



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41)
FPO AE 09591-1729

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From: Commanding Officer, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41)
To: Director, Naval History (NO9BH), Naval Historical
Center, Washington Navy Yard, 901 M Street SE, Bldg.
57, Washington, D.C. 20374-5060

Subj: 1998 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

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 1998 to 31 December 1998.

R L Clark Jr.

R. L. CLARK, JR.

Copy to:
COMPHIBGRU TWO

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

The mission of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD-41) is to conduct prompt, sustained combat operations at sea, worldwide, in support of national policy. WHIDBEY ISLAND, homeported in Little Creek, VA and under the immediate senior command of Commander Amphibious Group TWO, was designed, built and manned to carry U.S. Marines in support of maneuver warfare and the "over the horizon" amphibious assault. WHIDBEY ISLAND can carry four Landing Air Craft Cushion (LCACs) in its flood-able 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 significant improvements to the fleet: updated communications, combat systems, 20 and 60 ton cranes, expanded repair shops, two helicopter landing spots and complete medical and dental facilities. The ship also has automated computer-based logistic support and an impressive engineering plant that gives WHIDBEY ISLAND an excellent capability for self-sufficient operations. Equally effective in peacetime as in wartime, WHIDBEY ISLAND is well suited to carry out a variety of humanitarian missions such as non-combatant evacuations and disaster relief.

With primary missions of Amphibious Warfare, Mobility, Command and Control, and Anti-Air Warfare, WHIDBEY ISLAND is designed to support Special Warfare, Fleet Support Operations (refueling other ships), non-combatant operations, Ocean Surveillance, and Electronic Warfare. Clearly a multi-mission capable ship, WHIDBEY ISLAND's crew, embarked Marines, and detachments must be multi-talented. Representing almost every state in the Union, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Phillipines, we all are privileged and proud to serve aboard WHIDBEY ISLAND.

Enclosure (1)

JANUARY 1998

01 - 12 JAN POST DEPLOYMENT LEAVE

12- 31 JAN SSQ-99 (CRYPTO VAN) REMOVAL

13 JAN DETAILER VISIT

13 - 14 JAN IMMUNIZATIONS

14 JAN FAST CRUISE
ADMIN GQ

15 JAN EXPEDITIONARY WARFARE TRAINING GROUP ATLANTIC VISIT

16 JAN PRE-AVAILABILITY AVIATION CERTIFICATION MEETING

22 - 23 JAN HELO FIREFIGHTING TEAM TRAINING

26 - 30 JAN AVIATION CERTIFICATION PRE-AVAILABILITY TECH ASSIST

30 JAN LT [REDACTED] RETIREMENT CEREMONY

FEBRUARY 1998

01 - 02 FEB CRYPTO VAN REMOVAL

03 FEB COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS GROUP TWO QUALITY OF LIFE INSPECTION

04 FEB FAST CRUISE

09 FEB UNDERWAY ENROUTE PANAMA CITY, FL

13 FEB MOOR PANAMA CITY, FL
EMBARK LCAC TEST EQUIPMENT/PERSONNEL

14-15 FEB LCAC TESTING OPS

16 FEB UNDERWAY ENROUTE NEW ORLEANS, LA

18 FEB MOOR, ST. JULIAN'S WHARF NEW ORLEANS, LA

18 - 26 FEB MARDI GRAS

19 FEB HERMES BALL (CO/XO)

20 FEB LAFAYETTE HIGH SCHOOL NJROTC TOUR

24 FEB REX BALL (CO)

26 FEB UNDERWAY ENROUTE NAB LITTLE CREEK, VA

MARCH 1998

01 - 03 MAR TRANSIT TO ONSLOW BAY, NC

02 MAR ANCHOR ONSLOW BAY, NC
LCAC OPS
UNDERWAY ENROUTE LITTLE CREEK, VA

03 MAR LCAC OPS
MOOR NAB LITTLE CREEK, VA

05 MAR E-5 EXAM

09 - 12 MAR PRE-LIGHT OFF TRAINING I (ETG)

16 - 20 MAR PERSONNEL AFLOAT TRAINING GROUP VISIT

20 MAR EWC(SW) [REDACTED] RE-ENLISTMENT

23 - 24 MAR COMMAND ASSESSMENT TEAM TRAINING - CPG-2

27 MAR CHANGE OF COMMAND

APRIL 1998

01 APR TOXIC GAS/HAZMAT FIRE DRILL
BERTH SHIFT TO QUAYWALL FOR AMMO OFFLOAD
BERTH SHIFT BACK TO PIER 14N

02 APR SK2 [REDACTED] REENLISTMENT

03 APR RM3 [REDACTED] REENLISTMENT

07 APR OFFLOAD ALL HAZMAT
DEFUEL

08 APR USMC COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE VISIT

10 APR ITT SHIP'S BRIEF
EWTGLANT VISIT

13 APR UNDERWAY
DEGAUSSING RUN
MOOR - PIER 3 NORSHIPCO

14 APR BEGIN FLEET MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY

22 APR NAVAL WARFARE PUBLICATIONS LIBRARY INSPECTION

27 - 30 APR COMMAND PHYSICAL READINESS TEST

MAY 1998

01- 30 MAY PHASE MAINTENANCE
FLEET MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY

04 MAY NOB PACE COORDINATOR VISIT

05 MAY I-DIVISION

12 MAY PRE-LIGHT OFF TRAINING II

18- 22 MAY SNAPSHOT

19 MAY COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS GROUP TWO VISIT

28 MAY ENGINEERING EVOLUTIONS
ENGINEERING OPERATING PROCEDURES TRAINING
ENGINEERING OPERATIONAL CASUALTY CONTROL TRAINING

JUNE 1998

01 - 22 JUN FLEET MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY

02 JUN REFUEL

02-03 JUN PQS ASSIST VISIT – ATLANTIC TRAINING GROUP

08 - 12 JUN COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS GROUP TWO
PRE-LIGHT OFF TRAINING III

15 - 19 JUN COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS GROUP TWO LIGHT OFF
ASSESSMENT

22 JUN FAST CRUISE
GENERAL QUARTERS

23 - 24 JUN U/W DEPART NORSHIPCO
SEA TRIALS/DIESEL TRENDS

24 JUN BALLAST/SMALL BOAT OPS
MOOR PIER 16S NAB LITTLE CREEK, VA

30 JUN SM1(SW) [REDACTED] REENLISTMENT

JULY 1998

01 JUL PIT SWORD MAINTENANCE

07 - 10 JUL HAZMAT ASSIST VISIT

13 JUL UNDERWAY
 DIESEL TREND ANALYSIS
 SWEPT CHANNEL EXERCISE

15 JUL MOOR NAB LITTLE CREEK, VA

16 JUL BEGIN SLQ-32 (EW SUITE) GROOM
 DIRECT DECOY INTERFACE (DDI) INSTALLATION
 SHIP CHECK POLLUTION CONTROL

20 JUL BEGIN SISCAL VISIT

22 JUL BERTHSHIFT TO QUAYWALL
 AMMO ONLOAD
 BERTH SHIFT BACK TO PIER 15N

28 JUL BEGIN AVIATION CERTIFICATION
 AVIATION READINESS EVALUATION TECH ASSIST

AUGUST 1998

01 - 03 AUG SLQ-32 GROOM
DIRECT DECOY INTERFACE INSTALL
SHIP CHECK POLLUTION CONTROL

01 - 07 AUG SISCAL VISIT

03 - 07 AUG HORSE
NAVY FOOD MANAGEMENT TEAM VISIT

06 AUG COMMAND ASSESSMENT READINESS TRAINING II DRILL
GENERAL QUARTERS FOR CONDITION 1A

11 AUG UNDERWAY
DIESEL TRENDS
COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS GROUP TWO
COMMAND INFORMATION PROGRAM MANAGEMENT
ASSESSMENT

12 AUG 25MM, .50 CAL, M-60 FAMILIARIZATION FIRE

13 AUG MOOR PIER 15S, NAB LCRK, VA

17 - 21 AUG WELL DECK CERTIFICATION
CART II

25 AUG UNDERWAY
SORTIE FOR HURRICANE BONNIE

29 AUG MOOR PIER 15S, NAB LITTLE CREEK, VA

31 AUG - ELECTRONIC KEY MATERIAL SYSTEMS INSTALL
01 SEPT

SEPTEMBER 1998

01 SEPT UNDERWAY

02 - 03 SEPT DECK LANDING QUALIFICATIONS

04 SEPT MOOR, PIER 15S, NAB LITTLE CREEK, VA

08 SEPT COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS GROUP TWO COMMANDER'S
CONFERENCE

09 - 11 SEPT EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL TRAINING SERVICES
SHIPHANDLING COMPLEX TRAINER

14 SEPT CHIEF PETTY OFFICER INDOCTRINATION
UNDERWAY
BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL NJROTC VISIT
LCM-8 OPS/BALLAST OPERATIONS

16 SEPT MOOR, PIER 15S, NAB LITTLE CREEK, VA

18 SEPT SAFETY STANDDOWN

22 - 24 SEPT CLOSE-IN WEAPONS SYSTEM UPGRADE
ORDNANCE HANDLING SAFETY ASSESSMENT TEAM VISIT

22 - 25 SEPT CONVEYER/DUMBWAITER OPERATIONS/MAINTENCE
TRAINING – FLEET TECHNICAL SUPPORT CENTER

22 - 30 SEPT SHIPS CONFIGURATION AND LOGISTICS SUPPORT
INFORMATION SYSTEM VALIDATION

OCTOBER 1998

01 OCT SHIPS CONFIGURATION AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT
INFORMATION SYSTEM VALIDATION

01 - 02 OCT WATER TIGHT DOOR MAINTENANCE TRAINING

06 - 09 OCT 2ND MARINE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE – CAPSTONE
EXERCISE (U/W CHERRY POINT OPAREA)

09 OCT MOOR NAB LITTLE CREEK, VA

14 - 16 OCT TAILORED SHIPS TRAINING AVAILABILITY I
(ENGINEERING TRAINING GROUP)

14 OCT FASTCRUISE

19 - 30 OCT TAILORED SHIPS TRAINING AVAILABILITY I
(COMBAT SYSTEMS TRAINING GROUP)
(FLEET TRAINING GROUP)

23 OCT DC2(SW) [REDACTED] RE-ENLISTMENT

27 OCT UNDERWAY
MINI MASS CONFLAGRATION (GQ)

28 OCT CIWS/PAC-FIRE

29 OCT UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USNS LARAMIE
GQ - CBR DRILL

30 OCT MINI MASS CONFLAGRATION (GQ)
MOOR NAB LITTLE CREEK, VA

NOVEMBER 1998

02 NOV UNDERWAY
ITT BRIEF
LCU OPS

03 NOV LCAC OPS

03 - 05 NOV TSTA I (FTG - U/W VCOA)
YOKE CHECKS

04 NOV TOW EXERCISE W/USS CARTER HALL

05 NOV MOOR PIER 15N, NAB LCRK, VA

06 NOV INPORT FIRE DRILLS FOR SECTIONS ONE, TWO AND THREE

09 - 12 NOV TSTA II (ETG - U/W)

10 NOV UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT WITH USS MONONGAHELA

11 NOV CIWS PAC-FIRE
TOWED DRONE EXERCISE

12 NOV MOOR PIER 15N, NAB LCRK, VA

16 - 20 NOV TSTA II (CSTG - INPT LCRK)

19 NOV TCAT PLANNING CONFERENCE

23 NOV SKC(SW) [REDACTED] RE-ENLISTMENT

24 - 25 NOV ENGINEERING EVOLUTIONS

30 NOV COLD CHECKS
AMPHIBIOUS SPECIALTY TRAINING PLANNING CONFERENCE
BOAT TRAINING
ORDNANCE HANDLING SAFETY TRAINING

DECEMBER

01 DEC UNDERWAY

01 – 04 DEC TAILORED SHIPS TRAINING AVAILABILITY II
(ETG – U/W VIRGINIA CAPES OPERATIONS AREA)

04 DEC ANCHOR LYNNHAVEN

05 DEC WET WELL OPS/UNDERWAY

07 – 09 DEC ECERT PREPARATIONS

10 DEC ECERT
MOOR NAB LITTLE CREEK, VA
IC2 ██████ RE-ENLISTMENT

14 DEC OS2(SW) ██████ RE-ENLISTMENT

15 DEC FLEET MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY
NAVY STANDARD INTEGRATED
PERSONAL SYSTEM INSTALL

17 DEC AWARDS CEREMONY

17 – 29 DEC 1ST HOLIDAY LEAVE/UPKEEP PERIOD

29 DEC – 2ND HOLIDAY LEAVE/UPKEEP PERIOD
08 JAN

JANUARY 1998

At the beginning of the year WHIDBEY ISLAND found itself in post-deployment and holiday leave following the five and a half month UNITAS 38-97/WATC 97 cruise. The duty sections completed regular maintenance until the crew returned on January 12th.

That week, the ship began to remove the SSQ-99 Crypto Van embarked for the deployment, commenced a Close-In Weapons System groom and installation of the SLQ-25A.

On January 13th, the ship held a detailer visit. Forty students from Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Atlantic (EWTGLANT) came aboard January 15th.

On January 21st and 22nd, the ship conducted a Safety Standdown. Training included electrical safety, heat stress, hearing conservation, and vehicle motor safety.

The Aviation Preavailability Tech Assist took place from January 26th to January 30th. The assist consisted of assessing the ship's flight deck equipment and flight deck firefighting crew.

Sadly missed by all, LT [REDACTED] retired from active duty on January 30th, ending over 20 years of faithful service to his country.

FEBRUARY 1998

WHIDBEY ISLAND started February by completing the removal of the SSQ-99 Crypto Van from Unitas 38-97. Commander Amphibious Group Two Quality of Life Inspection was held February 3rd. On February 4th, the ship conducted a fast cruise to refresh all personnel with jobs, positions, and responsibilities during special evolutions.

On February 9th, WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway for Panama City, Florida. On February 13th, the ship moored and embarked LCAC testing equipment and personnel. While in Panama City for three days, the LCAC ran various tests inport with the ship. On February 16th, the ship was underway for New Orleans, Louisiana.

On February 18th, WHIDBEY ISLAND moored at St. Julian's Wharf, New Orleans, Louisiana for the first day of Mardi Gras. During the Mardi Gras festivities, WHIDBEY ISLAND hosted both ROTC and NJROTC students from various universities and high schools. The ship also conducted tours during the day for the locals and tourists in the area. Upon completion of the festivities February 26th, WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway for NAB, Little Creek, Virginia marking a very busy but fun month for the crew.

MARCH 1998

WHIDBEY ISLAND started March underway from New Orleans, Louisiana enroute to Onslow Bay, North Carolina. On March 2nd, WHIDBEY ISLAND anchored at Onslow Bay, North Carolina to conduct LCAC operations. Later in the day, the ship was underway again enroute to its homeport. On March 3rd, the ship off-loaded the LCACs and pulled into Little Creek.

The following week, WHIDBEY ISLAND began Pre-Light Off Training I (PLOT I), the first of three such training evolutions designed to test the effectiveness of the ship's fire parties and train the engineering department. Next the ship hosted a Personnel Afloat Training Group (PATG) visit conducted by Commander, Amphibious Group TWO. This inspection examined the ship's administrative department and ensured all work was being done correctly.

On March 23rd, the ship began the SPS-49 radar upgrade. Also during this week, the ship was preparing for the upcoming change of command. On Friday, March 27th, CDR Terry C. Pierce was relieved by CDR Ray L. Clark, Jr. as WHIDBEY ISLAND's 8th Commanding Officer.

On March 30th, the ship began hull cleaning evolutions in preparation to the upcoming shipyard availability at NORSHIPCO, Norfolk, Virginia.

APRIL 1998

At the beginning of April, WHIDBEY ISLAND was inport NAB, Little Creek, Virginia preparing for the upcoming two and a half-month shipyard availability at NORSHIPCO, Norfolk, Virginia. On April 1st, the ship shifted berths to the Quaywall for the small arms ammunition offload. At the end of the day, the ship returned to Pier 14N having successfully and safely offloaded all ordnance. The ship continued to prepare for the upcoming yard period by offloading all hazardous material and de-fueling.

Over the next two days, WHIDBEY ISLAND celebrated the reenlistments of SK2 [REDACTED] and RM3 [REDACTED].

On April 8th, the ship hosted a visit from CDR Brooks and eight professors from the USMC Command and Staff College for a tour of WHIDBEY ISLAND. The tour was designed to show the professors how an amphibious assault is executed from the ship's perspective.

On April 13th, the ship was underway from Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia. That afternoon, WHIDBEY ISLAND moored at NORSHIPCO Pier 3, Norfolk, Virginia. Enroute to NORSHIPCO, the ship conducted a degaussing run near the Norfolk Naval Base piers.

While the ship was being repaired, WHIDBEY ISLAND took time to train new sailors and prepare for upcoming inspections by conducting daily main space fire party drills as well as continuing to focus on safety and training.

MAY 1998

May served as the last full month of the shipyard availability period for WHIDBEY ISLAND. On May 4th, the ship began signing up crewmembers interested in taking summer PACE courses.

The ship continued on schedule replacing many engineering components and equipment. Repairs included replacing the old fire pumps with five new titanium fire pumps. All oil, fuel and ballast tanks were cleaned and inspected. Both High Pressure Air Compressors (HPACs) were overhauled and #1 Low Pressure Air Compressor (LPAC) received a new dehydrator. The ship's laundry was refurbished with new electrical, vice steam, powered equipment. Boiler #1 had the internal fireside brick replaced and was inspected afterward for proper operation.

With many newly reported sailors, the ship concentrated on qualifying personnel for their watchstations. Later in the month, WHIDBEY ISLAND participated in Pre-Light Off Training II (PLOT II), which consisted of several main space fire drills and continued engineering training. PLOT II examined not only fire fighting drills but ensured the crew was qualified and ready to tackle the Light Off Assessment (LOA), the major engineering assessment following any significant non-underway period.

During the SNAPSHOT visit Commander, Amphibious Group Two, RADM Gordon S. Holder, came aboard to talk with the officers and the crew. RADM Holder was the 2nd Commanding Officer of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND. During the remainder of the month, the crew continued to run main space fire drills in preparation for LOA.

JUNE 1998

The start of June found WHIDBEY ISLAND moored at NORSHIPCO Pier 3, Norfolk, Virginia. During the last few weeks of the shipyard availability, WHIDBEY ISLAND began making preparations to get underway.

Following a PQS Assist Visit from Regional Support Group (RSG) and refueling, the ship underwent Pre-Light Off Training III. PLOT III, like its predecessors, tested the ship's crew on engineering watchstanding, damage control, and firefighting drills. It also assessed the condition of the ship's engineering plant and the effectiveness of the administrative programs that are in place to ensure its safe operation and repairs.

The next week, WHIDBEY ISLAND was tackling LOA. This, being the final graded inspection of the shipyard availability, determined whether WHIDBEY ISLAND was safe to get underway. Two watch sections participated in the drills for LOA and were deemed effective in combating a main space fire. WHIDBEY ISLAND's Engineering Training Team (ETT) and Damage Control Training Team (DCTT) were also graded as effective. In all, WHIDBEY ISLAND earned eight 'effective' ratings, a first for any amphibious ship on the waterfront.

On June 22nd, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a fast cruise, which included a general quarters, man overboard and abandon ship drills. The crew was also refreshed on Condition One Alpha Wet Well/Small Boat Operations and flight quarters evolutions.

On June 23rd, the ship was underway for sea trials off the coast of Virginia. During the sea trials, the ship conducted diesel trend analysis and various other operations and engineering drills to test its sea-worthiness after the three-month shipyard period. On June 24th, WHIDBEY ISLAND returned to Pier 16S, Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, Virginia.

Ordnance Handling Safety Training and SM1(SW) [REDACTED] re-enlistment concluded the busy month of June.

JULY 1998

The month of July had USS WHIDBEY ISLAND preparing for the upcoming fall training cycle. Having just completed the Fleet Maintenance Availability (FMAV), WHIDBEY ISLAND was ready to go back to sea with upgraded combat systems and a refurbished engineering plant.

On July 7th, WHIDBEY ISLAND participated in the HAZMAT Assist Visit. This visit offered refresher training on how to properly store and discard shipboard hazardous materials. Shortly after the visit, WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway on July 13th.

During the underway period, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted diesel trend analysis on all four main engines. Prior to returning to Little Creek on July 15th, the ship conducted a Swept Channel exercise in the Thimble Shoal Channel.

While WHIDBEY ISLAND was in port for the remainder of the month, the ship began to install upgraded equipment to better support the training cycle. The SLQ-32 and Direct Decoy Interface systems were installed over the course of two weeks. The upgrade to the SLQ-32 suite included auto-firing chaff launchers. On July 20th, the Ship's Instrument System Calibration (SISCAL) Visit began with inspectors ensuring all gauges had been recently and properly calibrated.

WHIDBEY ISLAND shifted berths to the Little Creek Quaywall on July 22nd for ammunition onload. At the end of the evolution, WHIDBEY ISLAND shifted to Pier 15N. At the end of the month, WHIDBEY ISLAND hosted the Aviation Readiness Evaluation Tech Assist which helped the ship prepare for its Aviation Certification.

AUGUST 1998

The month of August placed WHIDBEY ISLAND in full operational mode with preparations for everything from food service to engineering inspections. From August 3rd to August 7th, WHIDBEY ISLAND participated in a pre-CART II training evolution. Also during this week, the Mess Management Specialists hosted a visit from the Navy Food Management Team.

On August 11th, WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway for three days to perform diesel trends on all four main engines. While out, the ship also conducted 25mm, .50 Caliber and M-60 familiarization fires. The ship returned August 13th to homeport, enjoying the weekend before the start of the Command Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART) II.

During the CART II inspection, WHIDBEY ISLAND received its well deck certification. The pace didn't let up however, as Hurricane Bonnie made its approach to the Hampton Roads area.

WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway on the afternoon of the 25th along with the majority of the Atlantic Fleet. The ship rode out the storm until the morning of August 29th ending a busy and exciting month.

SEPTEMBER 1998

September started out quickly for WHIDBEY ISLAND with the ship underway the first day of the month. While underway, the crew on the flight deck honed their skills and those of the visiting helicopter pilots by conducting Deck Landing Qualifications.

After returning to NAB Little Creek, Virginia, WHIDBEY ISLAND underwent Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) training and the junior officers participated in the Shiphandling Complex Trainer. On September 14th, WHIDBEY ISLAND went back to sea with a group of Bowie High School NJROTC students from Bowie, MD for training.

Also during this time, Chief Petty Officer Indoctrination concluded as Mess Management Specialist [REDACTED] and Enginemen [REDACTED] received their anchors after the ship moored on September 16th.

On September 18th, WHIDBEY ISLAND conducted a Safety Stand-down which included training on heat stress, hearing conservation, eye protection and responsible driving. Later in the month, the ship's Close-In Weapons System (CIWS) was groomed and the ship hosted an Ordnance Handling Safety Assist Team visit.

September concluded with maintenance training from Fleet Technical Support Center and the Ship's Configuration and Logistics Support Information System (SCLISIS) Validation.

OCTOBER 1998

WHIDBEY ISLAND started October by completing the Ships Configuration and Logistic Support Information System Validation. On October 1st and 2nd, the ship conducted training on watertight door maintenance with damage control petty officers.

From October 6th to October 9th, WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway to the Cherry Point Operation Area for Capstone Exercise (CAPEX) 98; an exercise designed to show new flag officers the capabilities of the LCAC amphibious assault force. WHIDBEY ISLAND performed as the LCAC control ship.

After the ship moored at Pier 15S, Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, the crew began preparations for the Tailored Ship's Training Assessment I (TSTA I). Sailors from Engineering Training Group (ETG) came aboard to conduct training on fire fighting, damage control, and yoke and zebra checks.

The following week, the ship participated in the Combat Systems Training Team portion of TSTA I inport. During the assessment, the Operations Specialists, Electronics Technicians and Electronic Warfare Specialists were trained and assessed on their knowledge of Combat Information Center operations, combat casualty control and chaff launcher operations.

The final underway period of the month came on October 27th. While underway, the ship conducted an underway replenishment with USNS Laramie. Two mass conflagration drills and a Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) drill were accomplished before mooring at Pier 15N, NAB, Little Creek, Virginia.

NOVEMBER 1998

At the beginning of the month, WHIDBEY ISLAND made preparations to get underway for the next few weeks to continue with TSTA I. On November 2nd, the ship conducted the Fleet Training Team portion of TSTA I, which included LCU and LCAC operations, flight quarters, and a towing exercise with USS Carter Hall.

The next week, the ship continued to work with FTG but was also involved with the engineering portion of TSTA I. USS Monogahela refueled WHIDBEY ISLAND on November 10th. During the week, while deck department performed various evolutions topside, the engineers conducted Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises (BECCEs) throughout the spaces below.

November 16th marked the beginning of TSTA II, the Combat Systems Training Team portion of the Inter-Deployment Training Cycle. This week of inport training primarily involved members of Operations Department.

For the remainder of the month, the ship prepared for the remaining part of TSTA II and Engineering Certification (ECERT). Prior to Thanksgiving, the engineering department continued work on the plant and conducted drills knowing any last-minute work would prove beneficial in next month's Engineering Certification.

DECEMBER 1998

The month of December started out with ten days underway for TSTA II and Engineering Certification preparations. The TSTA II phase of training included multi-hit missile general quarters drills and material Condition Yoke checks. After the Engineering Training Group (ETG) inspectors departed, the ship shifted its concentration to ECERT. Before mooring at NAB Little Creek, Virginia on December 10th, the Propulsion Examining Board (PEB) embarked and deemed WHIDBEY ISLAND's engineering plant effective in all areas.

Upon returning to port, the ship began an extensive FMAV period which included the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS) installation. On December 17th, the ship went to three section duty to support the holiday leave and upkeep period. CDR Clark, the Commanding Officer, presented several awards to crew members for their many long and hard hours during the extensive training and inspection cycle.

The first leave and upkeep period lasted until December 29th. After a full day of turnover, WHIDBEY ISLAND ended a busy and productive 1998.