

Francis Hammond (DE-1067)

1970-1995



A portrait of HM3 Francis C. Hammond by Roma C. Harlin (1958). (NHHC Archives, NH 74257-KN)

Francis Colton Hammond -- born in Alexandria, Va., on 9 November 1931, the son of a pharmacist -- had intended on following in his father's footsteps upon graduation from George Washington High School, but with the Korean War approaching its second year, he decided on 20 March 1951 to enlist in the U.S. Navy as a seaman recruit. After completing his training at the U.S. Naval Hospital Corps School at the Naval Hospital, Great Lakes, Ill., and subsequently transferring to the Naval Hospital, Mare Island, Vallejo, Calif., Hammond attained the rank of Hospitalman 3rd Class on 1 March 1952. Recognizing that it was only a matter of time before he deployed to the Korean Peninsula, he requested, and was granted, permission to marry Phyllis Ann Jenkins, his high school sweetheart, on 19 June 1952.

In November 1952, Hammond was assigned to USMC Base Camp Pendleton, Oceanside,

Calif., for further training. Although the Navy's core focus is on maintaining freedom of the seas in both times of peace and war, many of its corpsmen serve with marine units operating in the field. Especially during the Korean War, they played a crucial role in ensuring the safety and survival of those under their care, setting up aid stations, performing field medicine, and coordinating the evacuation of the wounded from the battlefield. For all intents and purposes, corpsmen such as Francis Hammond did everything and anything in their power to keep their patients alive long enough to be transported to the nearest Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH), where their odds of survival were drastically higher (97% of those who were successfully evacuated to a MASH survived). Such outcomes, however, were not achieved without considerable risk and sacrifice. Corpsmen often performed their duties under heavy shelling and gunfire, running wherever they were needed no matter how hot and heavy the fighting was. In some instances, they even used their own bodies to shield their patients. Such courage under fire earned these corpsmen the respect of the marines with whom they served.

William R. Charette was among this illustrious group. Although he came from a very different background than Hammond, the two became fast friends shortly after the young Virginian arrived at Camp Pendleton, often spending their off-duty hours in each other's company. During those heady days, Hammond frequently talking about his wife, their future plans, and the unborn child she was now pregnant with. Both corpsmen hoped to serve in the same unit when they were sent to Korea, but ultimately, Hammond was assigned to the 5th Marines and Charette to the 7th. Even so, Charette firmly believed that he would see Hammond again and that they might even have the opportunity to meet up while on leave.

Hammond deployed for the Korean Peninsula in February 1953 attached to the 1st Marine Division, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Battalion, Fleet Marine Force. Despite his relative inexperience, "Doc" Hammond quickly won the respect and admiration of the marines in the third platoon. On his very first patrol, one of his comrades at the head of the group stepped on a mine. "Doc" charged through the whole group, and when he found that he could not get through the wire fast enough, he ran right through the minefield to treat the wounded man," Robert S. Durham, one of the platoon's members, later recalled. He went on to note that, "[Hammond] saved his first life that night."

This would not be the last life Hammond would save. Since 1951, the Korean War had settled into a long, bloody war of attrition, more reminiscent of WWI than WWII, with both sides firmly entrenched in a series of outposts just north of the 38th parallel collectively known as the Jamestown Line. There were signs in late March 1953, however, that the Chinese were readying a major assault.

Filled with a deep sense of foreboding, Hammond and his fellow corpsman, Paul N. Polley, exchanged addresses and agreed to look up each other's families in case something happened. The very next night, on 26 March 1953, the Chinese launched a massive attack against the Jamestown Line, focusing especially on the section held by the 5th Marines. Comprised of three outposts (Reno, Las Vegas, Carson City) just northeast of the Ungok Hills, this section of the line guarded a key route between Pyongyang and Seoul and also enabled U.N. forces to observe Chinese movements on the other side of the line. Thus, it was imperative to defend it at all costs.

This proved easier said than done. Facing heavy artillery and machine gun fire, outposts Las Vegas and Reno were swiftly overrun. The marines stationed at Reno managed to retreat to a nearby cave, but the Chinese bombardment partially collapsed the cave and its entrance. With their comrades' oxygen swiftly running out, Hammond and the rest of the 3rd Platoon

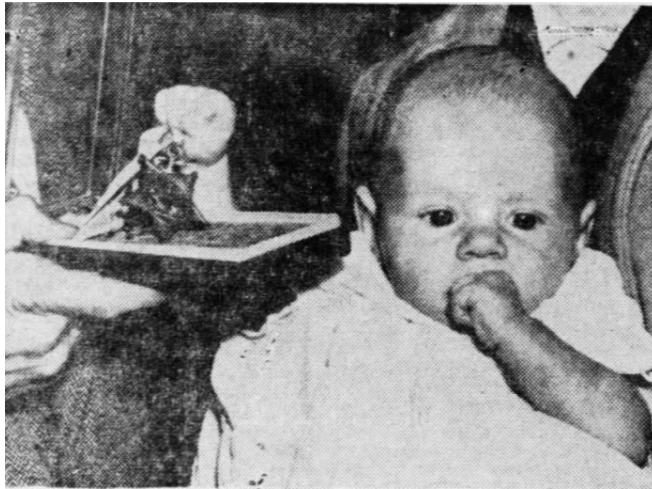
received orders at 2030 to launch a counterattack against the Chinese forces in order to recapture Reno and dig out the entombed marines. The path to the outpost proved treacherous, with minefields on both sides of the trail and the Chinese lying in wait ahead, fully prepared to ambush any incoming patrols. Nevertheless, the 3rd Platoon pushed forward, climbing the steep hill leading up to the outpost, all the while under heavy fire.

All through this, Hammond remained cool under pressure. While the 3rd platoon was attempting to retake Reno, he and Polley raced about the battlefield, aiding as many of the wounded as they possibly could. Both were eventually wounded themselves, with Polley being temporarily blinded by a combination of dirt and blood and Hammond receiving a severe leg wound. Nonetheless, they continued to work feverishly, even as loss of blood gradually began to take its toll on Hammond. As the platoon's sergeant, William R. Janzen, later recounted, "[Hammond] was all over the place patching up the wounded, no matter, how slight their wounds.... Even after he himself was wounded he continued moving about the area, ignoring his own wounds, and giving as much aid and comfort to the other wounded as he possibly could under the circumstances." Sgt. Janzen went on to emphasize that Hammond "was the calmest and coolest person I saw out there that night. No matter whether a man was wounded or not he always had a few words of comfort and encouragement for everyone."

After nearly four hours of intense, bitter fighting, Hammond's unit was ordered to disengage. Hammond skillfully directed the evacuation of the casualties, but when it came time for him to depart, he insisted on staying behind in order to assist the Marine company (F/2/5) that had come to relieve them. It was while aiding one of their casualties that he himself was mortally wounded by a mortar blast. His death came as a shock to the other members of his unit. When Sgt. Janzen heard the news, he nearly assaulted the private who informed him, believing it to be a scurrilous lie. "I just could not accept that Doc Hammond was dead," he later explained.

Although he fought and died in the so-called "Forgotten War," Francis Hammond would not soon be forgotten. Brief though his own life was, he ensured that many of his comrades would go on to live theirs. To Sgt. Janzen's mind, Hammond was "the bravest man I saw out there that night.... His actions were an inspiration to all of us there who saw and talked with him." Others higher up the chain of command agreed with this assessment. After Hammond was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery on 10 June 1953, he was awarded the Medal of Honor (posthumously) by President Dwight D. Eisenhower for his "exceptional fortitude, inspiring initiative, and self-sacrificing efforts."

Ironically, Hammond's fellow corpsman and friend, William Charette, was also awarded the Medal of Honor for actions taking place on the same night at the nearby Las Vegas outpost. Although he was severely wounded during the fighting after shielding one of the marines under his care from a grenade explosion, he ultimately survived that fateful night, earning himself the distinction of being the only one of the Navy's five corpsmen who earned the MOH who lived to receive it. Hammond's award, on the other hand, was presented to his next of kin, Francis Hammond, Jr., in a ceremony at the Pentagon on 29 December 1953. The younger Hammond was only three months old at the time, having been born well after his heroic father fell in combat.



Francis Hammond, Jr., receives the Medal of Honor from Secretary of the Navy Robert B. Anderson (not pictured), 29 December 1953. (NHHC Archives)

Other honors were bestowed upon Francis Hammond, Sr. in the years that followed. In addition to the Medal of Honor, he posthumously received the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Ribbon, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Service Medal, and the United Nations Service Medal (Korea).

His hometown of Alexandria also honored him by naming its newly built high school after him in 1956. In memory of its namesake, the school (now a middle school) named their sports team the Admirals and adopted blue and white as its colors. His Medal of Honor is still displayed there, along with some of his other memorabilia. In addition to this, Camp Pendleton named one of its medical clinics for him, a symbol of the indelible link between Hammond and the marines with whom he served.



Francis Hammond's insignia honors the life and deeds of HM3 Francis C. Hammond, as well as the ship's own role in protecting the United States. Shaped similar to a hospital corpsman's badge, the crest bears a blue stripe with five stars symbolizing the Medal of Honor that was awarded to Hammond. Two tridents, long a symbol of Neptune and the "Rule of the Deep", sit at each end of this stripe, their three prongs representing Francis Hammond's anti-submarine warfare (ASW) armament: the ASROC, the torpedo, and the helicopter. The objects sitting at the center also symbolize this function, with the missile representing the ship's ASW functions and the sword its might and readiness. The latter is sheathed, however, in order to emphasize the defensive nature of this might. Finally, the ship's motto "Valor, Honor" refers to both Hammond's personal gallantry and the manner in which the crew was expected to discharge their duties.

(DE-1067: displacement 4,200; length 438'0"; beam 47'0"; draft 25'0"; speed 27 knots; complement 285; armament 1 Mk. 42 5-inch, 1 Mk. 16 Missile Launcher, 1 Mk. 46 Torpedo Tube, 1 Mk. 25 Basic Point Defense Missile System Launcher, 1 helicopter; class *Knox*)

Francis Hammond (DE-1067) was laid down on 15 July 1967 at San Pedro, Calif., by Todd Shipyards, Los Angeles Division; launched on 11 May 1968; sponsored by Mrs. Phyllis Hammond Smith, widow of HM3 Francis C. Hammond; and commissioned on 25 July 1970, Cmdr. John E. Elmore in command.

The 16th of 46 *Knox*-class destroyer escorts, *Francis Hammond* was designed for anti-submarine warfare (ASW). Armed with ASROC and torpedoes, her primary mission would be to patrol the Pacific Ocean, locate and identify Soviet submarines, and, in the event of armed conflict, destroy them. As Rear Adm. Douglas C. Plate exhorted Cmdr. Elmore, "Hospitalman Hammond made a tradition of being 'in harm's way.' Far in advance of main friendly lines with the First Marine Division Francis Hammond laid down a gauntlet that is yours to pick up." Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt concurred with this, but also reminded the crew that in addition to exhibiting the "resolution so well exemplified by Francis Hammond," they also needed to demonstrate "the compassion and sense of humanity that helped to set him apart." On the day of her commissioning, the Bakersfield, Calif., Council of the Navy League of the United States officially adopted the ship.



Francis Hammond at Todd Shipyards, 17 July 1970. (NHHC Archives, USN 1144661)

Francis Hammond – assigned to Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla 7 and Destroyer Squadron (DesRon) 29 and homeported at Long Beach, Calif., spent her first month being fitted out at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard and Long Beach Naval Supply Center. It was not until 26 August that she got underway for her first engineering sea trials, with a second set soon to follow on 3 September.

After her fitting out availability, *Francis Hammond* got underway for a more sustained period of time. After a brief cruise to Seal Beach on 15 September 1970 to receive her ammunition loadout, she spent her first night at sea and then entered San Diego Harbor to receive her first deperming (16-18 September), upon completion of which she spent four days conducting independent exercises in the southern California operations area (25 September-4 October) including firing her first shots from her 5-inch guns as part of her structural test firings. She then briefly returned to Long Beach (5-8 October) before heading out to sea once more to conduct further exercises including her first underway replenishment (UnRep) with oiler *Tolovana* (AO-64) and a gunnery exercise with auxiliary ocean tug *Kalmia* (ATA-184) (5-8 October).

Francis Hammond steamed northwards on 24 October 1970 to commence a series of port visits and trials at sea. Her first destination was Treasure Island in San Francisco, Calif., to conduct firefighting and damage control training, as well as provide a few days liberty for her crew (25-30 October). She then cruised to the Puget Sound area, mooring briefly in Seattle, Wash., (1 November) and subsequently conducting acoustic trials (2-4 November) in and around the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Wash., after which she moored at the U.S. Naval Supply Depot (5-8 November) and conducted weapons systems accuracy trials in Hood Canal and Dabob Bay, Wash. She then sailed to Vancouver, B.C., for her first liberty visit to a foreign port (14-16 November).

More weapons systems trials took place at the Nanoose Weapons Testing Range, B.C. (17-18 November 1970), with *Francis Hammond* firing four tube-launched torpedoes and two antisubmarine rocket (ASROC) torpedoes. Following the completion of these tests, she returned to Long Beach, spending ten days in port (21-30 November) prior to conducting her final contract trials off southern California (1-2 December). These trials included firing a torpedo at a submarine target, gunnery firing against an aircraft-towed sleeve target, and other important equipment tests. With these completed, the ship returned to port to begin her post-shakedown availability. During this prolonged period in port (8 December 1970-28 May 1971), she had her Basic Point Defense Surface Missile System (BPDMS) and AN/SQS-35 independent Variable Depth Sonar (VDS) installed, the first *Knox*-class ship to receive those upgrades.

Save for an informal visit by Secretary of the Navy John H. Chaffee (13 January 1971), *Francis Hammond*'s post-shakedown availability proved relatively routine, with much of the focus being on correcting the sort of design deficiencies and builder discrepancies that often crop up early in a ship's career. While in dry dock (11 January-3 February), however, she did have her screw replaced owing to damage it had sustained after striking an underwater log during one of her transits of the Strait of Juan de Fuca the prior November. She also had her hull and tanks re-preserved, as well as an experimental plastic coating applied to the sonar dome. Once this was complete, the ship set out to sea to conduct system qualification trials for her RIM-7 *Sea Sparrow* missiles on 7 June 1971. Three days in, she suffered a casualty to her steering tube after it was damaged by a fire, forcing her to return to port and enter dry dock on 15 June, which would delay her shakedown training nearly two weeks to 12 July. In the interim, she was assigned to DesRon 9 and Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla 3.

Getting underway on 3 July 1971, *Francis Hammond*'s shakedown training went relatively smoothly, though she was unable to complete her naval gunfire support (NGFS) qualifications owing to scheduling issues and a casualty to her gun mount. She did, however, successfully undertake her first Convergence Zone (CZ) sonar exercise on 13 August, finally bringing her shakedown training to an end. There was no time for the crew to sit back and relax, however,

as the destroyer escort was back out to sea the very next week in order to participate in testing of her point defense system as part of CNO Project P/S8 (23-27 August). She further demonstrated her combat capabilities during a three-day exercise with submarine *Plunger* (SSN-595) (20-22 September), as well as ASW exercise (ASWEx) *Uptide 3A* (29 September-7 October), after which she steamed to San Francisco, Calif., for a five-day port visit (16-20 October). Inspections and training for her upcoming deployment consumed the rest of the year, including participation in *Composite Training Unit Exercise (CompTUEX) 14-71* (29 November-2 December). Two days after this was complete (4 December), the ship entered her planned overseas movement (POM) phase.

Francis Hammond left for her Western Pacific (WestPac) deployment on 7 January 1972 in company with other members of DesRon 9, *John Paul Jones* (DDG-32) and *Higbee* (DD-806). The very next day, she rendezvoused with the attack aircraft carrier *Hancock* (CVA-19) and served as a screening member for her carrier escort group. Although the ship had successfully completed her shakedown training, ahead still lay a battery of qualification exercises and equipment tests to undertake before she could be considered truly ready to fulfil her duties. To that end, she made a detour to Kahoolawe Island, Hi., to complete her qualification exercises (13 January) before getting back on course for Pearl Harbor, Hi. After a three-day period spent in port, the ship participated in further exercises at the Barking Sands Tactical Undersea Range (BARSTUR) including tests of her *Sea Sparrow* missiles and sonar (16-8 January). She spent another four days moored in Pearl Harbor (18-21 January) before getting underway again. Following her arrival at Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines (R.P.), on 2 February, she conducted three days of independent steaming exercises (10-12 February) in local waters in order to prepare her crew for the rigors of the deployment ahead.

Before assuming her normal duties, *Francis Hammond* participated as the U.S.'s representative in the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) exercise *PX-44* (Exercise *Sea Hawk*) (16-26 February 1972). Preceded by two days of ceremonies in Manila, R.P. (14-15 February), this large-scale ASW and coordination exercise involved ships, submarines, and aircraft from the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, and the Philippines. Such exercises were considered essential to fulfilling the organization's core purpose of containing the U.S.S.R. and, especially, China, in the region, though, as the list of participants demonstrates, the organization's effectiveness was hampered by the fact that very few Southeast Asian countries were actually members. In fact, Pakistan withdrew from SEATO that very year after it lost control of Bangladesh.

After another two days of upkeep in Manila (27-28 February 1972), *Francis Hammond* got underway for her first patrol off the coast of Vietnam. Sailing to Yankee Station on the Gulf of Tonkin, she performed plane guard duty for *Coral Sea* (CVA-43) during a twelve-day patrol of the waters between Vietnam and the island of Hainan, China (2-13 March). She then briefly sailed back to Subic Bay, where she held her first change of command ceremony, before returning to the Gulf of Tonkin to plane guard *Coral Sea* once more (23 March-1 April). This duty was only supposed to last three weeks, but on 30 March, the North Vietnamese launched a massive, multi-front assault that subsequently came to be known as the Easter Offensive. Their objective was to seize as much territory from South Vietnam as possible in the hopes of obtaining more favorable terms during the peace talks in Paris.

Francis Hammond initially carried out her duties as before, including engaging in an ASWEx with heavy cruiser *Chicago* (CG-11), *Whipple* (DE-1062), and *Sculpin* (SSN-590) (2-3 April 1972), as well as plane guarding *Coral Sea* (3-7 April). On 8 April, however, she was detached from *Coral Sea* and sent to Quang Tri province for NGFS operations. Although she

suffered a number of casualties to her gun while performing this duty, the home-made fixes made by her gunner's mates and hull technicians enabled the ship to fire over 2,000 rounds on enemy positions (8-20 April). During her operations there, she also rescued five South Vietnamese from a sinking sampan on 17 April and transferred them to *Roark* (DE-1054). Afterwards, the ship returned to her plane guard duties on 21 April.

For two weeks, it seemed as though this would just be another routine patrol, but on 8 May 1972, the *Francis Hammond* was called upon to render assistance in a search and rescue (SAR) effort to recover a helicopter carrying Rear Adm. Rembrandt C. Robinson (Commander, Cruiser-Destroyer Group Seventh Fleet); Capt. Edmund Taylor, Jr., his chief-of-staff; Cmdr. John M. Leaver, Jr., of guided missile destroyer escort *Ramsey* (DEG-2), and, Cmdr. Martin L. McCullough, aviation officer. While attempting to land on board guided missile light cruiser *Providence* (CLG-9) (8-9 May), their helicopter had experienced an engine failure and crashed into the sea. Although *Francis Hammond* failed to locate the aircraft or its crew or passengers while sweeping the area, she did, however, retrieve Capt. Taylor's briefcase, which contained sensitive documents. Cmdr. McCullough and Rear Adm. Robinson would both eventually be recovered from the water by another one of the searching ships, but, tragically, the rear admiral was declared dead on arrival. He was the only Navy flag officer killed during Vietnam.

Shortly after that tragedy, *Francis Hammond* left the Gulf of Tonkin and arrived back in Subic Bay (10-13 May 1972). She was only supposed to be moored there for ten days, but was detained there for considerably longer owing to casualties to her forced-draft blowers, as well as a lack of available technical assistance (13 May-7 June). She finally got underway again on 8 June, this time for Talos Station in the Gulf of Tonkin to serve as an escort for guided missile frigate *Sterrett* (DLG-31) (10-11 June) and *Chicago* (12-18 June). During her escort duties in company with the latter, she was temporarily detached to relieve *Roark* in shadowing two Chinese merchantmen that were proceeding through the mined harbor of Vinh, North Vietnam (13 June).

Following her escort duties, *Francis Hammond* served on the gunline near the Cua Viet River. Over the course of the next three weeks, she provided fire support for South Vietnam's counter offensive against Quang Tri City, South Vietnam (Operation *Lam Son 72*), as well as at Point Allison (Quang Tri), Betsy (Hue), and Claudia (north of Da Nang). On 21 June 1972, while firing upon Point Allison, the enemy returned fire, peppering the vessel's hull with bullets and shrapnel. Unfazed by this, her crew continued to carry out their mission, firing nearly 2,500 rounds in response.

Francis Hammond departed the firing line on 10 July 1972 for what her crew hoped was some much needed leave in Hong Kong. Once again, however, events conspired to prevent her from making port, this time, the arrival of Typhoon *Susan*. Diverting to Subic Bay instead, she remained in port for five days (13-17 July) before getting underway for Long Beach. Following a brief stop in Pearl Harbor on 29 July, she arrived back at her homeport on 5 August. In the post-deployment stand-down and the months that followed, the crew experienced a nearly 50 percent turnover rate, with many of its plank owners leaving for other opportunities. The ship herself would enter a three-month restricted availability overseen by Al Larson Boat Shop on 5 September. During this time, she transitioned from Navy Standard Fuel Oil to Navy Distillate and had modifications made to her air search radar (AN/SPS 40 C). She also had repairs made to her main turbine after some issues were discovered during the restricted availability. Upon completion of these, she got underway on 30 November for her first set of sea trials and later plane-guarding *Coral Sea* (4-8 December). The rest of the

month largely involved local operations, training, and even a visit from Santa Claus on 23 December.

When 1973 began, *Francis Hammond* was scheduled to deploy in February. As is customary prior to deployment, she participated in a *CompTUEx* in preparation for her journey overseas (22-26 January). A day after completion of these exercises, however, the U.S. signed the Paris Peace Accords, effectively ending its involvement in the Vietnam War. As a result of the reduced need for forces in the region, the ship's deployment was postponed until May. In the interim, she made a brief port visit to San Francisco (24-25 February), repeatedly conducted plane guard duty and type training off the southern Californian coast, and undertook a SAR mission with *Hull* (DD-945), *McKean* (DD-784), and *Agerholm* (DD-826) to rescue the pilot of a downed fighter jet (8 March). Finally, on 6 April, she began her POM phase in preparation for her upcoming deployment.

When *Francis Hammond* deployed on 9 May 1973, she had more than just her usual complement on board. Since February, she had participated in a pilot program between the Navy and Chapman College in Orange, Calif., to provide sailors with the opportunity to obtain either a high school or college degree. To that end, professors were now being periodically brought on board to teach courses in everything from mathematics to psychology. This program would prove quite successful, so much so that the next year, the Navy established the Program for Afloat College Education (PACE), which to this day ensures that those serving on board ships have the same educational opportunities as those serving ashore.

College professors were, of course, not the only ones to depart Long Beach with *Francis Hammond*. She also did so in company with other members of DesRon 9, including *John Paul Jones*, *Edson* (DD-946), and *Cook* (DE-1083). While en route to Pearl Harbor, she undertook CZ operations to test her sonar capabilities. She and the rest of her squadron were also supposed to undertake training in Hawaiian waters and at Barking Sands (15-16 May 1973), but high seas forced them to proceed instead to Midway, where they stopped briefly for fuel on 18 May. During the transpacific crossing to Subic Bay, the vessel suffered a casualty to both of her main fuel oil service pumps, which forced her to proceed at ten knots in company with *Cook* to Guam for emergency repairs.

Not long after she arrived in Subic Bay (1 June 1973), *Francis Hammond* steamed to Kaohsiung, Republic of China (Taiwan) for an upkeep alongside destroyer tender *Prairie* (AD-14) (5-11 June) and then to Keelung, Taiwan for a port visit (13-16 June). Upon returning to Kaohsiung, she participated in an *ASWEx* with *Edson*, *Parsons* (DDG-33), and six destroyers from the Taiwanese navy. With this completed, she returned to Subic Bay for nearly a month of upkeep (25-19 July). At the end of this, she cruised to Singapore for a week-long visit (23-29 July) followed by a brief return to Subic Bay (2 August) to prepare for her upcoming patrol of the Gulf of Tonkin. Getting underway on 3 August, the ship would spend nearly a month in the gulf, first serving anti-air warfare (AAW) picket duty (3-19 August) and then plane guarding *Constellation* (CV-64) (20-30 August).

Francis Hammond briefly returned to Subic Bay on 31 August 1973, before getting underway for Hong Kong. Although she successfully made port on 2 September, similar to her prior deployment, bad weather forced an alteration of her plans. In this case, she had to get underway for two days to evade Hurricane *Louise* (5-6 September), subsequently resuming her visit without further incident (7-10 September) and returning to Kaohsiung for upkeep (12-19 September). She then returned to the Gulf of Tonkin for another brief period of plane guard duty followed by time in port at Subic Bay (2-6 September) to prepare for a combined amphibious forces exercise (*Philas Pagasa II*) with forces from the Republic of the

Philippines. During this exercise, she plane-guarded for *Coral Sea* (27 September-2 October). Shortly thereafter, she steamed to Sasebo, Japan, for a port visit and upkeep (8-16 October).

With her return to Subic Bay on 21 October 1973, *Francis Hammond* had fulfilled all operational requirements for her deployment. Rather than immediately transiting back to Long Beach, however, she instead got underway for the southern hemisphere, visiting Port Kembla, Australia (2-5 November) and Auckland, New Zealand (6-8 November). While visiting the latter port, she and *Cook* joined company to transit back to the U.S. together. The transit did not proceed as smoothly as either might have intended, however, as *Francis Hammond* experienced considerable trouble obtaining fuel during this stretch, forcing her to make an unplanned stop in Pago Pago, American Samoa, on 14 November and travel back to Long Beach at only 16 knots in order to conserve fuel. Despite these difficulties, she made it back to Long Beach on 28 November and immediately commenced holiday leave and upkeep.

On 9 January 1974, *Francis Hammond* steamed to San Diego for a week of technical training, inspections and tender availability alongside *Prairie* (AD-15) culminating in her naval technical proficiency inspection (NTPI) (9-15 January). Three weeks later, she conducted her sea trials in the southern California operations area while en route to Long Beach (5-6 February), after which she carried out further training, upkeep, and inspections at Long Beach, occasional plane guarding of *Constellation* (15-19 March, 5-9 April, 1-3 May, 14-17 May) in local waters, and a brief port visit to San Francisco (13-15 April). Upon arriving back at Long Beach on (22 May), she underwent a month of pre-overhaul upkeep prior to commencing the overhaul itself on 1 July. This would be the ship's first overhaul since her commissioning.

The overhaul took nearly eight and half months (1 July 1974-15 March 1975), with *Francis Hammond* spending much of the remaining months of 1974 in Dry Dock No. 2 at Long Beach in order to receive a LAMPS conversion, an overhaul to her onboard equipment, and a new rubber window on her sonar. After leaving dry dock on 18 November, she spent another month moored at the pier in preparation for her light-off exam on 18 and 19 December. It was not until over month later that she finally got underway for the first of her six sea trials (23 January-13 March). Even after completing these, the ship still had five more months of inspections and refresher training in port at both Long Beach and San Diego, as well as during operations off the southern California coast. This whole process took longer than anticipated due, in part, to difficulties she experienced during her operational propulsion plant exam (OPPE) (26-28 June), which required her to return to Long Beach for repairs and to undergo another inspection (15, 18 July). It was during this period that she was also reclassified as a frigate (FF-1067) as part of the Navy's fleet-wide reclassification of certain ship types on 30 June.

Upon completion of the second phase of her refresher training, *Francis Hammond* spent nine days in port before getting underway for *ReadiEx 1-76* in the Southern California area (18-26 August 1976). She then steamed to Mazatlan, Mexico (27 August-1 September), for a few days of leave followed by more exercises with her task unit while en route back to Long Beach (2-4 September). Spending the rest of September in port, the ship underwent her final inspections and certifications as part of her preparations for her upcoming overseas voyage.

On 16 October 1975, *Francis Hammond* departed Long Beach in company with *Marvin Shields* (FF-1066). This was not, however, the sort of overseas deployment like she had undertaken in years' past, but rather, a change of homeport from Long Beach to Yokosuka. Referred to as forward deployment, *Francis Hammond* would now be at the forefront of U.S.

naval operations in western Pacific, maintaining relations with other countries by participating in joint exercises with their navies, conducting surveillance of Soviet vessels that left the U.S.S.R's territorial waters, and responding to crises in potential hotspots such as the Korean Peninsula. The initial plan was for her to sail to Pearl Harbor, and from there, directly to Yokosuka, but a tropical storm forced her off-course during the latter half of its voyage. In need of fuel, she stopped briefly in Guam on 4 November, before resuming her course. She subsequently arrived at her new homeport on 8 November and spent the next twelve days in port (9-20 November) while her crew engaged in upkeep, training, and familiarizing themselves with their new home. She would briefly get underway to conduct some independent exercises around local waters (21-23 November), but it was not until 2 December that she undertook a more extensive patrol of the regional waters.

Francis Hammond made Eta Jima, Japan, her first port of call in her new home region. While there (4-6 December 1975), she conducted ASW training with Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) ships. Afterwards, she set a course for Pusan, Republic of Korea (9-13 December), stopping briefly at Sasebo, Japan, on 6 December for a refueling stop. She then got underway for the Okinawa operations area serving as an escort for *Midway* (CV-41) with guided missile cruiser *Worden* (CG-18) also in company. Following these exercises, the frigate arrived back in Yokosuka for her annual holiday leave and tender availability alongside repair ship *Jason* (AR-8).

On 13 January 1976, *Francis Hammond* departed Yokosuka to escort *Midway* while it conducted various exercises. Once this was complete, she returned to Yokosuka for another period of tender availability with *Jason* (23 January-8 February) and then set a course for Chinhae, South Korea, again escorting *Midway* en route (9-12 February). During her time in Chinhae, the frigate participated in *Tae Kwon Do X*, an ASWEX involving ships from the Seventh Fleet and the South Korean Navy (15-24 February). More upkeep at Yokosuka soon followed (27 February-12 March). This would become a fairly normal pattern of operations over the course of the next few years, with the ship spending much of her time either in port at Yokosuka, Chinhae, Pusan, or Subic Bay for upkeep, plane guarding *Midway* (which was also forward deployed), or engaged in exercises with the JMSDF and the South Korean navy.

Indeed, upon departing Yokosuka on 13 March 1976, *Francis Hammond* once again escorted *Midway* during operations off northern Japan, Okinawa, and in the South China Sea. She then briefly stopped at Subic Bay to onload ammunition in preparation for missile and readiness exercises (19-31 March). Upon her return to port, she conducted another tender availability with *Jason* (1-4 April) and then undertook yet another escort of *Midway* (5-18 April) while conducting consolidated anti-submarine training. Once this was complete, she returned to Yokosuka for a prolonged period of upkeep and tender availability with *Dixie* (AD-14) (21 April-12 June). The ship did, however, briefly leave port to conduct a dependent's cruise between Yokosuka and Shimoda, Japan (16-18 May), where she participated in the annual Black Ship Festival, commemorating the opening of Japan by Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry.

Upon completion of upkeep, *Francis Hammond* steamed to Pusan with Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron (Light) (HSL) 35, Detachment (Det.) 8 embarked for another ASW exercise (*Tae Kwon Do XI*) (21-25 June 1976), after which she returned to Yokosuka for a tender availability with *Jason*. This was briefly interrupted, however, when a Soviet patrol was detected outside of its home waters. The ship rapidly sortied from her port to join Task Force (TF) 72 in shadowing the group, but a typhoon forced both the Soviet and USN ships to return to their home waters. Consequently, *Francis Hammond* did not get underway again until 21

July, when she joined Task Group (TG) 77.4 for a training exercise and plane guard duties off Okinawa. More upkeep at Yokosuka soon followed (4-20 August).

Francis Hammond would have remained in port longer, but was forced to leave port early on 21 August 1976 in response to a brewing crisis on the Korean Peninsula. On 18 August, North Korean troops murdered two U.S. Army officers while they oversaw the removal of a tree in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). In response to the so-called "Axe Murder Incident," President Gerald R. Ford ordered an augmentation of U.S. forces in and around the Korean Peninsula, hoping that a display of overwhelming force would deter the North Koreans from further action and convince them to formally accept responsibility for the murder and make reparations. Although he did not go quite so far as to do that, North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung did make the rare step of issuing a statement expressing his regret that the incident had occurred.

Rather than immediately return to Yokosuka, *Francis Hammond* provided escort and screening for *Midway* during an ASWEx (23-25 August 1976) and participated in another with the JMSDF a week later (4 September). She then got underway for Keelung, but a storm forced her and *Parsons* to make port in Sasebo on 9 September. The frigate was able to get underway four days later (12 September) and resume her visit to Keelung (15-20 September), after which she sailed to Subic Bay for more upkeep (23 September-3 October) followed by an unscheduled participation in ASWEx *Sharkhunt XVIII* with ships from the Taiwanese navy. Save for a brief port visit to Hong Kong (24-28 November), the ship predominantly spent the rest of the year either in upkeep at Yokosuka and Subic Bay or conducting training exercises at Chinhae.

Francis Hammond began 1977 by participating in *ReadEx 1-77*, a Seventh Fleet exercise involving both *Midway* and *Enterprise* (CVN-65) task groups (16-20 January). Afterwards, she completed her NGFS qualifications at Tabones, R.P. and then returned to Yokosuka. The next month, she conducted a joint training exercise with the Japanese destroyer escorts *Ayase* (DE.216) and *Teshio* (DE.222) followed by a three-day visit to Toba, Japan, as part of a broader effort to build international cooperation between the U.S. Navy and the JMSDF (14-18 February). Upon returning to Yokosuka, the crew spent the next three weeks in port (20 February-9 March) readying the ship for her OPPE (10-13 March).

Following a month in port, *Francis Hammond* departed for another round of Soviet Out-of-Area Operations (SOAP). Over the course of three weeks (20 April-11 May 1977), she conducted surveillance of a Soviet task group, steaming well over 7,000 miles in the process. After a short sojourn in Yokosuka, she departed for Taiwan, visiting both Keelung (23-26 May) and Kaohsiung (28-29 May) in preparation for a *Sharkhunt ASWEx* with the Taiwanese navy (30 May-1 June). With this exercise complete, she returned to Yokosuka (7-12 June).

Francis Hammond spent the next month performing ASW escort duties, first for *Midway* (13-14 June 1977), then *Oklahoma City* (CG-5) (27-30 June), and finally for the Japanese destroyer *Asagumo* (DD.115) (1-2 July). In addition, she visited Subic Bay to participate in both *MultiplEx 5-77*, a multi-phase exercise intended to test her air, surface, and sub-surface offensive and defensive capabilities (21-25 June), and also a missile exercise (*Miss/Ex*) (26 June) to test her point defenses. By July, she was once again operating in Japanese waters, visiting Hakodate, Japan (4-5 July) and then returning to Yokosuka for nearly a month to prepare for her sea trials and material inspection. Upon successful completion of these of these (12 August), the ship largely spent the next month operating in and around Yokosuka, save for a brief visit to Keelung (27-29 August).

On 28 September 1977, *Francis Hammond* deployed on a three-month patrol of the Indian Ocean as part of *Midway's* task group (TG 77.4). After visiting Subic Bay to take on supplies, the group steamed southwards to Freemantle, Australia, where they received over a thousand visitors over the course of six days (17-22 October). From there, she sailed onwards to Bandar Abbas, Iran, stopping briefly off Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territories (BIOT) to conduct an underway replenishment with combat stores ship *White Plains* (AFS-4). Arriving in Bandar Abbas on 9 November, the frigate participated in *Midlink 1-77*, a Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) exercise. Consisting of Great Britain, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, this organization was, in essence, a Middle Eastern/South Asian equivalent of NATO that had been formed in order to prevent the U.S.S.R. from expanding southwards. For a week, ships from all member nations participated in anti-surface warfare (ASUW), AAW, and ASW exercises (12-18 November).

Exercises with other U.S. allies soon followed, including a joint exercise with the British and Australian navies (*Compass 1-77*) while en route to Singapore (22 November-2 December 1977), and one with the Singapore Navy (*Merlion V*, 6-7 December). *Francis Hammond* subsequently visited Singapore for three days before getting underway for Tabones to undertake her NGFS qualifications and host a visit by Secretary of the Navy W. Graham Claytor (14 December). After another period weapons training at Subic Bay (15-17 December), she arrived back in Yokosuka on 22 December to begin holiday leave and upkeep.

The first four months of 1978 largely consisted of local operations and exercises in, around, and between Yokosuka and Chinhae including escorting *Midway* during two separate ASWExs with Korean naval units (31 January-20 February and 7-20 March) and once with those from the JMSDF (12-21 April). Following the latter exercise, the ship assisted in surveying and upgrading the gunnery range at Okino Daito Shima, Japan (22-23 April), and then sailed to Hong Kong for a port visit (26-30 April). More exercises ensued including NFGS training at Tabones (4-5 May) and another ASW escort for *Midway* during *MultiPLEX 1-78* (6-22 May).

Not long after she returned to Yokosuka (23-25 May 1978), *Francis Hammond* got underway for another set of Soviet Out-of-Area Operations (26 May-9 June). Upon being relieved of these duties, she returned to Yokosuka for a prolonged period of upkeep that would keep her in port until July (19 June-5 July), when she sailed to Chinhae for another ASWEX and a port visit (6-12 July). From there, she visited Pusan (14-18 July) and then Kure, Japan (21-23 July), where she embarked a number of Japanese midshipmen and returned to Yokosuka (27 July).

Less than a week later, *Francis Hammond* departed for Thailand, briefly stopping at Subic Bay (6 August 1978) for provision. While en route, she encountered two boats off the southern coast of Vietnam containing 77 refugees on 9 August. This was not mere happenstance, but rather, symptomatic of a much broader trend taking place during this period. Since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, tensions between China and Vietnam had been steadily rising over the latter's growing hostility towards the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia (a Chinese ally) and closeness with the U.S.S.R. In response, the Vietnamese government began to oppress its ethnic-Chinese population in an attempt to drive them out. Some fled on foot into China, but a great many exited the country by boat. These so-called "boat people" faced many risks not the least of which is that many of the craft they used were barely seaworthy. Such was the case with the two boats *Francis Hammond* encountered, which led her to embark all 77 passengers on board to receive the food, clothing and medical aid they

so desperately needed. Following the frigate's arrival at Pattaya, Thailand (10 August), the United Nations International Refugee Commission in Bangkok agreed to accept them into the country on 14 August.

With this accomplished, *Francis Hammond* participated in Exercise *Sea Siam XIII* with units from the Royal Thai Navy (15-19 August 1978) then sailed back to Pattaya for another three-day visit (21-23 August) before getting underway for Keelung (29-31 August) and then Yokosuka (4-17 September). She soon commenced a baseline overhaul at the Naval Ship Repair Facility, Yokosuka, the first frigate to receive such an overhaul in the western Pacific. Between September 1978 and 13 July 1979, she received a Tactical Towed Array System (TACTAS), a hurricane bow, and spray rails, enhancing both her functionality and appearance.

Once the overhaul was complete, *Francis Hammond* gradually resumed her duties. Following a four week period of upkeep and tender restricted availability with *Prairie* (21 July-17 August 1979), she departed Yokosuka to undertake her weapons systems accuracy test (WSAT) her Ship's Qualification Trial and her 9024 training. With these completed, she was finally able to get underway for Subic Bay on 20 September to begin a prolonged period of training in the South China Sea (26 September-16 October 1979).

Francis Hammond next sailed to Bangkok, Thailand, on 17 October 1979 for what was supposed to be a routine diplomatic visit. However, similar to her prior voyage to those waters, she encountered two boats with 44 Vietnamese refugees on board. Embarking them, the ship continued her cruise to Bangkok. Three days after arrival (26 October), the Thai government agreed to accept the refugees into the country. With the rescued Vietnamese safely under the care of the Thai government, she embarked U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Morton I. Abramowitz and other VIP's on board for a short cruise to Pattaya on 28 October 1979. Once they debarked, she proceeded onwards to Sattahip, Thailand for a brief refueling stop (29 October) and then returned to Subic Bay (3-7 November) to begin preparations for her OPPE (8-10 November). Additional training followed over the course of November and early December, including a brief transit to Guam (13-15 December) to properly calibrate her sonar. The remainder of the year was spent in Yokosuka.

Francis Hammond got underway again on 20 January 1980 in company with *Kirk* (FF-1087) to participate in *ASWEx 1 A-80*, an exercise that would make full use of her TACTAS. Afterwards, she made port visits to Manila (30 January-2 February) and Subic Bay (3-5 February) before returning to Yokosuka for two weeks of upkeep and a maintenance and material management (3M) Inspection (13 February-2 March). She might have spent even longer in Yokosuka, but with only seven-days warning, she was forced to get underway on 3 March for operations in the Indian Ocean with *Coral Sea* after two other ships proved unable to make the rendezvous. Steaming to Subic Bay at a pace of 18 knots, she embarked ComDesRon 5 on 7 March and departed the very same day.

Following a brief stop in Singapore (12-14 March 1980), *Francis Hammond* rendezvoused with the *Coral Sea* Battle Group. Over the next month, she would escort that carrier during her patrol of the Indian Ocean and also participate in exercise *Gonzo 2-80* (23 March-5 May). The relative calm of the patrol, however, was shattered on 25 April by the sounding of General Quarters. Just a day prior, President Jimmy Carter had initiated Operation *Eagle Claw*, an attempt to rescue the U.S. Embassy hostages from Tehran, Iran. Carrier Air Wing 14 (CVW-14) in *Coral Sea* was supposed to provide air support for the effort, but never even got off the ground due to the rather rapid failure of the mission.

After escorting *Coral Sea* through the South China Sea, *Francis Hammond* returned to Subic Bay, rescuing 25 more Vietnamese refugees en route and disembarking them the day after on 10 May 1980. She then spent five days in Hong Kong (14-18 May) followed by a return to Yokosuka. She spent the next two months undergoing upkeep before getting underway again on 14 July to escort *Midway* to Subic Bay. After two days in port (23-25 July), she sailed to Pattaya Beach for a four-day visit (30 July-2 August).

On 3 August 1980, *Francis Hammond* once again deployed to the Indian Ocean, this time, to join *Dwight D. Eisenhower's* (CVN-69) Battle Group. Rendezvousing on 14 August, she spent nearly a month escorting the carrier through the Indian Ocean. She then detached from the battle group on 6 September to undertake two periods of tender availability alongside *Ajax* (AR-6) at Diego Garcia (11-21 September, 27 September-2 October) and four days of type training in the surrounding waters (23-26 September). During this period, the crew was apparently so well-behaved that the local military commander awarded them the "Zero Liberty Incidents Award," one of the more rarely awarded honors in the history of the island.

For her remaining three weeks in the Indian Ocean (9-20 October 1980), *Francis Hammond* escorted *Midway*. When this was complete, she sailed for Hong Kong. As with her prior transit home, she sighted and, ultimately embarked, 85 Vietnamese refugees. Living up to Adm. Zumwalt's exhortation to show "compassion and a sense of humanity," the crew donated clothing and volunteered their free time to feed and tend to the medical needs of the refugees, who disembarked upon arrival at Hong Kong on 12 November. Five days later, the ship cruised to Subic Bay for a short visit (18 November) followed by NGFS training at Tabones a day later. After spending another day in Subic Bay, she escorted *Midway* back to Yokosuka (21-25 November). She spent the remainder of the year in upkeep.

Having spent much of 1980 involved in unscheduled operations, *Francis Hammond* began 1981 prepping for a number of long overdue inspections including her OPPE. To that end, she got underway briefly to conduct engineering casualty drills off the coast of northern Japan (6-10 January) and then spent the rest of the month in Yokosuka undergoing more training and inspections. On 2 February, she departed for Subic Bay, where most of the major inspections were going to be held. Arriving on 7 February, she spent the rest of the month alternating between time in port and out in the South China Sea, during which she successfully completed her OPPE (23-24 February) and other inspections. Returning to Yokosuka on 18 March, the ship almost immediately underwent her underway material inspection (UMI) by the Sub Board of Inspection and Survey (InSurv) (23-26 March). Once this was completed, she entered selected repair availability (SRA) for over a month to rework and repair her low pressure turbine and sonar dome (30 March-5 May).

Upon completing her SRA and sea trials (6 May 1981), *Francis Hammond* spent a week undergoing various drills around the Sagami Wan and northern Japan operation areas. She then got underway for Shimoda to attend the 42nd Annual Black Ship Festival (16-18 May) and also conduct a dependent's cruise (15 May). Three more weeks of training and upkeep in and around Yokosuka ensued (20 May-10 June), followed by a cruise to Pusan for an ASWEx with the Republic of Korea Navy (*Tae Kown do XXXI*) (18-22 June). Once this was complete, she briefly returned to Yokosuka (24 June) before assuming ASW escort and plane guard duties for *Midway* (25-26 June).

Francis Hammond sailed to Sasebo on 29 June 1981 to prepare for *MultiPLEx 81-4*, a battle group exercise intended to simulate warfare in a multi-threat environment. Prior to that, she spent time in port at Sasebo conducting her final grooming (3-6 July) and then undertook type training and MTT during a group sail in company with *Lockwood* (FF-1064) (7-8 July). As for

the exercise itself, the ship scored hits with both its exercise ASROC and surface-launched torpedo. With this complete, she returned to Yokosuka on 17 July and spent the next two months alternating between time in port and conducting training and inspections off the coast of Japan. During this time, Adm. Thomas B. Hayward, the CNO, visited (2 September).

Shortly after the CNO's visit, *Francis Hammond* rendezvoused with the *Midway* Battle Group off Poro Point, R.P. to participate in *MissilEx 81-8* (7-9 September 1981). Following a five day port visit to Subic Bay (10-14 September), the group got cruised to Pattaya for a few days of liberty (21-25 September). While there, some of the crew volunteered at a local orphanage, assisting with painting and digging the foundations for new buildings. The ship then spent the next ten days escorting *Midway* through the South China Sea and undertaking her NGFS qualification trials at Tabones (26 September-5 October). Upon her return to Yokosuka, she underwent a two weeks of upkeep (6-18 October), during which she served as a visit ship as part of Navy Friendship Day (10 October), receiving nearly 6,000 visitors from the local community.

Getting underway again on 20 October 1981, *Francis Hammond* steamed to Sasebo for another period of upkeep and to exchange helicopters with *Cushing* (DD-985). She then spent the next two weeks training near Okinawa and in the East China Sea (29-10 November), before cruising to Pusan for a five day port visit (12-16 November). Upon returning to Yokosuka on 23 November, she entered a prolonged period of Restricted Availability (23 November-10 January), as well as a tender availability with *Hector* (AR-7) in order to perform necessary maintenance on her boilers.

Francis Hammond got underway for a week in company with the rest of the *Midway* battle group for TACTAS training off Okinawa (11-18 January) before returning to Yokosuka for more upkeep. She then steamed to Sasebo through the Inland Sea (3-8 February) to prep for *ASWEx 82-13* with the JMSDF (11-15 February) and an anti-surface warfare exercise (*ASUWEX*) (16-18 February) with her battle group while en route to Hong Kong. In between exercises, she briefly stopped in Buckner Bay in Okinawa (15 February) to refuel. Once all of this was completed, she spent five days in Hong Kong (22-26 February) and then steamed back to Yokosuka for another three weeks of upkeep and training (3-20 March). The ship closed out the month by participating in *Team Spirit '82*, a special operations exercise in the Sea of Japan (21 March-5 April).

After spending nearly all of April in upkeep (6-26 April 1982), *Francis Hammond* operated in the South China Sea and off northern Japan for nearly a month (27 April-21 May), during which she and the rest of the *Midway* Battle Group participated in *ReadEx '82*, a three-carrier battle group exercise (4-8 May). This was followed by nearly three months of upkeep and inspection in and around Subic Bay (22 May-17 June), Yokosuka (24 June-26 July), and Chinhae (30 July-4 August). Upon successfully passing her OPPE (5-8 August), the crew held a picnic along with members of her sister ship, *Ayase*, to celebrate finally completing her inspections. As for the ship herself, she was in SRA for nearly three months receiving upgrades to her electronic warfare capabilities. She also received a visit from Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman, Jr. (11 August).

Following her SRA, *Francis Hammond* got underway on 9 October 1982 for Subic Bay and Tabones to conduct her interim refresher training and NGFS qualifications (15-24 October). Once this was complete, she set a course for Australia to participate in *Sandgroper '82*, a joint exercise with the New Zealand and Australian navies. While en route, she briefly visited Singapore (29 October) and sailed in company with *Knox* (FF-1052), *Davidson* (FF-1045), and *Stein* (FF-1065). She finally arrived at Geraldton, Australia (5-9 November), and

subsequently visited Fremantle (11-14 November), with her crew dividing their time between enjoying a healthy dose of Australian hospitality and preparing for the upcoming exercise. For ten days (15-24 November), both she and *Knox* conducted exercises in company with the Australian ships *Stalwart* (D.215), *Perth* (D.38), *Swan* (DE.50), and *Yarra* (DE.45), as well as the New Zealand ship *Otago* (F.111). This joint exercise proved quite valuable, not just for enhancing military coordination between the three navies, but also building a sense of camaraderie. *Francis Hammond* not only received a visit from Rear Adm. Michael W. Hudson, the Australian commander overseeing the exercise, but also welcomed *Yarra's* wardroom to share an American Thanksgiving. She would get to enjoy more Australian cordiality in the weeks to come, visiting both Sydney (3-6 December) and Brisbane (9-13 December) before finally getting underway for Yokosuka on 14 December. After a brief fuel stop at Guam (20 December), she arrived back at Yokosuka on 21 December.

Following a period of restricted availability, *Francis Hammond* got underway for operations with her battle group near Okinawa (12-27 January 1983) and then spent four days at Sasebo (28-31 January), acting as a service ship for *Tunny* (SSN-682). Returning to Yokosuka on 4 February, she spent most of the month prepping for an extended period of battle group operations throughout the South China Sea and the Sea of Japan. The first of these, *Team Spirit '83*, was a joint exercise involving nearly forty ships from the U.S. and South Korean navies (25 February-22 March). Once completed, *Francis Hammond* briefly visited Pusan (23-27 March) before getting underway again to participate in *FleetEx 83-1*. This massive exercise involved not just *Midway* Battle Group, but also *Enterprise* and *Coral Sea*, as well as 35 U.S. and Canadian coast guard ships. Steaming north from the Sea of Japan towards the Aleutian Islands, *Francis Hammond* conducted a TACTAS patrol in advance of the rest of the group (28 March-24 April). After nearly a month at sea, she finally made port at Sasebo for six days rest (25-30 April) before getting underway for yet another exercise (*ReadiEx 83-1*), this time with a task unit from the Australian Navy (1-9 May).

Save for a brief cruise to Shimoda for the Black Fleet Festival (15-19 May 1983) *Francis Hammond* spent nearly a month in upkeep at Yokosuka repairing the wear and tear she had sustained during her the prior months' operations. She then headed for the South China Sea with her battle group for more operations, followed by an NFGS at Tabones (18-19 June) and a port visit to Subic Bay (20-30 June). During the latter, she successfully passed her annual command inspection, as well as her 3-M inspection. With these complete, she got underway in company with *Midway* for more operations in the South China Sea, including ASUW and ASW training during *Battle Week 83-1* (1-18 July). They then visited Hong Kong (19-23 July) prior to conducting further group operations (24 July-5 August) and ultimately returned to Yokosuka on 6 August for another three weeks of upkeep.

At the end of her upkeep, *Francis Hammond* cruised to Pattaya to enjoy a few days of liberty and to celebrate capturing the Battle "E" (3-8 September 1983). Such merriment did not last long, however, as the ship made an unplanned voyage to the Indian Ocean in response to Korean Air Lines Flight 007 being shot down over the Sea of Okhotsk by a Soviet Sukhoi Su-15 interceptor (NATO codename: *Flagon*) on 1 September. Although the crash site was actually not that far from *Francis Hammond's* homeport of Yokosuka, the Indian Ocean was becoming an increasingly important theater of operations in the Cold War. Given the potential for hostilities to erupt in the aftermath of this incident, it was just as important to have a presence there. Getting underway on 9 September, *Francis Hammond* spent the next three weeks steaming around the Indian Ocean with ComDesRon 15 embarked. Save for a brief stop at Diego Garcia (17-18 September), her patrol proved to be uneventful. By the end of

September, she was en route back to Yokosuka, making port visits to Singapore (30 September-3 October) and Subic Bay (9-11 October) along the way. She then spent the remainder of 1983 undergoing inspections both there and at Chinhae, culminating in her InSurv UMI (11-17 December).

Although the end of the calendar year is normally a time when many Navy vessels are in port for holiday leave and upkeep, *Francis Hammond* and her battle group spent most of it preparing for an early deployment. Departing on 28 December 1983 and arriving at Masirah, Oman, on 10 January 1984, she spent the next three months conducting operations in the North Arabian Sea as part of *Midway* Battle Group. The operations were relatively routine, with the ship alternating between participating in assorted exercises at sea and anchoring at Masirah for tender availabilities with *Yosemite* (AD-19) (10-15 February) and *Prairie* (AD-15) (24-29 March and 6-8 April). For *Francis Hammond's* command historian, however, the most significant days were the all-important Beer Day (17-18 February, 6-8 April). In contrast to many other navies, U.S. naval ships have been completely "dry" since Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels issued General Order No. 99 on 1 June 1914. By 1979, it was felt that a sailor stuck at sea for many days without foamy, golden refreshment could potentially grow irascible, so Secretary of the Navy Edward Hidalgo decreed that for every 45 days a ship spent at sea, the captain could, at their own discretion, allow the crew a ration of two cans of beer. Though not sufficient to prevent frequent grouching among sailors past and present about the rather lukewarm temperature of said beer or off-color descriptions of its taste (or lack thereof), nonetheless, Beer Day is one much looked forward to by the crew of any Navy vessel, particularly if it is accompanied by a picnic on the ship's deck (better known as a Steel Beach Picnic). Indeed, *Francis Hammond's* command historian believed this event to be of such great importance to the ship's smooth operation and morale that he took pains to list it not once, but twice in his chronology of operations in 1984, a rarity among command historians.

After conducting a turnover with *Kitty Hawk* (CV-63) Battle Group on 16 April 1984, *Francis Hammond* got underway for Yokosuka. En route, her crew enjoyed liberty visits at Phuket, Thailand (23-27 April) and Singapore (29 April-4 May), as well stops at Tabones and Subic Bay to conduct her NGFS trials. (12-16 May). She finally arrived back at Yokosuka on 23 May. Despite being away nearly four and a half months, she was soon back underway for a brief visit to Sasebo (8-10 June) for upkeep and to conduct a Tiger Cruise on her return voyage (11-13 June). During both parts of her voyage, she briefly served plane guard for *Midway*. She spent the rest of the month at Yokosuka.

Francis Hammond spent most of July underway in the Sea of Japan participating in exercise *Kennel Freelance* (5-29 July 1984). Afterwards, she visited Sasebo (1-6 July) and then sailed to the East China Sea for *ASWEx 84-23A* (7-10 August). On 13 August, she returned to Yokosuka for two weeks (13-26 August) during which she completed her UMI (22-24 August). With this complete, she sailed to the northern Pacific to participate in multiple exercises (*ASWEx*, *TorpEx*, and *GunEx*) over the course of four days (27-30 August). From there, she cruised to Pusan for a five-day port visit (2-6 September) and then returned to Yokosuka (9-12 September). She would leave port only one more time for exercises (*AnnualEx 59G*, 16-20 September), before returning to Yokosuka to begin a major overhaul that would last nearly ten months (24 September 1984-20 June 1985).

Upon the completion of her overhaul, *Francis Hammond* had the privilege of receiving a Shinto blessing performed at the Hachiman-gu Shrine in Kamakura on 21 June 1985. She then got underway for Pearl Harbor, where she would spend nearly a month (7 July-5 August)

undergoing various inspections and tests (mobile training team [MTT], weapons safety assistance team [WSAT], combat systems operability test [CSOT], fleet operational readiness accuracy check [FORAC], NGFS) to ensure that she was ready to assume the rigors of active service. Upon successfully completing these, she began her voyage back to Yokosuka, refueling at Midway Island (9 August), conducting UNREPs and personnel transfers with USNS *Navasota* (T-AO-106) (13-17 August), participating in a mine warfare exercise (*MinEx*) (14 August), undergoing a 3M assist visit and other inspections (18 August-2 September), and laboring through type training (2-6 September) en route. The overhauled frigate finally arrived back at Yokosuka on 6 September, though she would depart briefly to complete her MTT Phase II (9-13 September) in the Philippine Sea and rendezvous with *Ayase* for a passing exercise (*PassEx*) and high-line transfer.

Francis Hammond would spend another two months engaged in training and inspections, most of it around Subic Bay (30 September-5 November 1985). During that time, she completed her OPPE (22-24 October) and managed to avoid a typhoon (18-21 October). She was not so lucky, however, on 5 November when she collided with amphibious command ship *Blue Ridge* (LCC-19) during a refresher training (RefTra) exercise. Fortunately, she did not suffer serious damage and was only in port for three days (6-8 November). The rest of the month's exercises proceeded without incident, enabling her to finally leave the waters around Subic Bay. Her first stop was Davao, R.P. on the island of Mindanao, where she delivered 45 boxes of books as part of Project *Handclasp* and also played the local basketball team. She then sailed to Hong Kong for five days of liberty and holiday shopping (11-15 December), before finally returning to Yokosuka on 21 December for a well-deserved respite.

Although most of her battle group would spend the next few months operating locally, *Francis Hammond* was temporarily assigned to the Middle East Force to relieve *Jack Williams* (FFG-24) in conducting escort operations in the Gulf of Oman, work necessitated, in large part, by the intensification of the Iran-Iraq War. Since 1984, both sides had increasingly targeted civilian shipping through the Strait of Hormuz in order to diminish the other side's oil revenues and prevent war material from reaching them. Although the U.S. had remained largely neutral throughout the conflict, this had not deterred the Iranians from boarding the U.S. merchant vessel *President Taylor* in January 1986. To prevent further recurrences of this behavior, the Navy increased the number of ships on patrol in the Gulf of Oman, as well as its escorts of merchant vessels. To that end, *Francis Hammond* got underway for the Gulf of Oman on 7 January, visiting Chinhae (9-15 January), Subic Bay (18-23 January), and Singapore (26 January) en route. By 3 February, she had arrived in the Gulf and was momentarily sailing in company with *Monongahela* (AO-178) and *Gallery* (FFG-26). Save for a brief visit to Bahrain (20-21 February), she spent nearly all of her deployment steaming throughout the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf, conducting UnReps with transport oiler USNS *Antarctic* (T-AOT-176), USNS *Hassayampa* (T-AO-145), and Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) *Tidespring* (A.75) and escorting a significant number of merchant vessels including *President Van Buren* (4-5 February, 3 March), *Maine* (17 February), *President McKinley* (18 February), *Washington* (1, 3 March), *Illinois* (7 March), and *President Johnson* (11 March).

With the arrival of *Enterprise's* battle group, *Francis Hammond* ended her patrol on 15 March 1986 and sailed to Colombo, Sri Lanka (19-20 March) for a brief port visit followed by six days in Patong Bay, Thailand (24-29 March). After transiting the Malacca Strait, she stopped at Singapore (30-31 March) while en route to Subic Bay for a period of upkeep and NFGS training (4-12 April). Returning to Yokosuka on 17 April, she spent the next month in upkeep and tender availability with *Cape Cod* (AD-43). As she had done in prior years, she briefly left

her homeport to participate in Shimoda's Black Fleet Festival (15-19 May), returning on 22 May for another eleven days in port.

Francis Hammond got underway again on 2 June 1986 to begin operations in the northern Sea of Japan. Such a venture was not without risk, as the sea's northern waters lapped against the southeastern shores of the U.S.S.R., making it both the perfect area for surveillance and potentially hostile encounters. *Francis Hammond* found that out quickly enough at 1355 on 4 June, when a Soviet Beriev *Chayka* Be-12 (NATO codename: *Mail*) made two passes close aboard the ship while she was operating off the coast of Primorsky Krai. This was followed by three more passes at 1531, none of which deterred the U.S. vessel from getting even closer to the Soviet coastline. In response, a Sukhoi Su-15 (*Flagon*) passed close aboard multiple times over the course of an hour. All of this led Cmdr. Paul H. Donaldson to set Condition Readiness at level III and order the guns manned.

By the next morning, *Francis Hammond* was operating in proximity to Soviet territorial waters. Such risks were not taken in vain, however, as she soon sighted a Soviet battle group comprised of aircraft carrier *Minsk* and destroyers *Admiral Spiridanov* and *Osmotritelnyy*. They greeted her by sending a Kamov Ka-25K (NATO codename: *Hormone-B*) to fly roughly 300 feet overhead. *Francis Hammond* returned the greeting by sending out her own helo and releasing a weather balloon at 0930. Thus, began the delicate ritual of surveillance and counter-surveillance, with the U.S. vessel shadowing her Soviet prey and them reciprocating such attention by having two Ilyushin *Dolphin* Il-38 (NATO codename: *May*) maritime patrol aircraft fly in overhead at 0200 on 6 June 1986. During that same day, the ships transited from the Sea of Japan to the Sea of Okhotsk where *Francis Hammond* observed her Soviet counterparts conducting exercises, including *Admiral Spiridanov* firing off three of her rockets.

The chase continued for another day before *Francis Hammond* set a course for the northern Pacific. On 8 June 1986, she encountered heavy fog, limiting visibility to a mere 500 feet. This was particularly problematic, as her course that day would take her through the Kuriles, an archipelago that surrounds the Sea of Okhotsk and ranges from the Soviet Kamchatka Peninsula to the Japanese island of Hokkaido. Although it is quite possible that *Francis Hammond* still managed to transit the archipelago without directly infringing upon Soviet territorial waters, the Soviets may have still regarded any attempt to do so as a violation of their territory. Consequently, the ship received a warning from a Soviet guided missile cruiser (possibly *Admiral Spiridanov*) at 1130 to leave U.S.S.R. territorial waters while en route to the north Pacific. This would not, however, be the final time that she provoked the Soviets' ire, as four days later (12 June), after returning to the Sea of Okhotsk to shadow *Minsk's* battle group, she received a similar warning. As if to emphasize their displeasure, a Soviet Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-23 (NATO codename: *Flogger*) flew over the ship at 3,500 yards starboard side. Undeterred, the ship continued to shadow the battle group and observed *Minsk* firing her RBU-6000 Smerch-2 rocket launcher at 1442. The next day, both the U.S. vessel and the Soviet battle group returned to the Sea of Japan.

It must be understood that the above actions were not particularly unusual during the Cold War. On both sides, ships aggressively attempted to gather as much intelligence as possible on their opposition, while at the same time, interfering with any and all counter-surveillance attempts. Recognizing that such situations were ripe for accidents and other misunderstandings that could potentially provoke hostilities, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. met in 1972 and established the Incidents at Sea (INCSEA) agreement, a bilateral agreement between the two powers intended to reduce the potential for conflict by establishing a number

of agreed upon rules governing interactions between ships. This included not interfering with ship formations, requiring surveillance ships to maintain a safe distance, not doing anything to embarrass or endanger the vessels under surveillance, not simulating attacks against other ships, and using an agreed set of signals to communicate with each other. To ensure compliance, both sides met annually in alternately Washington, D.C. or Moscow, U.S.S.R. to review individual incidents and hash out other outstanding issues. By and large, the agreement proved quite successful in its aims.

This began to change in the 1980s, however, with the breakdown of détente and the [President Ronald] Reagan Administration's more aggressive stance towards the U.S.S.R. During this time, U.S. ships made an increasing number of forays and into Soviet-claimed waters in order to assert freedom of navigation and the right of innocent passage. While it is unknown if *Francis Hammond* actually violated Soviet territorial waters during her transit through the Kuriles, nonetheless, the Soviets vigorously protested the incident during the 14th Annual INCSEA Meeting in Moscow.

Although *Francis Hammond's* patrol of the northern Pacific created some diplomatic difficulties for the U.S., the mission itself was considered a major success. In addition to conducting surveillance of the *Minsk* battle group, the frigate also briefly managed to track and photograph an *Akula*-class submarine (in all likelihood, *Akula* herself) at some indeterminate point during her patrol. As the newest class of Soviet submarine, only one of these had been commissioned by this point, limiting intelligence-gathering opportunities (another submarine in the class, *Delfin*, had been launched but was still over a year away from commissioning). Moreover, in contrast to their relatively noisy predecessors, the *Akula*-class was designed to be almost as stealthy (if not more so) as the U.S.'s own *Los Angeles*-class subs, making them much more difficult to track. That *Francis Hammond* was able to do so and even photograph her was a rather remarkable achievement.

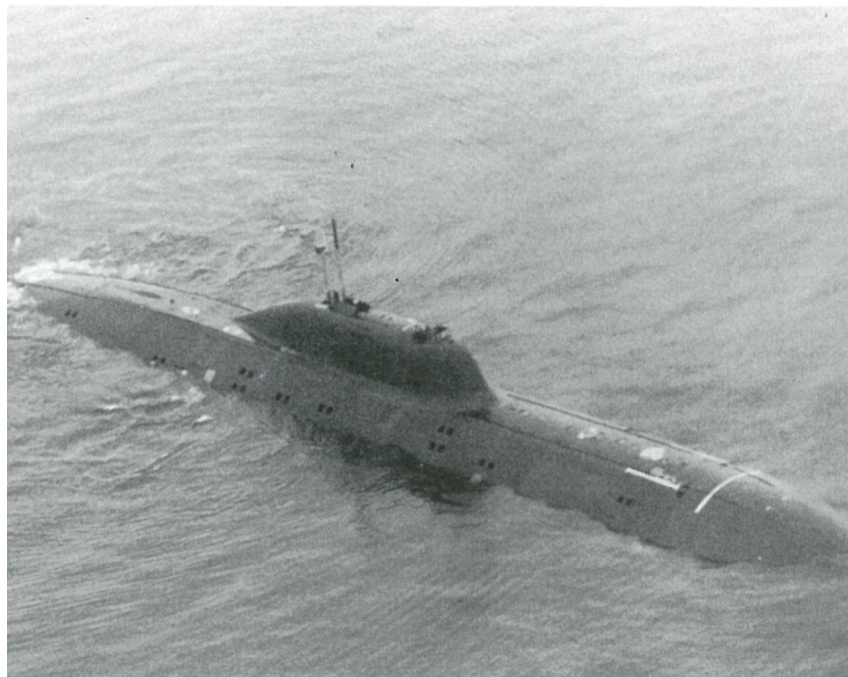


Photo of the Akula-class submarine taken during Francis Hammond's surveillance operations in the northeastern Pacific in June 1986.

This would not be *Francis Hammond's* last patrol of the northern Pacific that year, however, for after a brief visit to Pusan (29 June-3 July 1986), she returned to Yokosuka to spend 12 days in port (5-16 July). From there, she sailed in company with *Knox* and *Towers* (DDG-9) to Kure, Japan (18-21 June) in preparation for a joint exercise in the North Pacific with Japanese ASW destroyers *Makigumo* (DDK.114) and *Yamagume* (DDK.113). The ship then returned to Yokosuka for nearly two-and-a-half weeks (25 July-10 August) before getting back underway for another round of surveillance in the vicinity of the Kuriles. Whereas her prior patrol had generated a rather stern response from the Soviets, both militarily and diplomatically, this time, she only encountered a *Stenka*-class patrol boat (15 August) and a *Chayka* flying close aboard port (16 August).

Upon completion of her patrol, *Francis Hammond* moored at Yokosuka briefly (18 August 1986) and then cruised to Subic Bay (22-24 August). She was not there long before she was back out to sea, conducting operations in the South China Sea with *Towers*, *Knox*, *Navasota*, and the Australian ships *Hobart* (D.39), *Derwent* (DE.49), and *Paramatta* (DE.46) (24-28 August). After another period in Subic Bay (28 August-3 September), she visited Cheju-Do [Jeju Island], South Korea (7-11 September) and then returned to Yokosuka for over a month of upkeep (13 September-23 October).

At the end of October, *Francis Hammond* briefly departed her homeport to conduct ASW operations (23-25 October 1986). She left Yokosuka again on 26 October to participate in a joint ASWEx involving ships from both the U.S. and Japanese navies. From there, she spent the next month conducting port visits around the Sea of Japan and the South China Sea including Ominato, Japan (31 October-3 November), Pusan (5-13 November), Subic Bay (19 November), Manila (20-25 November), and, finally, Hong Kong (28 November-2 December). She finally arrived back in Yokosuka on 10 December, leaving for only a few days to conduct ASW operations before ending the year in upkeep (20 December 1986-8 January 1987).



In addition to being adept at keeping an eye on Soviet ships, *Francis Hammond's* crew also proved generous in using both their time and money to aid worthy causes. After successfully raising ten times the ship's number for the Navy Relief Fund, they were granted temporary permission to change the ship's identification number to "\$10,670."

Francis Hammond got underway on 9 January 1987 for battle group operations in the South China Sea and the Philippine Sea. While serving plane guard duty for *Midway*, she suffered a boiler casualty on 18 January which forced her to spend two days in Subic Bay for repairs. The rest of her patrol proceeded without incident, and by 25 January, she was back in Subic

Bay for two weeks of repairs and inspections (25 January-8 February). She then returned to Yokosuka, where she spent the next month in port (13 February-13 March).

Despite the difficulties she had encountered the previous year, fleet command had no hesitation about sending *Francis Hammond* on yet another surveillance mission, this time near the major Soviet port of Vladivostok. While on patrol, she served as the early warning platform for exercise *Team Spirit '87* and also observed the Soviet battlecruiser *Frunze*. After enduring sub-zero temperatures for over two and a half weeks (13-30 March), she finally got underway for Pusan for some much need upkeep and liberty for her crew (7-19 April). She then returned to Yokosuka, where she underwent further upkeep and inspections over the course of the next month (21 April-27 May), including the installation of a WQC-6 Underwater Communication Device which would allow her to communicate with submarines.

Once all upkeep was complete, *Francis Hammond* cruised to Chinhae for a week of exercises with the Republic of Korea Navy (1-7 June 1987), including a midshipman exchange cruise, an opposed UnRep, and an air gunnery exercise. She then sailed to Pusan (8-12 June) and from there, to Kagoshima, Japan for a goodwill visit (15-19 June). After arriving back at Yokosuka on 21 June and making all due preparations, the ship commenced a nearly two-month SRA (29 June-20 August) followed by a month of inspections in and around Yokosuka. It was not until 17 September that she got underway, steaming with *Midway* to participated in *AnnualEx 62G* (17-28 September). When she returned to Yokosuka, she embarked HSL-33 Det. 4 and began preparations for her upcoming deployment.

Francis Hammond sailed from Yokosuka on 9 November 1987. After cruising to Subic Bay to onload ammunition and conduct one final NFGS at the Tabones Range (14-19 November), she got underway for the North Arabian Sea. Save for a very brief stop at Colombo on 27 November, she maintained a direct course and ultimately, rendezvoused with her battle group on 2 December. While they were in company together, the frigate conducted multiple UnReps with ammunition ship USNS *Kilauea* (T-AE-26) (9, 16, 23 December), USNS *Mispiration* (T-AO-105) (10, 16, 24 December), and *Cimarron* (AO-177) (23 December), a surface gunnery exercise with *Iowa* (BB-61), *Ticonderoga* (CG-47), *Sterett* (CG-31), *Horne* (CG-30), and *Knox* (21 December), a towing exercise with *Deyo* (DD-989) (9 December), and had the honor of hosting Chief of Chaplains Rear Adm. John R. McNamara on board (22-23 December). The crew was even more excited for their next group of visitors, the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders (4 January 1988).



Members of the Midway Battle Group steam alongside each other while on deployment in the Indian Ocean. (From L to R) Kirk, Francis Hammond, Lockwood, Knox, Towers. (DIMOC No. DN-ST-92-04059)

For most of the next month, *Francis Hammond* operated off the coast of Oman, riding “shotgun” (providing anti-air protection) for *Cape Cod*. The Iran-Iraq had only intensified in the time since her last deployment to the gulf, with the Iranian forces even going so far as to mine international waters and attack vessels sailing through the Strait of Hormuz, compelling the U.S. to engage in reflagging Kuwait oil tankers and destroying an Iranian-controlled oil platform in retaliation for a missile attack on Kuwait. The U.S. would eventually launch another attack on a group of Iranian oil platforms (Operation *Praying Mantis*) on 18 April 1988 after *Samuel B. Roberts* (FFG-58) struck an Iranian mine.

For her part, *Francis Hammond* saw no action while on deployment, but nevertheless, remained on a high state of alert. Aside from a brief visit to Karachi, Pakistan (14-18 January 1988), she spent nearly all of her time in company with *Cape Cod* and even participated in anti-terrorist training exercises (22-23 January). At the end of her deployment, she sailed to Colombo (11-15 February) and then on to Phuket (20-26 February). While anchored in the latter, some of the crew volunteered their time to rebuilding and repairing local school houses.

Francis Hammond did not immediately return to Yokosuka upon transiting the Malacca Strait. Instead, she set a course for Subic Bay to prepare for *Team Spirit '88*, a joint amphibious exercise with South Korea involving nearly 70,000 U.S. troops and 140,000 South Korean soldiers. Arriving at Subic Bay on 3 March 1988, she embarked HSL Det. 33 (*Seasnake 14*) and a Tactical Air Control Center (TACC) detachment to conduct special operations. Getting underway on 14 March, she rendezvoused with the amphibious task force off the Okinawa coast on 17 March and sailed to Pusan, arriving on 20 March. Four days later, she was back at sea to perform “gate guard” duties in the Sea of Japan for the next 12 days (23 March-4 April). The frigate subsequently made port at Sasebo on 6 April to conduct a cross-deck transfer of both the TACC detachment and HSL Det. 33 to *Kirk*. With her participation in the exercise now at an end, she cruised to Yokosuka, arriving on 9 April.

Save for brief visits to Chinhai (18-25 May 1988) and Hong Kong (2-7 July), *Francis*

Hammond largely spent the next three months in Yokosuka undergoing inspections, (most notably, her InSurv [6-9 June]) and preparing for her upcoming change of homeport to Long Beach. This would be her first time back in U.S. coastal waters since her forward deployment began 13 years ago. Getting underway on 3 August, she sailed to Pearl Harbor in company with *Kirk*, conducting a joint gunnery exercise en route. The frigate spent a week in port (12-18 August) and then set a course of Long Beach to make her triumphant return to U.S. shores. Welcomed home by family, friends, and ComDesRon 9 on 25 August, *Francis Hammond* spent the next month in port, both to give her crew time to readjust to life back in the U.S. and to undertake a period of intermediate maintenance activity (IMA) (6-23 September). She then left port on 26 September to conduct her first southern California operations and to visit San Francisco (2-3 October). These would be the only local operations she would conduct for that year, as not long after her return to Long Beach (6 October) she soon commenced an SRA at Al Larson Boat Shop, during which work was performed on her 1A boiler, and her SPS-10 and LN-66 radars were replaced (17 October 1988-6 January 1989).

Upon completion of her upkeep, *Francis Hammond* got underway to participate in *ReadiEx 89* (9-11, 14-23 January 1989). For the next two months, she spent most of her time between Long Beach and San Diego (10-21 February) conducting drills, inspections, exams, and even a *TorpEx* (24 February). On 17 April, she steamed to Nanoose, participating in joint U.S.-Canadian operations en route (17-21 April). After three days in port (21-24 April), she sailed to Esquimalt (25-27 April) and then to Eureka, Calif. (29 April-4 May). Wherever she went, she served as a visit ship, hosting numerous local visitors hoping to get an up-close look at her. She finally returned to Long Beach on 6 May to commence another period of inspections, most notably, her operational propulsion plant recertification exam (OPPRE) (23-26 May). Unfortunately, she failed the exam, requiring her to undergo it again two months later (16-17 August).

In the interim, *Francis Hammond* conducted a *TorpEx* with *Haddock* (SSN-621) and *Portsmouth* (SSN-707) (30 May-2 June) and then sailed to San Diego to commence a period of Interim Refresher Training (3-16 June). Once this was completed, she participated in a *CompTUEx* (19-28 June) and conducted an UnRep with replenishment oiler *Wichita* (AOR-1) (20 June). She then cruised to Capitola, Calif., for a six-day port visit (30 June-5 July). Despite being anchored in Monterey Bay and the occasional periods of high seas, she still received an estimated 6,000 visitors before departing for Long Beach. When the frigate arrived back in her home port, more visitors embarked for a dependent's cruise (6 July). She then entered a period of upkeep (7-25 July) before getting back underway for a *ReadiEx* (25 July-10 August) and her OPPRE (16-17 August), which she finally passed.

With all of her inspections passed, *Francis Hammond* got underway for the north Pacific with HSL-33 Det. 1 embarked to participate in *PacEx 89*. Involving U.S., Canadian, South Korean, and Japanese ships, this was, at the time, one of the largest naval exercises ever conducted in the Pacific post-WWII. En route, *Francis Hammond* participated in numerous evolutions, including an explosive ordnance disposal exercise involving an AM-39 *Exocet* warhead. Her helo also had to make an emergency flight to Amchitka Island to procure repair parts for an aircraft embarked on another frigate. Once she had arrive at the rendezvous point on 2 October, the first phase of the *PacEx*, the *AnnualEx*, began. Among the many exercises the ship participated in, the most noteworthy was a mass casualty exercise on 6 October, which involved assisting and evacuating 30 simulated casualties with the help of a Japanese rescue seaplane. All of this led into Operation *Valiant Blitz*, a simulated amphibious landing north of

Pohang involving U.S. and Republic of Korea underwater demolition (UDT) and SEAL teams for which *Francis Hammond* provided NGFS (16-20 October). Upon successful completion of this, she visit Pusan for four days (21-24 October) and then sailed to Long Beach (9 November), where she began preparations for her upcoming SRA. Just prior to entering dry dock, she made one final visit to San Francisco (4 December) and then offloaded ammunition at Concord Naval Weapons Station, Concord, Calif. (7-8 December).

Francis Hammond spent nearly four months in dry dock (12 December 1989-2 April 1990) and another moored in Long Beach undergoing numerous evaluations ranging from a communication readiness assessment team inspection (20 April) to an industrial hygiene survey (23-24 April). All of this was preparation for her upcoming deployment to the eastern Pacific to conduct law enforcement operations. After participating in an NGFS exercise (*FirEx II*) and conducting other operations off southern California (7-11 May), she stopped in San Diego to embark a law enforcement team on 11 May and then got underway for three weeks of patrolling in search of vessels carrying drugs or other illicit cargo (11 May-25 May 1990). Although such operations might seem like a far cry from manning the firing line off the coast of Vietnam or shadowing Soviet battle group, they were increasingly a critical part of naval operations during this period, particularly as both as the influx of drugs into the U.S. swelled and the Cold War began to wind down. Consequently, many of the navy's frigates began to spend just as much time operating off the coasts of South and Central America as they did in Europe and Asia.

Upon completion of her law enforcement operations, *Francis Hammond* returned to Long Beach for brief respite and a Combat Systems Training Review (29-1 June 1990). She then departed for exercise *Behavior Criterion 90* (3-11 June) and cruised northwards for port visits to Astoria, Ore. (6 June) and Portland, for the annual Rose Festival (7-11 June). From there, she sailed even farther north to undertake CNO special project operations at Nuwes Range, Canada, and a port visit to Esquimalt (16-17 June). Returning to Long Beach on 21 June, the crew spent the next month occupied with inspections and training. The frigate eventually got underway again to conduct intermediate refresher training, during which she fired both her torpedoes and ASROC (23 July-10 August).

After spending the remainder of August and most of September 1990 undergoing a series of inspections, *Francis Hammond* departed Long Beach to participated in a series of exercises including *CompTUEx 90-3* (27 September-5 October), *FirEx II* (2 October), *ReadiEx 91-3A* (9-17 October) and *ReadiEx 91-3B* (9-13 November), and a Battle Group Evaluation (14-16 November). All of this was undertaken in preparation for her deployment to the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean to participate in Operation *Desert Shield*. Getting underway on 8 December as part of *Ranger* (CV-61)'s battle group, she set a course for Subic Bay, arriving 28 December. From there, she made port visits to Singapore (7-8 January) and Chittagong, Bangladesh (13-15 January), the latter of which was part of a broader diplomatic mission to shore up support for coalition efforts to protect Saudi Arabia from the possibility of Iraqi invasion. She then crossed the Indian Ocean, during which the U.N.-imposed deadline of 15 January for Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait passed, leading the U.S. and a number of other member nations to subsequently declare war on Iraq. Operation *Desert Shield* now morphed into *Desert Storm*, with the goal no longer just to protect Saudi Arabia, but to drive the Iraqi military from Kuwait.

Once she arrived in the North Arabian Sea, *Francis Hammond* undertook numerous duties over the next three months including providing air and surface surveillance for carrier operations off the coast of Iran, escorting oilers and ammunition vessels to the Persian Gulf

so they could replenish ships on the frontline, monitoring all merchant traffic in and out of the Gulf of Oman in order to prevent any material aid from being sent to Iraq, and even utilizing her helicopter to monitor the movement of an oil slick. In addition, she also led a multinational group in rescuing 30 crew members from the Sri Lankan merchant vessel *Mercs Horana* in the Arabian Gulf (29-30 March 1991), earning a Meritorious Unit Commendation.

Following a week of upkeep at Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) (1-7 April 1991), *Francis Hammond* undertook one last round of operations in the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, before conducting a turnover with *Nimitz* (CVN-68) and her battle group on 18 April. Steaming back across the Indian Ocean and through the South China Sea, she visited Pattaya Beach (30 April-3 May), Hong Kong (8-12 May), and Subic Bay (15-18 May) while en route to Pearl Harbor (31 May). She finally arrived back in Long Beach on 8 June.

Francis Hammond largely spent the rest of 1991 in port preparing for inspections such as her OPPE (21-25 October) and InSurv (2-6 December), though she did make the occasional foray into local waters to conduct exercise such as providing NGFS spotter services for the firing range at San Clemente Island (28 August) or participating in Exercise *Kernel Usher 92-1* (18-21 November). After spending nearly a month in holiday upkeep and POM (7 December 1991-2 January 1992), she was finally ready to deploy to the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific for counter-narcotics operations. With a Coast Guard law enforcement detachment embarked on board, she got underway on 3 January and transited the Panama Canal on 17 January after a brief stop in Rodman, Panama, the prior night.

This was the first time in *Francis Hammond's* history that she had operated in the Atlantic Ocean, and for the next month, she would alternate between counter-narcotics operations and making ports visits to Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, and Georgetown, Grand Cayman, British West Indies. In between her two port visits, she utilized her embarked helo to track down *Maria B*, a suspected drug smuggling vessel, which she eventually found was carrying nine tons of marijuana. Securing the illicit cargo and the smugglers, the frigate turned both them and the ship over to *Nicholas* for delivery to the DEA at Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The rest of *Francis Hammond's* deployment proved largely uneventful. Transiting the Panama Canal on 17 February 1992, she briefly sailed southward to conduct equatorial patrols before setting course for Long Beach. Although she herself did not conduct any more boardings, she did intercept radio communications from a suspected drug smuggling ship, which she relayed to her task force command, resulting in the seizure of the vessel and the cocaine in her cargo hold. En route, she also served as Force Over the Horizon Track Coordinator for her group, an unusual task for a ship not equipped with a Naval Tactical Data System (NTDS).

Francis Hammond arrived back at Long Beach on 27 February 1992. There was little time to relax, however, as the ship was scheduled to begin her three-month decommissioning availability at the end of March. Although the *Knox*-class frigates had been designed for 30 years of service, the end of the Cold War, coupled with the desire for more technologically advanced ships, ultimately led all of them to be decommissioned well before then.

To that end, *Francis Hammond* got underway one last time on 17 March 1992, making two brief visits to Treasure Island, San Francisco (19, 21-22 March), offloading her ammunition at Concord Naval Station (20 March), and conducting a final Tiger Cruise on her journey back to Long Beach (23-24 March). Shortly after arriving back in her home port, she began her decommissioning availability (30 March).

Decommissioned on 2 July 1992 *Francis Hammond* was stricken from the Naval Vessel Register on 1 January 1995.

On 31 March 2003, she was disposed of by scrapping.

During her nearly 22 years of service in the U.S. Navy, she received the Vietnam Service Medal, a Combat Action Ribbon, five Humanitarian Service Medals, a Navy Expeditionary Medal (Iran/Indian Ocean), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (Persian Gulf), two Meritorious Unit Commendations, the Southwest Asia Service Medal (*Desert Storm*), four Navy "E" Ribbons, a Navy Unit Commendation (*Desert Storm*), and a Joint Meritorious Unit Award.

Commanding Officers	Date Assumed Command
Cmdr. John E. Elmore	25 July 1970
Cmdr. Peter J. Doerr	16 March 1972
Cmdr. Richard E. Ong	14 September 1973
Cmdr. John Dachos	17 November 1975
Cmdr. James E. Auer	25 February 1978
Lt. Cmdr. James R. Kott	11 January 1979
Cmdr. Harris Sperling	12 February 1979
Cmdr. Vance H. Morrison	12 February 1981
Cmdr. Ralph E. Zunich	8 February 1983
Cmdr. Paul H. Donaldson	13 April 1985
Cmdr. David J. Klich	30 July 1987
Cmdr. Douglas A. Smartt	1 September 1989
Cmdr. Charles G. Cooper III	6 September 1991

Martin R. Waldman, Ph.D.
29 May 2018

Further Reading

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