



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD 44)
FPO AE 09573-1732

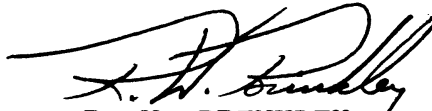
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From: Commanding Officer, USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD 44)
To: Director of Naval History
Subj: 1994 COMMAND HISTORY FOR USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD 44)
Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E
Encl: (1) List of Abbreviations
(2) Command Composition and Organization
(3) Chronology for 1994
(4) Narrative
(5) Welcome aboard pamphlet

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (5) are submitted.


R. W. BRINKLEY

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACU	- Assault Craft Unit
ADM	- Admiral
ARG	- Amphibious Readiness Group
BECCE's	- Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises
CIWS	- Close-in Weapons System
COMPHIBGRU	- Commander, Amphibious Group
COMPHIBRON	- Commander, Amphibious Squadron
CTF-61	- Commander, Task Force SIX ONE
DTE	- Detect to Engage
FAMFIRE	- Familiarization Fire
FLEETEX	- Fleet Exercise
FLT	- Flight
GQ	- General Quarters
INSURV	- Board of Inspection and Survey inspection
LCAC	- Landing Craft Air Cushion
Little Creek	- Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Norfolk, Virginia
MARG	- Mediterranean Amphibious Ready Group
MEU	- Marine Expeditionary Unit
MSSG	- Marine Service Support Group
NC	- North Carolina
OPPE	- Operational Propulsion Plant Examination
OPS	- Operations
PAC	- Pre-Action Calibration
SIMA	- Shore Intermediate Maintenance Activity
SOPA	- Senior Officer Present Afloat
TCAT	- Type Commander's Assessment Training
VACAPES OPAREA	- Virginia Capes Operating Area
VADM	- Vice Admiral
VIP	- Very Important Person

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

1. USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD 44) is the fourth ship of the Whidbey Island class Landing Ship Dock Amphibious ships. The ship's mission is to provide functional support in three areas; amphibious warfare, mobility, and command and control. This mission is accomplished through the transportation of elements of a landing force, landing craft, and support equipment to an amphibious objective area and to launch assault craft in support of amphibious operations.

2. USS GUNSTON HALL is permanently assigned to Commander, Amphibious Group TWO. The ship's type commander is Commander, Naval Surface Force, Atlantic Fleet. From 20 October to 31 December 1994, GUNSTON HALL was assigned to Commander, Amphibious Squadron SIX, deployed to the Mediterranean Sea under Commander, SIXTH FLEET, for Marine Amphibious Readiness Group 1-95. While deployed, the ship embarked elements of Beachmaster Unit TWO, Assault Craft Unit FOUR and elements of MEU Service Support Group TWO TWO.

3. From 1 January to 22 April 1994, CDR Michael P. Nowakowski was Commanding Officer, USS GUNSTON HALL.

4. From 15 April to 31 December 1994, Commander Ronald W. Brinkley was Commanding Officer, USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD 44).

5. USS GUNSTON HALL is homeported at the Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Norfolk, Virginia.

CHRONOLOGY FOR 1994

FIRST QUARTER

1. JANUARY - The year began with USS GUNSTON HALL in port, moored to pier 15 North, Little Creek. The ship, in the midst of the Christmas 1993 standdown, had half of the crew on leave. COMPHIBRON SIX, Captain A. L. Heisig, USN, was embarked as SOPA. Refueling on 7 January, the ship remained in Little Creek until 11 January. Underway on the 11th (COMPHIBRON SIX not onboard), GUNSTON HALL conducted flight operations, BECCE's, GQ drills, and Close-in Weapons System PAC fires in the VACAPES OPAREA until 14 January. In the evening of the 14th, the ship moored to pier 15 South at Little Creek. GUNSTON HALL remained at Little Creek until 31 January. From 14 January to 24 January, SOPA was COMPHIBRON TEN embarked in USS SPARTANBURG COUNTY. On 24 January, COMPHIBRON SIX embarked again as SOPA.

2. FEBRUARY - On 1 February, GUNSTON HALL was underway enroute to the VACAPES OPAREA (COMPHIBRON SIX not onboard). On 2 February, a major fuel oil leak was reported in Main Machinery Room Number One and the ship set GQ. Initially, it was reported that approximately 50 gallons of fuel oil had leaked into the bilges of the Main Machinery Space. Upon further investigation, it was determined that 2-3 gallons had leaked into the space and there was no damage. GUNSTON HALL conducted BECCE's for the remainder of the day. On 3 February, the ship returned to Little Creek and moored to pier 15 North. COMPHIBRON SIX embarked upon the ship's arrival. Underway on 7 February, the ship was once again enroute to the VACAPES OPAREA via the Lynnhaven Roads anchorage area. COMPHIBRON SIX was embarked as was the COMPHIBRON TEN Engineering Readiness Assessment Team in preparation for the upcoming Operational Propulsion Plant Examination. Throughout the day, the ship conducted LCAC operations with elements of Assault Craft Unit FOUR while at anchor. Later that evening, the ship got underway. On 8 and 9 February, GUNSTON HALL accomplished various BECCE's and GQ drills as well as "streaming" the AN/SLQ-25A (NIXIE). Anchoring again in the Lynnhaven Roads anchorage area on 10 February, COMPHIBRON SIX departed via small boat enroute to Little Creek. The ship's personnel launch (PL-2), which ferried the Commodore to Little Creek, could not be recovered due to inclement weather and the small boat was directed to return to Little Creek while the ship got underway. More BECCE's and GQ drills were completed on 11 February and the ship returned to Little Creek later that evening - after anchoring briefly in the Lynnhaven Roads area and moored to pier 16 South, Little Creek. From 12-23 February, the ship remained in port with COMPHIBRON SIX embarked (and SOPA from 18-23 February). GUNSTON HALL departed Little Creek on the 23rd for two more days of OPPE preparations - conducting numerous BECCE's and GQ drills. Returning to Little Creek on 25 February, the ship moored to pier 15 North and stayed in port until the 28th. COMPHIBRON SIX was embarked as SOPA throughout this period.

3. MARCH - From 1-8 March, GUNSTON HALL remained at pier 15-North with COMPHIBRON SIX embarked as SOPA. Underway on the 8th, the ship anchored in the Lynnhaven Roads area and conducted LCAC operations with ACU-4. Later that day, GUNSTON HALL got underway for the VACAPES OPAREA for more OPPE preparations. From 9-11 March, the ship conducted BECCE's, GQ drills, and a .50 caliber famfire. On 11 March, GUNSTON HALL moored to the Quaywall, Dog Leg in Little Creek - remaining there until 14 March. SOPA was COMPHIBRON TEN embarked in USS LAMOURE COUNTY. Underway again on the 14th, the ship accomplished more BECCE's and GQ drills with a CIWS PAC fire in the VACAPES OPAREA. GUNSTON HALL returned to Little Creek on the 16th and moored to the Quaywall, Dog Leg. The final underway preparations for the OPPE were completed on 18 March when the ship got underway to "trend" MPDE's and anchored in the Lynnhaven Roads area later that day due to inclement weather. Later in the evening of the 18th, the ship returned to Little Creek and moored to the Quaywall, Dog Leg. GUNSTON HALL remained there until the 21st. SOPA was COMPHIBRON TEN throughout this in port period. On 21 March, the Atlantic Fleet Propulsion Examination Board embarked to conduct the OPPE. GUNSTON HALL got underway on 21 March and anchored in the Lynnhaven Roads area. Underway on 22 March, the ship was enroute the VACAPES OPAREA to conduct the underway phase of the OPPE and returned to anchorage on 23 March. Later that evening, the ship moored to the Quaywall, Dog Leg in Little Creek. The ship received an overall adjective grade of "Good" for the OPPE. GUNSTON HALL was in port until the end of March when, on 31 March, a berth shift to Quaywall, East Little Creek was conducted.

SECOND QUARTER

4. APRIL - From 1-12 April GUNSTON HALL remained moored to the Quaywall, East in Little Creek with COMPHIBRON TEN as SOPA. On the 12th the ship got underway enroute to the VACAPES OPAREA with the COMPHIBRON TEN Pre-INSURV Assessment Team for a rigorous day of rudder checks, anchor tests, and combat systems tests. On the evening of the 12th, GUNSTON HALL returned to the Quaywall where she remained until 25 April. On 15 April, the prospective Commanding Officer, CDR Ronald W. Brinkley, reported for duty. Then, on 22 April, CDR Ronald W. Brinkley relieved CDR Michael P. Nowakowski as Commanding Officer, USS GUNSTON HALL. In attendance for the change of command were RADM L. F. Picotte, Commander, Amphibious Group TWO, CAPT K. H. Larson, Commander, Amphibious Squadron TEN, and the Commanding Officers of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND, USS SAGINAW, and SIMA, Little Creek. On 25 April the ship got underway for anchorage in the Lynnhaven Roads area to conduct Amphibious Refresher Training with the Naval Amphibious School, Little Creek. That day was filled with LCAC operations with ACU-4, wet well operations with ACU-2, and BECCE's. From the 25th to the 29th the ship got underway for the VACAPES OPAREA and anchored in Lynnhaven Roads 5 times while conducting numerous LCAC operations,

wet well operations, flight operations, and BECCE's. On 29 April, GUNSTON HALL returned to Little Creek and moored to the Quaywall, East. COMPHIBRON TEN was SOPA for all in port time during the month of April.

5. MAY - From 1-10 May the ship remained at the Quaywall, East in Little Creek. Underway on the 10th, the ship completed another day of Pre-INSURV assessment with COMPHIBRON TEN staff assistance; conducting rudder checks, a full power run, and an anchorage in the Lynnhaven Roads vicinity. Later that evening, GUNSTON HALL returned to the Quaywall, East. On 12 May, the ship refueled pierside and on 13 May, conducted BECCE's in port. On May 18, the ship hosted community leaders from the state of Massachusetts as well as COMPHIBRON TEN and Commanding Officer, ACU-4; the visitors were brought to the ship pierside via LCAC. The next day, 19 May, GUNSTON HALL hosted the Major General of the Bulgarian Army in company with the International Fellows of the National Defense University escorted by RADM L. F. Picotte, Commander, Amphibious Group TWO with more pierside LCAC operations. On 23 May, COMPHIBRON EIGHT broke his pennant in GUNSTON HALL as the ship got underway to conduct LCAC operations. Returning to port later that day, the ship stayed at the Quaywall, East throughout the remainder of May.

6. JUNE - From 1-6 June, GUNSTON HALL remained in port moored to the Quaywall, East. On 6 June, the Atlantic Fleet Board of Inspection and Survey arrived to conduct the INSURV Inspection. Also on 6 June, Lieutenant Commander George B. Hendrickson, USN, reported for duty as Executive Officer. The ship got underway that day to complete the underway material portion of the inspection; accomplishing a CIWS DTE, anchor drop test, thrust clearance measurement, full power run, steering checks, as well as various other shipboard systems tests. GUNSTON HALL returned to the Quaywall, East late that evening. The inspection was completed on 10 June and the ship was found to be "well presented and fit for further service". Remaining in port for the rest of the month, COMPHIBRON SIX visited on 17 June and the ship breasted out on 28 June to complete an incline experiment for stability calculations. On 22 June, GUNSTON HALL completed LCAC operations pierside and hosted community leaders from the state of Missouri. COMPHIBRON EIGHT visited on 29 June and was SOPA for all time spent in port for the month of June.

THIRD QUARTER

7. JULY - GUNSTON HALL spent the entire month of July moored to the Quaywall, East in Little Creek. On 8 July, the ship was visited by COMPHIBRON TEN. On 9 July, SOPA shifted from COMPHIBRON EIGHT to COMPHIBRON TEN. The ship was visited by COMPHIBRON TEN and Commander, Readiness Command SIX on 12 July. On 19 July SOPA shifted back to COMPHIBRON EIGHT. On 23 July, the ship conducted

LCAC operations pierside to host community leaders from the state of Nebraska who were escorted by Commander, Amphibious Group TWO and COMPHIBRON TEN. SOPA shifted to COMPHIBRON TEN on 24 July. Commander, Amphibious Group FOUR, RADM R. S. Cole, visited the ship on 29 July.

8. AUGUST - From 1-8 August, GUNSTON HALL remained in port at the Quaywall, East in Little Creek. On 2 August, the ship was visited by the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, ETCM (SW) John Hagan, USN. GUNSTON HALL conducted a GQ drill on 3 August and was visited by COMPHIBRON TEN on 4 August. Then on 5 August, the ship completed LCAC operations pierside in support of a visit from RADM L. F. Picotte, COMPHIBGRU TWO, COMPHIBRON TEN, and community leaders from the state of Mississippi. SOPA was COMPHIBRON TEN from 1-8 August. On the 9th, the ship got underway enroute to the Cherry Point Operating Area off the coast of North Carolina to conduct the pre-deployment Type Commander's Assessment Training under Commander, Amphibious Squadron SIX in company with USS NASSAU and USS PONCE. That day, LCAC operations and man overboard drills were accomplished. From 9-18 August GUNSTON HALL remained off the coast of North Carolina conducting LCAC operations, flight operations, small boat operations, and routine anchorages in Onslow Bay, North Carolina. On 18 August, the ship accomplished an underway refueling at sea evolution alongside USNS JOHN LENTHAL (TAO-89) taking F76 (DFM) and F44 (JP-5). Then, on 19 August, a CIWS PAC fire was completed just prior to entering Little Creek and mooring to Pier 15 North that evening. Berth shifting on 24 August to the Quaywall, West, GUNSTON HALL completed LCAC operations to host the Chief of Naval Operations, Hellenic Navy, VADM Iaonnis Stagas, who was escorted by RADM L. F. Picotte, COMPHIBGRU TWO. Later that day, the ship completed an ammunition onload. The next day, 25 August, GUNSTON HALL berth shifted to Quaywall, East and remained there in port until 31 August. COMPHIBRON TEN was SOPA throughout the in port period.

9. SEPTEMBER - GUNSTON HALL remained in port from 1-6 September moored to Quaywall, East in Little Creek. On 6 September, the ship got underway for FLEETEX and Joint Task Group Operations in preparation for the upcoming deployment enroute to the Cherry Point Operating Area under the tactical command of Commander, Amphibious Squadron SIX. That day the ship embarked elements of ACU-4 and steamed in company with USS NASSAU and USS PONCE. After a brief anchorage in Onslow Bay, NC, GUNSTON HALL moored to Berth 9, Morehead City, North Carolina on 7 September and unloaded MEU Service Support Group TWO TWO. Essentially, from 8-22 September the ship conducted Joint Task Group operations in preparation for the Marine Amphibious Readiness Group 1-95 deployment; LCAC operations, deck landing qualifications, flight operations, wet well operations, tactical formation training, and routine anchorages in Onslow Bay, NC were completed. On 11 September, TWO TWO MEU and COMPHIBRON SIX visited the ship and on 13 September,

COMPHIBGRU TWO visited. GUNSTON HALL accomplished two refueling at sea evolutions during this period as well - on 12 and 18 September with the USS DETROIT (AOE 3). Then, on 20 September, ADM Henry Mauz, USN, Commander in Chief, U. S. Atlantic Fleet visited the ship. Anchoring in Onslow Bay on 22 September, GUNSTON HALL offloaded its Marines and returned to homeport on 23 September, mooring to Pier 16-North, Little Creek. The ship remained in port until 30 September. On 27 September, Commodore D. Cantor, Commander, Amphibious Warfare, Royal Navy visited the ship pierside via LCAC - escorted by Commanding Officer, ACU-4.

FOURTH QUARTER

10. OCTOBER - GUNSTON HALL remained pierside at Pier 16-North in Little Creek from 1-20 October in preparation for overseas movement. On 17 October, the ship was visited by VADM D. Katz, Commander, Naval Surface Force, Atlantic Fleet. 20 October saw GUNSTON HALL, after a brief visit from COMPHIBGRU TWO, depart Little Creek as part of MARG 1-95 under Commander, Amphibious Squadron SIX. That day, the ship embarked elements of ACU-4 and steamed for Morehead City, NC in company with USS NASSAU and USS PONCE. Mooring to berth 8 in Morehead City on 21 October, the ship unloaded the MSSG element of 22nd MEU and was underway that day enroute to Rota, Spain. From 21-31 October, the ship conducted numerous GQ drills, deck landing qualifications, tactical formation steaming exercises, CIWS PAC fires, and a refueling at sea with USS DETROIT (AOE 3) on the 25th, while transiting across the Atlantic Ocean. On 31 October, the ARG completed a "Passing Exercise" with French naval units and GUNSTON HALL refueled at sea from the French Naval Ship DURANCE (A-629). Later that day, the MARG and the French units conducted tactical formation exercises.

11. NOVEMBER - On 1 and 2 November, GUNSTON HALL conducted deck landing qualifications and another refueling at sea with USS DETROIT (AOE 3). On 3 November, the ship anchored in Rota, Spain and could not enter port due to high winds. The turnover between MARG 2-94 and MARG 1-95 was conducted via small boat and the ship entered port on 4 November - mooring to pier 2, Berth 3 Naval Station Rota. During this period, COMPHIBRON SIX assumed duties as Commander, Task Force SIX ONE. Remaining in Rota until 7 November, the ship got underway enroute to Lisbon, Portugal and moored to the Cais Rocha de Alacantara berth in Lisbon on 8 November. GUNSTON HALL remained in Lisbon until 11 November. Underway on the 11th, the ship conducted flight operations for four days - transiting the Strait of Gibraltar on 12 November - and entered Toulon, France on 15 November. The ship moored to Pier 1A and offloaded its Marines in support of exercise Mayflower 1994 - remaining in port until 25 November. On 25 November, the MARG completed a short notice backload for immediate, unscheduled contingency tasking in the Adriatic Sea in support of Operation Provide Promise and was underway that day. GUNSTON HALL conducted GQ drills and deck landing qualifications throughout the rest of the month. On 25

November, GUNSTON HALL transited the Strait of Bonafacio and then on 27 November, transited the Strait of Messina - entering the Adriatic Sea on 29 November. That same day, the ship conducted a refueling at sea evolution with the USNS KANAWHA (TAO 196). GUNSTON HALL remained in the Adriatic for the last two days of the month.

12. DECEMBER - On 1 December, the MARG split and GUNSTON HALL, in company with USS PONCE (CTF SIX ONE embarked), departed the Adriatic enroute to the coast of Morocco. From 1-4 December, the ship completed numerous flight operations, GQ drills, small boat operations, and small arms FAM fires during the transit. Then, on 4 December, GUNSTON HALL anchored in Betoia Bay, Morocco to conduct exercise AFRICAN EAGLE '94. Essentially, from 4-12 December, the ship conducted many LCAC landings, tactical formation exercises with PONCE and the Royal Moroccan Naval Ship SIDI MOHAMMED BEN ADBELLAH (former USS BRISTOL COUNTY), flight operations, small boat operations, and routine anchorages in Betoia Bay. GUNSTON HALL detached from CTF SIX ONE upon completion of the exercise and was underway enroute to Tangier, Morocco for a port visit. Transiting the Strait of Gibraltar on 13 December, the ship moored to the passenger ship's Quay in Tangier later that morning. On 14 December, the U. S. Ambassador to Morocco, the Moroccan Defense Attache, and the Commanding Officer, Royal Moroccan Naval Ship SIDI MOHAMMED BEN ADBELLAH visited the ship. Underway on 19 December, the ship transited the Strait of Gibraltar and rejoined PONCE. 20 December saw the ship conduct a vertical replenishment and refueling at sea with USNS KANAWHA (TAO 196). Then on 22 December, the ship rejoined with NASSAU and the two ships began their transit to Barcelona. On the 23rd, GUNSTON HALL moored to the Levante pier in Barcelona, Spain. While in Barcelona, the officers hosted Lady Margaret Thatcher, former British Prime Minister, at a reception in her honor. Underway on the 27th, the ship conducted deck landing qualifications on the 27th, and GQ drills enroute to Valletta, Malta for a diplomatic port visit. On 31 December, the ship moored to the Deep Water Quay number 4 in Valletta, Malta and conducted LCAC operations in port for members of the local press. GUNSTON HALL was only the second ship in the past fifteen years to visit Malta.

NARRATIVE

FIRST QUARTER

The most prominent factor which affected the schedule of the ship and morale of the crew for most of the first quarter was the preparation for and conduct of the Operational Propulsion Plant Examination. Upon completion of the Christmas 1993 standdown, and after the crew became acclimated to life at sea again, much of January was spent underway training for and in support of amphibious operations. Also, many of the administrative requirements for the OPPE were completed.

The month of February and beginning of March were dominated with continued engineering examination preparations - fine tuning training for repair locker personnel and engineering watchstanders was of the utmost importance. When the inspection finally came, the crew of GUNSTON HALL was ready and it showed. The ship received an overall adjective grade of "Good" and GUNSTON HALL had overcome another hurdle.

Also in February, the ship learned it had been awarded its third consecutive type commander's Battle "Efficiency" ribbon and its second consecutive type commander's safety award. GUNSTON HALL has won the Battle "E" for every competitive cycle since it has been in commission.

SECOND QUARTER

The second quarter, aside from the Change of Command, was spent entertaining distinguished visitors, conducting amphibious training, and preparing for and conducting the Board of Inspection and Survey. In April, the ship welcomed a new Commanding Officer, Commander Ronald W. Brinkley, USN, and the week after, successfully completed Amphibious Refresher Training. The training provided by the Amphibious Warfare School was outstanding and the crew made significant progress toward becoming an operational, amphibious asset.

Throughout most of May the ship prepared for the extremely important INSURV inspection. When the inspection finally arrived, in the beginning of June, once again, the ship was GUNSTON HALL was found to be "well presented and fit for further service". The ship had passed its final in port inspection hurdle and was preparing itself for the upcoming deployment.

THIRD QUARTER

The month of July was spent entirely in port - entertaining more distinguished visitors from various states and foreign countries. The month moved slowly while the crew was ready to get underway and prepare for the upcoming deployment.

August and September were principally spent underway with the NASSAU ARG off of the coast of North Carolina. The training was intensive, exceedingly important, and a superb demonstration of the abilities of this fine ship and crew. The ship completed TCAT, FLEETEX, and Joint Task Group operations with aplomb and was ready for the MARG 1-95 deployment. The last part of the quarter was spent in port in preparation for the overseas movement.

FOURTH QUARTER

Beginning the quarter in a pre-deployment standdown, the crew was busy wrapping up final preparations before deploying to the Mediterranean Sea. On 20 October, the ship deployed with the NASSAU ARG for a six month deployment - the men of the crew were poised and ready to finally do their operational jobs.

November and December were spent visiting many fine ports and conducting unilateral exercises with various foreign countries. The time spent during these exercises was instrumental to the fine tuning of Team GUNSTON HALL. Also, the ship was an outstanding ambassador of the United States during five extremely important port visits.