

USS WHITE PLAINS

CVE-66

27Sept. 43 - 8 Oct. 45

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U. S. S. WHITE PLAINS (CVE-66)

6 November 1945.

From: The Commanding Officer.
To : The Chief of Naval Operations (OP-03-6B).
Subject: History of the U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS - Transmittal of.
Reference: (a) Aviation Circular Ltr. No. 101-45, Op-03-6B-HMD,
Serial 329703 of 11 September 1945.
Enclosure: (A) Two (2) copies of Ship's History.

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (A) is
submitted herewith.

F. Funke Jr.
F. FUNKE, Jr.

HISTORY
OF THE
USS WHITE PLAINS
CVE-66



COMPILED OCT, 8, 1945

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H I S T O R Y
of the
U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS (OVB-66)

PART I -- CHRONOLOGY

Date and place of launching - - - - - September 27, 1943
Vancouver, Washington
Date and place of commissioning - - - - - November 15, 1943
U.S. Naval Station, Astoria,
Oregon.

Commanding Officers and dates of command:

Oscar Arthur WELLS, Captain, U.S. Navy, Beeville, Texas.
November 15, 1943 to July 16, 1944

Dennis Joseph SULLIVAN, Captain, U.S. Navy, of Montana.
July 16, 1944 to May 20, 1945

Frederick FUNK, Jr., Captain, U.S. Navy, of Lincoln, Nebraska.
May 20, 1945 to date

The U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS steamed from Vancouver to Astoria on November 14, 1943, manned by a civilian crew. From November 15 to December 6, 1943, she was moored at the U.S. Naval Station, Astoria, Oregon, engaged in outfitting under jurisdiction of the OVB Precommissioning Detail.

Outline of Physical Movements - Commands under which duty performed, and status of aircraft on board.

DATE	MOVEMENT	AUTHORITY	PURPOSE
1943			
December 6	Departed Astoria, Ore.	Com13	
December 7	Arrived Port Townsend, Wash.		Loaded Bombs
December 8	Moved to Bremerton, Wash.		Loaded Ammunition
December 9	Reported by despatch to Cominch, CincPac, and ComFair, W.C.		
December 9	Various points in		Navigational
to	Puget Sound		Calibrations
December 13	Moored at Seattle, Wash.		Provisioning
December 15	Departed Seattle, Wash.	COTPAC,	Loaded Aviation Stores
December 18	Arrived Oakland, Cal.	SubCom	and Gasoline
December 19	Departed Oakland, Cal.	ComFair,	Reported for shake-
December 21	Arrived San Diego, Cal.	W.C.	down Training Duty
December 22	Departed for WSF Oper-	ComFair,	Conducted shakedown
to	ating Area	W.C.	Exercises under
December 24	Moored at San Diego.		COTPAC
	(North Island)		
December 26	Off San Diego		Conducted Gunnery
	Moored North Island		Exercises

DATE	MOVEMENT	AUTHORITY	PURPOSE
1943 - 44			
December 29 to January 4	Departed for Pearl Harbor, ComFair, T.H. Moored Pearl Harbor, T. H.	W.C.	Transporting passen- gers. Disembarked 333 pas- sengers.
	Flight units transported: Air Warning Squadron Number 1, USMC., VC-66, VMF(N) 531.		
January 8 to January 14	Departed for Tarawa Atoll, Gilbert Islands Anchored Tarawa Lagoon	COMAIRPAC	TU 19.9.7. Transporting 385 pas- sengers, 39 aircraft.
	Flight units transported: VMF 532 and VMF 113.		
January 15 to January 16	Underway from Tarawa Lagoon Anchored in Tarawa Lagoon	CTF 57	To avoid anticipated Jap bombing raid.
January 16 to January 23	Departed for Pearl Har- bor, T.H. Moored Pearl Harbor, T.H.	COMAIRPAC	Transporting 2 passen- gers, 2 prisoners, 34 aircraft.
	Flight units transported: 34 aircraft of VF-1.		
January 27 to February 2	Departed for Tarawa Atoll, Gilbert Islands Arrived Tarawa Lagoon	COMAIRPAC	TU 19.9.7. Transporting pilots, 70 aircraft and mail.
February 3	Departed for Majuro Atoll	COMTASKFOR 57	Transferred aircraft by flight and barge to USS INTREPID, COR- REGIDOR, JORAL SEA and MANILA BAY.
February 4	Arrived Majuro Atoll		
February 6	Departed for Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands		
February 7	Arrived Kwajalein Atoll		
February 11	Departed to Majuro Atoll		
February 12	Arrived Majuro Atoll. Departed for Makin Is., Gilbert Islands.	COMCENTPAC FOR	Transferred aircraft by flight to U.S.S. HELLEAU WOOD, ENTER- PRISE, and NASSAU
February 13	Arrived Makin Atoll		
February 14	Departed for Tarawa Atoll.	COMTASKFOR 57	Transporting 260 passengers, 30 P-39 aircraft.
February 15	Arrived Tarawa Lagoon		
February 16	Departed for Pearl Har- bor, T.H.		
February 23	Arrived Pearl Harbor, T.H.		
	Flight unit transported: 72nd Fighter Squadron, U.S. Army Air Forces, with aircraft.		
February 26	Departed for Alameda, Cal.	COMAIRPAC	Transporting 199 passengers and 9 air- craft.
March 3	Arrived Alameda, Cal.		
March 4	Departed for San Diego.		
March 6	Arrived San Diego, Cal.		
	Flight unit transported: Officers and enlisted men of VF 6, Pearl to Alameda. At Alameda, 34 officers and 146 enlisted men of VC-68 reported aboard for duty, with 12 FM-2 and 9 TBM-1C aircraft.		

DATE	MOVEMENT	AUTHORITY	PURPOSE
1944			
March 8	Departed for Western Sea Frontier Operating Area.	ComFair, W.C.	Air operations with VC-68 for qualification training.
March 16	Arrived San Diego.		
March 18	Departed for Western Sea Frontier Operating Area.	ComFair, W.C.	Air operation with VC-11 for qualification training.
March 22	Arrived San Diego		
March 23	Departed for Western Sea Frontier Operating Area	ComFair, WC	Air operations with VB-20 for qualification training.
March 27	VC68 crew remained aboard until detached March 27. Arrived San Diego. Moved to Naval Repair Base, San Diego.		Repairs and dry-docking.
April 23	VC-4 reported aboard for permanent duty with 12 FM-2 and 8 TBM aircraft.		
April 24	Departed for Pearl Harbor, T.H.	ComFair, W.C.	Transporting 422 passengers.
May 1	Arrived Pearl Harbor		
May 7	Departed for Pearl Harbor Operating Area	COMAIRPAC	TG 19.2
May 10	Arrived Pearl Harbor		Conducted air operations and gunnery exercises
May 13	Departed for Operating Area	ComCarDiv 25	Conducted air operations and rehearsed amphibious operations under CTG 52.14
May 19	Arrived Pearl Harbor		
May 30	Departed for Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall Islands	ComTaskFor 52	TU 52.14.2, Operating as part of Escort Carrier Unit TWO.
June 9	Arrived Eniwetok Lagoon		
June 11	Underway for Saipan, Mariannas Islands.	ComTaskFor 52	Operating in TG 52.14 providing ASP and CAP for combined TG in connection with occupation of Saipan.
July 12	Arrived Eniwetok Lagoon, Marshall Island.		ground operations.
July 19	Return to Eniwetok was in TU 52.18.10. VC-4 in attack and observation missions supporting		TG 52.14 - Provided ASP
August 5	Departed for Tinian, M.I. Arrived Eniwetok Atoll.	ComTaskFor 52	OAP in connection with occupation of Tinian.
August 11	VC-4 in attack and observation missions supporting		ground operations.
August 17	Departed for Espiritu Santo, N.H.	ComCarDiv 26	TU 57.19.7
August 24	Arrived Espiritu Santo		
August 26	Departed For Tulagi Area, Florida Island, S.I.	ComGrp5, PhibsPac	TU 32.19.1
August 26	Arrived Gavutu, Florida Island, S.I.		
August 26	Departed Gavutu	CTU	TU 32.7.3. Conducted training and rehearsal operations.
August 29	Anchored Gavutu		
	Conducted logistics for next operations.		

DATE	MOVEMENT	AUTHORITY	PURPOSE
1944			
September 8	Departed for Palau Is.	ComTaskFor 32	In TU 32.7.3 Provided ASP and CAP for TF.
September 15	Arrived Palau Is. Operating Area		Commenced air support in connection with lan- ding on Peleliu and Anguar.
September 21	Departed for Ulithi Is- lands		TU 33.12.2 - Provided ASP, CAP in connection with occupation of Ulithi.
September 23	Arrived Ulithi Islands.		
September 25	Departed for Manus, Ad- miralty Is., via Hollan- dia, New Guinea.	CTG 33.19	TU 32.18 - Provided ASP and CAP for TG.
September 28	Arrived Humbolt Bay, New Guinea.		
	Departed for Manus, Ad- miralty Islands.		
October 1	Arrived in Manus, Admi- rality Islands.		Overhauled engines and conducted logistics.
October 12	Departed for Leyte Gulf, CTG 77.2 Philippines.		TU 77.4.3
October 17	Arrived in Operating Area off Leyte Gulf		Conducted air support operations in connection with bombardment and assault of Leyte.
October 25	Departed for Manus, after battle	CTF	
October 29	Arrived Mios Woendi, NW New Guinea due to low fuel supply.	77	
October 30	Departed for Manus.		
November 1	Arrived Manus, Admiralty Islands		Made temporary repairs as result of battle da- mage off Samar.
	VC-4 Personnel remained on board.		
	Discharged all but 8 aircraft to ComAirPac Pool.		
November 7	Departed for Pearl Harbor	CTU 77.4.3	TU. 77.4.3 dissolved. on arrival at Pearl.
November 18	Arrived Pearl Harbor.		
November 19	Departed for San Diego, California.	ComAirPac	Discharged all air- craft. Squadron VC-4 detached.
November 27	Arrived San Diego.		
November 29	Moved to Naval Repair Base, San Diego.	ComFair, W.C.	Commenced scheduled availability period for repair of battle damage.
1945			
January 10	Moved to Naval Air Sta- tion, San Diego.	ComFair, W.C.	Repairs completed. Ship under orders of ComAir- Pac was transferred to Carrier Transport Squad- ron, Pacific Fleet on January 1, 1945.

DATE 1945	MOVEMENT	AUTHORITY	PURPOSE
January 19	Departed for Pearl Harbor, T.H.	ComFair, W.C.	Transporting 186 passengers and 69 aircraft.
January 26	Arrived Pearl Harbor Departed for Roi Island, Kwajalein Atoll.	ComCarTrans RonPac	Disembarked passengers and 1 aircraft. Embarked 300 passengers, 4 aircraft and 429 tons supplies. TU 19.9.10.
February 2	Arrived in Roi Namur, Kwajalein Atoll.		Disembarked passengers, aircraft and cargo.
February 3	Departed for Pearl Harbor.	ComCarTrans RonPac	Transporting 28 passengers.
February 9	Arrived Pearl Harbor		Disembarked passengers.
February 12	Departed for Roi Namur	ComCarTrans RonPac	Transporting 7 passengers, 53 aircraft and 75.6 tons freight.
February 19	Arrived in Roi Namur		
February 21	Departed for Pearl Harbor. T.H.	ComCarTrans TU RonPac	19.9.10 - Transporting 26 passengers and 65 aircraft.
February 26	Arrived Pearl Harbor. Departed for San Diego	ComCarTrans RonPac	Transporting 282 passengers and 59 aircraft.
March 5	Arrived Alameda, Calif. Ship diverted to Alameda by despatch orders of	ComWesSeaFron	Disembarked passengers and aircraft. TU 19.9.10
March 8	Departed for Pearl Harbor.	ComCarTrans RonPac	Transporting 48 passengers, 79 aircraft and 53 tons cargo.
March 14	Arrived Pearl Harbor		
March 15	Departed for Manus, Admiralty Islands.	ComCarTrans RonPac	Transporting 79 aircraft and aviation supplies.
March 26	Arrived Seeadler Harbor, Manus Island.		TU 19.9.16.
March 27	Departed for Ulithi	CincPac	Transporting 64 pilots and aircraft.
March 31	Arrived Ulithi. Flight units transported: VMF 322 and VMF 323, with		combat ready aircraft.
April 2	Departed for Okinawa	ComTaskFor	Launched embarked squadrons.
April 9	Arrived in operation area southwest of Okinawa. Commenced retirement to Guam.	51	
April 13	Arrived Apra Harbor, Guam.		Temporary duty with 5th Fleet completed. Reported to ComCarTrans-RonPac.
April 14	Departed for Pearl Harbor.	Port Director, Guam	Transporting 210 passengers.
April 23	Arrived Pearl Harbor.		

DATE	MOVEMENT	AUTHORITY	PURPOSE
1945 April 24	Departed for San Diego.	ComCarTrans RonPac	Transporting 348 passengers, 2 aircraft and 41 tons cargo.
May 1	Arrived San Diego.		
May 2	Moved to Naval Repair Base, San Diego.	ComServPac	Repairs
May 11	Moved to North Island, San Diego.		
May 14	Departed for Pearl Harbor.	ComFair, W.C.	Transporting 302 passengers and 75 aircraft.
May 20	Arrived Pearl Harbor.		
May 21	Flight units transported: Carrier Air Group 1. Departed for Saipan, M.I.	ComCarTrans RonPac	Transporting 190 passengers and 71 aircraft
May 31	Arrived Saipan Harbor.		
June 1	Departed for Guam Arrived Apra Harbor, Guam.	Port Director, Saipan	Transporting 71 aircraft.
June 2	Departed for Ulithi.	Port Director,	Transporting 21 Passengers, 71 aircraft.
June 3	Arrived Ulithi Lagoon	Guam	
June 4	Departed for Guiuan, Samar P.I.	ComAirPac Fwd	
June 6	Arrived Guiuan Roadstead.		Disembarked passengers and aircraft.
June 7	Departed for Pearl Harbor via Ulithi	ComCarTrans RonPac	Transporting 92 passengers, 7 aircraft and 39 aircraft engines.
June 10	Anchored Ulithi Lagoon. Departed for Guam.	ComCarTrans	Transporting 7 aircraft.
June 11	Arrived Apra Harbor, Guam. Ship diverted to Guam by request	RonPac ComAirPacFwd.	Disembarked passengers aircraft and cargo.
June 12	Departed for Leyte, P.I.	ComCarTrans RonPac	Transporting 32 aircraft and air groups.
June 16	Arrived San Pedro Bay, Leyte. Flight units transported: Squadrons VF 31, VT 31, VF 1, VT 1 and VB 1, and fly-away aircraft.		Launched aircraft for delivery to Guiuan, Samar
June 17	Departed for Guam, M.I.	ComCarTrans	Transporting squadrons, 446 officers and enlisted men.
June 21	Arrived Apra Harbor, Guam. Flight units transported: VMF 112-123, CAG 82, VB 82, VF 82 and VT 82.	ComCarTrans RonPac	
June 22	Departed for Pearl Harbor.	ComCarTrans RonPac	
July 3	Moored Pearl Harbor Departed for Alameda		Loaded aircraft TU 19.9.2 Transporting 446 passengers and 36 aircraft.
July 9	Moored Alameda		Disembarked passengers and aircraft.
	Flight units transported: VMF 112-123, CAG 82, VB 82, VF 82 and VT 82.		

DATE	MOVEMENT	AUTHORITY	PURPOSE
1945			
July 13	Departed for Pearl Harbor.	ComWestSea Front.	Transporting 314 passengers and 73 aircraft.
July 19	Arrived Hilo Bay, T.H. Flight units transported; Carrier Air Group 60. Ship's destination changed to Hilo by despatch orders on July 16.		Disembarked 160 passengers
July 19	Departed for Pearl Harbor.	Port Director, Hilo	Embarked 58 officers and 62 enlisted men of CAG26.
July 20	Moored Pearl Harbor.		
July 21	Departed for Guam	ComCarTrans RonPac	TU 19.9.6 Transporting 120 passengers and 75 aircraft.
August 1	Arrived Guam Flight units transported; Carrier Air Group 26.		
August 3	Departed for Pearl Harbor.	Port Director Guam	Transporting 158 passengers and 34 aircraft.
August 12	Arrived Pearl Harbor.		
August 13	Departed for San Diego	ComCarTrans RonPac	TU 19.9.3 Transporting 154 passengers and 34 aircraft.
August 19	Moored San Diego (North Island)		
August 21	Moved to Naval Repair Base, San Diego.		Overhaul period. Ship-alt work cancelled.
August 30-31	In dry dock.		
September 2	Moved to North Island		Trial Run
September 6	Departed for Pearl Harbor.	Com11	Transported 362 passengers.
September 12	Moored Pearl Harbor Flight units transported; Carrier Air Group 15.		Reported to ComSoPac for duty.
September 14	Departed for Buckner Bay, Okinawa.	ComTG 16.12	Transporting 258 passengers. TU 16.12.7
September 26	Anchored Buckner Bay		Disembarked passengers.
September 28	Departed for Pearl Harbor.	ComTG 16.12	Transporting 127 officers and 665 enlisted passengers.
October 8	Moored Pearl Harbor. Ship's routing altered by authority of Commanding Officer on September 28 to avoid typhoon located southeast of Okinawa.		

- NOTE:
- "Flight units transported" means personnel only unless aircraft are specifically mentioned in connection therewith.
 - All aircraft transported during 1945 were preserved unless otherwise mentioned.

ACTIONS IN WHICH ENGAGED

Occupation of Marianas:

WHITE PLAINS operated in TU 52.14, which was subjected to air attack on the following dates -

June 15, 1944

June 17, 1944

June 26, 1944

WHITE PLAINS' guns were engaged only on June 17; VC-4 aircraft were engaged on June 15 and June 17.

Battle off Samar, October 25, 1944:

WHITE PLAINS' guns were engaged against enemy surface ships (See appendix J); also against suicide aircraft. VC-4 aircraft were engaged against the surface ships.

LOSS OF PERSONNEL THROUGH ENEMY ACTION

The following is a complete list of personnel of ship's company who were killed while the ship was engaged in operations in an actual combat area:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RATE</u>	<u>SERVICE NO</u>	<u>DATE OF DEATH</u>
ALBRIGHT, Roger Randolph	AMM3c	381-66-44	June 17, 1944
LANCASTER, James Melvin	AMM3c	671-56-44	June 17, 1944
WILLSON, Bill (n)	S2c	565-94-25	October 23, 1944

All of these personnel were killed as a direct result of accidents occurring during landing of aircraft returning from action against the enemy. No competent board has passed on the question of whether their loss was "through enemy action"; so far as is known aboard this ship.

PART II - NARRATIVE.

Introduction.

As one of the earlier ships to be launched under a bold and untried plan for mass production of fighting vessels the U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS came into being at a time when the tide of battle was first turning conclusively in the favor of the Allies. The Russians had just begun to demonstrate their decisive superiority on the Eastern Front, while the shape of the Navy's almost incredible expansion program was first becoming clear to the public mind with the appearance on the scene of battle of the powerful new Essex class carriers. At the same time the strength of the crescendo of American Sea Power depended equally on the newly conceived type-CVE, or Escort Carrier, which was being produced in unprecedented numbers.

The intended purpose of the Kaiser Class ships was to counter the serious threat of the U-boat wolf-packs in the Atlantic. However, the WHITE PLAINS was destined to see only Pacific duty. In the course of this duty she has found opportunity to participate in all the types of service for which these versatile ships have been found suitable. In fact, she has been among the pioneer CVEs in action, as aircraft replenishment, and also as amphibious support units. Her escort duty has been relatively uneventful but she has performed also her full share of aircraft and personnel transport.

Pre-Commissioning Period

The nucleus of the original crew was by no means made up entirely of men experienced at sea. Personnel reported gradually during September and October 1943 to the CVE Pre-Commissioning Detail, at the ship's theoretical home port of Bremerton, Washington. They were drawn from many diverse sources. For the most part officers and men alike were fresh from their initial naval training. Key Engineering personnel had completed special training at Milwaukee studying the

operation of the ship's unconventional machinery. A few specialists trained in operating the catapult, arresting gear and much other equipment of late and unfamiliar design for the effective control of air operations were among those gathered in. A bare minimum of officers with watch-standing experience had been ordered from other ships.

The Pre-Commissioning Detail's duty was to integrate the mass of recent civilians into an organization which could be trained into a fighting crew. Classes were held; tests were given; most of the crew participated in a training cruise aboard the U.S.S. CASABLANCA. On the basis of this slim experience the new officers slated for divisional responsibility were given the assignments of setting up all the complex human machinery required to transform the new U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS from a mere hull full of mechanism into a compact weapon capable of taking its place in the fleet, and of putting aircraft into the air. As a guide, the "S.O.B." (Ship's Organization Book) became the bible for all hands.

Only one major change was made in the organization. Combat Information Center and radio-radar maintenance were transferred from Communications to the Air department, under V-3 Division. This placed all activities in any way connected with prospective air operations under the Air department, excepting only aviation ordnance, which remained under the 3rd Division. At this stage, and for five months to come, the Air department personnel stood at less than half of full allowance.

During this period of time, the ship yard crews at Vancouver, Washington, where the ship had been launched on September 27, were finding their own difficulties trying to reconcile the mass production technique with the exacting requirements of naval specifications. For example, at the time of

launching an insufficient supply of 40MM anti-aircraft guns made necessary the omission of one of the ship's four secondary batteries. Make-shift arrangements and lack of standby equipment were also found in the auxiliary engineering plant. .

But in spite of all these handicaps the Navy considered both crew and ship ready for acceptance and commissioning by the middle of November, 1943.

Commissioning, Fitting Out and Shakedown.

The first glimpse of their ship for most of the men, and the first of any naval vessel for many was the day of commissioning. The ship had steamed to Astoria, Oregon with a civilian crew on board, and the naval complement arrived by special train. The order of the day was to proceed at once with commissioning and completion of all the arduous preparations for making both ship and crew ready for operations. The commissioning ceremony, held on the flight deck at 1000, November 15, 1943 under gathering clouds and the chill wind of the Oregon coast, was impressive but brief. (Appendix F). The WHITE PLAINS was accepted for the Navy by Captain O. A. WELLER, USN, (Appendix A-I), as her first Commanding Officer. (Appendix C-2) The orders delivering the ship were read by Captain L. E. CRIST, Jr., USN; the crew was mustered by Commander T. A. AHROON, USN, Executive Officer. Lt.(jg) M. A. WIDOLFF offered prayer; and the first watch was set by Lieutenant R. B. SMITH, USNR, who assumed the duties of Navigator. The U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS was ready for duty.

The first task required was the completion of the preparation and training of the crew. All hands had to learn how to live both with each other and with their new ship. The process was complex and almost frenzied; at times formal and again informal. Yard workmen were still completing installations and alterations while the green hands of every department were learning the

location and function of seemingly endless amounts of unfamiliar gear. Countless instructions on the details of organization had to be smoothed out and drilled into each man. His duties on his various routine and General Quarters stations were to become second nature. The process of drilling, never completed, was the main activity for many weeks. At the same time personal lessons on how to live in close quarters in a ship had to be learned by all hands, and the individual crew men who turned out to be misfits in their billets had to be sifted through and transferred, to perfect the organization of all departments.

The enthusiasm and excitement reached a peak as the day arrived, December 6, 1943, when the WHITE PLAINS stood out to sea for the first time enroute to Port Townsend, Washington where the crew was initiated in the "all hands" evolution of loading bombs. The next day, the ship steamed to Bremerton, where a week was spent readying the ship for what the future might hold. Radio direction finder and degaussing equipment were calibrated, the ship was depermed, speed trials were held and the allowance of ammunition taken on board. After a month in commission, the men of the WHITE PLAINS had tasted enough of the variety of serious ship-board life to know that it would not be all excitement or play, but much hard work, and they began to feel the first rays of confidence in their ability to handle their duties.

As the ship took departure from Seattle for San Diego, via Oakland, at 1200, on December 15, 1943, the training process was still only fairly begun. The ship was to remain under orders of the Operational Training Command until the day after Christmas. Although despatched overseas then because of the serious need for support in the Gilbert Islands Campaign, still the shakedown period was to be cut short.

Steaming through the straits of Juan DeFuca, the first gunnery exercises

were held, and from that day on, drills at sea on problems of damage control, simulated attack maneuvers, and casualty procedure for Navigation and Engineering control equipment were an incessant feature of the sea routine. It was quickly discovered that the moods of the sea may often cause intense discomfort. But under the firm insistence of the Captain and Executive Officer, all hands also learned that all the activities, routine and emergency, required on a naval vessel must be diligently carried on regardless of the human stomach.

At Oakland, the allowance of the secret Mark 32 projectiles was taken aboard under guard and supplies and provisions were obtained which practically completed material readiness of the ship for extended steaming. The first consignment of aviation spares was loaded and the aviation gasoline tanks were filled. This served as a reminder of the ultimate purpose of the ship, and gave the skeleton Air department their first experience in handling their own kind of materials.

Shakedown training conducted off San Diego between the 22nd and 25th of December 1943, was a bare minimum for rounding out the training of all hands for ship operation. Work being done aboard up to this time gave little hint that the ship was eventually to operate aircraft. The physical equipment was there - a maze of strange gear, and working spaces assigned to aviation activities.

But the preoccupation of almost all hands had been with learning to conduct the ship efficiently from place to place, and to protect her operating integrity against the casualties which must be anticipated. Air operations still seemed a dream for the future.

Cruise to the Gilberts and Marshalls.

When the passengers and aircraft were loaded at North Island for the trip, the scheduling of which had interrupted shakedown plans, air operations no longer

seemed so remote a possibility. The cargo was an assortment of radar and amphibious gear (Appendix C-3), but one group of passengers were a flying outfit of Marines and the atmosphere of aviation began to permeate the ship and make itself at home in her. The ultimate destination and mission were unknown to the crew, but as the catapult was tested on no-load runs during the six-day trip to Pearl Harbor, from December 29 to January 4, 1944, the rumors seemed well founded that the ship would see the forward area almost immediately. The old feeling of excitement reappeared and was heightened to a new peak when the ship received orders from Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet to proceed to Tarawa in the Gilberts on January 8, 1944. This was a transport mission, but the 39 aircraft were "Fly Aways" and the passengers were Marine Fighter Pilots all ready for business. The Air department suddenly became the most important and alerted group on the ship, the focus of interest and speculation. The Air Officer, Lt. Comdr., W. M. DICKEY, USN, found a major job of organization on his hands. A maximum of ingenuity was required in making arrangements for launching and recovery of aircraft with only the kernel of an Air department on board.

There was no slacking off in the tempo of the endless drills during this cruise. In fact, the requirement of prospective flight operations made exercise necessary at a new drill, Flight Quarters. This was the ship's initial shakedown for air operations, as the complicated routine required for organized escort or combat flying could not be mastered, until the personnel allowance was filled out. On January 24, 1944, at 0829, the WHITE PLAINS came of age as a carrier. First plane to leave her catapult was a Marine-piloted Corsair destined for shore based operations in the Gilberts. In spite of an air of tenseness affecting the whole crew, including the pilots who had never been catapulted before, 23 planes were catapulted in 40 minutes and 13 more were flown off immediately afterwards. This first operation was a perfect success and although the ship was later to

set far superior records for rapid launching, at this time the first feelings of pride in their ship were very evident among all hands. Subsequently, this pride has never slackened, as throughout many much more arduous operations, the WHITE PLAINS has never lost a plane from its catapult.

Upon anchoring in Tarawa, the ship's company found a placid tropical scene, apparently belying the bloody history which had so recently been made there. The ship's crew knew, through their inscrutable sources of unofficial information, that the U.S.S. LISCOMBE BAY had been sunk in a very few minutes as a result of an unexplained explosion, in this very vicinity. The LISCOMBE BAY was a sister ship of the WHITE PLAINS, and so no one was quick to be deceived by the peaceful atmosphere. The general wariness was vindicated next day when an air-raid alert caused the ship to leave the harbor in an emergency underway evolution. Three of the officers were caught ashore and only one of these, the Air Officer succeeded in reaching the ship by speedboat as she stood out. The others went through a severe Japanese air-raid and rejoined the ship the next day.

During this maneuver, the ship not only avoided attack but, steaming southward, took the opportunity to enter the southern hemisphere waters for the first time. Most of the youngsters on the ship were "pollywogs" and received their initiation into the mysteries of King Neptune's Kingdom during the return trip to Pearl. (Appendix C -5)

The arresting gear was put to use for the first time on return to Tarawa; 34 planes were flown aboard; and on January 17, 1944, the ship was underway for Pearl Harbor transporting two Japanese prisoners of war. The planes taken on board were F6Fs of VF-1, the original Naval garrison at Tarawa. The entire squadron was returned to Pearl aboard the WHITE PLAINS. (Appendix C -4)

Little time was lost returning to the forward area, as the pace of operations

required the use of every available vessel. The WHITE PLAINS was assigned a replacement mission, leaving Pearl for Tarawa on January 27, with 70 aircraft, personnel of 7 squadrons for the large carriers, and a large consignment of mail. The ship arrived in the Gilbert Islands on February 2, 1944 and spent the next two weeks in various anchorages of the Marshalls and Gilberts under orders of Commander Task Force 57. The load of fresh forces for the fleet was distributed gradually by barge and flight to various combat carriers, including INTREPID, BELLEAU WOOD, ENTERPRISE, and the CVEs CORREGIDOR, CORAL SEA, and MANILA BAY. In Kwajalein Atoll, while anchored off Roi-Namur, a minor collision occurred with the U.S.S. CALDWELL (DD 605), while the latter was transferring ferry pilots back to the WHITE PLAINS by brooches buoy.

On February 16, 1944, with mission completed, the WHITE PLAINS loaded thirty "dud" aircraft and took aboard an Army Fighter Squadron and returned to Pearl. After a 3 day lay-over it was decided by Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet to return the ship to the States for completion of her preparation for entering into full combat status. A squadron of Navy fighter pilots was embarked and the flight deck loaded with an unusual assortment of planes for a CVE: 8 PBV, 2 PV-1, a J2F and a Cub. The ship moored at Alameda, California on March 3, 1944 and disembarked passengers and aircraft.

In preparation for operational training, the WHITE PLAINS embarked a newly commissioned squadron, including maintenance crew and 21 aircraft, at Alameda. Steaming coastwise, the ship arrived at San Diego on March 6, 1944, and reported to Commander Fleet Air, West Coast for training in air operations as a squadron qualification carrier.

Operational Training and First Yard Period

This first squadron to operate from the WHITE PLAINS' flight deck was

Composite Squadron SIXTY-EIGHT, attached for temporary duty. The maintenance crew of this squadron remained aboard throughout the operational training period, until March 27, while the pilots completed their qualification and left the ship on March 16. All maneuvers connected with carrier air operations were practiced. The pilots gained practice in strafing, bombing, landing, and taking off from the flight deck, and the Air department, augmented to full strength by the addition of VC-68's maintenance crew, got down to the serious business of shaping itself into a fighting organization.

VC-68 was followed by Composite Squadron ELEVEN, a "streamlined" squadron, which qualified aboard this carrier in the Western Sea Frontier operating areas off San Diego from March 18, 1944 to March 21, 1944. On March 23, 1944 Bombing Squadron TWENTY reported aboard for temporary duty and by this time the WHITE PLAINS was beginning to feel like a veteran in handling the operations of an aircraft squadron. Only the test of combat remained to make real veterans of the crew.

The operations with VB-20 were of special interest. Their aircraft were SB2Cs and landing these heavy new ships on a CVE was still an experimental procedure. A little difficulty was experienced because of stiff tail-wheel oleos. When the tail came down hard during arresting, occasional failure occurred in the tail-wheel assembly, and in one case a buckled fuselage resulted. The experiment was a success from the ship's viewpoint, on the whole, as there were 182 successful landings and launchings, with only four minor accidents.

Qualification duty was completed with the detachment of VB-20 on March 27, when the ship again moored at North Island. The shakedown for the Air department personnel was finally completed, and VC-68's maintenance men were transferred to the U.S.S. FANSHAW BAY.

Before the ship was ready for combat in all respects, however, it was necessary to put her through a minute inspection of hull and all equipment, and to incorporate the changes which the bureau experts had deemed desirable after a study of the combat experiences of the few earlier CVEs. It had been three months since the ship had last seen availability to the welding rods and cutting torches of the yard shipfitters.

The ship moored at the Naval Repair Base, San Diego, on March 27, 1944 and for three weeks underwent the usual processes of tearing out and putting back gear of all kinds to provide the latest available equipment. The Engineering Plant was overhauled; the protection around bomb stowage was re-designed to minimize the danger of another LISCOMBE BAY disaster; rocket and aircraft ammunition magazines were added; a radar indicator was installed on the bridge; and the missing 40MM battery was installed. The after port 40MM director instrument, whose platform had been crumpled by the collision with the CALDWELL, was replaced.

From April 17 to 22 the ship was in dry dock, and on the 23rd. she was moored at North Island, now ready in all respects to take on her permanent squadron and go to work. During the stay in home waters, opportunity had been found for the granting of many leaves.

Combat Carrier Duty: Marianas, Palau and Ulithi

On April 23, 1944, Composite Squadron FOUR, after a round of training activities as long and varied as that of the ship it was to join, reported with 33 officers and 38 enlisted men. This squadron had just completed qualification aboard the "FANSHAW BAY", and during this period had received its "streamlining" orders. However, VC-4's maintenance complement was still intact, and these men, numbering about 160, were transferred to ship's company from

North Island, along with the squadron. In this way the Air department's full allowance of ratings was finally obtained. The WHITE PLAINS had now reached an advanced state of readiness for any combat condition, needing only a period of practice operations for the final polishing of the coordination between the ship and squadron organizations. The 12 FM-2s and 8 TBFs of VC-4 were loaded, and the ship sailed from San Diego on April 24, 1944. All hands looked forward with an eagerness tinged with anxiety to this cruise, which proved to be of seven months' duration.

The ship carried 422 passengers to Pearl Harbor. She then spent two periods in that area at sea, in practice operations, rehearsing the exact maneuvers which were now imminent. During the first of these periods the ship steamed singly while the squadron conducted exercises, thus bringing together the two organizations as a single integrated striking unit. The second period of practice was conducted in company with Carrier Division TWENTY-FIVE and included training in the technique of steaming as escort to an amphibious fleet, and providing cover during landing operations. It was found that the most effective liaison between the ship and squadron could be developed through the Air Combat Information officers of the two organizations, Lt. A. W. KIVETT for the ship, and Lt.(jg) A. B. WILEY for the squadron. The ship's Air Plot Officer operated a clearing house for information affecting flight operations. In particular, the A.C.I. officer of VC-4 was untiring in his liaison duties and was the best friend of both ship and squadron. From the standpoint of pilots in the air, of course, the Fighter Director officer and his assistants in C.I.C. were the real contact men with the ship, and the wisdom of having placed this activity under the Air department was amply proven. From the ship's standpoint, the squadron was looked upon as her main battery, and consequently squadron activi-

ties occupied the highest place in the esteem of all hands.

With exercises completed, the ship moored at Pearl Harbor on May 20, 1944, and for the next ten days the Communication department worked overtime checking all arrangements for operating with a large force in the presence of the enemy. The rest of the crew held their breath. The identity of both the force with which the WHITE PLAINS was to operate and the target on which the strike was scheduled were naturally closely guarded secrets in the Communication Office until the ship was well at sea.

Once underway, it became known that Carrier Division TWENTY-FIVE, including the WHITE PLAINS, was attached to Task Force FIFTY-TWO, and that the immediate destination was Eniwetok Atoll in the Western Marshalls. Rear Admiral R. K. TURNER, in the U.S.S. MONROVIA was in command of the task force and Rear Admiral G. F. BOGAN, USN, commanded Car Div 25, designated Task Group 52.14. Captain O. A. WEILER, USN of the WHITE PLAINS was officer in tactical command of Carrier Escort Unit TWO (TU 52.14.2) providing air cover and anti-submarine patrol for attack group TWO (TG 52.16). The ship was steaming as part of an immense assemblage of mixed forces, and at last she was functioning in full fledged maturity as a warship, fulfilling the exact purpose for which the Escort Carriers had been designed.

Eniwetok was reached on June 9, 1944 without incident, and in the lagoon the ship's crew was treated to the sight of a combined fleet assembled which was more overwhelming than any in history. The men had seen the striking power of the U.S. Navy assembled before in Majuro and Kwajalein Atolls during the Marshalls campaign, but it had been nothing to compare with this. Still, the exact nature of the mission was not generally disclosed.

The sortie from Eniwetok was made on June 11, 1944, and then the startling

news was published aboard ship. Task Force 52 was the northern attack force for the amphibious landings on Saipan in the Marianas, an almost unbelievable stride toward the eventual destruction of the Japanese Empire. The mission of the WHITE PLAINS then became clear; to act in support of the troops fighting for the beach-heads. This was something relatively new in carrier tactics and the WHITE PLAINS had been selected along with other CVEs to make it work. It had been tried with a few CVEs in the Marshalls campaign, but there the risk of contact with enemy surface units was minor compared to this operation.

The operation was commenced with the arrival of the task force on station east of Saipan, before dawn, June 15, 1944. The CVEs threw every available plane into the task assigned of making strafing runs on the beaches and providing air cover for the landing forces. The difficulties encountered and miracles performed by those landing forces have become widely known and are already history.

The first counter attack on the supporting ships found the WHITE PLAINS' fighter pilots in the middle of the melee. Four of them splashed one "Jill" each that evening, leaving only one enemy aircraft to penetrate to the formation of CVEs. This remaining "Jill" was accounted for by the radar controlled AA of the Task Unit's screening vessels. The AA fire of the WHITE PLAINS was not engaged.

The second attempt by the Japanese against the CVEs was launched on the night of June 17, and this time they came closer. One "Betty" came within range of the WHITE PLAINS dead ahead but the ship was quickly maneuvered to bring the starboard anti-aircraft batteries to bear. T. E. PECOR, GM1c, 646-14-47, manning the forward starboard 40MM director was the first to open fire. Immediately afterward, all the starboard 20 and 40MM guns opened up, blanketing

the aircraft, which was low on the water, The "Betty" was not seen again. In this action it was observed that the director operators of the forward 40MM batteries are at a disadvantage, due to the location of the director platform aft of the guns on this class of CVE. Under normal circumstances the field of view of the operator is obscured by smoke very quickly after the guns commence firing.

Although this raid occurred after 1800, the WHITE PLAINS launched 8 FM-2s immediately. These planes were embarrassed in engaging the enemy, both by the gathering darkness and by friendly AA fire. However, the enemy raid was a heavy one, and the fighters are given credit for driving off some, though they made no kills. Others of this ship's aircraft had been engaged in anti-submarine patrol and in observation missions, carrying Marine Corps and Army observers over the fighting lines on the island. Some of these planes were forced to land on the one air strip which was in American hands on Saipan. Others were able to land aboard ship during the air raid.

The raid lasted approximately one hour and a half, during which time two bombs missed the WHITE PLAINS at 1500 yards on one occasion, and at another time a probable kill was scored on a "Kate" making a run on the ship from the starboard bow. The kill of the "Betty" described before occurred near the end of the period at about 1920. 5000 rounds of 20 and 40MM ammunition and 15 rounds from the 5"/38 gun on the fantail were fired that evening.

The excitement was not yet over. The FANSHAW BAY had been hit. Three of her planes, unable to land on her damaged flight deck, found sanctuary aboard the WHITE PLAINS. One of the FM-2s, piloted by the Squadron Commander, Lieutenant Commander E. C. EVINS, USN, which had been engaging the attacking aircraft, called in for an emergency landing due to damaged oil line, but was never

heard from again. They returned to the ship after dark and with all but one parked safely on the forward end of the flight deck, one FM-2, piloted by Ens. E. M. BILLINGHURST, became involved in a serious barrier crash resulting in collision and severe damage to 8 planes forward, the death of one man in a gasoline fire and the loss of another over the side. The fire was quickly extinguished through the efficient efforts of the well-organized flight deck repair crew, and the pilot of the crashed plane escaped with minor injuries. By the next day, the ship was again ready for operations, using the planes from the FANSHAW BAY, which had to retire, as partial replacement for those lost. Rear Admiral G. F. BOGAN, USN, and his staff of CTG 52.14 transferred to the WHITE PLAINS on the morning of June 18, 1944, making this ship his flag ship.

On the morning of June 18, 1944, although the WHITE PLAINS herself had come through unscathed, the four CVEs of Carrier Division 25 found themselves carrying out a withdrawal for a breathing spell under orders of Commander Task Force FIFTY-TWO. This ship had the flag, of Commander Carrier Division 25 and continued to provide anti-submarine and combat air patrol coverage for the group, but the aircraft were mixed up among the four CVEs, having landed where they could in the confusion of the night before. The FANSHAW BAY was unable to affect repairs adequate to make any air operations possible. Therefore, the three remaining carriers were forced to return to the battle area with only those planes which they were able to restore to operating condition, leaving the FANSHAW BAY to take the aircraft she still had aboard back to Eniwotok with her.

With the WHITE PLAINS, MIDWAY, and KALININ BAY still under his command, Rear Admiral BOGAN was able to return and effectively support operations for

the fighting on Saipan on June 22, 1944, joining with Task Group 53.7. CarDiv25 was still operating as Task Group 52.14, and was still a real striking force.

The occupation of Saipan was completed on July 9, 1944. During the intervening 18 days, Admiral BOGAN's Unit provided a variety of types of patrol, observation, photographic and support coverage in connection with the land operations. There were only three incidents especially noteworthy. On June 24, 1944, after bombing attacks had failed, the squadron from this vessel was called upon to send a torpedo attack mission against a Japanese cargo transport anchored at Rota, about 85 miles to the south. This mission was undertaken with complete success (Appendix C-6) by Lieutenant E. R. FICKENSCHER, USN, who, as Executive Officer of VC-4, had assumed command of the squadron after the unfortunate loss of Lieutenant Commander R. C. EVINS, USN, a week before. On June 26 the last Japanese strike involving the WHITE PLAINS brought a heckler plane over the group repeatedly just before midnight. This plane flew very low and forced the ships to General Quarters several times without exposing himself to effective fire. Just after his last run a heavy explosion, believed to have been a self-destructive torpedo, was felt under the WHITE PLAINS' stern. No damage was caused. Finally, this plane was caught on the fire control radar screen of one of the destroyers and quickly disposed of. On June 30 the ship proceeded to anchorage off Tannapaug to replenish her supply of aircraft ammunition and bombs. Retirement to Eniwotok, with mission completed, was effected from July 9 to July 12 without incident.

The next week was spent in rest and recreation, and in checking over armament and equipment to make ready for the next operation. During this period, Rear Admiral C. A. F. SPRAGUE, USN, assumed command of Carrier Division 25 and the flag was no longer on the WHITE PLAINS. Commander W. M. DICKEY, USN,

formerly the Air Officer, relieved Comdr. ~~AHROON~~ as Executive Officer, and on July 16, 1944, Commander D. J. SULLIVAN, USN (later appointed Captain to rank from 1 July), reported aboard (Appendices A-II and C-7) and relieved Captain O. A. WELLER, USN, as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS. Captain WELLER's next command was to be the new U.S.S. WASP.

Carrier Division TWENTY-FIVE returned to action, leaving Eniwetok on July 19, 1944, and again reporting to Task Group 52.14 off Tinian on July 22, 1944. The next day, Rear Admiral SPRAGUE transferred the flag of CARDIV25 once more to the WHITE PLAINS. The operations in support of the Tinian occupation followed exactly the same pattern as in the case of Saipan. But this time the opposition of the Japanese air power had already been neutralized almost to the vanishing point.

The twelve day campaign ending in complete mastery of Tinian was, for the crew of this ship, a more routine matter. The WHITE PLAINS, including VC-4, had now become a capable, hardened and battle-worthy organization, tested and not found wanting.

On July 29, 1944, Rear Admiral SPRAGUE's Flag had been transferred to the U.S.S. MIDWAY, later sunk (as the SAINT LO) in the Battle off Samar. On August 5 the ship arrived in Eniwetok, and her participation in the Marianas campaign was at an end. The next three weeks were a period of relaxation from the tensions of battle for the crew, and of continual training, and maintenance of the ship's fighting equipment, in order to keep her hard won battle efficiency and high morale at peak level. (Appendix G) The ship was ordered on a long voyage south to Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides. There was much speculation as to when and where her next mission would be, but no one aboard could doubt that the ship was destined soon to participate further in the march of American

sea power which was gathering with such obvious strength.

Enroute to Espiritu Santo, routine anti-submarine patrol was flown, but it was a quiet, period for all hands, climaxed by a week of liberty and shore leaves at the destination. On August 24, the ship moved to the Tulagi Area in the Solomon Islands, where staging was being carried out for the next operation. On the way to the staging area a routine landing broke a deck pendant and exposed a number of excessively worn sheaves. A poor lubrication system was the source of the trouble, and all weather deck sheaves were replaced, a major undertaking. From August 26 to 29 the WHITE PLAINS was engaged in training operations in the Tulagi area with Task Force THIRTY-TWO, increasing the experience and ability of her officers in tactical maneuvering for air support operations.

Announced during maneuvers, the objective was the Palau Islands in the Western Carolines. (Appendix H) Now part of Carrier Division TWENTY-SIX, the WHITE PLAINS was again headed for action as she stood out from Gavutu on September 8, 1944 as part of the Western Escort Carrier Group (TG 32.7).

As it turned out, the invasion of Peleliu and Anguar was an easy one for the air support groups. After only seven days the WHITE PLAINS' mission was completed, and the story was the familiar one as experienced in the Tinian Operation: Anti-submarine and combat air patrol, direct support of beach operations, and observation patrol.

During this operation the annoyance caused by failure of airborne identification equipment made itself increasingly felt. The wasted effort in C.I.C., when valuable time was spent plotting and intercepting "bogies" which turned out to be friendly, was a not inconsiderable handicap to operations. The real problem was one of radar maintenance. With only one officer to handle mainten-

ance of both shipboard and airborne gear, there were times when one or the other had to be slighted. Although this work had been assigned to the Air department organization, it was still not always possible to give the airborne gear the full attention it required. This problem of organization was never fully resolved.

One observation flight of special interest was dispatched on September 22, the day after the departure of Car Div 26 from the Palau theatre; to provide first hand information on Japanese activities on Yap. The WHITE PLAINS was now attached to Task Group 33.12 on a special mission and it had been rumored that an amphibious strike on Yap was contemplated. However, the force stood further to the northeast and it actually turned out that the operation was the invasion of Ulithi. The usual air coverage services were provided, with the exception that no air support was necessary for ground operations because the landing forces were able to find only three Japanese on the Islands. The WHITE PLAINS anchored in Ulithi Lagoon on September 25, 1944 but was dismissed immediately and left the same day for Manus in the Admiralty Islands, making intermediate stop at Humboldt Bay, Hollandia, New Guinea. The ship dropped anchor in Seeadler Harbor, off the big new base on Manus Island. On October 1, 1944. The entire Palau and Ulithi operations had proved unusually easy for the CVEs; in fact, the capture of Ulithi, which has since become a major fleet anchorage of the highest value, later came to be called the "Bloodless Invasion".

LeYTE and the Battle off Samar

Ten days in Seeadler Harbor were a period of intensive overhaul and logistic preparation for immediate resumption of the campaign. With the availability of added stocks of spare parts and shop facilities on the repair ship

U.S.S. WHITNEY, the engineering crew turned to in an effort to give the steam plant a complete inspection and restore it to excellent operating condition. The rest of the crew was kept more than busy with working parties loading aviation spares and other supplies to restore stocks depleted by the prolonged absence from major supply bases.▲ through cleaning of the ship from top to bottom was undertaken. Particular attention was given to the gallery deck spaces, because some anxiety was felt over the fact that for the first time the ship was to be routed into those waters where the hazard from tropical storms is the greatest. (Appendix I). The WHITE PLAINS, again in Carrier Division 25, took departure from Manus on October 12 under SEVENTH Fleet Command, bound for the Leyte Gulf area in the Central Philippines.

The scene of operations was reached on the morning of October 17, but during the preceding night, the Task Group (77.4) had encountered the very conditions over which anxiety had been felt. With a young typhoon forming just to the north, the winds had risen to full gale force, and the visibility was reduced to a few hundred yards. Fortunately, this storm moved away from the rendezvous area, and the group formation was not broken up. Although considerable discomfort and apprehension was felt by all hands, the severity of the storm had not been enough to cause any damage beyond some minor buckling of the overhang on the gallery deck aft on the port side. There was a delay of one day in commencing air operations as part of the pre-invasion attack, because weather conditions made launching impossible on October 17.

By the next day, the weather was again normal, and from the standpoint of the ship's crew, proceedings settled down into just another round of the familiar work which had been learned so well in the Marianas and Palaus. On October 20, the amphibious forces went in, and on the 24th, an aircraft from

the WHITE PLAINS, making a forced landing on Tacloban airfield, was one of the first to touch wheels to Philippine soil since 1942. Routine conditions prevailed throughout the initial assault phases of the operation, so that all hands were beginning to congratulate themselves on having experienced all the lessons there were to be learned in the various phases of CVE combat operations. On the night of October 24, there was no hint of the predicament in which Carrier Division TWENTY-FIVE was to find itself at the next dawn.

The WHITE PLAINS was on station 80 miles off Homonhon Island in the mouth of Leyte Gulf, as secure was sounded from routine morning General Quarters. A group of ships noted in the early morning hours on the radar screen, to the northward, had been supposed to be Taffy 2, a friendly unit assisting in the operation. Many of the planes scheduled for morning strikes had already taken off, having been ordered to assist in pursuit of the Japanese fleet which had been turned back the night before by Rear Admiral J. B. OLDENDORF's old battleships and PT boats in Surigao Strait. Those pilots added considerably to their score that morning. The rest of the planes were ready on deck, armed for ground support missions. A recognition officer was aloft with the dawn patrol.

The words which came in over the air-to-ship voice circuit were almost incredible, "I don't think those ships up there are friendly!" At that moment the Japanese task force which had sneaked through San Bernardino Strait during the night was at a range of 15 miles, and the first salvo was already in the air. It landed 300 yards off the WHITE PLAINS' starboard beam. This was at 0659, October 25, 1944, and was followed three minutes later by a perfect straddle of major caliber shells. That the WHITE PLAINS was not crippled by this salvo was due only to the providential fact that the enemy was using armor piercing ammunition, so that the explosions occurred under water. As it was, all power

was temporarily interrupted throughout the ship, but structural damage, though extensive, was of minor consequence and did not demand attention until later. A few personnel were injured slightly but all were able to return to duty after treatment. The most serious casualty which occurred was the rupture of the canvas expansion joints in the blower ducts supplying air for the forced draft of number 3 and 4 boilers. This threatened the maintenance of steam on the starboard main engine, but by virtue of exceptionally alert thinking and quick emergency repair on the part of the engineering repair party, the damage was patched within 15 minutes. Machinist F. W. SAMPLE, USN, was in charge of this crew, assisted by H. C. BROWN, CWT, 265-70-63, G. W. JONES, MM1c, 576-07-83 and F. O. FACCIN, WT3c, 807-38-16. Even with reduced air supply, speed was maintained on the starboard shaft by opening the fuel pumps up wide, as a smoke screen was immediately ordered. As soon as the damage was repaired, it was sworn by the gun crews that the lurch of the ship forward could be distinctly felt as maximum speed was delivered.

The emergency power was restored within two minutes and normal power supply was available within 8 minutes. The gyro compass was the only equipment knocked out by the power failure which required a longer period to be restored to normal operations. The gyro operation continued erratic for several hours. It was not until the next morning when celestial sights were again available, that the ship's position could be definitely established.

After the first moment of consternation and confusion, the ship immediately launched the planes remaining on deck, and commenced maneuvering on violently evasive courses in a successful effort to confuse the ranging of the enemy's fire. At 0736, the formation of six carriers and their escort destroyers was maneuvered into a handy tropical rain squall which gave a brief respite, and also

enabled the CVEs, which were hopelessly outdistanced by the enemy cruisers, to change course undetected so as to keep their distance. Although the enemy heavy cruisers later closed and nearly surrounded the CVEs, the worst of the surface bombardment was over for the WHITE PLAINS.

In fact, when the range had been closed to nine miles at 0849 and later to less than six miles, it only meant an opportunity for the ship's gunner, Chief Gunner W. F. BRISSON, USN, (now Lt.(jg)), to demonstrate his skill with the 5"/38 gun on the fantail. So adroit was Captain Sullivan's maneuvering of the ship to head for the spot where the next enemy salvo would not land, that the Japanese 8-inch guns were unable even at 12000-yard range to come as close as they had with their first salvo. The WHITE PLAINS' five inch fire was continued for thirty-six minutes, with a succession of three armored Japanese ships as targets. A total of 127 rounds were fired including 27 rounds of the new Mark 32 projectiles, and a number of hits were definitely attributable to this ship's fire. The Mark 32 projectiles were particularly effective, having been clearly observed to cause casualties resulting in at least one turret of a Japanese cruiser being put out of action.

Although there had been no time to re-arm for effective action against surface vessels, the pilots of VC-4 exhibited the utmost courage and determination in action against the Japanese force. At first they were able only to harrass the heavy attacking ships, but this they did expertly so as to interfere very materially with their fire. Later, there was an opportunity to arm and launch a few torpedo bombers, and at least one telling torpedo hit was scored before the Japanese cruisers had retired altogether. (See Appendix J). In the course of the surface engagement, the Japanese ships were hit by VC-4 aircraft with .5 caliber ammunition, 100-pound bombs, and depth charges, as well as torpedoes.

The improvisation was brilliant; in some cases dry runs were made by fighters whose ammunition had been expended, and even in the face of determined enemy AA, the Japanese gun crews were effectively distracted.

The full story of the determined but apparently hopeless battle, which was put up by the formation of which the WHITE PLAINS was a part on October 25, has already been told and discussed from many angles in several other accounts. It is not necessary in this history to recount again the exceedingly valourous exploits of the destroyers in harrassing the enemy with torpedoes, nor the tragedy of the ill-fated U.S.S. GAMBIER BAY. As far as the WHITE PLAINS was concerned, the surface engagement ended with an emergency turn made at 0932 to avoid a torpedo launched by one of the enemy cruisers as they were retiring to the northwest. The reasons which compelled the Japanese force to retire can never be made clear, solely on the basis of the eye-witness testimony of anyone who went through the battle on this ship.

The miracle of the WHITE PLAINS' escape had not yet completely dawned on her crew, when another equally dangerous weapon was unleashed by the Japanese against this small and already battered formation of CVEs. At that date the new Japanese tactic of suicide diving was not generally known nor fully appreciated even in the battle fleet. So when six enemy aircraft approached the group at 1047, their suicidal intentions were not suspected by many on board. The CVEs were caught off balance, with their air operations schedule disorganized, the planes which they did have aboard unarmed after the impromptu work against the surface fleet, and with most of the screening destroyers either sunk or dispersed to pick up survivors of the vessels which had been lost. But still, at first sight, it was just another air-raid, and not a very big one. This attitude changed immediately when two of the attackers detached

themselves and headed directly for the WHITE PLAINS and the SAINT LO, which was steaming in formation on the port beam. The two "Zekes" were coming in low and very fast from dead ahead. Although brought immediately under fire, they swerved to the WHITE PLAINS' port side, and one, which had already been mortally wounded, crashed into the SAINT LO's Flight Deck before anyone had time to determine its intentions.

The details of the explosions and large fires, which resulted in the SAINT LO's sinking within 7 minutes, have been thoroughly described and studied elsewhere. This performance served as a bare few seconds' warning to the WHITE PLAINS' gun crews as to the danger they were facing. The second plane made a quick circle and approached the ship from astern and slightly to starboard. By this time, the "Zeke" had been under fire from all of this ship's anti-aircraft batteries, but apparently was not hit. He closed as if for a landing and the Captain ordered hard left rudder. (Appendix C-8). The crews of the after port 20MM guns, under Lt.(jg) G. S. HUSBY, were alert enough to take over the fire as soon as he appeared in their sector over the stern. This action was instantaneous and undoubtedly saved the ship. D. E. PARKER, Slc, 234-35-27, a veteran of Guadalcanal, was the gunner who finally found the mark at almost point-blank range, disabling the plane so that she fell off on her left wing and missed the ship by inches, her bomb exploding in the air below flight deck level, not over 20 feet from the spot where PARKER himself stood (Appendix C-9). The hangar deck enclosure was riddled with shrapnel and the flight deck littered with debris of both plane and pilot. But when the smoke cleared in a few minutes, order had begun to replace confusion; it was found that material damage to the ship was negligible and that only eleven men had been injured, none of them seriously enough to prevent immediate return to duty.

It was some time before the graphic lesson offered by the fate of the SAINT LO brought home to all hands a realization of how narrowly the WHITE PLAINS had escaped, for the second time in one day. As later events proved, the suicide dive technique was the most dangerous threat which the Japanese were able to offer to our ships. Gradually during the next few days, as the ship was retiring toward Manus, a complete story of what had happened in those few minutes passed around and was talked over excitedly from every angle. The WHITE PLAINS crew thereby gained an awareness of the nature of the enemy she was up against, which was unsurpassed in the whole fleet.

The record of the rest of that day shows a submarine kill by the screen and several alerts after dark caused by enemy aircraft formations. But those seemed as mere incidents on October 25. The four carriers that were left of Carrier Division 25 were on their way out to lick their wounds. The ships were still proudly able to provide the usual air coverage for the unit. A stop was made on October 29 at Mios Woendi Island off Northwest New Guinea for fuel and on November 1, Carrier Division 25 again came to anchor in Soodlor Harbor, Manus Island.

This time the WHITE PLAINS made closer acquaintance with the repair crews of the U.S.S. WHITNEY. For six days inspection parties were ranging the ship with intensive thoroughness to determine how badly she had been hurt. The holes in the hangar deck enclosure could be patched easily for light-tightness, but there remained a stubborn buckle just above hangar deck level which was to continue permanently to give out an annoying noise like a big bass drum when the ship encountered heavy seas. A large crack in the hangar deck itself was growing worse, and could only be temporarily checked with the facilities at hand. Shock damage throughout the ship was repaired by patching, readjusting,

and straightening. The overhang deck, and enclosure bulkheads which were of light sheet metal, could be repaired by the metalsmiths. But below, in the vicinity of the after engine room, there were some structural bulkheads which were slightly buckled, and the skin of the ship below the bilges was corrugated in places like a sheet of metal roofing. These items could probably never be made good from the standpoint of battle-worthiness of the hull, although they did not affect sea-worthiness.

By far the most serious discovery was that the starboard main engine had been loosened from its moorings. Several of the hold-down bolts were broken and all were badly strained, resulting in the starboard shaft being shifted out of line. This caused extensive vibration and necessitated reduction in cruising speed to prevent permanent damage to the engine. In fact, there was grave doubt as to whether this engine could ever be put back in condition so as to provide the $19\frac{1}{2}$ knot top speed that had been used to such great advantage during the battle. It was evident that this engine room had borne the brunt of the nearest misses.

No great deliberation was required to decide that the services of a full fledged repair base were necessary. Consequently the WHITE PLAINS discharged all but eight of the VC-4 aircraft. The four carriers, still operating as a unit of the SEVENTH Fleet (TU 77.4.3) got underway for Pearl Harbor on November 7, 1944. The aircraft retained on board were used for combat air patrol during the trip.

On arrival at Pearl, it was learned that the WHITE PLAINS had been assigned an availability period for repair at the San Diego Repair Base. The anticipation of liberty and possible leave which this news aroused in the crew may easily be imagined. The trip home began on November 19 after a one day stopover

in Pearl and the ship moored at North Island on November 27. At this time, Squadron VC-4 was detached.

A brief review of the combat experiences of the WHITE PLAINS' first and only permanent squadron shows the following. Twelve enemy aircraft and one cargo ship were definitely credited to VC-4. Substantial contribution was made to the support of ground operations in four amphibious campaigns, and at the same time in each case, observation, anti-submarine and combat air patrol service was maintained. Several assists were credited to the squadron in knocking out warships of both the Central and Southern Japanese task forces in the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea. Their losses totaled 6 pilots, 3 aircrewmembers, and 1 Marine officer observer. The last landing made on the WHITE PLAINS' flight deck by combat air patrol before arriving in Pearl in November was the 3058th for the ship; yet there had been only six barrier crashes during the time that VC-4 was aboard. Eight aircraft were lost while away from the ship.

It has been mentioned that in the course of the combat experiences of the WHITE PLAINS, the ship's company had developed a first hand working knowledge of how to use an escort carrier as a most effective instrument for striking the enemy. At this time, there was probably no CVE crew in existence that had a wider experience of the various battle uses of the Escort Carrier, or was better qualified to know what to do with their ship. The achievements of Carrier Division 25 had been officially recognized in commendatory messages from the higher echelons of command. (Appendix K). As far as the WHITE PLAINS was concerned, however, this summation of experience was not destined to be put directly to further use. On the trip from Pearl to San Diego, the ship was given 65 dud aircraft to haul back, and this was her first taste of what was in store.

Transport Duty.

As the repair work proceeded during December, 1944, the decision was made that the WHITE PLAINS was to join the growing ranks of the Carrier Transport Service. The expanding scope of air operations in the Far East demanded that tremendous numbers of naval combat planes be carried over distances much too great for them to fly. These distances were so great that every ship capable of carrying planes, and not immediately needed for combat, was being drafted for this service. On January 1, 1945, while still undergoing repairs the WHITE PLAINS was transferred to the control of Commander Carrier Transport Squadron. Personnel transfers were made to bring the complement in line with the reduced allowance for CVE transports; many of the experienced Air department men went to the U.S.S. SHIPLEY BAY and U.S.S. BENNINGTON. Nevertheless, all authorized ship alterations were accomplished, providing this ship with the latest arrangements of spaces and gear to be used in case it became necessary for the ship to be recalled to combat duty. A new type of 20MM gun mount was installed, torpedo stowage on the hangar deck was given added protection, Loran navigational gear was installed, the aviation gasoline delivery system was improved, flight deck landing lights were provided, and changes in arrangement of internal communication systems were made according to the recommendations made by the bureau from the experiences of many CVEs.

On the trial run on January 12, 1945, the ship demonstrated that her engines were still in condition to deliver a speed of seventeen knots if needed. She was scheduled for her first transport run beginning January 14, but after aircraft and passengers had been loaded, it was discovered, while loading aviation gasoline, that a minor leak had been overlooked, allowing gasoline to escape into the voids surrounding the tanks. This hazard could not be overlooked, and consequently one day at sea emptying voids, and three more in port were required

to correct the condition.

The WHITE PLAINS left San Diego on her first transport voyage on January 19, 1945, carrying passengers and aircraft consigned to Pearl Harbor. She also carried a full allowance of ammunition bombs, aircraft torpedoes and aviation gasoline, just in case a change in the ship's status might be ordered. This trip was the prototype for nearly all of the WHITE PLAINS' subsequent voyages. She carried only preserved aircraft, and steamed singly without escort. The sixty-nine aircraft on board represented almost a capacity load on both hangar and flight decks. There were 186 passengers and some of them had to be berthed on cots underneath the planes parked on the hangar deck. One interesting feature of this trip was the securing of a PBJ forward on the flight deck, thus occupying space which otherwise could have accommodated five additional carrier aircraft with folded wings.

On this first transport cruise, two round trips were made from Pearl Harbor to Roi-Namur Island in Kwajalein Atoll, delivering Army, Navy and Marine Corps personnel, a variety of types of combat aircraft, and high priority Wextrans cargo. Some of the details of the loads carried may be found in the chronology above. By the time the ship was again underway from Pearl eastward on March 1, 1945, her crew had become accustomed to the rapidly varying conditions of transport duty, to the monotony of long continuous steady steaming with very short lay-overs in port, and to the plain fact that their duties now consisted principally of getting the ship through the water and keeping up her routine maintenance.

The trip to the States in early March turned out to be very rough all the way, and as the WHITE PLAINS was delayed several hours in the first two days by heavy seas, the original orders to San Diego were modified to send the ship

to San Francisco. On March 5, she was moored at Alameda and early on March 8, she was already under way again for Pearl Harbor. This was a typical example of the quick turn-arounds required. At the forward bases visited, the time spent in port was usually even less, because the unloading was done by the ship's crew, working around the clock.

When the ship left Pearl Harbor on March 15, it became known that this second transport cruise would not be routine but would include some kind of special mission. At that time, the aircraft load, consigned to Manus, included several SNJs, JRFs and other non-combat types. The aircraft on board totalled 79, an absolute capacity load. (Appendix C-11)

Manus was the point of departure for the special mission, which turned out to be the transportation of Marine Fighter Squadrons VMF 322 and 323 to the Okinawa area for shore-based duty, on the fields which were scheduled for early capture in the campaign ready to be launched. The F4Us of these squadrons were loaded with the aviation boom, but were in a condition of combat readiness, having just been flown in from bases farther to the south. Sixty-four planes and their pilots were taken on board. All their gear and maintenance crews had been dispatched previously with the amphibious forces. These pilots had been overseas for more than two years, and were spoiling for action.

On March 27, the WHITE PLAINS left Manus in company with the U.S.S. HOLLANDIA, and from March 31 to April 2 the ship was anchored in Ulithi, awaiting orders which would be timed so as to bring the Marines to their new base at the right phase of the amphibious operation. The array of ships in Ulithi on this occasion was in overwhelming contrast to conditions at the time of the ship's previous visit. This change demonstrated the rapid pace with which the Pacific war had been moving forward.

The WHITE PLAINS arrived in Ulithi on the heels of a tropical storm which had caused considerable official anxiety, since at the same time a full-fledged typhoon to the westward was threatening to move north and interfere with the scheduled landings on Okinawa. The U.S.S. BRETON, also carrying squadrons which had come from the Marshalls for the same mission as those on the WHITE PLAINS, had weathered the storm at anchor in Ulithi. When the WHITE PLAINS arrived, all vessels in the harbor were still alerted for steaming on three hours' notice. As the weather situation developed, the two storms formed a "Siamese Twins" arrangement, finally merging into one severe typhoon about midway between Ulithi and Okinawa. This storm passed northeastward in the vicinity of Iwo Jima, and did not interfere with any scheduled operations, except fueling at sea. There was some trouble with surf on the beaches, but the Okinawa landings were not delayed.

On April 2, 1945, the group of four CVEs and four APDs as screen departed for the mission which was to take the WHITE PLAINS on her deepest penetration of enemy territory. On April 6, the formation reached the designated launching area and commenced maneuvering, awaiting orders. It was soon learned that the squadrons embarked on the WHITE PLAINS were not to be the first to land on OKINAWA, as they had hoped, because the LST transporting their equipment and maintenance personnel had been bombed on the landing beach and had lost considerable gear. The BRETON and the SITKOH BAY parted company and launched their aircraft while the HOLLANDIA and WHITE PLAINS, with two of the APD's reversed course and spent two days killing time while awaiting instructions.

In some ways, this experience was among the most tense in the WHITE PLAINS' history. A great deal of talk could be heard on the combat voice circuits between friendly aircraft and their own carriers not over 150 miles away. It

was known that major air battles exceeding anything in which the WHITE PLAINS had ever participated were being waged every day almost in the immediate vicinity. The news of the sinking of a Jap battleship by American torpedo planes was received by intercepting the action report. The crew had only routine work to keep their minds off the imminent danger. With 64 planes aboard, this ship could not possibly recover any aircraft which would have had to be launched in case of an air raid. Steaming back and forth along one line at an average distance of 150 miles southeast of Okinawa, the small formation was unprotected except for its own anti-aircraft and the air screen which the forces covering the island provided. That air screen must have been practically air tight, because only one lone enemy reconnaissance plane was sighted and according to the indication of radar it was promptly splashed. As far as could be told by the uninformed observer on deck, the WHITE PLAINS might have been on a pleasure cruise. The word finally came to launch the Marine pilots on April 9, 1945. All were launched without incident. As the ship set her course for Guam, the message was received towards evening that all 64 of the catapulted planes had landed safely on Kadena airfield. Some of them had even had a chance to take a crack at the enemy on the way in. (appendix C-12)

This group became known on Okinawa as the "Death Rattlers", and they turned out a record number of Aces. In less than two months they surpassed the Marine Corps record for number of kills, without losing a single one of their own planes or pilots to enemy action. Later, they carried out the first fighter sweep over Kyushu. While on the WHITE PLAINS these Marine pilots had been given an intensive course in preparation for their missions by Lieutenant W.J. POLK, USNR, an Air Combat Information officer who had reported aboard at Pearl for temporary duty, for this purpose. Relations between squadron and ship had been exceptionally cordial on both sides.

The routine of transport duty was resumed immediately after arriving at Guam. Passengers were carried to Pearl Harbor, and still more passengers with a few aircraft and some cargo from Pearl to San Diego. On May 1 the WHITE PLAINS was again moored at North Island, and the next day moved to the Naval Repair Base for routine overhaul.

During this period of availability, ship alterations were made to keep up with the latest state of combat readiness. A second master gyro compass was installed, the radio direction finder was removed, having been superseded by the newer Loran equipment previously installed, and several new damage control telephone circuits were provided. The aviation radio-radar repair shop was completely rearranged. Nevertheless, the ship returned immediately to transport duty.

Before the ship shoved off from San Diego, Captain Frederick FUNKE, Jr., (Appendix A-III) came aboard, having been ordered as the WHITE PLAINS' new Commanding Officer. Captain SULLIVAN retained command until the ship reached Pearl Harbor. On May 20, 1945, in a ceremony on the flight deck, the command was turned over, while the ship was moored at Ford Island. (Appendix C-10)

Day follows day in transport service very much the same on one trip as on another. In the lower latitudes, there was not even a change in the seasons to relieve the monotony. On this third trip, the WHITE PLAINS visited several of her old haunts, Tannapaug Anchorage in Saipan, Guam, Ulithi, and the Leyte Gulf Area. The latter provided the greatest possible contrast with the conditions prevailing on the occasion of the ship's previous visit. The WHITE PLAINS delivered aircraft on June 6, 1945 to the big new aviation Supply Depot at Samar, P.I. After a shuttle trip back to Guam, she again entered Leyte Gulf unmolested and proceeded to anchorage in San Pedro Bay off Tacloban. On this

occasion, June 16, 1945, a view of the fleet was afforded that outclassed the display at Eniwetok, just twelve months before, by more than the latter had outclassed the early show at Majuro. On June 16, the WHITE PLAINS carried out her last launching operation, in company with the U.S.S. MAKASSAR STRAIT, Thirty-two aircraft; Hellcats, Corsairs and Helldivers, were catapulted from a position within 50 miles of the scene of the Battle off Samar on October 25, 1944. This flight was a matter of routine delivery to the Guiuan airfield.

On the return trip, the ship again skirted a young typhoon, the same one which embarrassed the forces operating to the northward several days later. No difficulty was experienced avoiding the destructive wind area as the typhoon had not yet reached extensive proportions. From Guam, the ship was routed to Alameda, via Pearl Harbor, arriving in the States on July 9, 1945. The passenger list for this trip included Carrier Air Group 82, whose outstanding exploits while serving aboard the U.S.S. BENNINGTON were rewarded in a presentation ceremony on the WHITE PLAINS flight deck at Pearl Harbor. The awards were made by Rear Admiral R. E. JENNINGS, USN.

The last wartime cruise of the WHITE PLAINS found her still in transport service. Leaving Alameda, July 13, 1945, the ship delivered personnel of Carrier Air Group SIXTY to Hilo, T. H., and then after a short stop at Pearl Harbor, delivered aircraft to Guam. Carrier Air Group Twenty-Six personnel made the trip from Hilo to Guam. On this trip, a customer was finally found for some of the aviation gasoline we had been hauling around for so long. Everyone, however, seemed to have plenty of ammunition, and in the end it was carried back to San Diego.

The glad news of the end of the war with Japan on August 14, 1945 was received while the ship was enroute from Pearl Harbor to San Diego. On August

On August 20, the WHITE PLAINS again moored at North Island, and on August 22 moved once more to the San Diego Repair Base. This time, cessation of hostilities had resulted in the cancellation of all alterations scheduled for this ship, and she was given only a routine overhaul and dry-dock period.

There was considerable speculation among all hands as to the probable employment of the CVEs during the demobilization period. The receipt of orders to proceed to Pearl Harbor and report for duty with "Carrier Division 24" did little to settle the question. The WHITE PLAINS stood out from Point Loma on her first peacetime cruise on September 6, 1945, loaded only with passengers. These passengers were all debarked on Ford Island at Pearl Harbor. The plan for the "Magic Carpet" operation was then revealed and it became clear that the WHITE PLAINS would still be making trans-Pacific crossings for some time. This ship was one of the first to be ordered to duty returning the men eligible for demobilization from Okinawa. The WHITE PLAINS dropped anchor in Buckner Bay, Okinawa, on the morning of September 26, 1945, once again returning under very much altered circumstances to the scene of one of her earlier adventures. The load of 669 enlisted men and 127 officers taken aboard that day was a record passenger list for escort carriers which had not been specially modified for the purpose of carrying personnel. The ship returned to Pearl Harbor on October 8, 1945. (Appendix C-13)

As a major war vessel, the WHITE PLAINS was at her peak of efficiency in late October 1944, just a year after her crew first began to come together from all over the United States and from other vessels of the Navy. In the year just closed, the second of the WHITE PLAINS' career, there has been just as great a change in the purpose and atmosphere of the ship as a working organization, as there was in the first year. But the transformation has been by more imper-

ceptible steps. The ship's crew has shrunk, the old hands, experienced in air operations, have been transferred here and there in small drafts. The air department in particular has been deliberately and progressively reduced to a mere maintenance organization, and it is expected that it will be reorganized so that only the minimum of personnel, necessary to care for those pieces of specialized aviation equipment which are permanent installations in the ship, will be kept. The ship is literally a battle-scarred war horse returned to its battle fields for peaceful moving of things or people across the waters. But among the hands who are essential for that purpose, the engineering crews, the seaman on deck, the quartermasters, the repair parties furnishing protection against the hazards of the sea, and the officers standing their watches, the established tradition of pride in doing their jobs with maximum safety and efficiency remains the heritage of all WHITE PLAINS men.

NOTE: concerning documentation:

The following records of the U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS were consulted in preparing this history: War Diary; Deck Log and QM notebook; Arresting Gear Log; personnel, medical, aerological, photographic, engineering, gunnery and communications files, and official action reports. In addition, the "Composite Squadron FOUR 'Scrapbook'", (Copyright 1945), compiled and edited by Lt.(jg) Russel WOOD, USNR, was freely drawn upon. Specific and scholarly documentation of the Narrative is impossible, because almost every statement is a synthesis from several of these sources. All names and specific dates have been carefully checked against records, and are known to be accurate. Statistical and descriptive material is known to be reasonably accurate, and have been checked wherever possible.

Many interviews were had during the period October 1 to 8, 1945, all with personnel still aboard who were eye-witnesses of the events in question. The compiler of the Narrative has been aboard since November 27, 1944, and has drawn extensively on his memory of conversations held with many other eye-witnesses who have meanwhile been detached.

APPENDIX A - Short Biographies of Commanding Officers.

I

At the Commissioning Ceremony at Astoria, Oregon on November 15, 1943, Captain Oscar A. WELLER, U.S. Navy, assumed command of the U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS (CVE-66), thus adding another fighting unit to the rapidly expanding program of the United States Navy. Succeeding months proved that the Bureau could not have selected a man better qualified to assume command of this Escort Carrier.

Captain Oscar Arthur WELLER, U.S. Navy was born in Beeville, Texas, December 2, 1896. He attended the West Texas Military Academy, after which he entered the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis.

Graduating from Annapolis in 1919, Ensign WELLER was assigned to the U.S.S. EURON for duty in Asiatic waters. After two years of cruiser experience, he entered aviation training in May 1922 at Pensacola, Florida. After winning his wings at Pensacola, he spent two years at Naval Air Station, San Diego, California in Fighting Plane Squadron ONE. He was later transferred to Pensacola's Corry Field as Instructor.

In 1928 Lt. WELLER returned to Annapolis for a post graduate course in Ordnance Engineering; following that he was assigned to the U.S.S. WEST VIRGINIA, where he served as senior aviator for a tour of duty which carried him over most of the Pacific waters.

Captain WELLER had duty at the Navy Department, Washington, D.C., was Air Group Commander on the U.S.S. RANGER, and Air Officer on the U.S.S. SARATOGA. Following these important assignments, he became Commanding Officer of the U.S. Naval Air Station, Coco Solo, Panama Canal Zone, after which he became Commander of Patrol Wing NINE, Quonset Pt. Rhode Island.

A man who was respected not only for his thorough knowledge of naval aviation, Captain Weller also won the admiration and respect of all hands because of his wisdom and good judgment of human nature. During his short tour of duty as Commanding Officer of the WHITE PLAINS, he exhibited the very highest qualities of leadership as an officer and a gentleman of the Navy.

In his commissioning address Captain WELLER is reported to have said: "This ship is named for a decisive battle of the American Revolution, where a lot of Yankees fought. They all got out with their hides. Now with all the Yankees I have aboard here, I expect her to get in a hell of a lot of trouble, but you'll get out with your hides, too! Yes, the Yanks made history in the battle of WHITE PLAINS over a century and a-half ago; the U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS will do no loss."

Captain WELLER saw the WHITE PLAINS develop from a gangling infant into a veteran, fire-spitting, sea-going hornet's nest. To him goes the credit for developing the raw recruits fresh from the boot camp, and likewise the inexperienced Ensigns from Reserve Training Schools, into well-disciplined, expertly trained, competent men of action. The courageous and aggressive manner which marked the training and shake down cruises of the WHITE PLAINS also characterized the initial operation against the enemy at Saipan. It was due to the courageous execution of skillfully conceived tactics and seamanship that the WHITE PLAINS dealt one of the knock-out punches and maneuvered to safety during the operations at Saipan. To Captain WELLER and his well-integrated command goes a full share of the credit for the successful campaign in the Marianas.

APPENDIX A (Continued).

Symbolic of the unfaltering trust of those who served under Captain WELLER during those restless, anxious days of the WHITE PLAINS' history, are the words of a Boatswain's Mate lc: "If I had to spend my naval career on one ship, I would want Captain WELLER to be the 'Skipper'."

On July 16, 1944 Captain WELLER was detached as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS(CVE-66) and ordered to the U.S.S. WAMP(CV-18) as Commanding Officer. Captain Dennis J. SULLIVAN, U.S. Navy succeeded him as Commanding Officer of the WHITE PLAINS.

II

On July 16, 1944 Captain Dennis J. SULLIVAN, U.S. Navy, seasoned from a colorful tour of duty as Executive Officer aboard the Escort Carrier, MANILA BAY, assumed command of the U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS(CVE-66). Again, it was as if Providence had directed the selection of this Irish aviator and ordnance engineer to execute the important role which the WHITE PLAINS was destined to fulfill.

Dennis Joseph SULLIVAN was born in the state of Montana on the 26th of September 1903. He entered the Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1922 and graduated in June 1926. While in the Academy young Sullivan was an adept athlete and a careful student of military science. His interest in chemical research and ordnance engineering led him to pursue post-graduate courses at Annapolis following his training in aviation at Pensacola, Florida, but not until after he had served a tour of duty as Senior Aviator aboard the Battleship, U.S.S. NEW MEXICO.

Captain SULLIVAN made salutary contributions in the field of aerial torpedo research, perfecting techniques and tactical procedures which have proved invaluable in the successful execution of the war against the enemy both in the Atlantic and the Pacific theaters of war.

Captain SULLIVAN assumed command of the U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS at that crucial hour when carrier operations in the Marianas Islands were undergoing the most devastating counter-attacks by the enemy. Inheriting a veteran crew and seasoned officers, he executed a determined and aggressive drive to make his ship the proudest and most able fighting carrier of its type at sea.

The Captain was a friendly man; he relished spinning yarns about the 'good old days' when he was stationed for a long time on a seaplane tender at Coco Solo, the entrance to the Panama Canal. "We used to take a pilot aboard every time we made the transit, because if you didn't have the pilot flag flying, you were likely to get held up for several hours in Gatun Lake, while the pilots would push you right through. We got to know them pretty well. They didn't like Japanese ships; hated to handle them, and even in those days, back in 1938, were suspicious of them, so their radios were sealed while they transited the canal.

"The Jap ships didn't handle well; I remember one of those pilots telling how he rang the engine-room for full speed astern and the ship kept going

APPENDIX A (Continued).

right ahead - engine room didn't understand. The captain said to him with one of those Jap giggles, 'Ha, ha, you are going to hit pier.' He said, 'Ha, ha, it's your ship.'"

Or yarns about the torpedo station at Newport in the old days (the skipper had been a torpedo pilot)! New torpedoes have to be fired two or three times before they are in perfect adjustment, with practice heads, of course, so they won't blow anything up. The skipper himself fired one once that was not quite in adjustment yet, so that it circled slightly, and almost sank the Jamestown ferry, for a torpedo travels with a considerable punch and the Jamestown ferry is an old wooden craft. The ferry skipper saw it pursuing him and turned frantically. Every time he turned, the torpedo turned with him and his ship was only saved because the torpedo was near the end of its run, so that it finally nosed down into the mud.

In the renowned battle of Leyte Gulf, Captain Sullivan out-smarted and out-maneuvered the enemy on every count. His superb firing and maneuvering during this decisive battle won for him the Navy Cross and the grateful respect of the officers and men of his ship. Captain Sullivan spared no effort in his consistent policy to weaken the enemy and bring his ship and his crew home to safety. He often boasted that his crew could load, unload, and launch planes faster than any carrier of its kind afloat. His cool efficiency in handling men and material earned for him the name of "Bull" of the Escort Carriers.

On May 8, 1945, Captain Denis J. SULLIVAN, U.S. Navy, was ordered to the Bureau of Ordnance, Navy Department, Washington, D.C. His Irish eyes were moist as he relinquished his command at Pearl Harbor; he knew then that these orders precluded his burning ambition to launch planes on the very door-step of the enemy.

III

Upon relieving Captain Dennis J. SULLIVAN, U.S. Navy on May 20, 1945, Captain Fredrick FUNKE, Jr., U.S. Navy, assumed command of the U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS (CVE-66) at Pearl Harbor. Proud wearer of 5 ribbons which include the Defense, American Theatre, Asiatic with four stars, the European and the commendation ribbon awarded to him by Admiral Stark, Captain FUNKE was in the show in the Pacific from the early beginning back in the anxious days of Guadalcanal when a handful of cruisers and destroyers was all we could muster to hold off Nippon's might. Serving as Gunnery Officer for ComAirSoPac in the Solomons area in 1942, he lived aboard the U.S.S. CURTISS for awhile, but roughed it most of the time in quonset huts and tents in New Caledonia, Espiritu Santo, Tulagi and Guadalcanal from April to December of that year.

Born in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1904, Captain FUNKE grew up on the middle west plains learning to handle a rod and reel and became an enthusiastic hunter. His skill with a rifle paid him dividends in New Caledonia where one time he bagged 3 deer in two nights using a 30 cal. Springfield and filed down bullets. He used to chase deer in a jeep. Golf was added to his favorite sports of fishing and hunting.

APPENDIX A (Continued).

He graduated from the Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1927, and was commissioned Ensign, reporting aboard the U.S.S. WEST VIRGINIA for a tour of duty that lasted until 1930. He reported to Pensacola that year for flight training and won his wings in December 1931. Soon thereafter he was to be found flying with his squadron off the U.S.S. SARATOGA. This billet lasted until 1934 when he returned to Annapolis for a year of study in general line duty at the Post Graduate School. From 1935 to 1937 he had duty aboard the U.S.S. NEW MEXICO with its observation seaplane unit; then on to Panama with FAIRWING 3 and to San Diego in 1940 flying PB2Y-3's. He loves to fly the big boats but is equally enamored of the sleek fighters.

Summoned out of the steaming jungles of the South Pacific, Captain FUNKE spent 1943 with BuAcr in Washington, D.C., where he prepared for the biggest show of 1944: the assault on Fortress Europe. Assigned to the staff of Commander Naval Forces, Europe, he was stationed in London at the height of the buzz bomb season. He says of these zoot-zoomers, "There wasn't much you could do about the buzzbomb because they usually came over singly at intervals throughout the day and night and you can't stay in a shelter 24 hours a day and get any work done. You felt like a small ant on a big dart board and hoped that one of the darts didn't have your number on it. When one approached and came overhead you simply wished it luck in not running out of gas until it had passed over and you were beyond range of its blast."

Assuming command of the WHITE PLAINS at a time when she was destined to remain "a mere transport" was not an easy job because of the reduced complement and rapidly changing personnel. But Captain FUNKE has taken it all in his stride, allowing nothing to ruffle the even-flowing tenor of his way. When there are personnel and material to deliver to forward areas, he becomes as enthusiastic about it as if he were launching a strike at Tokyo; and, now that there are thousands of men and tons of supplies to be returned to the home front, he is most eager to return the largest numbers he can by Christmas time.

Captain FUNKE possesses an uncanny ability to gauge the temper of his officers and men. He has already become the "Beloved Captain" of the WHITE PLAINS, for he cries out with Patrick Henry, that patron Saint of every blue-jacket, "Give me liberty....."

APPL...

CONSOLIDATED ROSTER OFFICERS

NAME	DEC. 43 - MAR. 44	APR. 44 - AUG. 44	SEPT. 44 - JAN. 45	FEB. 45 - AUG. 45	PRESENT ASSIGNMENT
Lt.Cdr. C. A. ABELE, Jr.	1st. Lieutenart	Same	Detached 12-44		
Comdr. T. A. AHROON	Exec. Officer	Detached 7-44			
Lt. J. M. ANDREWS, Jr.	Sr. Asst. Eng. Off.	Same	Same	Chief Eng. Detached 7-45	
Lt.Cdr. B. W. ARVIN	Comm. Officer	Same	Same	Detached 5-45	
Lt. S. J. ARNOLD				Navigator	Detached 9-45
Lt. B. W. BECKER	V-1 Div. Officer	Detached 4-44		(after 7-45)	
Ens., J. W. BERNIS				Asst. Supply Off.	Same
Lt. L. W. BERTOGLIO		Asst. ISO	Detached 1-45		
Lt.(jg), R. M. BEVIS, Jr.	Jr.1st.Div.Off.	Asst.Nav.Off.	Jr.1st.Div.Off.	1st. Div. Off.	Asst. DCO & 1st Lt.
Lt.(jg), L. BRAATEN			Jr.2nd.Div.Off.	Asst. Navigator	Asst. Navigator
Ens. C. F. BLEICK				Comm. Watch Off.	Same
Lt. C. J. BRADY	Jr. Medical Off.	Detached 5-44		Asst.Gun.&Pass.Off.	Detached 8-45
Lt.(jg), H. E. BOICE					Jr. B Div. Off.
Ens., A. R. BREDAHL					
Ens., J. E. BRENNAN					Jr. M Div. Off.
Lt.(jg), W. F. BRISSON	Ship's Gunner	Same	Same	3rd. Div. Off.	Gunnery Off.
Pharm. S. J. BUCKO				Asst. H Div. Off.	Same
Lt. T. J. BUKVICH	Asst. DCO & Athletic Off.	Same	Same	Detached 9-45	
Ens., E. CARR, Jr.				FDO & CIC Asst.	Same
Ens. C. M. CAVE					Jr. Asst. Navigator
Bosn., J. D. CLINTON				Ship's Bosn.	Same
Carp., C. W. COLLINS				Ship's Carp.	Same
Lt. H. C. COOKE			B-1		Comm. Officer

APPENDIX B

NAME	DEC. 43 - MAR. 44	APR. 44 - AUG. 44	SEPT. 44 - JAN. 45	FEB. 45 - AUG. 45	PRESENT ASSIGNMENT
Ens., G. L. CONTNER					Jr. 1st. Div. Off.
Lt. E. C. CONRAD				Asst. First Lieut.	Detached 9-45
Lt. Cdr. L. W. COSPER	Asst. 1st. Lt.	Detached 7-44			
Ens. C. P. CORKE					R Div. Off.
Lt. W. C. CURRY	Jr. 2nd. Div. Off.	Lookout Off.	Detached 10-44		
Lt. R. W. DARBY				Supply Officer	Same
Lt. M. DONELSON, Jr. (Transferred from VC-4)	Jr. Med. Off.	Same (Det. 1-45)		(after 5-45)	
Lt. (jg), K. W. DAVIS	Jr. 3rd. Div. Off.	Detached 7-44			
Lt. (jg), W. F. DEYVIS (Trans. From VC-4)	Asst. Flight Dk. Off.	Detached 1-45			
C. Mach. R. DEFRANCO	Gasoline Officer	Same	Same	Detached 7-45	
Rd. Elect. E. H. DEFRIEZ	Radio Officer	Detached 4-44			
Comdr. W. M. DICKEY	Air Officer	Exec. Officer	Same	Detached 8-45	
		(after 7-44)			
C. Rd. Elec. M. C. ECKFORD		Radio Officer	Same	Same	Same
Lt. Cdr. P. J. EPPINGER	Eng. Officer	Same	Detached 12-44		
Lt. (jg), J. FARRELL	Jr. M Div. Off.	Same	M Div. Off.	Detached 5-45	
Lt. (jg), J. M. FRENCH (Trans. from VC-4)	Land. Sig. Off.	Same		Detached 9-45	
Lt. (jg), L. FRIAGLIA	A Div. Officer	Same	Same	Same	Same
Lt. C. D. FRIX				Asst. Air Off.	
				Detached 4-45	
Capt. F. FUNKE, Jr.				Commanding Off.	Same
				(after 5-45)	
Lt. O. E. GILES				Asst. Air Off.	V-2 Div. Off.
Lt. R. GRANT, Jr.				Dental Officer	Same
Lt. L. M. HAMMAR				Jr. Medical Officer	Same
Lt. H. A. HANSEN				Jr. Medical Off.	Detached 7-45
Lt. J. K. HARRISON	F.D.O. Asst.	Same	Same	Fighter Dir. Off.	Detached 9-45
Lt. (jg), H. M. HAYES	3rd. Div. Off.	Same	Same	Detached 5-45	

APPENDIX B

NAME	DEC. 43 - MAR. 44	APR. 44 - AUG. 44	SEPT. 44 - JAN. 45	FEB. 45 - AUG. 45	PRESENT ASSIGNMENT
Lt. J. W. HOCK, Jr. Comdr. D. C. HIGGINS	B Div. Officer	M Div. Officer	Asst. Eng. Officer	Detached 6-45	Executive Officer
Lt.Cdr. K. H. HOLCOMB	Asst. Air Off.	Air Officer (after 7-44)	Same	Detached 9-45	
Ens., E.M. HOLMES	Radar WatchOff.	Detached 6-44			
Lt. (jg), G. S. HUSBY	Disb. Officer	Same	Same	Detached 3-45	
Lt.Cdr. C. D. HUSTON					Air Officer
Lt.(jg), V. L. INGERSOLL	Elect. Off.	Same	Same	Same	Same
Lt. H. F. JOHN				Eng. Officer (after 7-45)	Same
Lt.(jg), R. F. JOHNSON	Arres. Gear Off.	Same	Same	Detached 2-45	
Lt.(jg), J. O. KARSTROM, Jr.	Catapult Off.	Same	Same	Detached 8-45	
Lt. W. D. KILPATRICK	Radar Maintenance	Same	Same	Same	Same
Lt. L. S. KENNEDY			Dental Officer	Detached 1-45	
Lt. A. W. KIVETT	Air Information Off.	Same	Same	Detached 3-45	
Ens. R. A. LABOMBARDE				Jr. M Div. Off.	M Div. Off.
Ens. R. LANSDON, Jr.					Personnel Off.
Ens. R. L. LAYBURN				Radar Maintenance	Same
Lt. H. G. LAW	Asst. Gunnery Off.	Detached 8-44			
Ens. C. L. LOHMAN	C.I.C. Watch Off.	Same	Same	Detached 8-45	
Lt.(jg), S. F. LONGO	Signal Officer	Same	Comm. Watch Off.	Detached 7-45	
Lt.(jg), R. M. LOOMIS				Comm. Watch Off.	Detached 9-45
Lt. C. H. MAHLSTEDT	1st. Div. Off.	Same	Gunnery Off. (after 11-44)		First Lieut.

APPENDIX B

NAME	DEC. 43 - MAR. 44	APR. 44 - AUG. 44	SEPT. 44 - JAN. 45	FEB. 45 - AUG. 45	PRESENT ASSIGNMENT
Lt.(jg), G. S. MC CRACKEN			Comm. Watch Officer	Same	K Div. Officer
Ens. M. C. MELTZER				Disb. Officer	Same
Lt. E.N. McCONNELL	Radar Watch Off.	Same	Radar Watch Off.	Detached 1-45	
Bosn. C. M. MESKE	Ship's Bosn.	Same	Same	Same	Detached 7-45
Ens. T. W. MITCHELL				Recognition Off.	1st. Div. Off.
Ens. J. W. MIZENKO			Jr. B Div. Off.	Same	B Div. Off.
Lt. H. R. MORGAN			Dental Officer	Detached 5-45	
Lt.Cdr. S. D. MURRAY	Medical Off.	Same	Detached 1-45		
Lt. J. D. NELSON, Jr. (Trans. From VC-4)		Avia. Ord. Off.	Same	Same	Detached 9-45
Lt. R. L. NICHOLS	V-2 Div. Off.	Same	Air Plot Off.	Detached 5-45	
S.Clk. H.B. OLNHUSEN	Ship's Secretary	Detached 3-44			
Lt. R. J. PETERS	Jr. B. Div. Off.	B Div. Off.	Same	Same	Asst. Eng. Off.
S.Clk. G. J. PELUSA				Ship's Secretary	Detached 9-45
Mach. P. PETERSON		Jr. M Div. Off.	Detached 1-45		
Ens. V. B. PETTIGREW					Flight Deck Off.
Lt. R. E. PINE		Land. Sig. Off.	Detached 1-45		
Ens. J. G. PRCHLIK			Asst. Air Off.	Jr. 2nd. Div. Off.	Same
Lt.(jg), H. B. OLIVER	Jr. 2nd Div. Off.	Same	2nd. Div. Off.	Same	Detached 9-45
Lt.(jg), E. W. REED	Radar Watch Off.	Same	Detached 1-45		
Comdr. R. H. RIGGS, Dr.				Medical Officer	Same
S. Clk. D. E. RIGGS		Ship's Clerk	Same	Detached 5-45	
Lt.(jg), R. L. RISLEY	Asst. to Supply Officer	Same	Commissary Off.	Same	Same
Ens. "J". "A". RODGERS				Jr.3rd.Div.Off.	2nd Div. Off.

APPENDIX B

NAME	DEC. 43 - MAR. 44	APR. 44 - AUG. 44	SEPT. 44 - JAN. 45	FEB. 45 - AUG. 45	PRESENT ASSIGNMENT
Lt. F. C. ROOP				Aero Off.	Same
Lt. J. B. ROPER	Gunnery Off.	Same	Detached 11-44		Historical Off.
Lt.(jg), R. E. RYAN	Radar Watch Off.	Same	C.I.C. Watch Off.	Detached 7-45	
Mach. F. W. SAMPLE	Jr. A Div. Off.	Same	Same	Same	Same
Lt.(jg), R. J. SCANLON	Comm. Watch Off.	Same	Same	Detached 5-45	
Lt.(jg), D. H. SCHMITT	"2nd" Div. Off.	V-1 Div. Off. Flight Dk. Off.	Detached 1-45		
Lt.(jg), L. W. SCOTT	Asst. Supply Off.	Same	Detached 12-44		
Lt. W. J. SLATER	Fighter Dir. Off.	Same	Detached 12-44		
Lt.Cdr. R. B. SMITH	Navigator	Same	Same	Detached 7-45	
Lt.(jg), S. A. SMITH, Jr.	Asst. Gunnery Off.	Detached 7-44			
Lt.(jg), H. SOKOLOV	Aviation Maint.	Same	Same	Detached 7-45	
Ens. T. Q. SPITZER					Comm. Watch Off.
Lt. R. M. STUART	Aerological Off.	Same	Detached 12-44		
C. Elect. F. A. STOREY	Jr. Elect. Off.	Same	Same	Detached 5-45	
Capt. D. J. SULLIVAN		Commanding Off. (after 7-44)	Same	Detached 5-45	
Lt.Cdr. C. G. SUMMERS, III				First Liout. Detached 9-45	
Mach. A. A. THOMPSON				Gasoline Off.	Same
Elect. V. TUCLARONE				Jr. Elect. Off.	Same
Lt.Cdr. R. E. TURNER	Supply Officer	Same	Same	Detached 5-45	

APPENDIX B

NAME	DEC. 43 - MAR. 44	APR. 44 - AUG. 44	SEPT. 44 - JAN. 45	FEB. 45 - AUG. 45	PRESENT ASSIGNMENT
Lt.(jg), E. H. VEATCH	Asst. Comm. Off.	Same	Same	Comm. Officer (after 5-45)	Detached 7-45
Lt. A. O. VERGARA	Comm. Watch Off.	Signal Off.	K Div. Off.	Comm. Officer (after 7-45)	Detached 9-45
Ens. J. G. WALLACE				3rd Div. Off.	Asst. Gunnery Off.
Capt. O. A. WELLER	Commanding Off.	Detached 7-44			
C. Pharm. J. C. WEST		Hosp. Corps. Pers. Officer	Same	Detached 3-45	
Lt. C. T. WEST				V-2 Div. Off.	Navigator
Lt.(jg), R. B. WITT, Jr.	Air Plot Off.	Detached 7-44			
Lt.(jg), E. A. WYNKOOP				Aid to Exec.	Ship's Secretary
C. Carp. J. R. YOUNG	Ship's Carp.	Same	Same	Detached 5-45	

APPENDIX B (cont'd): ROSTER OF PILOTS OF COMPOSITE SQUADRON FOUR

Lt. Cdr. R. C. EVINS USN
Lieut. E. R. FICKENSCHER USN
Lieut. V. E. FLATEBOE USNR
Lieut. J. R. MAYHER USNR
Lieut. F. E. KURZ USNR
Lieut. F. C. SRSEN USNR
Lieut. H. C. PALMER USNR
Lieut. V. A. MUDGETT USNR
Lieut. L. M. FERKO USNR
Lieut. J. H. BEAR USNR
Lieut. J. A. HUSER USNR
Lieut. E. STRAUGHN USNR
Lieut. C. H. McLEAN USNR
Lieut. C. D. McGAHA USNR
Lt.(jg). D. E. DURICK USNR
Lt.(jg). W. P. OWENS USNR
Lt.(jg). F. J. MALONEY USNR
Lt.(jg). S. N. BALES USNR
Lt.(jg). R. J. WOOD USNR
Lt.(jg). J. B. OSBORNE USNR
Lt.(jg). F. F. ROX USNR
Lt.(jg). C. M. SHIELDS USNR
Lt.(jg). F. M. ATKINSON USNR (Personnel Officer)
Lt.(jg). A. B. WILEY, Jr. USNR (Air Combat Information Officer)
Ensign H. H. CARSON USNR
Ensign J. B. HEARN USNR
Ensign L. R. POOL USNR
Ensign E. M. BILLINGHURST USNR
Ensign H. E. BYRD USNR
Ensign J. R. DENNIS USNR
Ensign P. BUTCHER USNR
Ensign W. F. PATTERSON USNR
Ensign W. G. SCHAUFLEER USN
Ensign C. F. REAMS, Jr. USNR
Ensign R. B. STAMATIS USNR

APPENDIX C - PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographic Table of Contents

- C-1 The WHITE PLAINS as she shifts berths in SAN DIEGO Bay.
- C-2 Captain CRIST from the Naval Station in Astoria, Oregon turns the WHITE PLAINS over to Captain WELLER at commissioning ceremonies November 15, 1943. Standing in the rear left to right are Capt. WELLER, Lt.(jg) WIDOLFF, Chaplain, and Comdr. AHROON, Executive Officer.
- C-3 The "WHITE PLAINS" is given its first assignment: transporting men and material to Tarawa, which had been secured recently. This cruise has been referred to by the crew as the longest shake-down in CVE history.
- C-4 On the WHITE PLAINS first day of air operations, January 16, 1944, there were thirty four (34) landings including this one. Crew "turns to" after plane makes off-center landing on deck.
- C-5 After completion of the mission to Tarawa the officers and men relax to honor a visit from "King Neptune" and his court. Formal ceremonies and the initiations of the "Polly-wogs" becoming "Shell-backs" were held on this occasion.
- C-6 Japanese cargo transport undergoing aerial assault in Apru Harbor, Rota. Planes of squadron VC-4 based on board the WHITE PLAINS made this kill on June 24, 1944.
- C-7 Captain SULLIVAN assumes command from Captain WELLER in Eniwetok, Marshall Is., on July 16, 1944. Lt. KIVETT is presenting V-3 Division to Cpts. WELLER and SULLIVAN for inspection.
- C-8 Japanese "Zeke" attempts suicide dive on WHITE PLAINS about one and one half hours after the Japanese Task Force has ceased shelling and retired, during the Battle off Samar on October 25, 1944. At this time the ship's mission was the support of ground operations on Leyte.
- C-9 Japanese "Zeke" scatters fragments after failing to hit the carrier and exploding between flight deck and water about twenty (20) feet off the port side.
- C-10 Captain FUNKE, the present Commanding Officer of WHITE PLAINS, assumes command from Captain SULLIVAN in Pearl Harbor on May 20, 1945. Captain FUNKE is at extreme left, Captain SULLIVAN at microphone, and Comdr. DICKEY in charge of the formation of officers.



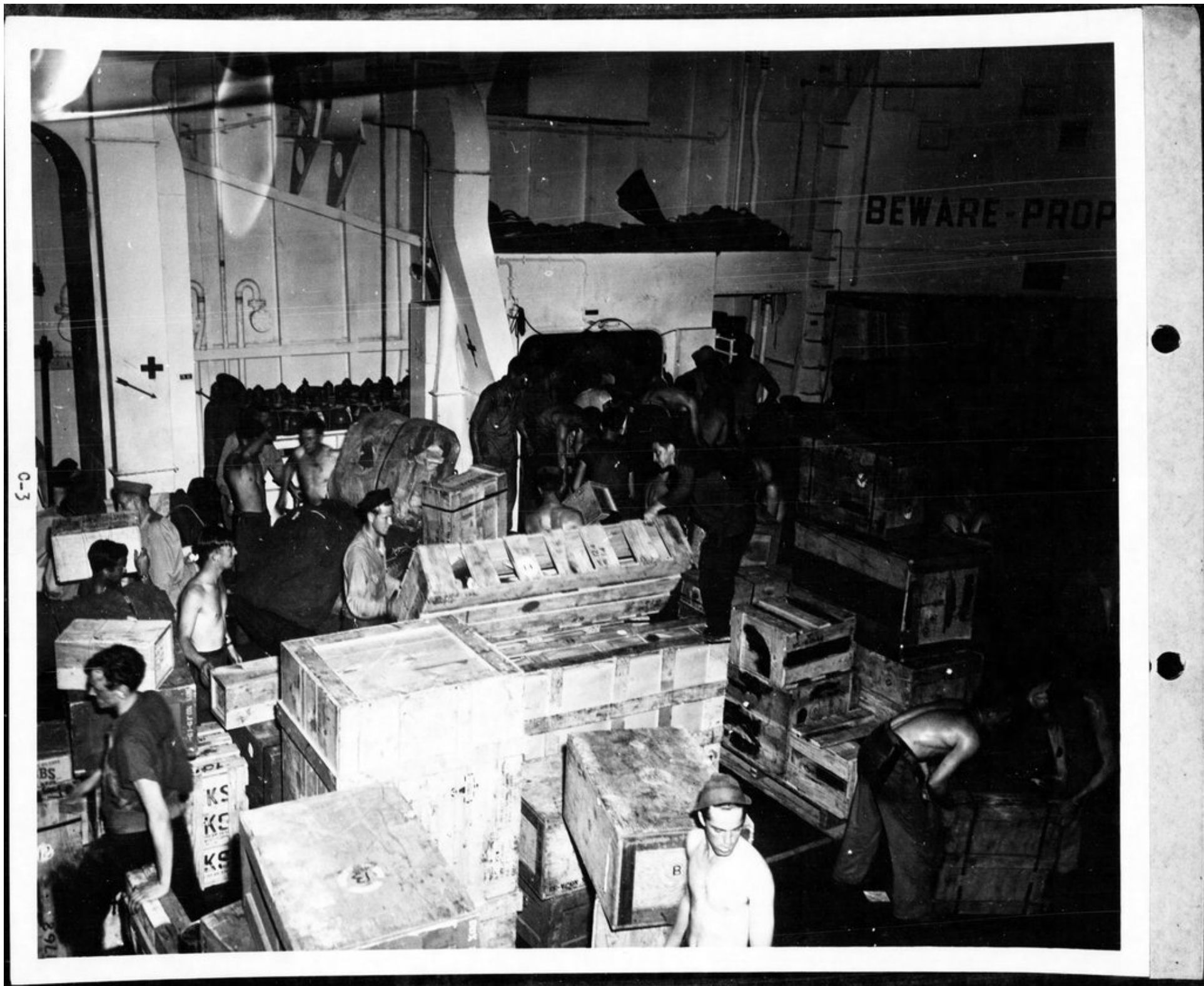
APPENDIX C- PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographic Table of Contents(Cont'd)

- C-11 'WHITE PLAINS' again carries material to war fronts but this time the cargo is preserved aircraft.
- C-12 One of sixty-four Corsairs taxiing to the catapult as Marine Fighter Pilots of VMF 322 and VMF 323 leave the WHITE PLAINS for shore-based duty on Okinawa, April 9, 1945.
- C-13 After the war ends, the WHITE PLAINS assumes the "Magic Carpet" duty, returning veterans to the States.

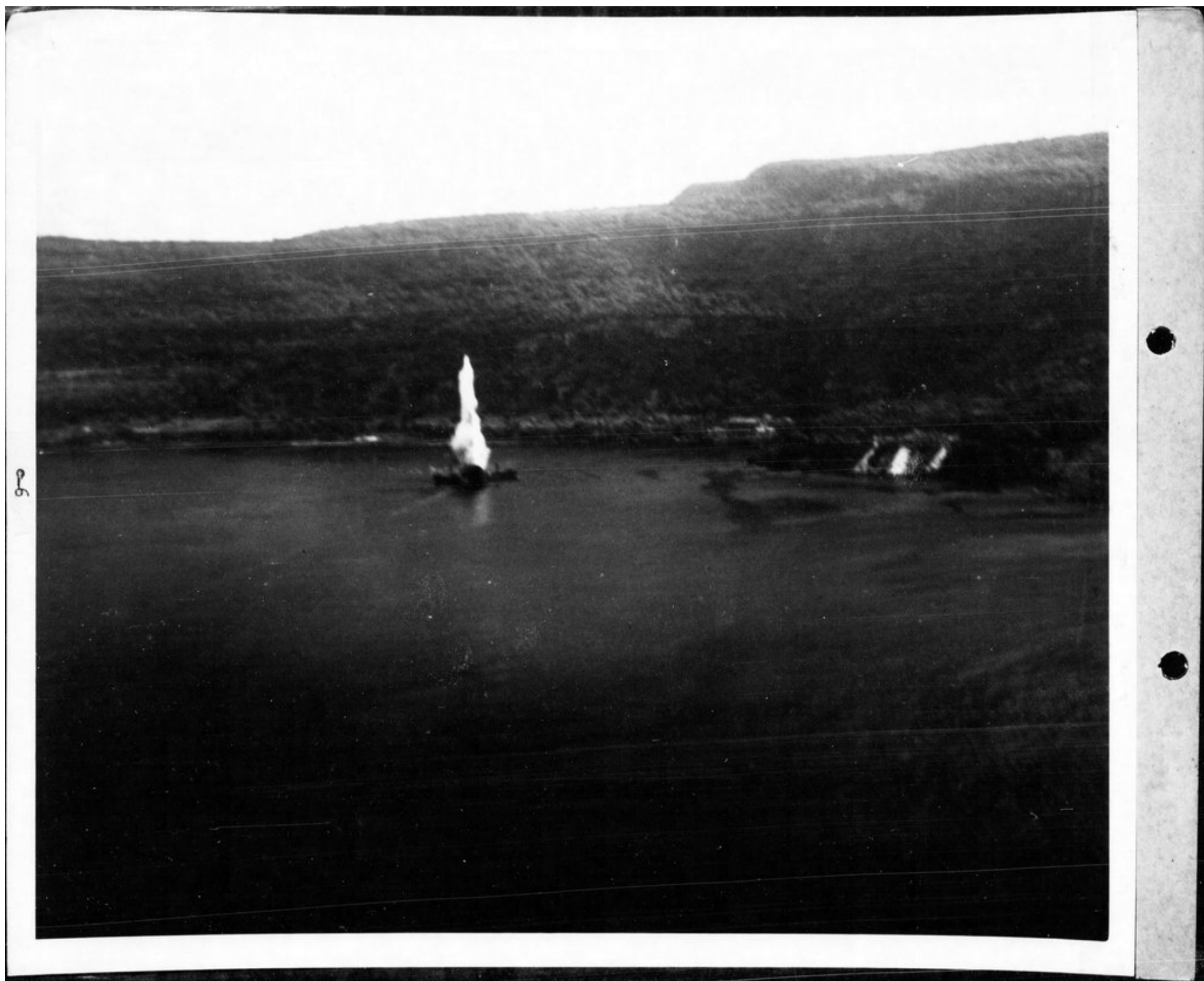


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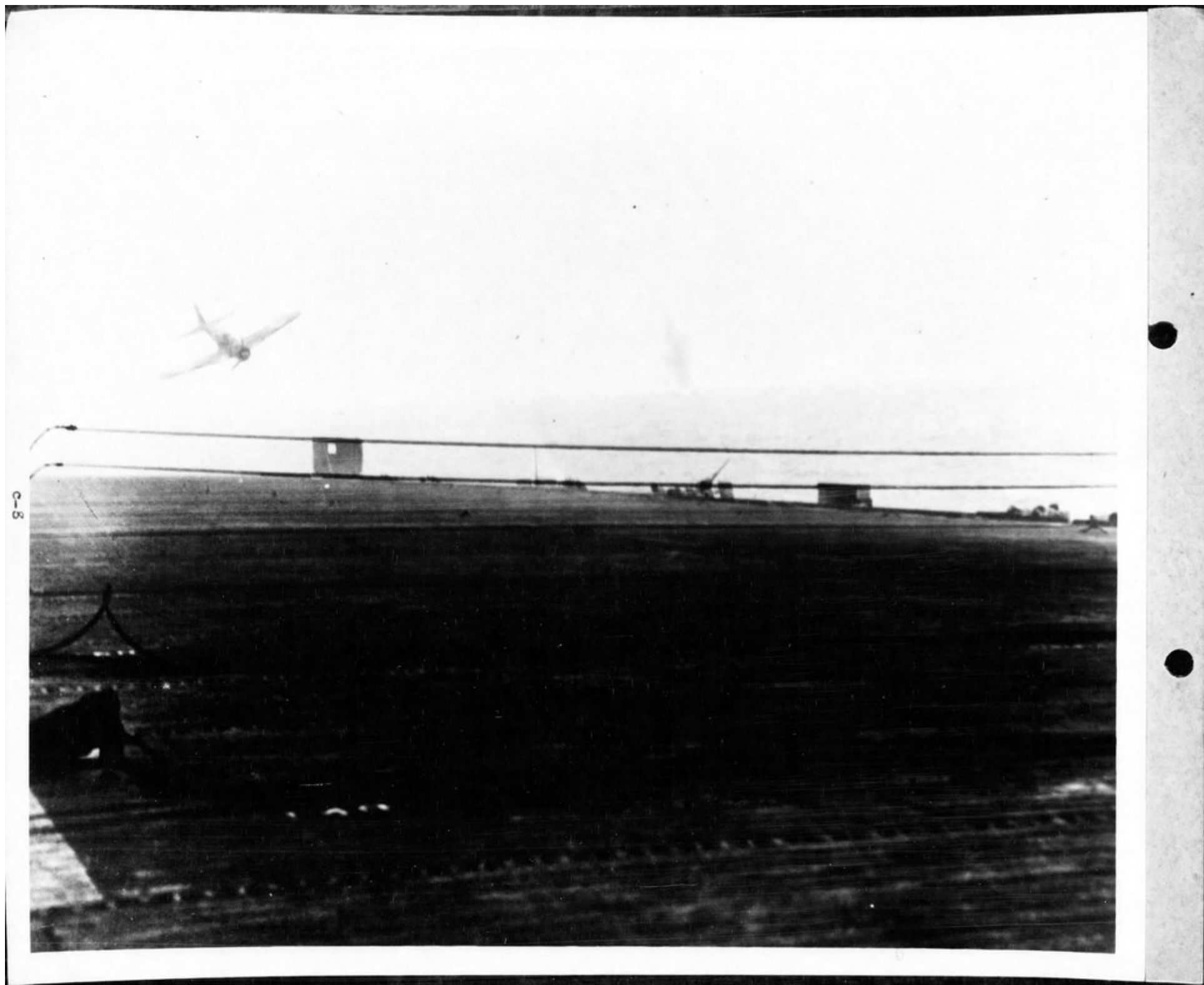








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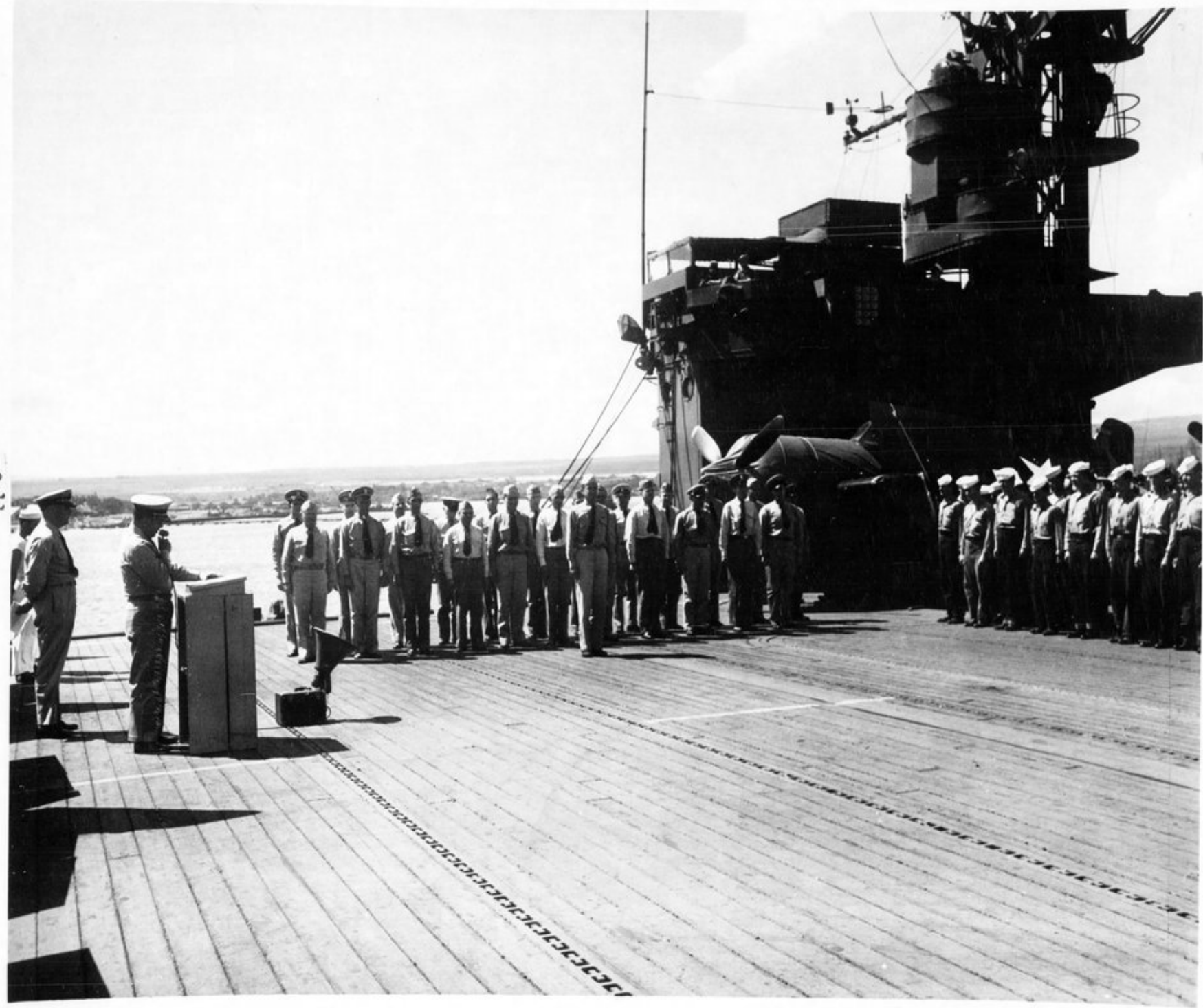


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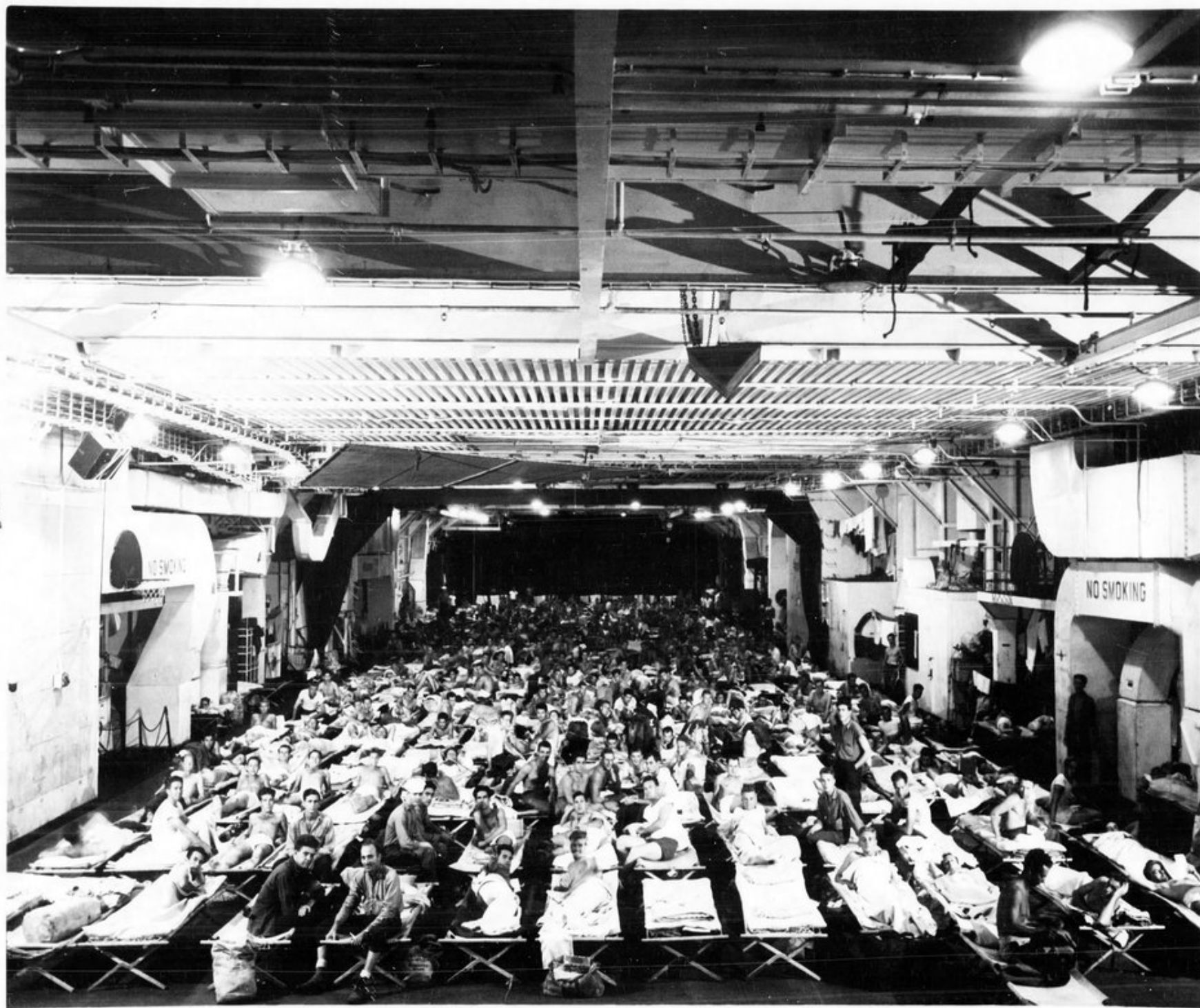
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c-12



c-13



APPENDIX D - List of Squadrons Attached

VC-68 (including maintenance crew)

Reported aboard for temporary duty at NAS, Alameda, March 4, 1944. Pilots and aircraft left the ship March 16 after qualification training. The maintenance crew remained aboard for the two subsequent qualification cruises, and were detached to the U.S.S. FANSHAW BAY (CVE-70) on March 27, 1944.

VC-11 Reported aboard for temporary duty March 17, 1944, at NAS, San Diego. Detached after qualification training on March 22, 1944.

VB-20 Reported aboard for temporary duty March 23, 1944, at NAS San Diego. Detached after qualification training on March 27, 1944.

VC-4 (including maintenance crew)

Reported aboard for permanent duty April 23, 1944, with 12 FM-2 and 8 TBF aircraft, at NAS, San Diego, Calif. Complement of aircraft increased in July 1944 to 16 FM-2 and 12 TBM; additional aircraft were taken aboard at Eniwetok. Before operational period, the entire maintenance crew, and the Landing Signal and Aviation Ordnance officers were transferred to ship's company. All of the squadron's aircraft excepting 8 FM-2 were turned in to ComAirPac Pool at Manus on November 4, 1944. Those remaining were turned in on the island of Oahu on November 18, 1944. The squadron was detached November 27, 1944 at NAS, San Diego, Calif. as a "streamlined" squadron.

APPENDIX E - Enemy Aircraft Destroyed by AA

June 17, 1944 - One "Betty"

October 25, 1944 - One "Zeke"

APPENDIX F - Executive Officer's Memo concerning Arrangements for Commissioning

U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS (CVE-66)

Subject: Special Arrangements for Commissioning of the U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS.

1. The following information and instructions in connection with the commissioning of the U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS are issued to supplement the directives enclosed as enclosure (A). All officers will take appropriate action to see that any procedure and all duties for which they are responsible are smartly executed. The Executive Officer will coordinate all activities. He shall be kept fully informed as to the progress of all arrangements.

2. ENLISTED MEN.

(a) The crew will leave the Tongue Point Air Station in dress blue able, (with ribbons) probably by bus in time to arrive at the U.S.S. White Plains one hour prior to commissioning. Division Officers will muster and inspect their men prior to embarkation on the busses and will accompany their men to the ship. Lieutenant Pecker will be in charge of the evolution. Upon arrival at the ship all men will immediately proceed to the flight deck (or in event of foul weather to the hangar deck) and form in accordance with the enclosed diagram.

(b) Men in ranks will stand at attention but shall not, repeat, not salute at colors.

(c) When the Boatswain pipes the watch, with the assistance of his mates, on order of the Executive Officer, all men who are in the first section starboard watch will fall out and proceed on the double to man their stations. Other officers and men stand fast until retreat is sounded. (Note: in event it becomes advisable to informally post part of the watch prior to commissioning, division officers will receive word from the Executive Officer and the first section starboard watch will not be held at quarters.) Other officers and men stand fast until retreat is sounded.

(d) Special directives will be issued in regards to transportation of baggage from Tongue Point to the ship. A watch shall be posted in the Barracks to prevent loss of baggage.

(e) Special details such as stewards, steward mates, ship cooks, etc. whose duties require them to be on station prior to the commissioning of the ship will remain on station during the commissioning ceremony and shall not put in an appearance above the main deck.

3. OFFICERS:

The uniform for officers will be Service Dress Able with grey gloves (and ribbons). Unless specifically assigned other duties, all officers upon completion of all preparations will fall in as shown in enclosure A, 20 minutes prior to the ceremony. Specific duties assigned to various officers are listed below.

(a) DIVISION OFFICERS. Complete their port watch bills and have men assigned and fully instructed prior to commissioning. Carry out requirements of paragraph 2 above.

(b) NAVIGATOR. Review and coordinate all watch bills, prepare first entry for log, instruct and rehearse bugler and quartermasters in their duties during the ceremony (jack, commission pennant, ensign), take first watch as O.O.D when practicable. After commissioning replace commission pennant and have original mounted in glass case for Captain.

(c) CHAPLAIN. Prepare invocation for ceremony. Report to Communications Officer, CVE Detail, and obtain necessary instructions.

APPENDIX F - (cont'd)

(d) WARDROOM MESS TREASURER (Lieutenant Cosper). Make all arrangements to serve refreshments to guests in wardroom after ceremony.

(e) GUNNERY OFFICER. Appoint four officer assistants and make arrangements for meeting and escorting guests. See Commander Board for special instructions.

(f) COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER. Send out invitations to the commissioning ceremony as soon as definite time and date is set. (Probably 1000 15 November 1943)

(g) SUPPLY OFFICER. Make preparations to subsist personnel on board as soon after commissioning as practicable.

(h) ENGINEERING OFFICER. Cooperate with CVE Pre-Commissioning Engineering Officer. Make last minute checks of power for elevators, public address system and general announcing system.

(i) AIR OFFICER. Cooperate with CVE Pre-Commissioning Air Officer. Instruct photographers. Station elevator operators.

(j) FIRST LIEUTENANT. Advise mess treasurer in regards to wardroom reception. Cooperate with First Lieutenant, CVE Pre-Commissioning Detail on arrangements of chairs, etc. Assist Executive Officer. Prepare for FIRE DRILLS to be held after commissioning. Issue instructions for fire watches.

(k) BOATSWAIN. Exercise and drill all boatswain mates in pipi and setting the first watch.

4. One or more fire drills will be hold a short time after the commissioning ceremony.

5. Subsequent to commissioning, officers will stand watches in port, as follows, until further notice:

<u>STARBOARD</u>	<u>DUTY COMMANDER</u>	<u>PORT</u>
Lt. Comdr. Abele		Lt. Comdr. Dickey
<u>OFFICER OF THE DECK</u>		
Lieut. Roper		Lieut. (jg) Mahlstedt
Ensign Davis		Lieut. Holcomb
Ensign Longo		Lieut. (jg) Schmitt
Ensign Hayes		Lieut. Law
<u>JUNIOR OFFICER OF THE DECK</u>		
Lieut. Becker		Lieut. Cosper
Lieut. (jg) Bean		Lieut. (jg) Veatch
Ensign Smith		Ensign Dennis
Ensign Lowe		Ensign Oliver
Ensign Bovis		Lieut. (jg) Curry
Lieut. (jg) Nichols		
<u>COMMUNICATION WATCH OFFICER - DAY'S DUTY</u>		
Lieut. Arvin		Lieut. (jg) Veatch

6. Engineering watch list shall be submitted to the Commanding Officer by the Engineering Officer for approval.

T. A. AERON
Executive Officer.

APPENDIX G - Commanding Officer's Memo, issued after Tinian operation.

U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS (CVE-66)

9 August 1945.

MEMORANDUM FOR: ALL HANDS.

1. The ship has just completed a protracted period of intensive operations with a very creditable record of accomplishments. All hands can justly feel proud of the work of the WHITE PLAINS during this period and this was accomplished only by the willing cooperation of all. Our record is as good if not better than that of the other ships of Carrier Division 25 and will compare favorably with that of any other carrier, CV, CVL or CVE.

2. At present we have a little breathing spell between operations, a chance to get caught up on some of the things which must be overlooked or by-passed during operating periods. We all want the WHITE PLAINS to be the best CVE in the Pacific. The operations to date place us near the top, if not there in this department. But in some of the other things there is considerable room for improvement and much to be done to make the WHITE PLAINS number one in all things.

3. We will have about three weeks with only a few days of operations. Most of the stores and ammunition are on board and except for topping off no large working parties will be required. We hope to get a little rest and be able to send recreation parties ashore for some beer and baseball. In other words we want to relax before the next operation. But there is also a great deal of work to be done. The tropics are very hard on steel work; we have much scraping and painting to do, both inside and outside the ship. There are numerous little things to be done which were neglected during the operating period. In some things we are behind the other ships of CarDiv 25, but with the willing cooperation shown during the recent operations we can come out on top.

4. To all hands: LET'S MAKE THE WHITE PLAINS NUMBER ONE CVE IN ALL THINGS!

D. J. SULLIVAN,
Commander, U.S. Navy,
Commanding.

APPENDIX H - Commanding Officer's Memo. issued before Palau operation.

U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS (CVE-66)

1 September 1944.

Memorandum for: ALL HANDS

Subject: Present Operations.

General Background

During the past year the United Nations have moved through most of the outer defenses of the Jap Empire and have taken or neutralized most of his outlying bases in the North, Central, South and South West Pacific. There are no Japs, except dead ones, left in the Aleutians, and from bases there we are able to bomb the Kuril Islands, the most northerly part of the Japanese Empire. So far these air raids have been little more than nuisance raids, but they keep the Jap guessing and our bases in the Aleutians can be the jumping off point for an amphibious attack on the Kuriles.

In the Central Pacific we now control the Gilberts, Marshall and Marianas Islands. The Japs still hold some islands in these groups but they are effectively neutralized and are of little use to the Japs. From the bases established in this area we are able to deny the Jap the full use of all bases in the Caroline Islands from Kusaie on the east to Palau on the west, including the once great base of Truk. From the Marianas we are able to keep the Volcano Islands fairly well neutralized, thus cutting the direct supply line from the Empire to the Carolines.

In the South Pacific the Japs have been driven out of the southern Solomon Islands and altho there are still some live Japs left on Choiseul and Bougainville, they are not very effective. The establishment of air bases on Green Island south of New Ireland and on Emirau to the north of New Hanover has effectively cut off Kavieng, once an important Jap base.

In the South West Pacific, bases on south New Britain and on Manus in the Admiralty Islands have neutralized the important Jap base at Rabaul. We have moved up New Guinea and now completely control it except for certain areas where large numbers of Japs are trapped. The Japs now have several operational airfields in New Guinea, New Britain and New Ireland but there have been no combat aircraft east of Biak for some time.

Present Operation.

The present operation is designed to cut the last Jap supply route to the Central and South West Pacific and to give us bases for further advance to the westward. This operation is divided into four parts. Forces from the South West Pacific augmented by forces from the Central Pacific will make landings on Morotai Island north of Halmahera which will neutralize the latter island, cut the direct sea route from Japan to the East Indies and give us a base close to the Philippines. The force of which we are a part will make landings in the Palau group and after these are complete will move north and east to take Yap and Ulithi. This will cut the last Jap supply route to the Central Carolines, and Truk will no longer be of much use to the Japs. In fact this operation will be the end of the Jap outlying bases. Prior to and during these operations the fast carrier groups will

APPENDIX H (Continued).

be operating to the westward to neutralize Jap air bases in the southern Philippines and to be in a position to intercept any large Jap naval forces that may try to move eastward from the Philippines. Land based bombers will also cover all Jap bases within range.

Possible Jap Reaction.

The Japs on Palau are expected to put up their usual fanatic defense, but without adequate air support they cannot last long against the forces that will be opposed to them. The Marines are slated to take Paloliu and Ngesebus and the Army will take Angaur Island. The largest island of the group and the one having the most Japs, Babelthusa, will not be taken at this time.

We can expect the Jap submarines to take an active part in this operation. In the past the Jap subs have been used for search, evacuation and supply. The Jap is beginning to realize that this is not a profitable employment for his subs and there are indications that he is ready to abandon all bases which have been cut off. If he pulls them all in and uses them offensively, the Japs have enough to make it very interesting for us. The CVEs are very vulnerable to torpedo attack. All hands must be on the alert and we must watch the lights during darken ship. It is not likely that the Japs will risk any major part of their fleet. But you never can tell about the Jap and if he thinks he has a chance he may do some surprising things. However, there are reports of Motor Torpedo Boats in the Palau's also barges with torpedo tubes mounted on them. Again the most probable attack will be with torpedoes.

Palau is within range of a number of Jap airfields. Many of them will be entirely or partly neutralized, but there are too many in the Philippines to keep them all neutralized for long. We can expect attacks from East or West, with the most likely times at evening twilight, with attacks also possible at night or early morning. So we are going to be in a tough spot most of the time. Keep on your toes, keep your eyes open and hope that the Japs run out of planes early in the game.

D. J. SULLIVAN,
Captain, U. S. Navy,
Commanding.

APPENDIX I - Commanding Officer's Memo, issued before Leyte operation.

U.S.S. WHITE PLAINS (CVE-66)

27 September 1944.

MEMORANDUM

For: All Heads of Departments.

Subject: Loading and Stability of Ship.

Reference: (a) BuShips Conf. ltr. C-CVE55-104/S29(456) of 2 March 1944.
(copy attached).

1. Upon departure from Ulithi Atoll we had on board our normal load of fuel oil but were shy a considerable amount of provisions and consumable supplies. Despite this our draft was 20 feet and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches which is in excess of our normal load draft of 20 feet. With a normal fuel load and full supply of stores the mean draft of this ship will exceed the limit allowed by reference (a) by about 3 inches. The full load draft of 20 ft. should not be exceeded except when carrying emergency fuel.
2. Today the moving of one TDM on the flight deck caused a change in list of one degree, indicating an unsatisfactory stability condition. In other words although we are at about full load condition the stability is not satisfactory and can only be accounted for by excess top-side weights.
3. For the past few months we have operated in good weather with smooth sea conditions. Our next operations will carry us into areas where extremely rough weather may be encountered and where the distances involved will make it necessary to carry emergency fuel load whenever we can get it.
4. Attention is directed to reference (a) a copy of which is attached. Another BuShips letter states that these ships must be regarded as ships without margins of strength, weight, or stability. Many authorized increases of equipment have been made and many unauthorized changes in weights have been made. From the draft and listing characteristics this ship is overloaded and top heavy.
5. Due to the extended operations we must carry the maximum amount of supplies. However, useless gear and supplies must be reduced in order to bring our total loading within the allowed limits. All possible weights on the hangar deck and above must be stowed lower down in the ship. This may result in some inconvenience and mixing of department spare parts but it must be done.
6. Heads of Department will make an immediate survey of all material which can be beached or moved to a lower stowage below the hangar deck. Positive action must be taken to improve weight and stability.
7. Prior to departure from Manus I will make a thorough inspection of all spaces on the hangar deck and above. I expect to find all excess and unnecessary gear removed from these spaces.

D. J. SULLIVAN.

APPENDIX J - Messages concerning Battle off Samar.

242235 of October 1944.

From: OTU 77.4.3
Action: Com7thFlt.

UNDER ATTACK X 0722 IN LAT 11 X LONG 126-29 X
ENEMY COMPOSED OF 4 BB 8 CA AND MANY DESTROYERS X
SPLIT IN 2 FORCES ONE BEARING 286 DEGREES 11 MILES
SECOND BEARING 307 TRUE 15 MILES XX

This was the second report on the contact from the
TU commander.

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260750 of October 1944.

From: CinCPac.

CincPac Communique No. 166, released October 26, 1944.

On October 24, 1944 (W.Long. date) the enemy carrier task force which had been sighted in the Philippine Sea on the previous afternoon approaching from Japanese home waters was attacked by a concentration of aircraft, surface ships and submarines of the Pacific Fleet during the day and the following night. Despite their support by enemy aircraft from Luzon, the following damage was inflicted with no damage to our ships involved in this action.

- 1 Large carrier exploded and sunk;
- 1 Large carrier was severely damaged by bombs and is believed to have sunk;
- 1 Light carrier was definitely sunk;
- 2 Battleships were probably sunk;
- 2 Light Cruisers were definitely sunk;
- 2 Battleships, 3 cruisers, and a number of destroyers withdrew to the northward in a damaged condition

On 24 October a carrier task group of the Third Fleet assisted units of the Seventh Fleet in striking a force of enemy battleships, cruisers and destroyers which had sortied through San Bernardino Strait and was attacking escort carriers of the Seventh Fleet off the Leyte Gulf. Fragmentary reports available indicated that in co-operation with the aircraft from the escort carriers the following damage was inflicted on this enemy force:

- 1 Heavy cruiser was seen to sink;
- 4 Battleships were heavily damaged by bombs and left the scene at low speed trailing oil;
- 1 Destroyer was left dead in the water.

APPENDIX J (Continued).

About midnight 24 - 25 October this enemy force withdrew through the San Bernardino Strait in a badly damaged condition. During the night surface ships of the Pacific Fleet sank a cruiser of this enemy force. Pacific Fleet carrier aircraft were continuing to attack this force during its retirement through the Sibuyan Sea.

Second paragraph in the above communique refers to the engagement involving the WHITE PLAINS.

APPENDIX K - Commendatory Dispatches after Battle.

From Task Unit Commander:

"TO ADMIRAL OFFSTIE, OFFICERS AND MEN OF THIS UNIT X I WISH TO EXPRESS MY SINCERE ADMIRATION AND CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL HANDS FOR THE SPLENDID MANNER IN WHICH ALL HANDS PERFORMED UNDER OVERWHELMING ODDS X NEVER IN HISTORY HAS A NAVAL UNIT BEEN SUBJECTED TO SUCH CONTINUOUS BOMBARDMENT AND ACHIEVED RESULTS WE ACHIEVED X THIS SMALL UNIT TOGETHER WITH PLANES FROM TAFFY 1 AND 2 TURNED BACK THE MAJOR PART OF THE JAPANESE FLEET X YOU MAY ALL BE PROUD OF YOURSELVES X YOU WILL BE PROUD TO KNOW THAT 800 SURVIVORS OF THE MIDWAY HAVE BEEN RESCUED AND I HAVE REASONS TO BELIEVE THAT MANY FROM THE GAMPIER BAY AND ESCORTS ARE BEING SAVED. X THE SCORE ISN'T IN YET BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THE YELLOW NAVY HAS BEEN PARRED DOWN MORE TO THIS UNIT'S SIZE X AGAIN MY THANKS AND BEST WISHES FOR CONTINUED SUCCESSES X

C. A. F. SPRAGUE

From Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

"WELCOME TO PEARL X YOUR SUCCESSFUL FIGHT AGAINST GREAT ODDS WILL LIVE AS ONE OF THE MOST STIRRING TALES OF NAVAL HISTORY X THE PEOPLE OF OUR COUNTRY AND THOSE OF US IN THE NAVAL SERVICE ARE GRATEFUL AND PROUD OF YOUR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE BEST THE ENEMY COULD OFFER X AS LONG AS OUR COUNTRY HAS MEN WITH YOUR HEART, COURAGE, SKILL AND STRENGTH SHE NEED NOT FEAR FOR HER FUTURE X TO EACH AND EVERY ONE A WELL DONE X NIMITZ XXXXXX

19 November 1944.

190034

1330

From Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet.

"UPON COMPLETION OF YOUR TOUR OF COMBAT DUTY COMAIRPAC TAKES PRIDE IN EXTENDING CONGRATULATIONS ON BEHALF OF AIR FORCE PACIFIC FLEET X YOUR PEOPLE AND NAVY WILL REMEMBER YOUR GALLANT AND VICTORIOUS FIGHT AGAINST GREAT ODDS X WE SORROW FOR THOSE WHO WILL NOT RETURN BUT GLORY IN THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS X THE PERFORMANCE OF ALL HANDS WAS BEYOND WORDS OF PRAISE X YOU MET THE BEST THE ENEMY HAD AND REPULSED HIM XX WELL DONE XXX"

17 November 1944

132210