



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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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Ser LSD41/0115  
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From: COMMANDING OFFICER, USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41)  
To: Director, Naval Historical Center,  
805 Kidder Breese Street SE  
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5059

Subj: USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD-41) 2002 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 57.12.H

1. Enclosed is the command history for USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD-41).  
Prepared and submitted in accordance with ref (a).

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**2002  
COMMAND HISTORY**

**FOR**

**USS WHIDBEY ISLAND  
(LSD-41)**

**Commander Alphonso L. Woods, Commanding Officer**

**Submitted February 28, 2003**

## COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41) carries out its mission conducting prompt and sustained combat operations at sea, worldwide, in support of national policy.

Designed, built and manned to carry maneuver-warfare vehicles and “over-the-horizon” amphibious assault vehicles, WHIDBEY ISLAND – homeported at Little Creek Amphibious Base, Va., and under the command of Commander, Amphibious Group TWO – can carry four landing craft air cushions (LCAC) or thirty-six amphibious assault vehicles (AAV) in its floodable well.

During assaults, WHIDBEY ISLAND serves as primary control ship and provides a boat haven with docking, repair and refueling services to landing craft and boats, thereby making it ideally suited to support our Navy’s foremost strike asset, the U.S. Marine.

The WHIDBEY ISLAND-class introduces to the Fleet significant improvements in communications, combat systems, 20- and 60-ton cranes, expanded repair shops, two helicopter landing spots, complete medical and dental facilities, automated computer-based logistics support and an impressive engineering plant, making it capable of self-sufficient operations. Equally as effective in peacetime as in wartime, the well-suited WHIDBEY ISLAND can carry out a variety of humanitarian missions to the effect of evacuations and disaster relief.

Designed with the primary missions of amphibious warfare, mobility, command and control and anti-air warfare in mind, WHIDBEY ISLAND supports 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 and are multi-talented. Representing almost every state in the Union, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Philippines, everyone aboard is privileged and proud to serve aboard USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41).

CHRONOLOGY

01 JAN UNDERWAY REPLENISHMENT (UNREP) WITH USNS CONCORD (T-AFS 5) & USS BRIDGE (AOE 10)  
VERTICAL REPLENISHMENT (VERTREP) WITH USNS CONCORD (T-AFS 5) & USS BRIDGE (AOE 10)

22 JAN UNREP WITH USS BRIDGE (AOE 10)  
VERTREP WITH USS BRIDGE (AOE 10)

30 JAN UNREP WITH USNS JOHN LENTHALL (T-AO 189) & USNS CONCORD (T-AFS 5)

07 FEB UNREP WITH USNS JOHN LENTHAL (T-AO 189)  
VERTREPWITH USNS JOHN LENTHAL (T-AO 189)

13 FEB UNREP WITH USNS JOHN LENTHAL (T-AO 189) & USNS SATURN (T-AFS 10)  
VERTREP WITH USNS JOHN LENTHAL (T-AO 189) & USNS SATURN (T-AFS 10)

20 FEB UNREP WITH USNS PECOS (T-AO 197) & USNS CONCORD (T-AFS 5)  
VERTREP WITH USNS PECOS (T-AO 197) & USNS CONCORD (T-AFS 5)

28 FEB UNREP WITH USNS JOHN LENTHAL (T-AO 189)

02 MAR MOORED: JEBEL ALI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)

07 MAR UNDERWAY EN ROUTE STRAITS OF HORMUZ

10 MAR VERTREP WITH USNS SATURN (T-AFS 10) & USNS CONCORD (T-AFS 5)

17 MAR RENDEVZOUS WITH WASP AMPHIBIOUS READY GROUP (WASPARG) FOR TURNOVER

18 MAR VERTREP WITH USNS SATURN (T-AFS 10)

20 MAR ANCHORED: PORT SUEZ

21 MAR TRANSIT: SUEZ CANAL

22 MAR OUTCHOP FIFTH FLEET – INCHOP SIXTH FLEET  
UNREP WITH USNS PATUXENT (T-AO 201)

25 MAR ANCHORED: SPLIT, CROATIA  
PORT VISIT: SPLIT, CROATIA

29 MAR UNDERWAY EN ROUTE ROTA, SPAIN

30 MAR UNREP WITH USNS PATUXENT (T-AO 201)

04 APR TRANSIT: STRAITS OF GIBRALTAR  
MOORED: ROTA, SPAIN

09 APR UNDERWAY EN ROUTE MOOREHEAD CITY, NC

11 APR OUTCHOP SIXTH FLEET – INCHOP SECOND FLEET

17 APR UNREP WITH USNS KANAWHA (T-AO 196)

18 APR ANCHORED: ONSLOW BAY, NC  
UNDERWAY EN ROUTE MOOREHEAD CITY, NC

19 APR MOORED: MOOREHEAD CITY, NC  
UNDERWAY EN ROUTE LYNHAVEN ANCHORAGE

20 APR ANCHORED: LYNHAVEN ANCHORAGE  
UNDERWAY EN ROUTE NAVAL AMPHIBIOUS BASE LITTLE CREEK,  
VA (NABLC)  
MOORED: HOMEPORT – NABLC

07 JUN UNDERWAY IN SUPPORT OF PRE-INSURV  
MOORED – (NABLC)

27 JUN UNDERWAY EN ROUTE NEW YORK CITY, NY

28 JUN MOORED PIER 88, NEW YORK CITY, NY

01 JUL UNDERWAY FROM NEW YORK CITY, NY

02 JUL MOORED – NABLC

09 JUL UNDERWAY FOR INSURV REHEARSAL  
MOORED – NABLC

11 JUL UNDERWAY EN ROUTE NAVSTA NORFOLK, VA  
MOORED -- NAVSTA NORFOLK, VA

13 JUL UNDERWAY FROM NAVSTA NORFOLK, VA  
MOORED -- NAVSTA NORFOLK, VA

23 JUL UNDERWAY EN ROUTE NABLC

MOORED – NABLC

06 AUG UNDERWAY FROM NABLC  
MOORED – NABLC

09 SEP UNDERWAY FROM NABLC  
MOORED – NORSHIPCO, NORFOLK VA  
COMMENCE PLANNED MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY

## NARRATIVE

As the year began, WHIDBEY ISLAND and its crew continued conducting operations in the North Arabian Sea while providing support to a large majority of Kilo Company and Battery troops in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. January 1 saw the ship receive stores and fuel during underway and vertical replenishments from USNS Concord (T-AFS 5) and USS Bridge (AOE 10). Equipment parts, large amounts of holiday packages and mail arrived by utility landing craft Jan. 4.

Late in the evening Jan. 10, WHIDBEY ISLAND and other ships in the area received a call to investigate a small boat spotted by a patrolling Magnum 443 helicopter. The aircrew could not hail the vessel, lighted by two emergency flares. WHIDBEY ISLAND arrived first on the scene, immediately followed by the Canadian frigate, HMCS Halifax (HMCS 330). In a heightened security alert, the ships approached the small boat cautiously, identifying it as a stranded fishing vessel from India with a crew of six malnourished and dehydrated fishermen. After making follow-up reports to Amphibious Squadron EIGHT, WHIDBEY ISLAND received instructions to continue operational commitments, allowing the crew of Halifax to assist the vessel.

Jan. 12, WHIDBEY ISLAND returned to the assistance of the stranded fishing vessel when the Halifax could not conduct repairs. When WHIDBEY ISLAND arrived on scene, Jan. 10, the fishermen had drifted for 37 days with no substantial food for 22 of those days and no drinking water for more than a week. Ultimately, WHIDBEY ISLAND detached from the BATAAN Amphibious Ready Group (BATAAN ARG) Jan. 13 and towed the small boat back to Indian waters where the local Coast Guard took over providing assistance. WHIDBEY ISLAND arrived off the Indian coast Jan. 15, where the awaiting Coast Guard received the fishing vessel. After turning over the small boat, WHIDBEY ISLAND returned to operational commitments with the BATAAN ARG.

Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Vern Clark, and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, Machinist's Mate Master Chief (SW) Jim Heardt, embarked WHIDBEY ISLAND to address the ship's company on the foc'sle Jan. 16.

The ship received fuel supplies from the Bridge during an underway replenishment Jan. 22.

By early afternoon Jan. 25th, all but a handful of Kilo Company and Battery troops had returned from the field. During their operations, troops of the 26<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, Special Operations Capable, set the record for conducting the longest, distance-wise amphibious operation ever, nearly 700 nautical miles inland.

Fuel and stores were taken on Jan. 30 during underway and vertical replenishments with the Concord and USNS John Lenthall (T-AO 189).

The ship rendezvoused with the John Lenthall again for fuel replenishment Feb. 7. WHIDBEY ISLAND picked up additional stores and fuel during an underway and vertical replenishment from the John Lenthall and USNS Saturn (T-AFS 10) Feb. 13 and again on the 20th from the Concord and USNS Pecos (T-AO 197).

On the last day of the month, the ship again received fuel supplies from the John Lenthall during an underway replenishment.

March 2, after 123 consecutive days at sea, WHIDBEY ISLAND moored at Jebel Ali with fellow ARG ships, USS Bataan and USS Shreveport. The ship's departure from Jebel Ali and its subsequent transit through the Straits of Hormuz were pushed back until later in the

evening, March 7<sup>th</sup> due to a shortage of local pilots and the high volume of harbor traffic in the port.

March 17<sup>th</sup>, two days before the ship had initially been scheduled to arrive at homeport from deployment, WHIDBEY ISLAND instead met with the ships of the WASP Amphibious Ready Group for turnover. After turnover, the ship continued on its course toward the Suez Canal.

Stores and supplies were received during a vertical replenishment with Saturn March 18<sup>th</sup>. On March 21<sup>st</sup>, WHIDBEY ISLAND began its return transit of the Suez Canal. The return trip took slightly less time without the anchorage at Great Bitter Lake for passing traffic. March 22<sup>nd</sup>. (Inchop/Outchop) After exiting the Suez Canal, WHIDBEY ISLAND left the command of FIFTH Fleet to fall once again under the command of SIXTH Fleet. The ship received additional fuel supplies from USNS Patuxent (T-AO 201) later that morning.

March 25<sup>th</sup>, WHIDBEY ISLAND arrived at its second, and final, liberty port of the deployment, Split, Croatia. WHIDBEY ISLAND weighed anchor and was underway again March 29<sup>th</sup> en route for its agricultural inspection at Rota, Spain.

In the early morning hours of April 4<sup>th</sup>, the ship transited through the Straits of Gibraltar. Hours later, WHIDBEY ISLAND was anchored outside of Rota, Spain.

WHIDBEY ISLAND weighed anchor April 9<sup>th</sup> en route for Onslow Bay and Moorehead City, North Carolina. WHIDBEY ISLAND switched from the command of SIXTH Fleet to SECOND Fleet April 11<sup>th</sup>.

April 17<sup>th</sup>. WHIDBEY ISLAND rendezvoused with USNS Kanawha (T-AO 196) for an underway replenishment of fuel and stores.

After nearly seven months of deployment WHIDBEY ISLAND arrived at Onslow Bay, North Carolina, on April 18<sup>th</sup> and began the process of offloading the majority of the Marines, their equipment and vehicles. By early evening, many of the troops and their gear had been offloaded, and the ship was underway again en route for Moorehead City, North Carolina. The following day, WHIDBEY ISLAND moored at Moorhead City, North Carolina. After completing the offload of troops and all equipment, the ship began its journey home.

Homecoming Day. During a brief anchorage early April 20<sup>th</sup>, LCACs 15 and 36 launched for the final time of the deployment. Once the LCACs were clear of the welldeck, WHIDBEY ISLAND weighed anchor en route Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, VA (NABLC). Pulling into NABLC, WHIDBEY ISLAND ended its 7th deployment.

On June 7, WHIDBEY ISLAND departed Little Creek in support of preparations for the upcoming inspection by the Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV). At the conclusion of the pre-INSURV checks that evening, the ship returned to homeport.

June 27<sup>th</sup>, WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway from Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek en route New York City, New York. June 28, the ship arrived in New York City where the Navy League celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a ceremony and dinner on the flight deck.

WHIDBEY ISLAND departed from New York on 1 July. Upon arrival to the Norfolk area, July 2, she made a run at the degaussing range before mooring to Pier 15N at Little Creek.

On 9 July, yet another pre-INSURV rehearsal began as WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway and headed out past Chesapeake light. After a long day, WHIDBEY ISLAND turned toward Little Creek, with a crew proud of their accomplishments and confident of their ship's upcoming success.

With tide restrictions in place at Little Creek due to the shallow channel, it would be impossible to conduct the entire INSURV schedule of events between the tides and return to



homeport that evening. To avoid anchoring out and having inspectors either sleep onboard or go ashore via small boat, the decision was made to get underway for INSURV from Naval Station Norfolk as there were no such restrictions there. On 11 July, WHIDBEY ISLAND was underway again en route Naval Station Norfolk. 13 July, WHIDBEY ISLAND spent the day underway ensuring the ship would be ready for the upcoming INSURV. The INSURV inspection commenced on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Most of the scheduled evolutions were conducted, but some minor issues with one of the ship's high-pressure air compressors forced the inspection team to end the inspection early without WHIDBEY ISLAND having the chance to get underway.

On 23 July, WHIDBEY ISLAND got underway and headed for Little Creek where the crew went back to work preparing for the upcoming re-inspection.

August 5, WHIDBEY ISLAND once again kicked off the INSURV schedule of events. Underway on the 6<sup>th</sup>, WHIDBEY ISLAND's crew demonstrated the ship's capabilities and returned to Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek.

September 9, WHIDBEY ISLAND cast off all lines and moored at Norfolk Shipbuilding and Dry-dock Corporation (NorShipCo) later that day, commencing a planned maintenance availability period.