



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
COMMANDING OFFICER
USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD-49)
FPO AP 96665-1737

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From: Commanding Officer, USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard,
Washington, DC 20374-0571

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

- Encl:
- (1) Command Composition and Organization
 - (2) Command History Chronology, 07 January 1995 - 31 December 1995
 - (3) Chronology Narrative
 - (4) Current Commanding Officer's Biography
 - (5) Current Commanding Officer's Photograph
 - (6) Ship's Photograph
 - (7) History of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia
 - (8) Ship's Newsletter, The Musket, of August 1994
 - (9) Ship's Newsletter, The Musket, of November 1994
 - (10) Ship's Newsletter, The Musket, of January-March 1995
 - (11) Ship's Newsletter, The Musket, of April 1995
 - (12) Ship's Newsletter, The Musket, of July 1995
 - (13) Ship's Newsletter, The Musket, of September 1995
 - (14) Ship's Newsletter, The Musket, of November 1995
 - (15) GENADMIN/COMAFLOATRAGRUPAC SAN DIEGO CA 201230ZAPR95
(Command Assessment of Readiness and Training Phase IIB of
USS HARPERS FERRY)
 - (16) GENADMIN/COMPHIBGRU THREE/021010ZMAY95
(CART II SUMMARY FOR USS HARPERS FERRY)
 - (17) GENADMIN/COMAFLOATRAGRUPAC SAN DIEGO CA/101200ZMAY95
(COMNAVSURFPAC AVIATION READINESS EVALUATION
(ARE) USS HARPERS FERRY)
 - (18) GENADMIN/COMAFLOATRAGRUPAC SAN DIEGO CA/092345ZJUN95
(USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49) TAILORED SHIP TRAINING
AVAILABILITY PHASE I (TSTA I) POST TRAINING REPORT)
 - (19) GENADMIN/USS HARPERS FERRY/242320ZOCT95
(USS HARPERS FERRY PSA COMPLETION REPORT)
 - (20) GENADMIN/PACFLT PEB SAN DIEGO CA/140315ZDEC95
(OPERATIONAL PROPULSION PLANT EXAM (OPPE) IN USS HARPERS
FERRY)
 - (21) GENADMIN/COMAFLOATRAGRUPAC SAN DIEGO CA/182200ZDEC95
(TSTA II OF USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49))
 - (22) GENADMIN/CINCPACFLT/280201ZDEC95
(CINCPACFLT GOLDEN ANCHOR AWARDS FOR FY95)

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

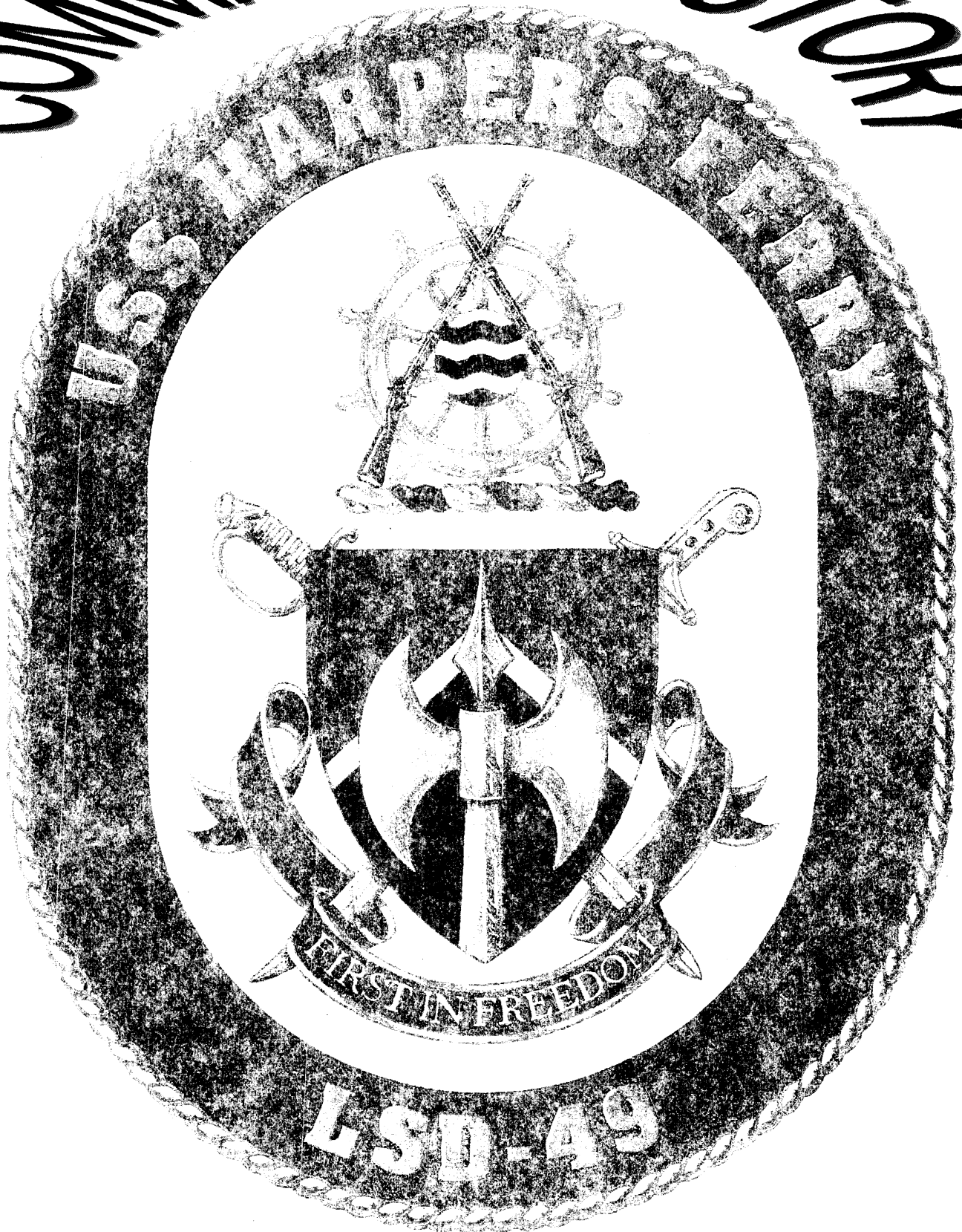
- (23) WHITE HOUSE letter of 30 November 1994
- (24) Current Ship's "Welcome Aboard" Pamphlet
- (25) LSD-49 Christening Program of 16 January 1993
- (26) USS HARPERS FERRY Commissioning Ceremony Booklet of 07
January 1995

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (26) are submitted.



C. P. SALSMAN

COMMAND HISTORY



07 JANUARY 1995 - 31 DECEMBER 1995

COMMAND COMPOSITION
AND
ORGANIZATION

Enclosure (1)

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

Mission: The ship's mission is to project power ashore by transporting and launching amphibious craft and vehicles loaded with embarked Marines and their equipment in an amphibious assault. HARPERS FERRY can also render limited docking and repair service to small ships and craft, as well as act as the primary control ship in an amphibious operation.

Organizational Structure:

Administrative Control - Commander, Amphibious Squadron Nine
(07JAN95 - 31MAR95)
Commander, Amphibious Group Three
(01APR95 - 31DEC95)

Operational Control - Commander, Amphibious Squadron Nine
(07JAN95 - 31MAR95)
Commander, Amphibious Group Three
(01APR95 - 31DEC95)

Name of Commanding Officer:

CDR C. P. SALSMAN, USN (07JAN95 - 31DEC95)

Ship's Homeport:

Naval Station, San Diego, CA

Name and Type of Ship:

USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49), Landing Ship Dock

CHRONOLOGY

07 JAN 1995 - 31 DEC 1995

Enclosure (2)

**USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49)
COMMAND HISTORY CHRONOLOGY
07 JANUARY 1995 - 31 DECEMBER 1995**

1995

JANUARY

07 - USS HARPERS FERRY COMMISSIONING CEREMONY
09 - MOVE TO ALGIERS, LA TO ONLOAD VEHICLES
11 - COMMENCED SAIL AWAY TO SAN DIEGO
12 - EMBARKED LCACs, PANAMA CITY, FL
25 - 27 PORT VISIT MAZATLAN, MEXICO
31 - ARRIVED IN SAN DIEGO

FEBRUARY

01 - 15 INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY
13 - 17 PRE-CSSQT INPORT
13 - 17 CART IIA

MARCH

06 - 10 NAVY FOOD MANAGEMENT TEAM VISIT
06 - 10 COMSOT TRAINING INPORT
13 - 17 INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE SURVEY
13 - 17 CSSQT INPORT
13 - 17 DOCKSIDE UNREP SIMULATOR TRAINING
20 - 24 CSSQT: UNDERWAY SOCIAL
27 - 31 FOSSAC SUPPLY VISIT
27 - 31 PSA SHIP CHECK
31 SELECTED EQUIPMENT VALIDATION

APRIL

01 ASSIGNED TO COMMANDER, AMPHIBIOUS GROUP THREE
03 - 07 TYT: UNDERWAY SOCIAL
03 - 07 UNDERWAY INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE SURVEY
10 - 14 CART IIB
12 AAV
17 - 21 INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY
17 - 28 HEAT STRESS REDUCTION SURVEY
22 - 22 COMMITTEE FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE (CCD) VISIT
24 - 27 SAFETY STAND DOWN
24 NATO NAVAL ARMAMENTS GROUP TOUR

MAY

08 - 12 TSTA I INPORT
10 ARE
10 - 11 PSA WORK DEFINITION CONFERENCE
15 - 19 TSTA I: UNDERWAY SOCIAL

22 - 26 TSTA I: UNDERWAY SOCIAL
30 - 02 JUN. TSTA I: UNDERWAY SOCIAL

JUNE

05 - 16 PSA SHIP CHECK
05 - 16 INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY
08 - 09 FINAL CONTRACT TRIAL PREPS: UNDERWAY SOCIAL
19 - 23 FINAL CONTRACT TRIALS: UNDERWAY SOCIAL

JULY

07 FAMILY CRUISE: UNDERWAY SOCIAL
08 UKRAINIAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE VISIT
09 - 31 JDS SAWAKAZE AND JDS HARUNA VISIT
13 OCT. POST SHAKEDOWN AVAILABILITY
14 MOVE TO NATIONAL STEEL AND SHIPBUILDING COMPANY
(NASSCO) SAN DIEGO, CA

AUGUST

01 WARRANTY PERIOD EXPIRES
17 COMPHIBGRU THREE, RADM GUNN VISIT
21 MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE NAVY,
ETCM(SW) HAGAN VISIT
22 - 23 PRE LIGHT-OFF EXAMINATION I
25 - 27 HARPERS FERRY VOLUNTEERS AT NAS MIRAMAR AIR SHOW
28 - 01 SEP. PRE LIGHT-OFF EXAMINATION II

SEPTEMBER

18 - 23 PRE LIGHT-OFF EXAMINATION III

OCTOBER

05 CINCPACFLT, ADM ZLATOPER VISIT
13 COMPLETED POST SHAKEDOWN AVAILABILITY
16 HARPERS FERRY/SUNNYSIDE ELEMENTARY PARTNERS IN EDUCATION
PROGRAM ADOPTION CEREMONY
17 - 18 SEA TRIALS: UNDERWAY SOCIAL
24 AMMO ONLOAD NAVAL STATION SAN DIEGO
30 - 03 NOV. TSTA II INPORT

NOVEMBER

06 - 09 TSTA II: UNDERWAY SOCIAL
09 - 12 VETERAN'S DAY WEEKEND: BROADWAY PIER SHOW SHIP
13 - 17 TSTA II: UNDERWAY SOCIAL
27 - 01 DEC. TSTA II: UNDERWAY SOCIAL

DECEMBER

01 HARPERS FERRY CHRISTMAS PARTY
04 - 08 OPPE PREPS

09 CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY
13 - 15 OPPE: UNDERWAY SOCIAL
15 - 07 JAN. HOLIDAY UPKEEP
18 - 23 HERO SURVEY
18 - 29 INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY
28 HARPERS FERRY WINS GOLDEN ANCHOR AWARD

Enclosure (2)

NARRATIVE

07 JAN 1995 - 31 DEC 1995

Enclosure (3)

CHRONOLOGY NARRATIVE

USS HARPERS FERRY was commissioned on 07 January 1995 at the Navy Landing at Woldenburg Park in downtown New Orleans, Louisiana. The Commissioning Ceremony of a United States Ship is a time-honored tradition in which a vessel is accepted as an active unit of the operating forces of the United States Navy. The Commissioning Ceremony has been the tradition of all navies for centuries, and the United States Navy since its beginning. It is the final and most significant event of the triad that brings a ship to life: laying of the keel, christening, and commissioning.

With the executive officer, LCDR Michael G. Barrington, acting as master of ceremonies, the ceremony was highlighted by the words of Principal Speaker Mark H. Morial, Mayor of New Orleans, the ship's sponsor, Mimi Daily, ordering the ship to "Come Alive" and be manned by the officers and crew, and breaking the Commissioning Pennant on the mast. At the moment of breaking the Commissioning Pennant, United States Ship HARPERS FERRY and the lives of all who serve in her became the responsibility of Commander Charles P. Salsman, Commanding Officer, USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49). Along with the officers and crew, he assumed the duty of making and keeping USS HARPERS FERRY ready for any service required by our nation, whether at peace or war.

After moving to Algiers, Louisiana to onload privately owned vehicles, the ship departed New Orleans for the transit to San

Enclosure (3)

Diego. Two LCAC's were embarked in Panama City, Florida before heading through the Panama Canal. All the plankowners became card-carrying members of "The Order of the Ditch", in recognition of this infrequently made transit. The ship made its first port visit in beautiful Mazatlan, Mexico from 25-27 January. The ship enjoyed the well-deserved rest and relaxation, and then continued home to San Diego.

HARPERS FERRY's Homecoming took place on 31 January. It was hard not to get a little choked up as the proud new ship sailed home. The seals stood at attention in the harbor, banners greeted the crew as they passed down the channel and under the bridge span, and the men of HARPERS FERRY manned the rails proudly as they sailed into the open arms of a magnificent "Welcome Home" reception organized by the wives of the crew.

After enjoying a brief stand down, the ship embarked on the initial phase of the training cycle which would prepare it for deployment and qualify it as a fully capable asset of the United States Pacific Fleet.

From 13-17 February HARPERS FERRY conducted CART IIA (Command Assessment of Readiness and Training IIA), and was evaluated as ready to commence basic level training.

CSSQT (Combat Systems Ship Qualification Test) was successfully conducted from 05-24 March. All objectives of the evaluation were met. CSSQT included technical support and training for CIWS, MK 38 25MM guns, radars and repeaters,

Enclosure (3)

external communications, internal communications, electronic warfare systems, and IFF. Both Close-In-Weapons-Systems (CIWS) Mounts were fired for the first time and successfully completed the mission of every combatant, rounds on target!

April was marked by many assist and training visits. An Underway Industrial Hygiene Survey, Heat Stress Reduction Survey, AAV (Aviation Assist Visit), and Command Safety Stand-Down were conducted. The ship was also honored to host official visits by the Committee for the Common Defense (CCD) and the NATO Naval Armaments Group. On 22 April the CCD came aboard as part of a four day trip to observe the Navy/Marine Corps team in action. The CCD is a non-partisan organization concerned with defense issues which counts several former Secretaries of Defense and Congressmen among its members. HARPERS FERRY led its distinguished guests, including Chairman James Courter and eighteen other members, through a detailed tour of the ship, focusing on the ships special amphibious capabilities. The NATO Naval Armaments Group included civilian and military representatives from many NATO member nations. The tour assisted in accomplishing the group's task of producing an allied naval engineering publication on ways to reduce costs of ships. Areas of special interest included problems specific to new construction ships and HARPERS FERRY's combat systems, engineering, and habitability.

From 08 May-02 June HARPERS FERRY completed five inport and

Enclosure (3)

fourteen underway days of TSTA I (Tailored Ship's Training Availability I). This was the first major evaluation and assistance period conducted by Afloat Training Group Pacific onboard HARPERS FERRY. The ship was evaluated and trained in all areas, from combat systems to engineering, and was found to be on-track in the basic phase of training. In addition, ARE (Aviation Readiness Evaluation) was completed on 10 May, qualifying HARPERS FERRY to conduct aviation operations with every helicopter in the Navy/Marine Corps inventory.

In June HARPERS FERRY conducted final evaluations and preparations prior to commencing its PSA (Post Shakedown Availability) in July. This included a PSA Ship Check from 05-16 June and FCT (Final Contract Trials) from 19-23 June. FCT was conducted by the Surface Trials Board of INSURV (Board of Inspection and Survey). FCT was the last in a series of trials conducted in order to document and correct discrepancies discovered during the commissioning process.

Prior to entering the shipyard for PSA, the crew had the pleasure of hosting family and friends for the ship's first ever Family Cruise on 07 July. This was a great opportunity for families to get a glimpse of what its like to serve onboard a U.S. Navy ship and begin to understand the rewards and hard work inherent in the naval profession.

On 08 July HARPERS FERRY continued its role as the ship of choice to host distinguished visitors. The Ukrainian Minister of

Enclosure (3)

Defense, Valeriy Shmarov, and Vice Admiral David B. Robinson, Commander Naval Surface Force Pacific Fleet were hosted to a tour and luncheon onboard. Shmarov's visit was part of a week long tour of United States military and private corporate facilities. Along with a contingent of U.S. and Ukrainian government officials, including Ambassador Y. Shcherbak, Embassy of the Ukraine, Shmarov was received by the officers and crew with full military honors. CDR Salsman led the group on a personal tour of the ship's state of the art medical and berthing facilities, machinery fabrication and welding shops, and shortened well deck and increased vehicle stowage area. Ukrainian Telenews covered the Defense Minister's visit to HARPERS FERRY for foreign broadcast services. The visit marked the first time a representative of a former Soviet Communist Republic was able to come aboard the new LSD 49 class of amphibious combatants.

Two Japanese Defense Ships, JDS HARUNA and JDS SAWAKAZE, arrived at the Naval Station on 09 July. The commanding officers of the U.S. Navy host ships, USS ESSEX (LHD 2) hosting JDS HARUNA and USS HARPERS FERRY hosting JDS SAWAKAZE, were on hand to greet their Japanese visitors. During the HARUNA and SAWAKAZE port visit, Japanese officers and enlisted personnel took in general tours and received training aboard U.S. Navy ships and at medical, technical, and warfare shore commands. In addition to their full slate of tours and training, the Japanese hosted a wreath laying ceremony at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, which

marked a reserved moment of grief for both Japanese and Americans who died in World War II. The Japanese departed on 31 July having left a strong impression upon both host ships. The crews aboard all the ships learned that all sailors, no matter the nationality, share a truly unique bond.

On 13 July HARPERS FERRY moved into NASSCO (National Steel and Shipbuilding Company) Shipyard in San Diego for its three month PSA. Many discrepancies discovered during Builder's Trials, Acceptance Trials, and Final Contract Trials were corrected during this maintenance availability. In addition to the Women-at-Sea Ship Alteration to accommodate the future addition of female crewmembers, SHIPALTs were performed on the following systems/equipment: H2S gas monitors, FO/LO strainer shields, HP air flasks, auxiliary boiler control system, auxiliary boiler burner, 400 Hz well deck circuit breakers, oily water separator, and the LCAC freshwater washdown system. The INMARSAT system was also installed, providing the ship telephone communications worldwide via satellite.

August found HARPERS FERRY preparing for LOA (Light-Off Assessment) with PLOE I and II (Pre Light-Off Examination) and hosting Commander, Amphibious Group Three and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy.

On 17 August Rear Admiral Lee F. Gunn, Commander Amphibious Group THREE visited HARPERS FERRY. The admiral was seizing his last opportunity to visit prior to transferring to become the

Enclosure (3)

Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel in Washington, D.C. in September. CDR Salsman led Rear Admiral Gunn on a brief tour of the ship, observing the revisions then underway during PSA. After the tour, RADM Gunn met separately with the chief petty officers in the CPO mess and the officers in the wardroom.

The highest ranking enlisted man in the Navy, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy ETCM(SW) John Hagan visited on 21 August. CDR Salsman and SMCM(SW) [REDACTED] led him on a personal tour. After the tour, Hagan met first with the chief petty officers and then with the entire crew. He addressed such issues as the future of naval enlisted leadership, the new evaluation system, advancement, retention, and quality of life.

The NAS Miramar Air Show was held 25-27 August. Over 50 E1 through E7 HARPERS FERRY personnel volunteered to help ensure the show was a success. Over 700,000 people attended the performance.

Admiral Ronald J. Zlatoper, Commander-in-Chief U.S. Pacific Fleet, visited HARPERS FERRY on 05 October. Donning their admiral hard hats, ADM Zlatoper and Rear Admiral Charles R. Saffell, Commander Amphibious Group THREE, were greeted by CDR Salsman. The Commanding Officer led them on a tour focusing on the changes made in the new cargo variant LSD and the modifications being completed during the ship's PSA.

On 16 October, CDR Salsman, LCDR [REDACTED], SMCM(SW) [REDACTED] and several of the ship's crew were on hand at Sunnyside

Enclosure (3)

Elementary School for the official Partners in Education Adoption Ceremony. The program has three principal purposes-- to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the military's role in the community, to acknowledge and utilize the wealth of talents and resources available from the United States Navy, and to develop a constructive partnership between USS HARPERS FERRY and Sunnyside Elementary. The ship looks forward to fulfilling these aims and enhancing the futures of local children for many years to come.

On 17 October HARPERS FERRY completed Post Shakedown Availability and left NASSCO Shipyard. Prior to departing, the ship successfully completed LOA (Light-Off Assessment), ensuring the ship could safely light-off main engines and get underway. The PSA was one of the best many had experienced during their careers, and the hard work by NASSCO will be evident in HARPERS FERRY for a long time.

From 30 October-01 December HARPERS FERRY completed one inport and three underway weeks for TSTA II. The ship's ability to train itself and its level of proficiency was again evaluated and again found to be "on-track in all areas."

HARPERS FERRY had the honor of being the Broadway Pier Show Ship in downtown San Diego over the Veteran's Day Weekend, 09-12 November. HARPERS FERRY left a positive impression on over 2,000 tourists over the three days the ship was open to the public.

The first annual HARPERS FERRY Christmas Party was held on

Enclosure (3)

Friday, 01 December at the Hotel Town & Country in San Diego. YN1 (AW) [REDACTED] and LT [REDACTED] did an outstanding job, guaranteeing a great time for the 296 who attended. A party was also held for younger members of the HARPERS FERRY family on 09 December. The Children's Christmas Party was held on the mess decks. Every child 12 and under, both in and out of the area, received a gift.

The ship also took the time and effort to care for the less fortunate in the area. As it did before Thanksgiving, HARPERS FERRY gave generously to the food drive run by the base chaplains. In addition to the food drive, the ship also participated in the Toys for Tots program in conjunction with the Marine Corps.

From 12-13 December HARPERS FERRY conducted its first OPPE (Operational Propulsion Plant Exam). The ship achieved an overall grade of satisfactory and displayed good cleanliness and preservation in all engineering spaces. The ship returned and hoisted a broom from the yardarm, symbolic of "sweeping" the inspection.

After returning from the holiday stand down HARPERS FERRY learned it had been selected as the winner of the coveted Golden Anchor Award for FY 1996. The Golden Anchor Award is given to the ship with the highest level of retention and career enhancement programs in the Pacific Fleet.

It is hard to believe how far HARPERS FERRY has come in its first year of commissioned service. The crew has improved and matured in every imaginable way. They have grown from a relatively inexperienced group of Sailors to what they are today-- true professionals at sea and the envy of the entire waterfront. From CSSQT to OPPE to LMA to FEP, HARPERS FERRY has impressed all comers in its short life. The ship looks forward anxiously to deploying in 1996, and showing the world what USS HARPERS FERRY is all about.

Enclosure (3)