



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS CURTIS WILBUR (DDG 54)  
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From: Commanding Officer, USS CURTIS WILBUR (DDG 54)  
To: Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY FOR 2004

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12H

Encl: (1) Command Organization  
(2) Chronology 2004  
(3) Narrative History  
(4) Commanding Officer Biography  
(5) Change of Command Ceremony Pamphlet

1. Pursuant to reference (a), enclosures (1) through (5) comprise the 2004 calendar year history of USS CURTIS WILBUR (DDG 54).

*J. T. James III*  
J. T. JAMES III

Commodore Perez came aboard to witness the changing of CURTIS WILBUR's command from Commander A. J. Abramson to Command J. T. Lauer. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2004 in a ceremony rolling in the waves of the Sea of Japan the crew of CURTIS WILBUR welcomed a new Captain and said farewell to another.

The next stop for CURTIS WILBUR was a port visit in the other United States Navy base in Japan at Sasebo. Over the span of a week CURTIS WILBUR conducted some much needed repairs to its engineering plant as well as giving the crew some much needed time ashore following its time off Korea. Soon after, CURTIS WILBUR returned home to Yokosuka in late April to begin months of preparations to become the Navy's first active Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) ship.

For the next three months CURTIS WILBUR underwent extensive alterations to its communications and combat systems suites in preparation for the first BMD patrol. With the assistance of experts from Port Hueneme Naval Surface Warfare Division, Ship Repair Facility Yokosuka, and Center for Surface Combat Systems Yokosuka, CURTIS WILBUR was able to transform both its equipment and training to prepare for this vanguard deployment. CURTIS WILBUR sailors used their expertise to not only learn their new equipment and mission but to also expand upon it and establish doctrine and training for other BMD ships to follow.

In mid-July after months of strenuous installations and training CURTIS WILBUR put to sea to test its BMD equipment and theory and also to conduct its Destroyer Squadron 15 Mid-Cycle Assessment. With both evolutions passed and validated CURTIS WILBUR sailed south toward a groundbreaking and unprecedented port visit to Da Nang, Vietnam.

As only the second United States Navy ship to visit Vietnam in thirty years, CURTIS WILBUR sailors were more than aware as to the uniqueness of the port visit and the opportunities it offered. CURTIS WILBUR sailors made most out of their time conducting numerous site sightseeing and shopping tours. Several receptions and community projects helped to reawaken and strengthen ties that had not existed in Da Nang since the American departure in 1973. Through five miraculous days CURTIS WILBUR sailors had the experience of a lifetime opening new doorways for their country and themselves.

Following Da Nang, CURTIS WILBUR returned to Yokosuka for another two months of BMD preparations. Using much the same regimen as the early spring, CURTIS WILBUR continued with the extensive installations and training that was needed. The first ever BMD patrol began the last week of September as CURTIS WILBUR sailed north from Yokosuka bound for the Sea of Japan.

October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004 found CURTIS WILBUR on station and radiating its modified SPY-1D radar over North Korea in defense of the United States. Through two weeks of this proof of concept patrol CURTIS WILBUR avoided the swipes of both the BMD critics and two typhoons to provide the best possible coverage for this new mission.