



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS CROMMELIN (FFG-37)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS CROMMELIN (FFG 37)

To: Director, Naval Historical Center

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY 2000

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) "All Hands" magazine of February 2001
(5) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are submitted.

A. C. Westphal

A. C. WESTPHAL

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

1. Mission. USS CROMMELIN's mission is to provide air, surface and undersea protection for underway replenishment groups, convoys, amphibious forces and other military and merchant shipping. In addition, CROMMELIN was principally employed at the Maritime Interception Operations (MIO) mission while deployed in the FIFTH Fleet area of responsibility (AOR) from September 2000 to January 2001.
2. Organizational Structure:
 - a. Immediate Superior in Command: Commander, Destroyer Squadron THIRTY-ONE.
 - b. Units under operational/administrative control: None.
3. Commanding Officer: Alan C. Westphal, Commander, United States Navy.
4. Permanent Duty Station: Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
5. Type and Number of Aircraft Assigned: Six SH-60B were assigned during the following periods: (Two) 11 January through 24 February for COMPUTUEX 2000, (Two) 6-29 June for RIMPAC 2000 in the Hawaiian Operating Area, and (Two) 17 August through 31 December for Western Pacific 2000 Deployment.

January 2000

- 01-10 - Inport, Naval Station Pearl Harbor.
- 11 - Underway from Naval Station Pearl Harbor for COMDESRON THREE ONE Multi-Sail with USS FLETCHER (DD 992), USS HOPPER (DDG 70), and USS PAUL HAMILTON (DDG 60).
- 11-16 - Underway for COMDESRON THREE ONE Multi-Sail.
- 16 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN(AOE 2).
- 17 - Moored, Naval Station San Diego.
- 18-31 - Underway from Naval Station San Diego for COMPTUEX with the ABRAHAM LINCOLN BATTLE GROUP.
- 21 - Underway replenishment with USNS PECOS(TAO 197).
- 26 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).
- 31 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).

February 2000

- 01-09 - Underway for COMPTUEX in the Southern California Operating Area.
- 10 - Moored, Naval Station San Diego.
- 10-18 - Inport, Naval Station San Diego.
- 12 - Rear Admiral Balisle, Commander, Cruiser Destroyer Group Three, onboard for Bravo Zulu to CROMMELIN for outstanding performance during COMPTUEX. CROMMELIN dubbed "Pocket Cruiser" of Battle Group.
- 19 - Underway from Naval Station San Diego for Pearl Harbor with USS FLETCHER (DD 992), and USS PAUL HAMILTON (DDG 60).

- 23 - Underway Replenishment with USNS JOHN ERICSSON (TAO 194).
- 24 - Moored, Naval Station Pearl Harbor.
- 24 - Commenced Fleet Maintenance Availability 001.
- 24-28 - Inport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

March 2000

- 01-31 - Inport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

April 2000

- 01-24 - Inport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- 21 - Commodore Peter H. Daly, Commander, Destroyer Squadron Three One onboard for lunch and flight deck Battle "E" Presentation Ceremony.
- 24 - Underway from Naval Station Pearl Harbor for Night Vision Goggle Qualifications with HSL-37.
- 25 - Moored, Naval Station Pearl Harbor.
- 25-26 - Inport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- 27 - Underway from Naval Station Pearl Harbor for the SESEF Range.
- 27 - Moored, Naval Station Pearl Harbor.
- 28-30 - Inport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

May 2000

- 01-03 - Inport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- 02 - 17 Congressional Staff Delegates tour ship in support of Office of Legislative Affairs Hawaiian Military Tour.

- 04 - Underway from Naval Station, Pearl Harbor for Naval Magazine, Lualualei.
- 04 - Moored, Naval Station Pearl Harbor.
- 05-24 - Inport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- 25-30 - Underway Naval Station Pearl Harbor for Independent Steaming.
- 29 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).
- 30 - Moored, Naval Station, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- 30-31 - Inport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

June 2000

- 01-05 - Inport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- 02 - CDR Alan C. Westphal relieves CDR Craig S. Kleint as Commanding Officer, USS CROMMELIN (FFG 37).
- 06-29 - Underway for RIMPAC 2000 in the Hawaiian Operating Area.
- 09 - Underway replenishment with USNS GUADALUPE (TAO 200).
- 12 - Underway replenishment with USNS GUADALUPE (TAO 200).
- 15 - Harpoon Missile Firing Exercise with USS BUNKER HILL (CG 52), USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62), and USS VANDERGRIFT (FFG 48), at the Pacific Missile Range Facility.
- 16 - Underway replenishment with HMCS PROTECTEUR (AOR 509).
- 20 - Underway replenishment with HMAS SUCCESS (AOR 304).
- 26 - Underway replenishment with HMAS SUCCESS (AOR 304).
- 27 - Moored, Naval Station, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- 27-30 - Inport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

July 2000

01-31 - Inport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

August 2000

01-27 - Inport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

26 - Underway for WESTPAC 2000 with the ABRAHAM LINCOLN BATTLE GROUP.

30 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).

September 2000

4 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).
- Participated in Laser Designation Training with various aircraft in the ABRAHAM LINCOLN BATTLE GROUP.

8 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).
- Participated in Laser Designation Training with various aircraft in the ABRAHAM LINCOLN BATTLE GROUP.

11 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).
- Participated in Laser Designation Training with various aircraft in the ABRAHAM LINCOLN BATTLE GROUP.

14 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).

15 - Moored, Singapore.

16 - Emergency sortie/departure from Singapore enroute FIFTH Fleet AOR. Rendezvous with ABRAHAM LINCOLN Battle Group in the Malacca Strait.

19 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).

21 - Participated in Laser Designation Training with various aircraft in the ABRAHAM LINCOLN BATTLE GROUP.

24 - Moored, Minasalman, Bahrain.

- 25-26 - Inport, Minasalman, Bahrain.
- 29 - Underway from Minasalman, Bahrain for Maritime Interdiction Operations in the Northern Arabian Gulf.
 - Underway replenishment with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL (TAO 193).
 - Participated in a Search and Rescue mission with USS SHILOH (CG 67), USS CARDINAL (MHC 60), and USS DEXTROUS (MCM 13).

October 2000

- 3 - Conducted non-compliant boarding of M/T BASRAN 7. Elected not to divert due to poor material condition of the vessel.
- 7 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).
- 11 - Underway replenishment with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL (TAO 193).
- 12 - Moored, Doha, Qatar. Shortly after arrival, received notification of terrorist bombing of USS COLE in Aden, Yemen. Conducted emergent sortie/departure for sea. Resumed Maritime Interdiction Operations in the Northern Arabian Gulf.
- 13 - While attempting non-compliant boarding of unidentified vessel in the Northern Arabian Gulf, ship's boat and Boarding Team were confronted and pursued by two ASHURA-class patrol boats armed with heavy machine guns operated by the Iranian Republican Guard Navy. IRGCN vessels abandoned intercept when CROMMELIN approached closely. Boat and crew recovered safely.
- 16 - Underway replenishment with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL (TAO 193).
- 17 - Underway replenishment with USNS SPICA (TAFS 9).
- 22 - Underway replenishment with RFA ORANGELEAF (A 110).
- 26 - Underway replenishment with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL (TAO 193).

31 - Conducted non-compliant boarding and diverted the motor vessel AL BARKA, found to be smuggling approx. 500 metric tons of Iraqi petroleum products.

November 2000

2 - Conducted non-compliant boarding and diverted the motor vessel FALCON III, found to be smuggling approx. 1500 metric tons of Iraqi petroleum products.

4 - Assisted in the Search and Rescue of a sinking dhow in the Northern Arabian Gulf.

6 - Conducted non-compliant boarding and diverted the motor vessel EMARATE II, found to be smuggling several hundred tons of Iraqi dates, petroleum products, and other goods.

8 - Conducted non-compliant boarding of M/V AL REESHA while conducting combined MIO with the Kuwaiti Coast Guard and Navy. Vessel was found not to be carrying contraband and was cleared to continue voyage.

9 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).

14 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2). Conducted non-compliant boarding and diverted the motor vessel AAYAT, found to be smuggling approx. 500 metric tons of Iraqi petroleum products.

23 - Conducted non-compliant boarding and diverted the motor vessel MINA I, found to be smuggling approx. 500 metric tons of Iraqi petroleum products.

24 - Underway replenishment with RFA ORANGELEAF (A 110) and USNS SPICA (TAFS 9).

25 - Conducted non-compliant boarding of vessel later determined to be M/T HERO. Vessel was found by Boarding Team to be sealed with steel plate welded over all accesses. Further protected by electrical shock hazards. Due to close proximity and approach of HERO to Iranian territorial waters, NCB was aborted and vessel escaped.

- 27 - Conducted non-compliant boardings and diverted the motor vessels RAZOWON 2 and BASHAYER I, found to be smuggling approx. 800 and 250 metric tons respectively of Iraqi petroleum products. Seizures of these two vessels were especially remarkable in that the NCB of BASHAYER I was staged from the deck of RAZOWAN 2 after the Boarding Team had secured that vessel.
- 29 - Moored, Minasalman, Bahrain.
- 29-30 - Inport, Minasalman, Bahrain.

December 2000

- 1 - Inport, Minasalman, Bahrain.
- 2 - Underway from Minasalman, Bahrain for Maritime Interdiction Operations in the Northern Arabian Gulf.
- Underway replenishment with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL (TAO 193).
- 8 - Conducted non-compliant boarding of M/T IKTRA I. Vessel was cleared following inspection.
- 9 - Conducted non-compliant boarding of vessel believed to be CONFOIL GULF. Vessel was protected similarly to M/T HERO (ref. 25 NOV). Boarding Team succeeded in torching an access through a steel door only to find a second layer of steel protection. This configuration came to be referred to as the "armored tanker" configuration, and was found with increasing frequency in the NAG. Due to proximity and approach to Iranian territorial waters, NCB was aborted.
- 10 - Early a.m. Conducted non-compliant boarding and divert of motor vessels AL KABIR. Boarding Team breached this "armored tanker" with portable cutting tools. Vessel was found to be smuggling approx. 700 metric tons of Iraqi oil.
- 10 - Late p.m. Conducted non-compliant boarding and divert of M/T AL ZAHRAA found to be smuggling approx. 6000 metric tons of Iraqi oil. This was also an "armored tanker" requiring use of cutting torch by the BT.

- 12 - Conducted non-compliant boarding and diverted M/T NATASHA, found to be smuggling approx. 425 metric tons of Iraqi oil.
- 13 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).
- 16 - Conducted non-compliant boarding and diverted the motor vessel PERSI, found to be smuggling approx. 4000 metric tons of Iraqi petroleum products. This was also an "armored tanker" requiring use of cutting torch by the BT.
- 18 - Underway replenishment with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL (TAO 193).
- 19 - Conducted non-compliant boarding of M/V ABDUL HAFIZ. Vessel was cleared following search.
- 21 - Conducted non-compliant boarding and diverted the motor vessel AL BATROS, found to be smuggling approx. 6500 metric tons of Iraqi petroleum products. This was also an "armored tanker" requiring use of cutting torch by the BT.
- 23 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).
- Moored, Minasalman, Bahrain.
- 23-25 - Inport, Minasalman, Bahrain.
- 26 - Underway from Minasalman, Bahrain for Maritime Interdiction Operations in the Northern Arabian Gulf.
- 31 - Underway replenishment with USS CAMDEN (AOE 2).
Transited the Strait of Hormuz with the ABRAHAM LINCOLN Battle Group and concluded Arabian Gulf operations.

NARRATIVE

CROMMELIN completed a demanding year of maintenance, training, and real world operations in 2000. In February and March, CROMMELIN spent six weeks transiting to the Southern California operating areas to participate in the Composite Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX) with the ABRAHAM LINCOLN Battle Group (ALBG). In late May, CROMMELIN rejoined the ALBG for a four-day anti-submarine warfare exercise in the Hawaiian operating areas over the Memorial Day Weekend, followed a week later with participation in the multi-national Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise. CROMMELIN capped the year with a record-breaking deployment to the Western Pacific Ocean and Arabian Gulf.

CROMMELIN spent the year-2000 as an integral member of the ABRAHAM LINCOLN Battle Group. The ALBG consisted of the following units: USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN 72), USS SHILOH (CG 67), USS BUNKER HILL (CG 52), USS CAMDEN (AOE 2), USS FLETCHER (DD 992), USS PAUL HAMILTON (DDG 60), USS TUSCON (SSN 770), and USS CHEYENNE (SSN 773), and Carrier Air Wing FOURTEEN. ALBG was led by Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Group THREE under the command of Rear Admiral Phil Balisle and Commander, Destroyer Squadron THIRTY-ONE commanded by Commodore Pete Daly. COMPTUEX and RIMPAC/FLEETEX events highlighted the first half of the year as the battle group "worked up" for their scheduled overseas deployment. Exercises included extensive training in all intermediate warfare mission areas with emphasis on battle group cohesion. In these exercises, CROMMELIN excelled in Air Defense Coordination (ADC), Under Sea Warfare (USW), Surface Warfare (SUW), Strike Warfare (STW), and Maritime Intercept Operations (MIO) exercises earning the sobriquet "Pocket Cruiser" from Admiral Balisle. During the return transit from the eastern Pacific to Pearl Harbor in February, CROMMELIN learned she had been awarded the coveted Destroyer Squadron 31 Battle Efficiency Award for 1999.

On June 2, 2000, CROMMELIN conducted a change of command ceremony as Commander Alan C. Westphal relieved Commander Craig S. Kleint.

RIMPAC 2000 followed mere days later, giving Commander Westphal his first opportunity to lead the CROMMELIN in a tactical setting. The huge multi-national exercise included ships and aircraft from navies of Australia,

Canada, Japan, Korea, and Chile in addition to many San Diego-based ships. The extensive exercises tested all facets of naval warfare and provided an excellent training opportunity for the crew. The lessons learned would soon be put to the test during the ALBG's overseas deployment.

RIMPAC was followed by eight weeks of leave and liberty for many of the crew along with aggressive preparations for the scheduled overseas deployment. Most noteworthy among these preparations was the replacement of 1A Gas Turbine Engine with a newly rebuilt unit. Indeed, throughout the year, CROMMELIN's crew distinguished themselves by their sense of ownership and industry in pursuit of material maintenance and repair. In recognition of their exceptional effectiveness at maintaining the ship with minimal support from the shore-based technical and repair establishment, CROMMELIN was awarded the Naval Surface Force, Pacific Self-Sufficient Ship of the Quarter award for the first and fourth quarters. In an addition, CROMMELIN was nominated by CINCPACFLT for the Secretary of Defense Maintenance Award for 2000.

Deployment began with another remarkably successful anti-submarine warfare exercise pitting the ALBG against a U.S. Navy SSBN that was returning from her own deployment via the Hawaiian area. Under COMDESRON 31's able direction, the ALBG succeeding not only in avoiding detection and attack, but in conducting multiple simulated attacks against the opposing submarine.

The auspicious beginning of the deployment proved to belie the typically reactive environment that would follow CROMMELIN and the ALBG for most of the balance of the deployment. The subsequent highlights of the cruise through the SEVENTH Fleet AOR included a lengthy diversion from planned track to avoid a major storm, Typhoon Saomai in the Western Pacific. The storm evasion resulted in the ship missing a planned port visit in Hong Kong. That visit was made up for with visit to Singapore. Even that opportunity proved short lived as world events necessitated the rapid arrival of the ALBG in the FIFTH Fleet. CROMMELIN conducted an emergency sortie from Singapore on 17 September and joined the battle group in a flank bell transit from the Malacca Strait to Bahrain. With an average speed of 25 knots, this single-screw frigate distinguished herself and her engineers by keeping pace

with a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier throughout the transit.

Following a four-day stop in Bahrain for FIFTH Fleet arrival briefings, CROMMELIN proceeded to the Northern Arabian Gulf, a span of brown shallow water, replete with wrecks, oil wells, terminals, and countless surface contacts that would become CROMMELIN's hunting grounds for the next 100 days. Operating in the northernmost reaches of the Arabian Gulf deep inside Iraqi territorial waters and in very close proximity to Iran, CROMMELIN typically operated with her SH-60B LAMPS helicopter detachment (Det 3) from HSL-37 out of Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, unassisted and unsupported by any other U.S. or Allied forces. Assigned to the maritime intercept operations (MIO) mission, CROMMELIN pursued and seized smugglers of Iraqi oil in support of United Nations resolutions controlling the export of petroleum from Iraq. During this period of time, CROMMELIN was likely on any given day, literally to be the most forward-deployed ship of the U.S. Navy. Despite the extreme physical and psychological hostility of the environment, CROMMELIN would excel at her MIO mission, shattering the single-ship record for seizures of oil smugglers with a total of eighteen non-compliant boardings resulting in twelve ship seizures. The CROMMELIN boat crew and Boarding Team demonstrated extraordinary discipline and physical courage in their tasks, returning unscathed and successful from virtually every mission. These personnel would be recognized personally at the end of the deployment by a special visit to the ship by Admiral Balisle to award each of the Navy Achievement Medal.

As hostile as the environment seemed at the onset of the MIO mission in the NAG, the stakes were raised immensely with two incidents in mid-October. On 12 October, CROMMELIN arrived in Doha, Qatar for a planned port visit and bi-national exercise with the Qatar Navy. The visit was terminated after only three hours by the horrific news of the terrorist bombing of USS COLE in Aden, Yemen which resulted in orders from FIFTH Fleet for all ships to get underway immediately. This emergency sortie, the second of the deployment for CROMMELIN, would be the last opportunity to touch shore for the CROMMELIN crew for 62 days. The second incident occurred the following day. On the 13th, back on station in the NAG, CROMMELIN was ordered to conduct a boarding of a vessel attempting to enter Iraqi waters without authorization. As the ship's

boat approached the suspect vessel, the vessel turned and ran for the security of nearby Iranian territorial waters. As the boat turned to return to CROMMELIN, observers on CROMMELIN's bridgewing observed two heavily armed ASHURA-class patrol boats of the Iranian Republican Guard Navy (IRGCN) pursuing the slower, RHIB. As CROMMELIN maneuvered at full speed to approach and neutralize the situation, the ASHURAs closed within a few yards of the RHIB, brandishing weapons, including at least one heavy machine gun, and signaling for the RHIB to stop. The boat crew and Boarding Team responded with remarkable courage in the face of what may have been a life-and-death situation. They kept the RHIB at maximum speed and continued to attempt to close the ship. Minutes later, as the RHIB and her pursuers and CROMMELIN converged within a few hundred yards, the Iranians' discretion got the better part of their valor, and they turned to withdraw from the scene. CROMMELIN recovered her RHIB and personnel with no further incident. This incident on the heels of the COLE bombing served to highlight the serious nature of the MIO mission in the Northern Arabian Gulf. In the aftermath, the crew resolved to apply lessons learned from these force protection experiences and never to be taken at disadvantage. This resolve was manifested in a steel-eyed determination to be the best ever at the MIO mission.

While in the Northern Arabian Gulf, the veteran Visit Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) team participated in eighteen non-compliant boardings of suspected sanctions violators. Among the eighteen non-compliant vessels, twelve were found to be smuggling petroleum products from Iraq and diverted to friendly ports for disposal of the ships and their illegal cargo. Additional details of these boardings and seizures are provided in the Chronology (enclosure 2). One aspect of the MIO environment during CROMMELIN's term in the Gulf warrants amplification. That is the effect of CROMMELIN's aggressiveness and success on the tactics and methods employed by the smugglers. Over CROMMELIN's 3.5 months in the FIFTH Fleet, and as CROMMELIN effected seizure after seizure, it became apparent that smugglers were resorting more and more to group sailings and payoffs (bribes) to Iranian authorities to enable them to transit to market unmolested by MIO forces. Most dramatic was the greatly increased frequency of installing protective devices, notably steel plate welded over accesses and various trip hazards and high-voltage electrical traps to deter boarding teams. Despite these

counter-measures, CROMMELIN was similarly able to adapt tactics, notably with the use of portable oxygen-acetylene cutting equipment to burn openings in steel deckhouses to gain access and seize control of the smuggling vessels. Seizures of these "armored Tankers" required more time to effect than unprotected vessels. With the memory of the ASHURA incident always in mind, Commander Westphal always maneuvered CROMMELIN to remain close-aboard the suspect vessels to provide direct support to the Boarding Team while they did their work. This led to some extremely exciting moments among the CROMMELIN Bridge and Navigation team, as well as some extraordinary and highly unconventional shiphandling among CROMMELIN's conning officers among densely crowded shipping lanes, anchorages, and shallow water regions! Despite the hazards to all involved, the tactics proved effective, and CROMMELIN was able to take credit for the seizures of four of these "armored tankers" among her twelve seizures.

In an effort to promote cooperation with our Arabian Gulf allies, CROMMELIN conducted combined operations with the Kuwaiti Coast Guard and Navy on two occasions. It was readily evident that a firm resolve went into enforcing the sanctions against their much-hated neighbor, and CROMMELIN was privileged to observe the Kuwait Coast Guard effect at least seven seizures of Iraqi smugglers.

The 31st of December 2000 found CROMMELIN and the ALBG handing off the security of the FIFTH Fleet AOR to the HARRY S TRUMAN Battle Group and transiting outbound through the Strait of Hormuz. This was the conclusion of a banner year for CROMMELIN and her crew. The weeks ahead would bring well-earned rest and relaxation with port visits in Darwin; Cairns; and Brisbane, Australia, followed by a brief stop in Samoa and a glorious homecoming to Pearl Harbor. On the eve of the homecoming from deployment, CROMMELIN would be informed of her second consecutive award of the Battle Efficiency Award for the year-2000.