



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49)
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W/O Clark

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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 1998 - 31
December 1998
(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) Current Ship's "Welcome Aboard" Pamphlet

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (8) are
submitted.


R. W. CLARK

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, 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) taking care of the people
- (3) know your job and equipment
- (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 1998-31 DECEMBER 1998

01 JAN 98 – 04 JAN 98	HOLIDAY LEAVE
05 JAN 98 – 30 JAN 98	TSTA I
27 JAN 98 – 27 JAN 98	RAM MK 49 GMLS TEST
02 FEB 98 – 27 FEB 98	CSSQT / CSOSS IMPLEMENTATION
02 MAR 98 – 27 MAR 98	TSTA II
05 MAR 98 – 05 MAR 98	CMS INSPECTION
06 APR 98 – 10 APR 98	LMA
06 APR 98 – 12 APR 98	EMBARKED COMPHIBRON SEVEN
10 APR 98 – 13 APR 98	COMNAVBASE DISBURSING AUDIT
22 APR 98 – 24 APR 98	CSQT / CHAFF FIRING
27 APR 98 – 28 APR 98	ECERT
30 APR 98 – 30 APR 98	RAM MISSILE TEST FIRING
29 APR 98 – 01 MAY 98	CSQT
05 MAY 98 – 07 MAY 98	TSTA III
19 MAY 98 – 21 MAY 98	FEP
01 JUN 98 – 04 JUN 98	COMPTUEX 98-14
01 JUN 98 – 12 JUN 98	EMBARKED COMDESRON ONE
05 JUN 98 – 08 JUN 98	PORTLAND ROSE FESTIVAL
13 JUL 98 – 12 AUG 98	RIMPAC 98
03 AUG 98 – 5 AUG 98	IN PORT PEARL HARBOR
13 AUG 98 – 13 AUG 98	SAN DIEGO FLEET WEEK PASS IN REVIEW

17 AUG 98 – 03 SEP 98	3 & 4 SSDG INSPECTION
01 SEP 98 – 01 SEP 98	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SURVEY
02 SEP 98 – 02 SEP 98	DENTAL READINESS EVALUATION
03 SEP 98 – 11 SEP 98	1 & 2 SSDG INSPECTION
14 SEP 98 – 25 SEP 98	FLEET-EX 98
28 SEP 98 – 28 SEP 98	PRE-DEPLOYMENT SEMINAR FOR FAMILIES
28 SEP 98 – 30 SEP 98	SESI
30 SEP 98 – 01 OCT 98	FINAL MEDICAL READINESS ASSESMENT
05 OCT 98 – 15 OCT 98	SOC EX / SOC CERT
16 OCT 98 – 16 OCT 98	PRE-DEPLOYMENT AMMO ONLOAD
17 OCT 98 – 17 NOV 98	POM
20 OCT 98 – 01 NOV 98	INDUSTRIAL HYGENE SURVEY
05 DEC 98 – 05 DEC 98	DEPLOY WESTPAC 98-99
12 DEC 98 – 14 DEC 98	IN PORT PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII
20 DEC 98 – 20 DEC 98	CHOP 7TH FLEET
30 DEC 98 – 31 DEC 98	ANCHORED HONG KONG

III. NARRATIVE

For the USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49), 1998 was a year of dedicated inter-deployment training, assessments and drilling evolutions which culminating in her second Western Pacific / Indian Ocean / Arabian Gulf Deployment in December. As a fruit of her labor, the crew was awarded the cherished Commander Naval Surface Forces Pacific Fleet's Battle Efficiency Award.

After finishing the holiday leave cycle on January 6th, 1998, HARPERS FERRY rolled right into the first phase of the Tailored Ship's Training Availability (TSTA I). Members of training teams from Afloat Training Group Pacific came onboard from January 5th -30th to re-establish the crew's level of proficiency and start honing the ship's warfighting capabilities. The crew proved ready to meet the challenge scoring a satisfactory grade on the Training Availability. TSTA II followed not too far behind from March 2-27. Again, the ship continued to excel receiving an overall satisfactory score for the availability.

With the first phase of TSTA complete the ship's Operations department started to shake down the newly installed Ship's Self Defense System (SSDS) and Rolling Airframe Missile (RAM) systems during the Combined Ship's Qualification Trails (CSQT). Communications upgrades were implemented and exercised (Combat Systems System Operating Sequence). The shakedown and training culminated in a direct hit on a single salvo firing of the newly installed MK 49 RAM missile system. This success set the tone for the remainder of the year's exercises and accomplishments.

In early April, the Ship's Supply department was put through its paces during the Logistics Management Assessment (LMA). Proving no task was too difficult for the experts in Fiscal and Food management, they received an overall grade of outstanding. The LMA might have been over on the 10th, but the inspections wanted to see more, so Commander Naval Base San Diego conducted a surprise disbursing audit in which the HARPERS FERRY Disbursing Office scored again, an overall outstanding. These two inspections combined with a lot of hard and precise work throughout the year that led to the Supply Department being awarded her fourth successive "Blue 'E'" for Logistics Management.

Nearly simultaneously with the myriad of topside assessments and reviews taking place, the quiet steamers in the main spaces were preparing their own materiel for review. Completely successful in their objectives, on 27 and 28 April 98, the Harpers Ferry Engineering Department earned its Engineering Certification. This two-day evolution certifying the ship "safe to steam" tested the engineers through every wicket of combat mobility and every aspect of casualty control.

In early May the ship entered TSTA III and once again rose to the occasion to display her warfighting prowess earning an overall grade of satisfactory for the availability. With the successful completion of TSTA II the ship entered into the Final Evaluation Phase (FEP), where the crew displayed with pride all it had learned in the last year for the inspectors and assessors to see. They performed markedly well during the Final Evaluation Phase with all mission areas of the ship qualifying at the FEP level.

After all the initial assessments of combat capability were determined and the crew was certified ready, the HARPERS FERRY embarked Commander Destroyer

Squadron One staff for execution of Combined Training Underway Exercise 98 – 14 (COMPTUEX 98-14). In company with five other ships, the crew steamed north conducting multi-ship exercises while en route to Portland, Oregon. After a four-day transit along the West Coast then down the Columbia and Willamette Rivers, the ship hosted the festivities for the city of Portland at the 1998 Portland Rose Festival. While moored in downtown Portland the ship hosted over 5,000 guest tours allowing the crew to show off the West Coast premier amphibious dock landing ship.

Upon the ship's return from the Portland Rose Festival the crew continued preparations for Rim of the Pacific Exercise '98 (RIMPAC '98). Embarking elements of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit; Echo Company Battalion Landing Team 2/1; 3rd AAV Division; a crew from Assault Craft Unit Five (LCAC 59); and CORTRAMID Midshipmen from the US Naval Academy, the ship departed San Diego on 13 July for the month long multinational exercise conducted in the waters off the Hawaiian Islands. In company with USS Boxer and USS Cleveland, the exercise finale was USS Harpers Ferry driving the Line of Departure and conducting a full scale "Charlie-on-Time" Amphibious landing on the beach of Pacific Missile Range Facility, Barking Sands Kauai. After the amphibious phase of the exercise was complete the crew of the Harpers Ferry enjoyed Hawaii for two days of well-deserved liberty. Not home yet, the Harpers Ferry was directed by her ISIC, Amphibious Group Three, to conduct a precise LCAC launch, abeam Broadway pier in San Diego Harbor, commemorating San Diego Fleet Week 1998.

Upon return from RIMPAC '98 with only one additional month of at sea exercises with the embarked USMC personnel remaining, the crew prepared themselves

for the final stages of work-ups and certification prior to deployment. In Mid November, the crew began final Preparations for Oversea Movement (POM). Balancing the workload and quality of life family time, they enjoyed some final days at home prior to the impending December 5th deployment. Still setting the pace for the Pacific, demonstrating the steady strain approach to material management, the crew achieved yet another milestone deploying 5 December 1998, Casualty Report (CASREP) free.

While en route to the preplanned USMC sustainment training off Kaneohe Bay Hawaii, weather conditions deteriorated not permitting a surface offload. Fortunately, the crew received an unexpected port visit to Pearl Harbor to debark the Marines for ground training. While the Marines trained the crew was able to slip away for a few days of rest and relaxation before the ship continued on deployment scheduled to take her to the West Coast of Africa and the Arabian Gulf.

Having completed a successful transit of the Pacific Ocean and South China Sea, The productive year of 1998 ended for the HARPERS FERRY while the ship was anchored just a few miles from Fenwick pier, in Hong Kong Harbor. The crew rang out the old year and in the new, while on liberty in Hong Kong and Kowloon, China.