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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
USS SAIPAN LHA-2  
FPO NEW YORK, NEW YORK 09549-1605

5750  
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APR 16 1991

From: Commanding Officer, USS SAIPAN (LHA-2)  
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09BH), Washington Navy Yard,  
Washington D.C. 20374-0571

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY OF USS SAIPAN (LHA-2) FOR 1990

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12E

Encl: (1) Command History, 1990  
(2) Copy of Commanding Officer's Biography  
(3) Photo of CTF-60 and CTF-61  
(EISENHOWER CVBG with MARG 2-90)  
(4) Photo of Five NATO Carriers Participating  
in NATO EXERCISE DRAGON HAMMER 90  
(5) Navy Journalists' Articles (28)  
(6) Navy Photos (21)  
(7) Welcome Aboard Pamphlets - SAIPAN (English, Spanish, French,  
Italian), CTF SIX ONE, and 22ND MARINE EXPEDITIONARY  
UNIT  
(8) USS SAIPAN Cruise Book -- MARG 2-90  
(9) Officer Billet Listing, 1990

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosures (1) through (9) are forwarded.

  
L. H. TURNER, JR.

Copy to: (w/o encl)  
COMPHIBGRU TWO  
COMPHIBRON TWELVE  
COMPHIBRON FOUR

## 1. COMMAND ORGANIZATION

- a. Commanding Officer  
Captain Laurence H. Turner, Jr., USN
- b. Executive Officer  
Captain Andrew M. Petruska III, USN  
Commander Harvey J. Gannon, USN
- c. Command Master Chief  
AWCM(AW) Jon C. Jewett, USN

2. MISSION: To embark, deploy, and land elements of a Marine amphibious landing force in an assault by AV-8B Harriers; CH-46, CH-53, AH-1, and UH-1 helicopters; LCAC, LCU, and LCM-8 landing craft; and LVT-B7 amphibious vehicles onto a hostile shore from the sea. SAIPAN serves as the flagship for Mediterranean Amphibious Ready Group (MARG) operations. Evacuation, disaster relief, and hospital ship are secondary missions of USS SAIPAN.

3. COMPOSITION: SAIPAN's crew is composed of 58 officers and 858 enlisted. The administrative chain of command is via COMPHIBRON Twelve, COMPHIBGRU Two, and COMNAVSURFLANT.

## 4. CHRONOLOGY

01 - 08 JAN 90	Holiday upkeep, Naval Station, Norfolk, VA. Commodore S.D. Gastar, COMPHIBRON FOUR, and staff embarked.
03-04 JAN 90	MARG 2-90 final embarkation conference (General Gray, USMC, guest speaker) at NAVPHIBASE Little Creek.
08-12 JAN 90	AV-8B stage V carrier qualifications, off Onslow Bay, NC. Embarked personnel for Scientists to Sea and Guest of Navy Cruise.
11 JAN 90	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial service onboard.
13-14 JAN 90	USMC onload, pierside Norfolk.
16-20 JAN 90	Ammo onload, Golf Anchorage, Norfolk, VA.
22 JAN-14 FEB 90	Argentine Midshipmen onboard for training.
22 JAN 90	MARG Presail conference onboard.

**23 JAN - 14 FEB 90**      **MARG 2-90 Work-Ups**

24 JAN 90      Onload 22 MEU at anchor, vicinity Morehead City, NC.

25 JAN - 12 FEB      AV-8B Stage VI Carrier Qualifications.

28 JAN 90      Arrive off Vieques Island, RQ, Practice Assault, FLEETEX 1-90.

29 JAN - 31 FEB      Green Water Work-Ups.

29 JAN - 06 FEB      CNAL Performance Assessment Team visit.

30 JAN - 01 FEB      FLEETEX Amphibious Assault on Vieques Island, RQ.

01 - 02 FEB      SACEX.

03 - 04 FEB      Inport Roosevelt Roads, RQ, for washdown/backload.

05 - 07 FEB      Return transit.

08 - 11 FEB      Arrive Onslow Bay, conduct SOCEX.

12 FEB      Offload at anchor, vicinity Morehead City, NC.

13 FEB      Return to homeport, Norfolk, VA.

**14 FEB - 07 MAR 90**      **POM Period, Norfolk, VA**

16 FEB      Pre-deployment briefings for dependents, NAVSTA Base Theater.

20 FEB      MARG 2-90 Fleet Planning Conference

**07 MAR - 07 SEP 90**      **MARG 2-90 Deployment**

07 MAR      Depart Norfolk, VA, for Morehead City, NC, with COMPHIBRON FOUR and staff embarked, incl. TACRON 22 DET, FLEET SURGICAL TEAM TWO, and EOD detachment.

08 MAR      Onload 22 MEU, Morehead City, NC, incl. BLT 2/4, HMM-261, and FSSG.

09 - 19 MAR      Transit Atlantic Ocean (MARG 2-90, composed of USS SAIPAN (LHA-2), USS PONCE (LPD-15), and USS SUMTER (LST-1181) ICW USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN-69) CVBG).

20 MAR 90      Inchop SIXTHFLEET.

20 - 27 MAR      GILLEX, West of Gibraltar.

27 - 30 MAR Turnover with MARG 1-90/Upkeep in Rota, SP.

30 MAR COMSIXTHFLT, VADM Williams, visits. Commodore Gastar, COMPHIBRON 4, assumes duties as CTF 61; COL Amos, USMC, 22 MEU, assumes duties as CTF 62. 22 MEU composed of BLT 2/4, HMM-261, and 22 MSSG.

31 MAR Depart Rota, SP, for Ops in WESTMED

01 - 07 APR Bi-lateral Exercise Spanish Phiblex

03 - 05 APR Amphibious landings, Sierra de Retin, SP.

07 APR Transit Straits of Gibraltar and enter Mediterranean.

09 - 16 APR Upkeep in Palma de Majorca.

15 APR Visit of HRH Princess Sophia of Sweden.

18 - 26 APR Training Anchorage, Pian de Spille/Monte Romano, IT.

27 APR - 01 MAY Upkeep in Naples, IT.

03 - 13 MAY NATO Exercise DRAGON HAMMER, including rendezvous with aircraft carriers of four NATO nations and international pre-sail conference on board SAIPAN while at anchor in Augusta Bay. Amphibious assault rehearsal. Amphibious assault.

05 MAY AV-8 operations with Royal Navy Carrier HMS INVINCIBLE.

06 MAY AV-8 operations with Spanish Navy Carrier SPS PRINCIPIE DE ASTURIAS. Five NATO carriers join for photo opportunity (USS SAIPAN, HMS INVINCIBLE, SPS PRINCIPIE DE ASTURIAS, ITS GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI, and USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER).

16 MAY Training Anchorage, St. Raphael, FR; offload Marines for training ashore at Camp de Canjeurs, FR.

17 - 26 MAY RAV in Toulon, FR. IMAV with USS SIERRA.

23 MAY Shipwide PQS standdown.

25 MAY Ordered to sortie within 72 hours. Embarked midshipmen - MEDTRAMID I.

27 MAY Participate in French Memorial Day service at Draguignan. Sortie Toulon en route Noncombatant Evacuation off Monrovia, LI.

27 MAY - 22 AUG 90

**NONCOMBATANT EVACUATION OPERATION "SHARP EDGE" OFF LIBERIA**

27 MAY CINCUSNAVEUR, COMSOCEUR, and COMSIXTHFLEET arrive onboard for briefings. SAIPAN and SUMTER underway for West Africa (PONCE underway 28 May).

28 MAY DEPUSCINCEUR joins CINCUSNAVEUR, COMSIXTHFLEET, COMSOCEUR onboard for further briefings. USS PETERSON joins NEO Task Force 61. COMSIXTHFLT embarks; other flags depart. PACE instructors arrive onboard.

29 MAY SAIPAN, SUMTER, PETERSON transit Straits of Gibraltar. COMSIXTHFLT battle watch embarks for ship orientation. COMSIXTHFLT and staff depart. JILE, OET, and CH-53E embark. FAS/RAS/ VERTREP with USNS RIEGEL.

30 MAY CTF 62 Forward Command Element (FCE) departs SAIPAN and arrives Rota, SP, en route Monrovia, LI.

01 JUN CTF 61 continues enroute Liberia at best speed (PETERSON at 30kts; SAIPAN at 23kts; SUMTER at 20kts).

02 JUN First EP-3E mission flown off Liberia. PETERSON arrives on station.

03 JUN SAIPAN and SUMTER arrive on station. Logistics head established in Freetown, SL. JSOC element embarks. HMS ANDROMEDA with one LYNX helo arrives.

04 JUN PONCE arrives on station. First confirmation briefing for NEO and security reinforcement of U.S. Embassy.

05 JUN RFA TIDESPRIING arrives on station with 22 Royal Marines and two Lynx helicopters. One hour alert set for possible extraction of Liberian President Samuel Doe.

06 JUN MODLOC named MAMBA STATION by Commodore Gastar. NEO plan briefed with British Task Group 325.1.

07 JUN Task force CO's meeting onboard SAIPAN.

08 - 09 JUN First full-dress rehearsal for Doe extraction (CH-53E/CH-46D options). SAIPAN reconfigures well deck for surface NEO.

13 JUN First night extraction rehearsal.

14 JUN Full dress rehearsal for NEO.

16 JUN No-notice Doe extraction rehearsal. Helo airborne in 50 minutes.

20 JUN MAMBA STATION DIVTACS; USN and RN units participate.

21 JUN HMS ANDROMEDA departs MAMBA STATION.

24 JUN HMS PHOEBE arrives MAMBA STATION.

02 JUL Heightened tension in Liberia; alert status raised to two hours reaction time for security force, one hour alert for Doe extraction, five hour alert for NEO.

03 JUL COMSIXTHFLT (VADM Williams) and battle staff embark in SAIPAN.

23 - 30 JUL Medical transfer of mercy conducted for master of German-owned, Cyprus registered M/V MARLAND. CAPT Dietrich Harder transferred by small boat to SAIPAN for treatment by CTF 61 medical staff for severe malaria. Patient restored to health and transported by helo to Freetown, SL, for convalescence in Germany.

04 AUG U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, Peter De Vos requests evacuation of non-essential AMCITS from Liberia, due to heavy fighting between factions in Monrovia. Taking of American hostages threatened.

05 AUG Limited drawdown of AMEMBASSY personnel and reinforcement of embassy by MARG Marines ordered. 74 evacuated in three-prong helo operation, including foreign nationals. One reinforced rifle company emplaced at embassy. Resupply of AMEMB begun, with fresh water most vital and fresh fruit and vegetables most welcomed.

06 AUG Evacuation of 19 by MARG, with transfer to Freetown. Hostages taken by Liberian faction, including one AMCIT.

07 AUG 24 evacuees, mostly foreign nationals and American children airlifted from Liberia.

08 AUG Eight evacuees brought to SAIPAN, for transfer to Freetown. Spanish, Vatican, and German embassies request U.S. assistance in evacuating diplomats and citizens.

09 AUG 25 evacuees helo'd to SAIPAN, including personnel from French Embassy.

10 AUG 14 evacuees transferred from American Embassy to SAIPAN en route Freetown.

11 AUG U.S. arranges evacuation from Buchanan with rebel leader. 30 civilians evacuated from Monrovia by helicopter to SAIPAN enroute Freetown.

13 AUG SAIPAN and PETERSON arrive off Buchanan and coordinate evacuation of over 100 civilians for overnight transfer to Freetown. Eight additional civilians saved from Monrovia and transferred to PONCE. COMSIXTHFLT and staff depart.

15 AUG MARG evacuates 12 expatriates from AMEMB, including Indian nuns and Guinean air-controllers from Robertsfield International Airport.

16 AUG MARG evacuates more than 400 Indian and Lebanese citizens to PONCE enroute transfer to Freetown. Five evacuees (one Lebanese family) to SAIPAN turned into six, as baby girl born onboard, named Nada Blell. USS BARNSTABLE COUNTY arrives on MAMBA STATION.

17 AUG 98 evacuees transferred to Freetown via SAIPAN.

19 AUG 50 evacuees rescued from Liberia by MARG assets.

21 - 22 AUG Nine evacuees transferred to Freetown via SAIPAN. 22 MEU Forward Command Element and reinforcing rifle company extracted from AMEMB. Turnover with MARG 3-90 units, USS INCHON and USS NASHVILLE. MARG 2-90 departs MAMBA STATION enroute Roosevelt Roads, RQ, for washdown.

30 AUG - 02 SEP MARG equipment, aircraft, and vehicle washdown, Roosevelt Roads, RQ.

05 - 06 SEP Offload of 22 MEU, Onslow Bay, Morehead City, NC.

07 SEP Return to homeport, Norfolk, VA.

08 SEP - 14 OCT Post-deployment leave/upkeep period.

17 SEP - 17 OCT IMAV with SIMA Norfolk, VA.

11 - 13 OCT Severe storm warning for Hurricane Lilli.

13 OCT SAIPAN celebrates Navy's birthday.

22 OCT - 05 NOV 90 Dedicated Lift/NGFS, Caribbean.

22 OCT Underway from Norfolk, VA.

23 OCT Anchor vicinity Morehead City, NC, for Army LCU onload.  
(Onload postponed due to heavy weather.)

24 OCT Onload Army LCU's. Underway enroute Roosevelt Roads, RQ.

25 OCT Aviation Safety Standdown.

28 OCT Arrive NAVSTA Roosevelt Roads, RQ, load SWOB for OPLIFT  
to Norfolk, VA, and depart.

29 OCT NGFS and surface GUNEX off Vieques Island, RQ.

31 OCT - 01 NOV Transit.

02 NOV Arrive/depart GTMO, offload LCU's.

03 - 05 NOV Transit.

06 NOV Arrive Norfolk, VA, offload SWOB.

09 NOV 90 SAIPAN celebrates Marine Corps birthday.

**13 NOV - 31 DEC 90 Ship's Restricted Availability (SRA)**

13 NOV SAIPAN moved, dead-stick, to Norfolk Naval Shipyard,  
Portsmouth, VA.

21 DEC Return to Naval Station, Norfolk, VA; SRA continues.

12 - 31 DEC SRA/Holiday leave period.