

The first part of January 2001 began in homeport with the continuation of the second holiday leave period, which ended on January 8<sup>th</sup>. TICONDEROGA's Fleet Maintenance Availability was completed on the same day, and preparations for C5RA continued.

On January 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 5<sup>th</sup>, USS COLE (DDG 67), a ship bombed by terrorists while in port Yemen in October 2000, underwent a weapons offload at Naval Station Pascagoula prior to undergoing repairs at Ingalls Shipyard. Volunteer fire parties from TICONDEROGA, THOMAS S GATES (CG 51), and STEVEN W GROVES (FFG 29) were ready to render assistance at a moment's notice in the event that an ammunition mishap occurred. Fortunately, Harpoons, Tomahawks, Standard Missiles, 5"/54 rounds, and other munitions were safely offloaded with zero incidents.

C5RA, part of the inter-deployment training cycle, was conducted during the week of January 15<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup>. Since October 2000, Electronics Technicians, Interior Communicationsmen, Fire Controlmen, and civilian contractors had been busy working the "bugs" out of various systems to ensure a successful inspection, and their hard efforts paid off. TICONDEROGA completed C5RA with flying colors in fashion typical of a ship first in her class.

On January 21<sup>st</sup> TICONDEROGA got underway for the COMDESRON SIX GROUPSAIL 01-2 in preparation for the upcoming counter-drug operations deployment in April 2001. Other participants in the Groupsail included STEVEN W GROVES (FFG 32) and HALYBURTON (FFG ). TICONDEROGA served as flagship for COMDESRON SIX, Captain William J. Marlowe, USNR. Events included leapfrogs, flaghoist drills, communications drills, non-firing detect-to-engage sequences, 5"/54 firings, helo week-one work-ups, "go-fast" drills, tow-and-be-towed exercises, and other events.

TICONDEROGA spent January 27<sup>th</sup> in port Naval Station Roosevelt Roads. During this time the ship was refueled, communication checks were conducted, and missile exercise briefs were held. That evening the crew had a chance to unwind with "Beer on the Pier" before getting underway again the following morning.

Anti-air, undersea, and surface warfare exercises were conducted in the Puerto Rican Operating Area during the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. On the morning of the 30<sup>th</sup>, TICONDEROGA was scheduled to fire her first Standard Missile in nearly three years in the northern Puerto Rican Oparea, but it was rescheduled for later that week. Had we had the opportunity to shoot, TICONDEROGA was ready.

The month of February began with the continuation of the DESRON SIX Groupsail 01-2 exercises in the Puerto Rican Operating Area. TICONDEROGA, STEVEN W GROVES, and HALYBURTON fired Standard Missiles on February 1<sup>st</sup>. That morning, TICONDEROGA fired her first missile in over two years off the coast of Vieques Island.

It was quite a sight as the forward missile launcher (LS-1) prepared for action other than training and elevating the "Blue Birds." The SM-1 was fired off the starboard side. Spectators on the Bridge as well as the Commodore and Captain in Combat watched the missile take off and kept their eyes on it until it became a mere speck on the horizon. Several crewmembers captured the moment on video and camera. Later that day STEVEN W GROVES and HALYBURTON successfully fired their SM-1s not far from where TICONDEROGA had launched her missile.

More Groupsail activities commenced the following day. TICONDEROGA participated in towing exercises with HALYBURTON and other seamanship events. Events continued until February 5<sup>th</sup>, when TICONDEROGA and the other ships pulled into Naval Station Mayport. COMDESRON SIX and his staff disembarked that day.

TICONDEROGA spent three days in Florida. During this time, SIMA Mayport visited the ship to make repairs that

were unable to be completed with materials in homeport. On February 8<sup>th</sup> TICONDEROGA got underway enroute Pascagoula.

TICONDEROGA arrived in Mississippi on the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup>. SIMA Pascagoula was onboard that afternoon to begin another IMAV (Intermediate Maintenance Activity) in preparation for the upcoming INSURV inspection. INSURV is a materials and combat systems readiness inspection conducted on each U.S. Navy ship every five years.

During the week of February 12<sup>th</sup>, a career decision fair held by the Command Lead Center took place onboard the Naval Station. Everyone from E-1 to O-6 attended the seminars held throughout the week. Detailers from the Surface Warfare Officer community visited TICONDEROGA on the 14<sup>th</sup> to speak to junior officers about the detailing process, and duty preference lists were updated.

On the morning of February 23<sup>rd</sup> a Mardi Gras celebration kicked off at the Naval Station. Events included a parade around the main loop, as well as food and festivities on the pier. THOMAS S GATES, YORKTOWN, and STEVEN W GROVES returned to homeport that day, and the base was flooded with visitors.

The remainder of the month was spent in port with the entire crew preparing for INSURV. Numerous contractors and crewmembers could be seen working hard all over the ship,

and many dedicated off-duty hours to ensure a job well done. Preparations included testing and grooming systems, checking damage control items for safe and proper operation, replacing damaged/missing equipment, and preservation work.

The first week of March was spent in port Pascagoula. Both the crew and various contractors remained hard at work continuing preparations for INSURV. As a reward for their efforts, liberty expired on the morning of March 7<sup>th</sup> at 0900, the day TICONDEROGA would get underway for Naval Station Mayport, FL.

TICONDEROGA got underway that afternoon at 1600. A pre-INSURV non-firing detect-to-engage (DTE) exercise was completed in the Safety Fairway in the Gulf of Mexico at 1730 with a Lear aircraft from VACAPES. During the three-day transit to Mayport, the Sailors and officers fixed last-minute items for the rapidly approaching inspection.

The ship moored in Mayport on March 10<sup>th</sup> outboard USS VICKSBURG (CG 69). Crewmembers were on liberty from 1800 until 1200 the next day before finishing INSURV preparations.

About fifty INSURV inspectors, both military and civilian, began arriving at 0715 on March 12<sup>th</sup>. After the inbrief on the messdecks half an hour later, inspectors began checking systems. Fuel oil and lube oil pump logics, 400 Hz split and parallel operations, marine sanitation devices, laundry equipment, lifeboats, rescue swimmer gear, anchor windlass, magazine sprinklers, AFFF station pumps, radio communications, and small arms were just a few of the items inspected. The following day HF antennae resistance, IC

switchboard, machinery spaces, and safety programs were checked for proper operation.

On March 13<sup>th</sup> reveille was held at 0400. TICONDEROGA got underway at 0545 for a DTE, full power run, Link 11 demonstration, electrical safety walkthrough, AFFF hangar sprinkler activation, and several other demonstrations. The ship pulled back into Mayport that evening. Inspections continued the next day and INSURV concluded March 16<sup>th</sup>.

TICONDEROGA spent the weekend underway in the Jax oparea and conducted a passenger transfer with USS UNDERWOOD (FFG ) on the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup>. The ship moored in Mayport on the 18<sup>th</sup> outboard of USS HUE CITY (CG 66). A "Sparkle" team prepared the engineering spaces for the impending Underway Demonstration, the last required inspection for the ship's inter-deployment training cycle. The ship got underway on the 21<sup>st</sup> and completed the Underway Demo the following day.

TICONDEROGA returned to homeport on March 25<sup>th</sup>. The first Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) leave period commenced the same day. A force protection drill was conducted on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> to test shipboard security measures in preparation for the upcoming deployment. On March 29<sup>th</sup> 80 children from the Jackson County Headstart program visited, and on the 30<sup>th</sup> more than 40 NJROTC cadets from Picauyne High School in Slidell, LA, toured the ship.

The month of April began in homeport with the continuation of the pre-overseas movement (POM) period. The first leave period ended on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The entire crew was on board until the 6<sup>th</sup> completing a turnover, and the second leave period commenced that afternoon.

During POM, SIMA and various contractors were on board completing jobs and installing equipment in preparation for the deployment. Many parts, particularly equipment needed to correct CASREPs, that had been on order for quite some time arrived and were installed by various workcenters. SIMA re-installed the SLQ-32 platforms and contractors replaced the Link 11 USQ-69 with a USQ-125 computer in CIC. The Paint Team, comprised of junior Sailors from all departments, gave TICONDEROGA a fresh coat of paint despite the heat and humidity of the Mississippi Gulf Coast in springtime. The Gunners' Mates also pulled out paintbrushes and repainted the forward 5"/54 gun mount.

On April 13<sup>th</sup> the Executive Officer, Commander James F. Buckley, USN, was properly relieved by Lieutenant Commander William F. Hesse, USN. LCDR Hesse reported to TICONDEROGA from Destroyer Squadron Six, Pascagoula, MS, where he served as Material/Readiness Officer.

The second leave period ended on April 16<sup>th</sup>. Sea trials were held to verify TICONDEROGA's many systems for



deployment and to identify last-minute repairs. A frocking ceremony was held on the flight deck during sea trials. TICONDEROGA returned to port at 1530.

TICONDEROGA departed for deployment at 1600 on April 20<sup>th</sup> and headed south towards the Panama Canal to begin counter-drug operations headed by Joint Inter-Agency Task Force East (JIATFE). During this transit, HSL 48 Det 8 completed Week One Work Ups (WOWUs). TICONDEROGA's tasking was to search for vessels suspected of transporting illegal drugs in the Eastern Pacific operating area.

On April 27<sup>th</sup> TICONDEROGA transited the Panama Canal after anchoring twice in the vicinity of the breakwall at the northern entrance. The ship remained anchored until 1700 when was she able to transit the Canal with a convoy of ships. USS LASSEN (DDG 82), commissioned only a week before in Pascagoula, followed behind TICONDEROGA enroute San Diego, CA, her homeport.

TICONDEROGA moored pierside at Vasco de Numez Balboa, Panama, at 0200 on April 27<sup>th</sup> for a brief stop for fuel (BSF). The crew enjoyed liberty in Panama City the next day and the ship was underway at 0900 on April 29<sup>th</sup> enroute the Eastern Pacific operating area.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> TICONDEROGA began in earnest and chased several suspicious vessels off the coast of Panama.

Right of approach questions were asked with full cooperation from the vessels and "Alpha" reports were filed on surface targets of interest (STOIs). TICONDEROGA provided Air Communications Guard for three P-3s patrolling the Eastern Pacific in search of suspect vessels. The ship's embarked SH-60B from HSL 48 Det 8 provided useful information from its sensors. TICONDEROGA ended the month in pursuit of two "go fasts" and was ready to receive new tasking from JIATF-E at a moment's notice.

On a lighter note, something a bit out of the ordinary occurred at Officers' Call on the morning of the 30<sup>th</sup>. A bird had flown into the helicopter on the flight deck the day before, and it decided to spend the night on board the ship. As the Executive Officer walked onto the flight deck from the hangar, the bird with webbed feet decided to join the ranks. It then inspected each of the officers and chiefs in its row, stealing the show from the XO. A short time later it was escorted off the flight deck by the Command Master Chief.

The first week of May began with TICONDEROGA steaming in two operating areas near the Galapagos Islands in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. Several days passed by without sighting another vessel anywhere before the pace quickened for counter drug operations.

On the evening of May 6<sup>th</sup>, HSL 48 DET 8 Venom 501 was launched for a dusk patrol in search of "go fasts." As the helo took off, a contact was spotted on the SPQ-9 radar and a white light was spotted on the horizon simultaneously. The helo investigated the contact, which turned out to be a fishing boat named DON HERI, but located a go fast in the vicinity. CDR Sears then ordered all engines ahead for Flank 3 and TICONDEROGA matched the go fast's speed. Law Enforcement Phase I was set. A chase then pursued while the go fast zig-zagged in front of the ship at a distance of 2 nm as Venom 501 shined its floodlight on the speed boat.

Forty-five minutes later the Columbian go fast surrendered. TICONDEROGA's RHIB with Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET) members was launched to investigate for contraband. After obtaining permission from the Columbian government to board the boat, the LEDET team searched for illegal drugs. An ion scan of the vessel revealed evidence of cocaine.

The Columbian government was notified and the drug runners were detained on board TICONDEROGA in the starboard break. The

go fast was towed by the gig on May 7<sup>th</sup> while TICONDEROGA searched for the fishing vessel DON HERI. The gig and go fast returned to TICO after an all-day towing exercise with the go fast.

On the afternoon of the 7<sup>th</sup> TICONDEROGA located F/V DON HERI. Extra fuel storage barrels and containers were topside and suspected to be used for refueling go fasts. By evening the LEDET and VBSS teams were on board and TICONDEROGA had "tactical" control of the vessel. Two Sailors volunteered to search the fish hold of DON HERI with no drugs found.

On May 9<sup>th</sup> TICONDEROGA turned over the go fast, F/V DON HERI, and prisoners to BUENAVENTURA, a Columbian Navy logistics and command patrol ship, about 130 nm from their coast. TICONDEROGA then proceeded to Vasco de Numez Balboa, Panama, for refueling, stores onload, and port visit.

The following day the ship spent most of the day anchored off the coast of Panama while waiting on a pilot. Due to several protests in Panama City, liberty was restricted to the former Rodman Naval base and Howard Air Force base. On May 12<sup>th</sup> most of the crew not on duty played golf or relaxed in the restaurant on the golf course at Howard.

TICONDEROGA proceeded underway on the week of the 13<sup>th</sup> and headed in the vicinity of the Galapagos Islands. The week was spent boarding two Columbian fishing vessels found guilty of

excess fuel violations. Also, during the week awards ceremonies were held for each department to thank Sailors for their hard work during UNITAS 41-00 Atlantic Phase, IDTC, and the INSURV inspection.

On May 20<sup>th</sup> a 5"/54 Quickdraw gun shoot was conducted in the vicinity of Malpelo Island off the coast of Columbia. Mount 51 was fired 20 times with 3 slow salvo rounds and 17 rapid and continuous rounds. A CIWS PACFIRE, ILLUMEX, and Fire For Effect followed shortly thereafter.

During the evening Engineman Second Class Petty Officer Williams was diagnosed with a case of appendicitis. TICONDEROGA then proceeded at Flank 2 towards Panama City, Panama, rushing to get him treatment at a medical facility. At 1030 on May 21<sup>st</sup> the ship anchored near Panama and coordinated a passenger transfer with the U.S. Embassy in Panama to take Petty Officer Williams to a local hospital. TICONDEROGA then proceeded to Manta, Ecuador for a port visit.

On May 23<sup>rd</sup> TICONDEROGA moored pierside in Manta, Ecuador. The following day a USO-sponsored event featured the Washington Redskins cheerleaders on board the ship. The cheerleaders ate breakfast in the wardroom, toured the ship, and performed on the flight deck in the afternoon for the crew.

While in port Manta, various tours were offered in and around the city. About 100 Sailors toured Manta, dry and semi-

dry forests, went snorkeling at Isla de Plata, and visited an archeological museum. Many crewmembers went shopping and purchased *tarqui*, a vegetal ivory, Panama hats, and pottery as well as other items at a nearby shopping mall.

On May 25<sup>th</sup> twenty-three TICO Sailors assisted in renovating a U.S. Navy-sponsored 15<sup>th</sup> of September Elementary School in Manta, repairing a wall in the school building, creating a concrete walkway between the building and the playground, repairing basketball stands, and cleaning up the playground. About 150 parents, children, and other locals joined in a barbecued lunch put on by TICO's Mess Specialists. CDR Sears presented a plaque to the 15<sup>th</sup> of September school in commemoration of the continued relationship between U.S. Navy ships and the Manta community.

TICONDEROGA proceeded underway at 1700 on May 26<sup>th</sup> and spent the rest of the month searching for suspect vessels. On the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup>, TICO rendezvoused with USS DAVID R RAY, a Spruance-class destroyer based in Everett, WA off the coast of Ecuador. TICO received FLIR software to be used with Venom 501.

Also on May 28<sup>th</sup> a Memorial Day celebration took place on the O-4 level, complete with a barbecued dinner, prayer, music, a reading of "In Flanders Fields," and a 21-gun salute using a salute gun. An ESWS pinning ceremony was held in the same location on May 30<sup>th</sup> for five Sailors.

TICONDEROGA entered the month of June fully engaged in counter drug operations in the Eastern Pacific until June 13<sup>th</sup> when the Cruiser shifted gears to participate as the flagship for U.S. Naval Forces for the Teamwork South 2001 exercises hosted by the Chilean Navy.

The first day of June found TICONDEROGA on station in the Eastern Pacific conducting CDOPS. After detecting and tracking two suspicious sailboats, TICONDEROGA closed on the vessels to investigate. Members of the Coast Guard LEDET questioned the intentions of the sailboats but were unsuccessful as neither of the sailboat captains spoke English. The sailboats were from the French-speaking island of Martinique in the Southern Caribbean Sea. Luckily the language barrier did not stop TICONDEROGA from continuing their mission.

LTJG Jean-Luc Trullemans, an exchange officer from the Belgian Navy serving on board TICONDEROGA, used his native language to ask right-of-approach questions using the bridge-to-bridge radio. At the conclusion of the inquiry, he reported that the two sailboats were on a trip around the world and the Captain had successfully replied to his requests. When the two sailboats were released to continue their voyage, the captain of one of the sailboats told LTJG Trullemans, thinking he was a U.S. Sailor, that he spoke French very well.

TICONDEROGA anchored off the coast of Talara, Peru on June 4<sup>th</sup> to receive various CASREP parts and supplies brought to the ship by small boat. After a tricky onload, TICONDEROGA departed heading north enroute for a BSF in Manta, Ecuador. The ship arrived in Manta the following day to receive fuel, stores, and mail, departing just prior to sunset.

Advancement results from the March 2001 exam cycle were announced by CDR Sears on the morning of June 6<sup>th</sup> congratulating thirty TICONDEROGA Sailors on their promotions. A frocking ceremony was held for the newly selected First and Second Class Petty Officers on June 10<sup>th</sup> on the O-4 level.

Still engaged in counter drug operations, TICONDEROGA assisted the Everett, WA-based SPRUANCE-class destroyer USS DAVID R RAY with a maritime drug interception on June 10<sup>th</sup>. A suspicious-looking 220 ft Ecuadorian fishing boat meeting the criteria of transporting illicit materials was delayed and searched by U.S. Coast Guard boarding teams from TICONDEROGA and DAVID R RAY. The three vessels steamed in formation with TICO's junior officers taking turns keeping TICO on station. The two-day search resulted in no contraband being found and the fishing vessel was released.

On June 13<sup>th</sup>, TICONDEROGA engaged in a high speed chase with a "go fast" fitting the description of the type of high-powered boats used to transport illegal drugs by outrunning Navy and



Coast Guard patrols. TICONDEROGA was successful in running down the "go fast" at over 30 knots. Panicked by the warship approaching them at flank speed, the crew threw bundles of cocaine over the side into the blue Pacific. VENOM 501 marked the area where the drugs were dumped as TICONDEROGA continued to close distance on the fleeing motor boat. The "go fast" took a pounding trying to escape from the cruiser at over 25 knots while jumping ocean swells. Finally, the overheated engines could take no more and seized.

After the crew of the "go fast" was rescued and detained on board TICONDEROGA, the ship returned to where the drugs were dumped. Over 100 Sailors went on deck to search for floating cocaine bales. Rescue swimmers and Sailors in TICONDEROGA'S small boats retrieved \$12 million in pure cocaine before sunset. One of the swimmers, YN2(SW) Joseph Duprie, said, "It was a great chance to put my rescue skills to work, but I never thought I'd be recovering something worth enough to retire on!"

TICONDEROGA retrieved 22 bales weighing in at 1,340 lbs. The drug smugglers were detained onboard by U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 401 based in Miami, FL and turned over to U.S. Federal agents. The cocaine was to be destroyed by Federal agents after an official investigation concludes.

After the successful drug seizure, TICONDEROGA moored in Vasco de Nunez Balboa, Panama to embark Commander Destroyer

Squadron 23, Captain Bob Riche, USN, and his staff for Teamwork South 2001 exercises off the coast of Chile beginning June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Teamwork South is the largest naval exercise conducted by the Chilean Navy. The biannual exercise, under the command of Vice Admiral Felipe Howard, Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Fleet, headquartered in Valparaiso, Chile, is designed to strengthen multinational cooperation and interoperability among the participating naval forces. The large-scale training exercise presents a unique opportunity to improve the high level of operational readiness and teamwork enjoyed by the naval forces of the United States, Chile, Canada and the United Kingdom.

U.S. Navy units participating in this year's Teamwork South exercise were under the command of Commander, Destroyer Squadron Twenty-Three, headquartered in San Diego, CA. The exercise was under the operational control of Rear Admiral Kevin Green, Commander, United States Naval Forces Southern Command in Puerto Rico, who is the Naval Component Commander for General Peter Pace, Commander in Chief, U.S. Forces Southern Command, Miami, FL.

The first phase of Teamwork South included ship handling, communications, combined gunnery and undersea warfare exercises, and crew exchanges (crossdecking). The preliminary exercises were designed to prepare the ships and crews for the second,

more intense phase of "Freeplay" war game exercises based on real-world scenarios.

"The type of exercises developed for the Freeplay phase of Teamwork South are based on the types of challenges that our naval forces could be faced with in the near future," remarked Commodore Bob Riche. Riche, a native of Thousand Oaks, CA, continued to explain that, "Multi-national training exercises based on real-world scenarios help to maintain the Navy's readiness and make the exercises more authentic and beneficial for our Sailors."

Transit exercises began on June 16<sup>th</sup> with an Engineering PUBEX and night RHIB operations were conducted between USS RODNEY M DAVIS (FFG 60) and TICONDEROGA in preparation for Teamwork South. During small boat ops that rainy evening, TICO's boat crew entered a waypoint into a handheld GPS unit and steered to that location. Once they arrived at the waypoint, they lit off a green flare and a Signalman communicated with TICO via flashing light. The RHIB then returned to TICO.

On June 17<sup>th</sup> Davy Jones embarked TICONDEROGA, taking charge of the ship as it passed over the Equator. Adhering to Navy tradition, a ceremony took place to cleanse all despicable, land-loving Wogs who had not yet had the privilege of crossing the line. Davy Jones was played by PNC(SW/AW) Williams and LTJG Horshok was Neptunis Rex. New shellbacks, now worthy of

respect, enjoyed a congratulatory steel beach picnic with those who had passed the line in years past.

TICO continued to participate in transit exercises such as EMATT exercises, Jeopardy, MIO queries, deceptive lighting drills, night steam packages, and a low slow flier exercise with USS RODNEY M DAVIS (FFG 60) on the transit South to participate in Teamwork South exercises with the Chilean Navy.

TICO arrived and anchored in Antofogasta, Chile on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Final planning conferences for Teamwork South 2001 were held while in port and the crew had an opportunity for liberty in a city with the world's driest desert. The Teamwork South Task Group departed Antofagasta, Chile on the 26<sup>th</sup> and proceeded underway in formation.

Fourteen warships from the United States, Chile and United Kingdom pulled into the port city of Caldera, Chile on the 30<sup>th</sup> after successfully completing the first phase of the biannual Teamwork South naval exercises in the Southern Pacific Ocean. TICONDEROGA and RODNEY M DAVIS participated in a series of high-tech naval exercises with eleven Chilean warships, the Chilean submarine THOMPSON, and the British Destroyer HMS EDINBURGH (D-97). In the air, Canadian CP-40 and U.S. Navy P-3C patrol aircraft were engaged in exercises with Chilean Navy P-3C patrol aircraft and Mirage fighter/bombers from the Chilean Air Force.

Chilean, U.S. and British ships embarked officers and senior enlisted Sailors on foreign ships as part of a combined crew exchange. Visiting crewmembers worked side-by-side with their counterparts, building lasting friendships and fostering a better understanding of operations, tactics and naval protocol.

LT Alejandro Gonzalez, a naval officer from the Chilean flagship ALMIRANTE PRAT, visiting USS TICONDEROGA said, "Being able to sail on this amazing ship and to see how the U.S. Navy works from the inside has been an unforgettable experience for me. The Combat Information Center looks like something out of *Star Wars*. The level of U.S. technology is amazing." Gonzalez spent four days onboard TICONDEROGA working, eating and sleeping as one of the ship's crew. "I learned much from the Americans and they were equally eager to hear how we do things in the Chilean Navy," he said.

The month of July began in port Caldera, Chile for Teamwork South Phase II pre-sail conferences, a wardroom party hosted onboard HMS EDINBURGH, and a port visit. On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, TICONDEROGA proceeded underway on July 2<sup>nd</sup> in formation with ALMIRANTE PRAT (D 11), the Chilean flagship for Teamwork South, and four Chilean missile patrol boats. The ships were enroute a rendezvous position for a freeplay exercise developed by military planners from the U.S. and Chilean Navies to be based on recent multinational operations to create a realistic exercise environment.

Twelve ships participated in the freeplay event and were divided into two task groups, each with a different mission. The first group was designated a multi-national peacekeeping task force charged with executing United Nations Security Council resolutions which established a de-militarized zone and embargo areas around a fictitious coastal country called 'Orange.' The multi-national task force was led by Vice Admiral Howard and his staff and consisted of the Chilean destroyers COCHRANE, CONDELL, and BLANCO, as well as USS RODNEY M DAVIS and HMS EDINBURGH. P-3C patrol aircraft from PATROL SQUADRON FOUR (VP-4), based in Hawaii and PATROL SQUADRON FORTY, (VP-40) based in Whidbey Island, also participated as part of the multi-national force.

The other group of ships acted as the Orange force, consisting of TICONDEROGA, PRAT, and the Chilean submarine THOMSON, along with the three Chilean fast missile patrol boats SERRANO, URIBE, and ORELLA. Orange Force's objective was to challenge the resolve of the multi-national force in the execution of its peacekeeping mission and defensive commitments to 'Blue' country. The multi-national force was provided with intelligence disclosures via message traffic to exercise its operational planning skills. DESTROYER SQUADRON TWENTY-THREE's staff administered strict rules of engagement and acted as National Command Authority (NCA) for both forces.

Freeplay began on July 4<sup>th</sup>. For the first two and half days, the tensions between the two forces grew until a full scale naval conflict broke out on the 6<sup>th</sup>. After two Orange Force ships were sunk in simulated sea battles, the Orange Force's NCA withdrew their remaining forces from the area and discontinued engagements. The multi-national force of ships from Chile, the United States and Great Britain protected the Blue country from Orange Force aggression, successfully conducting maritime interception and peacekeeping operations. Commodore Riche said, "The freeplay exercise was a tremendous success and allowed the ships and crews to operate as a multinational team with one common goal to maintain peace and discourage aggression."

Everyone's hard efforts for Teamwork South Phase II were rewarded with a port visit to Coquimbo, Chile from July 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>. While in port, Sailors enjoyed a multitude of items, including fresh seafood and visiting La Recova market. Others went souvenir shopping, bought handcarved stone figurines, alpaca wool clothing, bottles of Pisco (a type of alcohol native to Chile), and delicious local confections. Others shopped at a local mall, gambled at a casino, or visited a Cinemark theater to watch some of the latest movies imported from the U.S., such as *Tomb Raider* and *Pearl Harbor*.

On July 9<sup>th</sup> the Teamwork South ships returned to sea for a live-fire exercise using ex-USS LA MOURE COUNTY (LSD 1194) as an unmanned target off the coast of Chile. LA MOURE COUNTY was decommissioned after running aground during last year's East Coast Phase UNITAS. It was determined it was more beneficial for the damaged ship to be used as a target for a live fire Sink Exercise (SINKEX) rather than making costly repairs.

TICONDEROGA and RODNEY M began the SINKEX on the morning of July 10<sup>th</sup> with PRAT, COCRHANE, BLANCO, and EDINBURGH. The exercise began with a live-firing gun pass at 5,000 yards. The ships moved into a firing line position with the target ship to the starboard.

TICONDEROGA was the first to send 20 five-inch rounds downrange. When the smoke cleared from the decks of LA MOURE



COUNTY, the other ships in the task group commenced fire. After the ships completed the first round, the ships changed course while remaining in a gun line firing formation and brought the target ship to the port side at 9,000 yards away. The ships again open fired on the amphibious ship, hurling another 60 explosive rounds into the now severely damaged target ship.

The final gun approach positioned the U.S., Chilean, and British ships at over 6 nm away from the target ship before they were cleared to open fire. Few of the ships in the firing line had difficulty with the increased distance. High on the starboard bridge wing, TICO's Executive Officer, LCDR Will Hesse, monitored the accuracy of the guns targeting system, watching the single spotting round strike just below the bridge of the target ship with a brilliant orange glow and thick plume of black smoke. He yelled into the telephone to the Tactical Action Officer, "Round on target, batteries release!" Seconds after his command, the forward five-inch gun quickly thundered out 19 more rounds, demolishing the bridge and deckhouse of the target ship.

With the gun exercises over and LA MOURE COUNTY badly damaged but still afloat, the exercise continued. EDINBURGH launched a Sea Dart surface missile at LA MOURE COUNTY and hit the rear of the bridge. With a Standard Missile (SM-2) ready on the forward missile launcher, TICO's powerful SPY-1A radar

locked onto the target over 10 nm away, ready to fire. The command was given and the missile leaped into the air leaving behind a thick cloud of white smoke on the cruiser's foc'sle. The missile quickly climbed towards the clouds, making a gentle arch back towards the ocean and LA MOURE COUNTY. The powerful missile exploded at the target, causing extensive damage, but the crippled ship still remained on top of the water.

The SINKEX continued with two air-launched surface missiles fired from the British Lynx helicopter assigned to EDINBURGH. The helicopter lifted off the flight deck of the British destroyer carrying a Sea Skua anti-ship missile flying low and fast towards the target. The Lynx fired the missiles from more than 4 nm away, striking the LA MOURE COUNTY amidships, leaving a gaping hole in the hull above the waterline.

LA MOURE COUNTY, smoking and listing to port, quickly fell prey to the U.S. Navy's Harpoon Cruise Missile. The first Harpoon missile jumped from RODNEY M DAVIS's MK 13 launcher, followed closely by TICO's own Harpoon erupting towards the sky with a brilliant blast of fire and smoke. Once the small turbo-fan jet engine engaged, the rocket boosters fell to sea and the cruise missile closed 25 nm to the target ship. With a shuddering explosion, the cruise missile ripped holes in the hulk peeling back huge sections of the ship's exterior. Still afloat, the Chilean submarine O'BRIEN finished off LA MOURE

COUNTY with six MK 8 torpedoes, sending the ship to the bottom of the Pacific to become an artificial reef.

On July 11<sup>th</sup>, the twelve warships from the United States, Chile and the United Kingdom proudly paraded single file along the downtown waterfront of Valparaiso, Chile, having completed three weeks of Teamwork South naval exercises. A gun salute was rendered to the naval base there while underway. One after another, the ships slowly pulled into the Chilean Navy's main base in downtown Valparaiso with flags flying crisply in the cool sea breeze and Sailors smartly manning the rails. A multi-national officers' cocktail reception hosted by Vice Admiral Felipe Howard, Commander in Chief of the Chilean Fleet, was held that evening in Vina del Mar, a nearby city.

A modern metropolis, Valparaiso offered a wide selection of liberty options. The streetcars, majestic buildings and inspiring churches reflect the European influence and architectural styles of Valparaiso's colorful history. Skiing trips to popular resorts in mountains near Chile's capital of Santiago were by far the most popular excursions by Sailors. Others took tours of local wineries and vineyards famous for producing world-class Chilean wines. On the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup>, officers from HMS EDINBURGH were invited to brunch onboard TICONDEROGA in return for the party they hosted for TICO's wardroom while in port Coquimbo, Chile earlier during the month.

After enjoying the wonderful liberty found in Valparaiso, TICONDEROGA's crew returned to sea on July 17<sup>th</sup>. The ship headed north towards Peru's main naval base in Callao, located near the capital city of Lima, to begin Silent Force Exercise (SIFOREX) 2001. Hosted by Peru, SIFOREX would focus on undersea warfare training aimed at increasing interoperability and appreciation of each country's naval forces. USS TICONDEROGA (CG 47), USS RODNEY M DAVIS (FFG 60), USS HALYBURTON (FFG 40), and FAP MONTERO (FM 53) would conduct anti-submarine exercises against FAP CHIPANA (SS 33) and FAP ISLAY (SS 35) off the coast of Peru for five days.

While in port Callao from July 19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>nd</sup>, the crew had free time to sightsee in nearby Miraflores and Lima. They enjoyed a variety of activities ranging from bargain shopping in open-air markets for native Inca handcrafts to seeing the latest motion pictures, like *Jurassic Park III* and *Planet of the Apes*. For many Sailors, the stopover was their first opportunity to experience the rich culture and extraordinary history of Peru.

On the evening of July 20<sup>th</sup>, a multi-national reception was held at the officers' club at the naval base in Callao. The party was hosted by Rear Admiral Guillermo Soriano, Commander of Peru's submarine force with Rear Admiral Kevin Green, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command in attendance. The evening included a smorgasbord of food delights, impressive Peruvian

folk dancing in native costumes, live singers, and dancing. A good time was had by all as everyone mingled and danced the night away to American and Latino music.

SIFOREX began before sunrise on July 23<sup>rd</sup> as the three U.S. warships and Peruvian destroyer set to sea from Callao. Their anti-submarine warfare capabilities were put to the test immediately as two Peruvian submarines quietly waited at the harbor's outlet, ready to pounce on the exiting ships. The four ships fought their way out of the shallow harbor into the open ocean. SIFOREX was the first time U.S. Navy ships had an opportunity to operate with significant potential of the Peruvian submarine force, exchanging engagement theories and testing each other's tactics and technology.

TICONDEROGA acted as Anti-submarine Warfare Commander for SIFOREX, responsible for anti-submarine operations by the four surface ships in the task group. CDR Sears said, "This type of anti-submarine warfare training is significant for the crew because the ability to effectively detect and identify submarines is an important part of TICONDEROGA's overall mission as a fleet Cruiser."

On July 26<sup>th</sup>, the SIFOREX ships and submarines engaged in a freeplay exercise. The task force of four surface ships split into two Surface Action Groups (SAGs) with orders to ingress into an exclusion zone established by opposing forces to

initiate a shore bombardment on a simulated radar installation and navy base. Opposing the two SAGs were two submarines and two fast attack missile boats with standing orders to deny the ships from entering the exclusion zone and to prevent them from approaching Orange Force's coast.

In the late hours of July 26<sup>th</sup>, the SAGs entered the exclusion zone, commencing an attack run on the two pre-determined targets. Orange Force submarines quickly reacted to the aggressive conduct and immediately set out to challenge the trespassers. One frigate was sunk by a simulated torpedo when the ships first entered the exclusion zone, and that particular submarine quickly fell prey to a simulated MK 46 torpedo dropped from VENOM 501.

After several hours of intense naval engagements, three of the surface ships successfully eluded the submarines and missile boats, effectively completing a gunnery bombardment strike against the two shore targets.

The exercise came to a close on July 27<sup>th</sup> when the U.S. and Peruvian vessels returned to the Navy base in Callao after successfully completing the maneuvers in the Southeastern Pacific Ocean. The introduction and successful completion of the first Silent Force Exercise offered an unmatched opportunity for U.S. naval forces to engage in undersea naval exercises with the Peruvian Navy promoting mutual understanding, hemispheric

cooperation and the chance for U.S. Sailors to experience exciting ports of call.

For the remainder of the month, July 27<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>, TICONDEROGA participated in transit exercises enroute Malaga, Columbia with HALYBURTON in preparation for UNITAS 42-01 Pacific Phase. Exercises included helo dusk patrols, night small boat operations, low/slow flyer exercises, VBSS boardings, and Jeopardy events to name a few. During this four-day period the crew finally had a chance to catch their breath for the first time in three months, catching up on sleep or finishing their Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist qualifications.

The month of August began with UNITAS 42-01 Pacific Phase. Approximately 4500 Sailors and Coast Guard Personnel from seven countries participated in UNITAS August 3<sup>rd</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> off the coasts of Columbia and Ecuador. Hosted this year by the Colombian Navy, UNITAS Pacific Phase entailed a challenging series of multinational operations with naval forces participating from Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Colombia, and the United States aimed at promoting regional military cooperation and hemispheric defense capabilities.

On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, TICONDEROGA anchored in Bahia Malaga, Colombia, the entrance to a large Colombian naval base, after rendering honors with a hearty 21-gun salute. Pre-sail conferences took place during the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup>. Multi-national officer receptions were held nightly at the Malaga Officers Club despite torrential downpours each evening.

U.S. Navy units participating in the Pacific Phase included TICONDEROGA and HALYBURTON as well as USCGC NORTHLAND (WMEC 904). U.S. Navy PC-3 Orion patrol aircraft from PATROL SQUADRON SIXTEEN (VP 16) along with SH-60B Seahawk helicopters from HELICOPTER SQUADRON LIGHT FORTY-EIGHT DET EIGHT (HSL 48) and HELICOPTER SQUADRON LIGHT FORTY-FOUR DET FOUR provided air support to the UNITAS task Group. Remote control BMQ-64E air targets from DRONE DETACHMENT V-6 were used for live fire surface-to-air gunnery drills during exercises on the high-seas.

While in port Malaga U.S. Navy Sailors and Coast Guard personnel participated in community relations projects on August 4<sup>th</sup>. Fifty volunteers donated their limited free time to generously assist with community projects at a



local medical clinic, primary school and children's park, all of which were in need of repairs and supplies.

TICONDEROGA donated more than 100 boxes of basic health and medical supplies to the Colombian naval base hospital in Malaga. Supplies included Cepacol-brand mouthwash, Tylenol, and other over-the-counter medications. The supplies were obtained through the U.S. Navy's international people-to-people assistance program Project Handclasp based in San Diego, CA.

While at the primary school and children's park, TICONDEROGA Sailors played with the children for several hours, handing out toys and cookies. Although language barriers existed, the smiles between the Sailors and Colombian children were universal. The Sailors were famous for a few hours as many of the children cheerfully requested their autographs and photographs.

The fleet of twelve ships departed at noon on August 5<sup>th</sup> to begin exercises in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. TICONDEROGA enjoyed the honor of leading the multi-national task force out of Bahia Malaga in column formation. The U.S. Ambassador to Colombia, the Honorable Anne Patterson, and Colombian Chief of Naval Operations, Vice Admiral Mauricio were onboard for a reception on the flight deck and to tour the first Aegis Cruiser. Eight Latin American flag officers and dignitaries were also in attendance. Following the luncheon on the flight deck, the visitors observed a live-fire gunnery exercise in which TICONDEROGA shot down a U.S. Navy unmanned aerial target drone launched from USS HALYBURTON (FFG 40). Shortly after the exercise concluded the visitors were flown off by various helicopters.

The task force of surface warships and submarines conducted an array of training exercises including anti-air and undersea warfare training, marine interdiction operations (MIO), crew exchanges, live fire gunnery drills, and a Freeplay event over the course of nine days. More conferences took place in Malaga on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> so the multi-national task group's leaders could discuss the Freeplay portion of UNITAS. Additional exercises and the Freeplay event took place from the 8<sup>th</sup> through the 13<sup>th</sup>, when UNITAS 42-01 Pacific Phase concluded in Manta, Ecuador.

Despite the hectic schedule, more than 30 TICONDEROGA Sailors became Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialists during UNITAS. They were awarded their qualifications by Commander Sears in a ceremony on the O-4 level on August 11<sup>th</sup>. A barbecue was held later that day in the same location with the junior officers cooking for everyone.

On August 14<sup>th</sup> TICONDEROGA departed Manta enroute Vasco de Numez Balboa, Panama for a port visit. TICONDEROGA arrived in Panama on the 16<sup>th</sup> and remained in port until the 19<sup>th</sup>. Barbecues were held each afternoon by the Chief Selectees onboard TICONDEROGA and HALYBURTON, providing an opportunity for both crews to meet and mingle or develop stronger friendships. On the 17<sup>th</sup> members of TICONDEROGA's wardroom joined the Captain for a tour of the Panama Canal Commission Control Center, compliments of a classmate from the Naval Academy.

TICONDEROGA proceeded underway on the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup> headed north through the Panama Canal after a delay of several hours due to one set of locks undergoing an overhaul. The ship anchored in Gatun Lake at approximately

0200 and transited through the last set of locks leading to the Caribbean Sea late the following afternoon.

After nearly four months in the Pacific Ocean, TICONDEROGA was homeward bound, but not without a rest stop to Cozumel, Mexico on August 22<sup>nd</sup> through 26<sup>th</sup> along the way. While in Cozumel the officers and crew enjoyed maximum liberty, whether by snorkeling, visiting ancient ruins, shopping, or simply soaking up the sun's rays.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> the world's largest cruise liner, a Royal Caribbean ship capable of handling 6000 guests, moored on the opposite side of the pier from TICONDEROGA. Tours were given to more than 2,000 guests and crew from the cruise liner over the course of about five hours. The cruise liner's staff then reciprocated tours to TICONDEROGA's crew. Everyone was impressed with the cruise liner's amenities, such as the rock climbing wall, basketball court, and other athletic facilities.

TICONDEROGA proceeded underway on the 26<sup>th</sup> headed straight for Pascagoula, MS. The following morning when TICONDEROGA was about 200 nm off the west coast of Florida, flight quarters was held for the last time. Venom 501 flew off, headed home for Naval Air Station Mayport, FL.

Slightly after lunch on the 27<sup>th</sup>, Commander Sears awarded 20 more Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialists their qualifications on the flight deck. Shortly thereafter everyone assembled on the O-4 level to observe both the Silver Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist Pennant and Gold Surface Warfare Officer Pennant unfolded and flown from the foremast. All Second Class Petty Officers and above as well as all Surface Warfare Officers were within periodicity for earning their professional qualifications.

TICONDEROGA arrived at the "HI" Buoy, a welcome sight for many, on August 28<sup>th</sup> at 0830 on a breezy and sunny morning. After conducting a 9-gun salute for the families of TICONDEROGA at the entrance to the naval station harbor, the ship moored at 1000. Once all lines were over and the brow was in place, new fathers FC1(SW) Cann, BM2 Li, STG3(SW) Reyes, OS3 Taylor, and SN Henry were the first to depart. A crowd followed behind them, everyone anxious to see loved ones for the first time in four months. Many Officers and Sailors handed roses to their mothers, wives, and girlfriends, thankful for their support while on the high seas. Half of the ship's crew departed on leave that afternoon for post-deployment stand down. TICONDEROGA and her crew had proudly accomplished all assigned missions and arrived home safely after an arduous SOUTHCOM deployment.

The first part of September began quietly in port Pascagoula with half of the ship on leave for post-deployment stand down. On the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup>, however, the lives of all Americans were changed forever. Three unprecedented and unforgivable acts of terrorism were carried out in New York City and Washington, D.C., resulting in the bloody and untimely deaths of more than 6,300 innocent people. The list of the deceased includes mothers, fathers, children, sisters, brothers, grandparents, friends, businessmen and women, firefighters, policemen, rescue workers, Sailors, Soldiers, Marines, and fellow countrymen, irreplaceable losses to everyone in the nation.

At approximately 0840 Eastern Standard Time on September 11<sup>th</sup>, an American Airlines Boeing 767 airplane headed from Boston to Los Angeles was hijacked in mid-air by terrorists armed with knives and box cutters. The airplane was re-routed to violently crash into the 107<sup>th</sup> floor of World Trade Center Two in New York City, exploding upon impact. Both the airplane and building erupted into fiery masses, instantly killing all airline passengers and workers inside the top of the tower.

About five minutes later a second American Airlines airplane, also enroute Los Angeles from Boston, was hijacked by a second group of terrorists. The plane smashed into the top of

World Trade Center One, erupting into flames and killing everyone onboard and in the upper stories of the building.

An unknown number of shocked office personnel inside the twin towers made their last phone calls home, saying goodbye and sending their love before being overtaken by fire and thick acrid black smoke that quickly filled the Manhattan skyline and streets. The fire was so intense it could be seen in space by astronauts in orbit.

Hundreds of firefighters, policemen, and rescue workers immediately rushed to the indescribable scene of horror, not fully certain what to expect as the inside of the buildings quickly reached temperatures greater than 2000 degrees Fahrenheit. Thousands of pedestrians in the area, many on their way to work, screamed and ran for their lives as both towers rapidly collapsed within in an hour of the attacks. Some paused to look over their shoulders, staring in disbelief at the horror surrounding them. Hundreds of high-heeled shoes were left behind as businesswomen fled the area. Many people later claimed the surrealistic events felt like a scene out of a science fiction or horror movie. More than 343 firefighters and 98 policemen died in the line of duty, inhaling the thick smoke, burning to death, or killed by falling debris.

Lieutenant Commander Will Hesse, TICONDEROGA's Executive Officer and volunteer firefighter, was on leave at home in Long

Island, NY and assisted with mutual aid requests by Fire Department New York (FDNY) to Bayville Fire Company No. 1.

Approximately twenty minutes after the towers were attacked, a United Airlines flight inbound Newark, New Jersey from Washington D.C.-Dulles airport was hijacked by terrorists with a new target in mind: the Pentagon. They aimed the plane into the massive World War II-era office building, taking out a newly-renovated wing, killing more than 150 civilians and servicemen and women, in addition to 87 passengers on the airplane.

Commander "Chip" Buckley, TICONDEROGA's previous Executive Officer who now works in the Pentagon, watched in horror from his office window as the firebomb exploded. He felt the aftershocks ripple through the building as he escaped unharmed.

A fourth terrorist attack attempt was made on another United Airlines flight shortly after the Pentagon started smoking, but fortunately due to courageous passengers on the airplane, the attempt failed. A handful of passengers apprehended the terrorists in an attempt to save the plane from crashing into another target.

The plane eventually crashed into a field in rural Pennsylvania, killing everyone onboard, but thanks to the courageous passengers, a fourth target of unknown destination was saved from destruction and one can only ponder how many

lives were spared as a result. The target is suspected to have been the White House.

After the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, all flights were grounded and all airports were closed in the U.S. until at least noon Eastern Standard Time on September 13<sup>th</sup>. The President, Vice President, Speaker of the House, Cabinet Members, and Congressional members were transported to undisclosed locations around the country to protect them from harm. President George W. Bush addressed the nation from the White House on the evening of the attacks, stating retaliatory strikes will be held "at a method and an hour of our choosing...to rid the world of evil-doers."

Not more than two hours after the attacks, thousands of servicemen and women around the country were recalled from leave and ordered to report to their respective duty stations. THREATCON DELTA was set at all U.S. Armed Forces bases around the world. An estimated 35,000 Reservists of all branches of the military were expected to be ordered to duty.

All but 80 of TICONDEROGA's crewmembers were onboard the ship by the end of the day; the rest were stranded at various airports around the country. At midnight Commander Sears informed the crew via the 1MC the ship would proceed underway the following morning with USS YORKTOWN (CG 48). The cruisers would support Operation Noble Eagle, protecting airspace along



the Gulf Coast from any suspect aircraft entering sea approaches to the continental United States. USS JOHN L HALL (FFG 32) would proceed underway on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> to provide additional coverage in the Gulf of Mexico (GOMEX).

TICONDEROGA was assigned as GOMEX Air Defense Commander. USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN 71), USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN 73), and USS JOHN F KENNEDY (CV 67) battlegroups were assigned to defend airspace surrounding Boston, New York City, Washington, D.C., Norfolk, and Atlanta. Commander-in-Chief, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) assumed tactical control of all ships protecting the homeland.

As TICONDEROGA prepared to get underway on September 12<sup>th</sup>, a call was made on the bridge-to-bridge radio by a fisherman passing by USS COLE (DDG 67) undergoing extensive repairs in drydock at Ingalls Shipyard (COLE was attacked by suicide bombers while refueling in port Yemen on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2000). The fisherman on the radio said to no one in particular, "Is that the COLE? God bless America!" as the sun rose over the petrochemical stacks in Pascagoula on a beautiful blue cloudless morning. The stacks are normally something of an eyesore, but on this particular day they represented the wealth and power of America, and the bright light of the sun's rays was symbolic of the unyielding strength of the American people. TICONDEROGA's

bow was pointed out facing COLE, a reminder that Americans are not invincible to danger and silent enemies.

At approximately 0800 TICONDEROGA proceeded underway with her battle ensign flying proudly as she left Pascagoula. As TICONDEROGA entered the safety fairway, fishermen in shrimp boats waved at the ship, knowing full well something was amiss and the ship's crew was off to protect the freedoms Americans cherish. That afternoon TICONDEROGA received orders to monitor airspace in the vicinity of Tampa, FL, while YORKTOWN headed west to defend Houston, TX.

As TICONDEROGA transited southward, the seas became slightly choppy due to a tropical depression that would become Tropical Storm Gabrielle as the days progressed. Fortunately the storm waned and caused little trouble, other than rocking the crew to sleep.

Before TICONDEROGA arrived off the coast of Tampa, new orders were issued to transit the Straits of Florida to refuel and receive stores in Port Everglades, FL. On the morning of September 17<sup>th</sup> the ship arrived at Port Everglades. Two Coast Guard cutters and their small boats escorted TICONDEROGA into Port Everglades, warding off pleasure crafts in the channel as a Broward County Sheriff's Department helicopter buzzed overhead. When the ship moored, several police cars and policemen patrolled the pier and surrounding areas. Barriers were also

set up to keep strangers out of the way of the ship. The 80 crewmembers who rejoined the ship were driven from the airport in buses escorted by Ft. Lauderdale police, which caused quite a commotion on the interstate because locals thought the crewmembers were Miami Dolphins football players.

TICONDEROGA received a maximum endurance stores loadout for 45 days costing \$50,000. The 80 crewmembers who had missed ship's movement on the 12<sup>th</sup> were flown on a military airlift command flight from Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, MS, to join the ship in Ft. Lauderdale. Commodore William Marlowe and the DESRON SIX staff embarked and assumed duties as GOMEX Air Defense Commander.

TICONDEROGA, loaded up with her full complement, stores, and fuel, proceeded underway at 1700. The ship headed south towards the Straits of Florida to monitor the airspace there. The following afternoon TICONDEROGA, YORKTOWN, and JOHN L HALL were ordered to returned to Pascagoula. The battlegroups defending the East Coast were dispersed to complete pre-deployment work-ups, return to Norfolk or Mayport, or depart for deployment.

TICONDEROGA moored in Pascagoula on September 20<sup>th</sup> at 0830. Friends and families waited on the pier, anxious to see their loved ones who had been called to duty on short notice.

TICONDEROGA would spend the remainder of the month in port on standby for further action in support of Operation Noble Eagle.

By the end of the month, THREATCON BRAVO was set at the Naval Station with everyone remaining on heightened alert and within a 4-hour radius of the ship. The ship had left before the second POM leave period began, and ten percent of the crew with family farther away than four hours from Pascagoula were allowed to take leave beginning September 28<sup>th</sup>.

Never before had any decent person in America imagined such nightmares occurring in their homeland, despite a 1993 World Trade Center parking garage bombing in which a handful of people were killed and hundreds others injured. The primary suspect responsible for masterminding both the 1993 and September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks is Osama bin Laden, an exiled millionaire Saudi dissident and world-renowned terrorist leader protected by the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Bin Laden is also responsible for the bombing of USS COLE.

A worldwide manhunt for Osama bin Laden and other terrorists is underway with hundreds of suspects already arrested in the United States, England, France, Germany, the Philippines, and other countries around the globe. The support the United States has received from her allies has been incredible; a French newspaper headline even exclaimed, "WE'RE ALL AMERICANS." President Bush wants bin Laden "dead or alive."

A patriotic fervor has swept over the United States in the days and weeks following the attacks. Millions of Americans are proudly flying flags from car antennas, houses, buildings, or wearing the nation's colors. Some have even repainted their vehicles with a patriotic scheme. Flags and other patriotic emblematic items around the country have sold out by millions. Lines at blood donation centers across the United States are often long, with people waiting in line for up to six hours to donate blood in support of relief efforts. Half a billion dollars has already been donated by hundreds of thousands of Americans to help out their fellow countrymen who no longer have mothers, fathers, husbands, and wives. The Marine Corps has pledged \$10,000 college tuition for each child who lost a parent in the Pentagon attack, whether the parent worked in the Pentagon or was a victim on the plane that crashed into the building. The State of New York is providing free in-state college tuition to New York children whose parents were lost in the World Trade Center attacks. The terrorists responsible for the horrific attacks had no idea who they were fooling with when they targeted the United States. The incidents resulted in showing off the incredibly strong fabric from which Americans are woven and linked the nation together in a way the terrorists never imagined.

The month of October was spent in port Pascagoula, MS. Ten percent of the crew who hadn't taken leave in September due to Operation Noble Eagle were allowed to travel outside a 4-hour radius from the ship to visit friends and family across the United States. Meanwhile, TICONDEROGA remained on a 12-hour standby in the event she was needed to monitor airspace in the vicinity of Miami, FL to defend the homeland.

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, E-5 advancement exams which had been postponed from last month as a result of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks were held on the messdecks. On October 9<sup>th</sup> two JAG Officers the Navy Legal Office in Gulfport, MS were onboard to write Wills and Powers of Attorneys for the crew, something particularly important in light of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. Petty Officer Third Class advancement exams were conducted on October 10<sup>th</sup>.

Allied air strikes in retaliation for the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks began in Afghanistan on October 11<sup>th</sup>. Laser-guided bombs and other destructive weapons were targeted at Taliban Al-Quida training camps and other military sites by American and British aircraft. The allied air campaign does not involve the killing of innocent starving Afghans, who are receiving food from the United States in the form of airdrops over the country; the U.S. simply seeks to destroy the corrupt Taliban government and to "rid the world of evil."

TICONDEROGA was nearly called out to sea on the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup> in support of homeland defense after the FBI reported a possibility of terrorist attacks between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. A full recall was initiated and preparations were made to get underway. At 0730 on October 12<sup>th</sup>, Commander Sears held a Captain's Call informing the crew the ship would not be getting underway.

While TICONDEROGA remained in homeport with SIMA Pascagoula and the crew replacing and repairing various parts onboard the ship, October was plagued by an anthrax scare in New York, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and Florida. Anonymous letters containing anthrax powder were sent to media houses in South Florida, the Senate Majority Leader's office in Washington, D.C., and to ABC and NBC news offices in New York. Three deaths have occurred as a result of anthrax inhalation, four U.S. Postal Service mail sorting systems contain traces of the white powder, and 32 cases of anthrax have been treated across the Eastern seaboard. Anthrax spores were found in the Congressional Rayburn Building in Washington, D.C., and more than 2,000 office workers there are being tested for anthrax exposure. Several thousand postal workers in the District of Columbia and New York City areas are demanding to be tested as well, a fear well-founded since they handle the letters sent to all of the above offices.

National awareness has been key in preventing innocent citizens from opening letters received in the mail from unknown people, and as a whole, fear concerning future bioterrorism is in the air. Despite an uncertain future, never has our great nation been so united since World War II and the time of our country's founding. Citizens are rising up, demanding Osama bin Laden and his men pay for the crimes of which they are accused.

Allied air strikes against the Taliban continued throughout the month of October, and more than 200 Special Forces troops landed in Afghanistan to begin a ground war. Three U.S. aircraft carriers are in the vicinity of the Arabian Gulf, an action not seen since Operation Desert Storm in 1990. The Pentagon expects the air strikes and ground war to continue "until at least March or April of next year."

As a result of the attacks, force protection requirements have changed immensely. At Naval Station Pascagoula, two checkpoints are in effect, one near the Ingalls Access Road prior to driving over the base bridge, and the other near Keesler Credit Union onboard the Naval Station where vehicles are randomly searched. Both checkpoints are monitored by at least two Masters-At-Arms. Parking onboard the Naval Station is limited; only government vehicles are permitted to park within 25 yards of any building. Only SIMA and government vehicles are allowed on the pier.



Aside from the crew remaining on a four-hour tether in the local area in the event the ship must get underway on short notice to support homeland defense, duty sections onboard TICONDEROGA have shrunk from eight to four to support increased force protection measures. In port watches now include Pier Guard, Chief of the Guard (on a rotating basis with other ships in port), a Brow Watch who inspects bags and has a handheld metal detector, a Force Protection Officer armed with one .50 caliber machine gun on each Bridge wing, an M-14 Rover, and two .50 caliber watches on the forecastle and fantail. Port Operations and the ships in port also communicate on Bridge-to-Bridge to share information concerning suspicious activity surrounding the Naval Station.

Additionally, ships in the Pascagoula basin must stand up a small boat picket on a rotating basis. A .9 mm pistol is carried onboard a ship's gig or RHIB. Concussion grenades are at the boat crew's disposal if a hostile boat approaches a Naval ship in the harbor or if a suspicious swimmer appears in the water, and does not reply when intentions are questioned by the boat crew.

Apart from standing heightened watches while in port, TICONDEROGA's crew has been training for emergency situations. In addition to duty section force protection training, General

Quarters was conducted several times during the month and a CBR drill took place on the morning of October 26<sup>th</sup>.

Four awards ceremonies were held on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup> to recognize Sailors' hard work during TICONDEROGA's recent deployment. More than 30 Sailors from all rates were awarded Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medals or Letters of Appreciation from the Commanding Officer highlighting their significant accomplishments. Their dedication and determination ensure TICONDEROGA remains "First and Formidable," ready to answer all bells and accomplish all missions.