



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
COMMANDING OFFICER  
USS GERMANTOWN (LSD-42)  
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From: Commanding Officer, USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42)  
To: Director, Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY (OPNAV REPORT 5750-1)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

Encl: (1) USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42) Command History for the period 1 January -  
31 December 1999  
(2) 3 ½ Disk

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) and (2) are submitted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. M. ABLER", written over the typed name below.

E. M. ABLER

USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42)  
COMMAND HISTORY  
1 January - 31 December 1999

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 six-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 that were 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
Ship's Company	25 Officers 19 CPO 372 enlisted
Troop Berthing	25 Officers 13 SNCO 362 enlisted
Combat System	AN/SPS-49 2-D Air Search Radar AN/SPS-67 2-D Surface Search Radar AN/SLQ-32 Electronics Countermeasure Set SPS-64 Surface Navigation Radar MK-36 MOD 6 Decoy Launch System SLQ-49 Decoy Launching System MK-15 MOD 12 Block 1 Close-In Weapons Systems MK-38 MOD Hughes 25mm Chain Gun Six 50 Caliber Machine Guns SSDS (Ship's Self Defense System) that integrates all combat systems weapons.
Propulsion	4-16 Cylinder PC2.5V Diesel Engines Two shafts with Controllable Pitch Propellers Four 1300 KW Ship's Service Diesel Generators Built by Lockheed Shipbuilding Company, Seattle, Washington
Well Deck	440 feet by 50 feet

Homeported at Sasebo, Japan, USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42) is named for the historic Germantown District of Philadelphia. Germantown was founded in 1683 and was the site of an important battle in the American War for Independence, fought on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 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. Organization Structure: GERMANTOWN is the first LSD 41 class ship in the Pacific Fleet under the administration organization of Commander, Naval Surface Forces, U.S. 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, and the commander for the BELLEAU WOOD Amphibious Ready 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 Joe H. Parker was born in [REDACTED] but spent the majority of his formative years in Mount Lebanon, Pennsylvania. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh and was commissioned in September 1981.

Commander Parker served as Third Division Officer, Aviation Fuels Officer and Assistant First Lieutenant aboard USS MIDWAY (CV 41) from June 1982 to September 1985. He was then assigned as Navigator aboard USS MARS (AFS 1). Upon completing Surface Warfare Officer School's Department Head Course in Newport, Rhode Island, he served as First Lieutenant aboard USS TUSCOLOOSA (LST 1187) from December 1987 to July 1989. His second Department Head Tour was aboard USS GERMANTOWN (LSD 42), initially as First Lieutenant and subsequently as Chief Engineer, from July 1989 to June 1991.

Upon completion of Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM, he reported to the United States Army Command and General Staff College where he earned a Masters Degree in Military Arts and Sciences. His next assignment was at United States Central Command, serving in the Logistics and Security Assistance Directorate as Country Desk Officer for the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Oman. During Operation RESTORE HOPE, he served as United States Central Command's Liaison Officer attached to the United Nations Logistics Support Command, Somalia. He is designated as a Joint Specialty Officer.

His next assignment was as Executive Officer aboard USS RUSHMORE (LSD 47) from April 1995 to November 1997, deploying with the TARAWA Amphibious Ready Group. Remaining at sea, he transferred to Amphibious Squadron SEVEN as Chief Staff Officer, from January 1997 to January 1998, deploying with the BOXER Amphibious Ready Group.

Commander Parker's awards and decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (three awards), Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy Achievement Medal (two awards), and various other unit and campaign awards.

Commander Joe H. Parker assumed command of GERMANTOWN on 16 June 1998.

## II. CHRONOLOGY

01-02 Jan Underway Arabian Gulf conducting Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO)

02-07 Jan Inport Bahrain (Upkeep)

08-13 Jan Underway Arabian Gulf - ARG Ops

14-18 Jan Underway Arabian Gulf - MIO

19-28 Jan Underway Arabian Gulf - ARG Ops

29 Jan-04 Feb Inport Jabal Ali (Upkeep)

05-25 Feb Underway Arabian Gulf - MIO

25 Feb Outchop FIFTH Fleet

26-28 Feb Underway, Enroute Phuket, Thailand

01-05 Mar Anchored, Phuket, Thailand

06 Mar Transit Straits of Malacca

06-13 Mar Enroute Okinawa

14-15 Mar Inport White Beach, Okinawa (USMC Offload)

16-17 Mar Underway, Enroute Sasebo, Japan

18 Mar-05 Apr Inport Sasebo, Japan (Upkeep)

06-16 Apr Ship Service Diesel Engine Inspection

17-20 Apr Upkeep Sasebo, Japan

21-22 Apr Underway for Ammunitions Offload, Sasebo Harbor

23-26 Apr Inport Sasebo (Defueling)

27 Apr-06 Jul Selective Restricted Availability Sasebo, Japan

07-10 Jul Underway, Sea Trials

11-14 Jul Inport Sasebo

15-16 Jul Underway Enroute Pohang, Korea for Korean Integrated Training Program

16-17 Jul Onload for KITP; Pohang, Korea

18-21 Jul Underway conducting KITP exercises

22-23 Jul Backload Pohang, Korea

23-24 Jul Underway, Enroute Sasebo, Japan

25-31 Jul Inport Sasebo, Japan (Upkeep)

01-03 Aug Underway, Enroute White Beach, Okinawa

04-05 Aug Inport White Beach, Okinawa Onload for BLUE/GREEN ARGEX

06-17 Aug Underway, BLUE/GREEN ARGEX

18-20 Aug Underway, SOCEX

21-24 Aug Inport White Beach, Okinawa (USMC Offload)

25-26 Aug Underway, Enroute Sasebo, Japan

27 Aug-10 Sep Inport Sasebo, Japan (Upkeep)

11-13 Sep Underway, Enroute Yokosuka, Japan

14-26 Sep Inport Yokosuka, Japan (SSDG Repair)

27-29 Sep Underway, Enroute Sasebo, Japan

29 Sep-15 Oct Inport Sasebo, Japan (Upkeep)

16-18 Oct Underway, Enroute White Beach, Okinawa

19-23 Oct Inport White Beach, Okinawa USMC Onload for FOAL Eagle '99

24-25 Oct Underway, Enroute Pohang, Korea

26-28 Oct Inport Pohang, Korea for FOAL Eagle '99

29 Oct-01 Nov Underway for FOAL Eagle '99

02-04 Nov Inport Pohang, Korea (Backload)

05-09 Nov Underway Enroute Manila, Philippines

10-15 Nov Inport Manila, Philippines

16-17 Nov Enroute White Beach, Okinawa

18-19 Nov Inport White Beach, Okinawa (USMC Offload)

19-20 Nov Underway, Enroute Sasebo, Japan

21 Nov-04	Dec	Inport Sasebo, Japan (Upkeep)
05 Dec		Move to Akasaki Fuel Pier for CART II preparation
06-10 Dec		Underway, CART II
11-31 Dec		Inport Sasebo (Holiday Leave and Upkeep) 28 Dec #4 SSDG Run-In and Op Test

### III. NARRATIVE SUMMARY

USS GERMANTOWN began the New Year steaming in the North Arabian Gulf, attached to Commander, Task Force 51, conducting Maritime Interdiction Operations. The rest of 1999 proved to be a very challenging and successful year for GERMANTOWN and her crew. The ship and crew completed a no-notice deployment to Commander, Fifth Fleet in the Arabian Gulf. They also went through a successful Diesel Engine Inspection, a Selective Restricted Availability Period. Then, without stopping to catch a breath, they rolled right into Korean Integrated Training Program Operations, Blue/Green Work-ups and SOCEX. The ship and crew also participated in Exercise FOAL Eagle '99 followed by a very successful port visit to Manila, Philippines. They finished up the year by successfully completing Command Assessment and Readiness Training II.

For much of the first quarter 1999, GERMANTOWN was steaming in the Arabian Gulf as part of a no-notice deployment that began in November of the previous year. There were a few scattered port visits, most of which were downplayed by the heightened security measures brought about by tensions in the Middle East. There were lots of long hours while GERMANTOWN worked hard to conduct Maritime Interdiction Operations and a few Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) exercises. However, the crew was treated to one of the more important American traditions, the Superbowl. GERMANTOWN's Moral Welfare and Recreation department brought in a large projection screen system and the crew sat on the pier in Jabal Ali, United Arab Emirates, in the chilly desert night and rooted for their favorite team in the game of the year.

Towards the tail end of February, it was time for GERMANTOWN, along with USS BELLEAU WOOD (LHA-3) and USS DUBUQUE (LPD-8), to set a course back toward the Indian Ocean. This course eventually led the ARG to Phuket, Thailand, where everyone enjoyed five full days of relaxation in the tiny resort town. Then, on March 6, all three ships pulled up anchor and headed back toward White Beach, Okinawa, to offload their embarked Marines.

On March 17, the Sailors of GERMANTOWN were given a hero's welcome as they maneuvered into Indian Basin in Sasebo, Japan for the first time in nearly five months. Fire engines shot streams of red and blue water high into the air on both sides of the basin as GERMANTOWN sailors proudly manned the rails. Soon, the brow was down and everyone but the duty section, left the ship to begin a leave and upkeep stand down period.

As the stand down continued for the rest of the crew, the Engineering Department got back to work April 6, for a major Diesel Engine Inspection on No. 4 Ship's Service Diesel Generator (#4 SSDG). This process involved taking apart the massive generator piece-by-piece and checking everything to make sure the engine was in top running condition.

The engineers, namely the Auxiliary Machinery Room #2 watchstanders, put in many long days to complete the operation. When it was all said and done, #4 SSDG was back together and up and running like new.

By April 16, most of GERMANTOWN's crew had returned from leave and it was time to begin preparations for the Selective Restricted Availability period. The first step was to offload all ammunition. This two-day operation took place just outside the India Basin in Sasebo Harbor. Then, the ship was back pier side and the engineers began offloading most of the ship's fuel oil. Meanwhile, the rest of the crew was transporting all personal gear from GERMANTOWN berthing areas to the Fleet Activities berthing barge, which was to be the crew's home for the duration of SRA. This also included moving all mess supplies and food stores from the ship to the barge. Amazingly, the Supply Department was able to coordinate this effort and accomplish the task in less than two days.

The SRA period brought about the many new installations and renovations. The biggest one being the installation of the Ship's Self-Defense System (SSDS). The SSDS required a major overhaul in GERMANTOWN's Combat Information Center and kept most of the weapons systems technicians busy throughout the three-month operation. There was also a major renovation project completed for two berthing compartments and one head. A team of 15-20 sailors and four civilian contractors dismantled all three spaces and built them back up from the steel deck plates to the barren overhead. This Habitability Team, comprised mostly of junior Sailors, put in many long days and even sacrificed weekend liberty time to accomplish this demanding assignment on time. And by the time SRA ended, all the major installments, renovations and repairs were complete, leaving only a few minor bugs to be worked out.

Before anyone had a chance to catch their breath, the operational tempo of forward-deployed forces was back again. Immediately after SRA, it was time to take the ship out and work out all the bugs and shake up any loose bolts. On July 6, GERMANTOWN and her crew got underway for four days of sea trials.

After only a few days back in Sasebo, it was time once again for GERMANTOWN and her crew to pull in the mooring lines and head out for another exercise. This time, the navigation team set a course for Pohang, Korea, where GERMANTOWN would take part in a Korean Integrated Training Program (KITP) with the Peleliu ARG and Korean Marine and Naval forces. After a few days of amphibious assault exercises, it was time to head back home.

Between July 21 and August 1 GERMANTOWN took a little time off for upkeep before heading out to White Beach, Okinawa, to onload Marines for Blue/Green Work-ups and SOCEX '99. This exercise consists of nearly three weeks underway for training on all aspects of amphibious warfare, between all members of the forward-deployed BELLEAU WOOD ARG. All ship's involved carried a specific type of amphibious assault vehicle. GERMANTOWN embarked ACU-5 and their LCACs, BELLEAU WOOD carried Beach Master Unit One, with Landing Craft Utility (LCU) vehicles, and the USS JUNEAU (LPD-10) transported the Marines' Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAVs). And,

throughout the duration of the exercise each ship took turns launching and recovering each type of vehicle, giving all ship's the necessary training to excel in total amphibious warfare.

By August 6, Blue/Green Work-ups and SOCEX were complete and GERMANTOWN was back in Sasebo to enjoy a two-week upkeep period. On September 11, the ship and her crew got underway again. This time enroute to Yokosuka, Japan to run the degaussing range near Yokosuka Naval Base. Unfortunately, just outside of Sasebo, the GERMANTOWN suffered a loss of one of it's SSDG's and had to extend their stay in Yokosuka for repairs before getting underway. This left them away from homeport for more than two weeks before returning September 29.

For the next two weeks, the crew sacrificed many early mornings to begin training for the upcoming Command Assessment Readiness Training II period before getting underway for Operation FOAL Eagle '99. With the busy month ahead during FOAL Eagle, the crew would have had very little time to prepare for the assessment period scheduled shortly after their return. Then, GERMANTOWN and crew headed back toward White Beach, Okinawa, to pick up their Marines and move on to Korea for FOAL Eagle. However, this time around the command control ship BELLEAU WOOD would not accompany GERMANTOWN and JUNEAU because of operational commitments in East Timor. This left GERMANTOWN carrying a bigger arsenal than usual including an A-5 Korea tank. There was not as many helicopter operations as normal with the BELLEAU WOOD gone, and one day of exercises was cancelled due to unsafe weather conditions. But, all in all it was a very successful exercise.

The end of the exercise did not mark the end of the underway trip, however. After the backload in Pohang, it was time for GERMANTOWN to set sail for Manila, Philippines. The entire crew along with embarked Marines, took part in one of the first major port visits to the Philippines since the United States withdrew it's forces nearly a decade ago. With all eyes on them, the crew excelled in every way, from the VIP reception held on board, to the community relations project at a Manila mission, to professional conduct while enjoying liberty in Manila City. This just showed once again, the pride and professionalism that is always a part of every activity, exercise and operation onboard GERMANTOWN.

After another stop in Okinawa to offload embarked Marines, GERMANTOWN headed back to Sasebo for the Thanksgiving Holiday and to make all final preparations for CART II. This meant cutting the Holiday Weekend short, but without reservation, GERMANTOWN Sailors went to work ensuring that CART II would most certainly be a successful venture. Among the hardest hit was Engineering Department, as they would have the brightest spot light shown on them during the assessment.

The day before inspectors from Afloat Training Group, Western Pacific arrived on board, GERMANTOWN moved to Akasaki Pier so they could run the engineering plant and have it all ready when ATG showed up. This turned out to work to everyone's advantage and passing the minimal equipment stage of the assessment visit became nothing more than a matter of time. On December 6, everything was cleared for getting underway and the real challenge began.

The next obstacle to overcome was the Main Machinery Space fire fighting. It took a few tries before we were deemed effective but GERMANTOWN came through and the initial assessment cycle was all but over.

Finally, CART II was successfully completed on December 10, and GERMANTOWN got the break they deserved for the upcoming Christmas Holiday. They finished out the year, resting in homeport reflecting on the events of a very demanding and equally successful 1999.