

1981



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
USS TARAWA (LHA-1)  
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96622

LHA1/37:awk  
5750  
Ser 507  
23 AUG 1982

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From: Commanding Officer, USS TARAWA (LHA-1)  
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)

Subj: Command History (OPNAV Report 5750-1) (U)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C

- Annexes:
- (1) (U) USS TARAWA Officer Precedence List November 1981
  - (2) (U) Compendium of embarked commands and units during 1981
  - (3) (U) Listing of USS TARAWA Officer Billet Summary during 1981
  - (4) (U) Photo of USS TARAWA AT San Diego 16 April 1981 (Homecoming from WESTPAC)

1. (C) The calendar year 1981 Command History for the USS TARAWA (LHA-1) is submitted in accordance with guidance contained in reference (a).

a. (C) Basic History

(1). (U) Command Organization

(a) (U) Commanding Officer

1 Jan 81-31 Dec 81: Dwight D. TIMM, Captain,  
U. S. Navy,  
Lineal #001478-60  
DOR 1 Jul 1976

(b) (U) Mission and function of Command:

The Amphibious Task Force, which executes tasks in support of the Navy's Force projection mission, can be composed of LHA, LPH, LPD, LSD, LKA, or LST class ships. TARAWA, the lead ship of the LHA class of General Purpose Amphibious Assault Ships, combines the functional capabilities of the LPH, LPD/LSD, and LKA to deliver a balanced payload, by air and/or surface operations, in an amphibious assault. Explicitly, the Chief of Naval Operations defined the LHA's mission: "To embark, deploy, and land elements of a Marine Landing force in an assault by helicopters, landing craft, amphibious vehicles, and by any combination of these methods".

**DECLASSIFIED BY: CNO (N09N2)**  
**OPNAVINST 5513.16 SERIES**  
**DATE: 3 Oct 2000**

Classified by OPNAVINST 5513.1  
Review on 31 December 1987

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(c) (U) Composition of Command

The command is composed of the USS TARAWA (LHA-1) and organic assets which include one UH-1H HUEY helicopter BUNO 460830, two LCM-6 and four LCPL assault boats. Ship's complement includes 55 Commissioned Officers and 817 enlisted.

(d) (U) TARAWA was homeported in San Diego, CA, during 1 Jan 1981-9 Aug 1981, and in Long Beach, CA, during 10 Aug 1981-31 Dec 1981.

(2). (C) Summary of Operations for Calendar Year 1981

- 1 Jan-31 Dec Assigned to the United States Pacific Fleet and to Naval Surface Forces, Pacific.
- 1 Jan-1 Apr Assigned to the United States Seventh Fleet
- 2 Apr-31 Dec Assigned to the United States Third Fleet
- 1 Jan-25 Jul Assigned to Amphibious Squadron SEVEN for immediate operational and administrative control
- 1 Jan-1 Apr Assigned to Amphibious Forces Seventh Fleet (Amphibious Group ONE; TASK Force designation: Commander, Task Force SEVENTY-SIX)
- 2 Apr-31 Dec Assigned to Amphibious Group Eastern Pacific
- 1 Jan-1 Apr Assigned to Amphibious Ready Group Alpha; Commander; Task Group SEVENTY-SIX POINT THREE
- 1-5 Jan Inport Singapore (Anchored)
- 5-17 Jan Transit to Mombasa, Kenya, via Strait of Malacca
- 11 Jan Crossing the line/visit by NEPTUNUS REX
- 17-19 Jan Inport Mombasa, Kenya (Anchored). British Broadcasting Company and Voice of America media representatives visit for command brief and ship tours
- 19-20 Jan Kenyan Amphibious Demonstration by Amphibious Ready Group Alpha
- 20-28 Jan Underway, Transit to Diego Garcia
- 28-29 Jan Inport Diego Garcia (Anchored). Voyage Repairs provided by USS JASON. Vertrep effected with USS KISKA
- 30 Jan-8 Feb Underway, Transit to Fremantle/Perth, Australia
- 8-13 Feb Inport Fremantle, Australia (Moored)

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13-14 Feb Underway and participation in VALIANT USHER 81-3. Embarked the Chief of Naval Staff of the Australian Navy, the Premier of Western Australia, the Commanding General of the Military district of Perth, the prospective Director of Carrier Ship Procurement RAN, the U.S. naval Attache, and a media team from National Geographic Magazine. Exercise conducted at Lancelin, Australia

14-23 Feb Underway, Transit to Subic Bay, Republic of the Phillipines, via the Lombok, Makassar and Mindora straits

23Feb-4 Mar Inport Subic Bay, Republic of the Phillipines (Moored). Embarked Stores. Work-up for Amphibious Landing Exercise TEAM SPIRIT 81/VALIANT FLEX 81-2

4-8 Mar Underway, Transit to Buckner Bay, Okinawa

8-9 Mar Inport in Buckner Bay at White Beach, Okinawa (Moored). Refueling and attending presail conference for up-coming exercise

9-20 Mar Underway, Transit to the vicinity of Pohang, Republic of Korea, where CTG 76.3 joins TG 65.0 to conduct TEAM SPIRIT 81/VALIANT FLEX 81-2

12 Mar Twelve Korean media personnel together with personnel from ABC news, CBS News and the Pacific Stars and Stripes magazine embarked for ship's tours and command briefs

15 Mar Visit by Republic of Korea Military Officials and a United Nations Observer Team for command brief, tour and observation of AV-8 flight ops

19 Mar Turnover between COMPHIBRON SEVEN and COMPHIBRON FIVE. Commander 31ST Marine Amphibious Unit crossdecked

20-21 Mar Transit from vicinity of Pohand, Republic of Korea, to Pusan, ROK

21-25 Mar Inport Pusan, Republic of Korea (Moored)

25-27 Mar Underway, Transit to Buckner Bay at White Beach, Okinawa

27 Mar Inport Buckner Bay, Okinawa (Moored). The ship received fuel and supplies

27 Mar-7 Apr Transit from Okinawa to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

1 Apr Outchop from COMSEVENTHFLT to COMTHIRDFLT

7-9 Apr Inport Pearl Harbor, Hawaii (Moored). Debarked Battalian Landing Team 1/3 and helicopter Composite Squadron HMM-265. Embarked Tiger Cruise participants

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9-16 Apr Underway, Transit from Pearl Harbor to San Diego, CA

16 Apr Arrived Naval Station San Diego, Pier Seven. End of 1980-81 WESTPAC/INDIAN OCEAN Deployment

17 Apr-31 May Standdown, Leave and Upkeep period

1-5 Jun Underway SOCAL Operating Area for flight Operations, Independent Exercises, and Ammunition Off-Load

5-15 Jun Inport, Naval Station San Diego (Moored)

16-19 Jun Underway SOCAL Operating Area for Flight Operations and Independent Exercises

20-21 Jun Inport, Naval station San Diego (Moored)

22-25 Jun Underway SOCAL Operating Area for NGFS Exercises, General Quarters and Damage Control Drills

25-26 Jun Inport, Naval Station San Diego (Moored)

26 Jun Underway for Dependents' Day Cruise

27 Jun-7 Jul Inport, Naval Station San Diego (Moored)

8-20 Jul Underway, Transit to SOCAL Operating Area for FLEETEX 81-1 as Flagship of Orange Forces. Embarked COMCRUDESGRU THREE and COMPHIBRON SEVEN

21-23 Jul Inport, Naval Station San Diego (Moored)

23-24 Jul Underway, Transit from Naval Station San Diego to Long Beach Naval Shipyard, Long Beach, CA

24 Jul-31 Dec Inport at Long Beach Naval Shipyard (LBNSY) for COMPLEX OVERHAUL

24 Jul-12 Aug Inport, Pier ECHO at LBNSY (Moored)

4 Aug Visit from five member Senate Armed Services Committee Team

10 Aug Homeport officially shifted from San Diego to Long Beach, CA

12 Aug-10 Nov Inport, Drydock at LBNSY (Moored)

4 Dec Visit from DEPCOM NAVSEA 94

10 Nov-31 Dec Inport, Pier TWO at LBNSY (Moored)

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b. (C) Narrative History and Special Topics

(1) (C) 1981 was a year of achievement and success for the Navy's first General Purpose Amphibious Assault ship (LHA). The first three and a half months were devoted to the second half of TARAWA's WESTPAC/INDIAN OCEAN DEPLOYMENT. The month of January was spent transiting the Indian Ocean to Mombassa, Kenya, after liberty in Singapore. While there, TARAWA participated in an Amphibious Demonstration for local officials on the air and water borne assault capabilities of the LHA. This was followed by a transit to Diego Garcia, and then movement to Perth, Australia.

(2) (C) By mid-February, TARAWA embarked with Australian civilian and military dignitaries, and members of the media, for exercise VALIANT USHER 81-3. This was a two day exercise conducted in the Lancelin Operations Area, some sixty miles north of Perth, West Australia,. Due to the limited time period allotted to the exercise, intensive flight operations began almost immediately upon clearing harbor. Over the next thirty-four hours, some 363 individuals sorties were flown, accounting for the cumulative transport of over 1200 troops and 88 tons of cargo to and from the landing zone. Upon completing backload, the ship steamed north to Subic Bay, Republic of the Phillipines, for upkeep and replenishment of stores by late February.

(3) (C) Early March saw TARAWA transiting from Subic Bay to Buckner Bay, Okinawa, to refuel and prepare for the next major amphibious event, exercise TEAM SPIRIT 81/VALIANT FLEX 81-2. This was the last major operation of the deployment, and was conducted in the environs of Pusan, Republic of Korea. One of the largest exercises of the year, it involved all aspects of Naval and Amphibious Warfare, with participants from the U.S. SEVENTH FLEET and Republic of Korea Navy. Air Operations included 667 takoffs and landings from TARAWA. A total of 4,430 troops and observers, together with 147 tons of cargo were transported to the assault areas. 567 flight hours were logged by TARAWA's organic and assigned Marine (HMM-265) rotary wing aircraft in support of VALIANT FLEX. Further, four AV-8A Harrier aircraft recorded 30 hours of flight time performing CAP and ground support missions. Surface operations consisted of dispatching 372 tons of equipment to the assault beaches. Exercise observers included Korean Military Officials, a United Nations Observer Team and members of the media.

(4) (C) After four days of liberty in Pusan, TARAWA transited one last time to Buckner Bay, Okinawa, for refueling. From here the ship steamed east to Hawaii. On 1 April, the TARAWA outchopped to THIRD FLEET and arrived in Pearl Harbor 7 April and debarked BLT 1/3 and HMM-265. After embarking several Tiger cruise participants, TARAWA steamed east for San Diego. The ship completed her deployment on the 16th of April.

(5) (C) The balance of April and the entire month of May were spent in standdown and upkeep. In June, however, TARAWA was at sea again engaged in work-up exercises for FLEETEX 81-1. Air Operations together with damage control, general quarters and Naval gunfire exercises were conducted throughout the month.

(6) (C) July 8-20 saw FLEETEX 81-1 conducted with the Blue/Orange war at sea scenario. With Rear Admiral Carter of COMCRUDESGRU THREE embarked, TARAWA functioned as flagship for the Orange forces. Excellent command and control, together with effective operational support from the ships various departments, earned many commendations for the ship during the exercise. TARAWA transited from the Southern California Operating Area to San Diego later that month. The ship steamed to the Long Beach Naval Shipyard on the 24th of July to commence a twelve month Complex Overhaul.

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(7) (U) From August to December, TARAWA entered the first phase of Overhaul. During this time the vessel was placed in drydock where the freeboard and underwater sides were sandblasted, primed and painted. 118 life rafts were removed, the well deck was replanked, and the fueling stations were dismantled and reworked. The ship's boats were placed in a lay-up status. The ship's winches and B & A Crane were unreeved of all cable and lines. All radar and radio antennas were removed for overhaul, as were considerable amounts of main propulsion equipment and auxiliary machinery. The galleys, heads and many passageways and work spaces were redecked. Crew berthing areas received new bulkheads. Ships force concentrated on painting and preservation while the Long Beach Naval Shipyard covered the overhaul or replacement of equipment, and the treatment of the vessel's external surfaces.

(8) (U) The year 1981 ended with TARAWA moored portside to Pier TWO at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard, with her Complex Overhaul well-advanced.

(9) (U) Annexes (1) through (4) are attached as documentation for special interest items during 1981.

c. (U) Statistical highlights for 1981

(1) (U) Throughout 1981, TARAWA's two boilers expended fuel and were steamed as follows:

	<u>FUEL EXPENDED</u>	<u>MILES STEAMED</u>
JAN	1,341,954	7,098.3
FEB	1,127,815	6,363.3
MAR	1,230,091	5,930.8
APR	1,395,948	5,449.5
MAY	88,669	9.9
JUN	487,328	1,462.0
JUL	692,950	2,697.8
AUG	53,425	000.0
SEP	151,235	000.0
OCT	000	000.0
NOV	000	000.0
DEC	000	000.0
	<u>6,569,415</u>	<u>29,011.6</u>

(2) (U) TARAWA conducted five underway replenishment operations in 1981, receiving approximately four million gallons of DMF and aviation gasoline. Supplying ships were USNS PASSUMPSIC on 11 Jan, USNS MISSINEWA on 30 Jan, USS ASHTABULA on 10 and 16 Mar, and USS CIMARRON on 11 Jul.

(3) (U) While assigned to SEVENTH Fleet, TARAWA's air assets flew a combined total of 2410.3 hours. Embarked units included twelve CH-46s, four CH-53s, four AH1Ts, two UH1Ns, and six AV-8 Harriers.

(4) (U) By 16 June, TARAWA had logged 611 day and 124 night launchings of AV-8s since the vessel was commissioned.

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(5) (U) The ship's organic helicopter, Eagle ONE, flew 165 flights for 308.2 hours during 1981.

(6) (U) The personnel Department discharged 124 people, transferred 179, and received for 340 officers and enlisted.

(7) (U) The Reenlistment totals from 1 Jan to 31 Dec 81 were as follows:

	1ST	2ND	3RD	TOTAL
Eligible	161	25	29	215
Ineligible	26	01	00	27
Reenlisted	50	12	17	79
Gross %	27%	46%	59%	33%
Net %	31%	48%	59%	37%

(8) (U) During 1981, a total of 271 instances of Commanding Officer's Non-Judicial Punishment (NJP), 12 Special Courts Martial and 3 Summary Courts Martial were processed by TARAWA.


(9) (U) The Medical Department treated 201 inpatients and 3,994 outpatients through the calendar year. In supporting this workload the Pharmacy filled 10,371 prescriptions, the laboratory processed 11,839 test samples, and the X-ray technicians took 1,018 X-rays. Thirty-two cases required General Surgery, and two cases of Malaria were treated.

(10) (U) The Supply Department Sales and Services Division turned over \$37,333.21 to the TARAWA Welfare and Recreation Fund in 1981. The Stores Division expended a total of \$3,117,407.16 in consumables and repair parts with 61,450 line items maintained in stock. \$1,600,209.57 was obligated for the purchase of aviation stores in 1981, with a year end inventory of 37,196 line items.

(11) (U) A total of 1930 rounds were expended from TARAWA's 5 inch guns during gunnery exercises conducted in 1981. One missile was fired from the aft Basic Point Defense Missile System (BPDMS) launcher.

(12) (U) The ship's Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department processed 1196 components consisting of airframes, hydraulics, avionics, electrical power plants and aircrew survival equipment through six work centers. 935 components were repaired to a ready for issue status while 261 were beyond the capability of maintenance/repair. The Calibration Lab processed 59 items through their workcenter, and the Ground Support Equipment Division maintained over 200 items of ground support and material handling equipment with an RFI rate of nearly 90%.

(13) (U) FTG3 James W. GINN, USN, was selected as TARAWA's 1981 Sailor of the Year.

  
K. R. SIEGEL

Copy to:  
Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)  
Washington Navy Yard  
Washington, D.C. 20374

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COMMANDS AND UNITS EMBARKED  
USS TARAWA DURING 1981

	<u>USN</u> <u>OFF</u>	<u>USN</u> <u>ENL</u>	<u>USMC</u> <u>OFF</u>	<u>USMC</u> <u>ENL</u>	<u>CIV</u>
1 JAN-24 JUL 1981 NUCLEUS LANDING FORCE	0	0	1	8	
1 JAN-24 JUL 1981 COMPHIBRON SEVEN	13	27	1	1	
1 JAN-19 MAR 1981 31 MAU	1	0	13	57	
19 MAR-16 APR 1981 37 MAU	0	0	11	35	
1 JAN-7 APR 1981 BLT 1/3 HMM 265	3 0	39 0	48 42	881 214	
1 JAN-8 APR 1981 1ST TANK BLT TOW CO 2ND BLT HMA 169	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 1 8	29 30 32	
1 JAN-16 APR 1981 TACRON 1 VMA 513 UDT 11 ACU 1 BMU 1 MAG 11 EOD MAG 39 EOD PACE SURGICAL TEAM SURGICAL SUPPORT	5 0 2 0 1 0 0 0 0 6 2	12 0 22 19 22 0 0 0 10 10	0 16 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	0 88 0 0 0 1 1 1 0 0 0	
8 APR-16 APR 1981 TIGER CRUISE PARTICIPANTS					135
8 JUL-20 JUL 1981 COMCRUDESGRU-3*	12	28	0	0	
<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>189</u>	<u>141</u>	<u>1378</u>	<u>135</u>
GRAND TOTALS (*ESTIMATED)					1888