



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

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

*Rec'd 9/20/00  
N/O disk*

5750

Ser ADM/172

21 Aug 00

From: Commanding Officer, USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD 44)  
To: Director of Naval History (OP 09BH)

Subj: **1999 COMMAND HISTORY FOR USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD 44)**

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12G

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization  
(2) Chronology for 1999  
(3) Narrative  
(4) Welcome Aboard Pamphlet

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

M. E. DONAHUE

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## COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

1. USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD 44) is the fourth ship of the Whidbey Island Landing Ship Dock class. The mission of the ship 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 preloaded assault craft in support of an amphibious assault operation.
2. USS GUNSTON HALL is homeported at Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Norfolk, Virginia and is permanently assigned to Commander, Amphibious Group Two. The ship's type commander is Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic Fleet. From April 14 to October 14, 1999, GUNSTON HALL was assigned to Commander, Amphibious Squadron TWO under Commander, Sixth Fleet while deployed to Mediterranean Sea with KEARSARGE Amphibious Readiness Group. While deployed to the Mediterranean Sea, GUNSTON HALL had elements of Beachmaster Unit (BMU) TWO, Assault Craft Unit (ACU) FOUR, and 26<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) Service Support Group embarked.
3. The Commanding Officer is Commander Grace Mehl.

## CHRONOLOGY FOR 1999

01-07 Jan Inport Little Creek. Holiday leave period

07-25 Jan Inport Little Creek. Diesel Inspections on all four Main Propulsion Diesel Engines and all four Ships Service Diesel Engines

25 Jan-03 Feb Underway Virginia Capes Operating Area (VACAPES) for Marine Expeditionary Unit Exercise (MEUEX)

03-10 Feb Inport Little Creek

11 Feb-04 Mar Underway (VACAPES) for Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX)

05 Mar-13 Apr Inport Little Creek. Prior to Overseas Movement (POM)

14 Apr Commence Mediterranean Deployment 99-2. Depart homeport

15 Apr Embark elements of 26<sup>th</sup> MEU at Morehead City, NC

15-25 Apr Transit Atlantic Ocean

24 Apr Underway Replenishment with USNS LARAMIE

25-27 Apr Inport Rota, Spain. Effected Port Controllable Pitch Propeller repairs

28-29 Apr Enroute Adriatic Sea to Rejoin Kearsarge ARG

04 May Underway Replenish with USS ARTIC

10 May Underway Replenishment with USS ARTIC

12 May Vertical Replenishment with USS ARTIC

17 May Underway Replenishment with USS ARTIC

23-27 May Inport Siracusa, Sicily for liberty

Enclosure (2)

27 May-08 Jun OPERATION ALLIED FORCE and JOINT TASK FORCE SHINING HOPE (JTF). On station in the Adriatic Sea off the coast of Albania

31 May Underway and Vertical Replenishment with USS ARTIC

10-14 Jun Offload of 26<sup>th</sup> MEU assets in support of OPERATION JOINT GUARDIAN at Litokhoran Beach Greece

14-17 Jun Transit to Aksaz, Turkey

17-20 Jun Inport Aksaz, Turkey for liberty in Marmaris, Turkey

20-24 Jun Transit to Haifa, Israel in company with USS KEARSAGE and USS PONCE

24 Jun-06 Jul Inport Haifa, Israel for a maintenance availability

06-15 Jul Transit to Thessaloniki, Greece

06 Jul Underway Replenishment with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN

13 Jul Underway Replenishment with USNS LEROY GRUMMAN

15-18 Jul Backload of 26<sup>th</sup> MEU

18-27 Jul Transit to Rota, Spain

27 Jul 10 Aug Inport Rota, Spain to conduct washdown vehicle maintenance and reconfigure MEU assets

10-13 Aug Transit to Ibiza, Spain

13-19 Aug Inport Ibiza, Spain for liberty

19 Aug SORTIE for Turkey following devastating earthquakes

19-22 Aug Transit to Sea of Marmara, Turkey

22 Aug-10 Sep Inport Hereke, Turkey in support of OPERATION AVID RESPONSE

10-13 Sep	Transit to Taromina, Sicily
12 Sep	Underway Replenishment with USNS JOHN LENTHAL
13-15 Sep	Anchored Taromina, Sicily for liberty
18-20 Sep	EXERCISE ATLAS HINGE at Cape Serrat, Tunisia
20-27 Sep	Transit to Rota, Spain
23 Sep	Astern refueling with USS CYCLONE
27 Sep-01 Oct	Inport Rota, Spain for washdown and agricultural inspection
02-12 Oct	Transit Atlantic Ocean en route Morehead City, NC
04 Oct	Astern refueling with USS CYCLONE and USS TEMPEST
07 Oct	Astern refueling with USS CYCLONE and USS TEMPEST
10 Oct	Astern refueling with USS CYCLONE and USS TEMPEST
12-13 Oct	Inport Morehead City, NC for 26 <sup>th</sup> MEU offload
13-14 Oct	Transit to Little Creek
14 Oct	Homecoming. Complete Mediterranean Deployment 99-2
14 Oct-13 Nov	Inport Little Creek. Post Deployment Standdown
14 Nov-16 Dec	Inport Little Creek
17-18 Nov	Berth shift from 17N to Quay Wall West, Ammunition Offload, berth shift to 17N
16-29 Dec	First holiday leave period
29Dec-31 Dec	Second Holiday leave period

## NARRATIVE FOR 1999

1. JANUARY - GUNSTON HALL was moored in homeport at Little Creek, VA for New Year's. Early in the month, engineering was preparing for the upcoming MEUEX and JTFEX. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, engineers commenced pre-deployment diesel inspections on all of the ship's Main Propulsion Diesel Engines. Inspections were completed by the 25<sup>th</sup>. The ship was underway for MEUEX from 25 Jan-03 Feb.
2. FEBRUARY - Underway Virginia Capes Operating Area, GUNSTON HALL conducted flight and well deck operations. GUNSTON HALL returned from MEUEX, and the crew continued preparations for final pre-deployment inspections. The ship was underway for JTFEX and MEU-SOC from 11 Feb-04 Mar. GUNSTON HALL was the first ship ever to deploy with 100% of the Mission Essential Task List (METL) completed.
3. MARCH - The ship completed JTFEX/MEU SOC 99-1. The Disbursing Inspection was conducted during the first week of March and the Postal Certification Inspection was conducted during the second week. The remainder of the month was POM and was spent on pre-deployment preparations.
4. APRIL - On the 14<sup>th</sup>, GUNSTON HALL deployed from Little Creek Amphibious Base. The next day, the ship was inport Morehead City for onload. Later that afternoon, the ship was in Onslow Bay to onload the Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAV). On the 16<sup>th</sup>, the ship began its transatlantic passage. GUNSTON HALL arrived Rota, Spain, on the 25<sup>th</sup>, having traveled 3647 miles. The ship was in port until the 27<sup>th</sup>. The ship got underway on the 27<sup>th</sup>, passing through the Straits of Gibraltar that afternoon, GUNSTON HALL transited the Straits of Sicily on the 29<sup>th</sup>. GUNSTON HALL crossed the 39<sup>th</sup> parallel at 0530 on the 30<sup>th</sup>, and arrived on station in the Strait of Otranto in support of OPERATION ALLIED FORCE and JTF NOBLE ANVIL.
5. MAY - COMNAVSIXFLT visited on the 1<sup>st</sup>. AAV and LCAC operations were conducted on the 7<sup>th</sup>. A 41-pallet vertical replenishment on the 12<sup>th</sup>. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, the ship conducted AAV/LCAC operations with USS KEARSARGE. An LCAC transfer to KEARSARGE occurred for maintenance on the 19<sup>th</sup>. On 22 May, the ship transited to Siracusa, Sicily, where the ship was inport

Enclosure (3)

through the 27<sup>th</sup>. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, a crewman was medically evacuated to Siracusa hospital, following a severe allergic reaction. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, GUNSTON HALL returned to its station. During the replenishment on the 31<sup>st</sup>, midshipmen embarked.

6. JUNE - On the 6<sup>th</sup>, the ship set course for the Aegean Sea. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, the ship conducted H-Hour on the beaches of Thessaloniki, Greece at 40-15N in support of OPERATION JOINT GUARDIAN. The offload was completed in 34 hours. GUNSTON HALL was anchored offshore from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup>, and the CO attended a commander's conference on KEARSARGE on the 12<sup>th</sup>. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, the ship left the anchorage for Turkey, and conducted a vertical replenishment. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, the ship arrived at Aksaz, Turkey, staying in port until the 20<sup>th</sup>. The ship got underway again for Israel, debarking the midshipmen during underway replenishment on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. GUNSTON HALL arrived in Haifa, Israel, on the 24<sup>th</sup>, beginning a maintenance availability. The crewman medically evacuated in Siracusa returned safely to the ship on 26 June as well.

7. JULY - Inport Haifa until 6<sup>th</sup>, GUNSTON HALL got underway for Greece to backload the Marines. On 15 July, USS GUNSTON HALL arrived in Thessaloniki, Greece, and commenced backload of the 26<sup>th</sup> MEU. Backloaded on 17 July, GUNSTON HALL transited to Rota, Spain, arriving on 27 July.

8. AUGUST - GUNSTON HALL was inport Rota for the start of the month. The ship got underway on 10 August for Ibiza, Spain conducting an underway replenishment and connected replenishment on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Inport Ibiza from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup>, GUNSTON HALL got underway for a rapid transit of the Dardanelles to assist earthquake relief operations in Turkey in support of OPERATION AVID RESPONSE. The ship conducted a night passage of the Dardanelles on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and reached the Sea of Marmara on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

9. SEPTEMBER - Following devastating earthquakes and flooding which destroyed Turkish cities and taxed local relief agencies' resources, the ship moored in Hereke, Turkey, rendering humanitarian assistance until the 10<sup>th</sup>. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, the ship transited southbound through the Dardanelles, performing another underway replenishment on the 12<sup>th</sup>. GUNSTON HALL anchored at Taromina, Sicily, on 13 September through 15 September. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, the ship rehearsed an amphibious assault at Cape Serrat, Tunisia, in support of EXERCISE ATLAS

HINGE. The ship conducted the actual assault exercise on the 19<sup>th</sup>, back-loaded the following day, and was underway for Rota on the 20<sup>th</sup>. USS GUNSTON HALL arrived in Rota on the 27<sup>th</sup>, and commenced washdown and turnover.

10. OCTOBER - On 1 October, USS GUNSTON HALL departed Rota for return transatlantic passage. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, the ship performed AAV and LCAC operations in support of offload of the MEU. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, the ship left Morehead City, arriving at Little Creek Amphibious Base on 14 October.

11. NOVEMBER - The crew stand-down continued, with the ship moored at pier 17 North, Little Creek. The ship shifted from the pier to the quay wall on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Ammunition offloads occurred on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and then the ship shifted back to pier 17 North.

12. DECEMBER - A medical emergency occurred in #2 main engine room on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. One crewman was evacuated by ambulance to the Naval Hospital after falling down a ladder well. The ship ended the year moored at Little Creek.