



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS SALVOR (ARS-52)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS SALVOR (ARS 52)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH)
Subj: 1998 COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAV REPORT 5750-1)
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F
Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Commanding Officer Biography and Picture
(5) Supporting Documentation

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are forwarded.


B. BOLIVAR BUSH

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

1. Command Mission. The mission of USS SALVOR is fourfold.

(a) Salvage of Stranded Vessels. Disabled vessels require various support services. SALVOR carries portable cutting and welding equipment, power generators, dewatering salvage pumps, machine shops, and necessary materials to effect temporary hull repairs. Additionally, she is equipped with six legs of beach gear, which can be rigged to exert over 300 tons of retracting force to the stranded vessel.

(b) Rescue and Assistance. For exterior fire fighting, SALVOR is equipped with two manual permanent fire monitors on the signal bridge and a manual portable monitor on the forecastle. These monitors provide fire fighting water or aqueous film forming foam at the rate of 1,000 gallons per minute to extinguish topside fires on a distressed ship. She is also rigged with two off-ship fire fighting manifolds, which supply firefighting water to aid in firefighting efforts to the interior of the distressed ship. SALVOR is designed for open-ocean towing. The power from her four main propulsion diesel engines and the towing machine is sufficient to tow a *Nimitz* class aircraft carrier at a speed of 3-5 knots.

(c) Recovery of Submerged Objects. SALVOR is equipped with a 7.5 ton capacity boom forward and a 40 ton capacity boom aft. Utilizing the two main bow rollers or the two stern rollers in conjunction with deck machinery, purchase tackle or hydraulic pullers, a dynamic 150 ton lift can be achieved. She can perform a dynamic lift of 300 tons using the main bow rollers and stern rollers in unison. SALVOR also possesses two auxiliary bow rollers, which when used simultaneously, can support a 75 ton lift.

(d) Manned Diving Operations. The MK21 MOD 1 diving system provides SALVOR divers the organic capacity of diving to normal operational depths of 190 feet on surface supplied air. When combined with the MK III Fly-Away Mixed Gas System (FMGS), the diving capacity is increased to a maximum depth of 300 feet. The divers descend to depth on a diving stage lowered by one of two powered davits. The diving locker is equipped with a double lock hyperbaric chamber for recompression following a deep dive or in the treatment of diving accidents.

Encl (1)

For shallow underwater inspections, searches and other tasks which require greater mobility than tethered diving, SALVOR maintains a complete complement of self contained underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA) equipment on board.

2. Organizational Structure.

- (a) Immediate Senior in Command:
Commander, Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific
RADM W. G. Sutton, USN
- (b) Commanding Officer
LCDR Babette Bolivar Bush, USN
- (c) Permanent Duty Station:
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
- (d) No aircraft assigned.

NARRATIVE

1. SALVAGE TRAINING 1998 - RESCUE AND ASSISTANCE.

On January 13, 1998, SALVOR was tasked to demonstrate its exterior firefighting capabilities as a part of the TSTA IV evaluation. Located approximately five miles south of Ewa Beach, HI, SALVOR's rescue and assistance team combated two blazing fires aboard the drifting salvage hulk, EX-NAVIGATOR. The operation provided a realistic training scenario and demonstrated her ability to conduct rescue and assistance operations at sea.

2. CHANGE OF COMMAND.

In a change of command ceremony held aboard SALVOR on January 23, 1998, LCDR Babette Bolivar Bush relieved LCDR Christopher Michael Henson as Commanding Officer. Other members of the official party included the guest speaker, CAPT Michael Sarraino, USN, Chief of Staff, Commander Naval Surface Group, Middle Pacific, and the command chaplain, CAPT Michael Pierce, Chaplain Corps, USN.

3. YTB SALVOPS, APRA HARBOR, GUAM.

During December 1997, Typhoon Paka stormed into Guam. In its wake, the inner harbor was in a state of disarray. The superb team effort of USS SALVOR (ARS 52) resulted in the successful retraction of YTB 794. From 15 through 16 April 1998, Team SALVOR's detailed rigging and precision deployment of two standard legs of beach gear; outstanding shiphandling into harness; and expert utilization of its diesel engines, resulted in the successful removal of YTB 794 from the West Beach of Inner Apra Harbor, Guam. This highly successful removal contributed significantly to the harbor cleanup effort.

4. USN/ROKN SALVEX 98-1K/USAF F-16D SALVOPS, YELLOW SEA.

From May 1 through May 7, 1998, USS SALVOR (ARS 52) was tasked with the salvage recovery of a crashed USAF F-16D off the West Coast of the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the Yellow Sea. The salvage recovery was necessary to obtain information for the USAF Safety Board. SALVOR assumed the duties as the Officer in Tactical Command (OTC) of a task force, which consisted of two Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN) MHCs, two ROKN ATSSs, and the ROKN Ship Salvage Unit (SSU). Team SALVOR's engineers primed the four MPDEs to provide the speed necessary required to traverse a distance of 1650 miles in 6 days. This transit was expedited considerably faster than her normal transit speed of 10 knots.

Encl (3)

Upon arrival in Chinhae, ROK, SALVOR conducted a salvage brief and presented the salvage plan that was eventually responsible for the recovery of over 35% of the F-16D wreckage scattered over a 4 nautical mile area.

During the transit to the F-16D crash site, SALVOR's expert navigation, shiphandling and rigging teams overcame angry seas and swift currents; maneuvering the ship into a three-point moor precisely over the debris field.

Team SALVOR's divers endured numerous afflictions; seawater temperature of 50 degrees fahrenheit, zero visibility in the water, and currents, which surged up to 5 knots. Despite these obstacles, the SALVOR diving team superbly trained ROK divers on U.S. Navy diving and salvage techniques. The task group completed a total of 190 mishap free dives for a total bottom time of 5400 minutes over a 9-day period. Wreckage recovery included numerous actuators, the tail section and other vital equipment needed for the USAF Safety Board's investigation.

5. Cooperation Afloat Readiness And Training (CARAT) 1998 Exercise.

Throughout CARAT '98, SALVOR conducted three successful bilateral diving and salvage exercises with the countries of Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore. SALVOR divers conducted 183 mishap free SCUBA and MK-21 Surface Supplied Diving System (SSDS) dives for a total bottom time of over 5000 minutes while simultaneously training foreign nationals on U.S. Navy diving and salvage techniques and procedures. Overcoming language barriers, SALVOR accomplished all training objectives and forged newfound camaraderie and esprit de corps with foreign diving brethren throughout.

CTG 712.0 was responsible for completing all facets of CARAT '98. The task group was comprised of USS SALVOR (ARS 52), USS SIDES (FFG 14), USS FORT MCHENRY (LSD 43), USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53), USS MONSOON (PC 4) and USS HURRICANE (PC 3). Commander, Destroyer Squadron Three One commanded the task group organization and orchestrated all exercise efforts.

6. PROJECT HANDCLASP, KWANG WHA, ROK.

Located north of Inchon, ROK, is the secluded island of Kwang Wha. Enshrouded in the foggy mists of the West Sea, the tiny island, its village and the people within normally go unnoticed.

However, torrential monsoon rains did not forget the island. The village and its people were devastated. During a brief port visit in Inchon, ROK on August 20, 1998, Team SALVOR volunteers, assisted by the U.S. Navy's Project Handclasp program, provided hygienic material to the villagers of Kwang Wha and rebuilt the island's broken levy. SALVOR's Sailors gained solace through the supply distribution and community work, promoting respect and goodwill between the U.S. Navy and the less fortunate villagers of Kwang Wha.

7. USN/ROKN SALVEX 98-2K.

During USN/ROKN SALVEX 98-2K, SALVOR's expert navigation, rigging and shiphandling teams overcame weather adversities by completing a three-point moor in currents that surged in excess of 5 knots. On August 23, 1998, after conducting a precision three-point moor over the objective area, SALVOR validated NAVSEAs experimental high current diving standard operating procedure (SOP), provided training to ROK Navy divers, and searched for a Soviet M-Class submarine which was believed to have been sunk in 1952 during the Korean Conflict.

Braving the high currents, frigid water temperatures, and poor visibility of the Yellow Sea, SALVOR divers conducted 7 joint mixed gas dives. The maximum dive depth of 255 feet allowed personnel to ascertain and incorporate valuable information into thorough lessons learned on high current mooring and diving. On August 29, 1998 the diving operations concluded and calmed the concerns of the ROKN hierarchy by determining that the underwater object was a merchant vessel vice a submarine.

8. USAF F-16C SALVOPS, SEA OF JAPAN.

When a USAF F-16C crashed off the east coast of ROK in the Sea of Japan, Team SALVOR eagerly rendered assistance. Upon tasking, SALVOR recovered its three-point moor in the Yellow Sea and traversed a distance of over 650 miles in two days to the crash site.

Upon arrival at the crash site on September 1, 1998, SALVOR's divers conducted several SCUBA survey dives to determine the location of the main debris field. With the assistance of an ROKN MHC, SALVOR's remarkable navigation team accurately plotted the debris field, which laid the groundwork for the deployment of a two-point moor within 25 yards of the aircraft engine.

After conducting a combination of 38 SCUBA and MK-21 SSDS dives for a total bottom time of 1700 minutes over a five-day period, SALVOR recovered over 50% of the wreckage including the engine and the flight data recorder.

On September 4, 1998, the USAF Safety Board determined that enough wreckage had been recovered their investigation and SALVOR detached from the salvage operations.

CHRONOLOGY

January 1998

- 01-12: Intermediate Maintenance Availability (IMAV), Pearl Harbor, HI.
- 13: Conducted Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA) IV.
- 14-26: Inport Pearl Harbor.
 - January 23, 1998: Change of Command ceremony
 - January 26, 1998: Commenced TSTA III.
- 27-29: Underway Middle Pacific, TSTA III.
- 30-31: Inport Pearl Harbor, HI for MK III FMGS onload.

February 1998

- 01: Inport, Pearl Harbor, HI.
- 02-05: Anchored Mamala Bay, HI, in order to conduct an operational test of FMGS.
- 06-28: Inport, Pearl Harbor, HI.
 - February 6, 1998: Received honorable mention for 1998 CAPT Edward F. Ney Memorial Awards.
 - February 9, 1998: Conducted Comprehensive Communications Assessment.
 - February 10-12, 1998: Conducted Final Evaluation Period (FEP).
 - February 17-20, 1998: Conducted Combat Systems Readiness Review (CSRR) and Logistics Administrative Training Review (LATR).
 - February 16-28, 1998: Conducted IMAV.
 - February 23, 1998: Conducted 2M Repair Site Review
 - February 25, 1998: Conducted Medical Readiness Assessment
 - February 27, 1998: Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) Period.

March 1998

- 01-12: IMAV and POM, Pearl Harbor, HI.
- 13: Underway Middle Pacific.
 - Conducted sea trials.
 - Conducted Navigation Evaluation Ride.
- 14-27: IMAV and POM, Pearl Harbor, HI.
 - March 16, 1998: Awarded the Maritime Warfare Excellence Award (7th), the Engineering/Survivability Award (2nd), the Command and Control Award (6th), and the Logistics Management Award (2nd).

Encl (3)

- March 26, 1998: Conducted Fast Cruise.
- March 27, 1998: Conducted Sewage Collection Holding and Transfer System Certification Inspection.
- 28: Underway for a six month Western Pacific deployment.
 - Held a burial at sea for the cremains of HA Leo E. Gliniecki and QM2 Michael R. Clements.
- 29-31: Underway, en-route Apra Harbor, Guam.

April 1998

- 01-11: Underway, en route Apra Harbor, Guam.
- 12-19: Inport, Apra Harbor, Guam.
 - April 15-16, 1998: Salvage Operations, debeached Yard Tug Boat (YTB)-794.
- 20-25: Underway, en-route Chinhae, Republic of Korea (ROK).
- 26: Inport, Chinhae, ROK for fuel onload and F-16D Salvage Operations preparations.
- 27-28: Underway, en-route from Chinhae, ROK to F-16D crash site. Underway with ROKS PYONG TAEK (ATS 27) and ROKS KWANG YANG (ATS 28).
- 29-30: Arrived at crash site, 35 miles off the coast of Inchon, ROK in the Yellow Sea. Executed a two point moor.

May 1998

- 01-07: Deployed a three point moor.
 - Conducted diving evolutions to recover the aircraft wreckage.
- 08-09: Underway, departed the crash site and proceeded to Inchon, ROK for wreckage offload.
- 10-15: Underway, independent steaming (ISE), en-route Hong Kong, People's Republic of China (PRC).
- 16-19: Inport, Hong Kong, PRC.
- 20-25: Underway, ISE en-route Sembawang, Singapore.
- 26-31: Inport, Sembawang, Singapore. Other vessels of the Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) present included USS SIDES (FFG 14) and USS FORT MCHENRY (LSD 43).
 - May 27, 1998: SALVOR divers examined starboard Auxiliary Power Units of the USS SIDES. Awarded the 2nd Quarter, FY 98 Energy Conservation Incentive Award, 1997 TYCOM Surface Ship Safety Award.

- May 28, 1998: Awarded the 1997 SURFPAC Force Commander Annual Wellness Unit Award.

June 1998

- 01-06: Inport, Sembawang, Singapore for availability and upkeep.
 - June 1, 1998: Assigned to Task Group (TG) 712.0, commander of Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training 1998 (CARAT '98).
- 07-09: Underway, ISE en-route Kuching, Malaysia on the island of Borneo.
 - Crossed the Equator and initiated all Polliwogs into the realm of Shellback.
- 10-15: Inport, Kuching, Malaysia for port visit.
 - June 11, 1998: Conducted Night Vision Equipment Annual Asset Verification and the Small Arms/ Weapons Annual Verification.
- 16-18: Underway, ISE en-route Pulau Tioman, Malaysia.
- 19: Anchored Pulau Tioman, Malaysia.
- 20: Underway, ISE en-route Kuantan, Malaysia.
- 21-29: Inport, Kuantan, Malaysia.
 - Commenced Malaysian phase of CARAT '98.
- 30: Anchored, Kuantan, Malaysia.
 - Conducted joint salvage dives with the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN).

July 1998

- 01-02: Inport, Kuantan, Malaysia.
 - Concluded the Malaysian phase of CARAT '98.
- 03-05: Underway, ISE en-route Sattahip, Thailand.
- 06-12: Inport, Sattahip, Thailand for the Thailand phase of CARAT 98. Other vessels of the PACFLT present included USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53), USS FORT MCHENRY (LSD 43), USS SIDES (FFG 14), USS MONSOON (PC 4), USS HURRICANE (PC 3), and USS HOUSTON (SSN 712).
- 13: Underway, ISE, Sattahip Harbor, Thailand.
 - Conducted sidescan sonar operations.
- 14-16: Anchored, Pattaya Beach, Thailand.
 - Conducted numerous dives to locate a lost anchor of a U.S. Navy submarine.
- 17-20: Underway, ISE en-route Sembawang, Singapore.
 - ISIC conducted Mid Cycle Assessment.
- 21-26: Inport, Sembawang, Singapore for the Singapore phase of CARAT '98.

Other vessels of PACFLT present included USS MONSOON (PC 4), USS HURRICANE (PC 3), USS MOBILE BAY (CG 53), USS FORT MCHENRY (LSD 43), and USS SIDES (FFG 14).

- July 25, 1998: SALVOR divers inspected and cleaned sea chest for numbers 4 and 5 fire pumps and provided dimensions for cofferdam construction for USS SIDES.

27-29: Anchored, Johor Strait.

- Conducted dive operations in support of CARAT '98.

30-31: Inport, Sembawang, Singapore in support of

CARAT 98-Singapore Phase and exercise completion.

August 1998

01-02: Inport, Sembawang, Singapore for upkeep.

03-05: Underway, ISE en-route Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.

06-09: Inport, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia for port visit.

10-18: Underway, ISE, en-route Inchon, ROK.

- August 14-15, 1998: Transited Taiwan Straits.

19-21: Inport, Inchon, ROK in preparation of USN/ROKN SALVEX 98-2K.

- August 20, 1998: Participated in Project Handclasp, Kwang Wha, ROK.

22: Underway, en-route salvage operations site.

23-29: Anchored, Yellow Sea in support of USN/ROKN SALVEX 98-2K.

30-31: Underway, en-route USAF F-16C salvage recovery site in the Sea of Japan at position 37-44.222N, 128-59.846E.

September 1998

01-04: Anchored, Sea of Japan, 2 NM SSE of Kangnung Air Base, ROK.

- Conducted salvage recovery operations.

- September 4, 1998: Underway at 1600, ISE en-route Chinhae, ROK.

05: Underway, ISE, en-route Chinhae, ROK.

- Arrived Chinhae, ROK at 1300.

06: Inport, Chinhae, ROK to offload F-16C wreckage.

- Underway at 1700, ISE, en-route Sasebo, Japan.

- 07-11: Inport, Sasebo, Japan for upkeep.
 - September 11, 1998, underway at 1452, ISE to Pearl Harbor, HI.
- 12-13: Underway, ISE, en-route Pearl Harbor.
 - September 13, 1998: Received OTSR divert to proceed to Yokosuka, Japan .
- 14-16: Inport, Yokosuka, Japan awaiting Tropical Storm Stella to pass.
- 17-27: Underway, ISE, en-route to Pearl Harbor.
- 28: Returned to homeport, Pearl Harbor, HI; completing six month Western Pacific deployment.
- 29-30: Inport, Pearl Harbor, HI for post deployment upkeep.

October 1998

- 01-28: Post deployment upkeep, Pearl Harbor, HI.
- 29-31: Inport, Pearl Harbor, HI.
 - October 29-30, 1998: Conducted fast cruise.

November 1998

- 01: Inport, Pearl Harbor, HI.
- 02: Underway, ISE, Middle Pacific for training.
- 03: Underway, ISE, Middle Pacific for training.
- 04-08: Inport, Pearl Harbor, HI.
 - November 406, 1998: Conducted Diving Operational Readiness Assessment (DORA).
- 09-10: Anchored, Mamala Bay, Pearl Harbor, HI.
 - Supported Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One (MDSU-1) Fly Away (Mixed Gas) Dive System III (FADS III) Certification.
- 11: Inport, Pearl Harbor, HI.
- 12: Underway, ISE, Middle Pacific.
 - Supported USS SAFEGUARD's (ARS 50) tow machine certification.
- 13-15: Inport, Pearl Harbor, HI.
- 16-18: Anchored, Mamala Bay, Pearl Harbor, HI.
 - Supported of MDUS-1 Master Diver Candidate pre-screening evaluations.
- 19: Underway, ISE, Middle Pacific.
 - Supported USS SAFEGUARD's (ARS 50) Prospective Commanding Officer (PCO) Visit.
- 20-30: Inport, Pearl Harbor, HI.

December 1998

- 01-02: Inport, Pearl Harbor, HI.
- December 2, 1998: Awarded Pacific Fleet Fuel Conservation Award for 4th Quarter, FY 98.
- 03: Underway for onload of A4 aircraft at pier W-3, Pearl Harbor, HI.
- 04-06: Underway, ISE, en-route Nawilwili, Kauai for Dependent's Cruise.
- December 5-6, 1998, inport Nawilwili, Kauai.
- 07: Underway, ISE, en-route Pearl Harbor, HI for Dependent's Cruise.
- 08-11: Inport, Pearl Harbor, HI.
- December 10, 1998: Provided Congressional Staff Delegation Tour.
- December 11, 1998: Underway, ISE, for Aloha Tower, Honolulu Harbor, HI.
- 12-14: Inport, Aloha Tower, Honolulu, HI for Visit Ship.
- 15: Underway, ISE, en-route Middle Pacific for training.
- Moored Pearl Harbor, HI at B-18.
- 16-31: Inport, Pearl Harbor, HI.
- December 18-31, 1998: Holiday upkeep.