



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
USS VALLEY FORGE (CG 50)  
FPO AP 96682-1170

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From: Commanding Officer, USS VALLEY FORGE (CG-50)

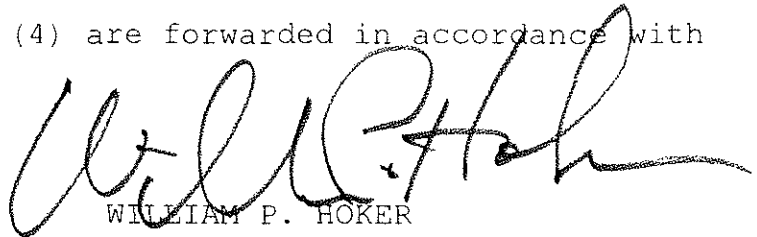
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH)

Subj: 1998 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization  
(2) 1998 Chronology  
(3) Narrative Summary  
(4) Supporting Documents

1. Enclosures (1) through (4) are forwarded in accordance with reference (a).



WILLIAM P. HOKER

Copy to:  
COMDESRON TWENTY-ONE

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**COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION:**

a. Mission: The mission of USS VALLEY FORGE (CG-50) is to complement the fleet's ability to keep the world's sea lanes open, and free, and to provide for in-depth protection of military and merchant shipping, underway logistics groups, amphibious forces and battle groups. To achieve this the ship has been specifically designed to simultaneously counter air, surface and subsurface threats.

b. Unit Commander:

(COMDESRON TWENTY-ONE)

CAPT Slattery	01 JAN - 20 MAR
CAPT Stavridis	20 MAR - 18 DEC
CAPT LeFever	18 DEC - 31 DEC

c. Units under VALLEY FORGE's operational control:

None

d. Commanding Officer:

CDR William P. Hoker	01 JAN - 31 DEC
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e. Executive Officer:

LCDR David Melin	01 JAN - 18 DEC
LCDR Jeffrey Frederick	18 DEC - 31 DEC

f. Homeport:

San Diego, California

g. Aircraft Assigned:

HSL-45 Wolfpack	17 JUN - 07 DEC
Two Lamps Mk III (SH-60B) Helicopters:	
Lonewolf 46	
Lonewolf 57	

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**1998 CHRONOLOGY**

**January**

01-08 Holiday Leave Period Two

01-09 Intermediate Maintenance Availability (IMAV) -  
SIMA San Diego, CA

10-25 Upkeep-San Diego, CA

26-30 Underway-ESSEX Amphibious Readiness Group (ARG)  
Composite Task Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX)

28 Naval Gunfire Support (NGFS)-Firing Exercise II

31 Upkeep-San Diego, CA

**February**

01 Upkeep-San Diego, CA

02 Underway-Type Training and Transit to Seal Beach,  
CA Run the Ship's Self-Radiated Noise Measurement  
(SSRNM) Range

03-05 Moored-Seal Beach, CA for Ammo Onload

06 Underway-Type Training and Transit to San Diego,  
CA

07-16 Upkeep-San Diego, CA

17 Underway-Type Training and Transit to Santa  
Barbara, CA

18-19 Anchored-Santa Barbara, CA for Port Visit

20 Underway-Transit to San Diego, CA

21-28 Upkeep-San Diego, CA  
IMAV-SIMA San Diego, CA

23 HSL-45 Pack-Up Kit (PUK) Onload

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**March**

01 Upkeep--San Diego, CA

02-13 IMAV--SIMA San Diego, CA

02-06 Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV)  
Inspects the Readiness of the Ship

02 Underway--Southern California (SOCAL) for  
INSURV Underway Material Inspection

06 Ship's Party at Club Metro

07-22 Upkeep--San Diego, CA

11 San Diego Naval Station Guest Ship

20 Commander Destroyer Squadron 21 Change of Command  
aboard VALLEY FORGE--CAPT Slattery to CAPT  
Stavridis

23-25 Underway--SOCAL

24 NSFS--Supporting Arms Coordination Exercise (SACEX)  
Replenishment at Sea (RAS) with USNS Rappahannock

25 HSL-45 Helicopter Squadron Onload--San Diego, CA

27-31 Underway--SOCAL for Fleet Exercise

28 ABRAHAM LINCOLN Battle Group Photo Exercise

29 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)

**April**

01-07 Underway--SOCAL for Fleet Exercise

02 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)

06-07 ABRAHAM LINCOLN Battle Group Missile Exercise  
--VALLEY FORGE fires two SM-2 Standard Surface to  
Air Missiles

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07 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)  
08-12 Upkeep--San Diego, CA  
13-23 Underway--SOCAL for Joint Task Force Exercise 98-2  
16 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)  
17 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)  
21 Commander Third Fleet Visits Ship (VADM Browne)  
24-30 Upkeep--San Diego, CA  
IMAV--SIMA San Diego, CA  
25-30 Pre-Overseas Movement (POM) Leave Period One

**May**

01-26 Upkeep--San Diego, CA  
01-20 IMAV--SIMA San Diego, CA  
01-06 POM Leave Period One  
08 POM Leave Section Turnover Day  
08-19 POM Leave Period Two  
20 Vice Admiral Krekich (COMNAVSURFPAC) Visits VALLEY  
FORGE  
26 Underway--Sea Trials in SOCAL  
27 Upkeep--San Diego, CA  
28 Underway--Guest Cruise  
30-31 Upkeep--San Diego, CA

**June**

01-07 Upkeep--San Diego, CA  
05 Bring your Kids to Work Day on VALLEY FORGE

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08-12 Surface Line Week--San Diego, CA  
08-09 Underway--Surface Line Week  
Burial At Sea Ceremony  
10-16 Upkeep--San Diego, CA  
18 Underway for ABRAHAM LINCOLN (CVN-71) Battle Group  
Deployment to the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf  
RAS with USNS PECOS  
17-30 Underway--Transit to Yokosuka, Japan  
19 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)  
21-23 Anti-Submarine Warfare Exercise 98-1  
24 CHOP to COMSEVENTHFLT  
25 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)  
29 RAS with USNS TIPPECANOE

**July**

01-04 Port Visit--Yokosuka, Japan  
05-09 Underway--Transit to Hong Kong, China  
08 Swim Call in Straits of Taiwan  
09 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)  
10-13 Port Visit--Hong Kong, China  
14-17 Underway--Transit to Singapore, Malaysia  
18-20 Port Visit--Singapore, Malaysia  
21-29 Underway--Transit to Arabian Gulf  
22 RAS with USNS WALTER S. DIEHL  
26 CHOP to COMFIFTHFLT

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30 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2) and USNS NIAGARA FALLS  
Transit Straits of Hormuz into Arabian Gulf

**August**

01-31 Underway-Arabian Gulf and Indian Ocean

03 Transit Straits of Hormuz out of Arabian Gulf

04 RAS with USNS YUKON

06-14 Tracking Exercises in Indian Ocean

14 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)

16 Transit Straits of Hormuz into Arabian Gulf

23-30 MIO Surge Operations

**September**

01 Anchored-Sitrah

02-04 Port Visit-Bahrain

05-13 Underway-Arabian Gulf

05-06 Central Arabian Gulf Operations

07-09 Maritime Interception Operations

10-11 Arabian Gulf ASW Exercise

14 Anchored-Sitrah

15-19 Port Visit-Bahrain

20-27 Underway-Arabian Gulf

20 RAS with USNS YUKON

21-26 Maritime Interception Operations

26 Swim Call in Arabian Gulf

28-30 Port Visit-Bahrain

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**October**

01 Port Visit--Bahrain  
02 Underway--Arabian Gulf  
03-04 Inport--Jubail, Saudi Arabia  
04 Reception for COMFIFTHFLT (VADM Moore) on VALLEY  
FORGE  
05-08 Underway--Operation Red Reef  
08 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)  
09 Inport--Jubail, Saudi Arabia  
10-13 Underway--Operation Red Reef  
13 RAS with USNS YUKON  
14-22 Underway--Arabian Gulf  
16-20 MIO Surge II Operations  
21 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)  
22 Transit Straits of Hormuz to Indian Ocean  
23-31 Transit to Albany, Australia  
26 CHOP to COMSEVENTHFLT  
28 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)  
29 RAS with USNS SPICA  
29-30 Mid-Cycle Assessment  
31 Crossing the Equator Ceremony--Wog Day

**November**

01-04 Transit to Albany, Australia



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02-04 Command Assessment of Readiness and Training  
(CART I)

05-09 Port Visit--Albany, Australia

10-12 Transit to Melbourne, Australia

12 Search and Rescue Mission--Four Australian  
Fishermen Rescued

13-17 Port Visit--Melbourne, Australia

18-29 Transit to Pearl Harbor, HI

22 Swim Call in Pacific Ocean

24 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)

27 CHOP to COMTHIRDFLT  
Turkey Shoot

30 Port Visit--Pearl Harbor, HI

**December**

01-06 Transit to San Diego, CA, Tiger Cruise

02 RAS with USS CAMDEN (AOE-2)

07 Homecoming--San Diego, CA

08-13 Upkeep--San Diego, CA

14-27 Holiday Leave Period One

18 COMDESRON 21 Change of Command--  
CAPT Stavridis to CAPT LeFever

28-31 Holiday Leave Period Two

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**NARRATIVE:**

During 1998, USS VALLEY FORGE (CG-50) participated in a wide variety of missions in many diverse operational environments. The majority of the year was spent either in preparation for or on her six-month deployment to the Arabian Gulf and Western Pacific. January of 1998 began with the second of two leave periods dedicated to allowing sailors to spend time with family and friends over the holiday season. Much of the first few months of 1998 were also dedicated to making final preparations in material readiness for her upcoming deployment. This meant that VALLEY FORGE received a great deal of assistance from SIMA workers during numerous Intermediate Maintenance Availability (IMAV) Periods.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, VALLEY FORGE got underway with the USS ESSEX LHD-2 Amphibious Readiness Group (ARG) for COMPTUEX. During COMPTUEX, VALLEY FORGE performed flawlessly as air, surface, and sub-surface warfare commander during high tempo operations in a multi-threat environment. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, VALLEY FORGE participated in FIREX II in which greater than 96% of her 5" gun ordnance was on target.

After a weekend in port in San Diego, VALLEY FORGE was underway again. On February 2, she was underway enroute to Seal Beach, California where she would conduct her ammunition onload in preparation for her upcoming deployment. On the way to Seal Beach, VALLEY FORGE tested how much and what types of noise she was putting into the water by running the SSRNM range. After returning to San Diego from Seal Beach, VALLEY FORGE went through a brief upkeep period before getting underway again to go to Santa Barbara, California for a port visit on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of February. For the rest of February, VALLEY FORGE was in another IMAV with SIMA San Diego.

In addition to final preparations for her 1998 deployment, during March VALLEY FORGE underwent an Inspection of her material readiness by the Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV). This is typically the most grueling inspection of material condition that Navy ships undergo. VALLEY FORGE did extremely well, and was the first cruiser to satisfactorily complete the full-power trial as graded by the senior inspector. On March 20<sup>th</sup>, Destroyer Squadron 21 had a change of command aboard VALLEY FORGE, making Captain Stavridis VALLEY FORGE's new operational commander. From 23-25 March, VALLEY FORGE was underway in the Southern California Operating Area with the

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USS ESSEX ARG again, and fired over 170 rounds from her 5" guns, and also provided surveillance, Defensive Counter-Air control, and Anti-Air Warfare coverage while troops were being transported ashore. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, VALLEY FORGE embarked a helicopter detachment from HSL-45 before heading back to sea on the 27<sup>th</sup> for a Fleet Exercise, which lasted from 27 March to 7 April. The Fleet Exercise was the first opportunity the ABRAHAM LINCOLN Battle Group had to operate together in preparation for their deployment.

A highlight of the Fleet Exercise was the surface-to-air missile exercise in which VALLEY FORGE fired two SM-2 missiles that were both evaluated as kills. One missile was fired at a high-altitude subsonic target and one at a low-altitude supersonic target. After a brief stay in San Diego, VALLEY FORGE was underway again from 13-23 April for a Joint Task Force Exercise (JTFEX-98-2). This was the final stage of preparation for the ABRAHAM LINCOLN Battle Group in anticipation of their upcoming deployment. Upon return to San Diego on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, VALLEY FORGE began her pre-overseas movement (POM) leave period during which one half of the crew took leave at a time. The leave period was intended to allow sailors to make final preparations at home and with their families before their six-month deployment.

Throughout the POM period, those sailors who were on the ship continued with the final IMAV before deployment. The POM period ended on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May. On May 20<sup>th</sup>, all personnel returned to the ship to make final preparations for deployment. On the 27<sup>th</sup>, the ship was underway for Sea Trials, and on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May, VALLEY FORGE hosted over 600 guests, including family and friends of the crew, to a one-day cruise in which she demonstrated many of her capabilities, including firing her 5" guns and a full power run.

During her underway period on June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> for Surface Line Week in San Diego, VALLEY FORGE conducted a burial-at-sea ceremony. The most anticipated day of the year for the VALLEY FORGE and her sailors came on June 17<sup>th</sup> when she left San Diego with the ABRAHAM LINCOLN Battle Group not to return home for six-months. From 17-30 June, VALLEY FORGE transited the Pacific Ocean enroute to Yokosuka, Japan. From 21-23 June, VALLEY FORGE participated in ASW Exercise 98-1. On 24 June, VALLEY FORGE entered the Seventh Fleet.

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From July 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>, sailors enjoyed the sights in Yokosuka, Japan. On July 4<sup>th</sup>, VALLEY FORGE participated in a base wide celebration of our independence. From 5-9 July, VALLEY FORGE transited to Hong Kong where she enjoyed a port visit from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup>. Next in line was Singapore, Malaysia where VALLEY FORGE enjoyed liberty from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup>. After leaving Singapore, VALLEY FORGE Sailors knew the most difficult part of the deployment was upcoming.

VALLEY FORGE was now on the way to the Arabian Gulf, which she entered on 30 July after transiting the Straits of Hormuz. During her time in the Arabian Gulf, VALLEY FORGE was involved in numerous exercises and activities, but her primary focus was on Maritime Interception Operations (MIO) in support of United Nations Sanctions against Iraq. During these exercises VALLEY FORGE boarded numerous vessels in a search of illegal cargo. VALLEY FORGE's Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) team diverted eight ships for further inspection of goods deemed to be questionable or illegal. Over the three-month period in which VALLEY FORGE conducted MIO, she boarded over 25 vessels.

From August 6<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, VALLEY FORGE participated in tracking exercises. From 23-30 August and 16-20 October, VALLEY FORGE participated in a new type of MIO called MIO Surge, in which Allied ships go to the far northern edge of the Arabian Gulf and attempt to divert illegal merchant shipping as it comes out of Iraqi waters. These operations were highly successful, and VALLEY FORGE was the key player in the interception of all eight shipments diverted by the ABRAHAM LINCOLN Battle Group.

In September, VALLEY FORGE received a short break from the grueling deployment during a port visit in Bahrain from 2-4 September. In the midst of MIO, VALLEY FORGE participated in an Arabian Gulf ASW exercise on September 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. Again from 15-19 September, and from 28 September to 1 October, VALLEY FORGE visited Bahrain.

VALLEY FORGE was inport in Jubail, Saudi Arabia on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and hosted the Commander of the Fifth Fleet, Vice Admiral Moore, to a reception aboard the ship. From October 5-8 and 10-13, VALLEY FORGE was underway for Operation Red Reef which is an annual joint operation between Saudi Arabia and the United States. During Operation Red Reef, VALLEY FORGE acted as warfare commander in all warfare areas. As mentioned, VALLEY

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FORGE was the key player in MIO Surge II from October 16-20. On October 22, VALLEY FORGE left the Arabian Gulf for the last time in 1998, and started the two-week transit to Albany, Australia. On 26 October, VALLEY FORGE entered into the Seventh Fleet. On October 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> VALLEY FORGE's engineering team underwent the Destroyer Squadron 21 Mid-Cycle Assessment (MCA), and passed with very few discrepancies. During MCA, VALLEY FORGE's team was described as "well prepared", and "outstanding" by the senior MCA observer. On the final day of October, the age old crossing the Equator Ceremony was observed as all polliwogs aboard the ship were cleansed to the best of the honorable shellbacks abilities.

The beginning of November found VALLEY FORGE completing the final leg of her transit to Albany, Australia. From the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup>, sailors enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of the Australians in the small town of Albany. They also hosted much of the city to tours of the ship. One of the most exciting moments of the deployment came on the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> of November when VALLEY FORGE conducted a dangerous Search and Rescue mission off the coast of Melbourne, Australia. Four Australian fishermen were pulled out of a sinking boat in extremely perilous seas by one of VALLEY FORGE's embarked SH-60B helicopters. Upon entering Melbourne later that morning, VALLEY FORGE was greeted with a hero's welcome, and huge national media interest in the rescue.

In Melbourne, VALLEY FORGE hosted over 10,000 guests to tours of the ship, all while enjoying many of the sailors favorite port of the entire deployment. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of November, VALLEY FORGE eagerly got underway for a transit to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and more importantly American soil. Upon arrival in Pearl Harbor on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, VALLEY FORGE took on about 100 Tiger Cruise guests, friends and family members of the crew, and about the same number of crew members flew home to San Diego for an early reunion with family and friends.

The final leg of deployment began on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December when the Tiger Cruise began. During the Tiger Cruise, the guests were treated to numerous gun shoots, an air show by the ABRAHAM LINCOLN, tours of the ship, and some very rough weather. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of December VALLEY FORGE celebrated her homecoming to San Diego. The week after deployment was dedicated to allowing family members to get back in the flow of things, and this was continued through the holiday leave period

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which began on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, VALLEY FORGE hosted another Change of Command for Destroyer Squadron 21, and Captain LeFever took operational control of VALLEY FORGE.

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**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

Photographs, biographies, and pamphlets are included as supporting documentation.