

U.S.S. Canopus (AS-34)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS CANOPUS (AS-34)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (Op-29)

Subj: Ship's history; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.7

Encl: (1) Narrative of calendar 1965 events

1. In accordance with reference (a), the following information is submitted for the period 4 November 1965 to 31 December 1965:

a. Commanding Officer for the period: Captain John M. BARRETT, USN, 165872/1100.

b. Principal ship movements and engagements: None. CANOPUS has been involved in fitting out after commissioning.

c. Major conversions and periods out of service: None.

d. Any special awards or outstanding events: None.

2. Enclosure (1) is a narrative of historical events for 1965.


JOHN M. BARRETT

USS CANOPUS (AS-34) NUCLEUS CREW
PERIOD 25 MARCH TO 22 OCTOBER 1965

From the time of the arrival of CANOPUS personnel in the nucleus crew at Pascagoula, Mississippi, their tenure was marked by vigorous industry in the civilian community. Since her launching on 12 February 1964, the citizenry had looked to CANOPUS with pride and pleasure. Her launching had been attended by more than the usual number of dignitaries. Her sponsor was Mrs. Earl L. Sackett, wife of Retired Rear Admiral SACKETT, commanding officer of the first CANOPUS (AS-9) at the outbreak of World War II. The early CANOPUS had built a legend for herself after she was cut off from any hope of escape south from the Philippines in World War II. She had repaired submarines and other craft until the Japanese were on her gangway, so to speak, and she had maintained a "Navy Army" which was active against the Japanese until the fall of Corregidor. Although bombed repeatedly by the Japanese, the CANOPUS crew men never gave up, but at last scuttled their own ship to prevent her from falling into Japanese hands. The remaining crew members were taken prisoner after the fall of Corregidor.

With such an impressive history to live up to, it was apparent that the new CANOPUS was going to have to be quite a ship -- and that is precisely what Captain John M. BARRETT, U. S. Navy, the newly named Commanding Officer, and his officers and men set out to make the AS34.

The first CANOPUS community effort was commenced by a remarkable assist to the Pascagoula Junior Chamber of Commerce, in conducting program "101", signifying the perilous 101 highway driving days between the Memorial Day and Labor Day holidays, including the Fourth of July. The idea behind the program was to provide refreshment stops for long driving, tired motorists to enable them to get off the highways, relax and refresh, and then continue on their way. Not enough JAYCEE members were available, however, to man the stops on a round the clock basis. CANOPUS personnel voluntarily pitched in and made a positive contribution toward reducing the number of highway deaths on these traditionally dangerous holiday weekends.

CANOPUS was active in sports during her stay in Pascagoula, too. Captain BARRETT, leading the CANOPUS soft ball players, entered the "slow pitch" soft ball league. Although outclassed by the local teams who had played together over long periods of time CANOPUS participation nevertheless contributed greatly to fostering a community spirit that was to get stronger as CANOPUS' stay went by.

Enclosure (1)

In July, the CANOPUS officers felt that the time had come to strengthen their relations with leaders in the civilian community by hosting them to a cocktail party at the Pinewood Terrace in Pascagoula. Many of the leading citizens attended this event and, in general, everyone commented that they had not had such a successful social function in Pascagoula in a long time.

The wives of CANOPUS crew members were active in community affairs, also. Mrs. Richard Everson was cited for her effort in the Red Cross Gray Lady program. Mrs. Everson had been in Pascagoula previous to the assignment of her husband to the CANOPUS nucleus crew.

On September 18, 1965, CANOPUS put to sea on her first sea trials. The trials went very well, and Ingalls Shipbuilding Corporation as well as the Navy was very pleased.

The next opportunity afforded CANOPUS crew members to assist in a community effort was an unexpected one. In late September, hurricane Betsy came roaring out of the Caribbean into the Gulf of Mexico only to stop indecisively south of Mobile on an uncertain track. It was predicted that Betsy would come ashore somewhere between Mobile, Alabama and Biloxi, Mississippi. But, finally, and unpredictably, she headed inland over New Orleans. Her fury was felt heavily in coastal regions, however, including Pascagoula. After leaving the APL-47 with a skeleton crew, CANOPUS organized a disaster relief crew and put it at the disposal of the civil government to assist in any way possible during the violent storm. A portable gas generator was provided at the court house, crew members set up teams to prevent looting in the event of damage to commercial and private properties, and vehicles and drivers were provided to assist in evacuation of low lying areas if necessary. Special thanks for this effort was expressed from many different sources after the danger was over.

A sequel to this particular event was the dispatching of a truck load of baby food and clothing to the New Orleans area after Betsy had passed over that area wreaking the greatest damage to New Orleans within memory. The Salvation Army dispensed the materials to homeless families.

Another Navy wife was signaled out for praise by the local populace in October 1965. She was Mrs. Alice Rose, wife of a CANOPUS crew member. Upon failure of the local officials to recognize and act on a potentially dangerous school crossing on heavily traveled route 90, she assumed responsibility for manning the crossing and continued to do so until departure of CANOPUS from Pascagoula. Her unselfish efforts finally brought official recognition of the danger to the school children whom she sought to protect.

Chaplain Bey G. GRUNDER, USN, was also active in the community. Prior to leaving Pascagoula, Chaplain GRUNDER preached a service at the First Presbyterian Church in Pascagoula.

In late October, CANOPUS held open house to provide the Gulf Coast community with a first hand look at the handicraft of their many shipyard workers. Captain BARRETT, the officers, and crew hosted an estimated 6,000 citizens in a tour of this largest of all ships ever launched in the Gulf of Mexico. The tour was enthusiastically received as many of the community members expressed amazement at the complexity of the vessel.

Upon departure of CANOPUS from Pascagoula, a Ship Appreciation Day was held by Ingalls Shipbuilding Corporation and the Pascagoula City Government. The CANOPUS was congratulated by the Mayor of Pascagoula on the extraordinary community spirit displayed by the officers and men during their stay. All CANOPUS nucleus crew members were made honorary citizens of the City of Pascagoula, Mississippi.

USS CANOPUS (AS-34) BALANCE CREW
PERIOD 6 JULY TO 25 OCTOBER 1965

Although the balance crew, assembled in Norfolk, Virginia, had not as much time as the nucleus crew in which to establish a fine record of performance, they nonetheless made their mark in the Norfolk area, building as fine a reputation as the nucleus crew in every respect.

Lieutenant John P. SURPRENANT, Officer in Charge of the Balance Crew of 670 men, determined that his "Gold Crew" was also to become imbued with the luster of the old CANOPUS tradition. At the behest of Commander Marvin C. SCOGGINS, Prospective Executive Officer, Lieutenant SURPRENANT set about establishing the "CANOPUS Rifles", a drill team commemorating the Bataan Naval Battalion. The forming of the Balance Crew was heralded by a series of articles about the old CANOPUS in the Virginia Pilot. Early in the game crew members were impressed with the tradition of the old and the hopes for the new CANOPUS. The end result was a balance crew record marked by the lowest Fleet Training Center school failure rates and one of the lowest disciplinary offense rates ever recorded by a ship in pre-commissioning training (22 mast cases in a 3 1/2 month period). Over 25,000 man days training was accomplished, a record capped only by ship's with much larger crews.

In the field of sports the Balance Crew touch football team playing as an independent, rang up a 6 won 0 loss record scoring 122 points to 13 for the opposition. They were hailed as one of the better area teams.

The Balance Crew's enthusiastic support of the Dolphin Scholarship Drive netted a total of \$1,412 in a brief two week effort placing CANOPUS in the fore for SUBLANT Ships.

A Ship's Band was formed which has since distinguished itself and CANOPUS by it's performances both on-board and ashore.

COMMISSIONING, 4 NOVEMBER 1965

The final occurrence of special note in 1965 was the actual commissioning of the ship at Charleston, South Carolina. The commissioning was attended by the Honorable Graeme C. BANNERMAN, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Installations and Logistics; Vice Admiral Vernon L. LOWRANCE, U. S. Navy, Commander Submarine Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet; Vice Admiral Ignatius J. GALANTIN, U. S. Navy, Chief of Navy Materiel; Rear Admiral Jack S. DORSEY, U. S. Navy, Commandant, Sixth Naval District; Rear Admiral John A. TYREE, Jr., U. S. Navy, Deputy Commander, Submarine Force, U. S. Atlantic Fleet; Rear Admiral Charles E. LOUGHLIN, U. S. Navy, Commander Submarine Flotilla Six; Rear Admiral Edgar H. BATCHELLER, U. S. Navy, Commander, Charleston Naval Shipyard; Rear Admiral William A. BROCKETT, U. S. Navy, Chief, Bureau of Ships; Rear Admiral Levering SMITH, U. S. Navy, Director, Special Projects and Rear Admiral E. L. SACKETT, U. S. Navy, Retired, Commanding Officer of the first CANOPUS (AS-9). The CANOPUS commissioning was marked by fair weather and clear skies, accompanied by a freshening breeze. Approximately 850 persons attended the commissioning which was held on the helicopter deck of the ship. Thereafter, CANOPUS hosted the commissioning guests to a reception at the officers' club, the chief petty officers' club, and aboard CANOPUS in the enlisted men's mess.