

ORIGINAL

USS SOMERS (DDG-34)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS SOMERS (DDG-34)
To: Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05A5G)
Subj: OPNAV Report 5750-1 (Command History); forwarding of

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Ref: (a) OPNAV INST 5750.12
(b) CINCPACFLT INST 5750.2
(c) Article A3109 COMCRUDESPECINST 5000.3C

Encl: (1) Chronology of Events of USS SOMERS (DDG-34) April 1966 to February 1968
(2) Narrative of USS SOMERS (DDG-34) April 1966 to February 1968
(3) Documentary Annexes to the History of the USS SOMERS (DDG-34) April 1966 to February 1968

1. In accordance with reference (a), (b) and (c) enclosures (1) through (3) are forwarded herewith.
2. This material is submitted to cover the period that the USS SOMERS (DDG-34) was out of commission during conversion to a guided missile destroyer. On 10 February 1968 SOMERS was commissioned as DDG-34.

Randall W. Young
Randall W. YOUNG

Copy to:
Chief of Naval Operations (OP-09B9)
CINCPACFLT
COMCRUDESPEC
COMCRUDESFLT SEVEN

Chronology of Events of USS SOMERS
(DDG-34) April 1966 to February 1968

11 April 1966
11 APRIL 1966

The USS SOMERS (DDG-34) was decommissioned at Hunters Point Site, San Francisco Bay Naval Shipyard for conversion to a guided missile destroyer. The ship's crew was detached from the ship with the exception of one officer, LT M.J. DEMETER, and twelve senior petty officers who remained with the ship as a conversion detail.

April 1966 to
February 1968

Conversion of the SOMERS to a guided missile destroyer was being carried out at Hunters Point Site, San Francisco Bay Naval Shipyard. The conversion included replacement of ninety per cent of the superstructure; installation of TARTAR surface-to-air missile system and ASROC anti-submarine rocket system; installation of additional electronics and communications equipment; and thorough overhaul of all engineering equipment, upgrading of the four ship's generators and increase in the ship's air conditioning capacity.

August 1967

The nucleus crew consisting of ninety experienced officers and petty officers including the Prospective Commanding Officer, CDR Randall W. YOUNG, USN, was assembled at Hunters Point.

October 1967

The balance crew or remainder of the crew, consisting of two hundred officers and men under the direction of the Prospective Executive Officer, LCDR R.H. AILES, USN, was assembled at Fleet Training Center, San Diego, California and underwent precommissioning training for a five week period.

20 November 1967

The balance crew moved from San Diego to San Francisco and moved into barracks at the shipyard.

1 February 1968

The crew moved aboard the ship at Hunters Point

10 February 1968

The SOMERS was commissioned (special) as DDG-34 in a traditional ceremony at Hunters Point Site, San Francisco Bay Naval Shipyard. The principal speaker at the commissioning ceremony was VADM John T. HAYWARD, President, U.S. Naval War College.

Narrative of USS SOMERS (DDG-34)
April 1966 to February 1968

On 30 March 1966, the USS SOMERS (DDG-34) arrived at Hunters Point Site, San Francisco Bay Naval Shipyard to be placed out of commission and commence an extensive modernization and conversion program which would convert SOMERS from a conventional to a guided missile destroyer. On 11 April 1966, SOMERS was placed out of commission. The ship's crew was disbanded and detailed for duty elsewhere with the exception of one officer and twelve senior petty officers who were assigned to the conversion detail. This detail, headed by Lieutenant M. J. Demeter, would remain with SOMERS throughout the conversion. They were responsible for over seeing the conversion for Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Force, Pacific Fleet, making periodic reports and recommendations as they saw fit.

The SOMERS was the fourth DD931/DD945 class destroyer to be converted to a guided missile destroyer, having been preceded by the USS DECATUR (DDG-31), USS JOHN PAUL JONES (DDG-32) and the USS PARSONS (DDG-33). The conversion itself was quite extensive, costing 15.5 million dollars, requiring over 170,000 man days of shipyard work, and requiring over two years to be completed.

Changes to the weapons systems of the ship included removal of two 5"/54 gun mounts and all 3"/50 gun mounts. A TARTAR surface-to-air missile system and ASROC anti-submarine rocket system were installed which in conjunction with the remaining 5"/54 gun mount and anti-submarine torpedo tubes provide SOMERS with a versatile, modern weapon's capability. To support the new equipment, new electronics equipment was installed including the AN/SPS 46 three dimensional radar, the MK 74 missile fire control direction system with associated AN/SPG-51C fire control radar, and the MK 4 weapons direction system. In addition the ship's AN/SQS-23 sonar system was overhauled and modernized and a new underwater fire control system, the MK 114, was added. The ship also received the probe refueling installation, permitting rapid at sea refueling, and the Fast Automatic Shuttle Transfer (FAST) system for rapid at sea transfer of TARTAR missiles.

No less impressive were the changes to the operations systems during the conversion. Ninety per cent of the ship's superstructure was removed during the conversion and rebuilt so that virtually all operations spaces were revised. A modern, enlarged pilot house and Combat Information Center were provided. Completely new electronics warfare and communications installations consisting of modern, high speed equipment were installed.

All engineering equipment was given a thorough overhaul and renewal as needed. All four boilers were extensively retubed. To handle the additional electrical requirements necessitated by the conversion, the ship's turbo-generators were modified and uprated from 500 to 750 kilowatts. The air conditioning capacity was increased from 69 to 143 tons by the addition of new equipment, an increase of over 100 per cent.

Berthing areas were revised to include the latest habitability features consisting of built in lockers with the bunks, tables in each berthing area, and additional locker space in each area. The crew's dining hall, CPO quarters, wardroom and officer staterooms, and laundry were completely modernized.

In August 1967, the new crew of the SOMERS began to assemble. A nucleus crew consisting of experienced officers and petty officers reported to the conversion site at Hunters Point to oversee the installation of equipment aboard ship and to provide a nucleus of personnel familiar with the ship when the remainder of the crew reported to the ship. By 30 August thirty men in the nucleus crew had arrived at Hunters Point to be followed in September by an additional sixty men. On 29 September Comander Randall W. YOUNG reported to Hunters Point as Prospective Commanding Officer and assumed supervision of the nucleus crew.

The remainder of the crew, designated the balance crew and consisting of 200 officers and men, assembled at the Fleet Training Center in San Diego under the supervision of the Prospective Executive Officer, Lieutenant Commander Robert H. AILES. The balance crew had assembled by 2 October 1967 and underwent a five week precommissioning training period at the Fleet Training Center on subjects ranging from seamanship, firefighting, and lookout duties to schools on the technical aspects of operation and maintenance of the sophisticated equipment to be installed on SOMERS.

On 10 November 1967, the balance crew moved to Hunters Point and joined the nucleus crew in taking up temporary residence in a shipyard barracks. The entire crew then began a period of training and orientation centered around the ship. The Christmas and New Year Holidays were declared a leave period and numerous crew members took advantage of this opportunity to enjoy holidays with their families.

On 25 January 1968 a Habitability Inspection was conducted on board ship to determine if the ship was ready for the crew to move aboard. Although some minor discrepancies were outstanding, the ship was declared ready for the crew and on 1 February the crew moved aboard ship. Immediately a concerted effort was commenced by all hands to prepare the ship for commissioning. A thorough clean up of the ship was accomplished and several rehearsals of the actual commissioning ceremonies were conducted during the ten day period prior to commissioning.

In the early morning hours of 10 February 1968, shipyard workers transformed SOMERS into a maze of red, white, and blue. The rails from bow to stern had been draped with bunting, and the weapons directors were splendidly decorated with rosettes. The ship was ready for the commissioning ceremony.

Enclosure (2)

At approximately 1445 on 10 February 1968, USS SOMERS (DDG-34) was commissioned (special) as DDG-34, the ensign and jack were hoisted, the commissioning pennant was broken for the first time in nearly two years, and SOMERS was ready to assume its duties as the newest guided missile destroyer in the fleet. At the moment of commissioning, the ship staged an impressive animation display by cycling the TARTAR missile launcher, ASROC launcher, and all radar antennas. Commander Randall W. Young then read his orders, assumed command, and reported the ship for duty as a unit of the Cruiser-Destroyer Force, Pacific Fleet. The crew then manned the ship.

A crowd of approximately 2,000 persons attended the ceremony which took place under excellent weather conditions. The official party for the commissioning ceremony consisted of Vice Admiral John P. Hayward, who was the principal speaker; Rear Admiral John H. McQuilken, Commander, San Francisco Bay Naval Shipyard; Rear Admiral Leo B. McCuddin, Commandant, Twelfth Naval District; Captain Edward J. Cummings Jr., the first Commanding Officer of SOMERS when commissioned as DD-947, Captain L.B. Mayer, Deputy Shipyard Commander and Mr. Somers Blackman, a descendent of Lt. Richard Somers, USN, after whom the ship is named.

General visiting by all guests was permitted following the ceremony, and most of the audience took advantage of the opportunity to tour the Navy's newest ship. Later in the afternoon, receptions were held at the Officer's Club, and the Enlisted Men's Club for their respective guests. There was a cake cutting ceremony at the Enlisted Men's Club, and SM1 J.R. Davis received the SOMERS' Sailor-of-the-Year-Award. This is an award instigated when SOMERS was first commissioned in 1959 to recognize the sailor who has contributed the most to the ship during the previous year. The winner receives a \$100 award from the ship's sponsor, Mrs. Charles E. Wilson.

Following commissioning, the SOMERS began a Fitting Out Availability at Hunters Point to complete conversion to a DDG. The conversion will be completed in May 1968. At that time the ship will conduct trials on various weapons systems and shakedown training. The SOMERS will be homeported in Long Beach, California.

Enclosure (2)

Documentary Annexes to the History of the USS SOMERS (DDG-34)
April 1966 to February 1968

- A. Photographs of ship during conversion
- B. Copy of muster roll and roster of officers at the date of commissioning
- C. Official correspondence associated with Commissioning on 10 February 1968
 - (1) Commissioning order for USS SOMERS (DDG-34) from Chief of Naval Operations
 - (2) Commissioning order for USS SOMERS (DDG-34) from COMMANDANT, Twelfth Naval District
 - (3) Letter directing Commander Randall W. Young to accept the ship and report to Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Force, Pacific Fleet for Fitting Out Availability
- D. Congratulatory Messages and Letters
 - (1) Letter from the Chief of Naval Operations
 - (2) Message from Commander Destroyer Squadron NINETEEN
- E. Biography and Photograph of Commander Randall W. YOUNG, Commanding Officer, USS SOMERS (DDG-34)
- F. Photographs of commissioning ceremony
- G. Commissioning Brochure

Enclosure (3)