fleet (TE 40.4.5.1). 21 and 22 April were taken up by a steel beach picnic with WHIDBEY ISLAND's version of softball, "Wellball" and final preparations prior to entering Rodman. At 0850 CST, 23 April, LSD 41 moored starboard side to pier one, Naval Station Rodman, Panama to offload Handclasp Material, Class A ordnance and LEDET members, and to onload mail, 125,000 gallons of F-76, 2530 gallons of 9250 lube oil and additional supplies for the transit to Virginia. The following morning, 0713 CST, 24 April, WHIDBEY ISLAND, with 86 civilian and military passengers including the Supply Officer's wife, Mrs Chandra DEHNZ, took in the last line and began her Panama Canal transit. Halfway through the Canal, at Gatun Locks, (1536 CST) the passengers debarked for their return trip to Rodman, and finally at 1732 CST WHIDBEY ISLAND sailed into the Atlantic Ocean.

On 25 April the Chief of Naval Operations requested an extension on SCN funding for USS WHIDBEY ISLAND. LSD 41 held a shipwide customs search. Friday was marked by a Safety Stand

down and General Quarters training, while Saturday, 27 April, was occupied by DC Olympics and flight quarters for a SAR helicopter (UH-1N) from Guantanamo Naval Base, Cuba to debark Engineman Second Class Paul P. KELLY for emergency leave. Sunday, April 28 was holiday routine in conjunction with a COMSEC Material System (CMS) Stand down. On 29 and 30 April, preparations were finalized for WHIDBEY ISLAND's grand entrance into her homeport--Naval Amphibious Base (NAB), Little Creek, Virginia.

May

At 0731 Eastern Standard Time (EST), 1 May 1985 a CH-46 from HC 6 arrived with Rear Admiral ROGERS, COMPHIBGRU TWO; photographers from the Virginia Pilot, Navy News and Soundings; Mr Kirk HAMMAKER of the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, and representatives from COMNAVSURFLANT'S Public Affairs Office as well as a Customs Inspector and Agriculture Inspector. After mooring portside to Quaywall East at 1100 EST, WHIDBEY ISLAND's crewmembers proudly displayed their ship to loved ones--some of whom hadn't been seen in over a year. The 34 private cars on flight deck spot one were offloaded later that afternoon and liberty call went early, allowing crewmembers to enjoy a well-deserved reunion with family and friends. Thursday through Sunday, 5 May, were devoted to finalizing Training Readiness Evaluation (TRE) preparations and early liberty call at 1430. 6 May marked the start of TRE. TRE continued the evening of 7 May. Wednesday afternoon, 8 May was marked by an official visit of Admiral James D. WATKINS, Chief of Naval Operations, and Vice Admiral William F. McCAULEY, Commander Naval Surface Force, Atlantic Fleet.

WHIDBEY ISLAND had an IMAV from 9 through 27 May with SIMA Little Creek accomplishing various jobs identified since commissioning, the largest being calibration of numerous gages and test equipment. 9 May also marked the offload of the sailboat. 10-13 May were largely devoted to Amphibious TRE preparations and correcting TRE discrepancies. On Tuesday and Wednesday (14-15 May, respectively) COMPHIBRON TEN conducted PHIBTRE onboard LSD 41. On 16 May, a third underwater hull inspection was conducted, this time by Lockheed sub-contracted divers. From 17 through 20 May, the crew continued correcting TRE and PHIBTRE deficiencies in anticipation of the Departure Material Status Review (DMSR) held 21-22 May by COMPHIBRON TEN and Atlantic Fleet Training Unit, Little Creek. During the entire work week, 20-24 May, the Personnel and Administrative Assistance Team (PAATLANT) were aboard, assisting the Administration and Disbursing offices. On 21 May the Naval Security Group Detachment, Norfolk gave a COMSEC Assist Visit. 22 May marked the official visit by both the CINCLANTFLT and the NAVSURFLANT Surgeons (Rear Admiral ZIMBALL and Captain SEELEY, respectively). 23 May marked a LCAC/LSD 41

acquaintance visit as select members of ACU FIVE, Bell Textron and Naval Coastal Systems Center (NCSC), Panama City, Florida toured the ship. On 24 May, the Commanding Officers of Amphibious Squadron TEN had their monthly CO's conference, and tour, aboard LSD 41. Also on Friday, SURFLANT inspectors conducted a surprise fire drill for duty section two's Inport Fire Party. Their outstanding score boosted preparations for GITMO. The weekend of 25-26 May marked WHIDBEY ISLAND's selection as Little Creek's Visit Ship in their weekend "Visit Your Navy Campaign". Memorial Day, 27 May, was the final day of the IMAV and LSD 41 continued with preps for GITMO.

WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway at 0915 EST, Tuesday, for three days (28-30 May) of training exercises in VACAPES. These drills included two CIWS Pacfires, GQ, flight quarters, and swing ship. Friday, 31 May was devoted to "Lift of Opportunity Onload"--some 292 pallets of Meals Ready to Eat (MRE), two motorboats, three cars and a household goods shipment for a total of 536 tons of cargo destined for Cuba. A special tour for USS SAGINAW (LST 1188) and ACU TWO personnel rounded out an already busy week.

June

The month of June planned to test WHIDBEY ISLAND's crew in Guantanamo to see how she compared against the rest of the fleet. During the 1st and 2nd of June (Saturday and Sunday), the crew made final arrangements for a scheduled 90 day deployment to GTMO and Panama City, Florida. At 1019 EST, 4 June, WHIDBEY ISLAND shifted to Quaywall West to onload ammunition for the "GITMO Battle problem". Further preparations were made for the deployment on 4 and 5 June. Finally, on 6 June at 1015 EST, WHIDBEY ISLAND inchooped into TG 43.2 and TG 136.2 as she set sail for Shakedown Training in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The remainder of the week (4-9 June) was entirely occupied with training the various watch teams and general quarters stations in the performance of their duties. At-sea fire drills, man-overboard boat recoveries, Pubex's, "The GITMO Five"--all occupied WHIDBEY ISLAND's crew as she steamed the Windward Passage route to GITMO. Monday morning, bright and early, (0556 EST, 10 June), WHIDBEY ISLAND anchored in Guantanamo Bay waiting for sunrise. At 0802 WHIDBEY ISLAND moored port side to Pier Victor and reported for Shakedown Training. The remainder of the day was spent with introductory meetings and various underway drills (Low Visibility and General Quarters).

Starting Tuesday, 11 June and continuing until the end of the month (Sunday, 30 June) the daily routine was consistent--beginning with underway times of 0530 to 0630, continuing with a low visibility drill, a swept minefield exercise, a man overboard drill and general quarters. The return trip usually

consisted of Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises (BECCE's), maybe a second GQ session, perhaps a second man overboard drill and then to anchorage, either for the night or for grade. Specific highlights during the month of June follow. 12 June marked the completion of WHIDBEY ISLAND's Navy Relief Fund raising drive with \$4677.00 donated by the crew. 13, 19, 24 and 27 June were CON-1-EX or graded exercise, days for WHIDBEY ISLAND. On Saturday, 22 June, the ship's crew went through the Gas Mask Trainer and on Tuesday, 25 June, the ship moored to a buoy for the first time. That afternoon marked WHIDBEY ISLAND's first underway replenishment, as she conducted exercises with USS NICHOLAS (FFG 47) off the coast of Cuba.

July

The month of July dawned with the final week of Shakedown Training and the promise of making naval history, working with the LCAC (Landing Craft, Air Cushion--CNO Project 594). On Monday and Tuesday (1-2 July) training time was used in preparation for WHIDBEY ISLAND's Operational Readiness Exam (ORE), the day long, GITMO graded exercise that decrees the detaching date for all ships. The ORE was conducted 3 July and WHIDBEY ISLAND passed with flying colors receiving an overall score of 90. The following day, 4 July, the crew was given a much needed rest as the Welfare and Recreation Committee, led by CWO4 William E. HENDRICKS, treated the crew to a cookout at Cable Beach. Afterwards GITMO's Welfare and Recreation Committee had fireworks to celebrate Independence Day. From Friday through Sunday (5-7 July) WHIDBEY ISLAND's Engineering Department, led by Chief Engineer, Lieutenant Commander Daryl S. BURKE, Main Propulsion Assistant, CWO3 Samuel L. WRIGHT, and Auxiliaries Officer, CWO4 Thomas THOMPSON, Jr., prepared for their upcoming OPPE cert. 8 July marked LSD 41's start and successful completion of her engineering ORE. On Tuesday, 9 July, WHIDBEY ISLAND was "released from Guantanamo Bay to proceed on duties assigned" as all training areas had been completed satisfactorily and on time--a feat few ships can claim. At 1643 EST, 9 July, LSD 41 set sail for Panama City, Florida and LSD41/LCAC interface testing. Wednesday, 10 July, LSD 41 outchopped TG 43.2 and TG 136.2. On 11 July WHIDBEY ISLAND held a pre-stateside arrival customs inspection and at 1609 EST, Friday, 12 July she anchored in St Andrews Bay, Panama City, Florida. The weekend (13-14 July) was devoted to installation of instrumentation to test environmental data associated with LCAC trials and the crew enjoyed their first liberty stateside in over a month. During the following week (15-21 July) LCAC/LSD 41 interface instrumentation installation continued. Monday, 15 July WHIDBEY ISLAND shifted berth to starboard side to west end of Dyer's Point Pier, Panama City Port Authority. Monday also marked the official beginning of LCAC ONE, Developmental Testing, Stage III A2 (LCAC 001 DT-III A2). On Tuesday lengthy LSD 41/LCAC interface briefings were

conducted. Wednesday marked the arrival of WHIDBEY ISLAND's first detachment of embarked marines. Led by Second Lieutenant Mike MCGINN and Gunnery Sergeant Robert MURRAY, the seventeen member marine detachment from Second Marine Division, Camp LeJeune reported aboard with one M60A1 tank, two M151GME TOW-equipped jeeps and one M813 truck. Friday, 19 July, marked the embarkation of two LVTP-7 personnel carriers. Sunday LSD 41 went back to anchor to continue preparations for the first LCAC/LSD 41 interface operations. Monday continued LCAC preparations. At 0954 CST, Tuesday, 23 July marked the first entry of LCAC 01 into the welldeck of LSD 41, the first ship specifically built to handle, support and transport this newest landing craft. Four entries and three exits were made by the LCAC on this historic day in amphibious warfare. ACU FIVE shifted their radio guard to USS WHIDBEY ISLAND for CNO Project 594-OT-IIIA2 on this same monumental day. Wednesday, WHIDBEY ISLAND, with ACU FIVE embarked and LCAC 001 in the well, proceeded out into the Panama City Operating Area (PCOA) for at-sea testing and trials. Three exits and three entires were conducted on this second day of trials. LCAC 001 was vectored under positive control and dispatched under emission controlled conditions to Crooked Island. At noon, on Thursday 25 July, Vice Admiral William H. ROWDEN, Commander Naval Sea Systems Command and Mr. Eugene E. SHOULTS, PMS 377, arrived by helicopter to observe the interfacing of WHIDBEY ISLAND and the LCAC. Environmental and interface trials with LCAC 001 continued in PCOA, completing two complete uneventful missions. At 1432 CST LCAC 001, exiting the well, experienced a major casualty with the complete failure of the port propeller and its associated shafting and shrouding. At 1655 the LCAC was recovered aboard WHIDBEY ISLAND. LSD 41 then made preparations for entering Panama City to offload the damaged craft. On Friday WHIDBEY ISLAND was released by CNO from LCAC developmental testing and commenced offloading major equipment needed by ACU FIVE in the repair of LCAC 001. This offload continued until Sunday morning when at 0954 CST, LSD 41 left Panama City for Little Creek and some rest and relaxation. The remainder of the month, 29-31 July, was occupied with "liberty turns" for Virginia.

August

The month of August began on a happy occasion as WHIDBEY ISLAND arrived in Little Creek, unexpectedly, after two months away from homeport. This week of unplanned reunion (1-6 August) was occupied by duty-only working days and initial preparations for Final Contractor Trials scheduled for early September. 7 August marked the end of this much needed respite from WHIBEY ISLAND's busy schedule as LSD 41 again sailed for Panama City. An underway schedule of events (SOE) and some additional preparations for LCAC operations were the name of the day for this four day transit (7-10 August). On Sunday

afternoon, 11 August, LSD 41 anchored in St Andrew's Bay and began to onload LCAC equipment again in preparation for continuation of DT-III A2. ACU FIVE and LSD 41 held a meeting onboard to coordinate anticipated evolutions for the remainder of the week. The onload continued through 12 August and until mid-afternoon on the 13th. At 1709 WHIDBEY ISLAND postponed further LCAC events, weighed anchor and sailed for a MODLOC (24-00-N 083-30W) in the vicinity of the Dry Tortugas to evade Tropical Storm DANNY. Tracking the storm closely, LSD 41 continued south. At mid-afternoon on Wednesday the 14th WHIDBEY ISLAND assisted the Coast Guard Cutter POINT THATCHER in the rescue of the sailing vessel, FAIR WIND at 24-50N 083-53W. Hospital Corpsman Chief Michael J. MCCABE was transported by POINT THATCHER to the sailboat to render medical assistance to one of its three passengers. WHIDBEY ISLAND received onboard a 32 year old caucasian male, David CHILDRESS, suffering from apparent cellulitis of the right arm and severe dehydration caused by a staph infection. Patrol Boat (WPB) POINT THATCHER took FAIR WIND under tow and accompanied LSD 41 as she closed Key West to medevac the patient to a hospital. Later that evening David CHILDRESS was medevaced by Navy helicopter (call sign Rescue 102) for further transfer to NAS Key West.

Tropical Storm DANNY, now Hurricane DANNY, continued to travel through the gulf with estimated landfall on the coast of Texas. Thursday afternoon WHIDBEY ISLAND departed her MODLOC heading for Panama City and resumption of DT-III A2. On Friday morning LSD 41 anchored in St Andrews Bay prior to going pierside later that evening. Once pierside, another coordination meeting between NCSC, Operational Test and Evaluation Force (OPTEVFOR), PMS 377 and ACU FIVE was held on board WHIDBEY ISLAND. During the weekend, 17-18 August, the crew tried to recuperate and rest up for the upcoming two weeks of LCAC operations. Monday morning the LCAC support and environmental testing continued with the LCAC exhibiting various engine combinations, marine serial loads and landing configurations. ACU FIVE also shifted her radio guard back aboard WHIDBEY ISLAND. Tuesday morning, 20 August, LSD 41 proceeded out into the PCOA for trials with LCAC 001. On this date, the LCAC had six entries and six exits. 21 through 24 August consisted of multiple LCAC mission profiles. After completing the last mission scenario, LSD 41 went starboard side to the west wharf at Dyer's Point, Panama City at 1512 local. The LCAC remained in the welldeck until Monday afternoon for PMS and routine maintenance. The crew enjoyed some hard-earned liberty on the 25th and then on the 26th WHIDBEY ISLAND sailed again for the PCOA to continue environmental testing. Once at sea, LCAC 001 conducted multiple missions until on 28 August Tropical Depression ELENA, soon to be Hurricane ELENA, pre-empted the testing. At 0745 WHIDBEY ISLAND departed the PCOA MODLOC and steamed throughout

the night, towards a Yucatan Channel MODLOC (23-00N 88-00W). On Thursday, off the coast of Mexico, environmental testing of LCAC 001 continued with internal fueling, flying over blocks, and ship's crane/LCAC interfacing. On Friday LSD 41 and LCAC 001 continued environmental testing while the crew reviewed heavy weather procedures. At 1105 local, Saturday, 31 August, WHIDBEY ISLAND departed the Yucatan Channel MODLOC enroute Panama City. Unpredictable as hurricanes are, ELENA proved no exception as she curved from her expected landfall north of Clearwater towards the Pensacola/Panama City area, and finally, made actual landfall in Bay St Louis, Mississippi. This extensive movement further postponed LSD 41's arrival back in Panama City.

September

The month of September began evading Hurricane ELENA and the crew anticipating a not-too distant arrival back in Little Creek, and Final Contractor Trials. On the 1st of September WHIDBEY ISLAND again established a MODLOC (26-00N 86-00W) to better monitor ELENA's track through the Gulf. On 2 September the crew began preparations for offloading ACU FIVE and NCSC once back in Panama City. Finally on 3 September Hurricane ELENA went ashore in Mississippi. WHIDBEY ISLAND then left her MODLOC, arrived at Bouy "SA" (Panama City seabouy) and anchored. At anchorage, LCAC 001 ferried the large Marine Corps/ACU FIVE/NCSC equipment back to NCSC while the remainder of the crew (LSD 41/ACU FIVE) prestaged the remaining equipment to hasten the offloading effort. At 1513 local WHIDBEY ISLAND went pierside at Panama City Port Authority to continue the offload. This undertaking continued until late on the morning of the 4th. On the evening of 3 September ACU FIVE hosted a kegger at The Long Glass at NCSC for the crews of ACU FIVE and LSD 41. At 1409 CST, 4 September, LSD 41 set sail, bound for Little Creek. Another chapter in naval amphibious warfare had been started and WHIDBEY ISLAND was proud to be part of it. The 5th through the 7th of September were occupied with the homeward transit, Chief Petty Officer-Selectee Indoctrination, Safety/Damage Control standdown, and CIWS pacfire.

On Sunday morning, 8 September, WHIDBEY ISLAND went port side to Quaywall East at Little Creek, Virginia. The crew had a happy reunion with family and friends that lasted until Tuesday, (Sunday and Monday being duty section only). Tuesday, 10 September through Tuesday, 17 September were spent preparing for the next underway period of 18-19 September. On 12 September COMPHIBRON TEN hosted a First Lieutenant's Conference at which WHIDBEY ISLAND's First Lt, LCDR Kenneth M. GOLASZEWSKI spoke on LCAC amphibious operations. On Saturday, 14 September WHIDBEY ISLAND was the "Open House" ship for Little Creek's "Surface Force Family Fest 1985". Monday, 16 September was highlighted by a German Midshipmen tour of WHIDBEY ISLAND. On

18 September WHIDBEY ISLAND ventured into the VACAPES Operating Area for a rehearsal of Final Contractor Trials (FCT's). This day-and-a-half equipment check-out included swing ship, CIWS pacfire, HF transmitting quality testing, 200 mile radar calibration testing, water barrier testing and anchoring in sixty fathoms of water. Thursday afternoon WHIDBEY ISLAND, having completed FCT rehearsal, moored at Quaywall East. On Friday afternoon a Radiation Survey was conducted of the CIWS loading area and CIWS magazines. The weekend was occupied by final FCT preparations.

Monday morning the INSURV inspectors arrived and began their testing. On Tuesday, 24 September WHIDBEY ISLAND completed the underway portion of FCT's. Wednesday was the final day of FCT's with machinery inspections and additional equipment demonstration. At 1808 that evening, 25 September, WHIDBEY ISLAND inchooped into TU 183.2.1 as she got underway for the hurricane evasion anchorages up the Chesapeake Bay. At 0145 local, LSD 41 finally anchored after an eight hour Sea and Anchor detail. The crew tried to rest while the ship steamed against the anchor in seventy knot winds. Friday afternoon, after Hurricane GLORIA's passage LSD 41 weighed anchor and sailed back to Little Creek with hopes that GLORIA had spared major damage to homes in Virginia Beach and Norfolk. Arrival pierside marked WHIDBEY ISLAND's outchopping from TU 183.2.1 and the beginning of WHIDBEY ISLAND's Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). LSD 41's goal of \$11,500 and 100 percent participation was achieved through extensive coordination by Electronic Warfare Chief David S. CHANEY and Signalman Second Class Kelly M. LEBLANC. Over the weekend (28-29 September) many of the crew cleaned up/fixd up their homes and yards after GLORIA's swath of limited destruction. Monday marked the end of the 1985 fiscal year and the end of another busy month aboard USS WHIDBEY ISLAND.

October

The month of October promised a first for all WHIDBEY ISLAND crewmembers--SHOCK TEST. The month got off to a fast start with the unannounced arrival of the Fleet Accounting and Disbursing Center, US Atlantic Fleet (FAADCLANT) on 1 October. Their surprise audit lasted through 4 October. WHIDBEY ISLAND's grade of outstanding proved that once again she was the "First and Finest". On Thursday, 3 October the radiomen assisted in USS HARLAN COUNTY's (LST 1196) TYCOMMEX and on Friday, 4 October, Commander MULDOON and Master Chief Electrician's Mate FERRELL (Command Master Chief) hosted a wives luncheon on the messdecks. On Saturday the Wardroom held a "Wetting-Down" party for Lieutenant Commander Frederick T. MATTHIES; Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Joseph A. KOSTECKE, Lieutenant Thomas M. BARRY, Lieutenant Edmund R. SAWTELLE, Lieutenant Marco S. RANDAZZO and Lieutenant Frank R. SPELLMAN.

The next couple of weeks (6-19 October) were dedicated to Pre-Shock Test training and coordination meetings. October 9th marked WHIDBEY ISLAND's first full participation in the Hampton Roads weekly Communication Inport Training Exercise (CINTEX). On Wednesday, 16 October LSD 41 set sail, anchored in LA 1 to onload a YFU (to simulate an LCAC) for shock testing, and sailed into the VACAPES for engineering sea trials and shipwide, pre-shock test training. Early the following morning (17 October) WHIDBEY ISLAND returned to Little Creek after completing various General Quarters scenarios specifically designed for expectant shock-related damage. The remainder of the 17th and all of 18 October were utilized for fast cruise training, again slanted towards shock related casualties and Shock Trials. On Saturday, 19 October, final inport preparations were made for Shock Test and the crew again said "Goodbye" to their loved ones. At 0958 EST, 20 October WHIDBEY ISLAND commenced her southern transit to the Key West Operating Area (KWOA) and Shock Trials. During the transit (20-23 October) the crew was exercised daily at shock-related General Quarters and indoctrinated in proper safety precautions related to Shock Test. On Wednesday afternoon the Operations Officer, Lieutenant Commander MATTHIES conducted the final Pre-Shock Coordination Meeting with all participants at the Naval Air Development Center Detachment (NAVAIRDEVCCEN DET) Headquarters in Key West.

Final adjustments and preparations were conducted on Thursday and Friday. Friday also marked WHIDBEY ISLAND's first overnight embarkation of females (two from Supervisor of Shipbuilding, ten Engineers-in-Training, and two photographer's mates). Saturday, 26 October was the big day. At 1410 EST the rehearsal shot of 2500 pounds of high explosive (HBX) was detonated off the starboard beam of WHIDBEY ISLAND. On Sunday morning the ship anchored in the vicinity of Key West and EOD divers inspected the hull. Ship's force continued equipment checks. Later that evening LSD 41 sailed out past the hundred fathom curve and began preparations for Shot One. On Monday, 28 October at 1240 EST the first shot--10,000 pounds of HBX located off the starboard beam--was detonated. Tuesday was much like Sunday with post-shot testing identifying damaged equipment. At 1200 EST, Wednesday, 30 October Shot Two--10,000 pounds of HBX off the starboard beam--was detonated. On Thursday, the 31st of October the EOD divers made a video of the hull after Shot Two and ship's force effected repairs on shock-damaged equipment.

November

The month of November began with USS WHIDBEY ISLAND at anchor 2 miles off Key West, Florida assessing damage inflicted by Shot Two. Members of the INSURV Board, arrived by boat on 3 November. EOD teams had made extensive underwater hull surveys

for possible shock damage from 1 to 2 November. Concurrently, ship's force damage control teams were inspecting the ship's interior and exterior structures for additional damage. All damage incurred was placed in the PSA work package for repair by Metro Shipyard. 3 November marked the third and final blast of the shock test. Nerves were tense when, at 1230 EST, BM1 Wright detonated the third and most powerful shot, sending a plume of water towering some 500 feet in the air. Again, damage control teams conducted surveys and the following day, Monday, 4 November, EOD made their final hull inspection. Despite minor new damage, WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway for Little Creek, Virginia on 5 November. On the 5th, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND rendezvoused with USS ESTOCIN (FFG-15) and conducted a night underway replenishment transferring some 28,000 gallons of Diesel Fuel Marine (DFM) to USS ESTOCIN. USS WHIDBEY ISLAND continued north enroute Little Creek, Virginia (6-7 November) and conducted communication drills of opportunity with USS BOULDER and USS TAYLOR. The 8th of November found WHIDBEY ISLAND arriving at anchorage LA 8 in Hampton Roads, Virginia. At anchorage, the YFU was offloaded and returned to the Inactive Ship Facility, Portsmouth, Virginia. WHIDBEY ISLAND then weighed anchor and returned to Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia, mooring at her normal berth, Quaywall East. The crew rested 9-12 November with last minute paperwork being prepared and submitted for Post Shakedown Availability (PSA). The 13th of November found WHIDBEY ISLAND underway for Craney Island Fuel Piers. At Craney Island, WHIDBEY ISLAND commenced off-loading fuel. This lasted through 14 November with some 480,000 gallons DFM and over 40,000 gallons of JP-5 off-loaded. On 15 November, with almost no fuel onboard except for the generators, WHIDBEY ISLAND was towed into Metro Machine Shipyard, Norfolk, Virginia, arriving at 1034 EST to commence PSA. 15 November marked WHIDBEY ISLAND's first day at the shipyard. During the weekend (15-17 November) the crew was indoctrinated in shipyard safety, rules and regulations. November 18 marked the arrival conference during which the comprehensive work package was reviewed. Major work to be done included main engines, boilers, bridge crane, hull blasting and painting, void, fuel tank and water tank inspection, gas freeing of all water tight spaces, installing ship alterations, radar antenna replacement, all shock test damage, flight deck re-arrangement, anchor windlass and EPCP alterations with a total of 481 jobs identified. The period 19-30 November closed out the month with ongoing shipyard work and sterling performance from the basketball team in a league at NAB, Little Creek, Virginia.

December

December began with Metro projecting 53% completion of jobs and ship's force projecting 55% of jobs completed. December was marked by continuing progress towards identified work item

completion. December 17th commenced the holiday leave period and personnel took advantage of time off for sporting events at NAB, Little Creek, Virginia. Initial gas freeing was completed on December 20th. The year 1985 came to an end with shipyard work progressing and drydocking scheduled for January 15th 1986.