



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS TICONDEROGA (CG 47)

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From: Commanding Officer, USS TICONDEROGA (CG 47)
To: Director of Naval History

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY SUBMISSION FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1998

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E CH-1, Command Histories

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology for Calendar Year 1998
(3) Narrative of Events for Calendar Year 1998
(4) Battle Efficiency Award Package for 1998
(5) Change of Command Program
(6) Radio Message, 201500Z OCT 98, from DIRJIATF EAST
(7) Radio Message, 271500Z OCT 98, from DIRJIATF EAST
(8) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet
(9) Biography of CDR K. H. Dietrich

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (9) are submitted for inclusion in USS TICONDEROGA's command history file for calendar year 1998.

K. H. Dietrich
K. H. DIETRICH

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

USS TICONDEROGA (CG 47) is part of the Western Hemisphere Group of Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet and is homeported in Pascagoula, MS. Her crew is comprised of approximately 30 officers and 325 enlisted personnel. TICONDEROGA's operational mission during 1998 was air surveillance and surface interdiction of suspected narcotics traffickers in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific Oceans. To deter drug traffickers from delivering illegal drugs to the United States, TICONDEROGA deployed under the tactical control of Joint Inter-agency Task Force East (JIATF EAST) with both an SH-60B helicopter (CUTLASS 461) and a U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) embarked. CUTLASS 461 was flown by four embarked pilots and maintained by 17 aviation specialists. Two LEDET's, each comprised of one Coast Guard officer and 12 Coast Guard enlisted personnel, embarked on TICONDEROGA for nine weeks at a time. USS TICONDEROGA's Commanding Officer during the first half of the year was Commander David G. Yoshihara. He was relieved by Commander King H. Dietrich on 30 June 1998.

CHRONOLOGY FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1998

01 JAN New Year's Day
07 JAN TICONDEROGA hosts quarterly Police Chief's meeting
09 JAN Captain's Call
09 JAN Reenlistment Ceremony at Naval Aviation Museum, Pensacola, FL
09 JAN Second leave period ends
12 JAN RAV commences
12 JAN Integrated Logistics Review commences
16 JAN CPO advancement exam
16 JAN Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast, LAFONT INN
19 JAN Martin Luther King Jr. Day
22 JAN TICONDEROGA's fifteenth birthday
26 JAN Commanding Officer attends THOMAS S GATES homeport shift meeting

02-06 FEB PLOT II
03-06 FEB ATG basic phase and ITT training
09 FEB AEGIS core doctrine review
10 FEB CO attends Kiwanis luncheon
CSOSS stage I training
11 FEB SNA luncheon
12 FEB Family Support Group Meeting
13 FEB Medical department conducts audiogram testing
Safety meeting
Awards ceremony
14 FEB Gautier Mardi Gras parade
16 FEB PRESIDENT'S DAY
20 FEB USS Stephen W. Groves Change Of Command
21 FEB Willoughby children baptism
Magnolia Scale Modelers ship tour
Pascagoula Mardi Gras Parade
24-25 FEB CO attends Counter Drug Commanders Conference
24-27 FEB Engineering LTT
03 MAR E-4 exams
05 MAR E-5 exams
10 MAR E-6 exams
10 MAR Annual postal inspection
10 MAR PERS 41 visit
16-20 MAR PLOT III
23 MAR AVCERT rehearsal
24-27 MAR CSOSS Stage II
24 MAR SESEF Mobile Testing Van conference
27 MAR TICONDEROGA picnic
07-11 APR AVCERT
13-17 APR CART II rehearsal
15-16 APR Sea Trials
16 APR ECERT status meeting
CART II status meeting
20-24 APR CART II
27-30 APR LMA assist visit

Encl (2)

04-08 MAY	TSTA I CSTG
06 MAY	Enroute Norfolk, Virginia
11-13 MAY	PEB CART II
11-15 MAY	TSTA I ETG
16 MAY	Big T Association visit
18-19 MAY	Enroute New York City with USS J F KENNEDY
19 MAY	Visit by the Secretary of the Navy, The Honorable John Dalton
20-26 MAY	Fleet Week 98 New York City
22 MAY	Visit by Town of Ticonderoga, New Yorkers
22 MAY	Reception onboard for United Nations Members
26 MAY	TICONDEROGA appeared on "Good Morning America"
27-31 MAY	Enroute Mayport, Florida TSTA I FTG
01-05 JUN	TSTA I FTG
10 JUN	Depart Naval Station Mayport
07-14 JUN	TSTA I ETG
14 JUN	Arrive Naval Station Pascagoula
18 JUN	SLAMEX
19 JUN	Commanding Officer's, CDR D. G. Yoshihara Officers Farewell Function
14 JUN	Arrive Naval Station Pascagoula
22 JUN	Underway with Engineering Training Group for TSTA 2
22-26 JUN	Prospective Commanding Officer onboard for turnover
22-26 JUN	TSTA II ETG
29 JUN-03 JUL	NGFS Team Trainer
26 JUN	Arrive Naval Station Pascagoula
30 JUN	Change of Command
01-02 JUL	Ammunition on load
03 JUL	Fourth of July (Observed)
04 JUL	Fourth of July
06-09 JUL	TSTA II ETG- at sea
13-16 JUL	CMTQ
15 JUL	INDEX 98-2 Brief
17-20 JUL	Enroute Mayport, Florida
22-23 JUL	ECERT
24 JUL	Arrive Naval Station Mayport Coast Guard Squadron 42 embarks HSL 46 Det 9 embarks
27-31 JUL	Enroute Puerto Rico Operating Area in support of INDEX
02-03 AUG	Inport Naval Station Roosevelt Roads
05-06 AUG	Inport Naval Station Roosevelt Roads
10-11 AUG	TSTA III ATG
14 AUG	Arrive Naval Station Pascagoula
17-18 AUG	FEP
28 AUG	Adopt A School Luncheon First Leave period for POM begins
30 AUG	OPS Officer visits DIRJIATF EAST
09-11 SEP	Leave Turnover

09-11 SEP	Pre-deployment briefs
10 SEP	E-4 exams
11 SEP	TICONDEROGA Open House/Family Day
14 SEP	OMBUDSMAN Appreciation Day
15 SEP	E-5 Exams
17 SEP	E-6 Exams
23 SEP	HSL 46 Det 9 embarks
23 SEP	Hurricane Georges Sortie
28 SEP	Arrive Naval Station Mayport
30 SEP	INCHOP-Commence Counter Drug Operations
06 SEP	CIWS & 5"/54 PACFIRE
10-14 OCT	Port Visit Curacao, New Antilles
12 OCT	Reception onboard for Counsel General
17 OCT	Boarding of HSIANG CHANG
18 OCT	Boarding of Erika Express
05 NOV	Night Pacfire
11-14 NOV	Port Visit Aruba
13 NOV	Prospective Executive Officer Arrives
28 NOV	Upkeep Naval Station Roosevelt Roads
30 NOV	Semi-annual Physical Readiness Test
02 DEC	Depart Naval Station Roosevelt Roads
10 DEC	Brief stop for fuel Colon, Panama
15-18 DEC	Port Visit Cartagena, Colombia
18-22 DEC	Year 2000 (Y2K) Inventories
24-28 DEC	Port Visit Cozumel, Mexico
25 DEC	Ship's Christmas Party
30 DEC	Panama Canal Transit
30 DEC	Arrive Rodman, Panama

NARRATIVE OF EVENTS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1998

The new year began with the crew of TICONDEROGA continuing their much deserved holiday leave period. Interested in involving the ship and community with one another, TICONDEROGA hosted the quarterly Police Chief's meeting on 07 January. The second leave period expired on the ninth and a Captain's Call was held. During the Captain's Call, the CO conducted a frocking ceremony for those whom earned a new "crow." He also recognized the crew, particularly the Intelligence Specialist and Cryptologists, for their selection as COMWESTHEMGRU's nominee for the TYCOM Intelligence Award. The Captain continued by praising the crew for the phenomenal turnaround of ship's store stock, the proceeds of which go to the Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) fund. Continuing his address, the Captain encouraged the crew to take an active role in the upcoming Restricted Availability (RAV) and to monitor the progress of the shipyard's work. In particular, he encouraged the crew to maintain space accountability in terms of material condition and cleanliness. Following the Captain's Call, the CO travelled to Pensacola, Florida where he conducted a reenlistment ceremony in the impressive Naval Aviation Museum.

TICONDEROGA's Restricted Availability (RAV) commenced January 12. Anticipating the habitability work, the crew began moving from shipboard berthing to barracks at the LAKESIDE Naval Facility. Supply Department began an Integrated Logistics Review January 12. On the thirteenth, the Wardroom clobbered the CPO Mess in the first softball game of the new year. The CPO advancement exam was conducted on the fifteenth. On Friday the sixteenth, interested personnel participated in the Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast held at the LAFONT INN in Pascagoula, MS. The ship observed holiday routine on Martin Luther King Day.

The Executive Officer conducted a personnel inspection on the NJROTC unit at PASCAGOULA HIGH SCHOOL on the twentieth. The promising service members of tomorrow presented themselves in an excellent manner. The school ship concept was briefed to the Commanding Officer on the twenty-first by TICONDEROGA's school ship coordinator. In the school ship program, the designated school ship passes a training syllabus to all other ships in Pascagoula. The training focuses on the unique attributes of the school ship. Areas of training typically include radars, weapons systems, damage control and deck seamanship. All Pascagoula area ships participate. TICONDEROGA celebrated her fifteenth birthday on January twenty-second. On the twenty-sixth, the Commanding Officer attended a meeting to discuss the arrival of THOMAS S GATES to NAVSTA PASCAGOULA after her homeport shift.

TICONDEROGA spent the month of February in port Pascagoula and continuing with the Restricted Availability (RAV). February also marked the halfway point with emphasis shifting toward training. Engineering Department successfully completed Pre-Light Off Training (PLOT) phase II February 2nd through 6th. This compulsory

evolution provided an opportunity to self-assess weaknesses, correct deficiencies, train the crew, and continue preparations for PLOT phase III and the Light Off Assessment (LOA). TICONDEROGA satisfactorily demonstrated her Inport Emergency Teams (IET) during PLOT II.

Other departments also received training from the Afloat Training Group during the week of 2 February. This training focused on the establishment of individual training teams such as Combat Systems Training Team (CSTT), Damage Control Training Teams (DCTT), and Seamanship Training Teams (STT) with the goal of merging these teams into the Integrated Training Team (ITT). TICONDEROGA will need to demonstrate during the Final Evaluation Phase (FEP) in August. Combat Systems and Operations department personnel received basic training in Combat Systems Operational Sequencing System (CSOSS) during the week of 9 February. A review of the Aegis Core Doctrine was conducted on 9 February. On February 10, the Commanding Officer spoke at the monthly Pascagoula Kiwanis Club luncheon. The monthly Surface Naval Association luncheon was held on February 12. The Family Support Group met at First Presbyterian Church in Pascagoula, February 12. The NAVSTA Pascagoula's audio testing facility was repaired and TICONDEROGA's Medical Department conducted 175 audiograms during the week of 9 February.

On the thirteenth, TICONDEROGA conducted an awards ceremony in which deserving TICONDEROGA sailors were honored for their outstanding contributions to the Navy and the TICONDEROGA team. Safety is a primary concern for all who serve in TICONDEROGA. On February 12, the Safety Officer hosted a safety meeting with representatives from the Naval Safety Center in attendance.

Saturday, 14 February, saw several TICONDEROGA crewmembers participating in the Gautier Mardi Gras Parade. TICONDEROGA sailors also performed duties as float walkers in the Pascagoula Mardi Gras parade the following week. The Commanding Officer and Executive Officer attended the USS STEPHEN W. GROVES Change of Command ceremony on February 20. Saturday, February 21, heralded the continuation of a longstanding Naval custom when the COMDESRON SIX chaplain baptized Jennifer Mae and Cody Michael Willoughby in the ship's bell. The bell is engraved with the names of all children baptized in it. The Magnolia Scale Modelers Club enjoyed a tour of the ship on February 21. The Commanding Officer attended the Counter Drug Commanders Conference in Key West, Florida, February 24. The engineering department successfully completed a Limited Team Trainer (LTT) during the week of 23 February.

TICONDEROGA used the month of March, 1998 to focus on preparing for the upcoming Inter-Deployment Training Cycle (IDTC) while continuing with the RAV. Much was done by way of administrative review, tactical team training, and overall improvement of material condition.

Training, or "T" division, curriculum was reviewed. "T" division prepares new TICONDEROGA crewmembers for a successful tour of duty through one of two phases. In one phase, more experienced sailors returning to the fleet are introduced to new equipment and procedures by requalifying in Damage Control and 3M. Returning sailors also receive command philosophy and standard operating procedures lectures. In the other phase, new fleet sailors earn their initial damage control and 3M qualifications and are given extensive training in shipboard systems and organization. Whether an "old salt" or a "boot," newly reporting personnel are afforded every opportunity to learn and grow in "TEAM TICO."

The Third Class Petty Officer exams were given March 3. The E-5 exam was held on the fifth. E-6 exams were administered March 10. Also on the tenth, the Postal Clerk completed his annual postal inspection. Bureau of Personnel (PERS 41) provided an informative briefing on career path development for all officers of TICONDEROGA's wardroom.

Pre-Light Off Training Phase III kicked off the week of March 16. As the last training phase prior to conducting the actual Light Off Assessment, PLOT III provided another week to conduct material hot and cold checks and program reviews for the engineers and enhanced training opportunities for the rest of the crew. On March 18 and 19, the ship went to General Quarters and successfully conducted Main Space Fire drills.

TICONDEROGA conducted an Aviation Certification (AVCERT) rehearsal March 23. During the rehearsal, department heads verified the shipboard self-assessment conducted earlier by their division officers. By using the actual checklists the inspectors would use in just two weeks, the department heads gave the Aviation Facilities Coordinator an invaluable "free look."

Combat Systems Operating Sequencing System (CSOSS) Stage II began March 24. CSOSS Stage II is conducted by the Afloat Training Group (ATG) and is designed to evaluate the ship's Combat Systems Training Team (CSTT). To accomplish this, a tactical scenario was conducted in Combat Information Center (CIC) March 24-27. Also on March 24, several Electronics Technicians accompanied the Electronics Material Officer to a conference to address desired capabilities of the Shipboard Electronic Systems Evaluation Facility (SESEF) Mobile Testing Van concept.

On March 27, TICONDEROGA sailors and their families enjoyed a picnic at the LAKESIDE Naval Facility. Regional foods like crawfish accompanied the traditional fare of chicken, hamburgers, and hotdogs. Softball and volleyball were enjoyed by the grown-ups while the children enjoyed playing in the moonwalk attraction or on the jungle gym. Canoeing provided the opportunity to bring all ages together.

The pace continued to increase as the month of April opened. The challenge for the crew was to shake free of the

"shipyard" mentality developed over the last five months and to begin thinking operationally. Sea trials lay less than three weeks ahead. Systems which had not been operated in nearly one half of a year would now need to perform to specifications.

TICONDEROGA conducted her Light Off Assessment (LOA) during the first week of April. LOA was a challenging look at the engineering plant which also served as a milestone for the engineering certification in July. Administrative programs such as heat stress, hearing conservation, and lube oil management were scrutinized in addition to the material condition and functionality of the engineering plant. TICONDEROGA's engineers correctly demonstrated the ability to control casualties by executing Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises (BECCEs). Watchstation proficiency was examined by conducting oral board examinations of key personnel.

Besides supporting the engineers through their LOA, the rest of the crew remained busy preparing for other upcoming inspections. Regular meetings of the Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification (CMTQ) team, Aviation Certification (AVCERT), Combat System Training Team (CSTT), and Seamanship Training Team (STT) were held.

The Command Sailor of the Year, ET1(SW) Steven J. Barlow, attended a SOY luncheon at the La Font Inn in Pascagoula, on April 6th. The luncheon honored Sailors of the Year from all area commands. The quarterly police conference was held at the NAVSTA conference room on the 6th.

On April 7, the AVCERT began. AVCERT is a thorough examination of the material condition of the aviation facilities. The certification requires a large amount of inter-departmental cooperation. The engineers ensure the JP-5 fuel system, AFFF, electrical service, and deck-edge lighting function properly. Combat Systems personnel groom the Stabilized Glide Slope Indicator and wave-off lighting, while Operations Department personnel maintain the material condition of the hangar, tower, workshop, and flight deck. The inspection concluded on the ninth of April and TICONDEROGA remained certified to operate helicopters until February of 1999.

On April 9th, TICONDEROGA conducted a fast cruise. The fast cruise is designed to simulate being underway while the ship remains inport. It is an important evolution in that it flexes underway watchstations, communication paths, and routines. For some newly reporting TICONDEROGA crewmembers, this is as close as they have ever been to getting underway. It affords them an opportunity to learn abandon ship procedures, man overboard procedures, and general quarters procedures in a safe environment before going to sea.

On April 15th, TICONDEROGA put to sea for the first time since November 11, 1997. One of the first goals was to successfully complete the Overall Combat System Operability Test or OCSOT. This PMS check looks at the interaction of all

components of the Aegis Weapons System and upon its completion, TICONDEROGA's weapon system was "full up round." Other demonstrations included maintaining Link-11, AN/SLA-10 blanker testing, SPS-49/SPQ-9/SP-1A radar data correlation tests, and engine/steering tests. TICONDEROGA returned from sea on the 16th content that she was ready for the rigors which lay ahead.

The week of April 20th was CART II week. CART stands for Command Assessment of Readiness and Training. CART II begins the portion of the IDTC in which outside agencies become intimately involved with the training and readiness of the ship. It is extremely thorough. Programs such as PQS, training, aviation, electrical safety, boats, boat davits, weight test data, ordnance, damage control and engineering equipment are scrutinized in order to begin building effective Engineering, Damage Control, Seamanship, Combat Systems, Medical, and Integrated Training Teams. The ship conducted its first Integrated Training Team exercise on the 23rd of April. On Friday, 24 April, the ISIC representative, Afloat Training Group, and TICONDEROGA Department Heads convened a meeting to set the schedule for the remaining portion of the IDTC known as Tailored Ship Training Availability or TSTA. TSTA is conducted in three phases with the intent of developing self sufficient training teams by TSTA III.

To begin preparations for the final Logistics Management Assessment (LMA) in August, TICONDEROGA conducted an LMA Assist during the week of 27 April.

The month of May began with TICONDEROGA performing TSTA I - Combat Systems. During this training availability, Afloat Training Group (ATG) worked with shipboard personnel to begin building a functional Combat Systems Training Team (CSTT). ATG also conducted a CMTQ Assist Visit which helped fine tune team skills in preparation for the upcoming CMTQ.

TICONDEROGA was underway May 6, enroute Norfolk, Virginia, for a training availability. Training availabilities allow ships homeported in more remote locations such as Pascagoula, to take advantage of schoolhouse resources in more populated areas such as Norfolk.

While inport Norfolk, TICONDEROGA conducted Propulsion Examining Board CART II and TSTA I ETG. This meant a heavy schedule of BECCE'S as well as material and administrative inspections for the Engineering Department. TICONDEROGA also took advantage of the inport time to get the ship ready for a visit from the "BIG T" Association on May 16, and Fleet Week 98 which commenced May 20.

TICONDEROGA is proud of her affiliation with the "BIG T" Association. The "BIG T" Association was created by sailors of USS TICONDEROGA (CV-14). The association bonds together all those whoever served one of warships named TICONDEROGA along with the townspeople of Ticonderoga, NY. "BIG T" members are

routinely seen aboard TICONDEROGA during dependent cruises and whenever TICONDEROGA visits ports along the eastern seaboard. TICONDEROGA pride is most evident in the ship's store passageway where a popular museum exhibit is on permanent display.

TICONDEROGA was the lead ship entering New York Harbor on May 20th. The crew manned the rails in whites while the battle ensign proudly flew overhead. While in New York City, TICONDEROGA hosted thousands of visitors and a reception for United Nations diplomats. TICONDEROGA also hosted the popular television news program "Good Morning America," which was broadcast nationally. The ship was pleased to host a delegation from the city of Ticonderoga and received a presentation honoring the ship and crew. The city of New York reciprocated with reduced theater prices, free city transportation, and complimentary tickets to the area baseball stadiums. A number of receptions were also held for the ships of Fleet Week 98. It was an exceptional week hailed by many crew members as the best liberty ever. TICONDEROGA bid New York City a fond farewell on May 27, and proceeded en route Mayport, Florida for TSTA I - FTG.

TSTA I FTG kept TICONDEROGA gainfully employed during the first week of June. This phase of the IDTC emphasized topside evolution training. First Division conducted man overboard recovery training from the forecastle, small boat training, and mooring to a buoy; an evolution the ship had not conducted for several years. The Seamanship Training Team was also hard at work with low visibility training, transiting a swept channel, and precision anchorage training. The engineers took this week to prepare for their TSTA I ETG the following week.

From 7 to 14 June, TICONDEROGA completed TSTA I ETG and remained very busy with STT training and Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) training. The ship arrived in Pascagoula on the 14th to begin a busy week of team training. The engineers practiced their Main Space Fire Doctrine while the Operations and Combat System departments conducted CSTT scenarios in CIC.

On June 18, TICONDEROGA participated in Surface Launched Attack Missile Exercise or SLAMEX. SLAMEX provides the opportunity for ships to exercise their cruise missile teams by participating in a scenario generated by Fleet Combat Training Center, Atlantic and broadcast to the ship via Joint Operational Tactical System (JOTS) and LINK-11. This was a perfect opportunity to flex the cruise missile team as they entered their final month of preparation for the critical Cruise Missile Tactical Qualification.

On June 19, the wardroom assembled at the Executive Officer's home to bid a fond farewell to CDR David G. Yoshihara, and his wife, Chiaki, pending his change of command on 30 June. CDR Yoshihara was praised by all in attendance for his

leadership, team building philosophy, and contribution to the Counter Drug Mission of TICONDEROGA and COMWESTHEMGRU.

TICONDEROGA spent the week of 22 June underway in the Gulf of Mexico conducting TSTA II ETG. The Prospective Commanding Officer, CDR King H. Dietrich was aboard conducting his turnover.

On 30 June, RADM Fergueson presided as CDR Dietrich formally relieved CDR Yoshihara of command of USS TICONDEROGA. The ceremony was held on the pier at Naval Station, Pascagoula. TICONDEROGA looked resplendent in her red, white, and blue bunting. The ship was cleaned until she gleamed and sported a fresh coat of paint courtesy of a hardworking First Division. The band played while TICONDEROGA's color guard performed a flawless presentation of the 50 state flags. Many in attendance exclaimed the day's events provided the nicest change of command ceremony they had ever witnessed.

The week of 29 June concluded with the Naval Gunfire Support (NGFS) team earning their classroom qualification. This qualification was a prerequisite to firing for certification at the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility (AFWTF) range at Vieques Island, Puerto Rico, which TICONDEROGA would attempt in August.

July started off busy for TICONDEROGA. On July 1, TICONDEROGA conducted an ammo on-load where both TICONDEROGA and USS THOMAS S. GATES (CG 51) worked together to transfer the GATES' ammo to TICONDEROGA. This negated the need for both ships to travel to a Naval Weapons Station thus saving thousands of dollars. The transfer of ammo ranged from small arms rounds to Harpoon missiles.

The Fourth of July was observed on Friday, July 3. All ships on the pier looked sharp at full dress ship. Many sailors enjoyed the three-day weekend at home while those on duty were able to watch from the fantail as fireworks blossomed over the Bay of Pascagoula.

TICONDEROGA got underway on Monday, 6 July in order to conduct TSTA II ETG. This involved further examination of how the Engineering Department conducts underway operations. The ship conducted Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises (BECCEs) while ETG evaluated the watch standers and Engineering Casualty Control Training Team (ECCTT). The ship arrived into port that Friday after a full week of good training.

Combat Systems Training Group (CSTG) came aboard Monday, 13 July in order to evaluate TICONDEROGA's Combat Systems Training Team (CSTT) for the Cruise Missile Training Qualification (CMTQ). TICONDEROGA performed brilliantly and with that, was ready to get underway on 17 July to perform the challenging Engineering Certification (ECERT) and Independent Exercises (INDEX). INDEX allows the ISIC to evaluate the ship during exercises designed to prove skills acquired during the IDTC and

to further prove readiness to deploy.

TICONDEROGA arrived in Mayport, Florida, on 20 July. During the next few days the Engineering Department made their final

preparations for the ECERT. TICONDEROGA went back to sea on Wednesday, conducted drill sets, and received the Propulsion Examination Board (PEB) team members via small boat on Thursday morning. Thursday was a grueling day, but in the end, TICONDEROGA pulled into port having scored 100 percent.

The crew enjoyed the weekend inport allowing the engineers to rest after the ECERT while preparing the ship for INDEX. HSL 46 DET 9 and Coast Guard Squadron 42 embarked over the weekend since they would be participating in the INDEX.

On Monday, 27 July TICONDEROGA was underway in support of INDEX. The first phase involved basics such as Week One Work-Ups (WOWU) with the helicopter detachment, Pre-Action Calibration (PAC) Fires, evolution and space walk throughs, and general training.

TICONDEROGA finished July ready to continue the qualifications and training facing the crew in August and the deployment in September. As dawn broke on 1 August, TICONDEROGA continued with INDEX 98-2 and joined with the ENTERPRISE BATTLE GROUP to conduct a Missile Exercise (MISSILEX). In groups of two, the ships proceeded to the firing line to fire missiles at a drone. Upon TICONDEROGA's opportunity, the ship fired two SM-1 Block VI missiles.

Following the MISSILEX, TICONDEROGA proceeded to Vieques Island to conduct Naval Surface Fire Support Qualification. The Qualification started in the early morning hours of 2 August as the ship waited for the first call for fire. By early afternoon, TICONDEROGA had shot over 100 5 inch rounds from both mount 51 and 52. Unfortunately, the Mk 86 Gun Fire Control System (GFCS) suffered a computer error causing rounds to go off target. After talking with the Range Officer, TICONDEROGA scheduled a reattempt for 4 August.

TICONDEROGA pulled into Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico at 1800 on 2 August for fuel and to continue troubleshooting the Mk 86 Gunfire Control System. TICONDEROGA got underway the morning of 4 August, ready to try again.

Arriving back on the NSFS Range at 1000, 04 August, TICONDEROGA commenced firing out of both mounts. As the last bit of smoke cleared, TICONDEROGA waited for the Range to tally the score. The Range announced the superb score of 102.78 percent. TICONDEROGA was able to score over 100 because the Radio-Telephone Talker earned the maximum of 50 bonus points. The crew of TICONDEROGA was understandably proud as TICONDEROGA steamed to Saint Croix to conduct a Torpedo Exercise (TORPEX) and submarine tracking.

The TORPEX started 5 August with TICONDEROGA, USS CLARK (FFG 11) and TICONDEROGA's embarked helicopter, CUTLASS 461

conducting tracking exercises and firing dummy torpedoes at a MK 30 MOD 5 AS target. All units were able to tune in the target. The afternoon found TICONDEROGA and CLARK conducting live ASW exercises with a submarine in the area.

On 6 August, TICONDEROGA and CLARK pulled into NSRR to accommodate Coast Guard Squadron 42 shifting his pennant to CLARK. TICONDEROGA was underway in the afternoon and conducted a Replenishment At Sea (RAS) with USS DETROIT (AOE 4).

From 7 to 10 August TICONDEROGA was involved in CDOPS training with CLARK. The exercises ranged from briefs to Law Enforcement Phase Walk Throughs to CD Air training. All of these exercises led up to a final problem where TICONDEROGA and CLARK

had to search, track, and apprehend a Go Fast.

On 11 August, CUTLASS 461 departed for Naval Air Station Jacksonville, FL and ATG came aboard to help TICONDEROGA get ready for the Final Evaluation Period (FEP). TICONDEROGA pulled back into homeport, Naval Station Pascagoula, MS on 14 August.

TICONDEROGA got underway 17 August to conduct FEP. FEP involved TICONDEROGA conducting many different kinds of drills. The ship was placed in a wartime scenario and conducted air, surface, and subsurface operations. The Engineers conducted Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises (BECCE's) and mock damage drills. The ship also simulated receiving heavy damage and a chemical warfare threat. TICONDEROGA arrived back in Naval Station Pascagoula, MS at 1600 hours on 18 August with FEP completed.

The Logistic Management Assessment (LMA) Team arrived along with the Personnel Administration Training and Groom (PATG) Team on 24 August. The ship's 3-M program and Supply Department were inspected during LMA. TICONDEROGA scored 85 percent for 3-M and 99 percent for the Supply portion of the Assessment. The PATG Team groomed personnel records, trained Ship's Office personnel, checked disbursing records, and even conducted a question and answer session on Fitness Reports and Enlisted Evaluations for the Chiefs and Officers.

TICONDEROGA went into a Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) Stand-down on 28 August. Approximately one half the crew took leave for 11 days followed by the other half of the crew taking leave the following 11 days. The POM period allowed the ship and the crew to make final preparations prior to deployment.

TICONDEROGA and all of the ships in the Gulf Coast area were given the order to sortie on 01 September due to the approach of Hurricane Earl. Just over 60 percent of the crew was available in the area to man TICONDEROGA. The remaining crew members were outside the geographical area on POM leave. TICONDEROGA returned to port on Friday 04 September.

The entire crew was aboard to turn-over POM duties from 9 to 11 September. On 11 September, TICONDEROGA had planned a Family Day Cruise but the weather was poor and prevented the

ship from getting underway. Instead, TICONDEROGA conducted an Open House. Tours of the ship were conducted and family members ate lunch with their favorite sailor. The guests were aboard while TICONDEROGA cast off lines and turned around in the basin in order to conduct ammo on load, scheduled for later in the week.

TICONDEROGA had a Gas Turbine Readiness Review (GTRR) on 16 September. The team went through and groomed all four GTMs and three GTGs. They inspected the gas turbines for damage and identified other problems ship's force is not trained to find. 2A GTM, which had a history of problems, was marked for replacement. Ship's force, along with SIMA, commenced replacement immediately in order to make it ready for deployment.

During TICONDEROGA's last week in port, Hurricane Georges was predicted to head straight for the Mississippi Gulf Coast. All of the ships were ordered to sortie again which caused TICONDEROGA to expedite the change-out of 2A GTM, the embarkation of HSL 46 DET 9, and to leave for deployment two days early.

As TICONDEROGA prepared to cast off all lines on 23 September, NR. 3 GTG broke down. TICONDEROGA got underway later that evening with only two GTG's and 3 GTM's.

TICONDEROGA arrived in Mayport, FL on 28 September in order to change out NR. 3 GTG and finish installing the new 2A GTM. TICONDEROGA stayed in port, feverishly working until the morning of 30 September when TICONDEROGA departed Mayport and headed south to commence Counter Drug Operations with all engines ready.

On 01 October, TICONDEROGA was en route to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (GITMO). The ship arrived on the morning of 02 October in order to pick up the Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment and allow the crew to conduct last minute logistics business. The ship cast off all lines later that afternoon and headed to the Caribbean Sea for Counter Drug Operations.

The Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) boarded the MARY EXPRESS on 07 October.

They conducted a cursory search and came back with negative results (NEGRES) for drugs. That did little to dampen the spirits of the crew because a port visit to Curacao was coming up on 10 October.

The ship arrived in Curacao on the morning of 10 October, which allowed the crew to maximize liberty in port. Curacao offered dancing, shopping, diving, and snorkeling; there was something for everyone. TICONDEROGA hosted a reception with the Counsel General for the Netherlands Antilles, Dr. Barbara Stephenson, for local dignitaries on 12 October. It was a great success. The Counsel General enjoyed a personal tour of TICONDEROGA on 13 October during which plans were made for

another reception in Aruba. TICONDEROGA departed Curacao on 14 October and proceeded back to patrol.

Law Enforcement activity increased around 17 October. The LEDET boarded HSIANG CHANG NO. 101 with NEGRES and boarded ERIKA EXPRESS on 18 October again with NEGRES. TICONDEROGA encountered its first go-fast later that evening. A go-fast is a small open drug smuggling boat with multiple out-board engines and fuel drums. They are difficult to detect because of their small size and fiberglass construction. TICONDEROGA and CUTLASS 461, TICONDEROGA's embarked helicopter, lost the go-fast during the search. An overturned go-fast was later reported by another unit with the belief that it was the same one the TICONDEROGA team tracked.

Another go-fast was detected on 20 October. TICONDEROGA and CUTLASS 461 gave chase and closed it. The go-fast crew dumped its illegal cargo and ran for shore. TICONDEROGA and Panamanian Maritime Forces recovered over 2.5 tons of cocaine. TICONDEROGA arrived in Colon, Panama later that day to offload the drugs and to refuel. The ship resumed its mission the following day.

TICONDEROGA captured another go-fast on 25 October. The go-fast crew was placed under arrest and turned over to Panamanian Forces the following day. After turning over the prisoners, TICONDEROGA proceeded to Cartagena, Columbia. TICONDEROGA was in port from 29 October to 02 November.

TICONDEROGA departed Cartagena, Columbia on 02 November and headed back to the southern Caribbean. A go-fast was detected on 09 November. TICONDEROGA and CUTLASS 461 closed the go-fast, chasing it throughout the night, but the go-fast crew dumped its cargo and got away. The Panamanian Maritime Forces handled the clean-up by themselves while TICONDEROGA headed for its next liberty port in Aruba.

The ship arrived in Aruba on 11 November. The crew enjoyed liberty and TICONDEROGA hosted another reception for the U. S. Counsel General. The Prospective Executive Officer, LCDR Cynthia M. Thebaud, reported on board 13 November. The ship departed with a content and rested crew on 14 November.

The LEDET boarded the M/V CHARLES on 19 November with NEGRES. TICONDEROGA conducted a brief stop for fuel (BSF) on 20 November in Colon, Panama. TICONDEROGA proceeded back to station after refueling and encountered another go-fast on 23 November. The go-fast crew was apprehended and their vessel brought alongside. Upon determining that there was not enough evidence to charge the go-fast crew, they were released. On 24 November, a P-3 Orion working with TICONDEROGA detected a go-fast which was subsequently lost when the go-fast went dead in the water.

With Thanksgiving around the corner, the crew decided to have some fun by sanctioning a MWR sponsored beard-growing contest. Prizes were awarded for the fullest, neatest, and

worst looking beard. Under direction of the Commanding Officer, the engineers built a floating turkey for a Thanksgiving Turkey-Shoot. The turkey was taken under fire by .50 cal gun mounts, M-79 grenade launchers, and small arms. After the shoot and beard judging, the crew sat down to a delectable Thanksgiving Feast. The Supply Department spared nothing in making the Thanksgiving Feast a memorable one.

TICONDEROGA arrived at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads on 28 November to conduct maintenance and paint the ship. Much needed stores were brought onboard along with repair parts. TICONDEROGA departed on 02 December freshly painted and ready to continue its mission.

On 05 December, the LEDET boarded M/V CANDY TRADER with NEGRES. The ship conducted Command Assessment of Readiness and Training Phase I (CART I) commencing 07 December.

M/V NANI was boarded on 08 December, again with NEGRES. Following the boarding, TICONDEROGA proceeded to Colon, Panama and refueled on 10 December. "Team TICONDEROGA" had better luck on 11 December. A P-3 working with TICONDEROGA sighted a go-fast. TICONDEROGA was too far away to chase this go-fast but sent CUTLASS 461 to aid in the pursuit. Upon notification of the go-fast, the Panamanian Maritime Forces directed a patrol craft to close it. The go-fast crew surrendered to the Panamanians and the vessel was confiscated.

TICONDEROGA made a second visit to Cartagena, Colombia on 15 December. The crew was able to enjoy another 3 days of excellent liberty. They also were able to watch the city prepare for the upcoming holidays. The ship left Cartagena on 18 December to resume patrol.

The entire crew was ecstatic when the ship pulled into port on 24 December, Christmas Eve, in Cozumel, Mexico. Many crewmembers had friends and loved ones fly down to visit while others celebrated the holidays with their fellow shipmates. The command Christmas Party was held on the beach and was a big success. Sailors took advantage of all Cozumel had to offer. There were dive trips, shopping, and Mayan ruins to explore. The ship cast off lines on 28 December and headed for the Panama Canal. TICONDEROGA transited the Panama Canal and pulled into Rodman, Panama on 30 December.