



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
USS NASHVILLE (LPD 13)  
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From: Commanding Officer, USS NASHVILLE (LPD 13)  
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), Naval Historical Center,  
Washington Navy Yard, 901 M St SE, Bldg. 57,  
Washington, DC 20374-5060

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) 1997 Command History for USS NASHVILLE (LPD 13)

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.

2. POC for questions concerning this package is LT [REDACTED]  
DC, USNR, NASHVILLE's Public Affairs Officer. Commercial: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].

*A. J. Pachuta*

A. J. PACHUTA

USS NASHVILLE (LPD 13)

COMMAND HISTORY

1997

Enclosure (1)

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COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

Commanding Officer: CAPT William L. McKee USN

Executive Officer: CDR Kevin R. Hempel, USNR to 16 May  
LCDR Anthony J. Pachuta, USNR from  
16 May

Operations Officer: LT [REDACTED], USN to 2 September  
LCDR (SEL) [REDACTED], USN from  
9 October

Engineer Officer: LCDR [REDACTED], USN to  
4 December  
LT [REDACTED], USN from 4 December

First Lieutenant: LT [REDACTED], USN to 4 December  
LT [REDACTED], USN from 4 December

Supply Officer: LT [REDACTED], SC, USNR

Chaplain: LCDR [REDACTED], CHC, USN to  
1 December  
LT [REDACTED], USNR from 1 December

Air Officer: LCDR [REDACTED], USN to 1 December  
LCDR (SEL) [REDACTED], USN from  
1 December

Medical Officer: LT [REDACTED], MC, USNR  
to 8 August  
LT [REDACTED], MC, USNR, from  
8 August

Dental Officer: LT [REDACTED], DC, USNR to  
20 October  
LT [REDACTED], DC, USNR from  
20 October

Nav/Admin Officer: LT [REDACTED], USN

Command Master Chief: ABCM(SW/AW) James A. Welsh, USN to  
6 October  
MMCM(SW) Bruce J. White, USN from  
14 October

WARDROOM: As of 31 DEC 1997

LCDR Anthony Pachuta, USN: Executive Officer  
LCDR(sel) [REDACTED], USN: Air Officer  
LCDR(sel) [REDACTED], USN: Operations Officer  
LT [REDACTED], USN: Chaplain  
LT [REDACTED], USNR: Medical Officer  
LT [REDACTED], USN: Chief Engineer  
LT [REDACTED], USN: First Lieutenant  
LT [REDACTED], USN: Fuels Officer  
LT [REDACTED], USN: Supply Officer  
LT [REDACTED], USNR: Dental Officer  
LT [REDACTED], USN: Navigator/Admin Officer  
LTJG [REDACTED], USN: Main Propulsion Assistant  
LTJG [REDACTED], USN: Communications Officer  
LTJG [REDACTED], USN: Food Service Officer  
LTJG [REDACTED], USN: Combat Information Center Officer  
LTJG [REDACTED], USN: Legal/Training Officer  
LTJG [REDACTED], USN: Disbursing Officer  
ENS [REDACTED], USN: Auxiliary Officer  
ENS [REDACTED], USN: Ship's BOS'N  
ENS [REDACTED], USN: Electrical Officer  
ENS [REDACTED], USN: Main Propulsion Division Officer  
ENS [REDACTED], USN: Second Division Officer  
ENS [REDACTED], USN: Weapons Officer  
CW03 [REDACTED], USN: Damage Control Assistant  
CW03 [REDACTED], USMC: Combat Cargo Officer  
CW02 [REDACTED], USN: Electronics Material Officer

SENIOR COMMANDS

COMPHIBGRU TWO: RADM Gordon Holder, USN

COMPHIBRON EIGHT: CAPT Kenneth Golden, USN

USS NASHVILLE (LPD 13) Homeport: Norfolk Naval Base, Norfolk, VA

### SHIP'S MISSION

USS NASHVILLE (LPD 13), an Amphibious Transport Dock, is the thirteenth platform of this type in the United States Navy. NASHVILLE's primary mission is to transport landing forces ashore, utilizing helicopter and amphibious craft for any contingency and provide support to those forces for an extended period of time. NASHVILLE can support up to 1479 Navy and Marine Corps officer and enlisted personnel, 515 crew members and 964 embarked troops and all the equipment required to make the landing force ready for combat upon arrival in an objective area. With the vast array of command, control, an embarked Amphibious Squadron or Group Commander can coordinate and control all of the air, sea and ground forces whose support is necessary to ensure the success of the amphibious operation.

CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS FOR 1997

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SIGNIFICANT EVENT</u>
01 JAN - 05 JAN	Inport : Trieste, IT - Holiday Port Visit
06 JAN - 14 JAN	Underway: Operations in Adriatic, Central Med and transit to Western Med
09 JAN	Underway: RAS with USS DETROIT (AOE 4)
12 JAN	Underway: SBU RHIB casualty with one injury
14 JAN - 21 JAN	Underway: Spanish PHIBLEX
18 JAN	Underway: Underway Replenishment with USS Kanawha (TAO 196)
22 JAN - 28 JAN	Inport : Alicante, SP
28 JAN - 30 JAN	Underway: Western Med operations, transit to Marseilles
31 JAN - 06 FEB	Inport : Marseilles, FR
07 FEB - 09 FEB	Underway: Western and Central Med operations
10 FEB - 18 FEB	Underway: Exercise ISLAND THUNDER
14 FEB	NASHVILLE's 27th Birthday
18 FEB - 22 FEB	Underway: Med Ops
20 FEB - 01 MAR	Inport : Catania, Sicily
01 MAR - 07 MAR	Underway: COMSIXTHFLT INVITEX
07 MAR - 13 MAR	Inport : Kerkira, Corfu, Greece
13 MAR	Underway: NEO OPS Tirana, Albania
13 MAR	Underway: Off Albania; OPERATION SILVER WAKE
19 MAR	Underway: RAS with USNS CONCORD (T-AFS 5)
20 MAR	Underway: FAS with USNS KANAWHA (TAO 196)
21 MAR	Underway: NASHVILLE designated COMNAVFOR
26 MAR	Underway: Evacuee phase halted
06 APR	Underway: RAS with USNS PATUXENT (T-AO 201)
10 APR	Underway: RAS with USNS CONCORD (T-AFS 5)
11 APR	Underway: RAS with USNS PATUXENT (T-AO 201)
21 APR	Underway: Congressman Sonny Bono visits
21 APR	Underway: RAS with USNS PATUXENT (T-AO 201)
22 APR	Underway: RAS with USNS CONCORD (T-AFS 5)
27 APR	Underway: RAS with USNS PATUXENT (T-AO 201)
29 APR	Underway: OPERATION SILVER WAKE officially ends
03 MAY	Inport : Rota, Spain - Washdown begins
11 MAY	Underway: Dep Rota



11 MAY	Underway: Turnover with 22 MARG
14 MAY	Underway: RADM Johnson (CCGR8) visits
17 MAY	Underway: RAS with USS DETROIT (AOE 4)
20 MAY	Underway: Rendezvous with NASSAU (LHD 4)
20 MAY	Underway: HMM 365 Det departs
21 MAY	Underway: Launch AAV to Onslow Beach
21 MAY	Inport : Morehead City, MSSG 26 departs
22 MAY	Underway: Tiger Cruise
23 MAY	Inport : Norfolk
23 MAY - 23 JUN	Inport : Norfolk, Stand down leave period
23 JUN - 30 JUN	Inport : Norfolk, Upkeep
30 JUN	Inport : Pre-INSURV inspection by COMPHIBGRUTWO
01 JUL - 07 JUL	Inport : Norfolk, Upkeep
08 JUL - 18 JUL	Underway: Camp Lejeune, TCAT Exercise
08 JUL - 10 JUL	Underway: PLOT I Inspection
19 JUL - 20 JUL	Inport : Norfolk, Upkeep
21 JUL - 25 JUL	Inport : Yorktown, Ammo Offload
24 JUL	Inport : Yorktown, NASHVILLE wins Sales and Service Competition
25 JUL	Underway: Family Day Cruise
26 JUL - 03 AUG	Inport : Norfolk, Upkeep
04 AUG - 07 AUG	Inport : Norfolk, INSURV
08 AUG - 01 SEP	Inport : Norfolk, Upkeep
02 SEP	Underway: Transit to Moon Engineering for PMA
02 SEP - 31 DEC	Inport : Portsmouth, VA., Moon Engineering, PMA
29 SEP	Inport : Stern gate removed
20 OCT	Inport : PMA extended to 13 Feb
04 NOV - 06 NOV	Inport : Command Inspection
17 NOV - 21 NOV	Inport : PLOT II
01 DEC - 05 DEC	Inport : PATG Visit
15 DEC - 16 DEC	Inport : Refueling
22 DEC - 31 DEC	Inport : Holiday leave commences

## NARRATIVE OF EVENTS

January 1997 saw the continuation of NASHVILLE's Marine Amphibious Ready Group (MARG) 97 participation. After holiday leave with USS NASSAU (LHA 4) in Trieste, Italy, NASHVILLE left port on 6 Jan for several days of Adriatic operations with USS NASSAU and USS PENSACOLA (LSD 38). Operations included RHIB operations in support of Seal Team TWO and a launch of AAVs from BLT 1/8. On 9 Jan, NASHVILLE conducted a RAS with USS DETROIT (AOE 4). On 12 Jan, while transiting the Straits of Gibraltar enroute to the SPANISH PHIBLEX one of NASHVILLE's embarked Special Boat Unit personnel was injured when a RHIB was engulfed by heavy seas. One crewmember suffered a back injury, and a RHIB inflatable hull was damaged. The back injury was minor and the inflatable hull was replaced the next day. On 15 Jan, BLT 1/8's launched AAVs accompanied by the two LARCs from BMU TWO. Participating with NASHVILLE was the Spanish LST, HERMAN CORTEZ. On 18 Jan, there was a rendezvous with USS KANAWHA (TAO 196) for an underway replenishment. On 21 Jan, NASHVILLE's Fire Control Team successfully completed a PAC fire with the forward and aft CIWS mounts. From 22-26 Jan, NASHVILLE conducted a port visit to Alicante, Spain. Two receptions were hosted by the Navy League and one by the Mayor of Alicante. A highlight of the port visit was a showing of the Super Bowl arranged by MWR at a local restaurant. Joining NASHVILLE in Alicante were HMS RICHMOND, HMS GLOUCESTER and the HMS BEAVER. Upon departure from Alicante, all four ships participated in leapfrogs and a crew exchange. British helos practiced touch and go landings. This marked the first time a British MK 8 helo had landed on an American warship. On 29 Jan, BEAVER and NASHVILLE conducted a personnel high line transfer of NASHVILLE's XO and the XOT, MAJ MacKenzie. On 31 Jan, NASHVILLE accompanied NASSAU to Marseilles, France for a week of liberty.

On 7 Feb, NASHVILLE hosted a demonstration of AAVs and LARCs after giving our gracious Marseilles' Navy League hosts a tour of the ship. NASHVILLE departed Marseilles enroute to Capo Teulada on the southern tip of Sardinia to participate in Exercise ISLAND THUNDER. On 8 Feb, NASHVILLE performed an unrep with KANAWHA. On Sunday 9 Feb, 108 Italian soldiers from Venice, Italy embarked NASHVILLE to participate in Exercise ISLAND THUNDER. The ship's

Medical Officer, LT [REDACTED], treated one soldier for German measles. On Wednesday, 12 Feb, COMSIXTHFLT, Vice Admiral Abbott arrived for a visit. He presented NASHVILLE's Sailor of the Year, MM1 [REDACTED] with the Navy Achievement Medal. On Friday, 14 Feb, NASHVILLE celebrated its 27th birthday with an awards ceremony and cake cutting. ENCS [REDACTED] was recognized as the oldest Sailor and SR [REDACTED] was recognized as the youngest. LT [REDACTED], NASHVILLE's Navigator took the honors of having the birthday closest to that of the ship's. LT [REDACTED] is one week older than NASHVILLE. On 15 Feb, one of NASSAU's LCUs was returning from the beach with a load of MSSG equipment. As LCU 1660 crossed NASHVILLE's sill it suffered a damaged hull. The water level rose to five feet inside the LCU before the combined efforts of the LCU crew, NASHVILLE's Deck Department and Damage Control Team stabilized the situation. NASHVILLE's crew worked all night to effect repairs and the following afternoon LCU 1660 returned to NASSAU. Upon completion of Exercise ISLAND THUNDER, NASHVILLE left Capo Teulada on 17 Feb and headed east for the Straits of Messina. NASHVILLE performed a Vertrep with USNS CONCORD (T-AFS 5) on 18 Feb and received fuel from USNS LEROY GRUMMAN (T-AO 195). After an uneventful passage through the Strait of Messina, NASHVILLE headed for the Port of Catania, Sicily for a port visit.

On Saturday, 1 March, NASHVILLE departed Catania to participate with the ARG and the ROOSEVELT Battle Group in INVITEX-97. ENS [REDACTED] was promoted to Lieutenant Junior Grade. NASHVILLE performed an unrep evolution with LEROY GRUMMAN. On Friday 7 March, due to the developing crisis in Albania, NASHVILLE learned that its next port would be Corfu instead of scheduled Zakynthos. Elements of the 26 MEU ACE were cross decked to NASHVILLE including four CH 46 Sea Knights and two AH-1 Cobras. PENSACOLA joined NASHVILLE in Corfu. NASHVILLE spent the next few days enjoying the port of Kerkira and watching the developments in Albania. On 13 March, NASHVILLE steamed North in response to the growing crisis in Albania. Later that afternoon, the ACE flew into Albania to insert a Forward Command Element of USMC personnel and extract 51 American citizens consisting of three adult males, 22 adult females and 26 children. The evacuees spent one night on board then were flown to Brindisi, Italy. NASSAU arrived on station on the 14th and received approximately 400 additional evacuees. NASHVILLE served as a fuel and ammo platform for helos flying between the Embassy Compound and the ARG ships.

Approximately 25 international media representatives embarked on 14 March to cover the departure of the 51 citizens from NASHVILLE to Italy. On 19 March, NASHVILLE conducted a RAS with CONCORD and on 20 March a FAS with KANAWHA. On 21 March, with over 800 evacuees airlifted out of Albania, the ARG split with NASSAU heading west for possible involvement in Zaire. NASHVILLE and PENSACOLA remained behind with USS LEYTE GULF (CG 55) to support Operation SILVER WAKE. CAPT McKee was named COMNAVFOR SILVER WAKE and NASHVILLE became the platform for COMNAVFOR and USMC forces maintaining security for the Embassy in Tirana. A total of 25 evacuees were processed on 20 March and another 21 evacuees on the 21st. VADM Abbot visited on 25 March on his way to the Embassy in Tirana. On 26 March, the Ambassador halted the evacuation phase while the security phase continued. LEYTE GULF and USS HAYLER (DD 997) were replaced by the USS RAMAGE (DDG 61). USS PENSACOLA (LSD 38) detached 29 March to participate in Exercise DESTINED GLORY off the coast of Spain.

As Operation SILVER WAKE extended into April, NASHVILLE continued to provide support to the Marine contingent ashore. On 6 April, NASHVILLE received fuel from USNS PATUXENT (T-AO 201) and LTJG Roberts was recognized as NASHVILLE's newest Surface Warfare Officer. On 10 April NASHVILLE received stores from the CONCORD and the next day, 11 April, received fuel from the PATUXENT. On 13 April, LCPL [REDACTED] suffered a spinal cord injury when a sandbag bunker collapsed on him at the American Embassy in Tirana. He was MEDEVACED by a HMM 365 helicopter to La Leche hospital in Brindisi, Italy where he was scheduled to undergo surgery. On 14 April, 26 MEU officially received word to draw down the number of Marines ashore to 70 as tensions in Albania eased and an International Peace Keeping Force took positions in Tirana, Durres and Valore, Albania. On 21 April, Congressman Sonny Bono, from California, visited NASHVILLE on a fact finding tour of the U.S. military's European operations. While on board, he received a brief about SILVER WAKE, spoke to an assembly of Sailors and

Marines and toured the ship. Later in the day he flew into Tirana to view the security mission being carried out by the ARG Marines. NASHVILLE received fuel from PATUXENT on 21 April and received stores from CONCORD on 22 April. On 25 April, the execute order was received giving permission to begin the turnover between the

MEU BLT Marines and the Marine Corps Security Force stationed in Naples and Souda Bay. On 27 April, NASHVILLE received fuel from the PATUXENT. On 29 April, NASHVILLE's participation in Operation SILVER WAKE ended and NASHVILLE set sail for Rota, Spain.

On 3 May, NASHVILLE moored pierside in Rota, Spain. After two days of liberty, NASHVILLE began its washdown. On 6 May, prospective Executive Officer, LCDR Anthony J. Pachuta arrived. On 7 May, the inspectors cleared NASHVILLE for departure. Upon getting underway from Rota, representatives from 26 MEU assembled on board NASHVILLE for the turnover on 11 May. Navy Family Service Center representatives, Sue Bushey and Jennie Fields, began Return and Reunion presentations for the crew and embarked Marines. They were assisted by Trooper Rob Koehler from the Virginia State Police who talked about safe driving issues. On 14 May, RADM "Grog" Johnson, COMCARGRU EIGHT, visited NASHVILLE from USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN 71). While on board, he received a brief of lessons learned, a tour of the ship and presented a Food Service Attendant of the month award to SR [REDACTED]. On 16 May, CDR Hempel officially turned over his position as Executive Officer to LCDR Pachuta. On 17 May, NASHVILLE performed its final RAS with DETROIT. On 20 May, NASHVILLE launched the HMM 365 "Blue Knight" detachment back to NASSAU. The next morning, 21 May, the AAVs departed for Onslow Beach. RADM Fladd, COMPHIBGRU TWO, visited NASHVILLE toured spaces and awarded ESWS pins to BM1 [REDACTED] and BM2 [REDACTED] and also a Junior Sailor of the Quarter certificate to AS2 [REDACTED]. Later that same day, NASHVILLE arrived at Morehead City pier and offloaded elements of 26 MEU. The inspection team for the Ship's Sales and Service competition embarked to begin their inspection of NASHVILLE, which was a semifinalist in the annual competition. On 22 May, approximately 85 relatives of the crew embarked in Morehead City for the traditional Tiger Cruise. On 23 May, NASHVILLE arrived at her homeport in Norfolk officially finishing the Mediterranean deployment.

During the stand down leave period, 23 May to 23 June, crewmembers continued their preparations for INSURV. On 30 June, GROUP TWO inspectors led by CAPT Mahoney embarked for their pre-INSURV inspection. They concluded that NASHVILLE was nearly ready for INSURV with only a few discrepancies remaining to be fixed prior to the 4 Aug INSURV.

On 8 July, NASHVILLE sailed to North Carolina and embarked approximately 500 Marines from BLT 2/6 and 29 AAVs for a TCAT exercise, which would last till 18 July. In addition to TCAT tasking, NASHVILLE's Engineering department underwent a PLOT inspection. From 21 to 25 July NASHVILLE transited to Naval Weapons Station Yorktown and offloaded ammo to USS AUSTIN (LPD 4) and to the Weapons Station. During the trip back to Norfolk on 25 July, NASHVILLE hosted a Family Day Cruise with 138 dependents and guests embarked. On 24 July, NASHVILLE was identified as the winner of the East Coast Best Ship's Sales and Service Award competition in the medium sized hull category.

INSURV inspectors arrived on 4 August to begin NASHVILLE's tri-ennial inspection. On 7 August, INSURV inspectors reported their results to the Commanding Officer. The balance of August was spent preparing for the September trip to the shipyards for a four month PMA period. Moon Engineering was awarded the contract. However, another shipyard sued the Navy alleging it had been denied the bid illegally since it was the lowest bidder. The Navy's response was based upon the lack of adequate clearance to safely transit into the particular shipyard. The court ruled in the Navy's favor. During August, the new Medical Officer, LT [REDACTED] reported on board relieving LT [REDACTED].

On 2 September, NASHVILLE transited to Moon Engineering in Portsmouth, VA to begin its PMA period. On 29 September, the stern gate was removed to replace pins and the seal. During September, several troop spaces were rehabbed by ship's force. Other work included a rehab of dental spaces, various components of the main spaces and the mast assembly.

During October, PMA on the NASHVILLE continued. A decision was made to extend the PMA through 13 February in order to allow contractors to replace and rebuild inner stacks. In addition, a three-inch warp discovered in the stern gate also required work that was not originally scheduled. During October, the new Operations Officer (LCDR (SEL) [REDACTED]), the new Dental Officer (LT [REDACTED]), and the new CMC (MMCM(SW) White), reported on board. Supply Officer, LT [REDACTED], and several members of Sales Division attended the Ship's Sales and Service Banquet at which NASHVILLE was awarded her trophy for first place in the 1997 Medium Hull category.

From 4-6 November, NASHVILLE was evaluated favorably by COMPHIBGRU TWO's Command Inspection team. PLOT II evaluation occurred during 17-21 November which also resulted in high marks for the Engineering Department. The new CHENG, LT [REDACTED], relieved LCDR [REDACTED], and the new DCA, CWO3 [REDACTED], relieved LT [REDACTED].

1 December brought the PATG Team from NAB Little Creek who spent a week training and evaluating the Admin department. On 2 and 3 December, NASHVILLE hosted a Christmas party on board the SPIRIT OF NORFOLK for crewmembers, their wives and girlfriends. On 7 December, it was the children's turn for a Christmas party at Nauticus. This month the new First Lieutenant, LT [REDACTED], reported on board relieving LT [REDACTED]. LCDR [REDACTED] departed as Air Boss leaving that position to LCDR (SEL) [REDACTED]. On 4 Dec, LTJG [REDACTED] became NASHVILLE's newest Surface Warfare Officer. LCDR [REDACTED] left the ship on 12 Dec for his new assignment; LT [REDACTED] became the new Chaplain. ENS [REDACTED] began his assignment as the new Weapons Officer. The ship was refueled on 15 December. On 17 December it was announced that ENS [REDACTED], the ship's BOS'N, was COMPHIBGRU TWO's Junior Officer Ship Handler of the Year. LTJG [REDACTED] received his Surface Warfare Supply Officers pin on 18 Dec. The ship began its Holiday leave period 22 December, which extended through the end of the month.