

= USS Mahan (DD @-@ 364) =

USS Mahan (DD @-@ 364) was the lead ship of the United States Navy 's Mahan @-@ class destroyers . The ship was named for Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan , a 19th @-@ century naval historian and strategic theorist . Her design ushered in major advances over traditional destroyers . Among them were a third set of quadruple torpedo tubes , protective gun shelters , and emergency diesel generators . Along with a steam propulsion system that was simpler and more efficient to operate .

Mahan began her service in 1936 . She was first assigned to the US Atlantic Fleet and then transferred to Pearl Harbor in 1937 . When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 , Mahan was at sea with Task Force 12 . Their mission to Midway Island was aborted to participate in the post @-@ attack search for the enemy strike force . Unable to locate them , the task force returned to Pearl Harbor .

Early in World War II , Mahan took part in raids on the Marshall and Gilbert Islands . In the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands , Admirals Chester Nimitz and William Halsey commended the destroyer group (of which Mahan was a member) for a stellar effort in screening the aircraft carriers Hornet and Enterprise against heavy odds . During the New Guinea campaign to take the northeast coast from the Japanese , Mahan was engaged in the amphibious landings at Salamaua , Lae , and Finschhafen . She participated in landings at Arawe and Borgen Bay (near Cape Gloucester) , New Britain , and provided support for the troop landing at Los Negros Island in the Admiralty Islands .

Late in the Pacific War , the Japanese kamikaze relentlessly plagued US Naval operations . On 7 December 1944 , a group of suicide aircraft overwhelmed and disabled Mahan at Ormoc Bay , Leyte , in the Philippine Islands . On fire and exploding , the ship was abandoned , and a US destroyer sank her with torpedoes and gunfire .

= = Characteristics = =

Mahan displaced 1 @, @ 500 long tons (1 @, @ 524 t) at standard load and 1 @, @ 725 long tons (1 @, @ 753 t) at deep load . The ship 's overall length was 341 feet 3 inches (104 @. @ 0 m) , the beam was 35 feet 6 inches (10 @. @ 8 m) and her draft was 10 feet 7 inches (3 @. @ 2 m) . She was powered by two General Electric geared steam turbines that developed a total of 46 @, @ 000 shaft horsepower (34 @, @ 000 kW) for a maximum speed of 37 knots (69 km / h ; 43 mph) . Four Babcock & Wilcox or four Foster Wheeler water @-@ tube boilers generated the superheated steam needed for the turbines . Mahan carried a maximum of 523 long tons (531 t) of fuel oil , with a range of 6 @, @ 940 nautical miles (12 @, @ 850 km ; 7 @, @ 990 mi) at 12 knots (22 km / h ; 14 mph) . Her peacetime complement was 158 officers and enlisted men . The wartime complement increased to approximately 250 officers and enlisted men .

Mahan had a tripod foremast and a pole mainmast . To improve the anti @-@ aircraft field of fire , the tripod foremast was constructed without nautical rigging . In silhouette , the ship was similar to the larger Porter class that immediately preceded her . She was fitted with the first emergency diesel generators , replacing the storage batteries of earlier destroyers . Gun crew shelters were built fore and aft for the superimposed weapons . A third quadruple set of torpedo tubes was added , with one mount on the centerline and two in the side positions . This required relocating one 5 inch / 38 caliber gun to the aft deckhouse . Mahan incorporated a new generation of land @-@ based steam propulsion machinery . With boiler pressures increasing to 600 PSI (pounds per square inch) , and high @-@ pressure turbines that had double reduction gears , which ran faster and more efficient than that of her predecessors .

= = Armament = =

The main battery of Mahan consisted of five 5 inch / 38 caliber guns , equipped with the Mark 33 ship gun fire @-@ control system . Each gun was dual @-@ purpose , configured for surface and aerial targets . Her anti @-@ aircraft battery originally had four water @-@ cooled .50 caliber

machine guns . The ship was fitted with three quadruple torpedo @-@ tube mounts for twelve 21 @-@ inch torpedoes , guided by the Mark 27 torpedo fire @-@ control system . Depth charge roll @-@ off racks were rigged on the stern of the ship .

In early 1942 , the Mahan @-@ class destroyers began a wartime armament refitting process , but most of the class was not fully refitted until 1944 . Mahan was refitted in June 1944 at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard . The notable refits to the Mahan @-@ class included the removal of one 5 inch / 38 gun , typically replaced with two twin Bofors 40 mm guns and five 20 mm Oerlikon guns .

= = Construction and service = =

Mahan was built by United Dry Docks (successor to the Morse Dry Dock and Repair Company) in Staten Island , New York . Her keel was laid down on 12 June 1934 and she was launched on 15 October 1935 , sponsored by Kathleen H. Mahan (the admiral 's great @-@ granddaughter) . The ship was commissioned on 18 September 1936 , with Commander J. B. Waller in command . The ship departed for Caribbean and South American ports within two months of her commission , combining her initial training and shakedown cruise with a goodwill tour . She remained in the Atlantic until July 1937 , then headed to the Southern California coast for fleet training before steaming to her new station at Pearl Harbor .

Rising tension between Japan and the United States stretched back to 1931 with Japan 's invasion of Manchuria in the Mukden Incident . Japan 's continued aggression , instigating the Second Sino @-@ Japanese War in 1937 and invading French Indochina in 1940 ? to which the United States and European powers responded with embargoes on iron and oil imports ? further heightened the tension . The Japanese thereafter decided to attack the Western powers in Asia , beginning with a surprise attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor . When the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 , Mahan was at sea with the aircraft carrier Lexington , three cruisers and four destroyers as part of Task Force 12 . Lexington 's mission was to ferry Marine aircraft to reinforce Midway Island . After news of the attack on Pearl Harbor , the task @-@ force commander received orders to terminate the ferry mission and to search for the Japanese strike force . Unable to locate them , the task force returned to Pearl Harbor on 12 December .

She put to sea in late December with 103 Marines to reinforce their detachment at Johnston Island (about 750 nautical miles ? 860 miles , or 1 @,@ 390 km ? west of Hawaii) , and evacuated 47 civilians to Hawaii the following month . A convoy assignment took Mahan to Samoa , where she joined Task Force 17 (including the carrier Yorktown , two cruisers and five destroyers) . The task force carried out raids on Jaluit Atoll , Mili Atoll and Makin Atoll (Butaritari) in the Marshall Islands and Gilbert Islands . Mahan moved on to Canton Island in late February 1942 , temporarily assigned to offshore patrol duty . By early April , she was at sea with a convoy bound for San Pedro , California . The ship then steamed north to the Mare Island Naval Shipyard for overhaul , docking on 18 April 1942 .

Mahan was back operating in the waters off Pearl Harbor in August 1942 . By mid @-@ October , she had steamed out of Pearl Harbor as part of Task Force 16 with the carrier Enterprise , the battleship South Dakota , two cruisers and seven destroyers . On 24 October they joined Task Force 17 , which included the carrier Hornet , four cruisers and six destroyers . The two carrier groups formed Task Force 61 under the command of Rear Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid , and was ordered to the Santa Cruz Islands to strike the Japanese if they moved on Guadalcanal .

After the task force anchored off the islands on the morning of 26 October , Enterprise 's search planes spotted the enemy carrier force and dropped two 500 @-@ pound bombs on the Japanese aircraft carrier Zuiho , setting the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands in motion . When it subsided , the Navy had lost 74 aircraft , the carrier Hornet and one destroyer ; Enterprise , South Dakota , one cruiser and one destroyer were damaged . The Japanese lost about 100 aircraft , but their ship casualties were much lower . Nimitz and Halsey expressed their satisfaction with Kinkaid 's force and their battle against heavy odds , and the destroyers in the Hornet and Enterprise screens were commended for a stellar effort .

En route to Noumea , New Caledonia , on 27 October , a Japanese submarine contact caused the

American ships to take evasive action . In the confusion , Mahan and battleship South Dakota collided : both ships were seriously damaged . Commander R. W. Simpson was Mahan 's captain at the time , having taken command in early 1941 . Temporary repairs were made to Mahan at Noumea , and she headed back to Pearl Harbor for a new bow .

Fully repaired , Mahan left Pearl Harbor on 9 January 1943 for the South Pacific . In subsequent months she escorted convoys between the New Hebrides and the Fiji Islands , performed patrol assignments off New Caledonia , and engaged in operations in Australian waters . By August her base of operations was Milne Bay , New Guinea , which along with Buna , Papua New Guinea , was used as a staging area for an advance to gain possession of the Japanese @-@ held northeast coast of New Guinea . The operation began in August 1943 , with plans to strike Lae , New Guinea . Two weeks earlier , Mahan , under Lieutenant Commander James T. Smith , and three other US destroyers had cleared the Lae approaches and the waters between Salamaua and Finschhafen , bombarding Japanese installations at Finschhafen . In early September the Lae Task Force , under Rear Admiral Daniel E. Barbey , left Milne Bay for Lae with 8 @,@ 000 Australian troops . By the evening of 4 September , the troop landing was completed . On 11 September Salamaua was under Allied control , and Lae was taken by 16 September . Mahan and other US destroyers had provided cover for the amphibious landings .

Defeated at Lae , the Japanese pulled back to Finschhafen , which the Americans and Australians chose as the site of their next offensive . On 21 September an assault force under Barbey left Buna , escorted by US destroyers including Mahan , and stopped at Lae to pick up an Australian infantry brigade . Additional US destroyers were attached to the force , preceding the convoy to the rendezvous point . On 22 September , before daylight , the amphibious force stormed the beach at Finschhafen ; by noon , all troops were ashore . As the destroyers began to withdraw from the area , ten Japanese torpedo planes winged across the water , targeting Mahan and five other US destroyers . The ships returned fire , shooting down eight of the ten planes ; the remaining two escaped . This scrimmage ended without any hits by enemy planes . By 2 October , Finschhafen was in the hands of the Allies .

On 14 December 1943 , the amphibious force led by Barbey mustered at Buna , New Guinea , in preparation for the landing at Arawe , New Britain . With it was a bombardment group , composed of Mahan and four other US destroyers . Setting sail on the 14th , the force dropped anchor off Arawe early the next morning , and Mahan and her sister ships bombarded the Japanese shore defenses at the main landing point . The shelling from the 5 " / 38 guns and the bazooka @-@ fired rockets sent the Japanese into retreat , and by mid @-@ morning the beachhead was secured . Christmas 1943 found Mahan steaming with Barbey 's amphibious force to Borgen Bay , near Cape Gloucester , New Britain . The entrance to Borgen Bay was risky , with uncharted waters ; Mahan and Flusser were picked to sound out the channel and mark the way . They moved through the channel , with two minesweepers laying buoys in their wake . The force shadowed the buoys , and made its way through the passage . On the morning of the 26th , the Marines landed on the beach unopposed . The Japanese struck forcefully later that afternoon , but the Americans would not be dislodged .

In late February 1944 , Mahan was in action with the Seventh Fleet supporting the troop landing at Los Negros Island in the Admiralty Islands . Although the supporting ships came under heavy fire , the troops made it ashore . Three weeks later , the Japanese force at Los Negros was defeated .

In early 1944 , after extended wartime duty in the Pacific , the veteran destroyer was ordered to California for overhaul and moored again at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard . Mahan left the yard in early July for Pearl Harbor , participating in exercises there until 15 August . She returned to New Guinea on 20 October via Eniwetok , Jaluit , Guam , Saipan and Ulithi , escorting convoys between Hollandia (Jayapura) and Leyte . By the end of November 1944 , Mahan was performing anti @-@ submarine patrol off Leyte in the Philippines .

= = Sinking = =

In November 1944 , bad weather and hostile terrain bogged down the ground campaign to seize Leyte from the Japanese . The chief impediment to retaking Leyte was the Japanese ability to

reinforce and resupply its headquarters at Ormoc City , on the west side of Leyte , and the Americans ' inability to counter this advantage . Thus , the unavoidable decision was made for an amphibious attack on Ormoc .

On the morning of 7 December 1944 , three years to the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor , troops of the US 77th Infantry Division landed south of Ormoc City . At the same time , Mahan was patrolling the channel between Leyte and Ponson Island . The amphibious strike by the infantry met with little opposition , but nine Japanese bombers and four escort fighters converged on Mahan . In Kamikaze (1997) , Raymond Lamont Brown wrote : " Observers were to record of this , one of the most unusual and devastating of kamikaze assaults of 1944 , that the Japanese aircraft used torpedo launching tactics , but when they had been hit ... they switched to kamikaze attacks , diving on Mahan " . During the assault , US Army fighters downed three Japanese aircraft and damaged two more . Mahan shot down four but took three direct kamikaze hits , as David Sears observed in At War With the Wind (2008) , " ... the most calamitous [being] a direct hit to the superstructure near the No. 2 gun . "

Exploding and awash in flames , Mahan was turned by Commander E. G. Campbell toward the picket line in a last hope to save her before issuing the order to abandon ship . The destroyers Lamson and Walke rescued the survivors ; one officer and five men were missing , and thirteen seriously wounded (including burns) . A US destroyer sank Mahan with torpedoes and gunfire because she was not salvageable .

Mahan ' s captain praised the performance of his crew during the ordeal . He described their response as disciplined and courageous .

= = Honors = =

Mahan received five battle stars for her World War II service .