



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, 08 January 1996 - 31
December 1996
(3) Chronology Narrative
(4) Current Commanding Officer's Biography
(5) Current Commanding Officer's Photograph
(6) Ship's Photograph
(7) Ship's Newsletter, The Musket, of June 1996
(8) Ship's Newsletter, The Musket, of August 1996
(9) Ship's Newsletter, The Musket, of September 1996
(10) Ship's Newsletter, The Musket, of October 1996
(11) Current Ship's "Welcome Aboard" Pamphlet
(12) LSD-49 Change of Command Pamphlet

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (12)
are submitted.

S. J. TANGREDI

USS HARPERS FERRY COMMAND HISTORY, 1996

I 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. Team HARPERS FERRY is composed of a seamless organization of Sailors and Marines striving for excellence in all warfare areas. Dedicated to pursuing innovations, Team HARPERS FERRY views itself as an evolutionary step towards the Navy's development of a "littoral supremacy ship" that combines the capabilities of cruiser/destroyer type ships with an amphibious well deck. In pursuing its mission, Team HARPERS FERRY has been guided by four command principles: (1) honesty and integrity in every action, (2) take care of our people, (3) know your job and equipment, and (4) strive for improvement.

Organizational Structure- USS HARPERS FERRY is attached to COMMANDER, AMPHIBIOUS GROUP THREE.

Name of Commander- CDR Sam J. Tangredi, USN

Permanent Duty Station- Naval Station San Diego, CA

II CHRONOLOGY

08 JANUARY 1996-31 DECEMBER 1996	
08 JAN - 12 JAN	TAILORED SHIPS TRAINING AVAILABILITY (TSTA) III UNDERWAY (U/W)
12 JAN - 15 JAN	BROADWAY PIER SHIP'S TOUR
22 JAN - 26 JAN	SHIPBOARD EXPLOSIVES SAFETY INSPECTION (SESI)
23 JAN	PRELIMINARY TRAINING AND READINESS INSPECTION (PTRI)
25 JAN	COMMUNICATION MATERIAL MAINTENANCE SYSTEM (CMS) ADVICE AND ASSIST VISIT
29 JAN - 02 FEB	LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT; FINAL EXAMINATION PROBLEM (FEP) (INPORT PORTION)

30 JAN - 31 JAN	MEDICAL READINESS EXAMINATION
05 FEB - 09 FEB	TSTA IV (U/W)
13 FEB - 15 FEB	FEP (U/W)
08 MAR - 22 MAR	(U/W) TO NEW ORLEANS, LA
16 MAR	CHOP SECOND FLEET
18 MAR	TRANSIT PANAMA CANAL
23 MAR - 25 MAR	INPORT NEW ORLEANS, LA
26 MAR	(U/W) TO PANAMA CITY, FL
27 MAR - 29 MAR	INPORT PANAMA CITY, FL
30 MAR - 08 APR	(U/W) TO ACAPULCO, MEXICO
30 MAR	EMBARK LCAC
04 APR	TRANSIT PANAMA CANAL
06 APR	CHOP THIRD FLEET
09 APR - 12 APR	INPORT ACAPULCO, MEXICO
12 APR - 15 APR	(U/W) TO SAN DIEGO, CA
16 APR	INPORT NAVSTA SAN DIEGO, CA
29 APR - 07 MAY	COMBAT SYSTEMS READINESS REVIEW
29 APR	CMS INSPECTION
02 MAY	MORALE, WELFARE AND RECREATION INSPECTION
11 MAY	(U/W) TO PEARL HARBOR, HI; BLT 3/1, MSSG EMBARKED
20 MAY - 22 MAY	INPORT PEARL HARBOR, HI
23 MAY - 15 JUN	(U/W) RIMPAC 96-1
16 JUN - 20 JUN	INPORT PEARL HARBOR, HI

21 JUN - 28 JUN	PCO TURN OVER WEEK
21 JUN - 27 JUN	(U/W) TO NAVSTA SAN DIEGO, CA
28 JUN	INPORT NAVSTA SAN DIEGO, CA
03 JUL	CHANGE OF COMMAND
08 JUL - 12 JUL	DEPERMING, POINT LOMA
15 JUL - 23 JUL	(U/W) FLEETEX 96-2M; BLT 3/1, MSSG EMBARKED
24 JUL - 26 JUL	AVIATION TECH ASSIST
29 JUL - 02 AUG	AMPHIBIOUS READY GROUP INPORT TRAINING
30 JUL	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SURVEY
05 AUG - 07 AUG	AVIATION CERTIFICATION
05 AUG	DENTAL READINESS EXAM
06 AUG - 07 AUG	MATERIAL READINESS EVALUATION
08 AUG - 19 AUG	(U/W) JTFEX 96-2; BLT 3/1, MSSG EMBARKED
19 AUG - 13 SEP	POM PERIOD
20 AUG - 23 AUG	HULL CLEANING
01 SEP	SHIP'S PICNIC
02 SEP - 12 SEP	HEAT STRESS REDUCTION VENTILATION SURVEY
13 SEP	FAMILY DAY CRUISE
16 SEP	CPO PINNING CEREMONY
17 SEP - 19 SEP	PRT
23 SEP - 24 SEP	(U/W) AMPHIBIOUS EXERCISES, CAMP PENDLETON
08 OCT	(U/W) READY FOR SEA TRIALS; EMBARK BLT 3/1, MSSG
10 OCT	(U/W) WESTPAC 96-97

18 OCT	CHOP SEVENTH FLEET
05 NOV - 10 NOV	C7F VISIT
10 NOV	(U/W) TO PENANG
12 NOV - 18 NOV	INPORT PENANG, MALAYSIA
24 NOV	CHOP C5F
01 DEC - 08 DEC	EXERCISE SEA SOLDIER WITH OMAN
10 DEC - 12 DEC	INPORT MUSCAT, OMAN
13 DEC	(U/W) TRANSIT STRAITS OF HORMUZ; PHIBGRU 3 VISIT
14 DEC - 18 DEC	EXERCISE EASTERN MAVERICK WITH QATAR
20 DEC	INPORT KUWAIT CITY, KUWAIT
20 DEC - 25 JAN	EXERCISE EAGER MACE WITH KUWAIT
20 DEC - 21 DEC	DISEMBARK BLT 3/1, MSSG
22 DEC	(U/W) TO JEBEL ALI
23 DEC - 26 DEC	INPORT JEBEL ALI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
26 DEC	(U/W) TO KUWAIT
28 DEC - 31 DEC	INPORT KUWAIT

III NARRATIVE

HARPERS FERRY's first event of 1996 was Tailored Ships Training Availability (TSTA) III, underway, from 08 Jan to 12 Jan. Following TSTA III, HARPERS FERRY moored at Broadway Pier from 12 to 15 Jan for Martin Luther King Jr. Day weekend. The ship was open to the public from midmorning to the afternoon from Saturday to Monday. Hundreds of visitors received a general tour of the ship. Each tour took about an hour and the crew received many compliments on their pride in giving the tours.

The Shipboard Explosives Safety Inspection (SESI) took place from 22 Jan to 26 Jan. The inspection was highly successful and resulted in 100% magazine certification and no major discrepancies.

On 23 Jan, the ship underwent Preliminary Training and Readiness Inspection (PTRI). On 25 Jan the ship passed a Communication Material Maintenance System (CMS) advice and assist visit.

The next few weeks were the last inspections of HARPERS FERRY's training cycle. From 29 Jan - 02 Feb the ship underwent the Logistics Management Assessment (LMA) and the inport portion of the Final Examination Problem (FEP). Supply department's excellent performance during the LMA resulted in zero major discrepancies and the ship was ready for the underway portion of FEP. Medical department passed the Medical Readiness Examination on 30 to 31 Jan.

HARPERS FERRY got underway again from 05 to 09 Feb for TSTA IV. The well deck operations included an LCU, MK 8 boats, AAVs, and LCAC. All evolutions went smoothly. The final test came during the underway portion of FEP from 13 Feb to 15 Feb. Successful completion of this event left HARPERS FERRY a fully capable deployable asset.

On 08 March, HARPERS FERRY undertook her first transport mission. An old Yard Patrol craft (YP) was loaded on to the flight deck and HARPERS FERRY steamed out of San Diego for New Orleans. After transiting the Panama Canal on 18 March, the ship moored at Naval Support Activity, New Orleans on 23 Mar. After unloading the YP and a few days of liberty, HARPERS FERRY got underway on 26 March for Panama City, Florida.

The following day, the ship moored at the Panama City commercial ship pier, which was notable since on previous visits most U. S. Navy ships anchored offshore. After a few more days

of liberty, the ship embarked two brand new LCAC and mine countermeasure equipment and was underway again on 30 March.

HARPERS FERRY then transited the Panama Canal for a third time on 04 April. The highlight of the mission was the Acapulco, Mexico port visit from 09 April to 12 April. On 16 April, the proud ship and crew disembarked the LCAC and returned to Naval Station San Diego.

The 02 May Morale, Welfare and Recreation inspection was notable due to the program receiving an outstanding grade of 100%.

The first real test of HARPERS FERRY began on 11 May when she set sail for Rim of the Pacific Nations (RIMPAC) 96. Elements of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit were embarked. The units were Lima Company Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 3/1, elements of Marine Service Support Group (MSSG), and elements of the Construction Engineers Battalion (CEB). After eight days of transit, all the Marines and their equipment were off loaded on the big island of Hawaii on 18 and 19 May.

HARPERS FERRY enjoyed liberty in Pearl Harbor from 20 to 22 May. On 23 May, RIMPAC '96 began. After embarking the Marines on 24 May, the Navy-Marine Corps team conducted multiple Amphibious exercises at Barking Sands, Kaneohe Bay. HARPERS FERRY also participated in exercising Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations, Marine Interdiction Operations, and operations with naval forces from Australia and Canada. RIMPAC ended on 16 June, when HARPERS FERRY pulled back into Pearl Harbor.

While in port Pearl Harbor, the new Commanding Officer, CDR Sam J. Tangredi reported aboard and began the turnover process. The ship was underway again on 21 June. After off loading all the Marines and their equipment on 27 June, the ship moored at Naval Station San Diego on 28 June.

The Change of Command ceremony took place on 03 July. On this occasion, the ships bell was christened. On 08 July, the ship got underway and moored at the Magnetic Silencing Pier at Point Loma. The deperming process took 3 days and HARPERS FERRY was moored back at the Naval Station on 12 July.

After embarking the elements of the 11th MEU (SOC), HARPERS FERRY was underway again on 15 July for FLEETEX 96-2. The FLEETEX involved combined Battle Group operations and amphibious landings. The ship pulled back into Naval Station on 23 July.

A series of examinations followed:

24 Jul - 26 Jul	Aviation Tech Assist
29 Jul - 02 Aug	Amphibious Ready Group Inport Training
30 Jul	Environmental Health Survey
05 Aug - 07 Aug	Aviation Certification
05 Aug	Dental Readiness Exam
06 Aug - 07 Aug	Material Readiness Evaluation

The last training evolution before deployment took place from 08 August to 19 August. Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX) 96-2 resembled FLEETEX, but involved a broader scenario. One

of the exercises involved disembarking the element of the MSSG for an operation in Yuma, Arizona. Through out JTFEX, Team HARPERS FERRY tested its capabilities for long-range and covert operations, including: long-range assault and recovery without use of communications or radars, night surface warfare actions, deception operations, and integrated AAV/LCAC operations. During JTFEX, HARPERS FERRY was referred to as the "stealth amphib" in message traffic. During JTFEX, SMC (SW) Wayne P. Clark became the first enlisted man to qualify as Officer of the Deck (Underway) in HARPERS FERRY.

The crew enjoyed the Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) leave period from 19 August to 13 September. The final highlight before deployment was the Family Day cruise on 13 September. This day was enjoyed by all and received a full page write up in San Diego's 20 September Compass.

On Sept 29 - Oct 3, inspectors from the COMNAVBASE Audit team came onboard for a surprise inspection of disbursing and personnel. HARPERS FERRY was awarded an overall grade of outstanding.

HARPERS FERRY spent two more brief periods underway before deploying. From 23 to 24 September amphibious exercises were conducted off Camp Pendleton. On 08 Oct the AAVs were embarked aboard for deployment.

On 10 Oct HARPERS FERRY was underway for WESTPAC/Arabian Gulf Deployment 96-97. HARPERS FERRY was attached to the ESSEX Amphibious Task Group. COMPHIBRON FIVE, Capt. W. J. Marshall, Commodore was embarked on USS ESSEX (LHD 2). Also sailing in company was USS CLEVELAND (LPD 7). Embarked on board the three ships was the 11th MEU (SOC), Col. J. R. Blöse, Commander Landing Force. Embarked on HARPERS FERRY was Lima Company, BLT 3/1, Capt. [REDACTED] Company Commander.

Also embarked were elements of MSSG, Combined Anti-Armor Team (CAAT) A, and LAV. Amphibious exercises were conducted in the vicinity of the Hawaiian Islands from 16 to 18 Oct. On 13 Oct 97, YN3 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] became the first HARPERS FERRY Third Class Petty Officer qualified in Enlisted Surface Warfare

At 0720 local, 19 Oct HT3 [REDACTED] was missing from morning quarters. Search and rescue efforts began immediately upon discovery of the service member's absence. The search continued throughout the night and by 1200 local, 20 Oct over 1500 square miles of ocean had been searched and the at sea SAR effort was suspended. NCIS continued the search on shore.

On 05 Nov, HARPERS FERRY moored at Sembawang Shipyard and enjoyed its first deployment port visit in Singapore. The ship was underway again on 10 Nov and moored in Penang, Malaysia on 12 Nov for another port visit. The port visits offered good liberty for the crew and were highlighted by community relation projects in both ports. On 18 Nov, HARPERS FERRY was underway again for the Arabian Gulf.

On 01 Dec to 08 Dec, HARPERS FERRY participated in Exercise Sea Soldier with Oman. Highlights of this exercise included AAV and LCAC launches and a visit by Omani Army officers. The crew then enjoyed a brief port call in Muscat, Oman from 10 December to 12 December.

On 13 Dec, HARPERS FERRY transited the Strait of Hormuz and received RADM C. R. Saffel, COMPHIBGRU THREE aboard. The following Day, Exercise Eastern Maverick with Qatar began. This exercise promoted good bi-lateral training with the Qatari forces. The exercise ended on 18 Dec.

On 20 Dec, HARPERS FERRY pulled into Kuwait City, Kuwait for the beginning of

Exercise Eager Mace. By nightfall the following day, the entire compliment of Marines was ashore for over 30 days of training.

On 22 Dec, HARPERS FERRY got underway for a port visit in Jebel Ali, UAE from 23 to 26 Dec. On 26 Dec, HARPERS FERRY was underway again for Kuwait. HARPERS FERRY pulled into port on 28 Dec and remained there until the end of the year. The final event of 1996 was a barbeque on the pier hosted by the Officers and Chief Petty Officers of HARPERS FERRY. The year ended with a lighted ball dropping from the starboard yardarm to a lighted sign that spelled out "1997".

Team HARPERS FERRY: First in freedom, forward from the sea.