



*Rec'd 11/4/97 w/disk*

**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**

USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD 44)  
FPO AE 09573-1732

5750

Ser ADM/554

27 OCT 1997

From: Commanding Officer, USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD-44)  
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH)

Subj: 1996 COMMAND HISTORY FOR USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD-44)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) List of Abbreviations  
(2) Command Composition and Organization  
(3) Chronology for 1996  
(4) Narrative  
(5) Welcome Aboard booklet

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (5) are submitted.

*J. C. LEGO*

J. C. LEGO

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACU	- Assault Craft Unit
ADM	- Admiral
ARG	- Amphibious Readiness Group
CIWS	- Close-in Weapons System
COMMARFORLANT	- Commander Marine Force Atlantic
COMPHIBGRU	- Commander Amphibious Group
COMPHIBRON	- Commander Amphibious Squadron
CONREP	- Connected Replenishment
CTF	- Commander Task Force
EMCON	- Emissions Control
FAMFIRE	- Familiarization Fire
FLT	- Flight
GQ	- General Quarters
LCAC	- Landing Craft Air Cushion
LCU/LCM	- Landing Craft Utility/ Landing Craft Mechanized
Little Creek Norfolk,	- Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Virginia
MARG	- Mediterranean Amphibious Ready Group
MEU	- Marine Expeditionary Unit
MPDE	- Main Propulsion Diesel Engine
MRG	- Main Reduction Gear
MSSG	- Marine Service Support Group
N.C.	- North Carolina
OPS	- Operations
OTC	- Officer Tactical Command
PACFIRE	- Pre-Action Calibration Fire
SOPA	- Senior Officer Present Afloat
TCAT	- Type Commander's Assessment Training
TSTA	- Tailored Shipboard Training Assessment
UNREP	- Underway Replenishment
VACAPES OPAREA	- Virginia Capes Operating Area
VADM	- Vice Admiral
VERTREP	- Vertical Replenishment
VIP	- Very Important Person

## COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

1. USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD-44) is the fourth ship of the Whidbey Island class Landing Ship Dock Amphibious ships. The ship's mission is to provide functional support in three areas; amphibious warfare, mobility, and command and control. This mission is accomplished through the transportation of elements of a landing force, landing craft, and support equipment to an amphibious objective area and to launch preloaded assault craft in support of an amphibious assault operation.

2. USS GUNSTON HALL is permanently assigned to Commander, Amphibious Group TWO. The ship's type commander is Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic Fleet. From May 30 to December 21, 1996, GUNSTON HALL was assigned to Commander, Amphibious Squadron SIX under Commander Sixth Fleet while deployed to Mediterranean Sea with Marine Amphibious Readiness Group 5-96. While deployed to the Mediterranean Sea, GUNSTON HALL had elements of Beachmaster Unit TWO, Assault Craft Unit FOUR and elements of MEU Service Support Group TWO TWO.

3. Commander James L. Clark was Commanding Officer, USS GUNSTON HALL throughout 1996.

4. USS GUNSTON HALL (LSD-44) is homeported at Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Norfolk, Virginia.

## CHRONOLOGY FOR 1996

### FIRST QUARTER

1. JANUARY - The year began with USS GUNSTON HALL inport, moored in Little Creek. The ship, in the midst of the Christmas 1995 standdown, had half of its crew on leave. On 9 January, GUNSTON HALL was underway enroute to the VACAPES OPAREA for LCAC OPS on 10 January. The ship then anchored in Lynnhaven Anchorage the evening of 10 January. GUNSTON HALL was underway again in the VACAPES OPAREA on 11 January, and moored at Little Creek the evening of 12 January. GUNSTON HALL remained moored in Little Creek before getting underway again on 16 January. The ship anchored in Lynnhaven Anchorage later that night. Underway again on 17 January, the ship suffered failure of its primary gyro and had to switch to magnetic steering. GUNSTON HALL moored in Little Creek on 18 January and remained there through 24 January. The ship got underway again on 25 January and remained at sea until 29 January, when the ship moored once again in Little Creek. The end of January saw GUNSTON HALL underway again to the VACAPES OPAREA on the 31st.

2. FEBRUARY - After steaming around the VACAPES OPAREA, GUNSTON HALL moored in Little Creek the evening of 1 February. COMPHIBGRU 2, ADM Fladd, came onboard 7 February for the day. GUNSTON HALL was underway again 12 February, anchoring at Lynnhaven Anchorage to conduct LCAC and LCM OPS. The ship continued LCAC and LCM OPS on 13 February, and LCAC OPS on 14 February before getting underway again later that day. 15 February brought FLT, LCAC, and LCU OPS, with GUNSTON HALL anchoring again at Lynnhaven Anchorage later that evening. On 16 February, the ship conducted LCM and LCU OPS, before returning to Little Creek to moor. GUNSTON HALL departed Little Creek on 26 February and conducted LCAC and FLT OPS. The ship anchored in Onslow Bay, N.C. the morning of 27 February and conducted AAV and LCAC OPS. Later that day, the ship was underway, along with USS SAIPAN (LHA 2) and USS AUSTIN (LPD 4) with COMPHIBRON SIX embarked onboard SAIPAN. More LCAC OPS were conducted 28 February, and GUNSTON HALL anchored in Onslow Bay that evening. The ship then got underway again the morning of 29 February, then anchored for LCAC, FLT, and AAV OPS until 1 March.

3. MARCH - Underway again the evening of 1 March, GUNSTON HALL anchored on 2 March for more LCAC OPS. The ship then got

underway that afternoon and moored to Pier 17 North in Little Creek that night. On 18 March, GUNSTON HALL departed for TSTA III. EMCON C was set on 19 March and the ship anchored at Lynnhaven "L7" later that day. Underway again on 20 March in the VACAPES OPAREA, a CIWS PACFIRE was conducted. 21 March saw GUNSTON HALL anchored first at Lynnhaven, then underway to Little Creek with the ship mooring to Pier 17 North that evening. Diving OPS were held on 22 March and GUNSTON HALL was underway again 25 March. The ship anchored in Lynnhaven Anchorage and conducted LCAC OPS before moving on to the VACAPES OPAREA with USS SAIPAN and USS MITSCHER (DDG 57). 26 March saw more LCAC OPS for GUNSTON HALL, with the ship anchoring in Onslow Bay later that day to conduct AAV OPS. FLT OPS were held the morning of 27 March, and GUNSTON HALL was underway later that day, anchoring in Onslow Bay that evening. The ship was underway again 28 March, enroute to Evacuee Point Anchorage. The ship then anchored in Onslow Bay and conducted LCAC and FLT OPS through 29 March, while LCAC OPS were held on 30 March with FLT, LCAC, and AAV OPS on 31 March.

#### SECOND QUARTER

4. APRIL - GUNSTON HALL anchored in Onslow Bay 1 April and conducted FLT OPS that day with its CO onboard USS SAIPAN, transferred by small boat. The ship conducted LCAC and AAV OPS the next day, then got underway enroute to Little Creek. While still underway, GUNSTON HALL conducted more LCAC OPS on 3 April, mooring in Little Creek later that night. The ship stayed moored at Little Creek until 23 April when the ship was underway briefly from Pier 17 North, Little Creek to the Quaywall for an ammunition onload. GUNSTON HALL returned to Pier 17 North, after the ammunition onload. GUNSTON HALL went underway again on 25 April and conducted LCAC OPS, as well as a CIWS PACFIRE. The ship anchored on 26 April at Beauford Inlet Anchorage, and went underway to Moorehead City later that day. The ship conducted FLT OPS that evening. Arriving at Moorehead City 27 April, the ship moored. Later that day, GUNSTON HALL got underway again and anchored at Onslow Bay, where the ship conducted LCAC OPS. 28 April saw GUNSTON HALL underway at Cherry Point, N.C. to conduct a FAMFIRE and FLT OPS. The ship conducted FLT, LCAC, and AAV OPS on 29 April.

5. MAY - GUNSTON HALL was operating underway in the Cherry Point OPAREA on 1 May, conducting 25MM and M-60 FAMFIRE and FLT OPS. SOPA, COMPHIBRON SIX, was onboard USS SAIPAN at the time. GUNSTON HALL conducted more FLT and LCAC OPS on 2 May, FLT and AAV OPS on 3-4 May, and LCAC, AAV, and FLT OPS on 5 May. GUNSTON HALL conducted an UNREP with HMS FORT GEORGE on 6 May, and FLT OPS later that night. On 7 May, GUNSTON HALL steamed with USS PONCE (LPD 15) and conducted LCAC and FLT OPS. After FLT and LCAC OPS on 8 May, GUNSTON HALL anchored for the night. The ship got underway again on 9 May and conducted AAV, LCAC, and FLT OPS. Afterwards, the ship steamed astern of USS WHIDBEY ISLAND (LSD 41) and anchored later that night in New River Inlet. SOPA and OTC was COMPHIBRON SIX aboard USS NASSAU (LHA 4). GUNSTON HALL held more LCAC and FLT OPS on 10 May, with LCAC OPS only on 11 May. 12 May saw more FLT OPS for GUNSTON HALL, with the ship getting underway that night. The ship once again performed an UNREP with HMS FORT GEORGE on 13 May with COMPHIBRON SIX onboard GUNSTON HALL. After conducting FLT OPS that night, GUNSTON HALL anchored at Lynnhaven Anchorage. 14 May saw more LCAC OPS for GUNSTON HALL, with the ship mooring later that day in Little Creek. The ship stayed at Little Creek until 28 May, when the ship went underway to shift positions from Pier 17 North to Pier 17 South.

6. JUNE - GUNSTON HALL stayed moored at Little Creek for the better part of the month, with COMPHIBRON SIX visiting the ship on 14 June. The ship got underway on 19 June in the VACAPES OPAREA to conduct LCAC OPS. GUNSTON HALL returned to Little Creek and moored at the Quaywall later that night. On 25 June, GUNSTON HALL conducted more LCAC OPS. The ship got underway on 28 June enroute to Moorehead City, arriving there on 29 June. GUNSTON HALL conducted LCAC OPS the morning of 29 June and then moored at Moorehead City. Later that day, the ship proceeded underway to Onslow Bay and anchored at Beuford Inlet, where the ship conducted AAV OPS. During this time, GUNSTON HALL received its LCAC, AAV, and U.S. Marine complement in preparation for its six month Mediterranean deployment. On 30 June, GUNSTON HALL began its deployment, getting underway enroute Rota, Spain.

### THIRD QUARTER

7. JULY - 1 July began with GUNSTON HALL starting its six month Mediterranean deployment, enroute to Rota, Spain. SOPA was

COMPHIBRON SIX onboard USS SAIPAN. Operations for GUNSTON HALL's deployment began on 07 July, with FLT OPS being held. The ship had an UNREP with USS SUPPLY (AOE 6), and VERTREP with USS AUSTIN, and USS SAIPAN on 9 July. GUNSTON HALL conducted LCAC OPS on 10 July with CRUDESGRU 12 onboard. 11 July held FLT, LCAC, and AAV OPS for GUNSTON HALL. The ship shifted to the Mk-27, the ship's secondary gyro, due to problems with the WSN-2 batteries. Later that day, the ship anchored outside of Rota, Spain. GUNSTON HALL conducted FLT and AAV OPS on 12 July, and FLT OPS only on 13 July, before getting underway again to Rota. The ship moored at Pier 1, Berth 4 Naval Station Rota that night. After holding more LCAC OPS on 15 July, GUNSTON HALL got underway from Rota to conduct AAV OPS. Afterwards, the ship returned to moor at Pier 3 NAVSTA Rota. On 18 July, the ship got underway enroute Tunisia and began its transit through the Straits of Gibraltar. EMCON A was set on 19 July. 20 July saw GUNSTON HALL underway in the Alboran Sea, independently steaming toward Tunisia. The ship conducted small arms FAMFIRE and FLT OPS. GUNSTON HALL held FLT, LCAC, and AAV OPS on 21 July. EMCON A was set on 22 July with OTC being COMPHIBRON SIX onboard USS SAIPAN. FLT and LCAC OPS were also held on 22 July, and continued on 23 July. July 24 saw GUNSTON HALL underway in Cape Serrat headed toward Tunisia with FLT OPS being conducted. LCAC and FLT OPS were held on 25 July, with LCAC, FLT, and AAV OPS on 26 July, and FLT OPS alone on 27 July. GUNSTON HALL headed underway toward Livorno, Italy on 28 July with FLT OPS being conducted. The ship also did UNREP and VERTREP with USS SUPPLY that day. On 29 July, GUNSTON HALL reached its second liberty port, Livorno, and moored at Pier 17 for five days.

8. AUGUST - GUNSTON HALL was once again underway on 3 August, this time traveling toward Messina, Sicily. Small arms FAMFIRE was also held that day. On 5 August, the ship moored in Messina for another liberty port. 9 August, GUNSTON HALL was back underway headed toward Albania, conducting FLT OPS that day. The ship held more FLT OPS on 11 August, as well as an UNREP with USS SUPPLY. FLT OPS were also held the next day, 12 August, with COMSIXTHFLT also arriving that day. GUNSTON HALL held more FLT and LCAC OPS on 13 August, with LCAC OPS only on 14 and 15 August. FLT and LCAC OPS continued on 16 August. CTF 61 visited the SAIPAN on 17 August, with GUNSTON HALL conducting LCAC, FLT, and small boat OPS. LCAC and FLT OPS continued for GUNSTON HALL on 18 August. The ship conducted another UNREP with USS PLATTE (AO 186) on 19 August, and continued with FLT OPS later that day. EMCON C and A were set on 20 August as GUNSTON HALL anchored at

Durres, Albania. The Charge D'Affaire visited GUNSTON HALL for the day 21 August. 22 August saw the ship underway again, this time enroute to Corfu, Greece. It was a short trip with GUNSTON HALL anchored in Corfu on 23 August for another liberty port. After four days of liberty, GUNSTON HALL was once again underway, this time enroute to Toulon, France on 27 August. The ship went through EMCON A, B, and C on 28 August before conducting a small arms FAMFIRE and setting flight quarters for a BLT-28 day visit. Flight quarter were once again set 29 August, as was an UNREP with USS SATURN. 30 August saw GUNSTON HALL conducting LCAC OPS before anchoring outside of Toulon. AAV OPS were then held before the ship once again got underway for Toulon. GUNSTON HALL moored at Pier 2 in Toulon later that day for its next liberty port. SOPA was USS SAIPAN.

9. SEPTEMBER - GUNSTON HALL held LCAC OPS on 5 September before getting underway from Toulon on 12 September. EMCON C was set on 13 September. 14 September saw FLT OPS for the ship as the ship traveled through the Straits of Messina. Small arms FAMFIRE was also held on 14 September. Traveling through the Tyrehiean Sea on 15 September, GUNSTON HALL conducted FLT OPS, a CIWS PACFIRE, and chaff launching. The ship performed an UNREP with USNS SATURN on 16 September before continuing on with FLT OPS later that day. Traveling through the Adriatic Sea on 17 September, the ship underwent more FLT OPS. 18 September saw GUNSTON HALL underway in the Ionian Sea enroute to Izmir, Turkey. The ship conducted another CIWS PACFIRE and FLT OPS that day. GUNSTON HALL anchored outside of Izmir on 19 September. Underway again on 22 September, GUNSTON HALL performed an UNREP with USS PLATTE before continuing with FLT OPS and setting EMCON A. Traveling toward Dogenbey, Turkey on 23 September, the ship held more FLT, AAV, and LCAC OPS throughout the day. FLT OPS continued for the ship on 24 September, while LCAC OPS were held on 25 September. More LCAC OPS were performed on 26 September, with COMSIXTHFLT arriving via LCAC to observe AAV OPS performed later that day. More FLT OPS were conducted on 27 September, while AAV and FLT OPS were held 28 September. GUNSTON HALL was underway from Dogenbey Bay to Sarros Bay on 29 September. The ship held a gun shoot and FLT OPS that day. LCAC and AAV OPS were held on 30 September, and then the ship anchored in the Sarros Bay, Turkey OPAREA.



#### FOURTH QUARTER

10. OCTOBER - October began with GUNSTON HALL underway again, conducting FLT OPS on 1 October with SAN GIORGIO onboard. USS FIREBOLT (PC 10) was alongside on 2 October, refueling from GUNSTON HALL. FLT and LCAC OPS were also held that day, and LCAC OPS were held 3 October as well. FLT OPS only were held 4 October, with FLT and LCAC OPS on 5, 7, and 8 October, and LCAC OPS only on 9 October. FLT OPS were held on 10 October as GUNSTON HALL steamed independently to Bari, Italy. FLT OPS were held once again on 11 October. 13 October brought visitors from the Ukranian ships OSHANKI, HETMAN SAGADACHRY, and KRIVAKI onboard GUNSTON HALL for the day. Underway in the Ionian Sea 14 October, GUNSTON HALL once again conducted FLT OPS until mooring on 15 October in Bari, Italy for another liberty port. GUNSTON HALL got underway again 21 October and performed an UNREP with USNS PATUXENT later that day. The ship conducted more FLT OPS in the Adriatic Sea with USS SAIPAN 22 October. CTF 61 was SOPA and OTC. FLT OPS were held on 24 October, as well as 25 October when the ship also conducted a CIWS PACFIRE. FLT OPS continued 26 October with COMMARFORLANT onboard, as well as on 27, 28, and 29 October, when GUNSTON HALL also held a FAMFIRE. GUNSTON HALL performed leapfrogs with USS AUSTIN on 30 October as well as holding FLT OPS. BLT-28 was onboard that day, while repelling exercises were held. To end the month, GUNSTON HALL performed a CONREP with USNS KANAWHA (WLR 75407), USNS SATURN (T-AFS 10), USS AUSTIN, and USS SAIPAN.

11. NOVEMBER - GUNSTON HALL was independently steaming through the Ionian Sea on 1 November, enroute to Alexandria, Egypt. The ship conducted LCAC OPS on 2 November, and CIWS PACFIRE, 25 MM and 50 caliber gun shoot, and chaff launching on 3 November. On 5 November, GUNSTON HALL reached its next liberty port, mooring at Berth 27 in Alexandria, Egypt. The ship was underway again on 9 November, this time traveling to Haifa, Israel. The ship anchored for part of 9 November and conducted LCAC OPS before mooring in Haifa with USS AUSTIN onboard. It was a relatively long liberty port in Israel with LCAC OPS being held on 22 November. GUNSTON HALL began independently steaming toward Rota, Spain on 26 November, and performed a CIWS PACFIRE on 29 November.

12. DECEMBER - GUNSTON HALL began December with FLT OPS and a VERTREP with USNS SATURN on 2 December. The ship then moored at Pier 3 at NAVSTA Rota, Spain on 3 December. The ship then performed a sterngate marriage on 5 December. GUNSTON HALL then got underway again on 7 December, and performed LCAC OPS later that day. The ship conducted FLT OPS on 8 and 14 December. The ship conducted another UNREP with USS SUPPLY, USS SANTA BARBARA (AE 28), and USS AUSTIN. GUNSTON HALL also conducted FLT OPS that day, as well as on 17 and 18 December. The ship's six month deployment began to wrap up on 19 December when the ship anchored at Onslow Bay, N.C. The ship performed LCAC and AAV OPS that day with COMPHIBRON SIX onboard. After the disembarkation of GUNSTON HALL's U.S. Marine complement, the ship moored at Berth 9 in Moorehead City, N.C. GUNSTON HALL continued on its way home 20 December as the ship got underway for Little Creek. After a highly successful Mediterranean deployment, GUNSTON HALL moored to Pier 15 South in Little Creek, Virginia on 21 December. Just in time for Christmas, holiday standdown began with GUNSTON HALL's crew home for the holidays.

## NARRATIVE

### FIRST QUARTER

During this period, GUNSTON HALL finished out it's holiday routine and quickly started getting back into its operational tempo. The ship was underway numerous times performing a great deal of operations with the assault vehicles the ship carries, along with other ships and helicopters. GUNSTON HALL hosted COMPHIBGRU-2 during this period also. The operational tempo increased dramatically toward the end of the quarter, as GUNSTON HALL underwent many shipboard assessments to ready herself for an upcoming Mediterranean deployment slated for the end of June.

### SECOND QUARTER

The high operational tempo continued through the second quarter with GUNSTON HALL performing numerous operations with assault vehicles, helicopters, LCACs, and other ships. The ship tested and calibrated its self-defense weapons systems and performed familiarization firings on numerous weapons to prepare the crew for the deployment. The ship also hosted COMPHIBRON SIX this period. After passing all its shipboard assessments, as well as participating in the exercise DYNAMIC MIX, GUNSTON HALL finished the second quarter by starting a six month Mediterranean deployment on 30 June, getting underway enroute Rota, Spain.

### THIRD QUARTER

GUNSTON HALL continued its deployment to the Mediterranean Sea this period. Its portcalls this period included: Rota, Spain; Livorno, Italy; Messina, Sicily; Durres, Albania; Toulon, France; Izmir, Turkey and Sarros Bay, Turkey. The ship was an outstanding ambassador of the United States during these port visits. GUNSTON HALL hosted numerous guests including CRUDESGRU-12, CTF-61, the Albanian Charge D'Affair, and COMSIXTHFLT. The ship steamed through the Alboran, Tyrehiean, Adriatic, Ionian, and Mediterranean Seas this period. GUNSTON HALL had an extremely busy operational tempo this quarter and performed exceptionally throughout this period of its deployment.

### FOURTH QUARTER

This quarter saw the continuation and completion of GUNSTON HALL's Mediterranean deployment. The ship visited Bari, Italy in

October, Alexandria, Egypt and Haifa, Israel in November, and Rota, Spain in December. GUNSTON HALL was an outstanding ambassador again in these ports. The ship hosted numerous VIPs this quarter including: the officers of SAN GIORGIO; the Ukranian ships OSHANKI, HETMAN SAGADACHRY, and KRIVAKI; COMMARFORLANT and COMPHIBGRU-2. GUNSTON HALL continued to have a high operational tempo this period. The ship returned to North Carolina and disembarked its U.S. Marine element and equipment, and returned to homeport on 21 December just in time for its crew to celebrate the holidays with their families.