



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
USS GARY (FFG-51)  
FPO AP 96666-1505

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~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ - (Unclassified upon removal removal of Encl (4))

From: Commanding Officer, USS GARY (FFG 51)  
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH),  
Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. 20374-0571

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAV REPORT 5750-1) (U)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12 Series

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization  
(2) Chronological Summary  
(3) Historical Narrative  
(4) Supporting Documents (c) *[IN CLASS FILE]*

1. (U) In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are forwarded.

*A.L. Diefenbach*  
A. L. DIEFENBACH

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**USS GARY (FFG 51)  
COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION**

USS GARY, the namesake of Congressional Medal of Honor recipient CDR Donald Arthur Gary, is the forty-fifth ship of the Oliver Hazard Perry (FFG-7) class of guided missile frigates. The mission of The Fighting Frigate is to provide anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine protection for merchant and military convoys, carrier and logistics battle groups, and amphibious task forces, operating either independently or as part of a surface action group. She was built by Todd Pacific Shipyards Corporation, Los Angeles, California. Her keel was laid on 18 December 1982, she was christened on 19 November 1983, and was commissioned 17 November 1984.

The Commanding Officer has the ultimate authority, responsibility and accountability for the performance and welfare of the ship and her crew. Second in command, the Executive Officer implements policies and regulations as applicable to the ship and her mission. Each Department Head reports to the Commanding Officer via the Executive Officer.

USS GARY is under the administrative command of Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWO THREE, home ported in San Diego, CA.

**SHIP'S ORGANIZATION, 1996**

COMMANDING: CDR C.J. Hithon (7th Commanding Officer)  
Relieved by CDR A.L. Diefenbach  
(8th Commanding Officer)

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: CDR Thomas H. Myers  
Relieved by LCDR Robert A. Bonner

**DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION**

OPERATIONS: LT [REDACTED]  
Relieved By LT [REDACTED]

NAVIGATOR/ADMIN OFFICER / ON Division/ X Division

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER / OC Division

FIRST LIEUTENANT / First Division

COMBAT INFORMATION CENTER OFFICER / OI Division

COMBAT SYSTEMS: LT [REDACTED]  
Relieved by LT [REDACTED]

ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE OFFICER / CA Division

ORDNANCE OFFICER / CW Division

ELECTRONIC MATERIALS OFFICER / CE Division

ENGINEERING: LT [REDACTED]

MAIN PROPULSION ASSISTANT / M Division

DAMAGE CONTROL ASSISTANT / R Division

ELECTRICAL OFFICER / E Division

AUXILIARIES OFFICER / A Division

SUPPORT: LT [REDACTED]  
Relieved by LT [REDACTED]

STOREKEEPERS / S-1 Division

FOOD SERVICES / S-2 Division

DISBURSING OFFICER / S-3 Division

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT / X Division

MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE COMMAND:  
BMCN (SW) Michael Fulton

USS GARY (FFG 51)  
COMMAND HISTORY 1996  
CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

01 JAN IPT PATTAYA BEACH, THAILAND  
04 JAN U/W ENR HONG KONG  
08 JAN IPT HONG KONG  
12 JAN ENROUTE PEARL HARBOR  
19 JAN CHOP C7F/C3F  
24 JAN IPT PEARL HARBOR  
25 JAN ENR SAN DIEGO  
31 JAN INPT SAN DIEGO  
END OF DEPLOYMENT!!!!!!!  
01 FEB STANDOWN BEGINS  
01 MAR STANDOWN ENDS  
04 MAR TYPE TRAINING IN SOCAL/AAW EXERCISE  
14 MAR SOCAL JTFEX 96-1  
19 MAR IPT SAN DIEGO  
25 MAR SAN DIEGO SHIP HANDLING TRAINER  
08 APR ENRT PUERTO VALLARTA, MX  
11 APR INPT PUERTO VALLARTA, MX  
15 APR ENRT RODMAN, PANAMA  
19 APR INPT RODMAN, PANAMA

Encl (2)

20 APR ESCORT EX-USS LONG BEACH TO SOCAL  
07 MAY IPT SAN DIEGO  
09 MAY ENRT SANTA SANTA BARBARA  
10 MAY IPT SANTA BARBARA FOR HARBOR FESTIVAL  
13 MAY ENRT SEAL BEACH  
14 MAY INPT SEAL BEACH  
AMMO OFFLOAD  
15 MAY ENRT SAN DIEGO  
16 MAY INPT SAN DIEGO  
20 MAY DSRA SAN DIEGO  
COMMENCED INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE AVAIL. WITH SIMA  
28 MAY GARY ENTERS THE DRYDOCK  
03 JUL SAFETY STANDOWN  
GARY LEAVES THE DRYDOCK  
08 JUL GARY CREW MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN SURFACE LINE WEEK  
1996  
29 JUL PLOA SAN DIEGO  
05 AUG ASIR SAN DIEGO  
06 AUG LOA SAN DIEGO  
08 AUG AAV SAN DIEGO  
19 AUG DOCK TRIAL SAN DIEGO  
20 AUG FAST CRIUSE SAN DIEGO  
21 AUG SEA TRIALS SOCAL  
22 AUG GARY PICNIC  
28 AUG ENRT PORT HUENEME  
29 AUG IPT PORT HUENEME  
COMBAT SYSTEMS GROOM

06 SEP ENRT SAN DIEGO  
07SEP INPT SAN DIEGO  
30 SEP PRE-DEPLOYMENT WORKUPS BEGIN  
CART II  
15 OCT U/W CABO SAN LUCAS, MX  
19 OCT INPT CABO SAN LUCAS, MX  
23 OCT U/W SAN DIEGO  
25 OCT INPT SAN DIEGO  
04 NOV CAREER INFORMATION TRAINING COURSE(CITC)  
TSTA 1 INPT SAN DIEGO BEGINS  
12 NOV U/W SOCIAL TSTA 1  
15 NOV INPT SAN DIEGO  
19 NOV U/W SOCIAL TSTA 1  
22 NOV U/W SOCIAL TSTA 1  
02 DEC COMMAND INSPECTION BY CDS-23 INPT SAN DIEGO  
05 DEC CHRISTMAS PARTY  
06 DEC CHANGE OF COMMAND: COMMANDER A.L. DIEFENBACH  
RELIEVES COMMANDER C. J. HITHON  
07 DEC CHILDRENS CHRISTMAS PARTY  
10 DEC U/W SOCIAL TSTA 1  
14 DEC HOLIDAY STANDOWN BEGINS

**USS GARY (FFG 51)  
COMMAND HISTORY 1996  
HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

USS GARY started the new year with tremendous confidence and much anxiety. As the crew enjoyed one of the last liberty ports on deployment, all minds were focused on their loved ones back home. There was only one month left until they would be reunited.

January was a long month, and everyone thought it would never end. After an enjoyable and culturally uplifting experience in Hong Kong, GARY headed east for home. We finally arrived in Pearl Harbor to moor only for the night to receive fuel and begin the Tiger Cruise. The next day, GARY set sail to arrive in San Diego in only three days. The son's of the crew members making the final leg of the journey were fascinated to see what "daddy" does when out at sea. Morale was high and the crew's excitement grew with each day. GARY arrived in port San Diego on January, 31 1996 and the deployment was officially over.

The crew returned from a one month stand-down, in which all were reacquainted with their families, and immediately were faced with two challenging Combat Systems exercises. On March 4, a Detect to Engage sequence was scheduled to train personnel to successfully complete a detection, assignment, and engagement of a live air contact. The crew performed remarkably proving they truly are professionals.

On March 11, GARY set sail again, to participate in the Joint Tactical Force Exercise (JTTFEX) 96-1. A JTTFEX is a complex evolution with near simultaneous operations in a variety of challenging and difficult warfare areas. The focus was to coordinate Pacific Fleet surface, air, and Marine forces before deployment. The exercise involved many complex phases, revolving around an amphibious landing with a Marine Expeditionary Unit. During the five day exercise, GARY operated as part of an enemy Surface Action Group against the TARAWA Battle Group. The first day of was full dark skies, pouring rain, and fog. GARY's crew displaying their outstanding seamanship skills, used these environmental factors to their benefit. The Officer of the Deck spotted a rain squall moving at the same course and speed as the GARY. He directed the ship inside the squall, reducing her radar signature, rigged deceptive lighting and radar emissions to appear as a merchant vessel. These tactics enabled GARY to penetrate the Battle Group and kill two ships. For the remaining four days of the exercise, GARY was closely monitored by Command Air Patrol Aircraft. On March 18, a proud ship arrived in San Diego after a job well done.

April brought upon another exciting mission: GARY was underway again. She was tasked with assisting in the transit of the ex-USS LONG BEACH from Rodman, Panama to Southern California. Before the mission began, the crew had the opportunity of enjoying one of their favorite ports, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

While in Puerto Vallarta, most of the crew simply enjoyed the weather and a break from the busy underway routine. There was much to see and do, sport fishing and beach volleyball were favorites. Many of ship's company also spent some of their hard earned liberty working at a local orphanage. The Casa Hogar Home received a new clothes dryer as well as bicycles, clothing, and toys for the children, all hand-delivered by GARY crewmen who spent the rest of the day hard at work performing general repair and clean-up around the home. Money was also donated to the home and would go to purchase some needed supplies.

Escort duties lasted two weeks, and GARY returned home for a brief stay. We were soon underway again for a one day transit to Santa Barbara, California. GARY was the guest of the City of Santa Barbara for the 1996 Harbor Festival. The crew enjoyed the four day get-away in the beautiful town as there was much to do. A picnic was scheduled on the first day, and the crew participated in a softball game with a local team. Everyone also had the opportunity to volunteer with all the efforts of the festival helping setting up and breaking down vender booths, and offering tours of the ship. GARY was a big hit! In three days, GARY hosted over five thousand visitors while at anchor. Lines to tour the ship were often more than an hour wait.

On the trip back to San Diego, GARY stopped at Seal Beach to offload ammunition. She would spend the next three months in Dry-dock and Restricted Availability receiving an overhaul. Although the days were long and the work was arduous, the crew enjoyed spending time with their families. A talented Engineering department brought swift completion to many repairs, and successfully completed Light Off Assessment. The operations department also surmounted challenges by earning an Aviation Certification. During the three months, there was a one week break which concentrated more on the morale of men rather than the condition of equipment, Surface Line Week 1996. GARY's competitors were excited and ready to show their mettle. Competing in just about every event, GARY held its own with respectable finishes in Volleyball, Physical Excellence, Softball, and the 10K run. It was a welcome break from the hectic pace of yard work repairs.

The week of August 19, consisted of Dock Trials, Sea Trials, and Fast Cruise. A new crew and an overhauled engineering plant was put to the test. All equipment was actuated for proper operation and the crew was assessed to determine their level of proficiency. The engineering department was tested on steering casualties, plant failures, and fire drills. The operations department was tested on navigation skills, man overboard drills,



and setting flight quarters. The combat systems department was tested on communication drills, anti-air warfare drills, and emcon setting. The long week ended on a positive note with the ship's picnic. The crew enjoyed good food, fun activities, and free prizes.

GARY spent the last week in August and first week in September in Port Hueneme, California for a Combat Systems Groom. Many civilian technical representatives tested the ships sensors and trained the crew on the combat capabilities of an FFG-7 Frigate. Upon return to San Diego, training continued in preparation for pre-deployment work-ups. Everyone knew that there would be many hurdles to leap before this rigorous cycle was completed.

Command Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART II) began on September 30 when the Afloat Training Group (ATG) Team arrived. Experts in engineering, combat systems, and operations flooded the ship in their respective areas. For two days they assessed, trained, and offered recommendations to help the crew improve their level of proficiency. The days were long, the drills were challenging, and at times tensions grew high. Learning new skills and working with new people, slowed forward progress. In just a few days, GARY crew members showed their true colors as spirits were high and signs of comraderie were evident throughout the ship. The week ended positively, but there was still a long way to go.

On October 15, GARY set sail for Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. The trip south was consumed with battle training, as ATG's recommendations from CART II were incorporated in the ship's training schedule.

While in Cabo San Lucas, everyone enjoyed the many events this beautiful, historic, quaint Mexican Village had to offer. Located on the southern most point of Baja California, it is ideal for fishing, diving, sunbathing, and sight seeing. Much of the crew took full advantage of each. As in the past, there were kind hearted individuals who spent their hard earned liberty time helping out the local community. Working with Project Handclasp, they painted schools, cleaned playgrounds, and donated care packages to the Red Cross.

The next event for GARY was the second hurdle in pre-deployment work-ups, TSTA 1. ATG was onboard again training and assessing the crew; this time on a more advanced level. Things ran much smoother than CART II, proving that all the training conducted in the past few weeks was beneficial. The four week evolution was broken up by the Thanksgiving Holiday, and Change of Command.

On 6 December, Commander A. L. Diefenbach relieved Commander C.J. Hithon as GARY's eighth Commanding Officer. Commander Diefenbach came to GARY after serving as the Chief of Staff Commander at Destroyer Squadron Thirty Three. Commander Hithon moved on to serve as Deputy Director of the Operations Division to the Aegis Program.

Commander Diefenbach had little time to get a feel for his new command before getting GARY underway. On 10 December, GARY commenced the final week of TSTA 1 for more challenging combat systems and engineering drills.

The year ended with a holiday standown. Much of the crew took leave and enjoyed the time spent with their families. Sailors who remained aboard were treated with a turkey dinner on Christmas day. Forecasting into 1997 reminded everyone of the strenuous, but rewarding work yet to come. After the break we knew we would all be ready.