



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS SAN ANTONIO (LPD 17)

UNIT 100326 BOX 1

FPO AE 09587

5750

Ser Code 17/091

4 Mar 16

From: Commanding Officer, USS SAN ANTONIO (LPD 17)

To: Director, Naval History and Heritage Command

Subj: 2016 USS SAN ANTONIO (LPD 17) COMMAND OPERATIONS REPORT

1. Command Data

a. Name of your Command or Organization: USS SAN ANTONIO (LPD 17);

b. Unit Identification Code (UIC), per the SNDL: 07207;

c. Name and Rank of Commander/Commanding Officer/Officer in Charge:

(1) Last: NELSON First: DARREN M.I.: W Rank: CAPT

d. Date Assumed Command (date format YYYY-MM-DD): 2016-07-21;

e. Mission/Command Employment/Area of Operations:

(1) Mission: SAN ANTONIO's mission is to transport and land Marines, their equipment and supplies by embarked air cushion or conventional landing craft, augmented by helicopters or vertical take off and landing aircraft. She supports amphibious assault, special operations and expeditionary warfare missions through the first half of the 21st Century. Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton named the lead ship of the LPD 17 class San Antonio in 1996. The ship is named in honor of the City of San Antonio, Texas;

(2) During CY 2016, SAN ANTONIO completed the basic and integrated phases before commencing her 2016 deployment to USEUCOM and USCENTOM for various operations.

f. Permanent Location (Home Port for deployable units): Norfolk, VA;

g. Immediate Superior-In-Command: Commander, Amphibious Squadron SIX;

h. Operational: Commander, Amphibious Squadron SIX;

i. Administrative: Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group TWO;

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j. Identify your assigned Task Force/Group/Unit name(s) and mission(s). Include OPLAN(s) and or named operations you participated in during Task Force assignment (if applicable):

Currently assigned: CTF 80
Assigned during CY 16: CTF 80
CDRUSEUCOM
CTF 62.1
CDRUSCENTCOM

Operations: ODYSSEY LIGHTNING
COPPER DUNE

k. Name(s) of Forces, Commands, Ships, Squadrons or Units assigned or under your operational control (if applicable): N/A;

l. Type and number of Aircraft Assigned and Tail Codes, if applicable:

CH-53E, 4	Tail Codes 20, 21, 22, 23
RQ-21A, 5	Tail Codes 07, 12, 16, 17, 18
AH-1W/UH-1, 7	Tail Codes 30, 31, 32, 40, 41, 42, 43

m. Commands, Detachments or Units deployed on board or stationed aboard as tenant activities (as applicable):

Assault Craft Unit FOUR Detachment C
VMM-264 Black Knights, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron
VMU-2 Night Owls, Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron
Beach Master Unit TWO

n. Number of Personnel Assigned:

Officers: 46 Enlisted: 336 Marines: 2
Brazilian Officer: 1 Civilian: 0

o. Command Point of Contact (required entry, complete in full):

(1) Name (Rank, First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name): LTJG,
Charles, G, Cahoon III;

(2) Job Title/Office Code: Navigator;

(3) E-mail (both classified and unclassified, if available):
nav@lpd17.navy(.smil).mil;

(4) Phone number(s): 757-443-8650;

(5) Command Mailing Address: COMMANDING OFFICER
USS SAN ANTONIO (LPD 17)
UNIT 100326 BOX 1
FPO AE 09587-1700

2. Commander's Assessment

a. USS SAN ANTONIO performed magnificently throughout the year, starting with her basic phase in January and proceeded into the integrated phase as she ramped up for deployment. The operations tempo became quite brisk, with frequent underway periods and a constant state of readiness for the ship's missions;

b. The WASP Amphibious Readiness Group, comprised of USS WASP, USS SAN ANTONIO and USS WHIDBEY ISLAND, learned to operate together and perform a myriad of different missions while also integrating with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit. Despite some minor growing pains, WASPARG did an outstanding job with the integration. The ARG worked through some engineering issues and the typically turbulent Virginia Capes Winter and Spring climates and USS SAN ANTONIO certified that she could carry out our nation's missions abroad;

c. SAN ANTONIO's deployment schedule graduated into a demanding set of tasks and missions, often involving tight timelines which left little to no room for error in planning and execution, yet her crew remained steadfast in their drive for mission execution, resulting in success during OPERATION COPPER DUNE, OPERATION ODYSSEY LIGHTNING and the War on Terror. SAN ANTONIO's role during the latter operation was historic. Not since the 1970s has an LPD been used as a sea based strike platform. Our readiness was never more important than during our North bound transit through the Bab-Al Mandeb Strait while enroute to the Mediterranean Sea. Several missile attacks had occurred near the strait in the days prior to our transit and we knew precisely what we were getting ourselves into. Our tasking was clear and we had to get through the strait. Due to almost certainty of an armed altercation, my crew was prepared to respond to any threat to support the freedom of navigation or shipping in the strait. For nearly all of the crew, that day had been the first time that they had to man their battle stations for a real world General Quarters to defend their ship against an attempted attack. The reality of the situation ignited the warrior inside of every Sailor and enabled them to carry out their duties with heightened professionalism and proficiency. I am proud of my crew for their performance that day. After a final port call in Rota, Spain we returned home on Christmas Eve, to the delight of the crew and their families, then started the holiday stand down which was well deserved after an arduous integrated phase and a demanding deployment.

3. Chronology

2016-01-12 Holiday leave period ended

2016-01-15 Departed NAVSTA Norfolk for VACAPES operations and completed Navigation Check Ride.

2016-01-22 Returned to NAVSTA Norfolk

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2016-02-01 HTCS Box commissioning ceremony
2016-02-08 Departed NAVSTA Norfolk and arrived in NAVSTA Yorktown for ammo on load.
2016-02-11 Departed NAVSTA Yorktown for VACAPES operations
2016-02-12 Returned to NAVSTA Norfolk
2016-02-17 Departed NAVSTA Norfolk for VACAPES operations
2016-02-18 Underway replenishment with USNS ARCTIC (T-AOE-8)
2016-02-18 Returned to NAVSTA Norfolk
2016-03-15 Departed NAVSTA Norfolk to commence PHIBRON-MEU Integration (PMINT)
2016-03-16 Arrived Morehead City, North Carolina for 22 MEU embark
2016-03-17 Departed Morehead City, North Carolina
2016-03-20 TOWEX with USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD-41)
2016-03-22 Assistant Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps visit
2016-03-23 Arrived Morehead City, North Carolina for 22 MEU disembark
2016-03-24 NATO Tour
2016-03-24 Departed Morehead City, North Carolina
2016-03-24 Underway replenishment with USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN (T-AKE 12)
2016-03-26 Returned to NAVSTA Norfolk
2016-04-05 Departed NAVSTA Norfolk to commence ARG-MEU Exercise.
2016-04-08 Arrived Morehead City, North Carolina for 22 MEU embark
2016-04-09 Departed Morehead City, North Carolina
2016-04-12 Underway replenishment with USNS BIG HORN (T-AO 198)
2016-04-19 Underway replenishment with USNS BIG HORN (T-AO 198)
2016-04-23 Arrived Morehead City, North Carolina for 22 MEU disembark
2016-04-24 Departed Morehead City, North Carolina
2016-04-25 Returned to NAVSTA Norfolk
2016-04-27 National Defense Industry Association Executive Members Tour
2016-04-28 SECDEF African Affairs Tour
2016-05-04 Departed NAVSTA Norfolk to commence COMPTUEX
2016-05-05 Arrived at anchorage near Morehead City, North Carolina for 22 MEU embark
2016-05-06 Departed anchorage near Morehead City, North Carolina
2016-05-15 Underway replenishment with USNS BIG HORN (T-AO 198)
2016-05-24 Underway replenishment with USNS BIG HORN (T-AO 198)
2016-05-25 Dynamic offload of 22 MEU
2016-05-26 Returned to NAVSTA Norfolk
2016-05-31 Commenced 6A3 CMAV
2016-06-01 Commenced POM leave period
2016-06-09 Naval Striking and Support Service Forces NATO, General Hans-Lothar Domrose visit
2016-06-17 LCDR Elder retirement ceremony
2016-06-20 POM leave period ended
2016-06-24 CMAV 6A3 end
2016-06-25 Commenced 2016-2017 deployment
2016-06-26 Arrived Morehead City, North Carolina for 22 MEU embark
2016-06-27 Departed Morehead City, North Carolina
2016-06-29 Underway replenishment with USNS KANAWHA (T-AO 196)
2016-06-30 Commenced Atlantic Ocean transit with the WASP Amphibious Readiness Group
2016-07-08 Arrived Rota, Spain for fuel on load

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2016-07-09 Departed Rota, Spain
2016-07-16 Arrived Haifa, Israel
2016-07-17 Commence EXERCISE NOBLE SHIRLEY
2016-07-17 Departed Haifa, Israel
2016-07-21 Arrived Haifa, Israel
2016-07-21 Captain Darren Nelson assumed command of SAN ANTONIO
2016-07-21 Departed Haifa, Israel
2016-07-24 South bound transit through the Suez Canal
2016-07-28 South bound transit through the Bab Al-Mandeb Strait
2016-07-30 Underway replenishment with USNS LARAMIE (T-AO 203)
2016-08-02 Underway replenishment with USNS LARAMIE (T-AO 203)
2016-08-06 Underway replenishment with RFA FORT VICTORIA (A387)
2016-08-11 Underway replenishment with USNS LARAMIE (T-AO 203)
2016-08-15 Vertical replenishment with USNS CESAR CHAVEZ (T-AKE 14)
2016-08-18 Vertical replenishment with USNS CESAR CHAVEZ (T-AKE 14)
2016-08-21 Muscat Noncombatant Exfiltration Operation exercise
2016-08-22 Arrived Muscat, Oman
2016-08-26 Departed Muscat, Oman
2016-08-28 Underway replenishment with USNS CESAR CHAVEZ (T-AKE 14)
2016-09-02 Vertical replenishment with USNS CESAR CHAVEZ (T-AKE 14)
2016-09-06 Underway replenishment with USNS CESAR CHAVEZ (T-AKE 14)
2016-09-10 Vertical replenishment with USNS LARAMIE (T-AO 203)
2016-09-16 Chief Petty Officer Pinning Ceremony
2016-09-16 Underway replenishment with USNS LARAMIE (T-AO 203)
2016-09-22 Underway replenishment with RFA FORT VICTORIA (A387)
2016-09-24 North bound transit through the Strait of Hormuz
2016-09-27 Arrived Manama, Bahrain
2016-10-07 Departed Manama, Bahrain
2016-10-08 South bound transit through the Strait of Hormuz
2016-10-11 Underway replenishment with USNS LARAMIE (T-AO 203)
2016-10-12 North bound transit through the Bab Al-Mandeb Strait with
USS MASON
2016-10-16 North bound transit through the Suez Canal
2016-10-17 Underway replenishment with USNS BIG HORN (T-AO 198)
2016-10-24 Underway replenishment with USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN (T-AKE 12)
2016-10-24 Underway replenishment with USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN (T-AKE 12)
2016-11-01 Swim call in the Gulf of Sidra, Mediterranean Sea
2016-11-04 Underway replenishment with USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN (T-AKE 12)
2016-11-07 Underway replenishment with USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN (T-AKE 12)
2016-11-11 Underway replenishment with USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN (T-AKE 12)
2016-11-18 Underway replenishment with USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN (T-AKE 12)
2016-11-23 Underway replenishment with USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN (T-AKE 12)
2016-11-28 Underway replenishment with USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN (T-AKE 12)
2016-12-03 Underway replenishment with USNS WILLIAM MCLEAN (T-AKE 12)
2016-12-07 Arrived Rota, Spain for liberty and refuel
2016-12-11 Departed Rota, Spain en route to Morehead City, NC
2016-12-21 Arrived Morehead City, North Carolina for 22 MEU disembark
2016-12-23 Departed Morehead City, North Carolina
2016-12-23 Tiger Cruise
2016-12-24 Arrived Naval Station Norfolk, commenced holiday stand down

4. Narrative

a. SAN ANTONIO was in Naval Station Norfolk, underway periodically for her basic and integrated phases in preparation for her 2016 deployment to C6F and C5F areas of operation, in months January through May, followed by commencement of deployment in June;

b. USS SAN ANTONIO completed a highly successful deployment as a member of the WASP Amphibious Readiness Group to the Sixth and Fifth fleet Areas of Responsibility in support of OPERATION COPPER DUNE and OPERATION ODYSSEY LIGHTNING. SAN ANTONIO visited the ports of Rota, Spain; Haifa, Israel; Muscat, Oman and Manama, Bahrain;

c. In July 2016, SAN ANTONIO participated in the bilateral exercise NOBLE SHIRLEY involving assets from the Israeli Defense Force, Israeli Air Force, Israeli Navy and Israeli Special Warfare. The participating forces exercised amphibious tactics through coordinated surface and air preparations culminating in a full-scale amphibious assault. With follow on training in Maritime security, ground movements and assault, and coordinated air operations;

d. The ship also executed the Amphibious Task Force 51/5th Marine Expeditionary brigade (51/5) embassy reinforcement and non-combatant evacuation exercise in Muscat, Oman. This was the first time in the 5th Fleet AOR the U.S. Embassy was directly involved in a NEO exercise. SAN ANTONIO's involvement aided in the embassy staff gaining contact with several Omani government agencies they normally do not engage with, increasing relations with the Omani government. SAN ANTONIO conducted simultaneous LCAC and helo operations, evacuating 140 multinational volunteers back to SAN for processing and return to shore;

e. SAN ANTONIO aggressively patrolled her area of responsibility in the western Gulf of Aden, at a heightened alert status, providing the sole source of Quick Reaction Force (QRF), Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP) and Role II medical capabilities to forces ashore in support of OPERATION COPPER DUNE, while maintaining the common maritime picture for the area. Due to ironclad vigilance, SAN ANTONIO responded to a Safety of Life at Sea Call. The VBSS and medical teams conducted a nighttime boarding, assessed the mariner in need and safely and efficiently transferred him to the ship for life saving stabilization, along with follow on transfer via an embarked CH-53 helicopter to Salalah, Oman;

f. While transiting North bound through the Bab-Al Mandeb Strait with USS MASON and two Saudi Arabian warships on the 12th of October 2016, SAN ANTONIO's convoy was threatened by a coastal cruise missile fired from Yemen, allegedly by Houthi Rebels. USS MASON's Aegis defense system activated and launched three defensive standard missiles to counter the engagement. USS SAN ANTONIO and USS MASON set general quarters immediately following the engagement to prepare for any subsequent attack. No vessels were damaged in the incident and the U.S. led convoy completed the transit. With the aid of

intelligence collected by USS SAN ANTONIO, USS NITZE engaged three coastal RADAR sites with five Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles the following morning, in an effort to maintain freedom of navigation and safety for international shipping in the strait;

g. In support of OPERATION ODYSSEY LIGHTING, during the months of October and November, SAN ANTONIO provided the only sea-based strike coverage in the Gulf of Sidra. AH-1s and UH-1s delivered 134 Precision Guided Munitions against Islamic State fighters on the ground in Sirte, Libya all while maintaining 24/7 alert status for QRF and TRAP for special forces ashore. This is the first major offensive where AH-1s and UH-1s have been deployed as strike assets based off an LPD, since 1972;

h. Of the 183 days deployed, SAN ANTONIO spent more than 140 days disaggregated from the main command element. Operating as an independent deployer, the team onboard functioned at the level of a full staff, flawlessly planning and executing every mission assigned. The crew (and especially the flight deck team) flexed the full capabilities of this ship executing 281 sorties, 115 flight days, 1255 launch/recovery operations, 42 LCAC operations, 2 multi-axis amphibious assault exercises and a NEO exercise.

5. Supporting Reports (Provided Separately)

Orders

Operation Inherent Resolve Planning Order
Operation Copper Dune Exercise Order
Operation Odyssey Lightning Exercise Order
Noble Shirley Exercise Order

C2X Exercise Orders

Humanitarian Aid
Amphibious Raids
Focused Collection Operations
Strait Transits
Theater Security Cooperation Engagements Ashore
Visit, Board, Search and Seizure

PCS Intentions Messages

Wasp Amphibious Readiness Group and Marine Expeditionary Unit 22
Exercise
COMPTUEX
Deployment

Pre-Exercise Messages

Supporting Arms Coordination Exercise
Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Engagement Exercise
Hellfire Exercise
Defensive Cyber Operations Exercise
Rolling Airframe Missile Exercise

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Deployment

Wasp Amphibious Readiness Group Fy16 Deployment Order

Lessons Learned

08-09Jul 2016 Rota, Spain AAR
16-21Jul 2016 Haifa, Israel AAR
24Jul 2016 Suez Canal AAR
22-26Aug 2016 Muscat, Oman AAR
27Sep-07Oct Manama, Bahrain AAR
16Oct 2016 Suez Canal AAR
07-11Dec 2016 Rota, Spain AAR
Noncombatant Exfiltration Exercise Muscat
Mid Deployment
Post Deployment

OPREPs

OPREP 5 January - December 2017
14Sep16 Chinese Query

CASREPs

January-December 2016

Misc

Meritorious Unit Commendation Citation Draft
Commander, Amphibious Squadron Six Operation General Supplementary
2016 Movement Reports

6. Published Documents

Welcome Aboard Brochure
HTCS Box Commissioning Notice
Deployment Guide
Assistant Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps Visit Notice
Change of Command Notice
NATO Tour Notice
SECDEF African Affairs Tour Notice
LCDR Elder Retirement Notice
NATO General Hans-Lothar Domrose Visit Notice
Chief Petty Officer Pinning Ceremony Notice
Tiger Cruise 2016 Notice
Published Photos
Published Stories
Advancement Records

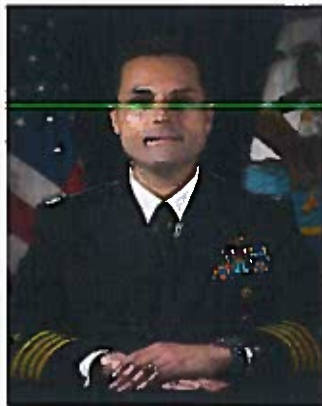
Command Website: <http://www.san-antonio.navy.mil/>

Command FaceBook URL: <https://www.facebook.com/usssanantonio/>

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Commanding Officer
Darren W. Nelson



Executive Officer
Edgardo A. Moreno



Command Master Chief
Eric J. Hovik

A blue ink signature of Darren W. Nelson, written in a cursive style.

D. W. NELSON