

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS BROOKE (DEG 1)

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From: Commanding Officer, USS BROOKE (DEG 1)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-0939), Washington
Navy Yard, Washington, D. C. 20390

Subj: Command History (OPNAV REPORT 5750-1); forwarding of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B

Encl: (1) Command History of USS BROOKE (DEG 1) for 1973

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is hereby
forwarded.


W. D. PIVARNIK

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COMMAND HISTORY
OF
USS BROOKE (DEG 1)
1974
(OPNAV REPORT 5750-1)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Chronology of Highlights
- II. Basic Narrative
- III. Attachments
 - (1) CTU 77.0.1 msg 080055Z MAR 73
 - (2) CTU 77.0.2 msg 100229Z JAN 73
 - (3) CTU 77.0.2 msg 281110Z JAN 73
 - (4) CTU 77.0.2 msg 150141Z JAN 73
 - (5) CTU 77.0 and CTG 77.7 msg 111136Z MAR 73
 - (6) CINCPACFLT msg 182222Z APR 73
 - (7) CINCPACFLT msg 210538Z APR 73
 - (8) CTF 75 msg 181916Z APR 73
 - (9) CCDP 1tr FF-4, 8123, Ser 31/282 dtd 21 AUG 73
 - (10) CDS5 1tr CDS5:N4:st, 8000, Ser 194 dtd 20 SEP 73
 - (11) CDS5 msg 091100Z JUL 73
 - (12) CDS23 msg 092325Z JUL 73
 - (13) CINCPACFLT msg 100541Z NOV 73
 - (14) CINCPACFLT 1tr FF1-1, 1133, Ser 71/7600 dtd 7 DEC 73
 - (15) CCDG1 1tr CCDG-1:11:jfb, 5000, Ser 354 dtd 29 DEC 73
 - (16) Biography of Commanding Officer
 - (17) Picture of Commanding Officer

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(This page UNCLASSIFIED)

CHRONOLOGY OF HIGHLIGHTS

1-27 JAN	Gulf of Tonkin as PIRAZ escort; TU 77.0.2
22 JAN - 1 FEB	Enroute Sasebo, Japan via Formosa Straits as a unit of TF 75.0; steaming independently
1 FEB - 13 FEB	Inport Sasebo, Japan for Upkeep
13 FEB - 15 FEB	Enroute Yokosuka, Japan; steaming independently
15 FEB - 19 FEB	Inport Yokosuka, Japan for rest and relaxation
19 FEB - 23 FEB	Enroute Yankee Station, Destroyer Training Area, Gulf of Tonkin; steaming independently as a unit of TF 75.0
20 FEB	Executive Officer relieved
23 FEB - 25 FEB	Training in Destroyer Training Area Yankee Station, Gulf of Tonkin; SOPA and OTC is CTG 77,4 embarked in USS ORISKANY (CVA-34)
27 FEB	Enroute NSAR; steaming independently
27 FEB - 13 MAR	Gulf of Tonkin as NSAR escort; TU 77.0.1
13 MAR - 15 MAR	Enroute Hong Kong B.C.C.; steaming independently as a unit of TF 75.0
15 MAR - 22 MAR	Inport Hong Kong, B.C.C. for rest and relaxation
16 MAR	Assumed SOPA ADMIN, Hong Kong, B.C.C.
22 MAR	Relieved as SOPA ADMIN Hong Kong, B.C.C.
22 MAR - 23 MAR	Enroute Subic Bay Operating Area as a unit of TF 75.0
23 MAR - 24 MAR	Conducting ASW Exercises in Subic Bay Operating Area with USS HARDER (SS-568); OTC and SOPA is Commanding Officer, USS BROOKE (DEG 1)
24 MAR	Enroute Subic Bay, R.P. for refueling
24 MAR - 26 MAR	Enroute Gulf of Tonkin; steaming independently

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CHRONOLOGY OF HIGHLIGHTS

26 MAR Operations in the Gulf of Tonkin as a unit of TU 75.0.2; OTC and SOPA is Commanding Officer, USS ENTERPRISE (CVAN-65).

26 MAR Enroute Yankee Station Destroyer Training Area

26 MAR-30 MAR Training (AAW and ASW) in Yankee Station Destroyer Training Area as a unit of 77.1.1; OTC and SOPA is Commanding Officer, USS HENDERSON (DD-785)

30 MAR-31 MAR Operating in Yankee Station Destroyer Training Area as a unit of TU77.1; OTC and SOPA is COMDESRON 11 embarked in USS GOLDSBOROUGH (DDG-20)

31 MAR USS RANGER (CVA-61) joins and Commanding Officer, USS RANGER (CVA-61) assumed OTC and SOPA

31 MAR-1 APR Enroute Yankee Station Gold to join USS ENTERPRISE (CVAN-65)

1 APR-3 APR Operating in Yankee Station Gulf of Tonkin as a unit of TG77.5; OTC and SOPA is Commanding Officer, USS ENTERPRISE (CVAN-65)

3 APR-5 APR Operating in Yankee Station Destroyer Training Area as a unit of TU 77.1; OTC and SOPA is COMDESRON 11 embarked in USS GOLDSBOROUGH (DDG-20)

5 APR-9 APR Enroute Sasebo, Japan via Formosa Straits; steaming independently as a unit of TF 75

9 APR-11 APR Inport Sasebo, Japan making preparations for joint Japanese-American ASW exercise (ASWEX-73)

11 APR-14 APR Operating as a unit of TG 75.1 in Kirin Operating Area with ships of the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force and units of the U.S. Navy; OTC and SOPA is COMDESRON 17 embarked in USS L.F. MASON (DD-852)

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CHRONOLOGY OF HIGHLIGHTS

14 APR-15 APR	Enroute Yokosuka, Japan in company with USS L.F. MASON (DD-852); SOPA and OTC is Commanding Officer, USS L.F. MASON (DD-852)
15 APR-17 APR	Inport Yokosuka, Japan; making preparations for transit to CONUS
17 APR-2 MAY	Enroute San Diego via Midway and Pearl Harbor; OTC and SOPA is COMDESRON 17 embarked in USS ORLECK (DD886)
20 APR	Changed operational control to THIRD FLEET
23 APR	Crossed International Dateline
23 APR	Brief stop for fuel at Midway Island
25 APR-26 APR	Inport Pearl Harbor, Hawaii for fuel
2 MAY	Arrived San Diego, California. Commenced Post-Deployment Standown.
2 MAY-2 JUN	Leave and Upkeep inport San Diego
3 JUN-3 AUG	Inport San Diego for Readiness Improvement Period
11 JUL-13JUL	Nuclear Training Proficiency Inspection
23 JUL-27JUL	Shore Power Electrical Equipment Inspection
3 AUG	Complete READIMP
28 AUG-31 AUG	Underway SOCAL OPAREAS for ISE/ENG training
25 SEP-27 SEP	Underway SOCAL OPAREAS to provide Antisubmarine Warfare Training
26 SEP	Excercise torpedo firing
1 OCT-5 OCT	Underway SOCAL OPAREAS to provide Helicopter Inflight Refueling Service
3 OCT	TARTAR Missile fired

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CHRONOLOGY OF HIGHLIGHTS

23 OCT-26 OCT	Underway Material Inspection
26 NOV-30 NOV	Underway SOCAL OPAREAS to provide serviced as Submarine Target Vehicle
10 DEC-12 DEC	COMCRUDESGRU ONE Command Inspection
10 DEC	Shifted Homeports to Bremerton, Washington

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Basic Narrative

January

January 1, 1973, found BROOKE operating as a unit of TU 77.0.2. BROOKE's job was to act as "shot-gun" for the PIRAZ ship, USS TRUXTUN (DLGN 35), providing an additional gun, an additional missile system and greater mobility for search and rescue operations. Also BROOKE was called upon to provide fuel to "Big Mother" rescue helicopters as well as routine mail/passenger helos. The job of notifying North Vietnam-bound merchant vessels of the dangers of minefields sown by the United States Navy soon became an important function for BROOKE.

The tempo of operations at PIRAZ was not slackened by the New Year: Jan 1 found BROOKE crewmen hustling throughout the ship to strike down stores received by vertical replenishment from USS SAN JOSE (AFS 7). At 0001, 2 Jan, USS JOUETT (DLG 29) relieved USS TRUXTUN (DLGN 35) as PIRAZ ship. Later the same day both ships sharpened the skills of the guncrews with a gunnery exercise. The following day sent BROOKE and JOUETT southward to rendezvous with USS HASSAYAMPA (AO 145). (Underway refueling was accomplished approximately every five days throughout BROOKE's line period.) Refueling completed, the PIRAZ station was reoccupied and the routine of patrol reestablished.

BROOKE had no time for boredom, however. Although not NTDS equipped, the CIC team used LINK 14 data, supplemented by and correlated with onboard sensors to maintain a detailed plot of surface and air contacts in the northern Gulf of Tonkin.

On Jan 6, 1973, an unknown contact was reported by LINK 14 to be steaming out of North Vietnamese waters. BROOKE was detached to investigate the contact and warn it's master of the possible consequences of his present course. The vessel was the SS HUNG CHI 150 flying the Chinese Communist flag and estimated to be outbound from Haiphong, North Vietnam. BROOKE paralleled her course and speed, concurrently collecting intelligence data and flying international signals warning of minefields ahead on the chance she was involved in coastwise traffic and bound for another North Vietnamese port. Additionally, the signalmen attempted to convey the same message by flashing light, as did the radiomen via International Morse Code utilizing the 500 KHZ International Distress Frequency. Finally, BROOKE's 6MC loud hailer was employed to pass the warning in spoken English. HUNG CHI 150 exhibited the normal response for such vessel - none at all! BROOKE continued her efforts while escorting HUNG CHI 150 southward. As HUNG CHI 150 again entered North

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Vietnamese waters, BROOKE turned away and set a course to rejoin JOUETT at PIRAZ. This was first of many such incidents. BROOKE was later commended for the excellence of her merchant ship reports (attachment 1).

Again the normal routine was established and again it was not long lived. Jan 7, 1973: another surface unknown on the LINK 14, and again BROOKE was detached to investigate and report. This was HUNG CHI 152, another Chinese Communist vessel, steaming toward Haiphong. BROOKE went through the entire gamut of notification methods: again there was no response. Data was collected and sent out expeditiously, updating and refining Navy intelligence data banks throughout the Pacific and in Washington, D.C.

JOUETT and BROOKE left PIRAZ together 8 Jan to meet and refuel from USNS Taluga. Enroute to the rendezvous the ships exercised at signals and ship-handling thus providing a valuable opportunity for junior officer, signalman and CIC team training. The exercises involved formation steaming and various turn maneuvers. Not only was the experience gained valuable, but also the diversion from otherwise routine operations served a vital function. The periodic runs to replenish fuel and stores came to be milestones in otherwise busy but repetitive lives.

On 9 Jan another unknown surface contact was intercepted, identified, notified of potential dangers ahead and escorted until clear of the PIRAZ area. This vessel was again of Communist Chinese origin, HUNG CHI 160, apparently bound for Haiphong, North Vietnam.

All hands looked forward to a change of pace as BROOKE was scheduled to be relieved as PIRAZ escort and move south to the gunline for shore bombardment work. However, after taking into consideration all aspects of the threat situation at the exposed northern Gulf of Tonkin stations, Commander, Task Force 75 opted to keep BROOKE at PIRAZ, where her full anti-air warfare capabilities could be utilized. The gunline's loss was a gain for TU 77.0.2, however. BROOKE continued to ride "shotgun" for JOUETT to the pleasure of JOUETT's Commanding Officer, CTU 77.0.2 (attachment 2).

The pace slowed for BROOKE. The routine so often interrupted previously lasted until the afternoon of 12 Jan, when BROOKE and JOUETT conducted gunnery exercises. These exercises were fruitful for BROOKE - her guncrews,

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stretched thin by condition III watches, learned to function as a team. In spite of smaller crews than used at General Quarters, the men were able to fire so accurately and quickly that it was remarked that BROOKE's 5"/38 sounded and shot like the newer 5"/54 mounts! (See attachment 3.)

(U) After the usual five day period, BROOKE and JOUETT again steamed south to replenish bunkers from one of COMSERVPAC's busy ships. This time it was USS PONCHATOULA (AO 148). At 1007, 13 Jan, after one hour eleven minutes alongside, BROOKE was again topped off and ready to steam. PIRAZ was reoccupied and the slow but steady grind of vigilance was resumed.

(C) On 14 Jan BROOKE was directed by CTU 77.0.2 to move to a position approximately twelve miles off the coast of North Vietnam and assume control of two helicopters, Big Mother 67 and Copyright 10. These two units in conjunction with BROOKE were prepositioned as Search and Rescue assets in anticipation of a large air strike into the mainland. The strike went in and was closely monitored throughout BROOKE as the Electronic Technicians and Interior Communications Electricians improvised a patch to the ship's entertainment system. Thus BROOKE crewmembers had a ringside seat on an unfolding drama of war. One by one the pilots reported dropping their weapons. Occasionally someone would come up on the circuit with warnings of surface to air missile (SAM) or anti-air artillery activity, but always their voices were cool and professional. Suddenly, one pilot reported that his aircraft was hit and he was heading to sea. His wingman said he could see a hole about one foot in diameter in the fuselage of the aircraft. With marginal control and rapidly losing altitude, the pilot of the damaged F4 Phantom skillfully navigated toward the waiting rescue forces. His report of "feet wet" was a welcome relief to all listening. BROOKE's CIC and Navigation teams quickly plotted the position of the damaged aircraft and the helicopters were vectored to the site. BROOKE came about and headed in also. The area was crowded with junks and there was some concern that the pilots might be in danger after ejecting. Their ejection and descent was uneventful, however, and both were recovered within one minute of entering the water. Copyright 10 and Big Mother 67 immediately returned to JOUETT where the flyers were given a quick medical examination and pronounced in good condition. The job was not over for BROOKE - Big Mother 67 suffered a casualty while on deck aboard USS JOUETT and Nevada City 05 was inbound and short of

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fuel. As she sped back to PIRAZ to rejoin JOUETT, BROOKE was called upon to provide fuel to the incoming helicopter. Shifting swiftly from her role as mobile communications station to mobile fueling platform, BROOKE topped off Nevada City 05 without losing stride. Repairs on Big Mother 67 were effected, Nevada City 05 picked up the flyers and returned them to their carrier, and BROOKE and JOUETT settled down for another night at PIRAZ. (Attachment 4)

(U) The morning of 15 Jan brought another HUNG CHI, this time numbered 162. The now familiar routine was repeated: intercept, identify, notify, escort and report. In spite of the frequency of these assignments the enthusiasm of BROOKE's Intelligence, Combat and Communications teams never slackened. The reports were as detailed and accurate as conditions would allow, and earned BROOKE the reputation as the best reporting ship in the Gulf (attachment 5).

(U) Another gunnery exercise was conducted on 16 Jan. As before, the exercise was intended to give the guncrews a chance to operate as a team. Their spirit and ability again showed improvement and contributed to the reputation documented in attachment (2).

(U) Also on 16 Jan orders were received to move PIRAZ twenty miles south as an indication to the North Vietnamese of the good faith of the United States Government in then secret negotiations for peace in Southeast Asia. JOUETT and BROOKE turned south, leaving one circle in the Gulf of Tonkin and taking station in another. The job was the same; the pace was slower.

(U) 17 Jan saw a new arrival at PIRAZ. USS HORNE (DLG 30) reported and began the lengthy process of relieving JOUETT as PIRAZ ship. The process was completed late in the evening and the Commanding Officer of USS HORNE became CTU 77.0.2 and HORNE became RED CROWN.

(U) With fuel and stores low, BROOKE and HORNE steamed south early in the morning of 18 Jan for a combined fueling and vertical replenishment. Fuel was provided by USS PASSUMPSIC (AO 107); stores came from USS NIAGRA FALLS (AFS 3). Conducting both evolutions in one morning was a big job for BROOKE's crew. Fueling requires most men at stations handling lines and communications. Vertical replenishment is a gruelling race between men and powerful CH-3 Seahorse helicopters. The helo shuttles back and forth, dropping large loads on deck at a rate of one

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every two to three minutes. In the intervening time crewmen must clear the deck and prepare retrograde (cargo nets, pallets, etc) to be returned to the replenishment ship. BROOKE won praise from all involved for the rapid and safe handling of such vital deck evolutions.

Another periodic gunnery exercise was conducted with HORNE on the morning of 22 Jan. Later in the evening, BROOKE was detached to investigate an unknown radar contact. The contact was determined to be a fishing junk and BROOKE rejoined HORNE.

January 23 saw BROOKE and JOUETT steam south for refueling from USS PONCHATOUA (AO-148). This was to be BROOKE's last underway replenishment while part of TU 77.0.2.

At 1215 on 28 January, BROOKE was relieved as PIRAZ escort by USS O'CALLAHAN (DE 1051) and turned south on the first leg of a four day transit to Sasebo, Japan. Operational control was transferred to CTF 75.0. The voyage, via Formosa Straits, was uneventful, although BROOKE was tasked with reporting shipping and fishing activity should it be encountered during her transit through the Formosa Straits.

February

The morning of 01 February brought Japan into view. BROOKE moored starboard side to berth India 7 at Sasebo, Japan. Workers streamed aboard immediately and no time was lost commencing repairs necessitated by BROOKE's 37 day at-sea period.

Liberty call for BROOKE's sea-weary sailors found all hands anxious to sample the pleasures of Japan. First stop was the Navy Exchange: purchases began streaming aboard before dark and rose to immense proportions in subsequent days as crewmen took delivery of over \$60,000 of items purchased from the Exchange by special order through the ship's store. BROOKE was tightly packed prior to sailing; everything from teapots to motorcycles was safely and securely stowed below.

Repairs completed, BROOKE sailed 13 February bound for Yokosuka, Japan, for a brief four day rest and recreation period for the crew. The transit was uneventful and by 1000, 15 February BROOKE was moored portside to pier 8, Yokosuka, Japan. Liberty was immediately granted and BROOKE crewmen set about the task of filling the few nooks that remained on board. Though brief, the stay was enjoyed to

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the fullest with maximum liberty and full use of all available diversions.

On 19 February, BROOKE again was underway. A course was set for the Gulf of Tonkin, this time via the Luzon Straits. Operational control was CTF 75.0, as before.

Rendezvous was effected with USS PASSUMPSIC (AO 107) for refueling and for highline transfer of LCDR Jeremy BOORDA, BROOKE's former Executive Officer. LCDR BOORDA was relieved 19 FEBRUARY by LCDR G. N. GEE, USN.

The evening of 23 February saw TU 77.4.2 rise over the horizon. This group, consisting of USS GOLDSBOROUGH (DDG-20), USS BRADLEY (DE 1041), USS KRAUSS (DD 849) and USS SHASTA (AE 33), was involved in exercises in the Yankee Station Destroyer Training Area. BROOKE joined the group and came under tactical command of COMDESRON 11 who flew his flag in GOLDSBOROUGH.

Exercises in AAW and formation steaming continued throughout the night. The next day, 24 February, BROOKE conducted replenishment with USS MARIAS (AO 57) and exercised at rearming with USS SHASTA (AE 33).

Detached from TU 77.4.2 on 25 February BROOKE rendezvoused with USS NIAGARA FALLS (AFS 3) for vertical replenishment, then proceeded to join TG 77.4, consisting of USS ORISKANY (CVA 34), USS GOLDSBOROUGH (DDG 20), USS FANNING (DE 1078), USS ROGERS (DD 876), USS DECATUR (DDG 31), and USS BORDELOU (DD 881). SOPA and OTC was CTG 77.4 embarked in USS ORISKANY (CVA 34).

February 26 BROOKE detached briefly from TG 77.4 for fueling from USS CACAPON (AO 52). Afterward, BROOKE rejoined ORISKANY.

Throughout this period BROOKE had been engaged in a continuous series of exercises in screening and AAW.

Orders were received 27 February to proceed to the Northern Search and Rescue station (NSAR), the northernmost station in the Gulf of Tonkin. Enroute to station BROOKE took an opportunity to top off her fuel tanks from USNS TALUGA. Early evening found BROOKE on station as escort for USS REEVES (DLG 24). Commanding Officer, USS REEVES (DLG 24) was CTG 77.0.1, SOPA and OTC at NSAR.

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March

Back in the familiar environment BROOKE found herself performing the same tasks which she had mastered so well at PIRAZ. 01 March sent BROOKE speeding to perform notification duties. Two Russian vessels, the tanker ODESSA and the freighter VEGORLIK, were accomplishing a predawn rendezvous. The sun rose on three ships as BROOKE stood by flying notification signals and taking a close look at the Soviet activities. Intelligence reports indicated Soviet intelligence collectors were operating in the area. After submitting the usual thorough reports, BROOKE rejoined REEVES at NSAR.

The next day brought another contact. This one was the ship being sought. The Soviet AGI Aneroid was intercepted northbound, visually identified and reported. Concurrently, REEVES moved to intercept another contact which was discovered to be AGI KURSOGRAF. Presence of two intelligence collectors in the northern Gulf as well as the Soviet ships sighted earlier portended things to come. On 03 March two more Soviet ships exited Haiphong harbor and found BROOKE as a reception committee of one. Both vessels, the BALASHIKA and the BABUSKIN, were modern frigates of the same class. BROOKE radioed the word throughout the Gulf and returned to NSAR.

March 04: again BROOKE went to intercept a contact. This one was ABAKASN, another Soviet freighter. Later the same day BROOKE refueled from USS CALIENTE (AO-53). Another vertical replenishment was conducted with USS SAN JOSE (AFS-7) on March 05. On 08 March the nuclear powered frigate USS BAINBRIDGE (DLGN-25) relieved REEVES as NSAR ship. BROOKE again refueled 09 March from USS CALIENTE (AO-53).

Things quickened again beginning early morning 10 March: a contact was obtained on radar. BROOKE reported and detached to investigate. The contact was closed and positioned such that the moon silhouetted the vessel. Intelligence messages and publications were consulted and the vessel tentatively identified as a Soviet tanker. Word of the intercept was flashed to the force and BROOKE returned to BAINBRIDGE on NSAR.

The Soviet ship TUNGUSKA was intercepted and reported 11 March.

After two weeks on station BROOKE was relieved by USS LAWE (DD-765), changed operational control to CTF 75.0 and set sail for Hong Kong, B.C.C. five hours later. A contact was detected and BROOKE diverted to intercept. This was the Soviet MERCHANT MICHURIN. Reports were filed and BROOKE resumed her transit. Later, rendezvous with USS TOLOVANA (AO-64) was effected for a refueling.

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Since leaving Yokosuka BROOKE had spent twenty-four days at sea, refueled seven times, taken stores by vertical replenishment twice, rearmed once and filed reports on ten Soviet vessels. Hong Kong, B.C.C. was a welcome sight on 15 March! BROOKE moored to Bouy 2 in Hong Kong harbor starboard side to USS KING (DLG-10). First order of business was not liberty but instead relief of KING as SOPA ADMIN, charged with running the administrative details of the port. Relief was completed 17 March and KING slipped her mooring and stood out of the harbor, leaving BROOKE in sole possession of Bouy 2 and the workload normally assigned to much larger ships. In true BROOKE fashion, the job was done well and the crew enjoyed Hong Kong.

March 22: Underway for Subic Bay Operation Areas to rendezvous with USS HARDER (SS-568) for antisubmarine warfare exercises. Arriving in the OPAREA 0026 24 March BROOKE joined HARDER and exercises began, lasting until 0454. Although scheduled to last several days, the exercises were terminated as BROOKE received orders to fuel and proceed to the Gulf of Tonkin. At 0855 BROOKE moored port side to Riviera Pier, U.S. Naval Station Subic Bay, R.P., and immediately commenced fueling. Shortly after 1400 lines were taken in and a course was set for the Gulf.

Before dawn 26 March BROOKE reported for duty to CTU 75.0.2, Commanding Officer, USS ENTERPRISE (CVAN-65). Several hours later orders were received sending BROOKE south to the Yankee Station Destroyer Training Area. Operational control was shifted to CTU 77.1.1, Commanding Officer USS HENDERSON (DD-785). Days were spent exercising at AAW/Screening and evenings were independent night steaming.

Refueling was accomplished from USS WABASH (AOR-5) on the morning of 28 March; 29 March brought stores from USS WHITE PLAINS (AFS-4).

USS HARDER (SS-568) joined TU 77.1.1 on the afternoon of 29 March and exercise emphasis was shifted to ASW tactics. Attack tactics were practiced until late evening 29 March, at which time BROOKE detached from TU 77.1.1 and joined TG 77.1 consisting of USS GOLDBOROUGH (DDG-20) and USS MORTON (DD-948). CONDESRON 11, embarked in GOLDBOROUGH, was SOPA and OTC. After several hours USS RANGER (CVA-61) arrived and her Commanding Officer assumed SOPA and OTC.

Later on 31 March BROOKE conducted underway replenishment with USS WABASH (AOR-5), then detached from TG 77.1 and proceeded to USS ENTERPRISE (CVAN-65).

April

Well before dawn on the first of April BROOKE reported for duty to CTG 77.5, Commanding Officer USS ENTERPRISE (CVAN-65). Also part of TG 77.5 was USS DECATUR (DDG-3). BROOKE served as plane

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guard and screen as ENTERPRISE conducted routine flight operations.

After an early morning replenishment from USS CAMDEN (AOE-2) 3 April, BROOKE detached and returned to TU 77.1 in the Yankee Station Training Area. One day was spent in company with USS GOLDSBOROUGH (DDG-20); late in the evening BROOKE detached and proceeded to rendezvous with USS TOLOVANA (AO-64). The last underway replenishment of BROOKE's six month deployment occurred at 0800 5 April. As BROOKE broke away from TOLOVANA the spirits of her crew were high: the first leg of the homeward journey lay ahead.

BROOKE moored starboard side to Akasaki fueling pier at Sasebo midmorning 9 April after another uneventful transit via the Formosa Straits as a unit of TF 75.0.

Two days were spent making preparations for a joint Japanese-American Antisubmarine Warfare exercise, officially known as ASWEX 4-73. At 0845, 11 April BROOKE got underway in company with USS LEONARD F. MASON (DD-852), USS MCCAFFERTY (DD-860), and the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) ships MAKIGUMO (114), VAMAGUM (113), AOKUMO (119) and MOCHIZUKI (166). These ships comprised TG 75.1 under the tactical command of COMDESRON 17 embarked in LEONARD F. MASON.

The exercise commenced at 1410, 12 April 1973. Tactical Command was passed to JMSDF COMFLOT TWO embarked in AOKUMO. Operations were conducted in the KIRIN operating area, south of Kyushu, the southern most of the major islands of the Japanese chain. The surface units acted in conjunction with ASW air units of both the Japanese and U.S. Navies to form an ASW barrier to protect a single High Value Target (HVT) transiting through the area. Submarine units (both JMSDF and USN) were to attempt to penetrate the screen and simulate torpedoing the HVT. On 13 April BROOKE fired an exercise torpedo at a contact; the shot was evaluated as a "hit" in the post-exercise critique.

The exercise was completed late afternoon 14 April; BROOKE and L.F. MASON departed the area enroute YOKOSUKA for a brief availability prior to commencing the transit to San Diego. Both units moored to berth 6, Yokosuka, Japan early morning 15 April.

Preparations completed and last minute purchases stowed safely below, BROOKE cast off her lines at 2029, 17 April, bound for Midway Island, Pearl Harbor and, ultimately, San Diego. The work was done and the crew was tired but happy: BROOKE had met all commitments and shown herself capable of meeting all challenges. Messages of congratulations flowed in: CINCPACFLT, CONSEVENTHFLT and CTF 75 sent messages of hearty congratulations, included as attachments six, seven, and eight.

There were five units transiting in company: USS ORLECK (DD-886),

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(with COMDESRON 17 embarked), USS O'CALLAHAN (DE-1051), USS LEONARD F. MASON (DD-852), USS EPPERSON (DD-719) and USS BROOKE (DEG-1).

The transit was uneventful: Time was passed doing maintenance previously deferred due to operations and various small exercises. At 0900, 20 April, all units changed operation control to Commander, Third Fleet. The International Dateline was crossed at 0146, 23 April, officially losing the day gained in transit to the Western Pacific in November, 1972. For convenience the decision was made to "relive" a day after the brief stop for fuel at Midway Island.

BROOKE arrived at Midway Island shortly after dawn 23 April. While the ship fueled some crewmen took the opportunity to see the local "gooney" birds, swim in the quiet lagoon and stretch sea-weary legs. BROOKE was underway again by midafternoon. As Midway sunk below the horizon the thoughts of the crew turned to the next stop: Pearl Harbor.

At 1250 on the "second" 23 April (due to the loss at the date-line) BROOKE's sonarmen detected what appeared to be a submarine. After reporting to the OTC, BROOKE was directed to assume tactical command of EPPERSON and prosecute the contact. Approximately ninety minutes elapsed before the contact was evaluated as "non-submarine." BROOKE and EPPERSON returned to the formation.

Dawn broke 25 April with Diamond Head looming into view. BROOKE steamed slowly up the channel, past the Arizona Monument and moored starboard side to USS O'CALLAHAN (DE-1051) at Hotel Pier, berth 4, U.S. Naval Station Pearl Harbor.

Next morning BROOKE, L.F. MASON, O'CALLAHAN and ORLECK cast off and set sail on the last leg of the journey. Six days ahead lay San Diego, homes and families.

May

The day was 2 May, 1973, and for the sailors of BROOKE it was a memorable one. The pier was crowded as the lines were put over. One hundred eighty eight days before BROOKE had left pier eight; thousands of miles and hours of work and tension were behind. BROOKE was home!

The month of May was spent in post-deployment stand-down; maximum leave and liberty were the rule. The crew was organized into four duty sections and personnel were required to be on board only on their duty days. The duty section maintained the ship and its equipments in outstanding condition in spite of their relatively small numbers and, concurrently, made preparations for BROOKE's next challenge: READIMP.

June

The READIMP (Readiness Improvement) concept was evolved as

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an answer to the problem of reduced maintenance and training levels throughout the Pacific Fleet as a result of the high tempo of operations required by the commitments of U.S. forces in Southeast Asia.

BROOKE's preparations for READIMP began long before 3 June. Planning was begun in February when the concept was first promulgated in a message from CINCPACFLT and further delineated by COMCRUDESPAC. Planning was completed during the transit from Japan to San Diego and the program was implemented fully 03 June.

The remainder of the month of June was consumed by maintenance and training at all levels. The results of this program would become evident in the outstanding results achieved by BROOKE in an intensive series of reviews and inspections which would involve the ship for the remainder of the year.

July

The month of July was BROOKE's second in READIMP. The first opportunity for demonstrating excellence was a Nuclear Training Proficiency Inspection (NTPI) which was conducted 13 and 14 July. The results were outstanding as noted in attachments 9 and 10.

BROOKE was nominated for the ARLIEGH BURKE Fleet Trophy early in July (Attachments 11 and 12)

Preparations for the regular overhaul (ROH) scheduled to begin 8 January 1974 were underway during the month of July. Preoverhaul test and inspection was accomplished on BROOKE's major equipments and teams came onboard to evaluate design drawings for changes to be accomplished during ROH.

August

READIMP was concluded 3 August. BROOKE was particularly successful in accomplishing the goals incident to READIMP. The list of work and training accomplished during READIMP was impressive. Major goals accomplished included improvements in material readiness, particularly in the engineering areas; upgrading individual and team training; emphasis on good orders, discipline and standards of grooming. More detail of BROOKE's accomplishments during READIMP is included in attachment 11.

The balance of the month of August was consumed in continued intensive training and maintenance in preparation for an Operational Propulsion Examining Board (PEB), scheduled for August 28-31. The OPPE was delayed and eventually cancelled, much to the dismay of the men who has worked so hard in preparations. (The work was not in vain, however; BROOKE was scheduled for an Underway Material Inspection (UMI) to be conducted by the President of the Board of Inspection and Survey (PRESINSURV). The results of that inspection were the

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reward so richly deserved by the men who had labored so long for the OPPE.) BROOKE got underway 28 August for four days of type training in the Southern California Operating Areas (SOCAL OPAREAS). Each night BROOKE anchored off Coronado, utilizing the warm evening hours for fantail cookouts and continued training.

September

The month of September was devoted to preparations for the UMI and for the rapidly approaching Regular Overhaul (ROH). Design shipchecks were conducted throughout the month and numerous inspections were conducted by BROOKE personnel to determine the necessity and extent of ship's force and yard work during ROH.

A meeting was conducted 20 September to inform BROOKE crewmembers and dependents of the opportunities and obligations that were to be placed upon them by BROOKE's homeport shift to Bremerton, Washington for ROH at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS). The meeting was quite successful and was an important point in BROOKE's human relations program.

The ship was underway 25-27 September providing training services to Fleet Anti-Submarine Warfare School. BROOKE was a platform upon which Anti-Submarine Air Controller Trainees could gain live experience in their work. Experience was also gained by BROOKE's ASW personnel as an exercise torpedo was fired 26 September.

October

The first week (1-5 October) was spent underway providing Helicopter Inflight Refueling (HIFR) services to helicopter from NAS Imperial Beach. While at sea BROOKE has the opportunity to fire two TARTAR missiles at drone targets at the Pacific Missile Range. The shots, which were fired early 3 October, were both misses as the missiles self-destructed after several seconds of flight when they failed to receive proper signals.

The most important event of the month was the UMI conducted by PRESINSURV 23-26 October 1973. The inspection was a tremendous triumph for BROOKE. In every area BROOKE was found to be outstanding (Attachment 13). The facet which brought the most praise was the exceptional state of BROOKE's Material Maintenance and Management (3M) System. PRESINSURV's inspection found the completion rate to be 94%- far above the normal. The completion of the UMI was the conclusion of the months of preparation by BROOKE crewmen. Thoughts turned to the next big event in their lives: ROH

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November

Maintenance and ROH preparations consumed the month of November. Additionally, the week of 26-30 November was spent at sea providing services as target for submarine torpedo firings for units of the Pacific Submarine Fleet. This was BROOKE's final underway period in 1973.

December

BROOKE received notification (attachment 14) in December that she has been awarded the CINCPACFLT CAREER Motivation Award for Fiscal Year 1973. This award, the Golden Anchor, is presented in recognition of an outstanding career motivation program and effective retention of quality personnel.

As a result of BROOKE's outstanding showing during the UMI COMCRUDESGRU ONE was tasked by COMCRUDESPAC with visiting the ship to determine what made BROOKE the ship she was. Three days, 10-12 December, were spent in an exhaustive probe of every facet of BROOKE's procedures and records. The conclusion was that "programs are vigorously pursued on a day-to-day basis, give teeth by personal involvement of officers and leading petty officers, and improved upon as experience is gained and constructive criticism is factored in. Attachment 15 has details.

Final preparations for ROH were conducted in December. Equipments not essential to the transit from San Diego to Bremerton were disabled and work on their components began. Concurrently, BROOKE crewmen began departing on periods of holiday leave, intent on enjoying the last weeks of the year, content in the knowledge that they had made 1973 a most successful year for BROOKE.

F A M I L Y G R A M

14 March 1973

Dear BROCKE Family and Friends,

A great deal has happened in the past seven weeks but before I get so that I want to thank all of you who took the time to write in response to the last familygram. I really appreciate your letters. The questions raised and/or suggestions offered by some of you have revealed some gaps in our internal communications program that I am moving to close as rapidly as possible. One of the side effects of keeping you, our non-deployed part of the ship (in a very special way, I do consider you part of the ship) well informed is that you want to know more. Please feel free to address any questions you have about the ship to me and remember what you read in these familygrams is fact, not rumor. When the ship's schedule is known and releasable, you will see it here. Don't get excited about rumors, get the facts here.

At the time of my last letter, we were in the Gulf of Tonkin. We left the Gulf late in January and transited via the Taiwan Straits to Sasebo, Japan. We arrived on the first of February, having logged 38 consecutive days at sea. As near as I can tell that is a record for BROCKE. 100% of the credit for that accomplishment goes to your husbands, fathers, and sons. It was a total crew effort. Everyone worked hard and long to keep us at sea and operating well. When we entered Sasebo, there was no reason why we couldn't have stayed at sea for another 38 days.

Sasebo is a beautiful town on the western coast of the southernmost large island of Japan, Kyushu. The shipyard which builds the great Japanese supertankers is located here. Many of our crew took advantage of the very excellent tour program organized by LTJG Joe PLUTA. Nagasaki, site of the atomic bomb blast in WWII was the favorite. The people of Sasebo, both the Japanese and the local US personnel stationed there, were simply fantastic. Not only did they give us our best upkeep period of the cruise, but they also opened their hearts and homes to us and really made us feel at home. Never in all my career have I seen a U.S. community stationed abroad welcome a visiting ship as did the folks in Sasebo. I am proud to be able to say I've since heard from some of our new Sasebo friends and they report that the people of Sasebo were equally impressed with BROCKE. The crew continues to be the best possible representatives of our country here in the Western Pacific.

While in Sasebo, many of your sons and I bands took the Navy-wide competitive exams for advancement. Having had three tours of joint duty (with other services) I have had an opportunity to observe the advancement systems of all the services and I am convinced the Navy has the fairest system of all. A man completes self-study correspondence course in both the military and technical aspects of his specialty and demonstrates to his senior's satisfaction the ability to actually perform the work required of the grade to which he is to be advanced. The man is then considered qualified and is recommended for advancement. Those who have been recommended then compete in a Navy-wide exam each year to determine who is best qualified. Test scores multiplied by a "multiplier" which is weighted according to time in service, time in grade, medals and awards and performance marks. The result is a rank ordering of candidates by "final multiple". The Navy then simply starts at the top of the list and promotes men until all the vacancies have been filled.

The most unusual event of our Sasebo stay occurred when during the course of a friendly discussion at the CPO Club, LTJG Joe PLUTA and Chief Radioman George STOKES entered into a wager with two marine gunnery sergeants (E-7) from the base. Long and bitter experience has taught us to never, at no time, place a bet with a "Gunny". Now Mr. PLUTA and Chief STOKES know. The bet was that if the two marines could get a pair of suede shoes "spit shined" before the ship left, Mr. PLUTA would get a marine "white sidewall" haircut on BRONCK's quarterdeck and Chief STOKES would get the same plus lose his beard. I wouldn't have touched that bet - everybody knows a marine can shine anything that isn't moving over ten miles per hour! On 12 February at 1100 a crowd of marines, many in dress blues, their wives, and people from the base appeared on the pier. On board they trooped, followed by an honor guard and GYSGT's CANNON and RHINEHART each carrying a pillow on which rested a gleaming, mirror finished, black shoe. I inspected them and they certainly passed. They had started as a pair of white bucks but they were obviously now black and shined. So with over 250 people watching, Mr. PLUTA and Chief STOKES lost their hair. When you visit the ship, stop by the trophy case and you'll see the shoes on display; and if you ever get to Sasebo, Japan, stop by the CPO Club and in the bar you'll find a large bag of hair which used to be Chief STOKES' beard.

After a short run from Sasebo we stopped for four days in Yokosuka, just south of Tokyo. We got there just in time for the dollar devaluation and watched the prices go up 5% a day each day we were there. In the long term things will be better, pricewise, then at home but the days of big shopping bargains in Japan are about gone. Yokosuka was a time of mixed emotion for us as well. We had to say goodbye to two of the greatest people I've ever known, our Executive Officer, LCDR Mike ROGRDA and his wife Bettle. Mike leaves for school in Oklahoma and will eventually end up in the Bureau of Naval Personnel in Washington, D. C. We received two really great replacements, however: Nick and Julianne GEE. Some of you in San Diego may have already met Julianne. It looks as if we've got another great Exec.

After our Yokosuka, BROCKE returns to the Gulf of Tonkin as part of a contingency group ready to provide relief for other interceptors operating in the Gulf or to take on any assignment which might be generated. The Peace Agreement has changed things considerably here, but as much as some of you may want it, we can't just leave and come home. This is a very tense time and in order for the cease fire to succeed the North Vietnamese must know that we are equally capable of moving quickly towards a lasting peace or returning immediately to previous combat levels. It's up to them.

We didn't spend our time with the contingency group just steaming around the ocean. We used the time, about five days, to sharpen our skills in areas in which we hadn't had much practice lately such as multi-ship formation steaming, escorting a carrier, Torpedo and ASPROC missile learning at sea (I won't even try to draw that one for you. You wouldn't believe it anyway.) and tactical signaling.

None enough in late February, a ship had to be moved from one of the search and rescue stations in the northern Gulf of Tonkin: and who knows that area of the world better? We spent 15 days on station in the Northern Gulf and are now enroute to the land of Santa Wong, the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong. We are all looking forward to the visit but at least eight of the crew are really anxious to get there. Their wives are joining them for our one week stay here. You think the rest of us aren't jealous?

Since my last letter we have had quite a few men make the decision to stay with the Navy for a while longer. We don't allow everyone to reenlist. We need only the very best. Fortunately, most of our crew falls in that category. That's what makes this ship so good. The first of the period was Fireman Don AVERY who reenlisted for six years on 30 January. Don's become a real mainstay in our Auxiliary Machinery Gang and we were glad he chose to stay. On 15 and 16 February Chief Machinist Mate Bob EMERY and Boiler Technician First Class Edgar THURPF signed on again for two and six years respectively. These two and Machinist Mate First Class Ernie USREY who shipped for two years on 28 February are key people in our engineering department and we certainly welcome their decisions to continue their careers aboard BROCKE. On 26 February, Commissaryman Second Class Clarence THURMOND, super cook and cake decorator, and Sonarman Seaman Bruce SMITH, one of Chief O'D's young tigers, both reenlisted for six years. Ship's Serviceman Second Class Jimmy Fields rounded out the group by reenlisting for six years on 7 March.

Another happy occasion for me occurred last week when I had the honor of presenting a personal letter of commendation from Commander THIRD Fleet to Operations Specialist Second Class Patrick L. BRACH for his outstanding performance as an Air Intercept Controller during special radar evaluation tests conducted last summer.

In my last letter, I wrote that we might go to Australia at the end of the cruise and that it might extend the cruise by as much as 18 days. Well, I got quite a bit of mail on that as I expected I would. Surprisingly, however, most letters favored the trip which is unusual in my experience. It would have been a great trip and everyone would have had a good time. However, because of an unexpected change in the ship's overhaul schedule, I thought it best to request that the visit to Australia be canceled in order that we might spend more time in San Diego. Our single men, who comprise about two thirds of the crew and the others who really wanted to go to Australia, took this decision very well, like the professionals they are. I thank them. As most of you have been informed by your husbands and sons by now, the ship has received completely unexpected orders shifting the shipyard overhaul in October from Long Beach to Bremerton, Washington. All of us can think of many reasons why this is a rotten deal and with the size of my family I can probably think of more than any of you. That kind of negativism, however, has never been part of BROOKE and won't be while I'm around. Let's look at the good things about this change. First, the ship will get a better overhaul in Bremerton. Bremerton is one of the Navy's best yards and is not overcrowded. With recent cutbacks in aircraft contracts, the Bremerton area has a labor surplus - there will be plenty of workers available. Long Beach is overcrowded and somebody had to move. Our yard period is sufficiently long to qualify for a homeport shift. That means that those families which qualify for a permanent change of station move (E-5 and above or career designated E-4) may move to Bremerton and back on government orders - at government expense. I have a tentative agreement from the San Diego Public Works Officer that those of you living in quarters need not move unless you want to. For those who wish housing upon the ship's return, I am negotiating an arrangement whereby you may go on the waiting list as soon as the homeport shift message is received - a full 13 months early! For those who choose not to move, I am working on Navy flights back to San Diego from Naval Air Station, Whidbey Island. I also have some plans to help E-4's and below to move to Bremerton if they wish. More about that when plans are firm. BROOKE was built in the Bremerton area and I am sure the people there will go all out to welcome her back. In short, there are a lot of good reasons for the ship to go to Bremerton and go we will. There are also many steps that have been and are being taken to lessen the impact on families. Stay loose, folks.

The question uppermost in your minds, and frankly in mine too, is when is the ship getting back to San Diego. I can't give you an exact date because I honestly don't know it yet. Those of you who attended our last "Wives Night" in San Diego will remember I gave an arbitrary date at that time. Add seventeen days to that

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date and you should be within a day of our arrival. There are rumors of an earlier return running about the ship, started and perpetrated by some of our amature schedulers. Some of them have undoubtably reached you. To the best of my knowledge, there is no basis of fact for these rumors. The date I gave you above is the best one I have. If I receive a change, I'll let you know immediately in another Familygram. Until then, God bless you all and thank you for your love, patience and support. They have sustained us in our separation from you.

W. D. PIVARNIK