

# Log of the Saihan

## SEPTEMBER 1953



## OCTOBER 1953



## NOVEMBER 1953



## DECEMBER 1953



## JANUARY 1954



## FEBRUARY 1954



- 28th Departed Norfolk, Virginia.
- 30th Arrived Mayport, Florida. Embarked VMA-324 and conducted refresher air operations in the Jacksonville Operating Area.
- 8th Arrived Mayport, Florida, from the Jacksonville Operating Area.
- 13th Departed Mayport.
- 19th Arrived Christobal, Panama Canal Zone. Completed transit of the Panama Canal and arrived Balboa, Panama Canal Zone. Reported for duty with the United States Pacific Fleet.
- 21st Departed Balboa.
- 30th Arrived San Diego, California, after two days of air operations in the San Diego Operating Area.
- 2nd Departed San Diego for the San Diego Operating Area. Conducted air operations and returned to San Diego on 4 November.
- 6th Departed San Diego.
- 12th Arrived Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii.
- 13th Departed Pearl Harbor for the Hawaiian Operating Area. Conducted air operations and returned to Pearl Harbor on 14 November. Departed Pearl Harbor on 16 November for the operating area and returned to Pearl Harbor on 17 November.
- 20th Departed Pearl Harbor for the Far East.
- 30th Arrived Yokosuka, Japan. Reported for duty with Naval Forces, Far East.
- 2nd Departed Yokosuka, Japan, for Sasebo, Japan.
- 4th Arrived Sasebo, Japan. Reported for duty with Task Force NINETY FIVE, United Nations Blockading and Escorting Force.
- 8th Departed Sasebo for Korean West Coast Operating Area in the Yellow Sea.
- 16th Returned Sasebo.
- 28th Departed Sasebo for Korean West Coast Operating Area in the Yellow Sea.
- 31st Returned Sasebo.
- 5th Departed Sasebo for Korean West Coast Operating Area in the Yellow Sea.
- 14th Returned Sasebo.
- 19th Departed Sasebo for Korean West Coast Operating Area in the Yellow Sea. Provided air cover for Japanese manned LST's transporting Chinese POW's from Inchon, South Korea, to Formosa.
- 28th Returned Sasebo.
- 4th Departed Sasebo for Okinawa. Embarked 143 Army, Air Force, Marine and Navy "Rest and Recreation" personnel from Korea for trip to Hong Kong. Participated in RLT MarLex III-54 (Marine Landing Exercise) from 3 thru 10 February.
- 12th Arrived Hong Kong, British Crown Colony. Liberty, shopping and sightseeing for all hands in Hong Kong thru 16 February.
- 17th Departed Hong Kong.
- 19th At Sea. Captain D. G. DONAHO, USN, relieved Captain W. B. MECHLING, USN, as Commanding Officer.
- 20th Arrived Inchon, South Korea. Prepared to assist in the helicopter evacuation of Indian security troops from Panmunjon truce camp.
- 23rd Departed Inchon.
- 24th Arrived Sasebo.

## MARCH 1954



## APRIL 1954



## MAY 1954



## JUNE 1954



## JULY 1954



- 3rd Departed Sasebo for Korean West Coast Operating Area in the Yellow Sea.
- 10th Returned Sasebo.
- 15th Departed Sasebo.
- 18th Arrived Iwo Jima Operating Area. Participated in MarDivLex 1-54 (Marine Division Landing Exercise) thru 25 March.
- 27th Arrived Yokosuka, Japan.
- 7th Departed Yokosuka, Japan. Participated in Japanese "Black Ship Festival" commemorating visit of Admiral Perry to Japan.
- 11th Departed Yokohama for Yokosuka. Loaded AU aircraft for delivery to French Forces in Indo China.
- 13th Departed Yokosuka.
- 18th Arrived Tourane, Indo China. Flew 25 AU aircraft ashore. VMA-324 pilots returned to SAIPAN by French helicopter. Off-loaded AU spare parts and maintenance personnel in Tourane harbor. Departed Tourane.
- 20th Arrived Sangley Point, Republic of the Philippines.
- 21st Departed Sangley Point.
- 25th Arrived Sasebo.
- 29th Departed Sasebo for Korean East Coast Operating Area in the Sea of Japan. Participated in 4th RLT LEX (Marine Landing Exercise) at Sokcho' Ri, South Korea, thru 4 May. Proceeded to Korean West Coast Operating Area in the Yellow Sea.
- 8th Returned Sasebo.
- 14th Departed Sasebo.
- 15th Arrived Nagasaki, Japan. Represented United States Navy at Armed Forces Day celebration.
- 17th Departed Nagasaki.
- 18th Arrived Sasebo.
- 25th Departed Sasebo for return trip to the United States.
- 28th Destroyer Division 341 joined off Hong Kong, B.C.C.
- 31st Crossed the Equator at 105° 36' East Longitude.
- 1st Arrived Singapore, British Crown Colony, for liberty, shopping and sightseeing.
- 3rd Departed Singapore. Duty with the United States Pacific Fleet completed.
- 7th Arrived Colombo, Ceylon, for liberty, shopping and sightseeing.
- 9th Departed Colombo.
- 15th Arrived Aden. Refueled and departed.
- 19th Arrived Suez Canal. Completed transit of Suez Canal and entered the Mediterranean Sea.
- 22nd Arrived Naples, Italy, for liberty, shopping and sightseeing.
- 25th Departed Naples.
- 26th Arrive Ville Franche, on the French Riviera, for liberty, shopping and sightseeing.
- 30th Departed Ville Franche.
- 1st Arrived Barcelona, Spain, for liberty, shopping and sightseeing.
- 5th Departed Barcelona.
- 7th Arrived Lisbon, Portugal, for liberty, shopping and sightseeing.
- 9th Departed Lisbon.
- 19th Arrived Mayport, Florida, completing a cruise around the world. Off-loaded VMA-324.
- 20th Departed Mayport.
- 21st Arrived Norfolk, Virginia. SAIPAN was home again after nine months and three weeks.



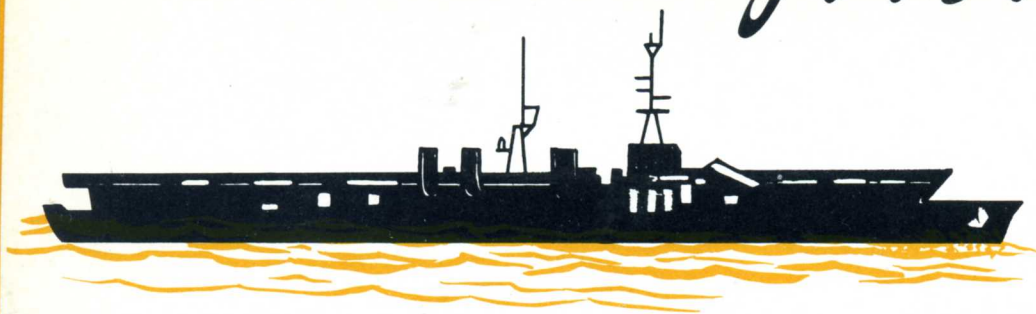
USS SAIPAN CVL-48  
VMA-324  
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FAR EAST AND AROUND THE WORLD  
1953 - 1954



# History OF THE



## U.S.S. SAIPAN (CVL-48)

The U.S.S. SAIPAN (CVL-48) was launched on 8 July 1945 at the Camden, New Jersey, yards of the New York Shipbuilding Corporation. Formal commissioning ceremonies took place in the Philadelphia Navy Yard on 14 July 1946.

The SAIPAN is a fast, light aircraft carrier, constructed on a basic heavy cruiser hull, and taking her name from one of the most heroic battles of World War II . . . the invasion and capture of Saipan in the Marianas Islands of the Pacific.

The SAIPAN is 684 feet long and displaces approximately 19,320 tons. Her flight deck is 617 feet long and 80 feet wide. Her power plant can produce 120,000 shaft horsepower to propel the ship at speeds above 32 knots with four screws. The electric plant can generate enough electric power to supply a city of 10,000 people. The evaporators provide a daily water supply of 80,000 gallons for the ship's power plant, personal use of the crew, cooking and the ship's laundry. Under war-time operating conditions the SAIPAN can berth some 2,000 officers and men.

Since commissioning the SAIPAN has enjoyed many and varied duties. Her first assignment was to the Naval Air Basic Training Command in Pensacola, Florida, as relief for the U.S.S. RANGER . . . one of the Navy's oldest aircraft carriers. The SAIPAN's duties in Pensacola consisted of the carrier qualification of embryo Naval Aviators while cruising in the Gulf of Mexico. She performed that duty honorably and departed Pensacola in April 1947 with over 12,000 carrier landings under her belt. From Pensacola the SAIPAN proceeded to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for a belated "shakedown". The SAIPAN is believed to be the first aircraft carrier that ever made a shakedown cruise after having had over 12,000 landings made on her deck.

In May 1948 the SAIPAN accomplished what is still considered to be one of her most memorable achievements . . . she was the first United States Navy aircraft carrier to operate with a complete squadron of jet fighters. The FH-1 "Phantom" . . . piloted by the pilots of Air Development Squadron THREE shared this honor with the SAIPAN.

As of the date this book is published, the SAIPAN has steamed over 300,000 miles; has received more than 39,000 landings on her flight deck; and has visited over 25 foreign countries. The SAIPAN is a "shellback", having crossed the equator on two separate cruises, and an honored member of the "Realm of the Golden Dragon," having crossed the 180th meridian. On arrival in Norfolk after the completion of her Pacific duty the SAIPAN will also have completed a circuit of the world.

Other duties at which the SAIPAN has served include: anti-submarine warfare, cold-weather evaluation cruises in the North Atlantic, service with the SIXTH Fleet in the Mediterranean, and service with the Operational Development Force.





# USS SAIPAN CVL - 48

## TO THE FAR EAST

The SAIPAN returned to Norfolk on 5 August 1953. Behind her was a two-month cruise to the Caribbean and South America with Midshipmen of the U.S. Naval Academy embarked. Ahead of her was extended deployment to distant duty . . . a polite Navy phrase meaning "long time no see United States" . . . to Korea and the Far East.

Preparations, including a ten-day training cruise with the pilots and aircraft of Marine Attack Squadron THREE TWO FOUR embarked, began immediately. On 28 September 1953 the last line was cast off Pier 7, Norfolk Naval Base, and the SAIPAN was on her way to do her part in the United Nations effort to gain a permanent peace in the Far East.

First stop was Mayport, Florida, where final loading of VMA-324 was completed and eight more days of carrier qualification training was accomplished. Thirteen October saw the SAIPAN on her way to the Panama Canal Zone. The Panama Canal was reached and transited on 19 October and SAIPAN moored in Balboa . . . the Pacific terminal of the canal, for two nights and one day of liberty. The SAIPAN had joined the United States Pacific Fleet.

First port of call in the Pacific was San Diego. Training operations and last-minute loading of supplies passed the time quickly in the last continental limits port that the SAIPAN was to see for some months. The SAIPAN was hull-down heading west out of San Diego on 6 November . . . bound for Pearl Harbor. The time from 12 November to 20 November passed as quickly as did that in San Diego and the latter date found the SAIPAN on her way to Japan . . . Waikiki Beach and the land of the hula left behind.

SAIPAN photographers set their range finders on Mount Fuji on 30 November 1953 and the SAIPAN entered Yokosuka harbor and reported to the Commander, Naval Forces, Far East, for duty. SAIPAN sailors spent two days investigating the "Land of the Rising Sun" and on 2 December the SAIPAN departed Yokosuka . . . bound for Sasebo, on the island of Kyushu and destined to be SAIPAN's "home away from home" in Japan. Sasebo harbor was

entered on 4 December 1953. And so commenced the SAIPAN's tour of duty in the Far East.

Duty in Japan offered many exciting changes to SAIPAN sailors. They learned to bow instead of shaking hands in greeting, to take off their shoes before entering Japanese buildings, and to sit on the "deck" instead of conventional western style chairs. And they increased the amount of out-going mail substantially as Japanese merchandise started on its way to loved ones at home.

Duties of the SAIPAN were also different from previous duties. The SAIPAN joined Task Force NINETY FIVE, a United Nations Command charged with Blockading and Escorting along the coast of South Korea. Duties included the reconnaissance and surveillance of the Yellow Sea coast of South Korea and air inspection of the "friendly islands" along the 38th parallel. The Yellow Sea became the SAIPAN's private cruising waters. Normal cruises lasted about ten days . . . and then back to Sasebo.

Three Marine amphibious training exercises helped to pass the time. The first exercise took the SAIPAN to Okinawa where the planes of VMA-324 simulated close air support of a Marine landing assault. The second operation took her to Iwo Jima and the third exercise took her back to South Korea and Sokcho' Ri. After the Okinawa exercise Hong Kong was visited for rest and recreation . . . and SAIPAN sailors became the best dressed men in the Far East. When the SAIPAN left Hong Kong on 17 February over 400 tailor made civilian suits and sports jackets went with her.

After the Iwo Jima exercise the SAIPAN returned to the Yokosuka area and entered Yokohama to represent the U. S. Navy at the Japanese "Black Ship Festival" commemorating the visit of Admiral Perry and the subsequent opening of Japan to western trade. The Tokyo souvenir market was invaded by SAIPAN sailors during the stay in Yokohama. The Yokohama visit was cut short by the worsening Indo China war. Twenty-five AU type aircraft were loaded in Yokosuka and pilots of VMA-324 flew the aircraft from the carrier to French forces at Tourane, Indo China, on 18 April. VMA-324 pilots renewed friendships with French pilots who had



# And Around



# The World

undergone flight training in the United States before being returned to the SAIPAN via French helicopters. Manila, Philippine Islands, became the next port of call. One day and night of liberty in Manila and she was on her way back to Sasebo.

Last minute shopping for Japanese souvenirs and a visit to Nagasaki for Armed Forces Day occupied SAIPAN sailors as they talked of going home until the great day arrived on 25 May 1954. Sasebo . . . with memories pleasant and otherwise . . . was left behind and the SAIPAN sailed for Singapore on 25 May.

SAIPAN was on her way home . . . and would complete a trip around the world before she again entered Hampton Roads.

## AND AROUND THE WORLD

Loaded with at least one set of Japanese chinaware for each member of the crew, the SAIPAN reached Singapore, in company with Destroyer Division THREE FOUR ONE, on 1 June 1954. Davey Jones and his court had come aboard the night before as the SAIPAN crossed the equator. His royal majesty held court for the many slime-smeared Polliwogs infesting the SAIPAN and scheduled a return visit on 4 June . . . to suitably deal with the low and uncouth Polliwogs. Enjoyable liberty in Singapore ended on 3 June and the SAIPAN departed for Colombo, Ceylon. Davey Jones kept his promise and ridded the SAIPAN of the stench of Polliwogs as scheduled and the SAIPAN became a ship sailed entirely by trusty shellbacks.

Colombo was entered on 7 June 1954 and carved Teakwood elephants joined the ranks of SAIPAN souvenirs. On 9 June she departed for Aden. She refueled in Aden on 15 June, allowing several hours of liberty for the crew. Eight months to the day after going through the Pan-

ama Canal the SAIPAN entered and completed transit of the Suez Canal . . . arriving at Suez early in the morning of the 19th of June and departing Port Said late in the evening of the same day. Naples, Italy, welcomed the SAIPAN on 22 June and Ville Franche, Nice and Cannes, France, followed suit on 26 June. The Riviera . . . complete with Bikinis, side-walk cafes and cognac . . . was all that it was supposed to be . . . and liberty was the order of the day. Perfume came aboard in quantity!

From Ville Franche SAIPAN sailors invaded Barcelona, Spain . . . with more side-walk cafes and featuring the bull fights. Spanish lace and dolls were added to the souvenir supply. Two days at sea after departure from Barcelona on 5 July provided all hands with much needed rest . . . particularly after the entire liberty section had to spend the night on the dock in Barcelona the night before sailing due to cancellation of small boating because of heavy seas. Lisbon, Portugal, was entered on 7 July and after two days of liberty all hands were ready to begin the last leg of the trip home. Mayport and the continental limits, U.S.A., was the destination when the hook was raised in Lisbon on 9 July.

VMA-324 was off-loaded in Mayport on 18 July. The SAIPAN departed Mayport on 19 July . . . Norfolk and HOME was reached on 20 July! SAIPAN was home again after nine months and three weeks!

Posterity will not read about the SAIPAN winning any wars or even setting any records . . . unless you consider the amount of photographic film used by camera enthusiasts or the amount of Japanese chinaware imported to Norfolk . . . but she did her job during her Pacific duty. And she did it well! All hands did their share!

SAIPAN was and is a "CAN DO" ship!