

1983 was a somewhat busy year for Lawrence. A few months in to the new year, she steamed south for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for refresher training. The visit to GITMO ended up being about a two-month ordeal.

Lawrence then sailed up to Port Jefferson, New York for a “show the flag” visit over the July Fourth holiday. During the visit, the town was opened up to the Lawrence crew. Over a three-day period crew members provided in depth tours of the ship. Lines of people waited hours on end to tour the ship. In the end, tens of thousands of Long Islanders had toured the decks of Lawrence.

October brought about another deployment to the Persian Gulf during the time when Iran and Iraq were at war. In transit the ship made stops in the Azores and Rota, Spain. Lawrence then steamed through the Suez Canal and made her way into the Gulf. Once in the Gulf, Lawrence made a visit to Dubai of the United Arab Emirates. Lawrence’s mission was to keep the shipping lanes and the Straits of Hormuz open. During this time, Iran had threatened to close off shipping.

Daily Lawrence had to deal with small boats that were constantly trying to get near the ship. There was a good chance that many of these craft were loaded with explosives and had a goal of ramming the ship. Machine gun fire was often used to turn these boats away. Lawrence also had to deal with the Iranian P3 that tried daily to get as close to the ship as possible, violating the no fly zone the United States issued around her ships operating in the Gulf.