

USS LEONARD F. MASON (DD-852)

FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

IN REPLY REFER TO

DD852/FAS:gn

5750

Ser:

From: Commanding Officer, USS LEONARD F. MASON (DD 852)

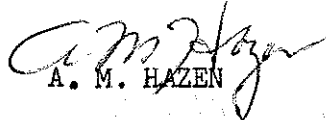
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09B9)

Subj: OPNAV Report 5750-1; forwarding of

Ref: (a) Chief of Naval Operations Instruction 5750.12

Encl: (1) USS LEONARD F. MASON (DD 852) Command History, 1 January 1966
31 December 1966

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted as OPNAV Report 5750.1.


A. M. HAZEN

Copy to:
CINCPAC FLT

Commander Task Group 70.8 Message 170748Z 18 MARCH 1966

Commander Task Force 130 Message 170727Z 17 MARCH 1966

See 6F.

Photographs

³ See 6C

USS CANBERRA (CAG-2) Message 300206Z 1 MAY 1966

USS WINSTON Message 242247Z 24 APRIL 1966

⁴ See 6C

II CORPS NGLO Message 270300Z 27 MAY 1966

COMMAND HISTORY USS LEONARD F. MASON (DD 852)

1 JANUARY 1966 - 31 DECEMBER 1966

1. Chronology of Events:

- 1/1 Moored port side to USS MACKENZIE (DD 836) at pier #6, U. S. Naval Station, Yokosuka, Japan.
- 1/4 Underway to Yokosuka explosive anchorage-on loaded ammo to allowance-underway commencing Sea Trials and refresher training in Sagami Wan.
- 1/5 Returned to Yokosuka.
- 1/10 Underway for Da-Nang Republic of Vietnam-Conducted gunnery drills enroute.
- 1/15 At anchor Da-Nang Harbor-Commenced Naval gunfire support missions.
- 1/17 Unreped from USS SACRAMENTO (AOE1) fuel and ammunition.
- 1/26 Unreped ammunition from USS PARICUTIN (AE-18).
- 1/28 Fired NGFS.
- 1/29 Fired NGFS.
- 1/30 Fired NGFS-Investigated small fishing craft.
- 1/31 Fired NGFS-Unreped fuel from USS ASHTABULA (AO-51)
- 2/1 Unreped ammunition from USS FIREDRAKE (AE-14) and fuel from USS SACRAMENTO (AOE-1).
- 2/2 Fired NGFS.
- 2/3 Fired NGFS-Unreped ammunition from USS FIREDRAKE (AE-14).
- 2/4 Fired NGFS.
- 2/6 Fired NGFS-Unreped fuel from USS CALIENTE (AO 53).
- 2/9 Fired NGFS.
- 2/10 Fired NGFS-Vertreped from USS MARS (AFS 1).
- 2/11 Fired NGFS-Investigated small fishing boat in restricted waters
- 2/12 Fired NGFS-Unreped ammunition from USS PARICUTIN (AE-18) and fuel from USS GUADALUPE (AO-32).
- 2/13 Fired NGFS.
- 2/14 Fired NGFS.
- 2/15 Fired NGFS.
- 2/16 Fired NGFS-Unreped ammunition from USS HALEAKALA (AE-25).
- 2/17 Unreped food from USS ZELIMA (AF-49).
- 2/18 Unreped fuel from USS GUADALUPE (AO-32)-Fired NGFS.
- 2/21 Unreped fuel from USS KENNEBEC (AO-36)-Fired NGFS.
- 2/24 Fired NGFS-Unreped fuel from USS SACRAMENTO (AOE-1).
- 2/25 Fired NGFS.
- 2/26 Fired NGFS-Unreped fuel and ammunition from USS SACRAMENTO (AOE-1).
- 2/27 Fired NGFS.
- 2/28 Fired NGFS.
- 3/1 Vertreped from USS MARS (AFS-1) and unreped fuel from USS CHIPOLA (AO-63)-Fired NGFS.
- 3/3 Fired NGFS-Unreped ammo from USS HALEAKALA (AE-25).
- 3/4 Unreped fuel from USS CHIPOLA (AO-63)-Relieved on NGFS station-enroute for Yokosuka, Japan
- 3/9 Arrived homeport Yokosuka, Japan.

3/14 Departed Yokosuka for Gemini 8 recovery mission
 3/17 1223 Gemini 8 capsule in the water-MASON proceeding to recovery,
 at 32 KTS-Astronauts Armstrong and Scott and Capsule received aboard
 171524L position Lat 26°-22'N Long. 135°-56'E.
 3/18 Arrived Naha, Okinawa-astronauts departed ship-capsule offloaded
 3/20 Arrived Homeport Yokosuka, Japan.
 3/27 Underway for ASW exercises in Sagami Wan.
 3/30 Arrived Yokosuka, Japan.
 4/15 Underway for Hong Kong B.C.C.
 4/19 Arrived Hong Kong B.C.C.-Assumed station ship duties.
 4/20 Governor Evans of the State of Washington visited the ship.
 5/9 Relieved of station ship duties-departed Hong Kong for NGFS miss
 off the Republic of Vietnam.
 5/11 Unreped from USS MARS (AFS-1).
 5/13- Unreped fuel from USS KAWISHIWI (AO-146).
 5/14 Fired NGFS.
 5/15 Provided 1,000 gallons of fresh water to the Republic of Vietnam
 (LSSL-229).
 5/16 Fired NGFS.
 5/17 Fired NGFS-Received aboard one wounded Vietnamese soldier from a
 patrol craft and transferred him to Qui Nhon-Unreped fuel from USS GAMB
 (CAG-2).
 5/18 Fired NGFS-Unreped fuel from USS KAWISHIWI (AO-146).
 5/19 Unreped ammo from USS MAZAMA (AE-9) and food from USS BELLATRIX
 (AF-62).
 5/20 Fired NGFS.
 5/21 Fired NGFS.
 5/22 Unreped fuel from USS CACAPON (AO-52).
 5/23 Unreped ammo from USS MASAMA (AE-9)-Fired NGFS.
 5/24 Fired NGFS.
 5/25 Unreped fuel from USS SACRAMENTO (AOE-1)-Fired NGFS.
 5/26 Fired NGFS.
 5/27 Fired NGFS.
 5/28 Unreped fuel from USS SACRAMENTO (AOE-1)-Departed Republic of V
 enroute Kaohsiung, Taiwan.
 5/31 Arrived Kaohsiung.
 6/2 Underway from Kaohsiung enroute to Yokosuka, Japan.
 6/5 Arrived Yokosuka.
 6/17 Departed Yokosuka enroute to Long Beach Calif. MASON'S new home
 6/22 Refueled at Midway Island.
 6/25-6/27 Stopover in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii-RADM PERSONS, COMHAWSEAFRO
 OTF 130 visited the ship.
 7/2 Arrived Long Beach Harbor, Long Beach, Calif.
 8/1 Underway for Seattle, Washington.
 8/4 Arrived Seattle as a part of TU 10.4 to participate in the Seaf
 festivities-Kitchen FTG3 was crowned King of Seafair.
 8/9 Departed Seattle enroute Long Beach.
 8/11 Arrived Long Beach.
 8/22-8/26 Underway for ASW exercises in Social Op areas.

Enclosure (1)

2. Command Organization.

a. **Commanding Officer:** CDR Alan M. HAZEN was born 18 June 1926 at Monroe, Louisiana. He attended C. E. Byrd High School, Shreveport, Louisiana and Tulane University. CDR HAZEN was commissioned an Ensign on 20 October 1945 and has remained on continuous active duty. Prior to assuming command of the USS LEONARD F. MASON (DD 852) on 19 August 1965, CDR HAZEN was attached to the Defense Language Institute, Washington, D.C. CDR HAZEN is married to the former Miss Ruby Alice Forrest of Gwynn's Island, Virginia. They have four children and are presently residing in Long Beach, California. CDR HAZEN has earned the following service medals:

American Campaign	Navy Occupation
World War II	National Defense
China Service	Armed Forces Expeditionary
Joint Service Commendation	Navy Commendation with Combat V
Viet-Nam Service	United Nations Service
Asiatic-Pacific	Korean Service

While serving in the following ships:

USS LCFF-399
USS ALCOR (AD 34)
USS MATHEWS (AKA 96)
USS CHILTON (APA 38)
USS SPOKANE (CLAA 120)
USS MISSISSIPPI (EAG 128)
USS RUSSELL COUNTY (LST 1090)
USS TWINING (DD 540)
USS BOSTON (CAG 1)
USS LEONARD F. MASON (DD 852)

b. **Commanding Officers and dates of command:**

Commander D. A. MERRIL	June 1946 to June 1947
Commander G. S. BULLEN	June 1947 to December 1949
Commander J. B. FERRITER	December 1949 to October 1951
Commander W. J. CASPARI	October 1951 to December 1953
Commander D. C. DEANE	December 1953 to August 1954
Commander J. H. RAYBURN	August 1954 to May 1956
Commander J. S. WEILER	May 1956 to January 1958
Commander Lester E. G. SETSER	January 1958 to February 1959
Commander Thomas HAZAPIS	February 1959 to November 1960
Commander B. W. SETSER	November 1960 to October 1961
Commander T. L. BALLIS	October 1961 to October 1961
Commander Louis J. COLLISTER	October 1961 to July 1963

Enclosure (1)

Lieutenant George E. LUDWIG	July 1963 to December 1963 (In commission in reserve)
Commander Ralph E. GRAHAM	December 1963 to August 1965
Commaner Alan M. HAZEN	August 1965 to Present

c. Homeport: U.S. Naval Station, Long Beach, California.

d. Mission: To operate offensively with strike forces, with hunter/killer groups, in support of amphibious assault operations, and screen support forces and convoys against submarine, air and surface threats.

e. Composition of Command: DD 710 (FRAM MK1) Class Destroyer.
Complement: Officers, 18; Enlisted, 270.

3. Operations and Activities.

a. Text. USS LEONARD F. MASON (DD 852), commanded by CDR A. M. HAZEN USN, of Shreveport, Louisiana was named in honor of a Private First Class of the United States Marine Corps who gallantly gave his life while in action on the island of Guam during World War II, and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery. Built by the Bethlehem Steel Company at Quincy, Massachusetts, her keel was laid 6 August 1945 and she was launched on 15 December 1945. She was commissioned at the Boston Naval Shipyard on 28 June 1946.

During the year 1966 MASON acted out another chapter in her illustrious career. MASON began the year homeported in Yokosuka, Japan as a unit of the U.S. SEVENTH FLEET. On the 20th of June MASON changed operational control to the U.S. FIRST FLEET changing her homeport to Long Beach, California and concluding a two year tour of duty in the Western Pacific. 1966 saw MASON provide more than 5,000 rounds of five inch ammunition in naval gunfire support, make the GEMINI 8 recovery, and visit the ports of Hong Kong; B.C.C.; Kaohsiung, Taiwan; Midway Island; Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; Seattle, Washington; Alcapulco, Mexico as well as Yokosuka and Long Beach.

New Year's Day 1966 found MASON in her homeport concluding an interim availability at Yokosuka's Ship Repair Facility. Sea trials were held on the 4th with satisfactory results and thus attest to the quality of the work done by Ship Repair Facility and ship's force in the short time allotted for the availability.

Almost immediately MASON was underway, departing Yokosuka on the 10th enroute to the Republic of Vietnam. Anchoring in Da-Nang Harbor on 15 January MASON assumed Harbor Defense Unit Da-Nang and commenced a period of naval gunfire support which lasted through 4 March. The five inch main battery was in use daily, firing as many as 5 missions and 371 rounds in one day. It was necessary to operate much of the time at Condition II considering the long hours spent at General Quarters. This, coupled with the almost daily necessity to replenish underway provided a stiff test for the crew and ship; both responded in an exemplary fashion. During this period MASON was a part of operations, "Masher" from 26 January to 5 February and "Double Eagle" from 5 February to 16 February.¹ Naval gunfire support was provided in the II Corps area from 17 February to 4 March. 3,603 rounds of 5 inch ammunition were expended on missions ranging from harassment to the annihilation of a Viet Cong Battalion and mortar position. During this period MASON was underway continuously for 59 days establishing record for destroyers of the U.S. SEVENTH FLEET.

On 4 March MASON was relieved on NGFS station and departed enroute Yokosuka arriving there on 9 March. MASON was again underway on 14 March enroute to the GEMINI 8 recovery area. This was to become the most spectacular ever during MASON's two year tour in WESTPAC. Her recovery of the GEMINI 8 capsule and Astronauts Major David Scott, U.S. Air Force and ex-Naval Officer.

Neil Armstrong will long be remembered by the crew. GEMINI 8, which was the first capsule to make an emergency landing and the first to come down in Western Pacific waters, was picked up shortly after landing by MASON with the help of Pararescue men from 33rd AARS, Naha, Okinawa. The ship, on station in the secondary planned landing area, had been a unit of recovery force in two previous GEMINI space shots.

When MASON received the message that the capsule would make an emergency landing in an area known as 7/3, a landing area designator for the seventh orbit, she was over 180 miles away. A situation calling for top speed, MASON commenced preparations for putting 2 more boilers on the line. This was the first time in many months that the ship had made a power run. During her last sea trial she had steamed flank speed for an hour. On March 17, 1966 MASON ran faster and harder than she had ever run before. Normally, it takes between 2 and 3 hours to fire up a cold boiler and "put it on the line" (engage it into the propulsion system). One hour and thirty two minutes after the call came out, the MASON slowed from 27 to 22 knots to allow the two extra boilers to be put into service. It was a record for the engine room. The temperature in the engine room began climbing from its normal 95 to 115 degrees as the ship accelerated up to over 32 knots.

About 100 miles away, and bobbing in three foot waves, the prime subjects, Astronauts Armstrong and Scott were fighting seasickness. "It's a great capsule", Captain Wally Schirra said later, "but a lousy boat". For the time being they were safe -- overhead an Air Force C-54 was flying, and paramedics were already making their own splashdowns.

Until the MASON was 100 miles away, there was still some doubt as to whether or not she would be picking up the capsule. Then, the final word was received, and Commander HAZEN, Commanding Officer, informed the crew.

After cruising at speeds near 7 miles a second, the 32 knot speed of the MASON must have seemed slow to the Astronauts, but the grey break in the horizon became a ship, and the ship became a destroyer and the destroyer soon became a grey wall towering over them. At 3:24 P.M. the MASON made its rendezvous with the GEMINI 8 capsule and Astronauts Neil Armstrong and David Scott.

"Boy are we glad to see you" shouted one astronaut, as the ship maneuvered into position to take them aboard.

Four minutes later, David Scott and Neil Armstrong, both wearing sunglasses were lifted aboard the destroyer. The capsule followed in another seven minutes and the three MASON swimmers, recovered the elusive R & R package.

Once aboard the Astronauts were given a medical examination and then went to sleep.

Steaming back to Okinawa, the Astronauts toured the ship. (Neither had been aboard a destroyer before). They were presented numerous souvenirs

and also gave many in the form of autographs.

A routine administrative message was dispatched to Personnel Accounting Machine Installation. It read "EMBARKED TWO ASTRONAUTS FROM OUTER SPACE".

The next day, the ship berthed at Okinawa where Astronaut Walter Schirra met the GEMINI 8 Astronauts as soon as the gang plank was lowered. The Astronauts thanked the ship's crew, and left for Houston by plane.

MASON received a warm welcome as she arrived in Yokosuka on 20 March ending the recovery mission in fact, although not in memory.² This marked the beginning of a welcome inport period. Except for three days of ASW exercises including submarine services rare in WESTPAC, this period lasted to 15 April. At this time MASON was again underway enroute Hong Kong, assuming station ship duties for a 20 day visit.

MASON's visit to Hong Kong was concurrent with that of the Honorable Daniel Evans, Governor of the state of Washington. Governor Evans served as Navigator and Operations Officer on the USS LEONARD F. MASON (DD 852) during the Korean War. He revisited his old ship and later was kind enough to entertain the wardroom.

MASON had a memorable stay in Hong Kong and performed her duties as SOPA ADMIN in fine fashion.³ On 9 May MASON was underway enroute to the Republic of Vietnam. Arriving on 11 May MASON commenced 2 weeks of naval gunfire support in the II Corps area.⁴ This period wrapped up 11 months of naval gunfire support activity for MASON. Commencing July 1965 MASON was among the first Destroyers to fire her guns in anger on foreign soil since Korea. Since that time MASON has fired over 8,000 rounds of five inch ammunition plus hundreds of rounds of 50 caliber and small arms ammunition on a total of 80 missions during which 450 targets were taken under fire in support of U.S. Marines, U.S. Army, Australian Units, South Vietnamese Army, Junk Force Units and Support Activities Danang, Vietnam.

MASON's fire accounted for 166 Viet Cong confirmed killed in action and 338 estimated additional Viet Cong killed in action, and destroyed three enemy mortars, three 50-caliber AA guns, three 30-caliber AA guns, 1 recoilless rifle, 245 Viet Cong structures, 3 reinforced Viet Cong bunkers, many trenches and prepared positions, 15-20 Viet Cong sampans and small boats, and 42 Viet Cong pack animals. 267 Viet Cong structures were also damaged, 75 Viet Cong structures were left burning and 4 secondary explosions were caused by MASON fire.

In the past eleven months of operations the total number of rounds fired by MASON in combat is four times as many as fired by her in combat in the previous 20 years of commissioned service. MASON's motto "We aim to Please" has proven appropriate as will be attested by the many U.S. and other friendly forces for whom she provided fire.

Enclosure (1)

Departing Vietnam on 28 May MASON returned to Yokosuka via Kaohsiung, Taiwan. This was the ship's last period in Yokosuka. On 17 June MASON and other ships of DESRON THREE broke homeward bound pennants and got underway enroute to the squadron's new homeport, Long Beach, California. In crossing MASON refueled at Midway Island on 22 June and spent 25 - 27 June at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. While at Pearl Harbor RADM Persons, COMHAWSEAFRON, visited the ship. As CTF 130 he had had operational control of MASON for the GEMINI 8 recovery mission.

On 2 July MASON arrived in Long Beach and was welcomed home by a brass band, friends, and relatives. This was the first time home in better than 2 years for many of the ship's company. A well deserved period of leave, rest and relaxation commenced upon arrival.

MASON spent the month of July in port getting underway on 1 August bound for Seattle, Washington and the Seafair festivities. MASON took an especially active part in this celebration. Fire Controlman Kitchen was crowned King of Seafair. The ship was open for guided tours and the honor guard was paraded for the citizens of Seattle. If Seafair can be considered representative it can be said that Seattle is a "Navy Town" in the best sense of the expression. All hands were impressed by the warm hospitality of the Seattle populace.

Returning to Long Beach on 11 August the ship commenced two months of weekly underway periods in which MASON acted as submarine target vessel and ASW school ship. Also included were a period as plane guard for the USS YORKTOWN (CVS-10) and several gunnery exercises.

MASON spent the Thanksgiving holidays in Alcapulco, Mexico along with other ships of Destroyer Division 31. The men of DESDIV 31 were entertained at a party given by Bob Hope. Actress Merle Oberon and her two children were guests for a meal in the MASON wardroom. MASON Officers returned her visit by attending one of her parties. Gina Lolabrigida was guest of honor. Returning to Long Beach on 30 November the Christmas and New Year holiday season was spent in port. For many of the ship's company this was the first Christmas spent in the United States since 1963 and a fitting end for an exciting chapter in MASON's history.

b. Footnotes

¹ See 6C.

Commander Task Group 76.6 Message 031352Z 01 APRIL 1966

² See 6C

Neil A. Armstrong, David R. Scott letter of 26 April 1966

Secretary of the Navy message 292217Z 31 MARCH 1966

Commander in Chief U.S. Pacific Fleet message 180149Z 18 MARCH 1966

Commander U.S. Seventh Fleet Message 170776Z 18 MARCH 1966

Enclosure (1)