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USS SAIPAN (LHA 2) CY 2001 COMMAND HISTORY

1. Command Composition and Organization.

a. <u>Mission</u>. To embark, deploy, and land elements of a Marine amphibious landing force able to conduct opposed assault operations from the sea. Elements of the landing force may include AV-8 Harrier attack jets, CH-46, CH-53, AH-1W and UH-1 helicopters, conventional landing craft, air cushion or tracked amphibious vehicles or a combination of these elements. USS SAIPAN serves as the flagship for the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) operations. Evacuation, disaster relief, and hospital ship are Secondary missions of USS SAIPAN.

b. Organizational Structure

- (1) Immediate Senior in Command: Commander, Amphibious Group TWO, Norfolk, Virginia
 - (2) Units under operational/administrative control: None
 - (3) Command Organization:

Commanding Officer Captain Russell T. Williams, USN (01 January 2001 – 06 December 2001)

Commanding Officer
Captain Norma L. Hackney, USN
(06 December 2001 – 31 December 2001)

Executive Officer Captain Christopher B. Chace, USN (01 January 2001 – 04 June 2001)

Executive Officer Captain Steven W. Litwiller, USN (05 June 2001 – 07 September 2001)

Executive Officer Captain Christopher A. Hase, USN (08 September 2001 – 31 December 2001)

Command Master Chief CMDMC(SW/AW) Charlie H. Lovett, USN (01 January 2001 – 09 November 2001) Command Master Chief CMDMC(SW/SS) Abraham Jackson, USN (10 November 2001 – 31 December 2001)

CY 2000 Command Sailor of the Year HM1(SW/AW) USN (01 January 2001 – 31 December 2001)

CY 2001 Command Sailor of the Year MS1(SW/AW) USN (01 January 2002 – 31 December 2002)

(4) Composition. USS SAIPAN's crew is composed of 65 officers and 961 enlisted personnel.

2. Chronology (CY 2001)

01 - 21 January

Inport Pier 7, Naval Station Norfolk, VA. Continuation of Holiday Leave standdown period.

22 January

Inport Pier 7, Naval Station Norfolk, VA. Commenced Fast Cruise.

23 January

Underway from Naval Station Norfolk, VA to Naval Weapons Station (NWS) Earle, NJ for weapons off-load.

24 January

Arrived NWS Earle, NJ and commenced weapons off-load.

27 January

Completed weapons off-load in record 3 days. Underway from NWS Earle, NJ to Naval Station Norfolk, VA.

28 January

Arrived Inport Pier 7, Naval Station Norfolk, VA.

12 February

Departed Pier 7, Naval Station Norfolk, VA via tug tow to Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) Portsmouth, VA. Entered NNSY Dry Dock Pier 8 and commenced Complex Overhaul (COH). Realigned duty section rotation from four (4) section to eight (8) section duty.

14 February

Commander, Naval Surface Force, Atlantic (CNSL) announces USS SAIPAN winner of Battle Efficiency Award for CY 2000.

27 February – 7 March

Conducted initial Women At Sea (W.A.S.) training for crew.

06 March

Visit by Naval Sea Systems Command Program Executive Officer, Expeditionary Warfare, Rear Admiral Dennis G. Morral.

23 March

Command commences "Warfare Friday" readiness sessions.

29 March

The command's first permanently assigned enlisted female crewmember, CTMC reports aboard.

30 March

Deck Department participates in community relations project renovating and painting the exterior of a former Navy Yard Patrol (YP) boat.

08 April

Installation of the A/F27T-10 Hydraulic Component Test Stand, used to test and check aircraft hydraulic and pneumatic components, commenced in the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD).

09 April

Fireman Apprentice Earl James Evans, III, Engineering Department, died following gunshot wound during attempted robbery at off-base Portsmouth, VA convenience store.

09 – 13 April

Command commences weeklong restoration community relations project at Brighton Elementary School, Portsmouth, VA.

11 April

Deck Department completes YP boat restoration community relations project. Major fire in ship's acclime room/gymnasium.

12 April

Command conducted memorial service for FA Evans. CNO message announces USS SAIPAN selected as runner-up for CY 2000 Admiral Flatley Memorial Aviation Safety Award in LHA/LPH/LHD category.

20 April

USS SAIPAN announced its pledge for an educational partnership with Brighton Elementary School at school assembly.

29 April

Fireman Edward Charles Ward, Engineering Department, died of a drug overdose while away from command in Maryland.

30 April

Completed initial W.A.S. Certification by Commander, Amphibious Group TWO.

03 May

Command conducted memorial service for FN Ward.

15 May

Installation of the AN-USM636 Consolidated Automated Support System, used to test and check aircraft avionics components, commenced in AIMD.

29 June

Navy/Marine Corps News video team covers USS SAIPAN Warfare Friday physical training session.

11 July

Norfolk area local television media WTKR TV-3 and WAVY TV-10, and Navy/Marine Corps News video team cover command restoration/painting project at Brighton Elementary School.

26 July

Conducted Command Picnic at NNSY Scott Center Annex ballfield.

03 August

Fireman Apprentice Richard Neil Wichita, Engineering Department, and JO3 Brandon Maurice Gillespie, Executive Department, involved in POV accident off-base in Norfolk, VA.

- FA Wichita dies of injuries sustained in POV accident.

04 August

JO3 Gillespie dies of related injuries sustained in POV accident.

07 August

Command conducted joint memorial service for FA Wichita and JO3 Gillespie.

04-07 September

Commenced Commander's Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART 1A).

06 September

Visit by Commander, Amphibious Group TWO, Rear Admiral J. Kevin Moran. Observed half-way mark of Complex Overhaul (COH).

11 September

Set Force Protection (FPCON) Condition Charlie following attacks on World Trade Center buildings and Pentagon. Posted 12 armed watchstanders to protect the ship/barge. Armed all Security Division Personnel.

11 - 17 September

Implemented four section duty assignment (vice eight section duty) due to increased Threat Condition.

14 September

Conducted Chief Petty Officer Pinning ceremony at NNSY Drydock Club.

18 September

Resumed implementation of eight Section Duty.

21 September

Set FPCON Bravo Plus.

02 October

Restored Firemain System.

11 October

Conducted Spouse Orientation Brief at NNSY Drydock Club.

12 October

Set FPCON Charlie.

15 October

Anchor installed.

19 October

Medical Department commenced blood drive.

22 October

Assembled crew in NNSY Pier 8 Dry Dock for photograph under propeller screws.

23 October

Commenced flooding of NNSY Pier 8 Dry Dock.

24 October

Moved Barge from NNSY Pier 8 to NNSY Pier 6.

25 October

Established Security Boat Watch (3-man Crew). Armed watchstanders reduced to 10. All Security Division Personnel remained armed.

30 October

USS SAIPAN towed from NNSY Pier 8 Dry Dock to NNSY Pier 6.

31 October

Conducted Command Halloween party at NNSY Drydock Club.

08 November

Set FPCON Bravo Plus.

20 November

Brighton Elementary School "Thank You" Assembly for command volunteers.

27 November

City of Portsmouth Proclamation Ceremony for USS SAIPAN recognizing command's volunteer contributions at Brighton Elementary School.

- Command awarded CINCLANTFLT Retention Excellence Award for FY 2001.

29 November

Conducted Command Christmas party.

01 December

Completed S/A 776K, Women At Sea modification.

06 December

Conducted Change of Command ceremony on board USS SAIPAN.

12 December

Chill Water System activated.

12 – 31 December

Commenced Holiday Leave standdown period.

3. Basic Historic Narrative.

USS SAIPAN (LHA 2) began calendar year 2001 at its Naval Station Norfolk homeport (Pier 7) preparing for a weapons off-load and a lengthy shipyard maintenance period following its return from a major deployment on 21 December 2000.

After the holiday standdown period (21 December 2000-21 January 2001), USS SAIPAN commenced a Fast Cruise on 22 January. On 23 January, the ship got underway enroute to Naval Weapons Station (NWS) Earle, New Jersey and arrived inport on 24 January, immediately commencing the weapons off-load. Despite extremely cold temperatures and icy winds gusting to 36 knots, the command set a record-breaking milestone, safely off-loading over a thousand pallets of munitions in less than 36 hours.

On 27 January, USS SAIPAN departed Naval Weapon Station Earle, NJ and arrived Pier 7, Naval Station Norfolk the morning of 28 January, just in time for Super Bowl Sunday festivities.

From 30 January to 11 February, USS SAIPAN performed a series of equipment and fuel off-loads in preparation for a 13-month Complex Overhaul (COH) at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard (NNSY) in Portsmouth, VA. On 05 February, a Berthing/Messing Barge was made available on Pier 7 for movement of office equipment and messing supplies. Following on-load of materials on 10 February, the Barge was towed to Norfolk Naval Shipyard.

On 12 February, USS SAIPAN was towed from Naval Station Norfolk (Pier 7) to the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Dry Dock Pier 8, and commenced the Complex Overhaul (COH). Berthing accommodations for the crew was made available on the Barge and at the NNSY barracks facilities.

On 14 February, the Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet (COMNAVSURFLANT) announced in a message that USS SAIPAN was the winner of the Battle Efficiency Award for CY 2000.

On 06 March, the command was visited by a Naval Sea Systems Command representative, Rear Admiral Dennis G. Morral, the Executive Officer, Expeditionary Warfare, who came for a briefing on the major COH work packages and to view the COH work already in progress. Among the various work packages were Engineering Plant upgrades, and the habitability berthing renovations for "Women at Sea".

Another milestone occurred 29 March when CTMC reported aboard, thus becoming the command's first permanently assigned enlisted female crewmember.

In March, USS SAIPAN began an innovative program to keep its Sailors and Marines physically fit and focused on warfare readiness topics through the "Warfare Friday" sessions. On designated Fridays, the entire command (with exception of oncoming/off-going duty section personnel) met on the NNSY's sports field for physical fitness calisthenics. The Warfare Friday program also included designated training sessions on a variety of damage control and surface/aviation warfare qualification topics.

During the last week of March, USS SAIPAN Deck Department personnel began work on a unique community relations project -- renovating and painting the exterior of a former Navy Yard Patrol boat, the USS Judgement (YP 678). The 80-foot long vessel, berthed at the Nauticus National Maritime Center piers in downtown Norfolk, VA, was being used by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice for the Tidewater

Environmental Program, a local area substance abuse treatment facility which houses non-violent male juvenile offenders ages 16-19. In just over a week, Deck Department volunteers spent over 500 man-hours sanding, painting and polishing the YP boat, and completed the project just days before the grand opening ceremony of the battleship USS Wisconsin (BB 64), which was also located on the Nauticus National Maritime Center piers.

During the local area school's spring break session on 09-13 April, more than 160 SAIPAN crewmembers donated their time during the week for a community relations project, renovating the Brighton Elementary School in Portsmouth, VA. The work included painting walls and murals, repairing electrical fixtures, constructing a storage shed, and completing extensive landscaping. In all, more than \$25,000 worth of renovations was made to the school.

On the evening of 09 April, a SAIPAN crewmember, Fireman Apprentice Earl James Evans, III, assigned to the Engineering Department, was sitting in a POV at an off-base Portsmouth convenience store when he was approached by two civilians and shot in the chest. Approximately 30 minutes after the incident, FA Evans was pronounced dead at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital. Days after the tragedy, a command-wide memorial service for FA Evans was held on the Barge roof.

At approximately 2300, 11 April, a major fire occurred in the ship's Acclime Room, which also served as the ship's gymnasium. Duty Section Fire Party personnel, assisted by USS George Washington (CVN 73) fire party personnel and the NNSY Fire Department, were able to put out the massive blaze. No personnel were injured, however, at least \$900,000 in damage occurred, mostly to exercise equipment. The fire also destroyed insulation and lagging, with surrounding spaces sustaining smoke and fire fighting water damage. A follow-on investigation into the incident was launched by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, the Navy's Fire Marshall, and the Judge Advocate General.

On 12 April, the command received some good news with the receipt of a CNO message announcing that USS SAIPAN was selected as a runner-up for CY 2000 Admiral Flatley Memorial Aviation Safety Award in LHA/LPH/LHD category.

On 20 April, SAIPAN's Commanding Officer and crewmembers who participated in the Brighton Elementary School spring break renovation project attended the school's assembly meeting. At the assembly, USS SAIPAN formally announced its pledge for an on-going education partnership with Brighton. Through the partnership, SAIPAN crewmembers would visit the school during the week to serve as tutors and teacher's assistants. It also included a pledge to continue renovation work to the school facilities during the summer months.

During the morning of 29 April, another USS SAIPAN crewmember passed away. Fireman Edward Charles Ward, assigned to the ship's Engineering Department, was in Maryland visiting relatives when he was found dead by a family member. Cause of death was determined to be by a drug overdose. Days after the tragedy, another command-wide memorial service was held on the Barge roof in memory of FN Ward.

The command's "Warfare Friday" program became the center of attention on 29 June when a video team from Navy/Marine Corps News covered a physical training session, interviewing several crewmembers on the benefits of the program.

On 11 July, the command's community relations and educational partnership with Brighton Elementary School was recognized by local media. Norfolk area local television media video crews from WTKR TV-3 and WAVY TV-10, along with a video team from Navy/Marine Corps News, covered the command's on-going restoration/painting project at the school and interviewed several crewemembers. Both local TV stations aired a report about the volunteer efforts on their evening news.

Another tragedy struck two SAIPAN crewmembers the evening of 03 August, when Fireman Apprentice Richard Neil Wichita, assigned to the Engineering Department, and JO3 Brandon Maurice Gillespie, assigned to the Executive Department, were involved in an off-base POV accident in Norfolk, VA. Both individuals were traveling in the same vehicle when it swerved and hit a pole, flipping the vehicle and ejecting both service members. Both were taken to Sentara Norfolk General Hospital. FA Wichita died that evening; JO3 Gilliespie died the following morning. Days afterward, a command-wide memorial service was held on the Barge roof for both individuals.

During the half-way mark of the Complex Overhaul on 6 September, the Commander, Amphibious Group TWO, Rear Admiral J. Kevin Moran, visited the ship to receive a COH progress brief. During the visit, an All-hands assembly was held on the Barge for RADM Moran's address to the Officers and crew. In his address, RADM Moran praised SAIPAN for its impressive accomplishments during the 2000 deployment and presented the command with the CY 2000 Battle Efficiency Award.

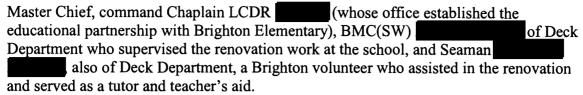
On 11 September, within hours of learning of the attacks on the World Trade Center buildings and the Pentagon, Force Protection Condition (FPCON) Charlie was implemented. Duty section assignments were reconfigured from eight (8) section to four (4) section to support additional security measures on the ship, the barge and the perimeters around the pier areas. On 18 September the command resumed eight (8) section duty rotation.

On 11 October, SAIPAN family members and significant others met at the NNSY Drydock Club for a "Spouse Orientation Brief" to receive an overview of the command's mission and operations, as well as family support information.

Another COH milestone was reached on 15 October with the installation of the ship's anchor. Days later, on 22 October, SAIPAN's crew gathered in the Dry Dock for a photograph under the propeller screws. The following day, the NNSY Pier 8 Dry Dock was partially flooded, marking another significant COH milestone. The Barge was moved from NNSY Pier 8 on 24 October to NNSY Pier 6. On 25 October, a security boat watch was established to provide security for the barge and future ship's movement out of drydock. Additionally on this date, Pier 8 Dry Dock was drained for ship's hull inspection. The Pier 8 Dry Dock was flooded again on 29 October, whereupon SAIPAN undocked, then moved to NNSY Pier 6 on 30 October.

SAIPAN's First Class Association hosted a Halloween party on 31 October at the NNSY Drydock Club, which was attended by more than 100 youngsters and adults.

In recognition of the command's volunteer efforts at Brighton Elementary School, City of Portsmouth Mayor Dr. James W. Holley III read a proclamation during the 27 November Portsmouth City Council meeting, praising the ship's crew for its service to the community and proclaimed December 2001 as USS SAIPAN month. Attending the proclamation ceremony was the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, Command



Also on 27 November, USS SAIPAN was notified that it was awarded the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet (CINCLANTFLT) Retention Excellence Award (formerly the Fleet Golden Anchor Award) for FY 2001.

On 29 November, the command's Christmas party was held.

USS SAIPAN held its change of command ceremony on 06 December at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Pier 6, in the ship's Hangar Bay. Captain Norma L. Hackney relieved Captain Russell T. Williams, becoming the first female to take command of a large deck amphibious assault ship.

From 12-31 December, USS SAIPAN commenced a Holiday Leave stand-down period and continued its COH maintenance period at NNSY.

In February 2002, the command was notified that it was awarded the Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet (COMNAVSURFLANT) CY 2001 "Green H" award which recognizes commands for achieving excellence in their unit health promotion programs.

Summary. During CY 2001, the ship underwent extensive modifications/upgrades in conjunction with the COH. Among the projects were crew berthing alterations for Women-At-Sea, Engineering Plant maintenance, and various habitability upgrades. Also during the COH period, was the installation of the new Damage Control Quarters (DCQ) system which automates damage control tracking, plotting and alarms, and can automate opening/closing of valves to set DC conditions. C5I Department also had extensive modifications/upgrades during this time frame.

The following items were performed in C5I Department's CA / ADP (Automated Data Processing) Divisions:

SAIPAN Unclassified LAN Migration

- 1. SAIPAN Pre-migration assessment conducted by Titan-Delfin 23 26 October 2001 included implementation of Integrated Shipboard Network System (ISNS) GIG-E LAN switches and server network and Hardware support for 135 workstations.
- 2. GOTS Delta Software support conducted by Titan-Delfin on 24 November 2001 09 January 2002 included the Gots Delta ISNS System Management of ship's systems administrator to build an NT LAN from scratch. Upgrade involved load of NT Operating Software with copy Gots Delta software on servers. The applications werethen loaded and configured on each machine.
- 3. NTCSS Program of Record Shipboard Snap users were offline from 14 November 2001 05 December 2001. Database conversion and building of individual shipboard accounts on user workstations took place.
- **4.** Cloned 100 Program of Record (POR) workstations Titan-Delfin on 28 November 2001 05 December 2001. This was a workstation by workstation, shipwide space by space evolution to include GOTS Delta Software loading.

- 5. SOVT (ISNS Servers, switches and PC's) Phase 1 commenced 03 21 December 2001.
- **6.** Completion by dates required flexibility and extended working hours by ships force Information Technicians to accomplish.

SAIPAN Classified LAN Migration

- 1. Pre-migration assessment conducted by Titan-Delfin 23 26 October 2001. SAIPAN provided SPAWAR Chesapeake, Virginia with a priority location list for 84 PC's.
- **2.** Master Clone workstation migration commenced 10 14 December 2001 for each Classfied workstation identified.
- **3.** GotsDelta Software support conducted by Titan-Delfin commenced 07 14 December 2001 for 25 Program of Record Classified workstations.
- 4. SOVT(ISNS Servers, switches and PC's) Phase 1 commenced 17 21 December 2001.
- **5.** Completion by dates required flexibility and extended working hours by ships force Information Technicians to accomplish.

Relational Admin (RADM), RSUPPLY, NALCOMIS and OMMS-NG

- 1. Legacy to Optimized Conversion (16 October 2001 19 December 2001) included RSUPPLY, which generates, processes and tracks ships material requirements. It also provides inventory, logistics and financial reporting and improved management functions increasing supply effectiveness and stock record integrity.
- 2. Relational Administrative Data Management (RADM) System conversion (16 October 2001 19 December 2001) replaced SNAP Admin and Compass. RADM interfaces with Common Access Card (CAC) which will replace the military Identification Card and allows for tailored application of Management tables.
- 3. OMMS-NG conversion (16 October 2001 19 December 2001) improves CSMP upline reporting, logistics support data, availability creation, acceptance, scheduling and tracking of parts and supplies.
- **4.** NALCOMIS conversion (16 October 2001 19 December 2001) offers improved management tools for engine cost accounting and adhoc report features. NALCOMIS interfaces with OMA and RSUPPLY, and simplifies AV3M downloading process and DBAG'S.

The following is a list of equipment added to C5I Department's CE Division.

Communication Systems:

UMK-3 TESS-4 (meteorological computer system)
NITES 2000 (meteorological system)
GBS (global broadcast system)
RD-674 (recorder/reproducer)
ISNS LAN
HYDRA (portable communications)

Radar Systems:

WSN-7

SPN-41

SPS-73

UPX-37(IFF)

Interior Communications Systems:

Integrated Voice Network (IVN)

Improved Point Detection System (IPDS)

Damage Control Quarters (DCO)

Below is a list of equipment removed from C5I Department's CE Division.

Communication Systems:

UMK-3 TESS-3 (meteorological computer system)

RD-379/RD-390 (recorder/reproducer)

JBS (joint broadcast system)

Radar Systems:

SPS-64

UPX-27(IFF)

Interior Communications Systems:

IVCS Phone System

Chemical Agent Point Detection System

The following is a list of equipment upgraded to C5I Department's CE Division.

Communication Systems:

USC-38 EHF

VIXS (video teleconferencing system)

SMQ-11 (meteorological recorder/reproducer)

SRC-54 (SINCGARS radios)

SRC-57 (DWTS radios)

Radar Systems:

SPA-25 CIRU'S

IFF

Interior Communications Systems:

2MC (Engineering Microphone Control Circuit)

ICSM Alarm Panels in Main Spaces

Improved Point Detection System

H2S Alarm System

Additional details of the COH work is contained in weekly COH Unit SITREPs.