



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDING OFFICER  
USS ASHLAND (LSD 48)  
FPO AE 09564-1736

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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--- Unclassified upon removal of enclosure (2)

From: Commanding Officer, USS ASHLAND (LSD 48)  
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard,  
Washington, DC 20374-0571

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Command History  
(2) Supporting Documentation (U) [IN CLASS FILE]  
(3) Press Releases  
(4) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet  
(5) Ship's Photo (3 each)  
(6) Commanding Officer's Biography  
(7) Commanding Officer's Photo  
(8) Commissioning Booklet

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (8) are forwarded.

  
D. W. KEITH

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## USS ASHLAND (LSD 48) COMMAND HISTORY

### 1. Command Composition and Organization:

a. Mission: Amphibious warfare; designed to transport Marines and their combat equipment to designated areas throughout the world, and then to launch and support assault landing craft and helicopters during amphibious operations ashore.

b. Organizational Structure: Assigned to Commander, Amphibious Squadron TEN, Little Creek, Virginia.

c. Commanding Officer: Commander D. W. Keith, USN (Capt Sel).

d. Homeport: Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Norfolk, Virginia.

### 2. Chronology:

KEEL LAID	04 APRIL 1988
LAUNCHING/CHRISTENING	11 NOVEMBER 1989
DELIVERED TO US NAVY	12 MARCH 1992
SUPSHIP BOSTON SHIP CHECK	17 - 30 MARCH 1992
SNAP II INITIALIZATION	23 MARCH - 10 APRIL 1992
ENGINEERING READINESS	
ASSESSMENT TEAM VISIT	25 - 27 MARCH 1992
SITE III INSTALLATION	13 - 17 APRIL 1992
DIESEL MOBILE ASSIST III	06 - 10 APRIL 1992
LIGHT OFF EXAMINATION	21 - 23 APRIL 1992
UMIDS INSTALLATION	21 - 25 APRIL 1992
CREW CERTIFICATION PHASE III	28 - 30 APRIL 1992
NAVY FOOD MANAGEMENT ASSIST	27 APRIL - 08 MAY 1992
FAST CRUISE	30 APRIL 1992
SHIP MOVEMENT FROM AVONDALE YARD	
TO BIENVILLE STREET WHARF	
NEW ORLEANS, LA	05 MAY 1992
COMMISSIONING	09 MAY 1992
OPCON CTU 040.4.5	09 MAY 1992
SHIP MOVEMENT TO TODD SHIPYARD	11 MAY 1992
FIRST LCAC RECOVERY (LCAC 46)	11 MAY 1992
DEPART TODD SHIPYARD	13 MAY 1992
OPCON CTG 040.10	13 MAY 1992
ANCHOR PANAMA CITY, FL	14 MAY 1992
RECOVER THREE LCAC'S	
(LCAC 34, 35, 36)	14 MAY 1992
PORT VISIT TAMPA, FL	15 - 18 MAY 1992
STEEL BEACH PICNIC	19 MAY 1992
CIWS / 25 MM / 50 CAL PACFIRE	21 MAY 1992
DEBARK LCAC'S	22 MAY 1992
ARRIVE HOMEPORT	
LITTLE CREEK, VA	22 MAY 1992

PSA PHASE I / CONCURRENT IMAV WITH SIMA LITTLE CREEK	26 MAY - 19 JUNE 1992
FIRST AWARDS CEREMONY	29 MAY 1992
CSSQT PHASE I	08 - 12 JUNE 1992
COMPHIBRON TEN SHIP OF THE WEEK	04 JUNE 1992
AVIATION ASSIST VISIT (UPGRADED TO AVIATION READINESS EVALUATION)	08 - 09 JUNE 1992
JOTS II INSTALLATION	08 - 19 JUNE 1992
POSTAL ASSIST VISIT	11 JUNE 1992
TRAINING READINESS EVALUATION	15 - 16 JUNE 1992
CBR INTERACTIVE VIDEO SUPPORT	16 - 19 JUNE 1992
EMBARK LANTRAMID II MIDSHIPMEN	21 JUNE - 23 JULY 1992
AMMO ONLOAD, YORKTOWN NAVAL WEAPONS STATION	22 JUNE 1992
UNDERWAY, VACAPES OPAREA	23 - 26 JUNE 1992
CIWS / 25 MM PACFIRE	24 JUNE 1992
FIRST HELICOPTER RECOVERY (ELVIS 07, HMM-261)	24 JUNE 1992
CSSQT PHASE II UNDERWAY, VACAPES OPAREA	29 JUNE - 02 JULY 1992
EMBARK 2 LCU / 2 LCM 8 BOATS (LCU 1657, 1662/LCM 8-9, 8-13)	
ASSAULT CRAFT UNIT TWO	29 JUNE 1992
CIWS TRACK-EX	29, 30 JUNE 1992
FIRST REFUEL AT SEA USS MONONGAHELA (AO 178)	30 JUNE 1992
CIWS GUNEX (A/C WITH TDU)	01 JULY 1992
SEA CROW ELECTRONIC WARFARE TRACK-EX	02 JULY 1992
OPCON CTU 040.4.5	02 JULY 1992
PORT VISIT NEW YORK CITY (NAVAL STATION STATEN ISLAND)	
SUPPORT OF OPSAIL 92	02 - 07 JULY 1992
RETURN TO HOMEPORT	07 JULY 1992
HOST LSD-1 REUNION VISIT	09 JULY 1992
DEPARTURE MATERIAL STATUS REVIEW	13 - 14 JULY 1992
OPCON CTG 043.2	16 JULY 1992
UNDERWAY ENROUTE GUANTANAMO BAY	16 - 19 JULY 1992
SAFETY STAND DOWN	17 - 18 JULY 1992
ARRIVE US NAVAL STATION GUANTANAMO BAY, CUBA	19 JULY 1992
SHAKEDOWN TRAINING	20 JULY - 25 AUGUST 1992
DEBARK LANTRAMID II MIDSHIPMEN	22 JULY 1992
EMBARK LANTRAMID III MIDSHIPMEN	23 JULY - 23 AUGUST 1992
WON GTMO WARRIOR COMPETITION	09 AUGUST 1992
REFUEL AT SEA USNS KANAWHA (T-AO 196)	15 AUGUST 1992
COMPLETED SHAKEDOWN TRAINING	25 AUGUST 1992
CONDUCTED MED MOOR, GTMO BAY	25 AUGUST 1992
ONLOADED JTF RETRO FROM HAITIAN REFUGEE OPS, GTMO	25 - 26 AUGUST 1992

DEPARTED GTMO ENRT PVST BAHAMAS	
EMBARKED LCU 1643	27 AUGUST 1992
ASSIGNED TO TASK FORCE 28 /	27 AUGUST - 07 SEPTEMBER 1992
JOINT TASK FORCE ANDREW	
ARRIVED VIC ELEUTHERA ISLAND	28 AUGUST 1992
CONDUCTED HURRICANE ANDREW RELIEF	
OPS, ELEUTHERA ISLAND, BAHAMAS	29 AUGUST - 03 SEPTEMBER 1992
DEPARTED ELEUTHERA, ARRIVED PORT	
OF MIAMI, FL	03 SEPTEMBER 1992
CONDUCTED HURRICANE RELIEF OPS	
MIAMI, FL	03 - 06 SEPTEMBER 1992
EMBARKED CPR-10 ERAT TEAM	04 SEPTEMBER 1992
HOSTED VISIT BY COMJTF ANDREW	
CHIEF OF STAFF, DEPUTY CDR	
AND J4	04 SEPTEMBER 1992
OFFLOADED JTF RETRO	04 SEPTEMBER 1992
HOSTED VISIT BY COMJTF ANDREW	06 SEPTEMBER 1992
ONLOADED PHIB SEABEE DET AND	
ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT FOR FURTHER	
TRANSFER TO ELEUTHERA ISLAND FOR	
SMALL ISLAND TRAINING AND	
HURRICANE RELIEF OPS	06 SEPTEMBER 1992
DEPARTED MIAMI, FL ENRT	
ELEUTHERA ISLAND	06 SEPTEMBER 1992
ANCHORED VIC ELEUTHERA ISLAND	
AND OFFLOADED SEABEE/EQPT	
VIA LCU 1643	07 SEPTEMBER 1992
DEPARTED ELEUTHERA ISLAND ENRT	
LITTLE CREEK VA	07 SEPTEMBER 1992
CONDUCTED ERAT	07 - 10 SEPTEMBER 1992
ARRIVED NAVPHIBASE LITTLE CREEK	
DEBARKED LCU 1643	10 SEPTEMBER 1992
IMAV WITH SIMA LCRK	10 - 28 SEPTEMBER 1992
HOSTED VISIT BY SHRINER GROUP	
FROM PENNSYLVANIA	11 SEPTEMBER 1992
FIRST BABY CHRISTENING ONBOARD	
[REDACTED]	
SON OF DC2 [REDACTED]	12 SEPTEMBER 1992
PROPELLER POLISH/HULL CLEANING	14 - 15 SEPTEMBER 1992
SLIDE GLOBE SCOPE INDICATOR /	
NAVMACS V2 INSTALLATION	14 SEPTEMBER 1992
HOSTED VISIT BY VETERANS OF	
LST-598	14 SEPTEMBER 1992
CONDUCTED ERAT	28 SEPTEMBER - 02 OCTOBER 1992
UNDERWAY VACAPES OPAREA	01 - 02 OCTOBER 1992
COMPHIBGRU TWO FLAGSHIP	07 - 13 OCTOBER 1992
UNDERWAY VACAPES OPAREA	14 - 16 OCTOBER 1992
UNDERWAY VACAPES OPAREA	
FOR PRE-OPPE PREPS	19 - 23 OCTOBER 1992
ANCHOR LITTLE CREEK ANCHORAGE	
FOR FINAL OPPE PREPS	26 OCTOBER 1992
UNDERWAY FOR OPPE	27 - 29 OCTOBER 1992

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF OPPE	29 OCTOBER 1992
COMPHIBRON SIX FLAGSHIP	02 - 16 NOVEMBER 1992
FINAL CONTRACT TRIALS	02 - 06 NOVEMBER 1992
UNDERWAY FCT/INSURV	03 NOVEMBER 1992
CMS INSPECTION	10 NOVEMBER 1992
HOSTED VISIT FROM CPG-2	12 NOVEMBER 1992
EMBARKED 248 MARINES FOR BASCOLEX TRAINING	15 NOVEMBER 1992
ANCHOR LYNNHAVEN ANCHORAGE FOR BASCOLEX TRAINING	16 - 17 NOVEMBER 1992
UNDERWAY VACAPES OPAREA FOR LCAC OPS/HELICOPTER OPS	18 - 20 NOVEMBER 1992
FIRST DEPENDENT'S CRUISE LITTLE CREEK TO YORKTOWN	23 NOVEMBER 1992
PRE-POST SHAKEDOWN AVAILABILITY AMMUNITION OFFLOAD, YORKTOWN	23 - 24 NOVEMBER 1992
POST-SHAKEDOWN AVAILABILITY III WITH CONCURRENT IMAV	01 - 31 DECEMBER 1992

### 3. Narrative:

The keel for LSD 48 was laid 04 April 1988 by Avondale Industries, New Orleans, Louisiana. The ship was christened ASHLAND (LSD 48) by Mrs. Kathleen Foley, ship's sponsor, wife of RADM S. R. Foley, USN (Ret), and launched into the Mississippi River 11 November 1989. On behalf of NAVSEASYSKOM, Washington, DC, Captain John Donahue, Supervisor of Shipbuilding, Conversion and Repair, USN, New Orleans, LA, accepted delivery of LSD 48 from Avondale Industries on 12 March 1992, along with the Prospective Commanding Officer, Commander D. W. Keith, in ceremonies conducted onboard ASHLAND. Colors were raised for the first time at quarters for the crew on the flight deck.

Prior to commissioning, the ship received various assist visits in preparation for entering active service. SUPSHIP Boston, MA, conducted ship checks to verify structural changes to the original plans and update the ship's blueprints. Amphibious Squadron TEN and COMNAVSURFLANT engineering assist visits were conducted in preparation for CINCLANTFLT Propulsion Examination Board Light-Off Examination, which was successfully completed 21 - 23 April 1992.

Following Amphibious Squadron TEN Crew Certification Phase III, ASHLAND sailed down the Mississippi River from Avondale Industries to Bienville Street Wharf, New Orleans, LA, to begin final preparations for the ship's 09 May 1992 commissioning. Commissioning officer was RADM A. M. Granuzzo, Commander, Amphibious Group TWO. Principal speaker was RADM J. B. LaPlante, Vice Director for Logistics, Joint Chiefs of Staff. Also speaking was RADM M. S. Firebaugh, Deputy Commander for Ship Design and Engineering, NAVSEASYSKOM, Washington, DC. The ship was placed under the operational command of CTU 040.4.5 (COMPHIBRON TEN).

On 11 May 1992, the ship departed Bienville Street Wharf for Todd Shipyard for final loadout prior to departing New Orleans. During the 2.5 nm transit, ASHLAND conducted the first ever LCAC recovery operations on the Mississippi River. The ship departed Todd Shipyard 13 May, and sailed down the Mississippi River enroute Panama City, FL. ASHLAND anchored off the coast of Panama City on 14 May and recovered three additional LCAC's for transport to Assault Craft Unit FOUR, Little Creek, VA.

On 15 May 1992, ASHLAND made its first port visit, to Tampa, FL. The ship conducted general visiting for the public before departing Tampa enroute homeport on 18 May 1992. During the transit, ASHLAND held its first "steel beach" picnic for the crew, and conducted PACFIRE of its CIWS, 25mm, and 50 cal gun mounts. On 22 May, the ship debarked the four LCAC's and arrived at its homeport of Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base, Norfolk, VA. A reception was held on board for family members, friends, and various military and city officials.

From 26 May - 19 June, the ship completed PSA Phase I and a concurrent IMAV with SIMA Little Creek. Major changes occurring during PSA included removal of the twin agent system in the main and auxiliary engineering spaces, changing placement of the signal flag bags and search lights, installation of "Big Eye" binocular stand on 07 level flying bridge, a change of the type of fuel oil trips in the main and auxiliary engineering spaces, and installation of JOTS II in Combat Information Center.

The month of June 1992 included several qualification and assist visits, and the COMPHIBRON TEN Ship of the Week. On 08 - 09 June, ASHLAND successfully completed an aviation assist visit, which was upgraded to an aviation readiness evaluation. The ship's initial Training Readiness Evaluation for shakedown training was conducted 15 - 16 June. From 16 - 19 June, the ship provided support to a Navy film crew for production of a CBR defense/Collective Protection System training video.

Following the embarkation of four midshipmen on 21 June in support of LANTRAMID II, the ship departed Little Creek for Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown, for initial ammunition onload 22 June 1992. From 23 - 26 June, ASHLAND conducted ISE operations in the VACAPES Oparea, completing basic engineering, damage control, and combat systems training, including CIWS and 25 mm gun shoot 24 June. Also on 24 June, ASHLAND conducted her first flight operations, recovering ELVIS-07, an MH-46 from HMM-261. In conjunction with the initial flight operations with ELVIS-07, the ship supported fast-rope training with members of SEAL Team EIGHT, and landed, refueled and launched a UH-1 and SH-3 from HC-2.

The ship returned to Little Creek 27 - 28 June, and was underway again on 29 June for CSSQT Phase II. Enroute VACAPES Oparea, ASHLAND conducted wet well operations at Lynnhaven

Anchorage, embarking two LCU's and 2 LCM-8's from Assault Craft Unit TWO in preparation for the ship's upcoming port visit to New York City. During CSSQT Phase II (29 June - 02 July), the ship successfully shot down towed TDU with the forward CIWS mount. On 30 June, ASHLAND conducted its first underway replenishment, receiving fuel from USS MONONGAHELA (AO 178). On 02 July, the ship conducted electronic warfare tracking exercises prior to entering New York Harbor.

On 02 July 1992, ASHLAND moored at Naval Station Staten Island to provide support for Operation Sail '92. The ship conducted wet well operations to debark the landing craft under the Verazzano Bridge prior to mooring. During the visit, the landing craft of Assault Craft Unit TWO ferried crew members of the foreign sailing ships in New York for OPSAIL between Liberty State Park, Manhattan, and Brooklyn. The ship also provided line handler support on 04 July for mooring the sailing ships following the Parade of Sail in New York Harbor.

ASHLAND departed New York 07 July, again conducting wet well operations to recover the landing craft, and returned to Little Creek 08 July. On 10 July, the ship hosted a visit for over one hundred members of the Ashlander's Association, former crewmembers of USS ASHLAND (LSD-1) and their wives, who were in Virginia Beach for their annual reunion. Events included a flight deck cookout and ship tours for the "Ashlander's".

On 13 - 14 July, the ship completed the required Departure Material Status Review (DMSR) prior to departing for shakedown training on 16 July. On the first day of transit to GTMO, the ship successfully shot down a towed TDU with the aft CIWS mount, thus fully completing CSSQT requirements and certifying the AAW systems. ASHLAND also chopped to CTG 43.2 operational command on 16 July. Safety stand down was conducted 17 - 18 July during the transit to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The ship arrived at US Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay on 19 July and commenced shakedown training on 20 July. On 22 July, the midshipmen of LANTRAMID II debarked, with four additional midshipmen checking on board 23 July for LANTRAMID III.

During shakedown training, numerous training evolutions were conducted, including low visibility and swept channel navigation, mooring to a pier, mooring to a bouy, anchoring, underway replenishment, Med moor, highline transfer, towing, small boat launch and recovery, man overboard, CIWS, 25mm and 50 cal gun shoots, basic engineering casualty control exercises, and various inport and underway damage control drills. The damage control scenarios included several multi-hit battle problems encompassing chemical and biological warfare protective measures and mass casualty requirements. Of note, a refueling-at-sea exercise was conducted with USNS KANAWHA (T-AO 196), who was also constructed at Avondale Shipyards in New Orleans. On 09 August, ASHLAND was named

winner of the GTMO Warrior intra-ship athletic competition organized by the base MWR Department with all the ships undergoing training.

ASHLAND completed shakedown training on 25 August, successfully passing the Mass Conflagration Drill required of all units at GTMO. Upon return to port, ASHLAND became the first ship of its class and size, and only the fourth U.S. ship ever to conduct a Mediterranean Moor at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station. This Med Moor allowed for and expedited scheduled onload of JTF GTMO retrograde remaining from the Haitian refugee relief ops. ASHLAND was scheduled to return the retrograde to Morehead City, NC, and Norfolk, VA.

From 21-23 August, while ASHLAND was completing shakedown training, Hurricane Andrew moved through the East Atlantic, making landfall through the Bahamas, the state of Florida south of Miami, and continued through the Gulf of Mexico into Louisiana. Several islands in the Bahamas chain suffered severe damage, and the area south of Miami, FL, was almost totally devastated. After loading JTF retrograde and embarking LCU-1643 for return transit to Little Creek, ASHLAND was diverted to Eleuthera Island, Bahamas, to provide manpower assistance to that islands victims of Hurricane Andrew.

ASHLAND arrived in the vicinity of Eleuthera 28 August, and after conducting a brief turnover with a departing three ship British relief force, and sending in a small boat to the island for liaison with local officials, ASHLAND prepared to send ashore 100 crew members to provide assistance.

On the morning of 29 August, the ship launched LCU-1643 from the western side of the island, enroute the eastern island communities of Hatchet Bay and James Cistern, where the ship's assistance had been requested. The ship sent ashore 100-hand working parties each day through 03 September, when ASHLAND departed Eleuthera enroute Miami. ASHLAND moored in the Port of Miami the evening of 03 September and joined the rest of Task Force TWO EIGHT (Commander Amphibious Squadron SIX), the Navy task force assigned to provide relief assistance to the Miami area.

From 03-06 September, ASHLAND again sent ashore 100 crew members, this time to aid in the clean-up of Homestead High School. The ship also offloaded the JTF retro brought from Guantanamo Bay. While in Miami, ASHLAND embarked the COMPHIBRON TEN Engineering Readiness Assistance Team (ERAT), and hosted visits by Commander Joint Task Force Andrew and members of his staff. On 06 September, the ship embarked an Amphibious SeaBee (Construction Battalion) Detachment and onloaded various construction and relief supplies, and returned to Eleuthera Island to offload the detachment and supplies for further assistance to the island.



From 07 - 10 September, the ship conducted ERAT during the return transit to homeport of Little Creek, VA. From 10 - 28 September, ASHLAND conducted an Intermediate Maintenance Availability (IMAV) with SIMA Little Creek. On 12 September, the first christening ceremony was conducted on board ( [REDACTED], son of DC2 [REDACTED]).

The ship was underway again for ERAT (CPR-10) 28 September - 02 October in the VACAPES OPAREA. ASHLAND became flagship for Commander Amphibious Group TWO (RADM L.F. Picotte) 07 - 13 October (no visit by CPG-2). The weeks of 14 - 16 October and 19 - 23 October the ship was again underway in VACAPES OPAREA conducting preparations for Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE) and Final Contract Trials/INSURV. ASHLAND anchored at Little Creek Anchorage "C" 26 October for final OPPE preps, and successfully completed OPPE 27 - 29 October, earning a two year certification.

ASHLAND became flagship for Commander Amphibious Squadron SIX (Capt R.C. Williams III) 02 - 16 November (no visit). Final Contract Trials and INSURV were conducted 02 - 06 November (underway 03 November).

ASHLAND hosted its first visit by COMPHIBGRU TWO 12 November. On 15 November, the ship embarked 258 Marine officers for BASCOLEX (Basic School Landing Exercises). From 16 - 17 November, the ship anchored Lynnhaven Anchorage "B" and conducted LCAC, LCU and AAV operations in conjunction with BASCOLEX. ASHLAND then operated in the VACAPES OPAREA from 18 - 20 November, conducting further LCAC operation training and helicopter landings.

From 23 - 24 November, ASHLAND transitted to U.S. Naval Weapons Station, Yorktown, for ammunition offload prior to commencing Post-Shakedown Availability (PSA) Phase III. On the transit to Yorktown on 23 November, the ship hosted its initial Dependent's Cruise. Assault Craft Unit FOUR provided an LCAC for "fly-by" and well deck demonstration and tours. The ship also sailed out to Chesapeake Light to give its riders a feel of being "at sea" before continuing to Yorktown.

On 01 December, ASHLAND departed Little Creek Amphibious Base enroute Metro Machine Shipyard, Norfolk, Virginia, to commence PSA Phase III. The ship remained at the shipyard through the end of the year. Major work scheduled included installation of second deck ventilation, halon firefighting system installation in shaft alleys, main engine blower bypass installation, repair locker modifications, chaff decoy launching system modifications, and flight deck resurfacing.