



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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From: Commanding Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41)

To: Director, Naval History (OP-09BH)

Subj: 1987 SHIP'S HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5720.12C

Encl: (1) Command History for 1987

1. In accordance with requirements set forth in reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted for the period 1 Jan 1987 to 31 December 1987.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. S. Holder".

G. S. HOLDER

JANUARY 87

Nineteen eighty-seven for USS WHIDBEY ISLAND opened with the ship moored at Pier 15 North, Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Va., preparing for Marine Amphibious Readiness Group 2-87 (MARG 2-87), the ship's first major deployment. The crew was also preparing for the first change of command aboard LSD 41. CDR PATRICK M. MULDOON, USN, the ship's commissioning Commanding Officer, was relieved by CDR GORDON S. HOLDER, USN, 06 JANUARY 87, in a ceremony held in WHIDBEY ISLAND's well deck. CDR HOLDER and the crew received a very brief respite after the hectic ceremony before getting underway 09 JANUARY for an ammunition onload at the Yorktown Weapons Station. On 10 JANUARY the crew celebrated with wives and friends at WHIDBEY ISLAND's Holiday Party at Pavillion Towers in Virginia Beach. On 12 and 14 JANUARY, the Naval Amphibious Base Family Service Center came aboard to give pre-deployment briefs to the crew and their families to ease the hardship of separation during the impending six-month separation. The last week in port was busy for every member of the crew, all making sure that LSD 41 was fully stocked and at peak material condition for a Mediterranean deployment.

Finally, on the morning of 20 JANUARY, following a brief visit from COMMANDER, AMPHIBIOUS SQUADRON TEN, CAPT A. J. CONKLIN, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND took in all lines and departed from Quay Wall East, Little Creek. The weeks of hard work paid off as LSD 41 got underway free of casualties. The ship went to anchorage at LA-4 and embarked elements of Assault Craft Unit Two (ACU-2), Beachmaster Unit Two (BMU-2) and Amphibious Construction Battalion Two (ACB-2), which then became part of the "WHIDBEY ISLAND TEAM" for the next six months. After completing the onload, LSD 41 joined Task Unit 22.1.1 (TU 22.1.1), comprised of USS NASHVILLE, USS INCHON, USS NEWPORT and USS SPARTANBURG COUNTY, under the command of CAPT J. M. QUARTERMAN. These were the Naval units of MARG 2-87. After their rendezvous, the Task Group sailed south to Morehead City and embarked elements of 26 MARINE AMPHIBIOUS UNIT, 3/6 MARINES including LIMA COMPANY, TANK PLATOON, FORCE RECON and BATTALION RECON. Members of SEAL TEAM FOUR also embarked at Morehead City. After securing the embarked craft and equipment, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway for the Mediterranean at 1903, 21 JANUARY. The remainder of JANUARY involved the transit to Rota, Spain. Numerous General Quarters drills were held to refresh the crew and indoctrinate embarked units to shipboard life. In addition, on 25 JANUARY, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND went to flight quarters for the first of many times while in the Mediterranean. On 26 JANUARY, WHIDBEY ISLAND instituted the command Physical Readiness Training program three times a week, and in-rate training and General Military Training three times a week, to increase the physical and professional readiness of the crew. On 27 JANUARY, the embarked units conducted small arms familiarization firing from the flight deck.

FEBRUARY

At 1148, 02 FEBRUARY, WHIDBEY ISLAND moored at pier 3 in Rota, Spain, to begin the INCHOP to 6th fleet. After TU22.21 became TF61.8, the crew learned that the four-day stop in Rota was being curtailed, and after a working party of sailors and Marines loaded three tons of food, the ship refueled and sortied with MARG 2-87 at 0600, 03 FEBRUARY. The destination of the group was the Eastern Mediterranean to relieve units of MARG 1-87 and to maintain a U.S. Naval presence in that area. On 04 FEBRUARY, LSD 41 conducted a Vertical Replenishment (VERTREP) with USNS PAWCATUCK. On 06 FEBRUARY, units of Task Group 61.8 (TG 61.8) conducted and completed relieving turnover with TG 61.9. Internally, the WHIDBEY ISLAND team began preparation for contingency operations. Following the turnover, TG 61.8 became Task Force 61 (TF 61) for the remainder of MARG 2-87. As TF 61 steamed toward a Modified Location (MODLOC) in the Eastern Mediterranean, all five ships went to condition III steaming to upgrade their preparedness. On 09 FEBRUARY, the crew of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND celebrated the ship's 2nd birthday with a cake and special dinner on the mess decks. On 10 FEBRUARY, LSD 41 conducted a Fueling at Sea (FAS) with USS KALAMAZOO and continued preparation for Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO). On 12 FEBRUARY, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND detached from TF 61, now in MODLOC, and transited west to rendezvous with USS NIMITZ to receive mail for the remainder of the MARG. On 14 FEBRUARY, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND rejoined TF 61 in MODLOC in the Eastern Mediterranean. On 15 and 16 FEBRUARY, TF 61 carried out a NEO rehearsal to test the MARG's ability to conduct contingency operations. The Units of ACU-2 finally got to put their boats in the water as the ships of TF 61 held a practice operational offload 40 miles from land. On 23 FEBRUARY, all units of TF 61 took part in Logistics Report 2-87 (LOGREP 2-87), receiving mail and repair parts. The task group left MODLOC 25 FEBRUARY and began to steam westward. Another NEO rehearsal was conducted on the morning of 27 FEBRUARY, during which time selected embarked Marine personnel acted as refugees and/or terrorist infiltrators. The month of February ended with TF 61 enroute to Naples, Italy for a long-awaited port visit. Onboard LSD 41, Black History Month was observed with a supper of traditional ethnic foods which was enjoyed by the entire crew.

MARCH

On the morning of 01 MARCH, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a Replenishment at Sea (RAS) with USNS MISSISSINEWA while en route to Naples. Many members of the WHIDBEY ISLAND Team took advantage of the excellent opportunity to do some sightseeing when the ship passed through the Straits of Messina on 03 MAR 87. The crew of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND completed final port visit preparations with a Captain's Call that evening.

USS WHIDBEY ISLAND finally made her first port visit the morning of 04 MARCH, Med mooring at Molo San Vincenzo and commenced a Restricted Availability (RAV). USS WHIDBEY ISLAND's Pace Instructor, MR. GENE HANLEY, arrived in Naples and immediately began teaching four college level English classes to the crew and embarked Marines. The March advancement cycle was completed, giving many sailors and embarked Marines a chance to advance in their chosen ratings. Two-day tours to Rome were popular with many of the crew. Also, personnel took an opportunity to relax at a ship's picnic, held at Carney Park on the outskirts of Naples on 14 MAR 87. On the same day a combined Navy/Marine pistol team from USS WHIDBEY ISLAND finished second in a competition which included two Italian National Carabinieri teams.

Wednesday, 18 MARCH, found the WHIDBEY ISLAND Team hosting the Department of Defense (DOD) sponsored band "Debbie Cox and Borderline," who played on the ship's turntable. Members of CAPSTONE, the senior U.S. Military Officer Training program, came aboard USS WHIDBEY ISLAND 20 MAR 87 to observe capabilities of both the ship and her embarked units. Another VIP visited 21 MAR 87 -- GENERAL GREY, USMC, COMMANDING GENERAL, FLEET MARINE FORCE ATLANTIC --who came aboard offering words of encouragement to the entire WHIDBEY ISLAND team. Giving of their own time and adding to their work, several crewmembers spent 22 MAR 87 doing community service for the Mother Theresa Home for the Homeless.

On 22 MARCH USS WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway and anchored just outside Naples harbor. The ship finally left Naples on the morning of 24 MARCH and proceeded with the remainder of TF 61 to the Gulf of Castlemare for amphibious operation, Sardinia 87. 24 MARCH ended with an evening Underway Replenishment (UNREP) with USS SAN DIEGO. After reaching the Gulf of Castlemare, a pre-dawn assault rehearsal was conducted on the morning of 26 MARCH. LSD 41 also launched Italian Recon craft to support the amphibious ship CAORLE. On the evening of 26 MARCH, the Task Force sortied and proceeded to rendezvous with USNS PAWCATUCK and conducted a Fueling at Sea (FAS) the morning of 27 MARCH. Following the FAS, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND detached from TF 61, reported to TG 703.3 and steamed to Capo Teulada, Sardinia for Advance Force Ops. Commanding Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND assumed the duties as Advance Force Commander on 28 MARCH. Anchoring at Gulfo De Teulada the morning of 29 MARCH, LSD 41 conducted Advance Force Operations, inserting Navy and Marine units ashore for Combat Recon and beach surveys. Late on the evening of 28 MARCH the ship worked in support of USS JOHN MARSHALL which conducted Shallow Submersible Diving Vehicle (SSDV) operations with SEAL units. USS WHIDBEY ISLAND sortied 29 MARCH and participated in an amphibious assault on Capo Teulada with the other units of TG 703.1. After the initial assault, COMDINAV TRE, CINCPAC, CTG 703.1 and 26 MAU paid a visit to the ship. The busy month of March ended with USS WHIDBEY ISLAND at anchor supporting the Marines ashore in Sardinia.

APRIL

LSD 41 spent the first three days of April at anchor at Capo Teulada, Sardinia, providing support to forces ashore. At the end of Sardinia 87, the ship reported back to TF 61. The backload commenced the morning of 03 APRIL. Because of rough seas, many of the backload personnel were carried out by helo. The heavy seas also disrupted the onload of causeways on USS NEWPORT. USS WHIDBEY ISLAND loaded the four causeway sections into her well and delivered them to a protected area for USS NEWPORT to attempt another onload. The seas were still too rough, so the causeways were once again brought into the well for the night. On the morning of 04 APRIL, the causeways were launched from LSD 41 and finally loaded successfully on USS NEWPORT. The backload was concluded that afternoon, and the ship sortied with TF 61 for Tunisia and the Tunisian Amphibious Landing Exercise (PHIBLEX).

While underway for Tunisia, LSD 41 carried out a successful firing of both Close-In Weapons System (CIWS) mounts on 05 APRIL. The next morning, 06 APRIL, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND anchored at Capo Serrat, Tunisia. After conducting an assault rehearsal the evening of 06 APRIL, the actual assault was carried out the morning of 07 APRIL. USS WHIDBEY ISLAND then anchored to support the offload, assuming the duties of Primary Control Ship (PCS) that afternoon. Even though the ship was at operational anchorage, the crew was very busy preparing for a 3-M inspection and a Diesel Mobile Training Team (DMTT) visit later in April. The backload commenced 09 APRIL, a day early, because of deteriorating weather. The backload continued through 10 APRIL, while the Medical and Dental departments carried out a mass casualty drill for Tunisian observers. The ship got underway at the completion of the backload 11 APRIL. LSD 41 and the other ships of TF 61 rendezvoused with USNS MISSISSINEWA for FAS and USNS SATURN for VERTREP the morning of 12 APRIL. At the completion of the replenishment, TF 61 units dispersed to sail to different liberty/upkeep port visits in Spain. USS WHIDBEY ISLAND and USS NASHVILLE sailed to Barcelona, Spain.

After mooring pierside in Barcelona on the morning of 13 APRIL, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND began a busy 10 days of upkeep, occasionally taking time off to visit beautiful Barcelona. On 14 and 15 April, the command held its semi-annual PRT Test with the results showing that the weekly PRT Program helped many sailors stay in shape. On 16 APRIL, an awards ceremony was held on the flight deck. A ship's picnic was held the afternoon of 18 APRIL on the Flight Deck, followed by a performance by the band "Pam Weston and the Stage West Band." On 20 APRIL, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND embarked eight midshipmen from the Naval Academy. Also, the local chapter of the Navy League and members of the Barcelona press came aboard for a visit 21 APRIL. On the morning of 22 APRIL, the ship departed Barcelona en route to St. Raphael, France.

LSD 41 anchored at San Raphael 24 APRIL. Many Marine personnel were offloaded to undergo training at Camp Canjeurs. The weekend of 25 - 26 APRIL was spent by many of the crew sightseeing along the French Riviera. A group of WHIDBEY ISLAND sailors took part in a 25-kilometer walk for March of Dimes, raising \$1800 in contributions. On 29 APRIL, the ship got underway from anchorage and conducted a FAS with USNS PAWCATUCK. The next two days were spent conducting training and Selected Exercises's (SELEX's), taking advantage of the underway time before returning to St. Raphael to backload the Marine units and then taking part in NATO exercise Dragon Hammer '87.

MAY

USS WHIDBEY ISLAND returned to San Raphael 01 MAY, anchoring early in the morning in order to complete the backload and sorties by evening. While at St. Raphael, the ship embarked two CH-46 helicopters. The helos departed the morning of 02 MAY, picked up 45 members of the Italian Lagunari Platoon and transferred them to USS WHIDBEY ISLAND. USS WHIDBEY ISLAND inchopped to CTF 503 on 03 MAY and, later in the day, anchored at Capo Teulado, Sardinia. A pre-dawn rehearsal assault was held on 04 MAY; after the landing craft were re-embarked, all amphibious units of TF 503 got underway and steamed in 4WHISKEY grid stations. The assault for Dragon Hammer '87 was conducted on 05 MAY. The ships of TF 503, including USS WHIDBEY ISLAND, anchored at Capo Teulado to support the Landing Force ashore. Later on the 5th, 15 senior US and foreign officers, including CINCSOUTH, ADM BUSEY, and COMSIXFLT, VADM MORANVILLE, visited USS WHIDBEY ISLAND for breakfast and a tour.

During the week at anchorage in Capo Teulado, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND hosted sailors and officers from the French ship, ORAGE, sending some of her own sailors to other ships to see what life is like in foreign navies. Preparations continued for the upcoming Diesel Mobile Training Team visit and 3-M inspection. Also, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND was ordered to become control ship for the Boat Support Mission for the Presidential visit to the Economic Summit in Venice in June. On the evenings of 06, 07 and 08 MAY, the ship got underway to conduct Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises (BECCE) and crew training, returning to anchorage every morning. The backload from Sardinia was completed 09 MAY. TF 61 then outchopped from TF 503 and got underway to rendezvous for Logistic Replenishment (LOGREP) 5-87. On 10 MAY, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a Fueling at Sea with USNS PAWCATUCK and a Vertical Replenishment with USNS RIGEL and USS SAN DIEGO. Following the LOGREP, LSD 41 again embarked two CH-46 helicopters and steamed independently toward Pisa, Italy, to offload the Italian Lagunare Platoon by helicopter. On 11 MAY, the ship kicked off its Navy Relief fund-raising campaign by selling raffle tickets.

On the evening of 11 MAY, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND rejoined TF61 and began Corsica PHIBLEX operations. The PHIBLEX differed from earlier exercises in that troop movement was with helo and small motorized boats instead of large landing craft. On 12 and 13 MAY, assault units were sent ashore via embarked helos, Combat Readiness Reconnaissance Craft (CRRC) and Avon boats. As in Sardinia, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway daily to conduct engineering drills and training, returning to anchorage to support the landing force. The backload was completed after an all-night effort on 15 MAY in an attempt to beat the weather. TF61 sortied from Corsica and anchored off of St. Raphael on the morning of 18 MAY. Force Recon and Battalion Recon were offloaded to train at Camp Canjuers while the Diesel Mobile Training Team (DMTT) and several PL boats were embarked. WHIDBEY ISLAND sailed from St. Raphael the evening of 18 MAY,

and at midnight became part of CTF 68 for the duration of the Boat Support Mission. The ship spent the next two days training with DMTT while steaming independently to Naples to embark boats and personnel for the Venice mission. USS WHIDBEY ISLAND moored pierside in Naples on 21 MAY.

After loading supplies and one Admiral's Barge, the ship got underway on 22 MAY. Among the new personnel were eight midshipmen onboard for their summer cruise and CTG 68.0, CAPT MONDUL. DMTT departed Naples after giving USS WHIDBEY ISLAND's Engineering Department a "thumbs up."

On 23 MAY, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND pulled into Augusta Bay to onload the Barge of COMCARGRU Eight. After this six-hour stop, the ship was underway for Venice, Italy. During the transit to Venice, preparations were made to put the Barges and PL's in perfect working order for use by the President and his party. On 25 MAY, the USS WHIDBEY ISLAND Team celebrated Memorial Day with a Steel Beach picnic and carnival with proceeds going to Navy Relief. On the morning of 27 MAY, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND moored along the Grand Canal in Venice. Work included sprucing up the sides of the ship and training the boat crews for the support mission. The embarked staff of TG 68 began working with the ship's QMs and OSs to plan routes and schedules for the "boatcade." On Sunday, 31 MAY, the USS WHIDBEY ISLAND Team helped the city of Venice celebrate the annual "Marriage of the Sea" by manning the rails in Summer Whites and saluting the city's leaders as they sailed by in decorated gondolas.

JUNE

The month of JUNE began with USS WHIDBEY ISLAND primarily engaged in preparations for the Boat Support Mission but also in carrying out other duties such as Command Physical Readiness Testing, in-rate and General Military Training, preparations for a 3-M inspection, Midshipman Training and the JULY Outchop from Rota. On 02 JUNE, the ship shifted berths from pierside to a two-buoy moor in the Canale Sea -- a less traveled canal. A limited Restricted Availability (RAV) began 03 JUNE to take care of routine repairs and some lagging work. Members of the Boat Division took part in a full dress rehearsal 05 and 06 JUNE for the Boat Support Mission. The Marines debarked from Camp Camjeurs, France, returning 07 JUNE, and the WHIDBEY ISLAND Team was completely together again to enjoy the sights of Venice.

On 08 JUNE, the weeks of planning and hard work paid off as the Boat Support Mission got smoothly underway with the arrival of the first of the President's entourage in Venice. Things remained busy onboard with the Wardroom hosting a luncheon and tour for several senior Italian Naval officers and their wives. The third and last DOD show of the cruise took place on the ship's Flight Deck the afternoon of 11 JUNE. The band "Trick" played Rock and Roll hits for over 250 crewmembers. The Economic Summit closed the evening of 11 JUNE, ending most of the duties of the personnel involved with the Boat Support Mission. CAPT MONDUL debarked from WHIDBEY ISLAND 12 JUNE, and USS WHIDBEY ISLAND chopped back to CTF 61. The President also left Venice 12 JUNE but not before flying over LSD 41 in a helicopter and radioing "thanks" to the entire WHIDBEY ISLAND Team for their help. On the morning of 13 JUNE, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND bid farewell to Venice and set sail for Naples to offload the boats and personnel embarked for the Venice mission.

USS WHIDBEY ISLAND anchored in Naples Bay early on 16 JUNE, then shifted anchorage to Pozzoli Bay. Personnel, including the embarked Midshipman, and boating assets were offloaded, and eight hours later the ship was underway for an independent transit to Rota. A Refueling at Sea was conducted with USNS MISSISSINEWA on 17 JUNE, followed by a successful firing of both Close In Weapons System (CIWS) mounts. On 18 JUNE, the ship unloaded stores from USS KALAMAZOO, moored in Rota, Spain, 19 JUNE, and spent a busy day offloading the remaining barge from Venice and embarking 34 Midshipman, mail and cargo for further transfer to units of TF 61. The ship also embarked the 3-M inspection team for an inspection which ran through 20 JUNE with good results. On 20 and 21 JUNE, the ship transited to a 4W grid position off the coast of Portugal and remained on station until the morning of 22 JUNE, when she proceeded to anchorage in Lisbon, Portugal. The port visit was short, however, and USS WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway after embarking 230 Portuguese Marines as part of Exercise GALERA '87. This exercise tested TF 61's capability to insert units in small combat craft to designated beach areas. USS WHIDBEY ISLAND

anchored the morning of 26 JUNE and shifted anchorage later that day -- all the while supporting the assaults of embarked units. On The morning of 27 JUNE, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND launched a SPECIAL OPERATIONS (SPEC OPS) mission. On 29 JUNE, the WHIDBEY ISLAND Team conducted a highly successful Assault Demonstration for visiting Portuguese military and civilian officials. That evening, the ships sortied for Rota, Spain, with other TF 61 Units. On 30 JUNE, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND moored in Rota and immediately commenced offloading Landing Craft and vehicles for washdown.

JULY

As JULY began, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND was hard at work cleaning the ship, landing craft and vehicles. In addition, turnover with USS SPIEGEL GROVE, relief ship in MARG 3-87, began the afternoon of 01 JULY. All the hard work in the washdown paid off when the ship and all embarked vehicles were certified "clean" by government inspectors the afternoon of 02 JULY. Immediately after the inspection, all embarked vehicles were backloaded onto USS WHIDBEY ISLAND and griped down. On the morning of 03 JULY, the turnover with MARG 3-87 was completed, TF 61 became TU 22.1.2 and, at midday, the ship got underway for the United States. Embarked were two members of the Navy Family Service Center Return and Reunion assistance team and an officer of the Virginia State Police who gave seminars to WHIDBEY ISLAND crewmembers. On 04 JULY, the ship observed Holiday Routine to celebrate Independence Day. Everyone enjoyed a Steel Beach Picnic and Skeet Shoot on the Flight Deck. The embarked reunion team conducted Highway Safety briefs on 04 and 05 JULY. On 06 JULY, the team was transferred to USS NASHVILLE. A customs inspection was held 07 JULY with all E-6's and above checking spaces for contraband. The ship held a Nuclear Detonation drill the morning of 08 JULY. Repair parties used the time to train extensively on CHEMICAL BIOLOGICAL RADIALOGICAL (CBR) defense procedures. On 09 JULY, the entire TU took part in CONVEX 87-2, giving USS WHIDBEY ISLAND watchstations ample opportunity to learn Wartime Convoy maneuvers. On 11 JULY, the ship conducted weapons training with a CIWS shoot, a 20MM/.50 CAL gun shoot and a SRBOC launch. The legendary Marine, Chesty Puller, was honored by crewmembers with a cookout, as well as a Personnel Inspection and an Awards Ceremony on the Flight Deck. Finally, on 15 JULY, the U.S. was spotted on the horizon, and USS WHIDBEY ISLAND sailed into Onslow Bay to launch the LCU's with their preloads. After the boats were recovered, LSD 41 sailed to Morehead City to offload the embarked Marines. Many crewmembers had an early reunion as family members were embarked for the overnight trip to Little Creek. USS WHIDBEY ISLAND anchored just off Thimble Shoals Channel on 16 JULY. The landing craft and personnel of ACU-2, BMU-2 and ACB-2 debarked, leaving LSD 41 looking and feeling a little like a ghost town. COMPHIBGRU TWO, RADM FOGARTY, arrived by helicopter to offer kind words to the crew. Also arriving by helo were members of the local media. A live radio remote from "Z-104" offered crewmembers a chance to say "hello" to their families. After COMPHIBGRU TWO left and the offload was completed, the ship got underway and moored at 1012. After the ship was secured, sailors reunited with their families and some left to go on leave. Then, only the duty section was onboard, and the standown and leave period commenced. From 17 JULY to 26 JULY, the ship was on Duty Section only standown. During this time, the crew performed maintenance on the ship as necessary. Also, the entire ship prepared for the Command Inspection. During the week of 27 JULY, the ship went to a half-day work schedule, re-commencing the morning General Military Training period (GMT), in-rate training and Physical Readiness Training. JULY ended as the crew finally settled in to conduct inport maintenance and preparation for future evolutions.

AUGUST

The first week of AUGUST brought USS WHIDBEY ISLAND back to a normal daily in-port routine. During the week of 03 AUGUST, the underwater hull was inspected and cleaned by divers. The men of the ship's Engineering Department took advantage of the cold iron time to open up and perform maintenance on machinery that had been running continuously for 6 months. All departments continued their preparations for the Command Inspection.

On 10 AUGUST, representatives from Naval Ship's System's Engineering Station (NAVSSSES) came aboard to inspect the hull and machinery. The staff of COMPHIBGRU TWO embarked onboard USS WHIDBEY ISLAND for a two-day working visit on 11 AUGUST. Also on the 11th, major provisions were unloaded requiring a 50-man working party. Crewmembers spent much of their time during the week preparing for the SEPTEMBER exam cycle, as all requirements were due by 17 AUGUST to be eligible.

LSD 41 conducted a Fast Cruise 18 AUGUST. The day was spent manning watch stations and conducting drills to refresh the crew in underway habits. The training paid off as the ship got underway 21 AUGUST. COMPHIBRON TEN embarked for the one day cruise which included Seamanship/Shiphandling Trials and a degaussing run.

The week of 24 AUGUST saw USS WHIDBEY ISLAND reviewing its Shipboard Manning Document with members of Enlisted Personnel Management and Accounting Center (EPMAC). The same week the crew began preparing for its inclining experiment. These preparations required each division onboard to conduct a survey of its spaces to estimate the loaded weight of the ship. Also the command's Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) training program continued as candidates once again began going to classes at noon to prepare for their boards. As AUGUST closed, the crew of LSD 41 adjusted to an inport routine.

SEPTEMBER

The first day of SEPTEMBER kicked off USS WHIDBEY ISLAND's Combined Federal Campaign drive. Divisional representatives were appointed to set up allotments for this worthy cause. The crew of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND also finished preps for the Inclining Experiment and, on 02 SEPTEMBER, the ship breasted out from the pier and conducted the Inclining Experiment in Little Creek Harbor. The experiment consisted of moving weights around on the ship and checking the ship's reaction to heeling over. Non-essential personnel conducted DC training on the pier. The experiment was completed successfully and a debrief was held 04 SEPTEMBER. The first week of SEPTEMBER also saw the Command Inspection being moved to 28 SEPTEMBER so that USS WHIDBEY ISLAND could participate in SURFACE WARFARE TRAINING WEEK.

07 SEPTEMBER was Labor Day and LSD 41 celebrated Holiday Routine. An Intermediate Maintenance Availability (IMAV) conference was held onboard 08 SEPTEMBER to maximize maintenance during the September in-port time. On 09 SEPTEMBER, over 50 Marine officers from the LFTC came aboard USS WHIDBEY ISLAND to tour the ship and discuss its capabilities with the crew. The SEPTEMBER advancement exam for E-4 was held 10 SEPTEMBER. Much attention was given to sprucing up the ship during the week, as LSD 41 was named the Visit Ship for the Surface Force Family Fest '87 held at Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, on Saturday, 12 SEPTEMBER. Commander, Amphibious Group Two held a meeting and luncheon onboard in the Wardroom 11 SEPTEMBER in honor of the MARG 3-87 Ombudsman. On the day of Family Fest, over 500 visitors came aboard and were impressed with both the ship and the courteous crew.

The week of 14 SEPTEMBER was an extremely busy one for the crew of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND. The big event was the Ship's involvement in SURFACE WARFARE TRAINING WEEK. On 14 SEPTEMBER, SWTW began with a review of the ship's Battle Bill by the CO, XO and senior watchstanders. Rifle Range practice was held for the crew. On 15 SEPTEMBER, the ship commenced practice Battle Problems to gauge readiness and responses to different battle situations. On 16 SEPTEMBER, a team from USS WHIDBEY ISLAND competed in a DC Olympics against teams from other ships. Senior Watchstanders, along with the CO and XO, took part in a review of the Rules of Engagement with representatives from other ships on 17 SEPTEMBER, while other members of the crew took part in a Ship's Self Defense Force exercise. At 1600, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND paused to take part in the "Bells Across America" ceremony. On 18 SEPTEMBER, the busy SWTW came to an end and the crew of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND observed POW/MIA recognition day.

The week of 21 SEPTEMBER was spent by USS WHIDBEY ISLAND preparing for the Command Inspection which would begin 28

September. On 21 SEPTEMBER, a representative from Supervisor Shipbuilding Conversion and Repair (SUPSHIP) Boston came aboard to review LSD-41's maintenance project. On 23 SEPTEMBER, the staff of COMPHIBRON TEN began a review of the technical manuals in each department. Throughout the week individuals were measured by the Medical Department to determine eligibility for the next command Physical Readiness Test.

The long-awaited Command Inspection of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND finally began on 28 SEPTEMBER. Members of COMPHIBRON TEN staff came aboard to inspect the material condition and administration of each of the ship's departments. In addition, the ship commenced its semi-annual command PRT Test. Also, members of the crew met with personnel from ACU-4 to discuss the operations the two units would conduct in late OCTOBER. The Command Inspection continued 29 SEPTEMBER with the COS of COMPHIBRON TEN conducting his messing and berthing inspection. On 30 SEPTEMBER, the Engineering Plant lit off for more Command Inspection requirements.

OCTOBER 1987

USS WHIDBEY ISLAND observed the first day of October by continuing its Command Inspection. Also, the ships of COMPHIBRON TEN, including LSD 41, took part in Small Boat Training 01 OCTOBER. On Friday, 02 OCTOBER, COMPHIBRON TEN walked about the ship and conducted a Personnel Inspection of the crew on the Flight Deck. Afterward the staff of PHIBRON TEN debriefed the ship's Department Heads, Division Officers, Chief Petty Officers and Leading Petty Officers on the results of the week's Command Inspection.

LSD 41 got underway the morning of 05 OCTOBER for a week of training. However, a casualty to the port steering unit caused the ship to go to anchorage unexpectedly. An all-hands effort got the affected machinery up to the 50' Utility Boat (UB) from after steering. After transferring the unit to SIMA, Little Creek and returning to LSD 41, the 50' UB was hoisted aboard and USS WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway. On 06 OCTOBER, the ship carried out a CIWS pacfire and a firing of the .50 cal's and 20 mm guns. Training continued 07 OCTOBER with the ship conducting a General Quarters drill at lunch hour to practice Battle Messing procedures. On 08 OCTOBER, LSD 41 conducted a P-1-CIWS for each mount with excellent results. Watchstanders were also given a chance to observe the tactical employment of chaff during practice firings. The ship returned to port 09 OCTOBER.

After observing Columbus Day, 12 OCTOBER, the crew took advantage of the inport routine to continue maintenance and began preparing for operations with ACU-4 at the end of OCTOBER. The birthday of the U.S. NAVY was celebrated 13 OCTOBER with a special dinner for the crew. On 16 OCTOBER, visitors from the USMC Command Staff College came aboard to look at the ship and learn about some of her capabilities. The following week USS WHIDBEY ISLAND continued preparations for her operations with ACU-4 in Panama City, FL, which were intended to include delivery of the first three LCACs to Little Creek. On 19 OCTOBER, an assist team came aboard to hydro-blast the CHT system. On 21 OCTOBER, there was a Personnel Inspection for all hands in Service Dress Blues. A brief was held in the wardroom 22 OCTOBER concerning the upcoming Law Enforcement Tasking with the U.S. Coast Guard. The brief initiated a discussion on the delineation of responsibilities of the Navy and Coast Guard to ensure a smooth operation. One last stores and parts onload was conducted 22 OCTOBER as the crew began securing for sea for the trip to Panama City, FL.

On 26 OCTOBER, LSD 41 departed from Quaywall East, Little Creek, underway for Panama City, FL, to bring the first LCAC's back to the new ACU-4 complex at the Naval Amphibious Base. Also onboard were six members of the 5th Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET). For the duration of the Panama City cruise, USS

WHIDBEY ISLAND would act as a "ship of opportunity" for the Coast Guard, closing on suspicious vessels and assisting the LEDET in any way necessary. For the crew, the trip provided ample opportunity to train and conduct drills. On the morning of 28 OCTOBER, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND closed on a U.S. fishing vessel and transported the LEDET by small boat for a boarding and search. No contraband was found. This turned out to be the only boarding of the LEDET mission, though numerous vessels were approached and questioned by radio. USS WHIDBEY ISLAND pulled into Panama City the morning of 30 OCTOBER and immediately began a series of meetings and briefs with ACU-4 personnel. For the remainder of 30 and 31 OCTOBER, the crew prepared for the arrival of ACU-4 and the LCAC's.

NOVEMBER 1987

USS WHIDBEY ISLAND began November moored at Dyer's Point, Panama City, FL. On the morning of 02 November, the ship got underway and anchored in the harbor of Panama City to begin loading the LCAC's of ACU-4. Before the ship left the pier, 100 Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (NJROTC) students from the Gulf Coast area embarked to observe shipboard life. After a full day of observing shipboard routine and loading LCAC's, the students were taken ashore by the ship's 50' Utility Boat (UB). Early on 03 NOVEMBER, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND's 50' UB once again cast off from the ship, this time to pick up another 61 NJROTC students from the Gulf Coast area for a two-day school cruise. Later in the morning, the ship weighed anchor and headed out to sea for day and evening landing qualifications for the LCAC crews. Early in the afternoon, a tropical depression caused the sea state to increase to the point where operations had to be suspended and USS WHIDBEY ISLAND returned to port again, mooring at Dyer's Point. The remainder of 04 NOVEMBER and all of 05 NOVEMBER were spent loading support equipment for ACU-4. On 06 NOVEMBER, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND departed Panama City for the time and, after clearing the harbor, embarked three LCAC's for transfer to Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia.

The transit home to Little Creek was used to maximize the training of watch sections and the crew, while supporting the embarked USCG Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET). On 07 NOVEMBER, the ship went to emergency Flight Quarters to receive a helicopter from Naval Air Station Key West and send one of the crew on emergency leave. On 08 NOVEMBER, LSD 41 took advantage of being two hours ahead of track and conducted night Qualifications with LCAC crews. Monday, 09 NOVEMBER, was a busy day for the crew with a morning General Quarters drill and .50 cal machine gun training. In the evening, a SRBOC launch and CIWS Pacfire were conducted. USS WHIDBEY ISLAND anchored at LA-7 the morning of 10 NOVEMBER and received RADM BENNETT, COMPHIBGRU TWO, via Sea Fox for an LCAC transit to the ACU-4 complex. After debarking the three LCAC's, the ship got underway and moored at Quaywall East

USS WHIDBEY ISLAND's inport routine continued 12 NOVEMBER. Again, the days were filled with training, command PT, stores onloads and battling the deteriorating weather to accomplish topside maintenance. On 13 NOVEMBER, NSC DET, Norfolk, held a Meaconing Interference Jamming Intrusion (MIJI) brief onboard for all officers and Combat Information Center (CIC) watchstanders. The week of 16 NOVEMBER began with LSD 41 participating in CINTEX 4-88. On 17 NOVEMBER, Condition I was set in CIC and watchstanders conducted Battle Problems for training. In preparation for the Diesel Material Training Team (DMTT) visit in December, Repair Party Training was held 19 NOVEMBER. The busy week concluded 20 NOVEMBER with LSD 41 supporting EOD TWO diving operations, and an afternoon awards ceremony on the Flight Deck.

On 23 NOVEMBER, the crew of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND began final preparations for Amphibious Warfare Training Week (AWTW) to be held at Onslow Bay, North Carolina, the week of 30 NOVEMBER. Also on the 23rd, Heat Stress training was conducted for all supervisory personnel. Preparation also continued for the DMTT visit with a Personal Qualification Standards (PQS) review of the Engineering Department. Naval Security Group DET, Norfolk, conducted an AGI brief for all officers and CIC watchstanders 24 NOVEMBER. Wednesday, 25 NOVEMBER, was the last work day before Thanksgiving. Captain's Call was held in the morning with the Commanding Officer discussing holiday safety and the upcoming ship's schedule. On Thanksgiving Day, 26 NOVEMBER, LSD 41 prepared a special holiday dinner and invited all crew members and their families to partake of the meal. The next three days were spent securing the ship for sea and making last minute preparations for AWTW. Monday, 30 NOVEMBER, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway for AWTW. Embarked were ten Naval Reservists and six members of the pre-commissioning crew of USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD 44) for training.

DECEMBER 1987

USS WHIDBEY ISLAND began DECEMBER at Onslow Bay, North Carolina, conducting Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV) operations with units of COMPHIBRON EIGHT as part of AWPW. The first static launches and recoveries were held 01 DECEMBER after embarking 26 AAVs from Bravo Co, 2nd AAV BN at anchorage in Onslow Bay. AAV operations continued through 03 DECEMBER with LSD 41 launching AAVs, anchoring, re-embarking the AAVs, getting underway and launching them again. On the evening of 03 DECEMBER, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND completed her AAV operations. After debarking the Bravo Co AAVs, LSD 41 embarked elements of BMU-2 and three assault craft for transport back to NAB. After anchoring at Lynnhaven Anchorage, and debarking the Assault Craft, the ship moored at Quaywall East, NAB, 04 DECEMBER. A children's Christmas party was held on the messdeck 06 DECEMBER.

Monday, 07 DECEMBER, found USS WHIDBEY ISLAND preparing for the visit and underway training with Diesel Mobile Training Team (DMTT), with Main Space watchstation training and selected program reviews. On 08 DECEMBER, DMTT arrived onboard to commence hot/cold checks and check for any restrictive deficiencies. Finding no restrictions, the ship got underway the morning of 09 DECEMBER for DMTT training in the Virginia Cape Hatteras Operations Area. Engineering Operating Procedures (EOPS) and Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises (BECCES) were conducted by each watch section in preparation for casualty control drills. On the evening of 10 DECEMBER, the bridge and CIC watches conducted a Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) to maximize readiness. Engineering training continued through 11 DECEMBER, and USS WHIDBEY ISLAND moored to Quaywall East that evening after getting a "thumbs up" from DMTT. The week concluded Saturday, 12 DECEMBER, with a Ship's Christmas Party at the Sheraton Ocean Front, Virginia Beach, which included dinner, dancing and a raffle.

The second holiday leave and upkeep period started 14 DECEMBER with approximately one third of the crew going on leave. In addition to the normal inport routine, a Third World Missile Brief was given by Naval Security Group Detachment (NSG DET), Norfolk, 14 DECEMBER. On 15 DECEMBER, the ship's store held a sale in conjunction with Pay Day. 17 DECEMBER brought a stores onload and the Petty Officer of the Quarter and Sailor of the Quarter Boards. The Sailor of the Year Board was held 18 DECEMBER, giving the Board a tough decision from among the many qualified candidates. A week of half work days and Duty Section only began 21 DECEMBER. Normal training and PT were conducted by the crewmembers onboard. An awards and advancement ceremony was held 22 DECEMBER with many crewmembers recognized for their achievements. A special holiday dinner was prepared for the crewmembers who were onboard

Christmas Day. Also, in the holiday spirit, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND won the Naval Amphibious Base holiday lighting contest in the Large Ship Category. The third leave period commenced 28 DECEMBER with, again, approximately one third of the crew taking leave. A Zone Inspection was held for Deck Department 30 DECEMBER. It would be 1987's last weekly inspection.