



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDING OFFICER
USS LABOON (DDG 58)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS LABOON (DDG 58)
To: Director, Naval History (N09BH), Naval Historical Center
Washington Navy Yard, 901 M Street SE, Bldg. 57
Washington, DC 20374-5060

Subj: USS LABOON (DDG 58) COMMAND HISTORY FOR 1998

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

Encl: (1) 1998 Command and Organization of USS LABOON (DDG 58)
(2) 1998 Chronology of USS LABOON (DDG 58)
(3) 1998 Command History of USS LABOON (DDG 58)

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) - (3) are submitted as USS LABOON's Command History for 1998.

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1998 COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION OF USS LABOON (DDG 58)

MISSION: LABOON deployed with the JOHN C. STENNIS Battlegroup in February 1998 to the Mediterranean Sea. After returning home to Norfolk, Virginia, in early July 1998, and a month long leave/standdown period, the ship started a new inter-deployment training cycle (IDTC) in preparation for her next deployment with the DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER Battlegroup in February 2000. The IDTC began with LABOON participating in the ENTERPRISE Battlegroup JTFEX as a member of the Opposition Force (OPFOR), followed by a maintenance availability period (PRAV).

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: Destroyer Squadron Two Two (January-July), Destroyer Squadron Two Six (July-December), JOHN C. STENNIS Battle Group (January-July), DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER Battle Group (July-December).

COMMANDING OFFICER: Commander Michael Kevin Mahon.

HOMEPORT: Norfolk, Virginia.

1998 CHRONOLOGY OF USS LABOON (DDG 58)

- February 26th: LABOON deploys with the JOHN C. STENNIS Battlegroup.
- During Deployment: LABOON participates in NATO *Exercise Dynamic Response 98*, NATO *Exercise Distant Thunder 98*, and NATO *Exercise Tapon 98*.
- July: LABOON returns home to Norfolk, Virginia.
- LABOON participates in the ENTERPRISE Battlegroup JTFEX as a member of the Opposition Force (OPFOR).

1998 Awards:

- SURFLANT PHALANX Close-In Weapons System Excellence Award
-LT [REDACTED], FCC(SW) [REDACTED], FC1(SW) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], FC1(SW) [REDACTED], FC2(SW) [REDACTED], FC3
[REDACTED], FC3 [REDACTED]
- Sea Service Deployment Ribbon
- CNSL Wellness Award
- CNSL Safety Award
- CNSL Maritime Warfare Award
- CNSL CCC Award
- CNSL Engineering/Survivability Award

1998 COMMAND HISTORY OF USS LABOON (DDG 58)

KEEL LAID: 23 MAR 92
LAUNCHED: 20 FEB 93
COMMISSIONED: 18 MAR 95

LABOON deployed with the JOHN C. STENNIS Battlegroup in February 1998. The political situation in the Arabian Gulf resulted in the STENNIS Battlegroup ships deploying at staggered times. Instead of deploying with the STENNIS, LABOON transited to the Mediterranean with two other ships from Destroyer Squadron Twenty Two: USS SIMPSON and USS CARON, with Commander, Destroyer Squadron Two Two embarked onboard. The first part of the transit would be the last time the squadron would sail together until the end of deployment as LABOON raced ahead for her first real-world challenge. Arriving in Augusta Bay, Sicily, after an extended, high-speed transit, LABOON worked with joint military forces throughout Europe and the Middle East to prepare for possible contingency operations against Iraq. Four days of intensive joint preparation paid off as LABOON established herself as a reliable and combat ready Sixth Fleet asset.

After a short transit from Italy to Corfu, Greece, the crew had their first Liberty port of the deployment. Sailors visited the largest "living" medieval town in Greece: Kerkika. Ashore, Sailors took tours of the island, walked the stone alleyways of the city, viewed the ancient forts, and sampled authentic Greek cuisine in the city's numerous restaurants. While in Corfu, LABOON's basketball team played the local Corfu semi-professional team in a much advertised contest. Unfortunately, the LABOON team lost the game, but did come closer to winning than any all-sailor team in recent history. LABOON also hosted a dinner in honor of the mayor of Kerkika and the commanding officer of a Belgian frigate, which was in port at the same time.

While a relaxing time for the crew, the port visit also contributed to one of Sixth Fleet's main missions in the Mediterranean: to provide an American presence and promote positive relations with the countries and communities accessible from the sea.

After a few great days of Liberty, LABOON headed north, and participated in exercise *Dynamic Response 98* which demonstrated NATO's ability to reinforce the stabilization force in Bosnia-Herzegovina from the sea.

LABOON provided direct support for the USS Wasp (LHD-1) Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) as they conducted an amphibious landing in Ploce, Croatia, and penetrated deep into Bosnia. LABOON provided all air, surface, and subsurface defense for the amphibious task force. She was also assigned duties as Adriatic Redcrown and assumed responsibility for all over-water identification and deconfliction. Working in close consort with NATO allies in the air and the littorals of the Adriatic, LABOON achieved a first in *Dynamic Response*: she became the first U.S. Navy warship ever to successfully establish Link 16 connectivity with NATO AWACS aircraft flying real world missions over the Adriatic and Bosnia in support of *Operation Deliberate Guard*. After two weeks of intensive operations at sea, LABOON headed southeast to the Turkish naval port at Aksaz Karaagac, which is located near the resort city of Marmaris. Sailors saw why Marmaris is known as a famous European vacation spot. Beachwalks, sailing ships, and rows of beachfront restaurants and shops made the bus trip from the naval base worthwhile. In addition to the well deserved and relaxing Liberty, LABOON had the opportunity to lay the groundwork for her next NATO exercise, *Distant Thunder 98*. The Turkish navy frigate ORUCREIS served as LABOON's sister ship during the visit and she hosted a reception onboard for all the *Distant Thunder* participants. This reception provided a springboard for the detailed planning necessary to *make Distant Thunder* a success. To show their appreciation, LABOON hosted an informal luncheon for the Wardroom of the Turkish flagship.

LABOON then spent a few days training and preparing independently for the upcoming exercise at sea before pulling into Rhodes, Greece. Although crucial to Greek history in the Aegean, Rhodes has become a major tourist hub for the Greek islands. Cruise liners pull in and out daily for visits to a historical shopping and restaurant district unique to the Aegean.

Sailing to Izmir, Turkey, LABOON completed final preparations for *Distant Thunder*. This exercise would involve multinational forces operating together both overland and at sea. Fighting through a scenario modeled on potential real-world threats, NATO ground, air, and maritime forces would soon strengthen invaluable alliance ties while validating NATO's warfighting capability. LABOON participated in both the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean phases of the exercise. She would play a crucial role in monitoring and controlling all over-water tactical air support of maritime operations missions. In addition, she would play an active role in hunting opposing force submarines, patrol boats, and attacking aircraft.

Following her successful completion of exercise *Distant Thunder 98*, LABOON headed to Naples, Italy. LABOON Sailors enjoyed their first visit to the Italian mainland by exploring the city of Naples and taking tours to the Italian capital of Rome.

On the Rome trip, Sailors had a once in a lifetime experience: being granted an audience with the Pope. Sitting in St. Peter's Square, the crowd of thousands listened to a Cardinal announce the visit of LABOON and her crew. The fact that it was the Pope's birthday and that LABOON was named for a Catholic priest made the event especially memorable.

After Naples, LABOON headed for Cannes, France, in the ship's first visit to the French Riviera. The highlight of the visit was the participation by LABOON Sailors in a Memorial Day commemoration at the Draguignan Cemetery in Rhone, France. Memorial Day, observed on the 25th, officially commemorated the sacrifice of veterans whom fought and died in our nation's wars.

In addition to Memorial Day, there was another significant event occurring in Cannes: the world famous Cannes Film Festival. This featured the best in motion pictures for the viewing pleasure of everyone--but only if you could get tickets! The film festival brought throngs of people to the city of Cannes--known for its spectacular beaches, nightlife, great shopping, and tasty French cuisine. The Navy League of southern France showed their hospitality to LABOON Sailors by hosting several crewmembers out to individual dinners with local families. Local officials in Cannes were treated to a very memorable time as well. After the mayor of Cannes hosted a reception in honor of LABOON's visit, the officers and crew of LABOON hosted a reception for local dignitaries and "Friends of the Navy." The French were treated to extensive ship-wide tours, and enjoyed a relaxing night on the flight deck where they drank American wine and beer and ate hors d'oeuvres.

As the visit to Cannes ended, LABOON Sailors said "goodbye" by hosting a "Friends of the Navy" cruise. This cruise gave over 40 Friends of the Navy an experience of a lifetime. For six hours as LABOON transited to Villefranche, France, the guests of LABOON enjoyed observing a refueling-at-sea evolution, as well as being treated to an old-fashioned American style barbecue.

The crew enjoyed visiting the small village of Villefranche. Villefranche provided everyone with on the water shopping, a quiet relaxing atmosphere, and excellent dining. The train station at Villefranche also enabled Sailors to conveniently make trips to the cities of Nice and Monte Carlo.

During LABOON's visit, the ship hosted a reception for the mayor of Villefranche and other distinguished guests. Everyone was treated to outstanding food prepared by LABOON's top-notch chefs.

In return, the mayor hosted several officers and members of the crew in the Citadel, an ancient fort built in 1557. The Citadel has a proud history. It, along with the fort of Mount Alban, were all that survived when King Louis XIV ordered the destruction of the defenses of the County of Nice. Over 40 LABOON Sailors also took advantage of a special tour to Paris that was arranged by MWR. After an overnight train ride, the Sailors spent a day touring the city. Highlights of the tour were the visits to the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, and Napoleon's tomb.

During the time in Villefranche, LABOON's Weapons Officer, LT Tripp Hardy of Hampton, Virginia, volunteered to serve as a crew member on a yacht belonging to a local businessman. LT Hardy sailed with Mr. Gerard Galbios, owner of the Welcome Hotel in Villefranche, and four other local crewmembers on a thirty eight foot Beneteau racing yacht called Heurtebise. With her five man international crew, Heurtebise competed in the *Croisiere Bleu 98*, a three day sailing race from Antibes, France, to Calvi, Corsica.

LABOON headed next to the island of Ibiza, Spain. Ibiza, an island with over 2,700 years of history, gave LABOON Sailors a taste of Spanish culture, history, and adventure. In Ibiza, Sailors enjoyed a multitude of activities, including shopping at the open air markets close to the harbor, and visiting the Renaissance Castle and the walled city. The Renaissance Castle, built in the 16th century, is one of the best preserved defense structures of the Renaissance period in Europe.

Next on the agenda for LABOON was the city of Rota, Spain. Located on the opposite side of the Iberian Peninsula from Ibiza, Rota was the final port for LABOON before the ship headed home.

LABOON conducted extensive preparations for NATO *Exercise Tapon 98* while in port in Rota. This multinational NATO exercise is the largest naval exercise conducted in the Western Mediterranean every year. The highlight of the preparations was the pre-sail conference. This conference gave all participants an opportunity to finalize details and to establish a professional relationship that would pay dividends during the exercise. This complex exercise flexed LABOON's combat capability in a realistic multi-warfare environment in a highly fluid battlespace.

LABOON Sailors took the opportunity to use the many outstanding facilities the U.S. naval base offered. The crew took advantage of the many sports facilities on the base and engaged in friendly competition with local base teams.

Sailors watched movies, shopped at the exchange, ate at American-style restaurants, and even took advantage of the local shops for last minute gift buying before returning to Norfolk. The nearby cities of Rota and Puerto Santa Maria were also visited by crewmembers. They gave Sailors a taste of authentic Spanish village life on Spain's Southern Atlantic coast.

LABOON returned home to Norfolk, Virginia, from deployment in early July 1998. After a one month leave/standdown period, the ship started a new inter-deployment training cycle (IDTC) in preparation for her next deployment with the USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER Battlegroup in February 2000.

The ship participated in the ENTERPRISE Battlegroup JTFEX as a member of the Opposition Force (OPFOR). LABOON provided realistic, at sea training for the ENTBATGRU ships. During the final war-at-sea scenario, LABOON successfully attacked USS NASSAU, an amphibious assault ship, and USS GONZALEZ, a DDG assigned to protect it. After JTFEX, LABOON underwent a maintenance availability period (PRAV).