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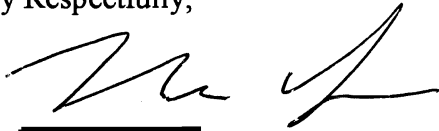
FROM: USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49)
TO: DIRECTOR, NAVAL HISTORICAL CENTER

SUBJECT: COMMAND HISTORY FOR USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49)

Director,

The following is an accurate and complete command history for USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49) from APR02 to MAR03.

Very Respectfully,



ENS [REDACTED]
HARPERS FERRY Public Affairs Officer



COMMANDER, USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD-49)

Command History

I. Command Composition and Organization:

- *Commanding Officer:* Commander Bradley D. Martin
- *Executive Officer:* Lieutenant Commander John P. Sanford
- *Command Master Chief:* CMDCM (SW) Robert L. Palmer

- UIC: 21852

HARPERS FERRY is assigned Forward Deployed Naval Forces. The new compliment consists of a total of 30 officers and 278 enlisted personnel, with the ability to embark approximately 500 Marines.

1. ***HOMEPORT: Sasebo, Japan:*** Home of the headquarters of Amphibious Force SEVENTH FLEET Detachment Sasebo, and the Commander Amphibious Squadron ELEVEN embarked onboard the USS ESSEX (LHD 2). The complete list of commands are:

- a. Commander, Amphibious Squadron ELEVEN (CPR-11)
- b. Commander, Mine Countermeasures Division ELEVEN
- c. USS ESSEX (LHD 2)*
- d. USS JUNEAU (LPD 10)*
- e. USS FORT MCHENRY (LSD 43)*
- f. USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49)*
- g. USS SAFEGUARD (ARS 50)
- h. USS PATRIOT (MCM 7)
- i. USS GUARDIAN (MCM 5)

* All of which form the ESSEX Amphibious Ready Group (ARG)

II. Chronology 2002:

April

2-5: Rear Admiral Rhuehe embarks ESSEX ARG (USS ESSEX, USS FORT MCHENRY, USS GERMANTOWN) for exercise RAMEX.

5-12: GERMANTOWN conducts landing of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Unit 4 and security elements from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, in direct support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM off the coast of Basilan Island, Philippines

May

1-31: Inport Sasebo for Spring upkeep.

June

1-22: Upkeep inport Sasebo.

22-24: Underway Demonstration.

25-28: N7 staff members embark GERMANTOWN for Final Evaluation Period
(FEP).

July

1-15: Upkeep period inport Sasebo.

16: Depart enroute Pearl Harbor.

29: GERMANTOWN chops to THIRD FLEET enroute to Pearl Harbor for hull
swap with USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49).

August

1-27: GERMANTOWN begins HULL SWAP with HARPERS FERRY in
Pearl Harbor.

15: GERMANTOWN and HARPERS FERRY have official Exchange-of-

Command ceremony in Pearl Harbor.

28: Depart Pearl Harbor, enroute to Sasebo.

September

4: HARPERS FERRY chops to COMSEVENTHFLT.

12: Inport Sasebo.

October

3-5: Enroute Okinawa for onload.

5-9: Arrive at Okinawa, embark elements of 31st MEU.

10: Depart Okinawa enroute to Guam.

14-18: Inport Guam.

19-25: Depart Guam, enroute Darwin, Australia.

25-27: In port Darwin Australia.

28: Depart Darwin, en route East Timor for HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.

OPERATIONS (HA)

25-28: Rear Admiral Ruehe travels to Dili, East Timor to support CTF-76

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE operations and engage COMUSGET.

31-3 (NOV): CATF Surgeon assists HARPERS FERRY is Medical Department during Dili, East Timor HA operations.

November

4-8: Enroute Hong Kong.

9-13: Inport Hong Kong.

14-16: Enroute Okinawa.

16-17: Inport Okinawa for offload.

17-21: Enroute Sasebo.

21: Inport Sasebo for Christmas Holiday Period.

December

1-31: Stand down for Christmas Holiday Period.

January 2003

1-28: Stand down.

29: Underway, enroute Yokosuka, Japan.

February

3-15: Inport Yokosuka for Training Availability

16-19: Enroute Sasebo.

20- 2 (MAR): Inport Sasebo.

March

3-4: Enroute Okinawa.

4-7: Okinawa for onload.

8-10: Enroute Iwo Jima for 58th IWO JIMA COMEMERATION.

10-13: Iwo Jima for IWO JIMA COMEMERATION.

17-19: Okinawa for offload.

20- 31 : Inport Sasebo.

III. Narrative of major events:

In March of 2002, the current HARPERS FERRY crew was the crew of the USS GERMANTOWN (LSD-42). While onboard GERMANTOWN in the spring of 2002, crewmembers participated in a number of amphibious operations with the ESSEX Amphibious Ready Group (EARG). Blue-Green Operations with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit began in mid March to build proficiency and increase battle readiness in joint operations. RAMEX tested the Rolling Airframe Missile defense system capabilities of the various ships in the EARG. The exercise was a success, in part, due to the drones that were carried and launched by GERMANTOWN. SOCEX followed RAMEX as a certification exercise to ensure GERMANTOWN can carry out a variety of special warfare missions. Again, the crew reflected its professionalism and gained the necessary qualifications. At the beginning of April, GERMANTOWN was nationally tasked in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM to carry out amphibious operations in Basilan, Philippines. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Unit Four and security elements from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit were landed in a hostile environment in the largest onload/offload in LSD-49 class history.

Upon returning to Sasebo, a variety of inspections awaited the crew. Intermediate Assessment, Underway Demonstration and Final Evaluation Period were inspections that tested the response of watchstanders from damage control to main space engineering. All inspections were passed in preparations for hull swap with HARPERS FERRY at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Throughout the month of August, CTF-76 coordinated with COMPHIBGRU THREE as key

events included familiarization underway periods for the two crews, an exchange-of-command ceremony, and a safe-to-steam assessment were conducted by COMPHIBGRU THREE. On 16 August 2002, the official exchange of command occurred, and after getting underway for a couple of days to get accustomed to their new ships, HARPERS FERRY departed Hawaii enroute to its new home port of Sasebo, Japan.

On September 4th 2002, HARPERS FERRY chopped into 7th Fleet ready for forward-deployed operations. After a brief inport period, HARPERS FERRY began its fall underway schedule that included the onload of the 31st Marine Service Support (MSSG) Group in Okinawa, and a liberty port visit to Guam. HARPERS FERRY then departed to enroute Darwin, Australia for a port visit to prepare for HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE OPERATIONS EAST TIMOR.

During the operation, over 700 inhabitants in East Timor were given medical attention through a joint effort involving the CATF Surgeon, United States Service Support Group East Timor, and medical personnel from the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force. Upon departing East Timor, HARPERS FERRY visited Hong Kong, where members of the crew were involved in many COMREL projects such as the Ronald McDonald House. After returning to Okinawa for an offload, HARPERS FERRY and her crew returned to Sasebo for Christmas Holiday Standown.

At the end of January, HARPERS FERRY left Sasebo enroute to Yokosuka, Japan for a training availability period. The crew attended training in many different areas such as firefighting, force protection, and fuels to help maintain the ship's battle readiness. HARPERS FERRY returned to Sasebo briefly before getting underway to Okinawa in preparations for the commemoration of the Battle of Iwo Jima. The entire ESSEX Amphibious Ready Group (ARG)

participated in the IWO JIMA COMEMERATION. Many members of the HARPERS FERRY crew went ashore to witness the comemeration, including HMC [REDACTED] who re-enlisted. there. All participants including veterans of the battle thought the operation to be a resounding success.

IV. Supporting Documents

- (1) USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD-49) 2002 Command History
- (2) Biography and Photo of Commander Brad Martin
- (3) 3.5" Floppy disk with command history file