



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
COMMANDING OFFICER  
USS GERMANTOWN (LSD-42)  
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From: Commanding Officer, USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42)  
To: Director of Naval History

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Encl: (1) USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42) Command History for the period 1 January to  
31 December 1997.  
(2) Ship's Photograph

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

  
A. T. KARAKOS

USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42)  
COMMAND HISTORY  
1 January - 31 December 1997

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, was 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 Trps	25 Officers 13 NCOs 362 Enlisted
Combat Sys	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 1A, 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.

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 Group One and her tactical 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 United States Naval Academy. In 1978, he graduated from the United States 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 Officer 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.

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

01-21 Jan	Inport Sasebo, Ja.
22-24 Jan	Independent Steaming IVO East China Sea.
25-26 Jan	Inport Sasebo, Ja.
27-31 Jan	TSTA III IVO East China Sea.
01-03 Feb	Inport Sasebo, Ja.
04-06 Feb	Final Evaluation Period (FEP) IVO East China Sea.
07-12 Feb	Inport Sasebo, Ja.
13-14 Feb	Underway Enroute Okinawa.
15-16 Feb	Inport White Beach, Okinawa.
17-18 Feb	Underway for MSPF IVO Okinawa.
19-24 Feb	Inport White Beach, Okinawa.
25Feb-12Mar	UW Enroute Australia (Typhoon Justin evasion)
12-20 Mar	Exercise Tandem Thrust (anchored IVO Townshend Island, Aus/UW IVO Aus)
21-22 Mar	Backload Townshend Island Underway Enroute Brisbane
23-30 Mar	Inport Brisbane, Australia
31Mar-9Apr	Underway Enroute Okinawa
10-11 Apr	Offload White Beach, Okinawa
12 Apr	Underway Enroute Sasebo
13Apr-11May	Pierside Repair Availability (PRAV) Sasebo, Ja
12May-13Jul	Selective Restricted Availability (SRA) Sasebo, Ja
13Jul-21Jul	Upkeep Sasebo, Ja
21Jul-25Jul	Sea Trials
25Jul-01Sep	Upkeep Sasebo, Ja
01-02 Sep	Underway Enroute Pusan, Korea
02-03 Sep	Independent Steaming Exercise Sea of Japan, ATACMS
03-06 Sep	Inport Pusan, Korea
06-07 Sep	Underway Enroute White Beach, Okinawa
07-08 Sep	OnLoad White Beach, Okinawa
09-11 Sep	Enroute Quigdao, China
11-14 Sep	Inport Quigdao, China
15-18 Sep	Enroute White Beach, Okinawa
18-20 Sep	Offload White Beach, Okinawa
20-22 Sep	Enroute Sasebo, Ja

22 Sep-07 Oct	Upkeep Sasebo, Ja
07-09 Oct	Mid Cycle Assessment (MCA) Preps, East China Sea
15-17 Oct	MCA, East China Sea
17-18 Oct	Enroute White Beach, Okinawa
18-21 Oct	Onload White Beach, Okinawa
21-24Oct	Underway enroute Pohang, Korea
24-27Oct	Inport Pohang, Korea
28Oct-04Nov	Exercise FOAL EAGLE 97
04-09 Nov	Enroute Hong Kong
09-13 Nov	Port Visit Hong Kong
14-16 Nov	Enroute White Beach, Okinawa
17-18 Nov	Offload White Beach, Okinawa
19-20 Nov	Enroute Sasebo, Ja
20 Nov-31 Dec	Holiday Upkeep Sasebo, Ja
	1-5 Dec Industrial Hygiene Inspection/Food Service Assist Visit
	4 Dec Postal Assist Visit

### III. NARRATIVE SUMMARY

USS GERMANTOWN commenced the New Year inport, Sasebo, Japan. Her fourth year being forward deployed was a year of new installations and challenging exercises. She was the first ship to engage in a successful 9 week Selective Restrictive Availability, completing numerous combat readiness upgrades and installs. Total Survivability Training Assessment (TSTA III), Final Evaluation Period (FEP), Exercise TANDEM THRUST, Goodwill Qingdao, China port visit, Exercise Foal Eagle 97 and Hong Kong port visit were the highlights of the year that demonstrated the Navy-Marine Corps team's strong forward presence.

GERMANTOWN'S underway schedule began 22 January as she steamed for three days in preparation for the upcoming TSTA III. Completing the training evaluation period was a major milestone and GERMANTOWN successfully completed TSTA III satisfactorily and was recommended to proceed into the Final Evaluation Period. FEP commenced on 04 February and two days later GERMANTOWN's crew celebrated another success.

After spending a few relaxing last days in homeport Sasebo, GERMANTOWN set sail for White Beach, Okinawa to pick up the Marines and begin a 25 February transit to Australia for Exercise TANDEM THRUST. GERMANTOWN embarked MSSG 31, Seal Team 3 Det Alpha and their associated equipment. During the exercise, GERMANTOWN was visited by the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Commander Seventh Fleet and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON). On the transit, GERMANTOWN Sailors and Marines engaged in the festivities of the "Crossing the line Ceremony". Over 300 Marines and 200 Sailors became shellbacks that day. The seas were rough as Typhoon Justin emerged in the path of the ship, making it almost impossible to continue. GERMANTOWN turned north to wait out the typhoon. The seas began to subside and GERMANTOWN successfully reached her destination, Townshend Island. On 12 March GERMANTOWN anchored off the coast of Townshend Island in support of the exercise. Three LCAC's were launched cycling a total of nine loads of MSSG

31's gear to the beach in support of logistics. Due to the Australian strict environmental laws, GERMANTOWN was unable to remain at anchor over night, so each night of the exercise GERMANTOWN sailed out past 50 nautical miles to conduct environmental house keeping and make water. In the early morning GERMANTOWN returned to anchorage to provide additional support to the Marines on the Beach, making frequent LCAC runs to deliver equipment and water. The exercise ended on the 20th of March with successful results and the equipment and personnel backload commenced on the following day. GERMANTOWN Sailors and Marines were ready for a port visit as the ship sailed towards Brisbane Australia for a seven day inport period. The ship moored at Brisbane on the 23rd of March and departed on the 31st of March. Every crew member and embarked Marine thoroughly enjoyed their visit to Australia and were recharged for the transit back to White Beach, Okinawa and Sasebo, Japan.

GERMANTOWN arrived in White Beach, Okinawa on the 10th of April and commenced a two day offload. Upon completion of offload GERMANTOWN began a return transit to Sasebo, Japan and arrived on April 13th. Upon arrival Sasebo, the ship immediately went into a Pierside Restricted Availability period which lead into her nine week Selective Restricted Availability (SRA).

During the nine week SRA, one of the first ships to accomplish an SRA in such a short period of time, the ship had major upgrades in the Operations Department including: the installation of advanced SPA-25G radar repeaters on the bridge and in Combat Information Center; SRBOC (Super Rapid Blooming Offboard Chaff) system upgrade increasing the number of launchers from 4 to 6, and the RAM (Rolling Airframe Missile) installation; all of which have increased the ships self defense capabilities. GERMANTOWN was able to correct many engineering deficiencies and return GERMANTOWN up to the highest state of material readiness and cleanliness.

In September 1997, GERMANTOWN participated in a Goodwill Port visit to Qingdao, China with RADM Robert C. Chaplin, Commander, Amphibious Force Seventh Fleet, embarked. The visit was significant in that it marked the first time an American Amphibious ship had ever made a port call to the heavy populated city. During the visit, GERMANTOWN Sailors and embarked Marines had the opportunity to sightsee, shop and take part in numerous recreational activities with Chinese counterparts. The Festivities began in the early morning hours of 11 September as a Chinese Destroyer lead GERMANTOWN into port. As the ship moored, crew members and embarked Marines manned the rails for a spectacular welcoming ceremony while the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force Band played Navy and Marine Corps service songs.

During the visit GERMANTOWN Sailors took part in numerous ship visits and social functions with Chinese military and civilian dignitaries. On September 13th, Qingdao citizens were given an opportunity to visit the ship and over 2,700 people took part in tours of the GERMANTOWN and many Navy and Marine Corps static displays. Sailors were provided a unique opportunity to tour Chinese ships and see many areas of interest in Qingdao and Beijing, including the Great Wall. While on liberty, Sailors and Marines walked the streets of Qingdao in

search of unusual bargains which represented Chinese culture. Many crew members were surprised by the numerous street vendors and their products.

A spectacular sunset parade was held on the evening of 12 September. Sailors and Marines watched as the sun set and the American and Chinese flags were lowered in unison to the sound of "Retreat". Admiral Archie C. Clemens, Commander In Chief Pacific Fleet, and Admiral Ding, Commander, North Sea Fleet acted jointly as Sunset Parade reviewing officers. Rear Admiral Robert C. Chaplin, Commander, Amphibious Force Seventh Fleet, was embarked in GERMANTOWN for the visit and stated, "The Sunset Parade was truly exemplary and has helped to bolster our relationship with the People's Republic of China." The visit came to a close on 15 September when GERMANTOWN Sailors and Marines manned the rails for departure at the farewell ceremony. The visit was a huge success, fostering good relations and a superb cultural exchange between two Navies and two Nations.

During the month of October 1997, GERMANTOWN completed an Engineering Mid Cycle Assessment (MCA) and participated in the combined exercise, Foal Eagle '97. The beginning of the month was dedicated to preparations for the Mid Cycle Assessment, spending the first week underway in the East China Sea conducting numerous General Quarters. On 15 October, GERMANTOWN got underway for MCA 97, a three day assessment testing and drilling the engineers on proper use of equipment and level of knowledge by successfully displaying their ability to operate machinery safely, restore machinery casualties, and combat Main Space Fires. Upon completion of the MCA the ship went right into the air portion of TSTA IV, spending a day of flight operations both day and night vision goggle (NVG) operations. Due to the rough weather the second portion which included the Aviation Safety brief, mass casualty drill, and helo crash on deck was delayed one day. Prior to entering port White Beach, Okinawa for onload the ship completed the delayed portion of TSTA IV and received a grade of satisfactorily in the area of aviation.

GERMANTOWN arrived in White Beach on 18 October and commenced the onload of Marines from MSSG 31 (Marine Service Support Group 31), Seal Team Three Det Delta and Special Boat Unit 12 for Exercise Foal Eagle 97. GERMANTOWN set sail in company with the Belleau Wood (LHA 3) on Tuesday, 21 October for a transit to Pohang, South Korea. During the transit both ships conducted numerous hours of flight operations completing over 60 day landings and 20 night landings. Divisional Tactics (DIVTACS) were conducted during the transit providing the ships an opportunity to train the Junior Officers and Signalmen in tactical maneuvering. This was the first time GERMANTOWN had steamed with the BELLEAU WOOD Amphibious Readiness Group (ARG) in over two years.

The crew of GERMANTOWN enjoyed four days of liberty in Pohang, Korea while gearing up for the upcoming exercise. The exercise began the day of the Port Break out, 28 October at Pohang, South Korea and proved to be a successful exercise at Tok Sok Ri. Some of the highlights included: three anti-SOF sledgehammer exercises where Commander Destroyer Squadron 15 conducted strikes against both GERMANTOWN and FORT MCHENRY'S LCAC crews in formation flying and cross training, small boat operations, RHIB/SEAL insertion operations, and helicopter operations. GERMANTOWN also completed the amphibious

rehearsal and assault, in addition to logistic support runs to the beach. All landings were on time and without incident. GERMANTOWN demonstrated professionalism and again brought the Sailors and Marines together with Korean Sailors and Marines to accomplish a common goal, defense of the ROK against external aggression. Upon completion of Exercise Foal Eagle '97 all hands looked forward to a relaxing port visit in Hong Kong.

On the 4th of November Exercise Foal Eagle '97 concluded and both BELLEAU WOOD and GERMANTOWN steamed south for five days to Hong Kong. During the transit over 50 hours of flight operations were conducted which included aided and non aided night operations. On the 8 November the FORT MCHENRY (LSD 43) joined the formation to complete the remainder of the transit.

All three ships anchored in Hong Kong on the 9th of November and began running liberty boats for the crew. The crew enjoyed five full days of liberty, making the most of the sight seeing and shopping opportunities. On the 14th, the day began early in order to prepare the ship for getting underway. By 1000 GERMANTOWN was underway again steaming in company with the BELLEAU WOOD and FORT MCHENRY towards White Beach, Okinawa. During this three day transit valuable Junior Officer shiphandling training was conducted during DIVTACS and Leap Frog evolutions. This would mark the last underway period for the remainder of 1997.

December was a month of maintenance, repairs, assist visits and time home with the families. On 03 December an extensive tour was conducted for the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) officers and enlisted to familiarize them with LCAC operations. They brought officers from JDS OOSUMI and the Joint Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) Fleet Training Group to obtain a good grasp of how GERMANTOWN manned up all stations for launching an LCAC. A short demonstration was conducted in the well deck where LCAC 76 moved from spot 2 to spot 3. Two of the officers observed from within the LCAC while the others observed from the ramp and took pictures and video. They were particularly interested in the personal protective clothing worn by the deck seaman that man all stations.

On 01-05 December, an Industrial Hygiene Survey was conducted and were assessed as excellent and effective. The Command Equal Opportunity (CMEQ) visit, Postal Assist visit and the Navy Food Management Assist visit took place giving the Officers and Crew thorough training in all aspects.

On 10 December, GERMANTOWN hosted another large tour for 105 students and instructors from the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force as Camp Ainora, the Common Service Support Company. Most of the students that came on board had never been on a ship before and were most eager to see and learn of what we do. The tour lasted just over an hour with a video presentation of past operations and exercises. The remainder of the month was dedicated to a holiday maintenance and upkeep period which allowed for the crew to have maximum time to spend with their families.



GERMANTOWN was one of the First ships in the Pacific Fleet to receive the new Force Commander Annual Wellness Unit Award ("Green H"). The purpose of this award is to enhance battle readiness by promoting the health, fitness, and well being of the active duty Sailors of the Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (SURFPAC) and Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet (SURFLANT). GERMANTOWN excelled in establishing and promoting a command climate conducive to wellness and health promotion. GERMANTOWN received the Maritime Warfare, Command and Control, and the Logistics Management Command Excellence Awards for the year 1996.

A GERMANTOWN sailor, Boatswains Mate Second Class Petty Officer [REDACTED] was selected to be the Amphibious Force Seventh Fleet Sailor of the Year for the year 1996. Sailor, Internal Communicationsman First Class Petty Officer [REDACTED] was selected as the Commander Amphibious Squadron Eleven (COMPHIBRON ELEVEN) Senior Sailor of the Quarter for his outstanding performance and upholding the highest Standard for Excellence during the 2nd Quarter, 1997.