



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7)
FPO AP 96662-1710

5750
Ser 00/026
26 Feb 04

From: Commanding Officer, USS CLEVELAND (LPD 7)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy
Yard, Washington, DC 20374-0571

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12H

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Command History Chronology, 01 January 2003 -
31 December 2003
(3) Chronology Narrative
(4) Current Commanding Officer's Biography
(5) Ship's Photograph
(6) Current Ship's "Welcome Aboard" Pamphlet
(7) 2003 Battle E Nomination
(8) Situational Reports
(9) Deployment Force Protection Lessons Learned

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (9) are submitted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. W. Brown", is centered below the text.

R. W. BROWN

I. COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

UIC: 07181, CLE

Mission: The ship's mission is to boldly and safely conduct Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare in support of our amphibious ready group commander. CLEVELAND has been guided by seven command principles:

- (1) Integrity
- (2) Level of knowledge
- (3) Procedural compliance
- (4) Forceful Backup
- (5) Formality
- (6) Questioning attitude
- (7) Foresight

Organizational Structure- USS CLEVELAND is attached to COMMANDER, AMPHIBIOUS GROUP THREE.

Name of Commander- CAPT Robert W. Brown, USN

Permanent Duty Station- Naval Station San Diego, CA

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II. CHRONOLOGY

01 JANUARY 2003 -31 DECEMBER 2003

01- 09 Jan 03: Holiday leave period

06- 16 Jan 03: C5RA

07-08 Jan 03: Underway for REWS range and Fuel Onload

09 Jan 03: FP#3 Exercise

17 Jan - 26 Jul 03: WESTPAC Deployment with ATF WEST ISO
Operation ENDURING FREEDOM/IRAQI
FREEDOM

28 Jan 03: CHOP C7F

08 Feb 03: Transit Mindanao Straits

12 Feb 03: Transit Strait of Malacca

19 Feb 03: CHOP C5F

22 Feb 03: Transit Strait of Hormuz

24 Feb - 03 Mar 03: Offload Landing Forces at KNB

06 Mar 03: Transit Strait of Hormuz

11 Mar 03: Transit Bab El Mandeb

15 Mar 03: Transit Suez Canal, CHOP C6F

18 - 24 Mar 03: Inport, Augusta Bay, Sicily. Onload
MCMRON, JMAST, HM-15, EOD, Offload
CPR-1.

25 Mar - 18 Apr 03: Underway Mediterranean Sea - MCM
Mothership Duties

09-15 Apr 03: MSC Flow Duties

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19-26 Apr 03: Inport, Augusta Bay, Sicily. Offload
MCMRON, JMAST, HM-15, EOD

02-06 May 03: Inport, Split, Croatia. Liberty port 1

10 May 03: Transit Suez Canal, CHOP C5F

18 May 03: Transit Strait of Hormuz

20-28 May 03: Anchored, KNB. Backload Landing Forces

28-29 May 03: QATAR Presence

01 Jun 03: CHOP C7F

07 Jun 03: Shellback Initiation

20-23 Jun 03: Inport, Sydney, Australia. Liberty
Port 2, repair period

28 Jun - 02 Jul 03: Inport, Cairns, Australia. Liberty
Port 3

08 Jul 03: CHOP C3F

09 Jul 03: Golden Shellback Initiation

11-12 Jul 03: Mid-Cycle Assessment

13-17 Jul 03: Inport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Liberty
Port 4, embark Tigers

24-25 Jul 03: Anchored, Camp Pendleton. Offload
Landing Force

26 Jul 03: Arrive Homeport San Diego CA

27 Jul - 25 Aug 03: POM Stand-Down

27 Aug - 14 Sep 03: Inport San Diego. IMAV, Corrosion
Control Avail.

15-19 Sep 03: Underway, transit to NEPAC.

20-23 Sep 03: Inport, Victoria, BC.

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01-03 Oct 03: Inport, Anchorage, Alaska.

09-13 Oct 03: Inport, San Francisco, CA. Embark C3F
for SF Fleet Week

16 Oct - 02 Nov 03: FMAV/Corrosion Control Availability,
DPMA Ship Checks

28-31 Oct 03: SMA

03-07 Nov 03: Underway, SoCal, DLQ's with Air Force

08-16 Nov 03: Inport, San Diego. Maintenance and
Upkeep

17-21 Nov 03: Underway, SoCal. Leaders to Sea, DLQ's

01-05 Dec 03: Ammo Offload, Seal Beach.

15-17 Dec 03: Defuel

13-31 Dec 03: Holiday Stand-down

III. NARRATIVE

2003 was an operational success story for USS CLEVELAND. After a busy year in 2002--completing one of the largest LPD work packages contracted to Southwest Marine in a little more than nine weeks, a compressed Inter-deployment Work-up Cycle in preparation for a June 2003 deployment to the Arabian Gulf, and coordinating our Commanding Officer's Change of Command--2003 was a true test of the ship and her crew's stamina and operational flexibility.

CLEVELAND's first challenge would come on Christmas Day 2002, in the form of orders for an early deployment in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The crew rallied to get the ship ready for a 17 January departure date. CLEVELAND sailed from San Diego in company with USS BOXER (LHD-4), USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD-6), USS DUBUQUE (LPD-8), USS COMSTOCK (LSD-45), USS PEARL HARBOR (LSD-52), and USS ANCHORAGE (LSD-36). Together "the Magnificent Seven," formed the largest Amphibious Task Force ever assembled to combat global terrorism.

Embarking Naval and Marine detachments--HMLA-267, H&S CO. 1st LAR BN, CSSC-111, ACU-1 DET CHARLIE, and BMU-1 DETS ALPHA/DELTA--while in-port San Diego, CLEVELAND steamed straight

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through to Kuwait City, Kuwait. Arriving at the Kuwaiti Naval Base on 24 February, she completed a seven-day offload of 350 troops and 267 pieces of equipment and cargo, while maintaining a vigilant force protection posture in light of several intercepted written and verbal threats directed against Amphibious Task Force West. Upon the completion of the offload, ATF West was assigned to monitor merchant traffic in the Northern Arabian Gulf and in the Gulf of Oman. During transit to the Gulf of Oman, CLEVELAND received orders to transit through the Suez Canal and disembark COMPHIBRON ONE, and embark MCMRON TWO, EODMU SIX, and HM-15 in support of mine sweeping operations along the northern approaches to the Suez Canal.

CLEVELAND's maiden voyage to the Mediterranean began with her transit through the Suez Canal on March 15th. For the first time in 36 years of operation, the crew navigated the rigorous ten-hour Sea-and-Anchor Detail and safely entered the Mediterranean Sea in the early hours of the 16th. There would be no rest for the crew however, as CLEVELAND weathered a severe storm on the 17th of March. Pulling into Augusta Bay, Sicily, on the morning of the 18th, the crew enjoyed their hard earned liberty while Deck Department helped embark MCMRON TWO, HM-15, and EODMU SIX. Coordinating Command and Control efforts through SIXTH FLEET, MCMRON TWO, and the four Mine Sweepers in

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company--USS SENTRY (MCM-3), USS DEVASTATOR (MCM-6), USS SCOUT (MCM-8), and USS CHIEF (MCM-14)--CLEVELAND became the first LPD class ship to ever serve as Mine Counter Measure Flagship and primary refueling station for the embarked HM-15 squadron and MCM ships.

Getting underway from Augusta Bay on 25 March, CLEVELAND and company steamed for the northern coast of Egypt. For the next month, the MCM task force would conduct flight operations and sea patrols throughout the northern approaches to the Suez Canal in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM; an operation primarily focused on identifying and tracking merchant traffic suspected of harboring and/or transporting known terrorists and cargo supporting terrorist efforts. In order to complete that mission, CLEVELAND sailors pioneered procedures for stern gate refueling for AVENGER class ships and the launch/recovery process for the MK 105 MCM Sled, used in mine sweeping operations, from the stern of an LPD class ship. The overall mission was a complete success. CLEVELAND's lessons learned and operational experience will be incorporated into THIRD FLEET's MCM exercises this coming summer during RIMPAC 2004.

CLEVELAND left the northern approaches on the 16th of April, and headed back to Augusta Bay; disembarking MCMRON TWO staff and their accompanying crew in-port Augusta, on April 19th. After

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eight days of liberty in Sicily, orders came in from SIXTH FLEET, instructing CLEVELAND to steam to Split, Croatia, then head back east to Kuwait City for the embarkation of Marines scheduled to return to the United States. Taking full advantage of another first for the ship and her crew, CLEVELAND arrived in Split, Croatia in the afternoon hours of May 2nd. The mayor of Split welcomed CLEVELAND with open arms and warm hospitality, and CLEVELAND sailors responded by showing the best of the American spirit and generosity to the citizens of Croatia.

Departing Split on the 6th of May, CLEVELAND made her way once more towards the northern approaches to the Suez Canal; completing the transit of the canal on May 10th. As CLEVELAND made her way into the Gulf of Oman, on the 15th of May, she received a distress call from a merchant vessel under attack from a pirate vessel in close proximity. FIFTH FLEET ordered CLEVELAND to prepare her Visit, Board, Search and Seizure Teams to provide assistance, and to close the distance to the merchant vessel at best possible speed. CLEVELAND responded to the call, but was redirected after the situation deescalated when the merchant reported that she was able to repel the attempted boarding. Shortly afterward, CLEVELAND was called upon to assist the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter JARVIS with a medical emergency, flying a Navy service member from the Coast Guard

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vessel to CLEVELAND for evaluation and treatment by the ship's outstanding medical team. The sailor was returned to JARVIS that evening, fit for duty. With no further incident, CLEVELAND safely transited the Strait of Hormuz on 18 May, and anchored just offshore from the Kuwaiti Naval Base on the morning of the 20th.

Once again at a heightened state of readiness, CLEVELAND's Deck and Air Departments expertly directed the embarkation of over 543 sailors and Marines, and over 136 vehicles and pieces of supporting cargo from MSSG-11, CSSD-11, CSSB-19, 3rd AA BN, ACU-1 DET CHARLIE, and BMU-1 DET DELTA. CLEVELAND weighed anchor on the 27th of May, and steamed out of the Northern Arabian Gulf, in company with USS BOXER, USS BONHOMME RICHARD, USS DUBUQUE, and USS PEARL HARBOR. Exiting the Arabian Gulf on 30 May, Amphibious Task Force West in-chopped to SEVENTH FLEET on 01 June, with orders to sail for Australian waters.

The next twenty days of open-ocean steaming were uninterrupted, except for a brief visit from "King Neptune" and his court on the 7th of June. For those sailors and Marines whom had never crossed over the Equator or the International Dateline, the time honored "Shellback" ceremony offered a fun-filled respite from watch standing and a chance to live out one of the Navy's oldest traditions. Once the Task Force rounded the

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eastern edge of Australia, the ships in ATF WEST detached to visit several cities along the Eastern coastline. CLEVELAND arrived in Sydney on 20 June, and enjoyed the next four days exploring the largest city in the "Land Down Under." Departing Sydney on the 24th, she spent four days skirting around the edge of the Great Barrier Reef to arrive in Cairns, Australia on the 28th. Cairns offered the crew a wide variety of outdoor activities, from hiking in the lush tropical rainforests along the interior, to scuba diving out in the world-renowned Great Barrier Reef. All fun aside, come the 2nd of July, it was time again to focus on CLEVELAND's next challenge, and to keep pushing on towards home.

As CLEVELAND prepared to in-chop to THIRD FLEET on the 8th of July, the Engineers made their final preparations before receiving inspectors from Pearl Harbor Naval Base, who would conduct a Mid-Cycle Assessment of CLEVELAND's programs and training team proficiency. From July 2nd until the arrival of the inspection team on the 11th, the crew worked hard to perfect textbook scripted reaction plans and narrow response times during Engineering evolutions and casualty drills. Upon the highly successful conclusion of the assessment on 12 July, CLEVELAND tied up pier-side in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on 13 July. After offloading her remaining reserves of automotive gasoline

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and receiving final approval from the Department of Agriculture to offload sanitized equipment upon arrival at Camp Pendleton, California, CLEVELAND sailors used the next three days to visit friends and family in town for the Tiger Cruise.

62 Tigers joined CLEVELAND for the seven-day voyage to Camp Pendleton. Along the way they were able to participate in and observe deck-landing qualifications with Army CH-47's and CH-60's, small arms and crew served weapons PACFIRE, Damage Control Olympics, General Quarters demonstrations, and a "Steel-Beach" Picnic. Following the offload of Marines at Camp Pendleton, on the 24th and 25th of July, CLEVELAND joined the remaining four ships from ATF WEST on July 26, in a parade of ships through San Diego harbor; celebrating their safe return home from deployment and the role they played in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

The crew was rewarded for their hard work, long hours, and exemplary performance underway and in-port overseas, with a post-deployment stand-down until 25 August. During that period, plans were drafted and ship-checks performed in preparation for the upcoming Depot level, Phased Maintenance Availability, scheduled to begin in January 2004. Operational plans were also finalized for deck-landing qualifications scheduled with the 123rd Aviation Battalion of the US Army in the vicinity of Homer, Alaska, in late September.

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CLEVELAND entered into a three-week pier-side Intermediate Maintenance Availability period upon the conclusion of the post-deployment stand-down. Along with continued planning for the January DPMA, IMAV projects included hull cleaning, elevator assessments, a NIXIE groom, corrosion control availability, and Ships Operational Maintenance System install and training. With the ship and the crew refreshed and re-supplied, CLEVELAND was underway and outbound San Diego for Victoria, British Columbia, on 15 September, after a brief stop at the La Playa refueling pier to top off her main fuel tanks.

CLEVELAND arrived at Esquimalt Naval Base, roughly six miles west of Victoria, on the morning of the 19th. Through organized social engagements, ship tours for the mayor and Canadian Naval Officials, and several sporting events, CLEVELAND sailors were able to interact with their Canadian counterparts and help strengthen the bonds of friendship between our two nations. With the command to "take in all lines," CLEVELAND departed Victoria on September 24th, and continued north towards the designated helicopter flight operations area off Homer, Alaska. After two days of deck-landing qualifications with the 123rd Aviation Battalion, the crew steered the ship into port at Anchorage, Alaska in the early hours of the 30th.

Anchorage offered several interesting challenges. While the

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beauty of the mountains and glaciers surrounding the city was unparalleled, the twenty-foot differences between the ebb and flood tides, combined with the black, heavily silt-laden water required an extra degree of precaution from watch standers monitoring the brow, mooring lines, and the seawater pumps.

Returning to sea on the 4th of October, CLEVELAND received an immediate tasking message from THIRD FLEET, altering the next port visit from Santa Barbara, California, to San Francisco. CLEVELAND was called upon to be the THIRD FLEET Flag Ship for the duration of Fleet Week in San Francisco. Over the next few days, the crew worked hard to get the ship's spaces in top shape and looking pristine for the arrival of Vice Admiral McCabe and the THIRD FLEET Staff.

CLEVELAND arrived in San Francisco just as the sun was rising over the Golden Gate Bridge on October 9th. Working closely with THIRD FLEET Staff, CLEVELAND coordinated several high level receptions and offered the best seat in the city for viewing the Navy's "Blue Angels." The sailors enjoyed exploring the city and playing a part in the weekends Fleet Week activities. Fleet Week came to a close after a large dinner reception held in honor of the Admiral's recent arrival at THIRD FLEET, and CLEVELAND headed home to San Diego on 14 October. On the return trip, CLEVELAND embarked members of the Employers

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Support of the Guard and Reserve program. This program brings employers of Armed Forces Reserve members out onboard ships to allow them to understand what some of their employees do during their active training, further helping in civilian/military relations.

After settling back into homeport on the evening of the 15th, CLEVELAND began a two-week maintenance availability on the 16th, focusing on ventilation cleaning and corrosion control jobs. Wildfires disrupted work efforts on the 27th and 28th, as much of San Diego was closed due to uncontrolled fires in the communities just outside of the city. The fires closest to downtown were contained by the 29th, thanks to the valiant efforts of thousands of firefighters from across the region, including units from the 32nd Street Naval Base. Work resumed on the 29th, starting with a Supply Management Assessment, which evaluated the effectiveness and accountability of the ship's Supply, Food Service, Disbursing, and Stores departments onboard. The department scored a 94.7 percent on the Stores Management Inspection, a 94 percent on the Post Office Management Inspection, and a 92.5 percent on the Retail Operations Management Inspection. Combined with the scores from several additional inspections, the Supply Department came out of the assessment as one of the best on the waterfront.

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CLEVELAND was underway in the Southern California Operation Area twice, for one-week periods, during the month of November. She conducted joint flight operations with the Air Force on the 3rd of November; closing out the year having qualified 116 Army pilots and 50 Air Force pilots in LPD class deck landings. Rendezvousing with Landing Craft Unit 1666 on the 6th, CLEVELAND practiced well-deck operations while assisting the LCU with several maintenance jobs that could only be completed out of the water in the well deck. CLEVELAND steamed back to San Diego on the 7th and continued another week of upkeep until returning to sea on the 17th of November.

From November 18-20, CLEVELAND hosted over 30 "Leaders to Sea" participants; giving CEO's and business owners in the community a chance to experience life at sea and to witness first hand, how much their support for the United States Military means to the country and to the men and women in uniform. During the week they were able to observe flight operations with the Navy's HC-3 and HC-11 squadrons out of North Island Naval Base, deck-landing qualifications with Marine Corps squadrons from Miramar, and VBSS drills with Seal Team 3. CLEVELAND returned to port on the 21st and began a brief stand down in celebration of the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Refreshed after a week of good food, football, and family,

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CLEVELAND got underway on the 1st of December, to support an ammunition offload at the Weapons Depot in Seal Beach, California. Safely completing the evolution on the 4th, CLEVELAND returned to San Diego on the morning of the 5th. Following the ammunitions offload, CLEVELAND prepared to berth-shift over to Southwest Marine Shipyard by defueling on December 15-18, and finalizing work packages and ship-checks for the upcoming DPMA. The crew began their Christmas stand-down on the 15th of December, while the shipyard geared up to receive CLEVELAND on the 7th of January. Over the next eight months, CLEVELAND will conduct an extensive maintenance availability, first of its class in line to undergo major life extension repairs and rehabilitation.

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