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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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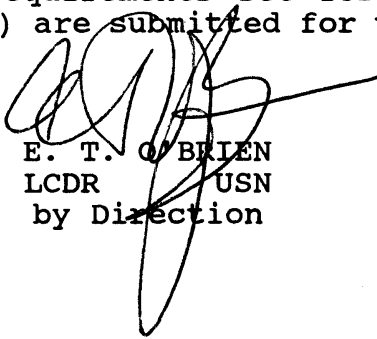
From: Commanding Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41)
To: Director, Naval History (OP-09BH)

Subj: 1991 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5720.12E

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Supporting Documents

1. In accordance with requirements set forth in reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are submitted for the period 01 January 1991 to 31 December 1991.


E. T. O'BRIEN
LCDR USN
by Direction

SHIP'S MISSION

The mission of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND is to conduct prompt, sustained combat operations at sea, worldwide, in support of national policy. Designed, built and manned to carry out MANEUVER WARFARE and the "over the horizon" amphibious assault, as part of an Amphibious Task Group, WHIDBEY ISLAND can carry four (4) Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC's)) in its floodable well, serve as the Primary Control Ship during an assault and provide a boat haven with docking, repair and fueling services for landing craft and boats. In short, WHIDBEY ISLAND is ideally suited to support our Navy's foremost strike asset... the U.S. Marine!

The WHIDBEY ISLAND class introduces to the fleet significant improvements with updated communications, combat systems, 20 and 60 ton cranes, expanded repair shops, two helicopter landing spots, complete medical and dental facilities, automated computer-based logistic support and an impressive engineering plant that gives WHIDBEY ISLAND an excellent capability for self sufficient operations. Equally effective in peace time as in wartime, WHIDBEY ISLAND is well suited to carry out a variety of humanitarian missions such as evacuations and disaster relief.

Assigned to COMPHIBRON TEN and homeported at the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia, Whidbey Island is commanded by Commander Bruce E. Sonn of White Plains, New York.

Enclosure (1)

JANUARY

- 1-2 ENROUTE TOULON, FRANCE. ANCHOR ST. RAPHAEL, FRANCE.
- 2-15 INPORT TOULON, FRANCE.
- 15-31 UNDERWAY WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN SEA.
- 17 VERTICAL REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS SIRIUS (T-AFS 8).
- 23-24 VERTICAL REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS SIRIUS AND UNDERWAY
REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS HENRY J. KAISER (T-AO 187).
- 29-31 OPERATION PROPULSION PLANT EXAMINATION (OPPE).

FEBRUARY

- 1-4 UNDERWAY WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN SEA.
- 4 MOORED CAGLIARI, SARDINIA, ITALY.
- 5-16 UNDERWAY WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN SEA.
- 5 UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS SIRIUS (T-AFS 8).
- 15 TRANSIT STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR.
- 16-20 MOORED NAVAL STATION ROTA, SPAIN. ENVIRONMENTAL WASHDOWN.
- 19 VADM OWENS, COMSIXTHFLT, VISIT.
- 20-28 ENROUTE MOOREHEAD CITY, NORTH CAROLINA.

Enclosure (2)

MARCH

- 1-2 UNDERWAY TRANSLANT CROSSING.
- 2 ANCHORAGE ONSLOW BAY, NORTH CAROLINA. COMMENCE OFFLOAD OF U.S. MARINE CORPS VEHICLES AND PERSONNEL.
- 3 MOOR MOREHEAD CITY, NORTH CAROLINA. COMPLETE OFFLOAD. EMBARK TIGERS. UNDERWAY ENROUTE TO LITTLE CREEK.
- 4 MOOR NAVAL AMPHIBIOUS BASE, LITTLE CREEK, VIRGINIA.
- 4-15 FIRST LEAVE AND UPKEEP PERIOD.
- 15-25 SECOND LEAVE AND UPKEEP PERIOD.
- 26-27 UNDERWAY FOR GOLF ANCHORAGE. AMMUNITION OFFLOAD.
- 27 COMMENCE DRYDOCK PHASED MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY AT METRO MACHINE CORPORATION SHIPYARD IN PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA.
- 27-31 DRYDOCK.

Enclosure (2)

APRIL

- 1-26 OLD DOMINION DRYDOCK, METRO MACHINE CORPORATION IN
PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA.
- 26 COMPLETE DRYDOCK PHASE OF DPMA. UNDOCKING.
- 26-30 MOORED FINGER PIER, METRO MACHINE CORPORATION SHIPYARD.

Enclosure (2)

MAY

1-31 INPORT METRO MACHINE CORPORATION, NORFOLK, VIRGINIA.

Enclosure (2)

JUNE

1-5 MOORED FINGER PIER, METRO MACHINE CORPORATION SHIPYARD,
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA FOR DRYDOCK PHASED MAINTENANCE
AVAILABILITY.

6-7 UNDERWAY SEA TRIALS.

7 WHIDBEY ISLAND RUNS AGROUND IN LITTLE CREEK HARBOR. MOORED
NAVAL STATION NORFOLK.

7-14 INPORT NAVAL STATION NORFOLK.

14 IN TRANSIT LITTLE CREEK. MOOR LITTLE CREEK.

14-30 INPORT LITTLE CREEK.

Enclosure (2)

JULY

1-7 INPORT LITTLE CREEK.

8 UNDERWAY VACAPES OPSAREA.

9-24 INPORT LITTLE CREEK.

25 UNDERWAY VACAPES OPSAREA.

26-31 INPORT LITTLE CREEK.

Enclosure (2)

AUGUST

1-4 INPORT LITTLE CREEK.
5-9 UNDERWAY VACAPES OPS AREA.
10-11 INPORT LITTLE CREEK.
12-20 UNDERWAY PHIBREFTRE VACAPES OPS AREA.
21-22 INPORT LITTLE CREEK.
23 DEPENDENTS CRUISE.
24-27 INPORT LITTLE CREEK.
28-30 UNDERWAY DMAT VACAPES OPS AREA.
31 INPORT LITTLE CREEK.

Enclosure (2)

SEPTEMBER

1-25 INPORT LITTLE CREEK.

26-30 UNDERWAY TYPE COMMANDERS AMPHIBIOUS TRAINING (TCAT) 4-91
VACAPES OPS AREA.

Enclosure (2)

OCTOBER

1-4 UNDERWAY ONSLOW BAY, NORTH CAROLINA TCAT 4-91.

7-25 UNDERWAY MARG 1-92 WORK-UPS.

25-31 INPORT LITTLE CREEK.

Enclosure (2)

NOVEMBER

1-7 INPORT LITTLE CREEK

7-8 UNDERWAY "G" ANCHORAGE FOR AMMO ONLOAD

8-30 INPORT LITTLE CREEK. PRE-OVERSEAS MOVEMENT PERIOD.

Enclosure (2)

DECEMBER

- 1-4 INPORT LITTLE CREEK.
- 5 DEPLOY MEDITERRANEAN AMPHIBIOUS READY GROUP (MARG) 1-92.
- 6 INPORT MOREHEAD CITY, NORTH CAROLINA. 24 MEU ONLOAD.
- 7-17 TRANSLANT.
- 18 INPORT ROTA, SPAIN.
- 19-22 UNDERWAY SIERRA DE RETIN, SPAIN. TRANSIT STRAITS OF
GIBRALTAR.
- 23-31 INPORT CARTAGENA, SPAIN.

Enclosure (2)

JANUARY

USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41), commanded by Commander Thomas L. Breitinger, continued her deployment as part of MARG 3-90 at the beginning of 1991, in company with flagship USS NASHVILLE (LPD 13), USS INCHON (LPH 12), USS NEWPORT (LST 1179), AND USS FAIRFAX COUNTY (LST 1193). WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway for St. Raphael, France on 1 January, 1991. Early the following morning, the ship anchored off St. Raphael, France and set Condition 1A for LCAC operations. After offloading the LCACs and preloads of Marine Corps vehicles, WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway for Toulon, France and moored that afternoon at the Honors Pier. The ship offloaded the remainder of Marine Corps vehicles and personnel for a dual French/United States training exercise at Camp de Canjiers, France via a specially designed stern gate/ramp assembly.

On 3 January, WHIDBEY ISLAND shifted berths to Pier 5 and commenced a two-week Restricted Availability (RAV). The ship received 206,010 gallons of F76 Fuel by shore bunker on 5 January, and continued making preparations for an upcoming 3M Inspection. Ship's force continued topside preservation and painting on 6 to 9 January. In addition, the Commanding Officer attended a luncheon onboard French Ship FOCH (R 99). On the following day, the Captain held an awards ceremony, during which Engineman First Class (Surface Warfare) [REDACTED] was honored as WHIDBEY ISLAND's

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Sailor of the Year for 1990. WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a 3M Inspection on 13 and 14 January, finishing with an overall score of 81.4. Also, the ship shifted berths to Honors Pier in order to complete onload of Marine vehicles. After completing her RAV, WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway again on 15 January enroute to St. Raphael, France to onload LCACs. The ship set Condition 1A for LCAC operations to onload three LCACs with Marine vehicle preloads. Afterward, WHIDBEY ISLAND departed for MODLOC to rendezvous with other MARG 3-90 units. Engineering Department conducted one set of BECCes later that night. MARG 3-90 units steamed in formation the next day, and the ship conducted another set of BECCes.

On 17 January, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a mass casualty drill, receiving eight simulated medevacs via CH-46E helicopter, two BECCe sets, and general quarters with a main space fire drill. The ship conducted a vertical replenishment with USNS SIRIUS (T-AFS 8), receiving 79 pallets of stores. Enroute for rendezvous with USS BELKNAP (CG 26) on 18 January, the ship conducted deceptive lighting and one BECCe set, including a main space fire drill. The next day, the ship held another BECCe set with a main space fire drill, followed by an anti-mine gunnery exercise and a small arms firing. The ship conducted BECCes and flight quarters for night vision goggle (NVG) deck landing qualifications (DLQs) on 21 January.

WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted NVG operations with CH-53E

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helicopters and one BECCE set, followed by a two-hit battle problem including general quarters and a Close-In Weapons System (CIWS), 50 caliber, and 20 millimeter gunnery exercise on 22 January. The following day, the ship again conducted general quarters for a main space fire drill. Later that night, the ship conducted a vertical replenishment and refueling at sea with USNS SIRIUS. WHIDBEY ISLAND completed the VertRep/RAS with USNS SIRIUS early the next morning. The ship received 38 pallets of stores and 181,605 gallons of F76 fuel. WHIDBEY ISLAND then conducted a fueling at sea and a connected replenishment with USNS HENRY J. KAISER. She received 131,292 gallons of F76 fuel and four pallets of stores via conrep.

On 25 January the ship conducted helicopter crash/flight deck aircraft firefighting training. Afterward she conducted a Close-In Weapons System (CIWS)/.50 caliber gunnery exercise. In addition, the ship held LCAC and SBU-20 small boat operations for proficiency training and over the horizon navigation training. Enroute to a new MODLOC on 26 January, WHIDBEY ISLAND steamed in formation with INCHON, NASHVILLE, and FAIRFAX COUNTY. The following day the group transited the Straits of Messina enroute to the new MODLOC. In addition, the ship conducted hot/cold checks for Operation Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE) preparations. The ship continued with OPPE preps and enroute to the new MODLOC.

WHIDBEY ISLAND embarked the Propulsion Examination Board (PEB)

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and commenced OPPE on 29 January and detached from MARG 3-90 the following day to continue OPPE. That evening COMPHIBRON TWO embarked WHIDBEY ISLAND for the next day's OPPE debrief. On 31 January, at the conclusion of OPPE debrief, WHIDBEY ISLAND received a grade of satisfactory with a 2 year certification. Afterward, COMPHIBRON TWO and PEB debarked the ship via CH-46E helicopter to USS NASHVILLE.

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FEBRUARY

At the beginning of February WHIDBEY ISLAND was still underway in the Western Mediterranean Sea. Commander Thomas L. Breitingger, Commanding Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41), commissioned Senior Chief Boatswain Mate (Surface Warfare) [REDACTED] to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer (CWO2), the first ceremony of its kind onboard. WHIDBEY ISLAND remained underway until early 4 February when she moored at Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy to take on 89,964 gallons of F76 fuel. Later that day the ship got underway again to rendezvous with MARG 3-90. On 5 February WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a vertical replenishment with USNS SIRIUS (T-AFS 8), receiving 81 pallets of stores. The next two days the ship steamed in company with INCHON, NASHVILLE, NEWPORT, and FAIRFAX COUNTY. WHIDBEY ISLAND held a Combat Systems Training Team (CSTT) brief followed by a Lear Jet Tracking for combat systems assessment of anti-air warfare detect-to-engage capabilities on 7 February. The exercise received a grade of satisfactory.

On 9 February the ship conducted a general quarters drill for a Chemical, Biological, and Radiological (CBR) attack, in addition to LCAC and small boat operations. Enroute to Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy on 11 February, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a general quarters drill for nuclear detonation with battle messing. The following

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day, flight operations for ammunition transfer and a mass casualty exercise were conducted. WHIDBEY ISLAND anchored off Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy on 13 February for a couple of hours before getting underway with other units of MARG 3-90 for Rota, Spain. On late 15 February, the ship transited the Straits of Gibraltar before conducting an early morning underway launch of LCACs with preloads of U.S. Marine Corps vehicles. WHIDBEY ISLAND moored at Naval Station Rota, Spain on 16 February to commence environmental washdown of the ship and her Marine vehicles. The ship continued her agricultural washdown and received 32,247 gallons of F-76 fuel and unloaded stores the following day.

Vice Admiral Owens, Commander, Sixth Fleet, visited WHIDBEY ISLAND on 19 February to congratulate the officers and crew for their excellent performance and devotion to duty during MARG 3-90 Deployment. On the next day, the ship commenced backload of all Marine Corps vehicles via crane and LCAC and completed backload later that afternoon. WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway on 20 February from Rota, Spain enroute to Moorehead City with the other units of MARG 3-90. During the transatlantic crossing in the last week of February, the ship conducted a customs inspection, basic engineering casualty control exercises, flight operations, man overboard drills, small arms familiarization firings, a personnel inspection and an awards ceremony.

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MARCH

WHIDBEY ISLAND continued enroute to Moorehead City, North Carolina at the beginning of March. The command held shipwide return and reunion seminars for both Navy and Marine Corps personnel on the first and second day of March. On 2 March the ship anchored in Onslow Bay, North Carolina to commence offload of U.S. Marine Corps rolling stock and personnel via LCAC. WHIDBEY ISLAND remained overnight in Onslow Bay and then weighed anchor the following morning and proceeded for Morehead City, North Carolina to complete offload of U.S. Marine Corps cargo and personnel. When the offload was complete, the crew embarked 85 tiger cruise guests and WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway for Little Creek, Virginia.

Early on 4 March, at the conclusion of the extended seven month MARG 3-90 Deployment, WHIDBEY ISLAND returned to homeport at the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia. The ship commenced the first leave/standdown period later that afternoon. On 5 March, Assault Craft Unit 4, SEAL Team Two and Special Boat Unit 20 commenced offload of their equipment and cargo from the deployment and completed the evolution the following day. For the next nine days the ship concentrated on its first post-deployment leave and upkeep period.

The first leave period ended on 15 March, and WHIDBEY

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ISLAND experienced a full work day for all hands to facilitate turnover of duties. The second post-deployment leave and upkeep period

commenced at the end of the work day and continued for the next 10 days. On 20 March, representatives from Metro Machine Corporation met with the Captain, Executive Officer, various Department Heads, and the Damage Control Assistant to discuss the ship's upcoming yard period. The second leave and upkeep period ended on 25 March.

WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway on 26 March for Golf anchorage to offload the ship's ammunition and remained at anchorage overnight. Early on 27 March, WHIDBEY ISLAND weighed anchor and proceeded to enter Old Dominion Dry Dock at Metro Machine Corporation in Portsmouth, Virginia for a 75-day Drydock Phased Maintenance Availability (DPMA). WHIDBEY ISLAND remained in drydock at Metro Machine Shipyards throughout the rest of the month.

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APRIL

WHIDBEY ISLAND began April in Old Dominion Drydock at Metro Machine Corporation in Portsmouth, Virginia. The 75 day shipyard period commenced with sandblasting to bare metal and repainting the hull and freeboard; removal, balancing, and polishing of the ship's twin Controllable Pitch Propellers, in addition to repair of blade pitch control elements; repair or replacement of 175 sea suction and ballast valves; relocation of several radio antennas; installation of a new SPS-64 surface navigation radar; overhauls of the main propulsion diesel engines and ship's service diesel generators; and replacement of glass reinforced plastic potable hot water pipes with copper pipes.

Lieutenant Commander Eugene T. O'Brien relieved Commander David W. Schreck as Executive Officer of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41) on 5 April. The command re-established its Adopt-A-School program with Bayside Junior High School on 10 April, when volunteer crewmembers spent the day roaming from class to class and talking with students. Afterward the faculty sponsored a picnic for the sailors and the teachers. The ship switched from three section to four section duty on 17 April.

After a thorough and satisfactory hull inspection on 24 and 25 April, WHIDBEY ISLAND commenced undocking early on 26 April

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and was relocated to the Finger Pier at Metro Machine Corporation Shipyard. While the yard workers were responsible for performing many jobs, the ship's force was busy monitoring the quality of the work, standing fire watches where welding and cutting was taking place, refurbishing spaces not included in the shipyard's contract, conducting training and keeping the ship clean. WHIDBEY ISLAND finished out the rest of the month at the Finger Pier.

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MAY

WHIDBEY ISLAND began May moored to the Finger Pier at Metro Machine Corporation Shipyard in Norfolk, Virginia. The ship remained at the Finger Pier for the rest of the month, while shipyard workers and ship's force continued maintenance and repairs to the ship. On 7 May, Captain Patrick M. Muldoon, Commander, Amphibious Squadron Ten, visited WHIDBEY ISLAND for lunch and an inspection tour. The command commenced its annual Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society fund drive on 10 May.

WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted general quarters with a main space fire drill walkthrough on 15 May. The following day the command held a general quarters drill along with an abandon ship drill. WHIDBEY ISLAND again conducted another general quarters drill on 21 May. Rear Admiral J. B. LaPlante, Commander, Amphibious Group Two, visited WHIDBEY ISLAND on 24 May for a brief orientation tour. On 31 May WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted dock trials at the Finger Pier in preparation for Sea Trials in early June.

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JUNE

WHIDBEY ISLAND remained moored to the Finger Pier at Metro Machine Corporation Shipyard in early June. On 4 June the crew participated in a Fast Cruise in preparation for leaving the shipyard. Two days later WHIDBEY ISLAND completed her 75 day Drydock Phased Maintenance Availability (DPMA) was underway for Sea Trials in the Virginia/Cape Hatteras Operations Area.

On the morning of 6 June, WHIDBEY ISLAND satisfactorily ran the degaussing range north and south. During the rest of the day the ship streamed NIXIE and conducted a Close-In Weapons System (CIWS) detect-to-engage non-firing exercise, a general quarters drill, an abandon ship drill, and a man overboard drill. In addition, the ship completed diesel trends on 2A and 2B Main Propulsion Diesel Engines (MPDE) and provided training for reserve unit, USS ASHLAND (LSD 48), and USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD 44) personnel. On 7 June the crew completed diesel trends on 1A and 1B MPDE, an anchor drop test, a combat systems test, and ballast/deballast tests/checks. WHIDBEY ISLAND completed Sea Trials later that afternoon and returned to her homeport at the Naval Amphibious Base (NAB) in Little Creek, Virginia.

During Sea and Anchor Detail while entering Little Creek Harbor, the ship ran aground in the channel on an uncharted sand

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bar at approximately 14:30 between the two jetties. Using ship's MPDE's and Little Creek tugs, the ship got underway by backing off the bar and proceeded to Norfolk Naval Station where she moored for about one week. While inport Naval Station Norfolk, an underwater hull inspection determined there was only superficial damage to the ship resulting from the grounding. On 8 June the ship commenced resurfacing the two spot flight deck and retiling the messdecks.

Commander Bruce E. Sonn, Prospective Commanding Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41), arrived onboard on 10 June for turnover of duties with Commander Thomas L. Breitinger, Commanding Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41). On 14 June, WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway from Naval Station Norfolk and returned to homeport at NAB. During the following week inport Little Creek, final preparations were for the upcoming Change Of Command.

On 21 June, Commander Bruce E. Sonn relieved Commander Thomas L. Breitinger as Commanding Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41). Commodore Patrick M. Muldoon, Commander, Amphibious Squadron Ten, and the Whidbey Island's Commissioning Commanding Officer, was the guest speaker at the Change of Command ceremonies held in the ship's well deck.

Rear Admiral J.B. LaPlante, III, Commander, Amphibious Group Two, embarked WHIDBEY ISLAND on 26 June as his flagship and remained embarked for the duration of the month. One hundred

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members of Benjamin Banneker Math and Science Honor Society from the Washington D.C. metropolitan area embarked WHIDBEY ISLAND on 28 June during their tour of Naval facilities in the Norfolk area. The ship remained inport for the rest of the month.

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JULY

USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41) began July inport at her homeport on the Naval Amphibious Base in Little Creek, Virginia. On 8 July, WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway for local operations and training in the Virginia-Cape Hatteras operations area. The ship conducted SIQ-32 tests to check the bearing accuracy of the system, two precision anchorages, small boat operations, general quarters, abandon ship, navigational training, meteorological training.

In addition, WHIDBEY ISLAND embarked four midshipman for the duration of the month. Seaman [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was found unconscious in a supply storeroom later that day, suffering from a probable heat stroke casualty. Approximately two hours later, SN [REDACTED] had fully recovered.

On the following day, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a precision anchorage, diesel trends, navigational training, meteorological training, helicopter crash firefighting, and small boat operations. However, as WHIDBEY ISLAND prepared to get underway from anchorage, a port hydraulic pitch system lube oil leak through a zerk fitting at the OOD box-shaft junction was discovered during pitch checks. WHIDBEY ISLAND moored later that day at Pier 4 Naval Station, Norfolk, to permit warranty repairs to port shaft controllable pitch propeller system. The ship remained at Naval Station,

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Norfolk, for approximately one week.

On 16 July, WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway for Sea Trials in the Virginia-Cape Hatteras Operations Area. The ship conducted diesel trends followed by a full power run assist check before returning to the Naval Amphibious Base in Little Creek.

WHIDBEY ISLAND commenced Combat Systems Readiness Review (CSRR) and Air Systems Readiness Review (ASRR) on 15 July. The ship completed CSRR and ASRR on 19 July.

██████████ ██████████ ██████████, daughter of Lieutenant ██████████ ██████████ ██████████, Supply Officer for WHIDBEY ISLAND, and Mrs. ██████████ ██████████ ██████████, was christened onboard WHIDBEY ISLAND on 20 July by Lieutenant ██████████ ██████████ ██████████, staff chaplain onboard USS INCHON (LPH 12). The ship's bell was used as a font for the ceremony, only the third of its kind in the history of the ship. On the following Monday, 22 July, U.S. Marine Corps representatives conducted a satisfactory Troop Habitability Inspection onboard ship.

Commodore Patrick M. Muldoon, Commander, Amphibious Squadron TEN, visited WHIDBEY ISLAND on 23 July for a brief tour and luncheon with Commander Bruce E. Sonn, Commanding Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41).

WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway on 24 July for a successful full power run and a precision anchorage. On the following morning, WHIDBEY ISLAND anchored at G-3 Anchorage for an ammunition onload. Afterward, the ship was underway from anchorage and moored later

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that day at the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Quaywall Dogleg.

Engineering Department conducted Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises (BECCEs) inport on 29 July and continued the drills until the end of the month. On 31 July, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a walkthrough of a main space fire drill including general quarters.

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AUGUST

WHIDBEY ISLAND began August inport Little Creek. On 1 August the ship conducted its last day of semi-annual physical readiness testing in the morning. Later in the afternoon, the ship conducted a main space fire drill with general quarters and basic engineering casualty control exercises (BECES).

WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway on 5 August for the Virginia-Cape Hatteras Operations Area to conduct deck landing qualifications (DLQ's) with the United States Air Force. From 5 to 8 August, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a total of 600 landings for deck landing qualifications, in addition to general quarters with main space fire drills, meteorological training, shiphandling drills, .45 caliber familiarization firings, .50 caliber anti-mine exercises, BECCE's, ballast operations, and small boat operations.

On 9 August WHIDBEY ISLAND returned to homeport. Later that afternoon, the ship underwent a Supply Material Inspection and received an overall grade of satisfactory. Over the weekend the crew made final preparations for the upcoming Amphibious Refresher Training (PHIBREFTRE).

WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway on 12 August for PHIBREFTRE. The ship conducted a precision anchorage, small boat operations,

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ballast operations, and cross deck training with personnel from the pre-commissioning detachment ASHLAND. On the following day, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted ship to shore movements with three Landing Craft Air Cushions (LCACs) from Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 4.

On 14 August, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted ship to shore movements with 4 LCM-8's, in addition to sterngate marriages for receiving and handling casualties in the well deck from an Landing Craft Utility (LCU). On the following day, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted ship to shore and well deck operations with 4 LCM-8's, alongside well deck cargo handling with LCU, and receiving/handling casualties from LCM-8's. The ship conducted 3 underway launches with LCM-8s, in addition to flight quarters, a helicopter crash drill, receiving/handling casualties from a helicopter, a precision anchorage, and cross deck training with PRECOM DET ASHLAND.

On 17 August, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a pre-dawn assault followed by Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV) operations, thus completing PHIBREFTRE ahead of schedule and with an overall score of 98.

At the conclusion of PHIBREFTRE, WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway from anchorage on the recommendation of NAVEASTOCEANCEN to conduct hurricane evasion tactics for Hurricane Bob, which was heading up the eastern seaboard. WHIDBEY ISLAND sailed approximately 300 miles southeast of Cape Hatteras into the western Atlantic Ocean to evade Hurricane Bob. Early on 19 August, WHIDBEY ISLAND

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commenced its return to homeport, and on the following morning the ship moored at Quaywall East Dogleg, Little Creek.

On 21 August the ship held general quarters with a main space fire drill in preparation for Diesel Maintenance Assist Team (DMAT) training the following week. WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway on 23 August for the ship's annual Dependent's Cruise, proceeding to anchorage in order to conduct demonstrations of wet well operations, an LCU stern gate marriage, LCAC operations, flight operations, and a steel beach picnic on the flight deck. Afterward, the ship steamed out to the vicinity of Chesapeake Light, came about, and then returned to homeport, mooring at the Dogleg Quaywall East, Little Creek.

WHIDBEY ISLAND commenced DMAT on 26 August with hot and cold checks. The ship got underway for DMAT on 28 August and conducted BECCES for two days in the VACAPES OPS AREA. On 30 August the ship successfully completed DMAT and returned to homeport. The ship remained inport on the last day of the month.

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SEPTEMBER

WHIDBEY ISLAND began September inport Little Creek. On 4 September the ship started an Intermediate Maintenance Availability (IMAV) which lasted approximately two weeks. The ship conducted Combat Systems Readiness Review (CSRR) Phase II from 9 to 13 September. The overall grade for CSRR II was outstanding.

On 16 September, WHIDBEY ISLAND initiated two new Chief Petty Officers into the CPO mess - Chief Radioman (Surface Warfare) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and Chief Mess Specialist (Surface Warfare) [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Also, later that afternoon, Third Division began installation of the ship's two new 25 MM machine gun mounts and guns on the 06 level. Over the following two days, the command conducted the pre-deployment troop habitability inspection. The inspection proved outstanding. On 18 September a training team from Commander Amphibious Squadron 2 conducted its pre-deployment medical readiness inspection of the ship's medical department. The medical department received a satisfactory grade.

Approximately 200 second lieutenants from the Basic School in Quantico, Virginia visited WHIDBEY ISLAND for a familiarization tour of the ship as part of a field trip to the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek. Commander Bruce E. Sonn, Commanding Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41), held an inspection and awards ceremony

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on the ship's flight deck on 24 September to reward efforts of the crew for the previous weeks.

WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway on 26 September for Type Commanders Amphibious Training (TCAT) 4-91 in Onslow Bay, North Carolina, in conjunction with USS INCHON (LPH 2), USS SHREVEPORT (LPD 12), USS NEWPORT (LST 1179) and USS FAIRFAX COUNTY (LST 1193). TCAT lasted until the end of the month and included flight deck landing qualifications (DLQ), landing craft air cushion (LCAC) operations, Close-In Weapons System (CIWS) firing, and shipboard familiarization tours for U.S. Marine Corps personnel. WHIDBEY ISLAND finished September underway for TCAT in Onslow Bay, North Carolina.

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OCTOBER

WHIDBEY ISLAND was still underway for Type Commanders Amphibious Training (TCAT) 4-91 in Onslow Bay, North Carolina at the beginning of October. In conjunction with USS INCHON (LPH 12), USS SHREVEPORT (LPD 12), USS NEWPORT (LST 1179), AND USS FAIRFAX COUNTY (LST 1193), WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted flight deck landing qualifications (DLQ), landing craft air cushion (LCAC) operations, Close-In Weapons System (CIWS) firing, and shipboard familiarization for U.S. Marine Corps personnel. On 2 October WHIDBEY ISLAND and SHREVEPORT conducted an anti-mine exercise. On the following day, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a day and night dry Fueling At Sea (FAS) with USNS JOHN LENTHAL. WHIDBEY ISLAND concluded TCAT 4-91 with a satisfactory grade on 4 October, returning to homeport in Little Creek, Virginia.

After remaining inport over the weekend, WHIDBEY ISLAND was again underway on 7 October for Mediterranean Amphibious Ready Group (MARG) 1-92 work-ups. WHIDBEY ISLAND went to anchorage in order to onload to onload three Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) from Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 4. Afterward, along with INCHON, SHREVEPORT, NEWPORT, and FAIRFAX COUNTY, WHIDBEY ISLAND sortied for Onslow bay, North Carolina to conduct MARG 1-92 work-ups. Later that night, WHIDBEY ISLAND went to anchorage again in

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Onslow Bay, North Carolina, to offload the LCAC to commence 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) embarkation. Onload of Marine Corps personnel and their vehicles was completed in four hours. WHIDBEY ISLAND remained at anchor overnight and the following day to conduct shipboard orientation for 24 MEU personnel.

On 09 October the SEALs launched Rigid Hulled Inflatable Boats (RHIB) to could conduct a beach survey. The ship continued shipboard orientation for embarked personnel, and also got underway for night formation steaming. On the following day, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a man overboard drill and a token Fueling At Sea (FAS) with USS AINSWORTH (FF 1090) with an emergency breakaway.

Units of MARG 1-92 were ordered to sail for Vieques, Puerto Rico on 10 October. Enroute the ship conducted general quarters, man overboard, diesel trends, deck landing qualification drills, flashing light, junior officer celestial navigation training, and formation steaming drills. WHIDBEY ISLAND and the other units of MARG 1-92 arrived at Vieques, Puerto Rico on 13 October. On the following day, WHIDBEY ISLAND inserted the SEALs and conducted an air/surface assault rehearsal, in conjunction with the rest of MARG 1-92. On 15 October, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted the actual air/surface assault. Afterward, the ship night steamed and the engineering plant conducted basic engineering casualty control exercises (BECCES). The ship recovered the SEAL team via RHIBs that night and concluded training in the Caribbean.

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WHIDBEY ISLAND and the other ships of MARG 1-92 departed Vieques, Puerto Rico on 16 October. Enroute to Onslow Bay, North Carolina, the ship held junior officer ship handling, LCAC launch/recovery for craftmaster training, general quarters, man overboard, flight quarters, BECCE, and anti-mine drills.

Early on 20 October, WHIDBEY ISLAND arrived at Onslow Bay, North Carolina, and conducted LCAC operations. On the following day, in conjunction with the other ships, WHIDBEY ISLAND commenced an air/surface warfare choke point transit exercise and continued it through the next day, in addition to war at sea exercises, flight quarters, and formation steaming. The ship conducted SEAL and Battalion Landing Team (BLT) reconnaissance insert/recovery via RHIB boats, and a simulated non-combatant evacuation exercise on 22 October. WHIDBEY ISLAND offloaded U.S. Marine Corps personnel the following day. Units of MARG 1-92 conducted their Special Operations Capable Exercise (SOCEX) on 23 and 24 October to conclude MARG 1-92 work-ups.

After launching LCACs and RHIBs early on 25 October, WHIDBEY ISLAND returned to homeport in Little Creek, Virginia and commenced Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) period. The ship's Halloween Party for dependents and their children was held in the well deck on 27 October. The rest of the month inport was spent preparing onloading stores and preparing for the upcoming deployment.

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NOVEMBER

WHIDBEY ISLAND began November inport at the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia. On the evening of 4 November, Commander Bruce E. Sonn, Commanding Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41), Lieutenant Commander Eugene T. O'Brien, Executive Officer, and Master Chief Master-At-Arms (Surface Warfare) William O. Wyndham, Command Master Chief, hosted a Spouse Appreciation Dinner on the messdecks for wives of sailors assigned to WHIDBEY ISLAND. The command held its pre-deployment single sailors brief on 5 November.

WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway for "G" Anchorage on 7 November to onload small arms ammunition. After completing the onload later that afternoon, WHIDBEY ISLAND returned to homeport on the following day and commenced its Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) period.

The command held its annual Christmas Party at Grand Affairs on Pleasure House Road, on 15 November. The Captain, officers, crew, and guests of WHIDBEY ISLAND attended the holiday event.

The command held a POM children/parent workshop on the messdecks on 19 November.

As part of a week long amphibious warfare conference at the Naval Amphibious Base, WHIDBEY ISLAND hosted tours for participants of the annual meeting on 20 November.

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Engineman Second Class (Surface Warfare) [REDACTED] and the former [REDACTED] exchanged marriage vows in the Pilot House of WHIDBEY ISLAND on 22 November. The Honorable Kevin O'Brien of Chesapeake, Virginia, presided over the wedding ceremony, the first of its kind in the ship's existence.

WHIDBEY ISLAND remained inport Little Creek for the rest of November, making final preparations for the upcoming deployment to the Mediterranean in December.

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DECEMBER

On 5 December, WHIDBEY ISLAND deployed as part of Mediterranean Amphibious Ready Group (MARG) 1-92. Embarked were detachments from Assault Craft Unit 4, Special Boat Unit 20, Beach Master Unit 2, and SEAL Team Eight. Along with USS INCHON (LPH 12), USS SHREVEPORT (LPD 12), USS FAIRFAX COUNTY (LST 1193), and USS NEWPORT (LST 1179), WHIDBEY ISLAND sailed for Morehead City, North Carolina to embark U.S. Marine Corps personnel and equipment of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU).

Early on the following day, WHIDBEY ISLAND moored pierside in Morehead City to onload Marine Corps personnel and equipment via sterngate marriage to the pier. After the ship got underway again, Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) transported the rest of the 24 MEU equipment and personnel. Later that day, WHIDBEY ISLAND and the other units of MARG 1-92 sortied to transit the Atlantic Ocean in formation steaming.

On 7 December, Navy and Marine Corps crewmembers commemorated the 50th Anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor with a brief, but solemn ceremony on the ship's flight deck. Lieutenant [REDACTED], embarked Chaplain for 24 MEU, delivered the benediction, followed by a twenty-one gun salute.

During the transatlantic crossing, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted

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several general quarters, abandon ship, man overboard, junior officer ship maneuvering, small boat, and small arms training drills. The ship also conducted numerous flight quarters, LCAC operations, and Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises (BECCEs), in addition to streaming the NIXIE anti-torpedo system. MARG 1-92 held a bluewater turnover with MARG 2-91 in the Atlantic Ocean on 11 December.

WHIDBEY ISLAND arrived at Rota, Spain on 18 December. On the following morning, MARG 1-92 was underway for Sierra de Retin, Spain to conduct a joint U.S./Spanish amphibious exercise that afternoon and evening. The ship participated in a combined rehearsal assault by launching and recovering LCAC/RHIB boats, inserting and extracting the SEALs, and conducting flight operations. At the conclusion of Sierra de Retin, WHIDBEY ISLAND commenced its annual two-day safety standdown and transited the Straits of Gibraltar. WHIDBEY ISLAND arrived at Cartagena, Spain on 23 December for its holiday port visit.

On Christmas Eve, Chaplain [REDACTED] concelebrated Midnight Mass with the priest of Parroquia Santa Maria de Gracia in Cartagena. Approximately 100 crewmembers attended the ceremony with about 300 local parishioners. WHIDBEY ISLAND celebrated Christmas Day with a savory holiday repast on the mess decks prepared by our Navy/Marine Corps mess specialists.

While inport Cartagena, Spain, WHIDBEY ISLAND commenced its

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