



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY ✓  
U S S GRAPPLE (ARS-53)  
C/O FPO NEW YORK, NEW YORK 09570-3223

5750  
Ser 07/148  
**26 APR 1988**

From: Commanding Officer, USS GRAPPLE (ARS 53)  
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY OF USS GRAPPLE (ARS 53)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12D

Encl: (1) USS GRAPPLE (ARS 53) Command History for 1987

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded.

  
T. B. STARK

USS GRAPPLE (ARS 53) COMMAND HISTORY  
FOR 1987

Command Composition and Organization

A. The primary mission of the USS GRAPPLE (ARS 53) is to assist in advance force operations, worldwide, in support of national policy. In combat, GRAPPLE will be employed to support protection of forces ashore through post-assault salvage operations in close proximity to the shore.

The GRAPPLE is designed to perform combat salvage, lifting, towing, off-ship firefighting, diving operations, and emergency repairs.

B. (1) Immediate Senior in Command: Commander, Service Squadron EIGHT, Commander Robert G. Bruce, U. S. Navy.

(2) Commanding Officer: Lieutenant Commander Timothy B. Stark, U. S. Navy.

(3) Homeport: Little Creek, VA.

**I. Chronology**

Fast Cruise	5 Jan 87
Command Assist Team Visit	6 Jan 87
Aviation Assist Team	6-7 Jan 87
Fleet Accounting & Disbursing Center Visit	
Personnel & Administration Assist Team	6-8 Jan 87
Engineering Operational Sequencing	6-16 Jan 87
System Hot Plant Checks/Training Readiness Avail	
DEPERM, NJROTC Sea Cruise	12-13 Jan 87
DEGAUSS, Load AMMO Yorktown	14 Jan 87
Training Readiness Evaluation	15-16 Jan 87
Depart Homeport Little Creek, VA	19 Jan 87
Arrive FT Lauderdale	21 Jan 87
U/W DLSS Certification	22 Jan 87
IPT Port Everglades Load Deep Drone	23-24 Jan 87
Salv OPS ALTEC Range	25-27 Jan 87
IPT Port Everglades Off-load Deep Drone	28-30 Jan 87
Depart FT Lauderdale	31 Jan 87
Arrive Homeport Little Creek, VA	02 Feb 87
IMAV (Rudder Stock Seal Repair)	04-22 Feb 87
WCAP Physical Security Assist Team	04-06 Feb 87
Steering Inspection	05 Feb 87
Food Management Assist Visit	09-11 Feb 87
Safety Standown	12-13 Feb 87
Command Readiness Assess Team	16 Feb 87
Aviation Readiness Evaluation	17-19 Feb 87
Diesel Mobile Training Team Visit	23-27 Feb 87
Noise and Heat Stress Survey	02 Mar 87
Final Contract Trials	09-13 Mar 87
Final Contract Trial Retrial	23-26 Mar 87
Operational Propulsion Plant Training	30 Mar-03 Apr 87
Mock Operational Propulsion Plant Exam	16-17 Apr 87

Enclosure (1)

Operational Propulsion Plant Training Ches Bay	20-24 Apr 87
Operational Propulsion Plant Training Ches Bay	27-29 Apr 87
Operational Propulsion Plant Exam	30 Apr-1 May 87
DMSR	04 May 87
Refresher Training	05-28 May 87
Post Shakedown Availability	01 Jun-31 Jul 87
SSR-1 Field Change	09-19 Jun 87
DAMA Installation	15-30 Jun 87
Intermediate Maintenance Availability	1-31 Jul 87
Concurrent SIMA Little Creek	
Training Readiness Availability	06-17 Jul 87
Engineering Operational Sequencing System	13-17 Jul 87
Configuration Checks	
Sea Trials/Dependents Cruise	03 Aug 87
SALVTRA	03-21 Aug 87
Restricted Availability/CSRR Phase I, II	24-28 Aug 87
Pre-Overseas Movement	29 Aug-03 Sep 87
Depart Little Creek VA	06 Sep 87
Conduct Tow OPS: USS FEARLESS, USS INFLICT	
USS ILLUSIVE	
Refueled/Replenished by USS CANISTEO while towing	
MSO's	13 Sep 87
Arrive Rota, Spain	24 Sep 87
Depart Rota, Spain	27 Sep 87
Arrive Haifa, Israel	09 Oct 87
Inport Logistics Replenishment USNS SIRIUS	09 Oct 87
Depart Haifa, Israel	12 Oct 87
Transit Suez Canal (Southbound)	15 Oct 87
Arrive Djibouti, BSF	21 Oct 87
Depart Djibouti	21 Oct 87
ENR Gulf of Oman	21 Oct-2 Nov 87
FAS W/USNS HASSAYAMPA	02 Nov 87
Depart Gulf of Oman	02 Nov 87
Breakaway from Minesweepers	
ENR Port Suez	02-12 Nov 87
Transit Suez Canal (Northbound)	13 Nov 87
Celebrated GRAPPLE's 1st Birthday	15 Nov 87
Arrive Augusta Bay	18 Nov 87
Depart Augusta Bay	19 Nov 87
Logistic Replenishment/VERTREP-USS CONCORD	20 Nov 87
Arrive Naples	20 Nov 87
Depart Naples	23 Nov 87
Arrived Training Anchorage Palermo/	24-26 Nov 87
Conducted Surface Supplied Diving 160 FSW	
Arrived Palermo, Sicily	27 Nov 87
Depart Palermo, Sicily	01 Dec 87
Arrive Menzel Bourguiba, TU	02 Dec 87
RAV	02-16 Dec 87
Depart Menzel Bourguiba, TU	17 Dec 87
Arrive Augusta Bay, Sicily BSF/BSC	18 Dec 87
Logistic Replenishment USNS RIGEL	
Depart Augusta Bay, Sicily	18 Dec 87
Pachino Target Buoy Inspection/Sicilian Coast	19 Dec 87

Arrive Naples, Italy	20 Dec 87
Depart Naples, Italy	27 Dec 87
Arrive San Remo, Italy	30 Dec 87
Depart San Remo, Italy	04 Jan 88

## II. Narrative

Following GRAPPLE's holiday leave and upkeep at the end of 1986, and a number of assist visits in early January 1987, GRAPPLE departed Little Creek to conduct Deep Search Operations using the Deep Drone Remote Operated Vehicle in the Bahama Islands. Final certification of the ships diving systems was granted during this period. Upon return to homeport, Little Creek, VA., GRAPPLE continued its first operational year of assist and training visits. Final Contract Trials were completed in March, followed by the successful completion of her Operational Propulsion Plant Exam and Refresher Training. Prior to her six month deployment, GRAPPLE and her crew completed an IMAV and Salvage Training.

On September 6, 1987 GRAPPLE set sail for the Gulf of Oman with the following minesweepers in tow: USS INFLICT, USS ILLUSIVE, and the USS FEARLESS. Embarked on GRAPPLE was Commander, Middle East Force, Mine Counter Measures, Atlantic Fleet. GRAPPLE's mission became the longest transit in tow by one vessel of three ships of more than 9000 nautical miles with eight tow connect and disconnect evolutions and watering. During this transit, GRAPPLE conducted the first multiship astern refueling and watering during towing evolutions. Another first for GRAPPLE was an astern refueling with the USS CANISTEO while GRAPPLE was towing the minesweepers across the Atlantic.

After stops in Rota Spain, Haifa Israel, and Djibouti, Africa, GRAPPLE completed her first mission by breaking away from the minesweepers on 2 November 1987 in the Gulf of Oman. Enroute to the Mediterranean, GRAPPLE conducted her first alongside replenishment with the USNS HASSAYAMPA in the North Arabian Sea.

Following stops in Augusta Bay, Sicily; Naples, Italy, and Palermo, Sicily; GRAPPLE arrived in Menzel Bourguiba Tunisia for a Restricted Availability. This was to mark the first availability for a U.S. Navy ship in this port in six years. Of all the port visits, Menzel Bourguiba had the most difficult language barrier. With assistance from the American Embassy, GRAPPLE was able to adapt to life in Tunisia. A surprise for GRAPPLE however, was the unforeseen cost of telephone usage during the stay in Menzel Bourguiba. This subject was addressed to Naval Regional Contraction Center, Naples, in hopes to forewarn other ships that may visit.

After a quick refueling in August Bay Sicily, GRAPPLE's next mission was to inspect the Pachino Target Buoy off the Sicilian Coast. GRAPPLE continued to Naples for a Christmas break and finished the year with a port visit in San Remo, Italy.