



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
COMMANDING OFFICER  
USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD-49)  
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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, 01 January 1997 - 31  
December 1997  
(3) Chronology Narrative  
(4) Current Commanding Officer's Biography  
(5) Current Commanding Officer's Photograph  
(6) Ship's Photograph  
(7) Press Releases for 1997  
(8) Ship's Newsletter, The Musket, of July and December  
1997  
(9) Current Ship's "Welcome Aboard" Pamphlet  
(10) LSD-49 Change of Command Pamphlet

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (9) are submitted.

R. W. CLARK

**USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49)  
COMMAND HISTORY - 1997**

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## **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. 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. 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 Randy W. Clark, USN

**Permanent Duty Station-** Naval Station San Diego, CA

## II. CHRONOLOGY

### 01 JANUARY 1997-31 DECEMBER 1997

01 JAN 97 - 06 JAN 97	INPORT KUWAIT
06 JAN 97 - 15 JAN 97	MARITIME INTERCEPT OPERATIONS (Northern Arabian Gulf)
16 JAN 97 - 25 JAN 97	INPORT KUWAIT
27 JAN 97 - 01 FEB 97	INPORT BAHRAIN
03 FEB 97	TRANSIT STRAIT OF HORMUZ
07 FEB 97	CHOP SEVENTH FLEET
15 FEB 97 - 16 FEB 97	MID-CYCLE ASSESSMENT
17 FEB 97 - 23 FEB 97	INPORT FREMANTLE, AUSTRALIA
04 MAR 97 - 08 MAR 97	INPORT BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA
10 MAR 97 - 21 MAR 97	TANDEM THRUST EXERCISE
22 MAR 97	ENRT PEARL HARBOR
25 MAR 97	CHOP THIRD FLEET
02 APR 97	INPORT PEARL HARBOR/TIGER CRUISE
09 APR 97	MARINE OFFLOAD CAMP PENDLETON
10 APR 97	ARRIVE NAVSTA SAN DIEGO
10 APR 97 - 05 MAY 97	POM PERIOD
19 MAY 97 - 23 MAY 97	FCA INSPECTION
27 MAY 97 - 12 SEP 97	PHASED MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY
02 JUN 97 - 04 JUN 97	SHIP HANDLING SIMULATOR
16 JUN 97 - 20 JUN 97	PLOT-1

17 JUN 97	NAVOSH INSPECTION
02 JUL 97 - 03 JUL 97	SHIP HANDLING SIMULATOR
07 JUL 97 - 11 JUL 97	PLOT-2
14 JUL 97	MSD SEWAGE SYSTEM CERTIFICATION INSPECTION
11 AUG 97 - 13 AUG 97	LOA
15 SEP 97 - 19 SEP 97	LOGISTICS ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING REVIEW
16 SEP 97 - 25 SEP 97	ON -LOAD AMMUNITION (NASNI)
09 OCT 97 - 14 OCT 97	FLEET WEEK (San Francisco)
04 DEC 97 - 05 DEC 97, 08 DEC 97 - 10 DEC 97	CART II (INPORT)
13 DEC 97	CHANGE OF COMMAND CEREMONY
16 DEC 97 - 31 DEC 97	HOLIDAY LEAVE AND UPKEEP PERIOD

### III. NARRATIVE

For USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49), 1997 was a year of change. The beginning of the year saw the ship nearing the halfway point of her first Western Pacific, Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf deployment. After spending the first week of the new year in port in Kuwait, HARPERS FERRY got underway on January 6, to take part in United Nations sanctioned Maritime Intercept Operations in the Northern Arabian Gulf.

With the aid of Coast Guard specialists, HARPERS FERRY trained a Visit, Board, Search and Seizure team to carry out her end of the MIO Operations. The operations were designed to stop and search ships attempting to violate United Nations sanctions against Iraq by smuggling supplies such as oil, tires and dates into the country. During the operations, HARPERS FERRY stopped five vessels, twice preventing the illegal entry of oil into Iraq.

On January 16, HARPERS FERRY returned to Kuwait to retrieve the Marines and Sailors attached to the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit ashore who were participating in Exercise Eager Mace. While ashore in Kuwait, liberty for HARPERS FERRY was severely restricted due to the constant threat of terrorist activity. After leaving Kuwait on January 25, however, the ship entered port in Bahrain two days later, where liberty was considerably more lenient and most of the crew were able to go ashore to watch the Super Bowl.

Bahrain was HARPERS FERRY's last stop in the Arabian Gulf. After leaving port on February 1, HARPERS FERRY was free to finally begin to head towards home. The ship passed through the Strait of Hormuz on February 3, more than two months after first entering the Gulf. Four days later, on February 7, HARPERS FERRY chopped to Commander, 7th Fleet when she entered the Indian Ocean.

Ahead for the well-traveled ship was the prospect of liberty in Australia, but first, a very important inspection had to be prepared for and conquered. On the 15th and 16th of February, the ship was examined for the Mid-Cycle Assessment, which tested primarily her engineering and damage control readiness. After scoring very well on this evaluation, HARPERS FERRY entered the small town of Fremantle, Australia, just south of Perth, the capital city of Western Australia.

After one week in Perth, the ship set out for Brisbane, a beautiful city on the country's Gold Coast, in Queensland, arriving there on March 4. HARPERS FERRY was originally scheduled for only five days in Brisbane, but her departure was delayed by Tropical Cyclone Justin, the worst storm to hit the East Coast of the country in over 50 years.

When HARPERS FERRY finally did put out to sea, on the morning of March 11, Justin had forced the bulk of the Australian and American forces scheduled to participate in Operation Tandem Thrust, a joint, combined amphibious exercise, to remain in port. Eventually, some of the scheduled elements of the exercise were completed, but the weather had too great an effect for a true demonstration of HARPERS FERRY's power. Before departing Shoalwater Bay, HARPERS FERRY received a special visit from the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Jay Johnson. During his visit, he spoke to the crew, presented awards and performed a reenlistment ceremony. On March 22, after more than five months at sea, HARPERS FERRY turned towards home.

After chopping back through to Commander 3rd Fleet control on March 25th, HARPERS FERRY arrived in Pearl Harbor on April 2. On that day, Secretary of the Navy Hon. John Dalton paid a visit to HARPERS FERRY, commending the ship's Captain and crew on a job well done on her first deployment. In Hawaii, she also picked up the friends and family members who had volunteered to be part of the ship's Tiger Cruise, which is a program which allows fathers, sons, brothers and male friends to ride with their sponsor's ship from Hawaii to San Diego.

On the morning of April 9, the ship offloaded her Marines and their equipment on the shores of Camp Pendleton. And the next morning, April 10, after six months away, HARPERS FERRY moored at Pier Six at Naval Station, San Diego, to a barrage of local reporters and joyous family members.

The month following the end of deployment was a relaxed one for the crew. Following the leave period granted to HARPERS FERRY, the ship's first task was to off-load her ammunition, which she completed on May 12 and May 13. One week later, HARPERS FERRY began her FCA Inspection, which lasted from May 19 through May 23. Upon passing this examination, on May 27, HARPERS FERRY sailed to Pier 9, to begin an extensive Phased Maintenance Availability (PMA) period in the Naval Station yards.



During PMA, HARPERS FERRY had one of the most advanced weapons systems in the world installed. Called the Rolling Air-Frame Missile/Ship's Self-Defense System (RAM/SSDS), the system is almost brand new, and in fact, HARPERS FERRY became the first ship on the West Coast and only the third ship in the Navy to receive RAM/SSDS.

While in the yards, HARPERS FERRY still had several important inspections and reviews to pass. From June 2 through June 4 and July 2nd and 3rd, HARPERS FERRY went through the ship handling simulator. From June 16 to June 20 the ship contended with Pre-Light Off Training One (PLOT I) and, from July 7 through July 11, Pre-Light Off Training Two (PLOT II). On June 17 the ship passed her NAVOSH Inspection and on July 14, aced her MSD Sewage System Certification Inspection.

One of the most important inspections happened between the 11th and 13th of August, the Light-Off Assessment (LOA), which tested HARPERS FERRY's damage control and engineering plant status. HARPERS FERRY scored a satisfactory on this inspection, which was outstanding considering the extremely difficult nature of LOA. Also, from September 15 through 19, the ship conducted the Logistics Administrative Training Review.

The ship's PMA ended on October 1 and HARPERS FERRY returned to Pier Six. On October 7, she was underway again, this time bound north for San Francisco, where she would serve as the flagship during the city's annual Fleet Week celebration. During the ceremonies, HARPERS FERRY hosted San Francisco Mayor, Hon. Willie Brown and various other dignitaries for a parade of ships entering San Francisco Bay and an aerial show by the renowned Blue Angels.

On 26 October, HARPERS FERRY hosted Rear Admiral Remp, Commander, Theater Air Defense, for an operational demonstration of the SSDS System.

HARPERS FERRY's attention shifted to the extremely important Command Assessment of Readiness and Training Two (CART II) inspection, which ran from December 1 through December 5. The ship scored well in all areas of this inspection, which not only spoke well for her crew, but also provided one final feather in the vaunted cap of her Captain, CDR Sam J. Tangredi.

For one week later, on December 13, CDR Tangredi passed command of HARPERS FERRY to CDR Randy W. Clark, of Birmingham, Alabama, and moved on to take duty as the Director of the

Strategy and Concepts Branch of the Navy, working in the Pentagon under the Chief of Naval Operations.

HARPERS FERRY's crew began her Christmas leave on December 16, which is where they were when 1997 ended. It was a year of change in many ways, beginning with the final months of her first deployment, through the obvious structural changes that took place during the PMA, and ending with a new Captain, a new energy and a new commitment to be First in Freedom, Forward From the Sea.