

U. S. S. GRIDLEY (DLG-21)
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

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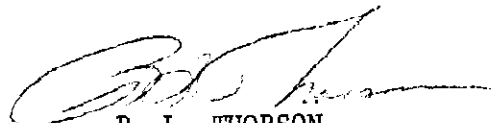
From: Commanding Officer, USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21)
To: Director of Naval History, Washington Navy Yard, **17 FEB 1971**
Washington, D.C. (OP-09B9) 20390

Subj: Command Histories

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12A

Encl: (1) Chronology of Events
(2) Narrative Report
(3) USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21) Commissioning Pamphlet
(4) Phase III Tests and Exercises
(5) Picture of Captain R. L. Thorson, Commanding Officer,
USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21)
(6) Biography of Captain R. L. Thorson, Commanding Officer,
USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21)
(7) Picture of USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21)
(8) GRIDLEYGRAMS (5)
(9) Ship's Roster dated 1 December 1970

1. Enclosures (1) through (9) are forwarded herewith in compliance with reference (a).



R. L. THORSON

Copy to:
Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05D2)
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Ship's History

Part I - Chronology of Events

- 9 Jan 70 Delivery of USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21) to the Navy
- 17 Jan 70 Commissioned following AAW Modernization at Bath Iron Works, Bath Maine. R. L. Thorson, Capt., USN, assumed command.
- 25 Jan 70 Commenced 20 week Phase III of DLG 16 Class AAW Modernization, Special test and check out period.
- 8 Feb 70 Transited Panama Canal.
- 16 Feb 70 Arrived at home port, Long Beach, California.
- 9-13 Mar 70 Exercises with Fleet Training Group, San Diego, in southern California Operating Area.
- 24-26 Mar 70 Prosecuted unidentified submarine contact.
- 15 April 70 USS GRIDLEY'S status changed from "In Commission, Special" to "In Commission" by CNO.
- 13-14 May 70 ASW operations in Southern California Operating Areas with USS MEDREGAL (SS-480)
- 14 May 70 Underway, independently, for Seattle, Washington.
- 18-19 May 70 Remained in Seattle for Weapons Systems Alignment Tests.
- 20 May 70 Underway for, and at, Dabob Bay on Hood Canal.
- 21 May 70 Underway for Nanoose Test Range in British Columbia.
- 22 May 70 ASROC and Torpedo firings in Nanoose Bay, then underway for Long Beach.
- 4-9 Jun 70 Independent steaming and test firings of Terrier systems at the Pacific Missile Range on the Fifth, Eighth, and Ninth. Eleven missiles fired.
- 13 Jun 70 Completed 20 Week Phase III of DLG 16 Class AAW Modernization, special Test and Check out Period.
- 29 Jun 70 Commenced Post Shake down Availability phase of AAW Modernization in Long Beach, Naval Shipyard.
- 27 Jul 70 Entered Dry Dock.
- 26 Aug 70 Completed Dry Docking.

4 Oct 70 Officially Completed Post Shake down Availability at 2400 and USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21) became a unit of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

6-7 Oct 70 Underwent dockside FORACS checks at Long Beach.

8 Oct 70 Complete underway FORACS check at San Clemente Island.

12-23 Oct 70 Underwent Interim Refresher Training at San Diego with Fleet Training Group, San Diego. Completed training and exercises with a grade of satisfactory.

9 Nov 70 Loaded weapons at Seal Beach.

12-13 Nov 70 At Pacific Missile Range for Test Firings, ASW and Helo Operations.

16 Nov 70 Completed weapons loading at Seal Beach.

20 Nov 70 Underway for Pearl Harbor in company with USS REEVES (DLG-24). Commencement of WESTPAC deployment.

25 Nov 70 Arrived Pearl Harbor.

27 Nov 70 Departed Hawaii, enroute to Guam.

3 Dec 70 Inchopped to Seventh Fleet.

5 Dec 70 Arrived at Guam for a fuel seop prior to getting underway for Subic Bay.

9 Dec 70 Arrived at Subic Bay.

12 Dec 70 Underway from Subic Bay for Gulf of Tonkin Operation.

14 Dec 70 Entered Hostile Fire Zone.

15 Dec 70 Assumed CTU 77.0.1 (North SAR) responsibilities from USS WAINWRIGHT (DLG-28) following unrep with USS WICHITA (AOR-1).

17 Dec 70 Departed NSAR to join TG 77.6 and departed Hostile Fire Zone.

19 Dec 70 Arrived in Subic Bay in company with USS RANGER (CVA-61)

26 Dec 70 Departed Subic Bay enroute in Yankee Station with TG 77.6.

27 Dec 70 Entered Hostile Fire Zone.

28 Dec 70 Again assumed responsibilities of CTU 77.0.1 with escort services provided by USS CHANDLER (DD-717). Remained on station for remainder of calendar year.

On 9 January 1970, GRIDLEY hull number DLG-21, was delivered to Commandant First Naval District, acting on behalf of the United States Navy, by Bath Iron Works Corporation, Bath, Maine. This day also marked the uniting of the two pre-commissioning details into one unit. The 7 officers and 240 enlisted men who had been undergoing formal training at Fleet Training Center, Norfolk, Virginia flew to Bath, Maine, and joined the 14 officers and 148 enlisted men who had monitored the final stages of GRIDLEY's modernization. Between 9 January and the commissioning date of 17 January, this newly formed crew prepared to take their new ship through an arduous series of tests and exercises to determine the fitness of their ship and themselves. Additionally they cleaned and prepared the ship for commissioning while loading her with all of the consumables that it takes to operate a modern warship. On 17 January 1970 USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21) was commissioned at Bath Iron Works. The ship was accepted for the U.S. Navy by RADM J. N. Shaffer, USN, who also commissioned the ship. Captain R. L. Thorson assumed command. Enclosure (3) is the commissioning brochure.

Upon completion of final preparations for returning to sea and the commencement of the Phase III Testing period of the DLG-16 Class Modernization Program, the ship and its newly assembled crew departed Maine for Norfolk, Virginia, on 23 January.

The Phase III Testing Period prescribed in the Modernization Program provided for continuous outside technical assistance while the crew groomed the four newly acquired AN/SPG 55B radars, Naval Tactical Data System, and AN/SFS-48 radar and melded them into a completed combat system. Simultaneously the crew worked its way from basic exercises to the sophisticated exercises that denote a combat ready team of men and equipment. One important element of Phase III was the Special Test and Checkout Period (STCP) which provided the ship with the services of Univac, Sperry, Librascope, Gilfillan, and General Dynamics under the coordination of LCDR Fred Katz, representing NAVSHIPS. Enclosure (4) is a detailed list of the tests and exercises undertaken during the entirety of Phase III.

Having steamed independently for six days after leaving Norfolk, the ship transited the Panama Canal on 8 February and moored at the Naval Station at Rodman in the Canal Zone. On 9 February GRIDLEY got underway and proceeded north to California. Throughout the passage the crew, as before, was drilled and trained in an attempt to more fully prepare them for the operation of the ship.

On 16 February GRIDLEY arrived in Long Beach for a period of local operations and upkeep that ended on 18 May. The time was made notable by several events. Fleet Training Group, San Diego, provided an assist visit to the ship in San Diego from 9 to 13 March. During the visit, various coordinated exercises were held in the Southern California Operating areas. From 24 to 26 March the Pacific Fleet's newest DLG participated in the prosecution of an unidentified submarine contact. For the period of 14 to 16 April GRIDLEY provided submarine target vessel services for four conventional submarines, the HARDER (SS-568), VOLADOR (SS-490), REQUIN (SS-481), and POMFRET (SS-391). The submarine force repaid this assistance by providing the USS MEDREGAL (SS-480) for anti-submarine operations off the coast of Southern California on May 13 and 14. In these two exercises three torpedoes and one ASROC were expended.

Following this, GRIDLEY steamed north to Seattle, Washington to undergo a weapons systems alignment check. These tests took place on 18 and 19 May. Following the completion of this evolution the ship got underway for operations in Dabob Bay on Hood Canal. After spending the night moored at the Naval Ammunition Depot, Bangor, the ship got underway for British Columbia to participate in ASROC and torpedo firings at the Nanoose Test Range. On 22 May two torpedoes and two ASROC firings were made. Following these firings the ship headed back for California, arriving in Long Beach on May 25 for a short

in-port period.

A weapons load was taken on at Seal Beach on 3 June prior to engaging in missile firings at the Pacific Missile Range on 5, 8 and 9 June. On those three dates a total of eleven missiles were fired. GRIDLEY then returned to Long Beach for restricted availability and the post shake down availability phase (PSA) of her AAW Modernization. This long period of shipyard work provided little time for operating at sea; however, the ship did undergo a full power run on June 15 and several other underway periods as part of final contract trials and a four day INSURV Inspection that commenced on 15 June. From 27 July to 26 August GRIDLEY was in drydock for underwater hull repairs. PSA ended 4 October. Local operations continued through September with one major shipboard event being the Annual Supply Inspection on 30 September. The Supply Department received a grade of 90.68 for a rating of excellent.

On October 6 and 7 a dockside FORACS check was made in Long Beach prior to making a final, underway, FORACS test off San Clemente Island on 8 October. 9 to 11 October were spent in San Diego undergoing a Training and Readiness Evaluation prior to the commencement of Interim Refresher Training which extended from 12 to 23 October. The result of the strenuous, condensed, program was a satisfactory mark for the ship. GRIDLEY then returned to Long Beach where she remained in port until 8 November.

On 6 November the ship successfully completed a Terrier and ASROC Nuclear Weapons Acceptance Inspection. The ship again loaded weapons at Seal Beach on 9 November and then returned to her homeport for two days prior to departing for the Pacific Missile Range on 12 November. Following the firing of one missile in the surface mode on 13 November the ship went south to San Diego for anti-submarine operations and helicopter exercises. Following one landing the helicopter was unable to take off and the ship was forced to divert to San Diego to off load it. This having been done, the ship returned to Long Beach on 14 November. After being in port for one day the crew again got their ship underway and steamed to Seal Beach for a final weapons loading. The ship immediately returned to her homeport where she remained in port from 17 to 19 November in preparation for overseas movement.

On 20 November USS GRIDLEY departed Long Beach in company with the USS REEVES (DLG-24), another AAW Modernized DLG, enroute to Pearl Harbor on the first leg of her transit to the Gulf of Tonkin and to her role in the Seventh Fleet. 25 and 26 November were spent in port in Pearl Harbor giving the crew a chance to rest after what had been, for many, an uncomfortable passage. The ship got underway on November 27 for an independent passage to Guam. Inshp to the Seventh Fleet occurred on December 3 and Guam was reached, for a half-day visit and fuel stop, on 5 December. GRIDLEY arrived at Subic Bay in the Republic of the Philippines 9 December. During three busy days spent in Subic Bay, final preparations for sustained combat functions were made and a Naval Security Group Detachment was embarked. The ship departed Subic Bay on 12 December and on 14 December the ship entered the hostile fire zone.

On 15 December, following an underway replenishment from the USS WICHITA (AOR-1), GRIDLEY relieved the USS WAINWRIGHT (DLG-28), on station, as CTU 77.0.1, Gulf of Tonkin North Search and Rescue Picket. This assignment continued for two days before a holiday standown caused GRIDLEY to join TG 77.6 as an escort to USS RANGER (CVA-61) on December 17. Later that same day the hostile fire zone was left behind as the ships returned to Subic Bay. All 77.6 units remained in Subic Bay until 26 December when they departed for Yankee Station. On 27 December GRIDLEY again entered the hostile fire zone, and with her escort USS CHANDLER (DD-717) assumed North SAR Station for the remainder of the reporting period.

Training was the one primary job of GRIDLEY and her crew in 1970. Her ordnance expenditures give about as true a picture of the level of activity as any indicator. 12 Terrier missiles, 6 torpedoes, 5 ASROCs and 781 rounds of 3 inch ammunition were expended in slightly less than twelve months of commissioned service.

HISTORY OF USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21)

USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21) third man-of-war named for Captain Charles W. Gridley, has a great reputation to uphold. The name Gridley is noted for Captain Gridley's honor, bravery, and devotion to duty and for the distinguished records of two previous ships which bore the name.

The first GRIDLEY (DD-92), a Torpedo Boat Destroyer, was commissioned 8 March 1919. She displaced 1200 tons and had an overall length of 114 feet. She participated in the historic NC-4 Navy Seaplane trans-Atlantic flight, the first of its kind in May 1919, before being decommissioned in 1927.

The second GRIDLEY (DD-580), commissioned 24 June 1937, displaced 1725 and had an overall length of 191 feet. She saw action in many battles and incursions in the Pacific theater during World War II. For her part in the war she received a number of ribbons and 10 battle stars, one of which was awarded for the sinking of the Japanese submarine I-54. The ship was decommissioned in April 1946.

The present GRIDLEY (DLG-21) was commissioned 25 May 1963 at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington, and was assigned to the U. S. Pacific Fleet. In March 1964 GRIDLEY deployed to the Western Pacific as a unit of the U. S. Pacific Fleet and was part of Task Group 70.5 during the Gulf of Tonkin crisis in August of that year. She was awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal and the Navy Unit Commendation for service in support of successful air strikes counter-attack operations against North Vietnamese torpedo boats and supporting facilities.

As a unit of the U. S. Pacific Fleet GRIDLEY again deployed to the Western Pacific in 1965, 1966, and 1968 where she served in the South China Sea and Tonkin Gulf. While deployed to the U. S. Seventh Fleet she provided anti-air and anti-submarine protection, carrier escort services and search and rescue services. Duties while assigned to the U. S. First Fleet have included missile firings for test and evaluation, anti-submarine warfare and anti-air warfare exercises and various good will port visits.

In July 1968 GRIDLEY departed her homeport of Long Beach, California bound for Bath Iron Works Corporation, Bath, Maine, and decommissioning incident to undergoing an extensive anti-air warfare modernization conversion. This included installation of the latest developments in naval warfare. During her shipyard period GRIDLEY was fitted out with the Naval Tactical Data System (NTDS) which will provide rapid communications and information display to enable ship and force commanders to make decisions in countering hostile threats in today's high-speed warfare. Also installed were updated air search radar and Terrier missile fire control equipment as well as more powerful turbo generators to provide increased power for the new equipment.

GRIDLEY was commissioned 17 January 1970 at Bath, Maine, and reported to the U. S. Pacific Fleet 8 February where she took her place as one of the newest units of today's modern United States Navy. After an initial testing period and post shakedown availability at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard GRIDLEY reported for duty 5 October 1970 to Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet.

Biography of

CAPTAIN ROBERT L. THORSON, USN

Robert LeRoy THORSON was born in Yankton, South Dakota on December 15, 1925. He attended high schools in DeSmet and Brookings, South Dakota prior to entering the naval service on May 24, 1943. He attended the University of Minnesota in the Navy V-12 program and was subsequently commissioned as an Ensign February 20, 1946 at the same time as he received a degree of Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering from the University of Minnesota.

Following graduation and commissioning, Captain THORSON initially served a short time at the Naval Training Station, Newport, Rhode Island and then on board the light cruiser CLEVELAND. In August 1946, he reported on board the destroyer BORDELON and served on board for one year, initially in the Far East and subsequently in the Atlantic Fleet. From September 1947 to August 1949, he served on board the light aircraft carrier WRIGHT, and then was reassigned to the attack cargo ship ALGOL.

After a six month deployment with the SIXTH Fleet in the Mediterranean on board ALGOL, his ship was ordered from Norfolk, Virginia to the Far East in June 1950. During the Korean conflict on board ALGOL, he participated in the assaults at Inchon and Wonsan, the evacuations of Korean Ports, and other amphibious operations in support of United Nations Forces. Detached from ALGOL in September 1951, he served with the staff of the Chief of Naval Air Reserve Training, Glenview, Illinois, as officer in Charge, Personnel Accounting Machine Installation, until December 1954.

From January 1955 to January 1957, Captain THORSON was Operations Officer of the Long Beach based destroyer HARRY E. HUBBARD. After attending Salvage School at Bayonne, New Jersey, he assumed command of the fleet ocean Tug ABNAKI, homeported at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in April 1957.

Captain THORSON was awarded a degree of Bachelor of Communications Engineering after attending the U. S. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, from July 1958 to May 1960. He was then assigned as Executive Officer of the Pearl Harbor based destroyer RENSHAW for a year. In July 1961, he became Commanding Officer of the radar picket destroyer escort WILHOITE also homeported at Pearl Harbor. In July 1962, he became the personal aide and Flag Secretary for the Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet. During this tour which lasted until May 1965, he served for four consecutive Commanders in Chief of the Pacific Fleet (Admirals John H. SIDES, U.S.G. SHARP, T. H. MOORER and Roy L. JOHNSON).

Captain THORSON then commanded the San Diego based destroyer LYMAN K. SWENSON from July 1965 to March 1967. From April to July 1966, he had additional duty as Commander, Destroyer Division FIFTY THREE. He was

awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V" for outstanding services as a screen commander and Commanding Officer LYMAN K. SWENSON during operations against the enemy in Vietnam from September 1965 to February 1966. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for outstanding meritorious service as Commanding Officer, U. S. Naval Communication Station, Greece from May 1967 to August 1969. Captain THORSON was then ordered as Prospective Commanding Officer, USS GRIDLEY (DLG-21) and reported at Bath, Maine, in October 1969. He became Commanding Officer, USS GRIDLEY when the ship was placed in commission 17 January 1970.

His home of record is DeSmet, South Dakota.

He is married to the former Shirley BEDNER of Yankton, South Dakota. Captain and Mrs. THORSON have one son, James Robert, aged five.

Captain THORSON has been awarded the following decorations and campaign medals:

- Meritorious Service Medal
- Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V"
- American Theatre Campaign
- World War II Victory
- Navy Occupation Service
- China Service (extended)
- National Defense Service with star
- Korean Service with 4 engagement stars
- Vietnam Service with 2 engagement stars
- United Nations Korean Service
- Korean Presidential Unit Citation

July 1970