



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS FORT MCHENRY (LSD-43) ✓
FPO SAN FRANCISCO, CA 96665-1731

DECLASSIFIED

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (Unclassified upon removal of enclosure (12))

From: Commanding Officer, USS FORT MCHENRY (LSD-43)
To: Director of Naval History (Op-09BH), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, DC 20370

Subj: USS FORT MCHENRY (LSD-43) COMMAND HISTORY FOR 1987

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12C

- Encl:
- (1) Command Composition and Organization
 - (2) Chronology
 - (3) Basic Historical Narrative for 1987
 - (4) Special Topics for 1987
 - (5) Commissioning Book
 - (6) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet
 - (7) Ship's Photo
 - (8) Ship's Crest
 - (9) Bumper Sticker
 - (10) Commissioning Invitation
 - (11) Commissioning Ceremony Plan
 - (12) OPSUMS (C) IN CLAS FILE
 - (13) Commissioning Tape

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (13) are submitted.


G. S. RHODES

Copy to: (w/o encl)
COMNAVSURFPAC
COMPHIBGRU THREE
COMPHIBRON SEVEN

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COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

1. **MISSION:** USS FORT MCHENRY's mission is to transport United States Marines with their combat equipment to designated areas around the world, and then to launch and support assault landing craft and helicopters during amphibious operations against hostile shores. FORT MCHENRY carries the new Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC). The LCAC is an assault hovercraft with the ability to exceed 40 knots while carrying a 60 ton payload. Using this new craft, FORT MCHENRY forces will be able to carry out an amphibious assault against a wider range of beaches.

FORT MCHENRY accomplishes her mission through the use of a well deck which is flooded to embark and launch assault craft. After leaving the ship, the assault craft are directed towards the shore by the ship's Combat Information Center.

To provide continuing support to the assault force, FORT MCHENRY is equipped with the Navy's latest advanced technology including updated communication and combat systems, 20-ton and 60-ton cranes, expanded repair facilities, two helicopter landing areas, complete medical and dental facilities, and an automated computer based supply system.

2. **ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE:** COMNAVSURFPAC
 COMPHIBGRU THREE
 COMPHIBRON SEVEN
 USS FORT MCHENRY

3. **COMMANDING OFFICER:** Commander George S. Rhodes.

4. **HOMEPORT:** San Diego, California

CHRONOLOGY

01 Jan - 23 Jul	Construction
11 May - 15 May	Builders Trials
15 Jun - 19 Jun	Acceptance Trials
22 Jun - 16 Jul	PLOE I
20 Jul - 21 Jul	Habitability Inspection
24 Jul	Crew Move Aboard
24 Jul - 07 Aug	Upkeep
27 Jul - 31 Jul	PLOE II
08 Aug	Commissioning
09 Aug - 03 Sep	Upkeep
10 Aug - 14 Aug	PLOE III
12 Aug - 13 Aug	Crew Certification I
17 Aug - 20 Aug	UNREP PRESQT
25 Aug	NIXIE Certification
25 Aug - 28 Aug	LOE
02 Sep - 03 Sep	Crew Certification II
04 Sep	Fast Cruise
05 Sep - 07 Sep	Upkeep
08 Sep - 09 Sep	STRL Puget Sound
08 Sep	BSF Manchester (RON)
09 Sep	BSA Indian Island
10 Sep	ENRAT Vancouver, BC, Canada
11 Sep - 13 Sep	Visit Vancouver, BC, Canada
14 Sep - 17 Sep	ENRAT San Francisco, California
18 Sep	Arrive San Francisco, California
19 Sep - 27 Sep	TRAV San Francisco, California (TI)

21 Sep - 27 Sep	PUBSAT, GPETESAT, DRYAIR/LIQ, LOGSAT, CSSQT, SKED Conference
28 Sep - 29 Sep	ENR San Diego, California
30 Sep	Arrive San Diego, California
01 Oct - 12 Oct	Upkeep San Diego, California
01 Oct - 16 Oct	IMAV (R-Availability-SIMA)
01 Oct - 18 Oct	IMAV (R-Availability-Contractor)
05 Oct - 09 Oct	3M Assist
07 Oct - 08 Oct	MRE Assist
13 Oct - 16 Oct	SQT IPT San Diego, California
14 Oct	AAV
16 Oct	Educator Visit
17 Oct - 18 Oct	Inport San Diego, California
19 Oct - 20 Oct	TRE SOCAL
19 Oct - 06 Nov	IMAV (S-Availability-SIMA/Tender)
21 Oct - 23 Oct	SQT SOCAL
24 Oct - 25 Oct	Inport San Diego, California
26 Oct - 30 Oct	ISE SOCAL
26 Oct - 30 Oct	MRE
26 Oct	CASWWP DLQ
30 Oct	ENRAT San Diego, California
31 Oct - 01 Nov	Inport San Diego, California
02 Nov - 10 Nov	Refresher Training
11 Nov	ISE SOCAL
12 Nov - 13 Nov	Refresher Training
13 Nov	ENRAT San Diego, California
14 Nov - 15 Nov	Inport San Diego, California
16 Nov - 20 Nov	Refresher Training

20 Nov	ENRAT San Diego, California
21 Nov - 22 Nov	Inport San Diego, California
23 Nov - 25 Nov	PRE-INSURV
28 Nov - 29 Nov	Inport San Diego, California
30 Nov	FCTRL San Diego, California
01 Dec	FCTRL SOCAL
02 Dec - 04 Dec	FCTRL San Diego, California
05 Dec - 18 Dec	Upkeep
10 Dec	Supply TAV
15 Dec	PTRI
19 Dec - 31 Dec	Holiday Upkeep

BASIC HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

USS FORT MCHENRY entered 1987 as a pre-commissioning unit moored at Lockheed Shipyard, Seattle Washington. Significant events that occurred during 1987 included:

- 24 Jul Ship's force moves onboard. Duty section 2 assumes the duties as inaugural duty section. First meal served onboard. Lockheed Shipbuilding Company delivers FORT MCHENRY to the United States Government.
- 30 Jul Initial pay day onboard.
- 03 Aug Inaugural opening of ship's store and library.
- 08 Aug FORT MCHENRY commissioned at Lockheed Shipyard. Commander G. S. Rhodes assumed command. Principal speaker is the Honorable Helen D. Bentley, United States House of Representatives.
- 28 Aug FORT MCHENRY certified safe for Propulsion Plant Operations by the Commander In Chief, Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT) Propulsion Examining Board.
- 08 Sep USS FORT MCHENRY underway for the first time. Heavy fog set in. Moored at Manchester pier for refueling. Underway after refueling for Manchester Anchorage. Spent night at anchorage.
- 09 Sep FORT MCHENRY underway for Indian Island to conduct ammunition onload. Heavy fog delayed underway time. Spent night at Indian Island.
- 10 Sep FORT MCHENRY conducted ammunition onload. Underway for Vancouver. Again heavy fog. Spent the night at Royal Roads Anchorage, Victoria, BC. Conducted Electronic Radiation Pattern Test.
- 11 Sep FORT MCHENRY underway for Vancouver.
- 11-13 Sep FORT MCHENRY anchored in Vancouver harbor for initial port visit.
- 14 Sep FORT MCHENRY returned to Royal Roads Anchorage. Spent the night due to heavy fog and heavy weather warnings.
- 15 Sep FORT MCHENRY underway for Treasure Island (San Francisco, CA) with two Guest of the Navy Cruise personnel embarked.
- 17 Sep FORT MCHENRY moored Naval Station, Treasure Island, San Francisco, CA, for ten days of Fire Fighting and Damage Control Training.

Enclosure (3)

- 28 Sep FORT MCHENRY underway for Naval Station, San Diego, CA.
- 28-30 Sep FORT MCHENRY conducted initial Tiger Cruise from Treasure Island to San Diego. Events included tours, movies, a cookout and various drills. Fifty-five Tigers participated in the cruise.
- 30 Sep FORT MCHENRY moored pier 6, Naval Station, San Diego.
- 07 Oct FORT MCHENRY completed Pilot Rescue Team Training.
- 09 Oct FORT MCHENRY conducted inaugural command personnel inspection and awards ceremony.
- 15 Oct FORT MCHENRY completed Aviation Assist Visit (AAV). AAV upgraded to Aviation Readiness Exam. FORT MCHENRY fully certified for Aviation Operations.
- 17 Oct FORT MCHENRY served as host for Commander Amphibious Group 3, Reserve Detachment, change of command ceremony.
- 19-20 Oct FORT MCHENRY completed Training Readiness Evaluation in preparation for Refresher Training. The ship received only one restrictive and one safety discrepancy and was evaluated as outstanding in Seamanship, Engineering, Electronics Repair, Electronic Warfare, Navigation, Signals Security and Weapons.
- 19-30 Oct FORT MCHENRY conducted local operations off the coast of San Diego. Exercises included a precision anchorage (FTG Anchorage #215), Close In Weapons System firing with MT 24 shooting TDU-34A towed target off tow line, Man Overboard Drill, General Quarters, Electronic Warfare exercise, Underway Replenishment with USNS Kawishiwi (T-AO-146), Engineering Casualty Control Drills, Amphibious Operations with Amphibious Assault Vehicles and Combat Rubber Raiding Craft and Helicopter Deck Landing Operations. FORT MCHENRY Amphibious Operations were conducted in association with Eleventh Marine Amphibious Unit Special Operations Capability Exercise. Ship successfully completed it's first Combat System Qualification test which included tests of: CIWS, all Radars, all Communications, NIXIE and SLQ-32/SRBOC.

- 31 Oct FORT MCHENRY selected as Self Sufficient Ship of the Week by Commander Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
- 02-20 Nov FORT MCHENRY conducted combined Shakedown and Interim Refresher Training. Exercises included precision anchorages, Formation Steaming (USS VINCENNES, USS BERKELEY, USS TEXAS, USS CAYUGA and USS COPELAND), Helicopter Flight Deck Operations, Engineering Drills, Casualty Transport Operations, Helicopter Flight Crash Drills, Helicopter In-Flight Vertical Replenishment Operations, Helicopter Deck Landing Qualifications, Helicopter On Deck Refueling, General Quarters, Night Steaming, Underway Replenishment with the USNS Kawishiwi (T-AO-146), Landing Craft Air Cushion Operations, Abandon Ship Drills, Man Overboard Drills, Radar Tracking Exercises, Steering Drills, Deep Water Anchor Demonstrations, Anti-Mine Gunnery/Surface Engagements, Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Warfare Drills, Tactical Maneuvers with USS COPELAND, Conventional Surface Tracking with USS COPELAND and Towing and being Towed. FORT MCHENRY received commendation letter from Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet for outstanding performance in areas of Weapons, Command Control Communications, Electronic Warfare, Navigation, Electronics, Seamanship and Major Conflagration exercise.
- 30 Nov-
04 Dec FORT MCHENRY successfully completed Final Contract Trials conducted by the Board of Inspection and Survey. Inspected areas included Electronic and Communication Checks, Engineering Checks, Steering and Navigation Checks, Damage Control Personnel and Equipment Checks, Working Space Inspections, Food Service Checks, Weapons Checks, Electrical Checks, Supply Inspections, Anchor and Well Deck Demonstrations, Habitability Inspections, Tanks and Voids Inspections, Stowage Inspections, Turntable Demonstrations and Elevator and Package Conveyor Demonstrations.
- 01 Dec FORT MCHENRY conducted briefings and a tour for the Surface Navy Association.
- 02-31 Dec FORT MCHENRY spent the final four weeks of 1987 moored to pier 10, U.S. Naval Station, San Diego, CA.
- 15 Dec FORT MCHENRY completed Pre-Training Readiness Inspection (PTRI) in preparation for Amphibious Refresher Training. Zero discrepancies were noted.

- 18 Dec First wedding onboard FORT MCHENRY. [REDACTED], a family member of Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] of the Commander Amphibious Squadron Seven staff, married the former [REDACTED] in the Engineering Lounge. Chaplain [REDACTED] of COMPHIBRON 7 performed the ceremony.
- 19 Dec FORT MCHENRY hosted Commander Amphibious Squadron Seven change of command ceremony, during which Captain William Terry relieved Captain Hugh Merrill.

SPECIAL TOPICS

Command Organization:

Commanding Officer: CDR G. S. Rhodes
Executive Officer: LCDR T. P. Labrecque

Significant Statistical Data:

Engine Hours: 1A - 202
1B - 187.4
2A - 190
2B - 198.1

Generator Hours: #1 SSDG - 641.3
#2 SSDG - 1102.7
#3 SSDG - 385.8
#4 SSDG - 311.7

Miles Steamed: 4412

Ammo Expended: 8 rounds of 7.62mm Grenade Cartridge
410 rounds of 12 Ga. Shotgun
956 rounds of 7.62mm M-14
200 rounds of 7.64mm M-60
1700 rounds of 20mm Cartridge CIWS
900 rounds of .50 Cal. Cartridge
7850 rounds of .45 Cal
18 rounds of Marine Location MK 58 Mod 1