



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDING OFFICER
USS GERMANTOWN (LSD-42)
FPO AP 96666-1730

IN REPLY REFER TO:
5750
Ser LSD42/069
21 MAR 97

From: Commanding Officer, USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42)
To: Director of Naval History

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAV REPORT 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42) Command History for the period 1 January to
31 December 1996.
(2) Ship's Photograph

1. Enclosures (1) and (2) are submitted per reference (a).

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "A. T. Karakos", is positioned above the printed name.

A. T. KARAKOS

USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42)
COMMAND HISTORY
1 January - 31 December 1996

I. COMMAND ORGANIZATION

a. Mission: GERMANTOWN'S mission is to transport and land troops and equipment via assault landing craft and helicopters during amphibious operations against hostile shores. GERMANTOWN, with an embarked Landing Craft, Air Cushion (LCAC) detachment, is the first ship of her class to be permanently assigned to the United States Seventh Fleet. The LCAC is an assault hovercraft with the ability to deliver a sixty ton payload to hostile shores at speeds of over forty knots. Utilizing this craft, GERMANTOWN can carry out an amphibious raid or assault over a much wider range of beaches than previously accessible by conventional landing craft.

b. Ship's Characteristics

Length	609 feet, 7 inches
Beam	84 feet
Draft (Full Load)	19 feet, 2 inches
Well Deck	440 feet by 50 feet
Ship's Company	25 Officers 19 CPOs 372 Enlisted
Embarked Troops	25 Officers 13 NCOs 362 Enlisted
Combat Systems	AN/SPS-49 Air Search Radar AN/SPS-67 Surface Navigation Radar AN/SLQ-32 Electronics Countermeasures Set Two MK 38 MOD Hughes 25mm Chain Guns Two MK 15 MOD 12 Block 1, Close-in Weapon Systems Six 50 Caliber Machine Guns NIXIE Torpedo Deception System
Propulsion	Four Colt-Pielstick PC2.5V 16 Cylinder Diesel Engines Two shafts with Controllable Pitch Propellers Four 1300 KW Ship's Service Diesel Generators

Built by Lockheed Shipbuilding Company, Seattle, Washington. Homeported at Sasebo, Japan, USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42) is named for the historic Germantown District of Pennsylvania. Now a residential section of Philadelphia, Germantown was founded in 1683 and was the site of an important battle in the American War for Independence fought on October 4th, 1777, between the forces of General George Washington and General Sir William Howe.

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The name GERMANTOWN has been borne by one previous U.S. Navy ship, a sloop of war (1846-1864), which performed significant service during the war with Mexico in the home squadron under Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry.

c. Organizational Structure: GERMANTOWN is the first LSD 41 class ship in the Pacific Fleet under the administrative organization of Commander , Naval Surface Forces, US Pacific Fleet, and the operational organization of Commander, Seventh Fleet. GERMANTOWN's immediate superior in command is Commander, Amphibious Squadron ELEVEN, the commander for the BELLEAU WOOD Amphibious Readiness Group.

d. Units Under Operational/Administrative Control:

-Assault Craft Unit FIVE, Detachment WESTPAC Alfa

-Various USMC units of THIRTY-FIRST Marine Expeditionary Unit.

e. Commanding Officer: Commander Andrew T. Karakos enlisted in May 1973 and completed recruit training at Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, IL. He attended the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Bainbridge, MD and received a Secretary of the Navy appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy. In 1978, he graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Science.

After commissioning, he served concurrently as Damage Control Assistant, Electrical Officer, and Auxiliaries Officer in USS LUCE (DDG 38). Following his Division Officer tour, Commander Karakos returned to sea via the Surface Warfare Department Head School. His Department Head tours included assignment as Ship Control Officer in USS SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON (FFG 13) followed by Operations Officer in USS DEWEY (DDG 45). In March 1987, he reported to the Surface Warfare Officer Assignment Branch of the Naval Military Personnel Command (NMPC 41) where he served as Surface Warfare Initial Assignment Officer (NMPC 412I), Senior Year Group Detailer (NMPC 412S) and Amphibious Placement Officer (NMPC 413F). Commander Karakos returned to sea and assumed duties as first Commanding Officer of USS SCOUT (MCM 8), upon her commissioning on December 15, 1990 until July 1, 1992.

Commander Karakos returned to the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS) in 1992 to serve initially as Head, Officer Professional Development Branch (Pers 213) and later fleeted up to serve as Surface Warfare Officer Community Manager (Pers 211W) during the 1993 to 1994 personnel drawdown. In August 1994, he attended the Naval War College and was awarded a Masters of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies. After graduation, he remained on the National Security Decision Making faculty, where he instructed courses in Rational Decision Making and served as the Rational Decision Making Course Coordinator for the College of Continuing Education.

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Commander Karakos is a proven subspecialist in Manpower, Personnel and Training Analysis. He wears the Navy Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (two awards), Navy Achievement Medal and various other medals and service ribbons.

Commander Andrew T. Karakos assumed command of GERMANTOWN on 11 October 1996.

II. CHRONOLOGY

1 Jan-12 Feb	Dry-dock Selected Restricted Availability: Sasebo, JA.
12 Jan	Undocking: Sasebo, JA.
13-15 Feb	Light-Off-Assessment: Sasebo, JA.
15-16 Feb	Aviation Assist Visit: Sasebo, JA.
17 Feb-5 Mar	Inport Sasebo, JA.
28-29 Feb	Light-Off-Assessment: Sasebo, JA.
5 Mar	Fast Cruise: Sasebo, JA.
6 Mar	Dock Trials: Sasebo, JA.
7-8 Mar	Sea Trials: East China Sea.
9-11 Mar	Inport Sasebo, JA.
12 Mar	Ammunition Onload: Sasebo, JA.
13-16 Mar	ISE East China Sea
17-19 Mar	Inport Sasebo, JA.
20-22 Mar	ISE East China Sea
23-31 Mar	Inport Sasebo, JA.
1-5 Apr	Command Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART II): Sasebo, JA.
6-14 Apr	Inport Sasebo, JA.
8-12 Apr	Logistics Training Review (LTR): Sasebo, JA.
15 Apr	Underway for CARAT '96
15-24 Apr	Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA I): East China Sea.
21 Apr	Rendezvous with PELELIU ARG
22 Apr	Conduct LCAC Swap with PELELIU ARG
23-24 Apr	ISE En Route Okinawa
25-26 Apr	Onload: Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
27-29 Apr	Underway En Route Manila, RP.
30 Apr-2 May	Inport Manila, RP.
3 May	Underway En Route Subic Bay, RP.
4-5 May	Inport Subic Bay, RP.
5 May	Underway En Route Manila Amphibious Rehearsal
6 May	Amphibious Assault "D-Day Ternate."
7-9 May	Amphibious Exercises in Manila OPAREA
10-14 May	Underway En Route Surabaya, Indonesia.
15-19 May	Inport Surabaya, Indonesia.

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20-22 May	Underway En Route Asem Bagus Area for Amphibious Operations ISO CARAT '96.
23-25 May	Backload: Asem Bagus AOA. Underway En Route Jakarta, Indonesia.
25 May	UNREP with USNS PECOS
26-27 May	Inport Jakarta, ID.
28-29 May	Underway En Route Tanjungpinang, ID.
30 May	Anchored: Tanjungpinang, ID. Underway En Route Singapore. RAS with USNS SPICA
31 May-1 Jun	Inport Singapore.
2-3 Jun	Underway En Route Kuantan, Malaysia.
3-8 Jun	Inport Kuantan, Malaysia.
9 Jun	Underway; RAS with USNS YUKON.
9-12 Jun	Exercise Penyu Trident 96.
12-13 Jun	Inport Kuantan, Malaysia.
14-15 Jun	Underway En Route Sattahip, Thailand.
16-21 Jun	Inport Sattahip, Thailand.
22-26 Jun	Underway ISO CARAT 96 IVO Thailand AOA.
26 Jun	Moor Chuk Samet.
27-29 Jun	Underway En Route Singapore.
30 Jun-7 Jul	Inport Singapore.
8-9 Jul	Underway ISO CARAT 96-Exercise Valiant Mark.
10-11 Jul	Anchored Jurong for Backload. FINEX Valiant Mark.
12-18 Jul	Underway En Route Okinawa, JA. Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA II).
19-20 Jul	Offload: Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
21-22 Jul	Underway En Route Sasebo, JA. Tiger Cruise.
22 Jul-5 Aug	Upkeep: Sasebo, JA.
6-9 Aug	ISE East China Sea.
10-13 Aug	Upkeep: Sasebo, JA.
13-14 Aug	Anchored: Sasebo, JA.
15-18 Aug	Upkeep: Sasebo, JA.
19-22 Aug	Underway for TSTA II(E): East China Sea.
23-29 Aug	Inport Sasebo, JA.
30-31 Aug	ISE East China Sea.
1-8 Sep	Inport Sasebo, JA.
9-14 Sep	Underway En Route Yokosuka, JA.
15-24 Sep	Inport Yokosuka, JA. Training Availability (TRAV).
25-27 Sep	Underway En Route Sasebo, JA.

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28 Sep	Rendezvous with TARAWA ARG for LCAC Swap.
29 Sep	Anchored: Outer Apra Harbor, Guam, to Conduct LCAC Swap.
29 Sep-3 Oct	Underway En Route Sasebo, JA.
4-5 Oct	Upkeep: Sasebo, JA.
6-7 Oct	Underway ISE East China Sea for TSTA II(E).
8-13 Oct	Inport Sasebo, JA.
11 Oct	Change of Command.
14-16 Oct	Underway En Route Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
17-18 Oct	Onload of Marines and Equipment: Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
19-21 Oct	Underway: Multisteam with USS DUBUQUE En Route Pohang, ROK.
22-24 Oct	Inport Pohang, ROK.
25 Oct-7 Nov	Exercise FOAL EAGLE 96 IVO Pohang, ROK.
8-9 Nov	Underway: Multisteam En Route Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
10 Nov	Offload: Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
11-12 Nov	Underway En Route Sasebo, JA.
13 Nov-2 Dec	Upkeep: Sasebo, JA.
3-6 Dec	Underway En Route Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
7-8 Dec	Onload: Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
9 Dec	Underway for TSTA II(E) IVO Okinawa. Inport Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
10-16 Dec	Underway for BLUE/GREEN WATER WORKUPS 97-1.
16-17 Dec	Offload: Buckner Bay, Okinawa.
17-19 Dec	Underway En Route Sasebo, JA.
19-31 Dec	Holiday Upkeep: Sasebo, JA.

III. NARRATIVE SUMMARY

USS GERMANTOWN commenced the New Year inport, Sasebo, Japan. This, her third year forward deployed, was to involve significant material and combat readiness improvements for GERMANTOWN as a result of very thorough availabilities, inspections and training periods. Additionally, 1996 would mark the arrival of GERMANTOWN'S first female crew members. Cooperation Afloat and Readiness Training (CARAT) 96, Exercise Foal Eagle 96 and Blue/Green Water Workups 97-1 allowed the ship to demonstrate the best the Navy-Marine Corps team has to offer.

The continuation of Dry-dock Selected Restricted Availability (DSRA) marked the first major evolution of 1996, beginning in December '95 and ending on the 12th of February. During DSRA 96, GERMANTOWN received much needed work and upgrades in all departments. With all the work and the remodeling being done to prepare for GERMANTOWN'S first female crew members, sailors were temporarily moved off the ship and onto a berthing barge. After undocking on the 12th of January, GERMANTOWN berthed her own crew and four Mine Counter Measures Rotational crews in order to facilitate the MCM ships' crew changeovers.

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GERMANTOWN received the highest praises for outstanding hospitality to over 275 MCM sailors and officers, while simultaneously accomplishing a demanding DSRA period.

At the end of DSRA, GERMANTOWN went through the Light-Off-Assessment (LOA) with the Propulsion Examination Board (PEB). The ship received an Aviation Assist Visit from the 15th to the 16th of February that resulted in a certified flight deck. GERMANTOWN shifted berths to Tategami Pier for the remainder of her time in port. PEB returned on the 28th of February to complete GERMANTOWN's LOA. Sailors spent the next week preparing for a Fast Cruise on the 5th of March. Next followed Dock Trials, when the main propulsion diesel engines were clutched in for the first time since the previous December. On the 7th of March, GERMANTOWN went to sea for the first time in 1996, successfully completing her sea trial phase.

After a brief respite inport Sasebo, GERMANTOWN picked up the pace again in preparation for Command Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART II). Ammunition was on loaded on the 12th of March, and GERMANTOWN put out to sea for independent steaming and training. Another short time inport followed by more underway CART II preparations kept GERMANTOWN crew members alert. The extra work at sea and inport paid great dividends, though, during the Propulsion Examination Board and Afloat Training Group's visit. During the first 5 days of April GERMANTOWN excelled in all facets of the CART II process. The evaluators' final comments stated GERMANTOWN had performed at a level equal to that of a ship going through TSTA II, a much more advanced level of readiness. GERMANTOWN was later awarded the coveted "Battle Efficiency" award for 1995.

A week's upkeep inport Sasebo produced an outstanding Logistics Training Review, followed almost immediately by GERMANTOWN leaving for the first major exercise of 1996. On the 15th of April, GERMANTOWN got underway for Cooperation and Readiness Afloat Training (CARAT) 96. Afloat Training Group Western Pacific (ATG WESTPAC) and PEB once again assessed the ship's training programs during Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA I). A scheduled rendezvous with the PELELIU ARG became a detour to the east as high seas and rough weather complicated the transfer of Landing Craft, Air Cushioned (LCAC). GERMANTOWN reached Buckner Bay, Okinawa, to begin the onload of Marines and equipment, disembarking ATG and PEB visitors after successful TSTA I.

Following the onload, GERMANTOWN began the first of many transits to foreign ports during CARAT 96. Manila, RP, was the first stop. The Philippine phase of CARAT took 11 days and encompassed multiple port stops in Manila and Subic Bay, an amphibious rehearsal and landing, and numerous community relations projects, such as Project Handclasp.

The exchange of ideas and training found with the Philippine Navy was duplicated during the subsequent Indonesian phase of CARAT.

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While underway en route Surabaya, the officers and crew of GERMANTOWN took time to celebrate the crossing of the equator in the timeless Navy tradition. This was followed by operations with the Indonesian Navy while in the Asem Bagus OPAREA and in ports Surabaya and Jakarta. A moment of respect and reflection occurred as the GERMANTOWN participated in a burial at sea on behalf of RMC Wellington M. Downing, a WWII Veteran and a former crewmember of the USS LANGLEY. RMC Downing requested that his remains be scattered upon the sea of Java, which almost claimed his life along with many of the LANGLEY'S crew. During the ashore periods, GERMANTOWN sailors and embarked Marines participated in many community relations projects and hosted tours of the ship.

GERMANTOWN also exercised replenishment at sea skills through UNREPs with the USNS PECOS, USNS SPICA, and USNS YUKON. After a short stop in Singapore, GERMANTOWN continued on to Kuantan, Malaysia. The Malaysian phase of CARAT 96 commenced June 9th with the start of Exercise Penyut Trident 96. After a well deserved rest inport Kuantan, GERMANTOWN steamed toward Sattahip, Thailand, to engage in the Thailand phase of CARAT.

To celebrate the independence of our nation, GERMANTOWN spent a week inport Singapore, enjoying the festivities and taking part in several sports tournaments. Sailors and officers took advantage of the numerous opportunities presented by Morale, Welfare and Recreation to experience Singapore. Well rested, the crew of the GERMANTOWN returned to sea for a short but intense period of amphibious operations in support of Exercise Valiant Mark. GERMANTOWN completed the exercise then anchored in Jurong for backload of equipment.

The 11th of July marked the end of Exercise Valiant Mark and the end of GERMANTOWN'S participation in CARAT 96. All parties hailed it as a complete success, with GERMANTOWN playing a key role in both the planning and execution of at least four major exercises with five different nations' navies. Additionally, GERMANTOWN conducted close to 100 hours of flight operations with zero mishaps.

GERMANTOWN sailed back to Okinawa, conducting TSTA II along the way. Upon arrival at Buckner Bay, GERMANTOWN completed TSTA II, offloaded embarked Marines and equipment, and headed back to Sasebo with over 20 dependents onboard for a Tiger Cruise. GERMANTOWN arrived inport Sasebo on the 22nd of July, and stayed inport most of the next month for upkeep, getting underway only briefly for typhoon evasion and independent steaming for training. On the 19th of August GERMANTOWN left Sasebo to conduct TSTA II(E), Engineering Certification, in the East China Sea. The rest of August was spent training in upkeep.

On the 9th of September, GERMANTOWN made a five day transit to Yokosuka, Japan for a training availability. The nine day availability allowed the crew to take full advantage of a range of schools not available at their homeport of Sasebo.

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Hundreds of quotas were filled in courses of instruction covering all ratings in GERMANTOWN resulting in significant knowledge, training and readiness improvements.

On the 25th of September, GERMANTOWN steamed out of Tokyo Wan back to Sasebo. En route from Yokosuka, GERMANTOWN ran the Ship's External Sensor Examination Facility (SESEF) range to ensure that her Tactical Air and Navigation (TACAN) system was operating within acceptable parameters.

On the way back to Sasebo, GERMANTOWN rendezvoused with the TARAWA Amphibious Readiness Group to conduct an LCAC swap. Sea conditions proved to be too harsh for the transfer, so GERMANTOWN steamed in company with the TARAWA ARG to Outer Apra Harbor, where the swap was conducted at anchor. GERMANTOWN received three new LCAC, while the craft used during CARAT were returned to San Diego for much needed overhaul.

GERMANTOWN returned to port for a brief upkeep period and a second round of Engineering Certification inspections. GERMANTOWN returned from independent steaming in the East China Sea, needing only to be re-evaluated on the engineering taskings. On the 7th of October, GERMANTOWN pulled into Sasebo, where all hands commenced preparations for a Change of Command Ceremony.

On the 11th of October, GERMANTOWN held a Change of Command Ceremony where Commander Stephen C. Rowland passed command of the GERMANTOWN to Commander Andrew T. Karakos. The ceremony, held on GERMANTOWN's flight deck, was followed by a reception on the bridge wings. On Saturday, 11 October 96, GERMANTOWN hosted a tour for over 250 Japanese nationals, who were celebrating the 90th anniversary of the Azuma Pharmaceuticals division of the Toshchi Company, ushering in an increased sense of good will between the ships of Amphibious Squadron Eleven and their host city of Sasebo.

The following week GERMANTOWN steamed toward Okinawa to pick up Marines and equipment for Exercise FOAL EAGLE 96, a cooperative exercise between United States forward deployed forces and forces of the Republic of Korea (ROK). Following the onload, GERMANTOWN rendezvoused with USS DUBUQUE (LPD 8) on the 19th of October and steamed in company to Pohang, ROK. GERMANTOWN moored in port Pohang for planning conferences and hosted tours for several international media personnel, who appreciated the personal attention and professional attitude of GERMANTOWN Sailors and Marines. From the 25th of October to the 7th of November, GERMANTOWN conducted exercises and training with DUBUQUE and numerous ships from the ROK Navy. GERMANTOWN was a member of the Amphibious Readiness Group and also served as the command and control platform for the mine countermeasures operations conducted in conjunction with FOAL EAGLE 96. The amphibious landing, and all of FOAL EAGLE 96, was a success. GERMANTOWN returned, in company with DUBUQUE, to Okinawa for offload on the 10th of November.

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GERMANTOWN returned to Sasebo on the 13th of November to enter an upkeep period. Ship's company readied GERMANTOWN for her next commitment, BLUE/GREEN WATER WORKUPS 97-1. On the 3rd of December, GERMANTOWN again set sail for Okinawa to embark the 31st MEU. Onload commenced on the 7th of December and continued through to the 8th. On December 9th, fully loaded with her embarked Marines and equipment, GERMANTOWN got underway for and successfully passed Engineering Certification.

During BLUE/GREEN WATER WORKUPS, GERMANTOWN served as LCAC control ship, command ship for the Search and Rescue helicopter, and command platform for SEAL Team 3 Platoon Charlie and the Special Boat Unit (SBU). Numerous operations were executed, including LCAC operations, SBU/SEAL Team infiltrations, and air operations. Additionally, the GERMANTOWN'S Operations department passed a CMS inspection and the Communications Comprehensive Assessment with a score of 96%. The amphibious portion of BLUE/GREEN WATER WORKUPS culminated in a Mechanized Raid on the 14th of December and a Mass Casualty Drill on the 15th of December.

The 16th and 17th of December were spent inport Buckner Bay, offloading Marines and equipment. During the two day transit back to Sasebo, newly selected E4 crew members were frocked. On the 19th of December, GERMANTOWN returned to Sasebo, JA, for the remainder of 1996 after steaming over 26,000 nautical miles safely and incident free!