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Command Composition and Organization

USS GONZALEZ (DDG 66)

Command UIC: 21833

- **Mission:** GONZALEZ is the U.S. Navy's finest Arleigh Burke destroyer, capable of effectively operating in all major warfare areas. GONZALEZ stands ready to execute all mission tasking from anti-surface warfare, to air warfare, undersea warfare and strike warfare. She did respond when called upon during her maiden deployment to the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas, launching Tomahawk cruise missile attacks against Serbian targets during Operation ALLIED FORCE.
- **Immediate Senior In Command:** DESTROYER SQUADRON EIGHTEEN
- **Permanent Duty Station:** Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, VA
- **Commanding Officer:** CDR Patrick O'Rourke

CHRONOLOGY

12 JAN 00 - Berth Shift to Nauticus
14 JAN 00 - Change of Command
17 JAN 00 - Berth Shift to NNSY
24 JAN 00- Underway TSTA, VACAPES Oparea
04 FEB 00- Arrive homeport, NNSY
22 FEB 00 - Underway, en route NWS Yorktown
25 FEB 00 - Return from NWS Yorktown; inport NNSY
13 MAR 00 - Underway, en route Savannah, GA
16 MAR 00 - Arrive Savannah, GA
20 MAR 00 - Depart Savannah, GA
23 MAR 00 - Arrive NNSY
10 APR 00 - Underway TRANSLANT
14-15 APR 00- CMTQ
19 APR 00 - Arrive Portsmouth, UK
25 APR 00 - Depart Portsmouth, UK
28 APR 00 - Arrive Sines, Portugal
01 MAY 00 - Depart Sines, Portugal - Commence Exercise LINKED SEAS
02 MAY 00 - RAS, CASEX
03 MAY 00 - CASEX, small boat operations
04 MAY 00 - GUNEX (Five-inch)
05 MAY 00 - GUNEX (Five-inch/CIWS)
06 MAY 00 - SURFEX, small boat operations
07 MAY 00 - RAS, ADEX, flight quarters
08 MAY 00 - ADEX, CASEX, flight quarters
09 MAY 00 - Commence TACEX
13 MAY 00 - RAS
15 MAY 00 - Exercise LINKED SEAS Complete- Commence TRANSLANT
16 MAY 00 - TOWEX (with USS STOUT); Fire for Effect (Five-inch)
18 MAY 00 - TLAMEX, TOWEX (with USS NICHOLAS)
19 MAY 00 - RAS, VERTREP, MINEX
20 MAY 00 - Flight quarters (DLQ)
23 MAY 00 - RAS
24 MAY 00 - Inport NNSY
27 JUN 00 - Underway, VACAPES Oparea
30 JUN 00 - Inport NNSY
05 JUL 00 - Underway, en route Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
07 JUL 00 - Arrive Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
11 JUL 00 - Depart Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
14 JUL 00 - Inport NNSY
21 AUG 00 - Underway, Family Day Cruise. Berth shift to Norfolk Naval Station
22 AUG 00 - Underway, VACAPES Oparea
25 AUG 00 - Inport NNSY
28 AUG 00 - Commence SEMAT and C5RA visits
12 SEP 00 - End SEMAT and C5RA visits
12 SEP 00 - Berth shift to Norfolk Naval Station
18 SEP 00 - Underway, ENTERPRISE Battle Group Sail I
19 SEP 00 - CIWS towed target firing exercise

20 SEP 00 - Five-inch PACFIRE, ENCOUNTEREX
21 SEP 00 - Plane guard with USS ENTERPRISE
22 SEP 00 - RAS, CASEX, flight quarters (DLQ)
24 SEP 00 - Steel beach picnic
25 SEP 00 - ADEX
27-28 SEP 00- VANDALEX
28 SEP 00 - RAS
29 SEP 00 - Inport NNSY
16 OCT 00 - Underway, Opposing Force for HARRY S. TRUMAN Battle Group's JTFEX
20 OCT 00 - RAS
25 OCT 00 - RAS
26 OCT 00 - Inport NNSY
06-09 NOV 00 - PRT
13 NOV 00 - Underway, ENTERPRISE Battle Group Group Sail II
17 NOV 00 - Inport NNSY
02 DEC 00 - GONZALEZ Christmas Party
04-06 DEC 00 - NAVOSH/Environmental Protection Assessment
07 DEC 00 - Underway, en route Vieques, PR for NSFS Qualification
15 DEC 00 - Inport NNSY; Holiday Standdown

The dawn of the year 2000 brought a new Commanding Officer to the sailors of the USS GONZALEZ (DDG 66). On 12 January the ship transited from her berth at Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) in Portsmouth, VA to downtown Norfolk, VA in preparation for a change of command. The ceremony, which took place on Friday, 14 January at Nauticus, saw CDR Joseph W. Murphy relieved by CDR Patrick E. O'Rourke. CDR O'Rourke had little time to relax and celebrate his new post as GONZALEZ got underway in the bitter cold the following Monday, 17 January, to return to her shipyard berth.

After only a week in her homeport, GONZALEZ set sail for the VACAPES operating area to conduct Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA). Greeted by fierce January weather, the crew was eager to return to homeport. However, a nasty Nor'easter delayed the ship's homecoming and sent the majority of the crew to bed with SIQ chills, leaving only the bare minimum watch bill in effect. Despite fears by some crewmembers that they "just couldn't take it anymore," GONZALEZ returned intact to NNSY on 04 February.

On 22 February, GONZALEZ traveled up the York River to the Yorktown Naval Weapons Station where the ship unloaded ammunition and other ordnance required for a NATO exercise in May. Onload complete, GONZALEZ returned to Portsmouth on 25 February.

GONZALEZ' next underway period, commencing on 13 March, took the crew south to Savannah, GA, for the world-renowned St. Patrick's Day celebration in this historic southern city. Rising to the occasion, GONZALEZ sailors, as well as her Commanding Officer, marched in Savannah's St. Patrick's Day Parade -- the second largest such parade in the nation. After four days of festivities, GONZALEZ departed Savannah on 20 March and returned to Portsmouth on the 23rd.

After a brief inport period, GONZALEZ once again took to the seas on 10 April; this time in company with her DESRON EIGHTEEN sister ships. GONZALEZ sailed across the Atlantic for the much-anticipated NATO Exercise LINKED SEAS. After an eventful 10-day Atlantic crossing filled with training evolutions, GONZALEZ arrived in Portsmouth, UK on 19 April for a five day

port visit. Much to sailors' delight, in addition to being the sister city of the ship's homeport, Portsmouth, UK was also a mere hour from London, the British capital. On 25 April, the ship set sail for Sines, Portugal, where she remained from 28-30 April.

On 1 May, port visits complete, GONZALEZ' sailors turned their attention to the business at hand -- Exercise LINKED SEAS. Warships, submarines, and aircraft from over 30 NATO and Partnership for Peace nations converged off the coast of Portugal to participate in the exercise. During the two-week exercise in which every combat area was tested, operational tempo never waned. Events included everything from gunnery exercises to undersea warfare to air defense to visit board search and seizure (VBSS) exercises. As the exercise progressed, planners demanded that units accomplish increasingly complex tasks and work in increasingly larger groups, culminating in full-scale hostilities among over 80 surface units.

15 May marked the end of GONZALEZ' participation in Exercise LINKED SEAS 2000; however, it did not mark the end of the crew's training. Throughout the trans-Atlantic journey home, the four DESRON EIGHTEEN ships continued to hone their skills, knowing that the next time these ships would cross the Atlantic they would be beginning of a Mediterranean deployment. Following 10 days of flight quarters, underway replenishments, a MINEX, and a TOWEX, GONZALEZ sailors were reunited with family and friends on 24 May when they returned to homeport NNSY.

After a well-deserved month inport, GONZALEZ got underway briefly from 27-30 June to "shake off the cobwebs" in the VACAPES Operating Area. Then, on 5 July GONZALEZ set sail in company with a sister ship, USS STOUT to Halifax, Nova Scotia. En route, the two ships honed their warfare skills, conducting seamanship, air defense and undersea warfare exercises. On 7 July, amidst a dense fog, the ships arrived in the beautiful Canadian port city. Despite the cooler temperatures, Halifax gave GONZALEZ sailors a warm welcome. Many crewmembers were sorry to leave when the ship set sail on 11 July.

Most of the remainder of the summer was spent in port, accomplishing maintenance and making preparations for a busy autumn. Operational tempo increased shortly before Labor Day when scores of GONZALEZ family and friends embarked on 21 August for a day to see how their sailors went to sea. The ship returned that evening to a berth at Norfolk Naval Station, but the very next day GONZALEZ was underway again, this time bound for sea for a longer period of training in the VACAPES. She returned to Portsmouth on 22 August and successfully completed major engineering and combat systems assist visits (Selected Equipment Material Assessment & Training (SEMAT) for the engineers and the Combat Systems, Command, Control, Communications and Computers Readiness Assessment (C5RA) for combat systems) from 28 August through 12 September.

A few days later, on 16 September, GONZALEZ joined the rest of the ENTERPRISE Battle Group in their first Group Sail since returning from deployment in June 1999. A milestone in the inter-deployment training cycle, this marked the first time in over a year that all the ships in the battle group had operated together.

The experience GONZALEZ gained during LINKED SEAS served her crew well as she demonstrated a high level of proficiency in all mission areas throughout the 12-day underway period. GONZALEZ sailors tackled and mastered five-inch gun, chaff, and CIWS firings, undersea warfare exercises, air defense exercises, flight quarters, underway replenishments, and even plane guard duties. Without question, the highlight of the underway period was VANDALEX. After weeks of preparation, GONZALEZ completed a mandatory pre-deployment check of the AEGIS Weapon System by successfully engaging a supersonic test target with a Standard Missile. A highly trained, albeit tired, crew returned to Portsmouth on 29 September.

Two weeks later, on 16 October, GONZALEZ was once again headed down Thimble Shoals Channel bound for sea. This time, she was acting as a member of the Opposing Force in the HARRY S. TRUMAN Battle Group's JTFEX – the final preparation and evaluation before their

deployment. During the two-week exercise, a simulated full-scale conflict in which units were expected to react quickly and respond to emergent tasking in all mission areas, GONZALEZ performed superbly. The ship was recognized personally by VADM Mullen, COMSECONDFLT for her outstanding performance. Unfortunately, approaching inclement weather cut the training short and all units returned to homeport on 26 October.

On 13 November, GONZALEZ rejoined her own ENTERPRISE Battle Group in their second Group Sail of the year. The time spent underway was used to tie up loose ends and conduct more pre-deployment evolutions such as towing exercises, integrated training team scenarios, and visit board search and seizure drills. GONZALEZ returned to Portsmouth on 17 November.

Following the short Group Sail, the GONZALEZ crew eagerly awaited the slowed tempo of the imminent holiday season. However, when a surprise announcement came days before Thanksgiving that GONZALEZ would be getting underway again before the New Year, the crew didn't hesitate to rise to the occasion.

On 7 December, Pearl Harbor Day, the ship headed to sea, passing the recently moored Battle Ship, USS WISCONSIN, for her last underway of 2000, this time bound for the Puerto Rican Operating Area (PROA) to conduct the Naval Surface Fire Support qualification, an old Battle Wagon specialty. During the transit to and from the PROA, various evolutions such as main space fire drills and Integrated Training Team scenarios tested the crew's skill and preparedness. However, the real test came on December 11, when, after less than two weeks of preparation time, the crew completed NSFS with an impressive score of 99.04. After a productive eight days spent underway, GONZALEZ pulled into port on the morning of 15 December, just in time for the crew to begin the holiday standdown.

It is only appropriate that the crew finished off the year with some much-deserved rest and relaxation. With a Mediterranean deployment scheduled for April 2001, it is no surprise that 2000 marked a year of continual preparation and testing. Despite the rigorous schedule and intensive

training, GONZALEZ sailors continue to excel. Year 2000 was simply another trademark year for GONZALEZ, proving that the proud tradition of war fighting excellence for which the ship was commissioned still lives on.