
U.S.S. TAYLOR


CHINA
JAPAN
P A C
OKINAWA
PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
MARIANNAS IS.
CAROLINE IS.
MARSHALL IS.
BORNEO
GILBERT IS.
NEW GUINEA
JAVA
SOLOMON IS.
SAMOAN IS
NEW HEBRIDES IS.
FIJI IS.
NEW CALEDONIA
AUSTRALIA
SYDNEY
NEW ZEALAND


ALASKA
CANADA
UNITED STATES
I F I C
C E A N
HAWAII
MEXICO
CEN. AMERICA
PANAMA CANAL
468
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Roger Sampson F.C. 3/c 10/18/80

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Nick Apostol MMLIC Southbridge Ma. (Torrance Ca).

Tom Brown CY

Jack M Taylor BTC Ventura. Ca.

Gene Gallagher Y 2/c Oak Lawn Ill

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Joe A. McSmith CMM

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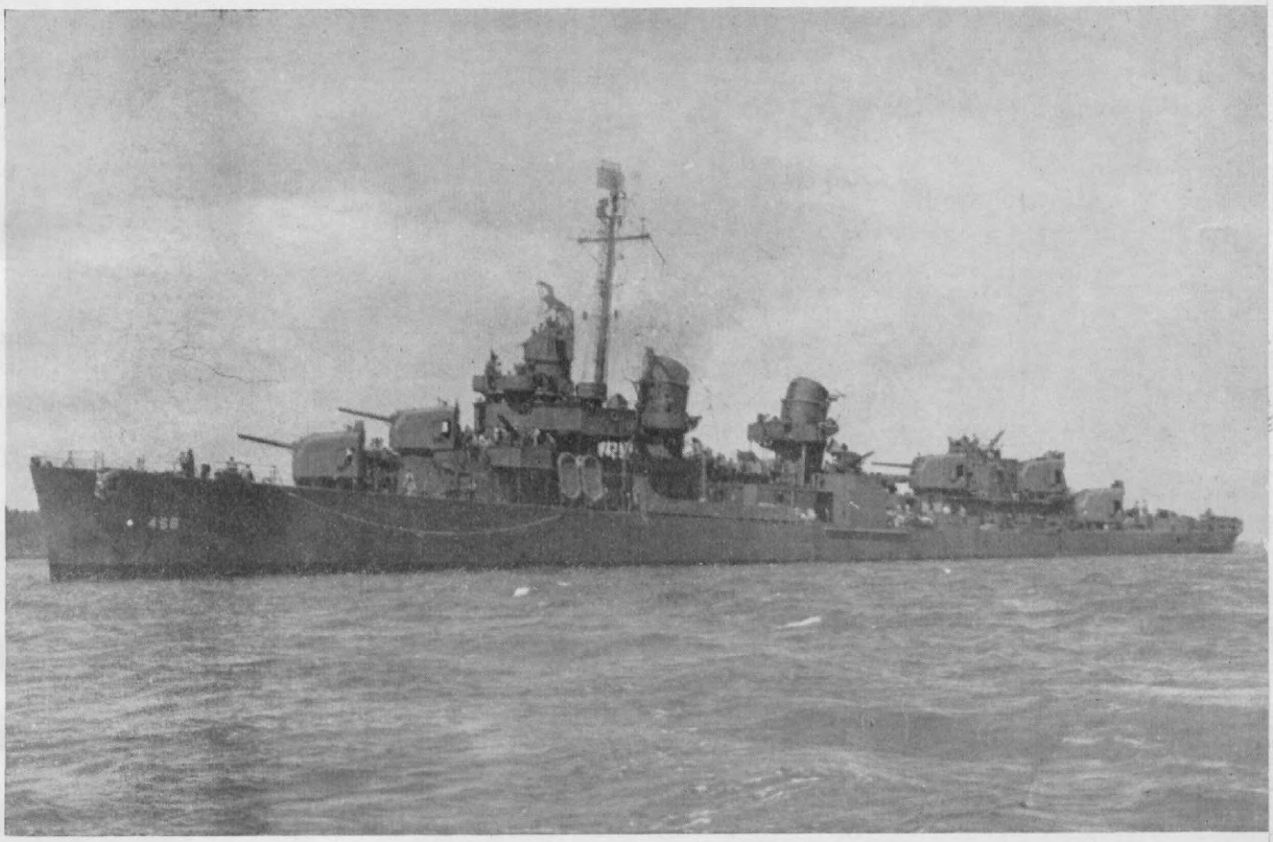
George Van, LTJG PLEASANTON, CA

Chigie Tacinella S.F. 2/c Holyoke, Ma

Jack E. Lane BM 1/c Lexington Ky.

Jack M Grisso

The U.S.S. Taylor DD468



August 28, 1942 . . . September 2, 1945

B. J. Katz To John Kinder Admiral Katz 10/9/82

N. J. Frank

H. H. deLaureal

DD468

U.S.S. TAYLOR

Let the spirit of loyalty, cooperation, and devotion to duty which has guided us in the performance of duty on board the TAYLOR continue to live with us, wherever we are or whatever our futures might be. By a continuous display of these excellent virtues we have carried the TAYLOR through three years of war in an enviable and magnificient fashion. The record of the good ship speaks for itself.

Let us thank Providence that our hazardous duties have been performed without one single casualty. Although we have been exposed and have been willing to accept the sacrifice of our very last drop of blood, we have been spared, and for that we should remain humbly thankful.

Let us take pride in the Service and in our good ship and her record; but more sincerely so, let us take pride in the cause for which we so whole-heartedly devoted ourselves during the period of our service.

Let us accept this publication in the light in which it is intended - - to refresh our memories in the dim future, to remind us of our shipmates, our activities, and our lives on board the good ship TAYLOR.

Few of us wish to forget the TAYLOR, her victories, and achievements. Let us all take just pride in having served on her.

Henry H. deLaureal
Commander, U.S. Navy
Commanding

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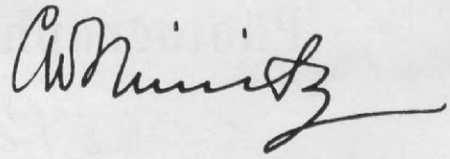
Navy Department
Washington 25, D. C.
3 December 1945

Officers and Men
U.S.S. TAYLOR DD468
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

"All honor to a ship and her crew who have fought so long in the vast spaces of the Pacific. It was the sum total of the efforts of every officer and man which brought about the successful conclusion of the toughest war in history.

"I congratulate the officers and men of the U.S.S. TAYLOR for the splendid part they played in this struggle."



Fleet Admiral, USN



Navy Department
Office of Chief of Naval Operations
Washington 25, D. C.
4 December 1945

Officers and Men
U.S.S. TAYLOR DD468
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

"It was a privilege to have had the U.S.S. TAYLOR under my command in the South Pacific, and later as a part of the Third Fleet. She admirably performed every mission assigned to her and her officers and men may be justly proud of their fine record."

W.F. Halsey

Admiral, USN



The U.S.S. TAYLOR waterborne for the first time June 7, 1942. Bath, Maine.



Pearl Harbor!

WHERE WERE YOU ???

Y E S ! Where were you on that Sunday morning, December 7th, 1941. Asleep, weren't we all. . . . Some of us rushed down to enlist immediately, others waited to see what would happen; no matter what our reactions were, we were all plenty fighting mad and eventually through one means or another decided upon a naval career. Induction, Boot Camp, training school and then orders to new construction. A Destroyer, the TAYLOR—that's what our orders read. But what is she? What does she look like? These were questions we were all asking ourselves.

The U.S.S. TAYLOR DD468 is a 2100-ton destroyer of the FLETCHER class. She was authorized, by congress, in 1934. The keel was laid in Bath, Maine, at the Bath Iron Works in April of 1942. In August of that year she was launched and christened the USS TAYLOR in honor of Rear Admiral William R. Taylor, World War I hero. The TAYLOR is 376 feet long and proudly supports five 5-inch 38 caliber guns, two five-tube torpedo mounts, five twin barreled 40 millimeter and seven 20 millimeter anti-aircraft machine guns, and fifty-six depth charges. Our four boilers turn twin screws propelling the ship at speeds greater than thirty-five knots.

Our active career started on the 28th day of August, 1942, when we made the 130 mile trip from Bath, Maine, to Boston for the commissioning ceremony. On the trip down the ship was put through routine tests; engines wound up, guns fired, and the ship generally worked over by her crew of naval yard personnel and members of the crew sent to Bath to man her. Upon arrival in Boston our original crew went aboard and witnessed the commissioning ceremony at which time Commander B. J. Katz assumed duties as our first commanding officer.

On the 16th, after a two-week fitting out period, we were under way for Newport, Rhode Island, via Cape Code Canal to pick up our torpedoes. Then back to Boston, Portland and Casco Bay for a training period; and what a training period—drills, drills, drills. We would wake up in the morning to the sound of an abandon ship drill, go to bed at night with a fire drill. Liberty? Yes, we had liberty, but more than liberty we remember those long boat rides in the icy cold weather to and from the beach.



TAYLOR shortly after launching. Guns and Torpedoes still to be added to make her the fighting ship she was.

On the 12th of October after a surprise inspection by the local authorities, we set out for Boston and thence to New York. Our first official assignment followed shortly afterwards when we escorted the transport Merak to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and from there to Kingston, Jamaica. The Island of Jamaica was a delightful spot situated in the heart of the tropics, with an average temperature of 130 degrees. Liberty on shore was quite an affair; all of the natives were Negroes and our liberty consisted mainly of visiting the local USO situated near the edge of the dense jungle. From Jamaica we went eastward to the colorful island of Bermuda. Port Royal was our port of entry. After fueling, we received orders to return to Norfolk, Virginia, for general repairs. We spent five days alongside a tender in Norfolk, then got underway and headed towards New York. A week alongside the 39th Street Pier with liberty for all and we were off again on the biggest operation of the war to date. Our formation of forty-two ships rendezvoused at the mouth of the Hudson River. As we headed eastward, all hands knew that something big was in the wind. The scuttlebutt said Africa . . . Africa it was, the invasion of North Africa near the city of the now famous Casablanca. This was the beginning of our offensive against the Germans



which eventually brought them to complete surrender.

The trip was one none of us will ever forget. Right from the start the weather was against us. At times the wind and sea were so strong passage fore and aft was impossible; our constant companion was the life jacket. The threat of German subs was ever present, though the weather did tend to reduce their menace. Fueling at sea under this weather was a strain on all hands, but somehow we managed to accomplish the task.

Morning and evening readiness was always observed as a precaution against submarines. On the night of November 28th several small lights were picked up by an alert lookout and the ship went to general quarters to investigate. The contact proved to be the Spanish merchantman S.S. Montesoja. Early the next morning another merchant vessel was sighted on the starboard bow. Failing to halt when hailed, we were forced to fire a shot across her bow; she was another Spanish ship, the S.S. Darro. A boarding party of six men boarded her; and after an inspection four men remained aboard to seal her radios and escort her to Gibralter.

The next day we rendezvoused with Task Force 38 just 10 miles off the coast of Africa; upon joining this outfit, we reversed course and started back for the good old U.S.A. A week later we went to general quarters on an underwater sound contact believed to have been a German submarine. An attack followed with a full depth charge pattern dropped; no damage or further contact occured. On December 11th we pulled into New York Harbor just ahead of the U.S.S. ARKANSAS after 28 days at sea. Truck loads of mail and a 48-hour liberty awaited us as we hit the docks.

Four more days of liberty and we were off again, this time our destination was the South Pacific.

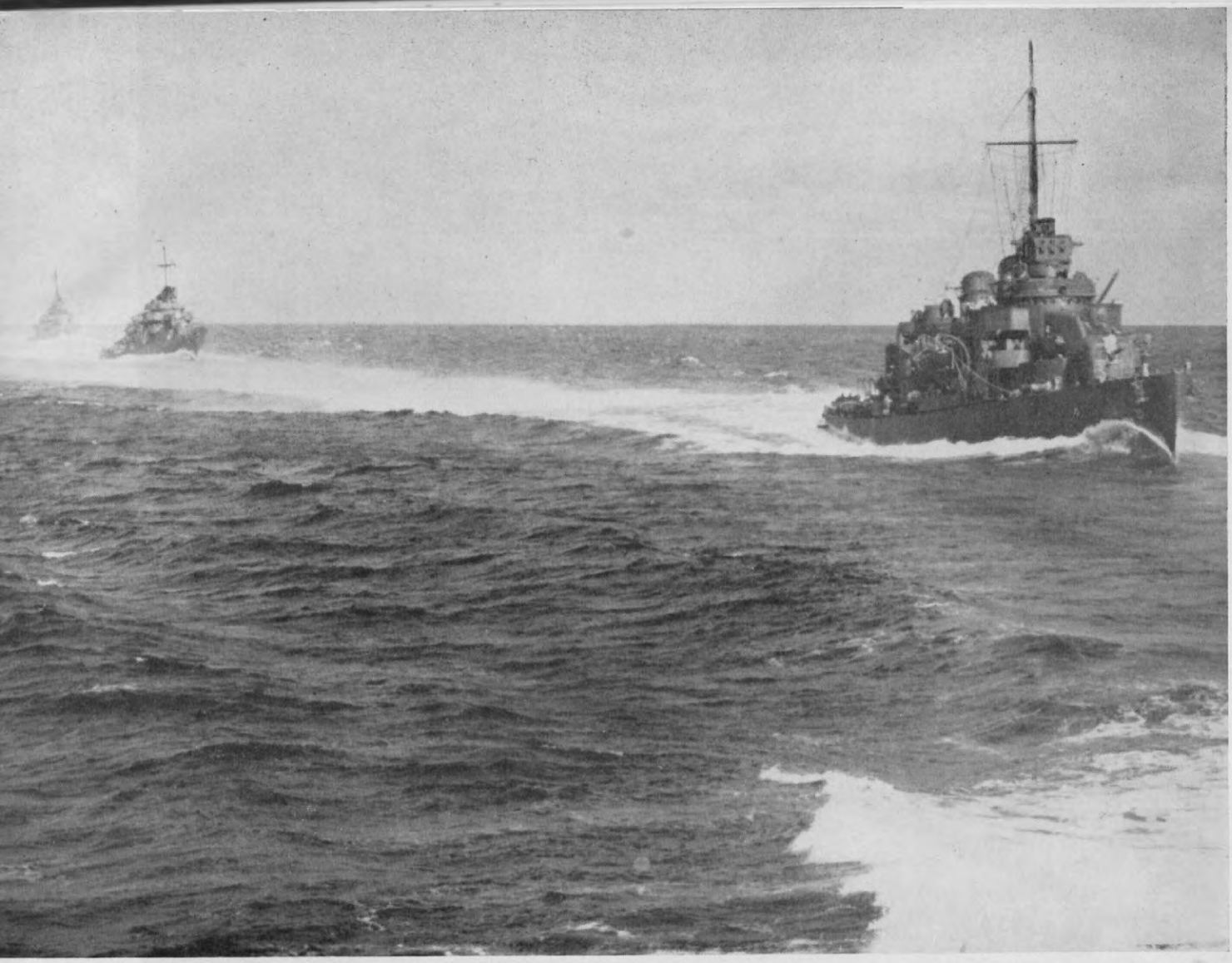
We approached the Panama Canal on the afternoon of December 24th, whereupon a party of two officers met the ship making a routine inspection. Soon afterward the pilot came aboard to take us through the locks. A little after noon we left the dock extending from the Gatun locks and took aboard the steel cable from the electric donkey that would tow us through the locks. Our ship's own power was used only on the short runs between the series of locks. The huge gate closed behind us and we were on our way. We arrived alongside the Balboa dock on the Pacific side early Christmas morning, and immediately began loading stores. We spent the day moored to the dock and the traditional dinner was served.

December 26th we departed from Balboa for strange parts of the far flung Pacific. The pilot directed us into the channel and we were on our own. We joined company with Task Force 13, composed of merchantmen, jeep carrier cruisers and a destroyer screen and headed for Noumea, New Caledonia.

The next three weeks were full of numerous sound contacts from underwater sources and bogies on the radar screen from unidentified aircraft. The seas were calm, the skies blue, and the days were taken up with countless drills to put the crew in shape for what was to come. The drills consisted of everything; general quarters, firing practice on various targets, torpedo runs, battle drills, and damage control problems. Plane guard was another duty of ours. While the carriers were launching and recovering their planes, it was our duty to cover them in event of a mishap.

Two events marked this journey to foreign ports; the first, when we were honored with a visit from his Royal Majesty, King Neptune. He came over the bow the afternoon of December 30th, using the anchor chain for a ladder. Accompanied by his court he said that we had a disgustingly large number of Polywogs aboard, and that he could not let us enter his royal domain under those conditions. The loyal shellbacks aboard lined up the Polywogs with their summons before Neptune's court, and the fun was on. The first victim was our skipper. He was tried and found guilty and thus sentenced to wear heavy cold weather clothing plus a shallow water diving helmet while conning the ship. Following him came the officers who had never entered the realm of Neptune, and then the crew members. Each stepped up to the court and was heard, but none could prove his innocence, so each was duly sentenced to the following torture: they proceeded down the deck through grit and grime to the Royal Barber who cut their hair in artistic designs. From the chair they had the privilege of walking or running through the second leg of the deck made hazardous by the necessity of bucking a shooting salt water hose. After slipping and sliding through this obstacle course, they reached the fantail where they found the sow's pen awaiting them. This little device was made of all things slimy and greasy. After wallowing through this, they were





NICHOLAS leads the O'BANNON and TAYLOR into battle formation.

greeted by the Royal Pharmacist Mate who checked up on their ills. Upon recovering from his kill or cure dose of things bitter and medicinal, they were escorted to the bath by the Royal Guards and here thoroughly ducked and ducked again until they were cleansed of their sins of having been a Polywog. All emerged full-fledged Shellbacks of good standing in King Neptune's Court. The day was closed as darkness dropped like a curtain and the beep beep of the general alarm went off, calling us to our battle stations for the evening alert.

Until the 6th of January everything was routine, that is to say, drills, drills, drills. That evening just before sunset the general alarm went off sending us scurrying to our battle stations. The surface radar had picked up unidentified contacts dead ahead and we were ordered to investi-



Night firing of the beach seen from abord the NICHOLAS during simultaneous attack on Kolombangara and New Georgia Islands by Task Force 18.

gate. They proved to be friendly; the damaged cruiser CHESTER screened by the damaged tin-can CLARK enroute to the States for repairs.

On the 13th of January, 1943, came our second break of the trip which was becoming just a little monotonous. We left the task force at midnight to escort a transport to Tutila Harbor, Samoa. We dropped the hook in the morning in a beautiful little harbor; an emerald in a blue setting of rolling hills that came right down to the water's edge. After several liberties and loading of more stores we were off again screening the transport to Noumea. Four days at sea, which were only three, for we crossed the International Date Line at midnight and we were at our destination, Noumea.

We passed through Tara Reef, entrance to the outer anchorage, in the early morning of the 20th, and made the long, slow trip up the reef-studded channel to the anchorage where we fueled. It was not until late that afternoon that we entered Dumba Bay, Noumea's inner harbor.

After mooring, all hands turned to on ammunition which was followed by a movie on the fo'cs'le. We all had liberty which consisted of visiting the small French Village near the shore of the bay. Between dodging their small automobiles and trying to understand their language, we unanimously decided that there is no place like home.

0500 the 25th of January saw us underway once more, in company with Task Force 66.8, consisting of the CVEs CHENAGO, SWANEE, and SANGAMON, the cruisers CHICAGO and MONTPELIER, with the screen of destroyers including the TAYLOR, LA VALLETTE, and CHEVALIER. We were bound for Havannah Harbor, Efate, arriving there late in the afternoon of the 25th. Two days, one of which was spent on an anti-submarine patrol and we were off again, this time with Task Force 18, including the cruisers CHICAGO, WICHITA, LOUISVILLE, MONTPELIER, CLEVELAND, and COLUMBIA, and a screen of six destroyers, including the TAYLOR, CHEVALIER, LA VALLETTE, CONWAY, EDWARDS, and WALKER. Our mission was to meet and destroy any and all Japanese vessels that might be operating in the area southwest of Guadalcanal.

On the 28th and 29th the days were filled with long tiresome drills, which were put to good use on the evening of the 29th. In the vicinity of Rendall Island, while covering the troop transports headed for the bloody beaches of Guadalcanal, we underwent our first air attack. Word was passed that it was expected that we would remain at general quarters most of the night



King Neptune and his Royal Court about to try several polywogs.



Shellbacks helped initiate the polywogs during the Equator crossing.

and our evening alert would be postponed until the last minute. Air attacks were expected, but we never dreamed they would come when and as suddenly as they did. The formation was steaming along with the cruisers in two columns and the destroyers in a circular screen around them. As dusk slowly settled over the fleet and the sky began to grow dim, a Jap plane came

shooting out of nowhere and skimmed across our bow headed towards the cruisers. The CLs opened fire, their automatic weapons leaving tracer trails that seemed to come straight at us, and in truth almost took our radar off the mast. The first wave of torpedo bombers had gone by now with little or no damage to our formation. Night began to close about us as the second wave came in for the attack. A log of the attack might run as this: "1938 second attack, all ships firing, enemy planes again repelled with no damage to task force. 1941 surface radar has fast moving contact on port bow believed to be low flying torpedo bomber. 1944 formation opened fire on the third wave of planes. A terrific explosion occured that rocked the entire task force. 1945 second explosion followed by a large fire lighting the entire area. The heavy cruiser CHICAGO has been hit to starboard. 1946 CHICAGO slews out to right, falling out of formation." Far astern a tiny fire broke out on the water as the attacker was shot down; small consolation for the loss we felt. Shortly afterwards the formation broke up as the CLs, with the TAYLOR and several other destroyers went northward as the CAs and their escorts went eastward. Two destroyers were assigned to cover the CHICAGO and give her any assistance possible. The number of enemy planes was unknown and we still had to be on the alert, for the Japs might have had submarines or surface forces in the area to back up their air attacks. The lull in the attack lasted until 2033 when two planes closed fast from astern. Everything was dark with the exception of the water which was cut to pieces with the twisting white wakes of the ships turning and maneuvering at high speeds avoiding the enemy planes. While taking the two planes under fire, the EDWARDS swung between us and our target during her evasive maneuvers and forced us to cease fire. The second plane swept over the EDWARDS enroute to bigger game, the cruisers. The next hour the Japs attempted to drop flares about us so their planes could see their targets as they came in. At 2147 the Japs attacked the cruisers from the port quarter. We opened

Scenes of the ceremony crossing the Equator.





fire, but had to cease as we again were blocked by one of our own destroyers. 2230 two contacts picked up on the CHEVALIER'S port bow. She opened fire with five-inch, but with no results. After an hour of peacefulness, we started in again. Shortly before midnight four ships were picked up about six miles dead ahead. The CHEVALIER was designated to investigate and as she approached challenged them by flashing light and TBS. Receiving no answer, she opened fire. One salvo brought the target to life, and she identified herself as the remaining part of Task Force 18 which thereupon joined us. Still later that night we were sent out to investigate another contact which also proved to be friendly. As dawn came we got our first look at the CHICAGO. She was listing heavily to starboard leaving a long, wide oil trail across the rolling Pacific. She had taken a torpedo on her starboard side near the engine room, but her crew had the ship under control and she was limping slowly home.

At 0555 that morning we secured from general quarters, after 10 hours and 49 minutes of excitement, heartbreak, and nearness to death. Our first action and the shock had not as yet begun to wear off, but as we wearily headed for our bunks we again heard the beep beep of the general alarm. Once again we were rushing to our battle stations. Word was passed, "Planes sighted, closing fast, identity unknown." As our guns came to bear they turned away and with a sigh of relief we identified the planes as friendly. Once more we secured from general quarters and the ships headed southward. We took our last look at the CHICAGO with the LA VALLETTE and two other destroyers screening her. It was the last time we saw her, as later in a daytime raid, enemy planes put two more "fish" into her and sent her to the bottom. The LA VALLETTE in an attempt to protect the CHICAGO, took a torpedo amidships and almost broke in half. Tied together with cables and chains, she limped toward port, making the last lap towed behind a salvage tug after she had run out of fuel.







Task Force 18, minus the CHICAGO and three "cans" screening her, steamed southward for Havannah Harbor, arriving at Efate late in the afternoon of the 31st with no further trouble.

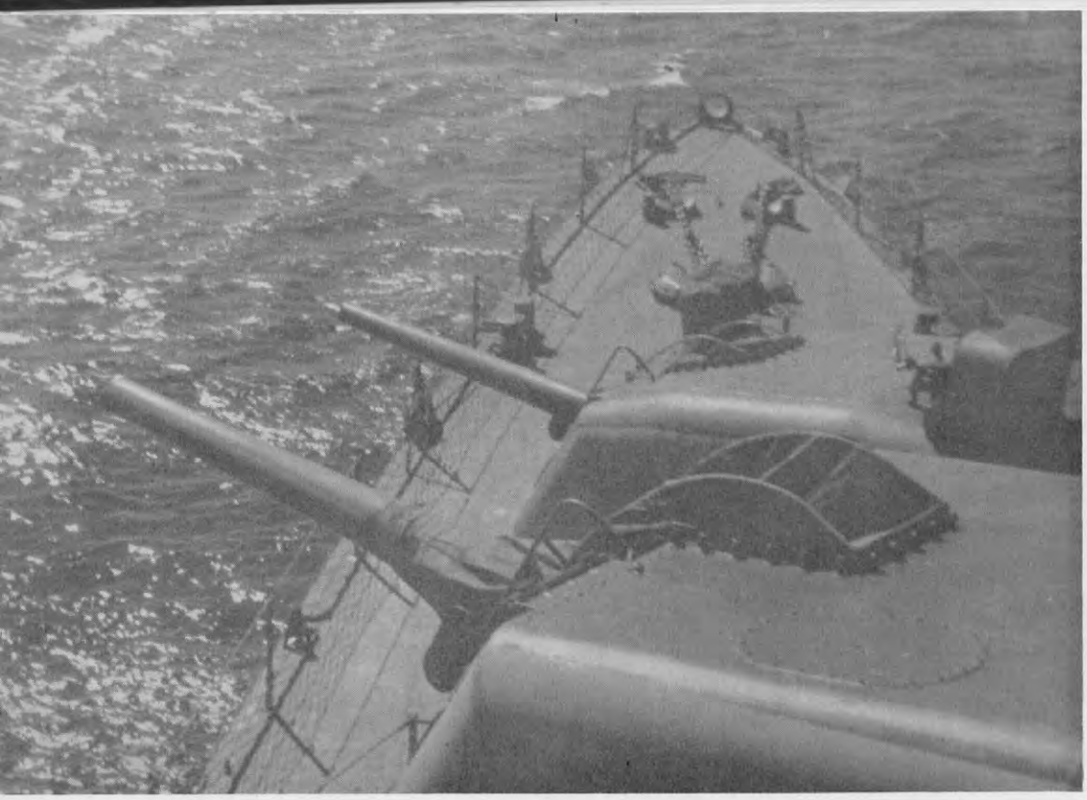
Early in the morning on the 1st of February we proceeded out of the harbor to take up the usual stand off the entrance and patrol back and forth, back and forth, all day long. At sunset the cruisers poked their bows out into the rolling swells of the Pacific, and once more we were off to the wars. This was a combined Task Force 18/69. In 69 were the battleships MISSISSIPPI and NEW MEXICO, and our own force consisted as before of cruisers and destroyers. We patrolled the area between Guadalcanal and Espiritu Santos for several days. On the 15th we made contact with Task Force 67. The TAYLOR along with the CHEVALIER, STRONG, and JENKINS, joined this group composed of the cruisers ST. LOUIS, NASHVILLE, HONOLULU, and HELENA. We returned to Espiritu Santos on the 14th only to return to our patrolling the following day. On February 17th we all had a busy day to break the routine of shipboard life. The ST. LOUIS reported a periscope and the CHEVALIER dashed to the spot to drop depth charges. No results were observed. This was quickly followed by a report from the HONOLULU sighting a raft. We rushed over to give aid only to find that it was a large log. Later in the day the formation received an emergency turn signal because of a suspected submarine. The TAYLOR was ordered to investigate. As we plowed through the seas to the given location we spotted a huge whale exhaling a spout of water. We started to turn to rejoin when there came a call from the lookout. "Periscope on the port bow." Away we went once more to be disappointed again, for it was only a sunken log with a limb protruding from the water resembling a periscope. One well aimed shot from a five-inch gun destroyed that illusion and we rejoined the formation. The finale came just at sunset when the CHEVALIER got a sound contact and dropped depth charges. We made our own contact a few minutes later and laid two ash-cans on the target. No results were observed from either attack and our day closed without further excitement.

On the 23rd we returned again to Espiritu, and it was not until the 3rd of March that we got underway again. One cruiser plane was forced down and we rescued the pilot, destroying the plane by gun fire. We steamed into port early on the morning of the 12th with orders to be ready to leave at 1630 that afternoon. We fuel, took on ammunition and stores and were ready to depart at the designated time.

Early on the 15th the destroyers TAYLOR, NICHOLAS, STRONG, and RADFORD left the formation headed for Tulagi Harbor. After fueling we formed column on the NICHOLAS and were off again proceeding up



Natives in the Guadalcanal area accepted our presence although bewildered by the overall aspect of the war.

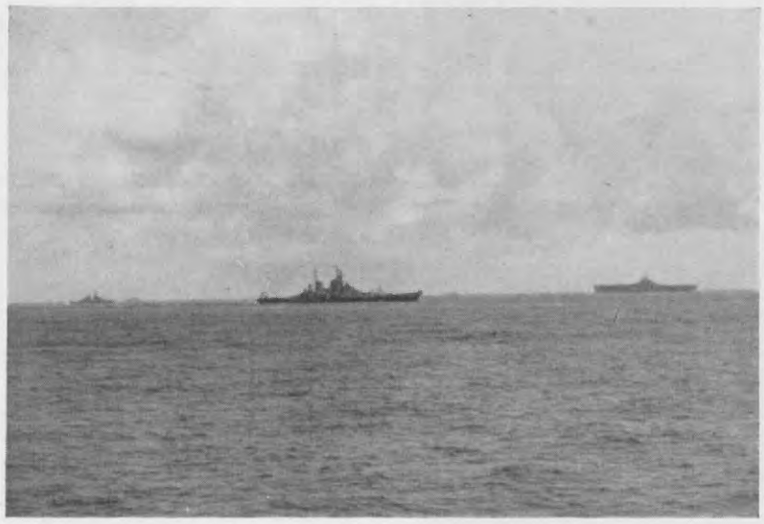


Five inch guns of the TAYLOR trained out to port ready to fire at the slighest indication of trouble.

Slot, nickname for the area between Guadalcanal and Bougainville. Midnight of the 15th we went to general quarters in preparation for our bombardment of shore installations on Kolombangara Island. All four boilers were lighted and the engineers told to stand by for 35 knots. At 0100 an unidentified plane was picked up by our radar, but was soon lost over land. 0145 we entered Kula Gulf and came to firing course and speed. 0200 all four destroyers opened fire with five-inch batteries. 0212 Jap shore emplacements opened fire on our formation, but failed to inflict any damage. 0230 several flares dropped by enemy planes, but no attack followed. 0600 secured from general quarters. Total of 401 rounds of five-inch ammunition thrown at the Nips in this short period of time. Late that evening we rejoined the task force and headed towards Tulagi Harbor. We arrived in Tulagi on the morning of the 20th, but left shortly for Espiritu Santos, arriving there on the 22nd. Four days of recreation and much needed rest, then we were off again to Tulagi with one tanker and several smaller craft.

The strain and toil of fighting a war was slowly descending upon us after four months in the South Pacific. Day by day we were becoming more experienced in the art of warfare against the Japanese and we were beginning to feel like veterans from the old school. Many of the boys were really anxious to get in there and get it over with, while others were really worried of what was coming in the months to follow.

Leaving Espiritu Santos on March 26th, we were assigned to escort the tanker Kanawha, the net tender Aloe ,and six APDs to the Guadalcanal area. On arriving at Tulagi Harbor on March 29th, we awaited the Kanawha to discharge her cargo before returning to Espiritu. Tulagi, like any other port in the Southwest Pacific, was nothing but a few scattered islands occupied in



Heavy units of the Pacific fleet steamed practically at will among the heavily fortified Japanese Islands.

part by the army with a suitable anchorage for the navy. Except for a few natives it was as remote as a mountain in the Himalayas. This spot of green was to be our new home for a good many months to come.

The weather in Tulagi was very similar to July in Kansas, hot and dry, but none of us seemed to mind very much as we were getting used to the torrid climate down SoPac way. We looked upon the morning sunrise as the beginning of another hot and dull day of waiting. Yes, men in the navy, from boot camp to actual combat, must grasp the virtue of patience and abide by it, because navy life is actually 25 percent waiting. However, it was not to be in vain.



No sooner had we anchored at Tulagi, when we were assigned to Task Force 18 to accompany them in their sweeps up and down the now famous "Slot," searching for enemy forces. This we did for three days, but to no avail. The Japs weren't ready to fight, so on direction from the Task Force Commander we returned to Tulagi and again resumed our Policy of Watchful Waiting.

On April 7th, we were designated to return to Espiritu with the tanker Kanawha. This was a pleasure indeed. Returning to Santo meant recreation and movies along with a ration of mail and rest for already war-shattered nerves. Never did we suspect that the way out of Tulagi was to be an experience long to be remembered by the TAYLOR and her crew.

We had received word previously that an enemy air attack was imminent, but such warnings in the past were usually false. However, all seemed to have a premonition of some sort, and we kept on the alert.

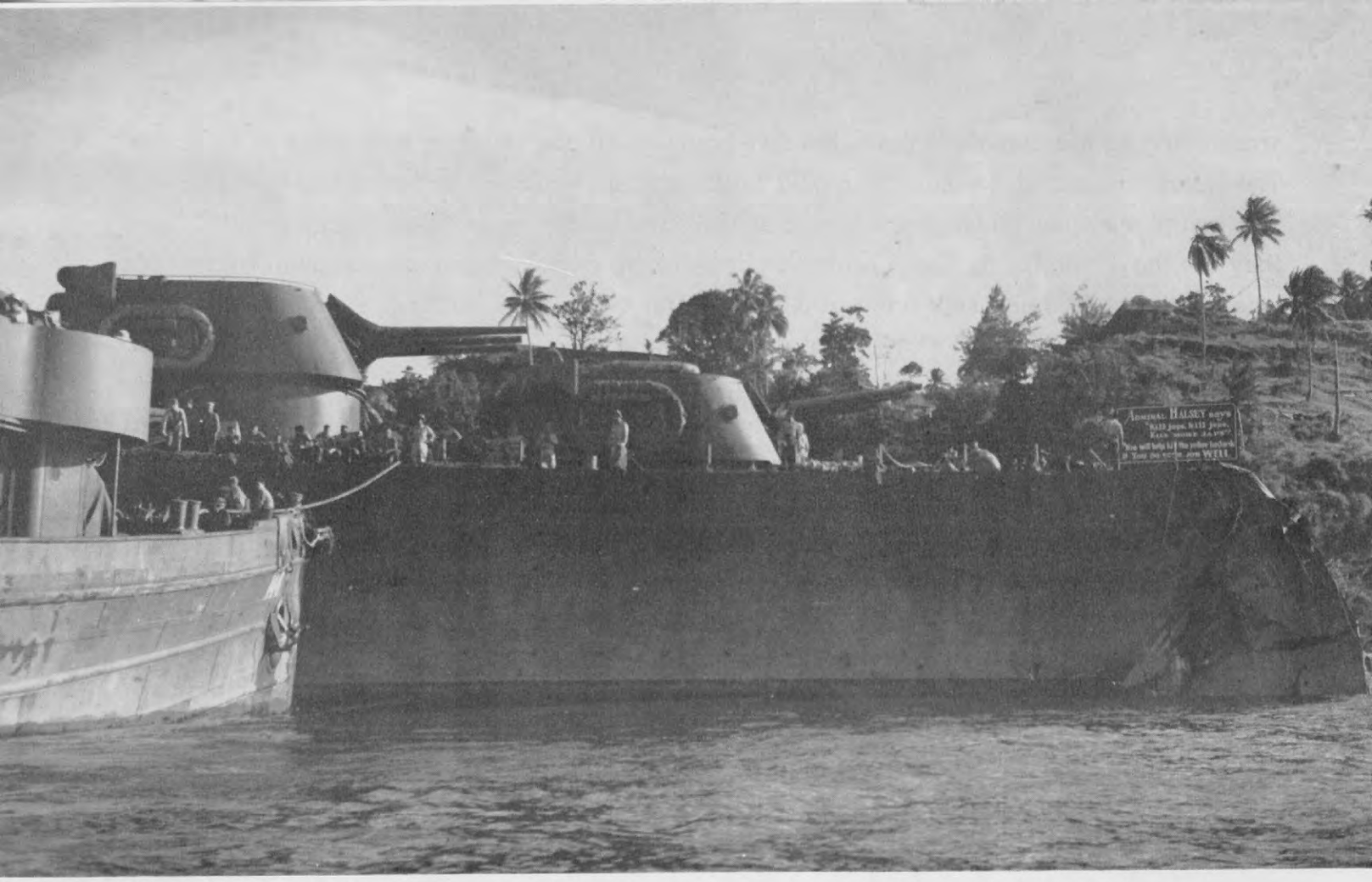
The word came that afternoon, "All hands to general quarters to repel enemy air attack." We knew they were really coming this time because our skipper had already changed course to make way out of Tulagi, and

was cutting figures of eight to throw the dive bombers off course when they came in for a run. The quartermaster at the helm was told to use a shallow zig-zag and make for the open sea. The first plane was sighted dead ahead at 1507, and as our cook "Chicko" exclaimed, "There they are, boys, the Rising Sun." Ninety-eight bombers and fighters came in over Tulagi. We opened fire at 1509 and kept firing at the maximum for over 28 minutes. An admiral on the beach at Tulagi wanted to know what anti-aircraft cruiser was present after seeing the five-inch burst the TAYLOR was firing. The Kanawha had hoisted anchor and was making way out when the attack occurred, but unfortunately she never made it. A Jap bomber flew through our barrage and made a direct hit. We tried to assist, but seeing that she was beyond help we increased speed to 30 knots and left Tulagi Harbor via Sealark Channel. The planes began to thin out and only a few remained to keep us on the alert. Fighters had come from Henderson Field on Guadalcanal, and between us we accounted for thirty-eight planes. The TAYLOR received credit for five.

We regained radio communication with Task Force 18 soon afterward, and were ordered to join Task Unit 32.4.1 for escort duty to Espiritu, arriving there on April 10th. Our stay in Santos



LCI (L)s (Landing Craft Infantry: Large) unburden themselves of their explosive human cargo. Troops who landed earlier stand in the dim light of the dawn awaiting the order to move forward from the beach into the jungle.



The cruiser HONOLULU shows her 'snub-nose' profile before the jury bow was affixed. She was torpedoed by the Japanese in mid-July 1943 during the Kolombangara operation.

was short and sweet. After a one-day overhaul alongside the destroyer tender DIXIE and a ration of mail, we left Espiritu escorting a convoy back to Guadalcanal. This trip, however, was not quite as exciting as the last, no enemy action was encountered and we returned to Santos once again.

Our short stays in Espiritu were always looked upon as a means of getting away from the war. There we received the greatest piece of morale building tissue known to any sailor serving in the Pacific, MAIL. Mail from home, good news or bad, had an influence on each and everyone of us. A small amount of recreation was provided on Aore Island where we could play ball, swim, or drink our ration of two beers.

After another much-needed tender overhaul we rejoined Task Force 18. On May 5th we left Espiritu to seek new exploits with the Japs. This time our job was a little more difficult. We were to screen a number of mine layers which were to sow a mine field right in Tojo's back yard. This mission was accomplished without incident and later reports showed it was a complete success. Within a period of 48 hours the mines the mine layers had sown had destroyed three enemy destroyers and several non-combatant vessels of the Imperial Navy.

Our job of driving the Japs from the Solomons was only beginning. Later we left Espiritu on another mine-laying mission, this time the TAYLOR herself was to lay, not a few mines, but a few shells in Tojo's lap. Our targets were to be the Jap positions on Villa, Baroke Harbor and Enogoi Inlet, a tough and dangerous job. The Japs were to have fortified all three places with heavy guns and there was always danger of torpedo boats and mines.

The moon was high as we sped up the Slot that night, and we made an easy target. However, the navigator timed the moon set perfectly, and we entered the narrow channel between Villa and Kolombangara just as the moon was disappearing behind the mountains. That night the Japs received a bombardment that they will long remember. Their shore batteries were soon silenced and all targets were destroyed or damaged. The mine layers at the same time were sowing another area of Jap waters on the other side of Kolombangara. Both missions were accomplished without casualty and we returned to Espiritu on May 14th.

Leaving Espiritu on June 5th, we were assigned to escort the troop transport Munargo to the 180th meridian. How we wished that we could take her to her final destination, the U.S.A. But the fun was only beginning and we had to stay, so back to New Hebredes we went to await reassignment.

Waiting for orders to get underway, to go anywhere or do anything, was always the hardest part of fighting the war. The scuttlebutt was always thick and heavy during our vigils in Espiritu as to the next operation. This time we were not kept waiting long.

We were on our way again, as the month of June rolled around. On the night of the 10th we were caught off San Cristobal, by a number of Jap bombers. Their objective was the convoy of reinforcements and supplies that we were escorting to Guadalcanal. The Japs were tricky in their night bombing attacks, but we managed to keep a jump ahead of them. They were handi-



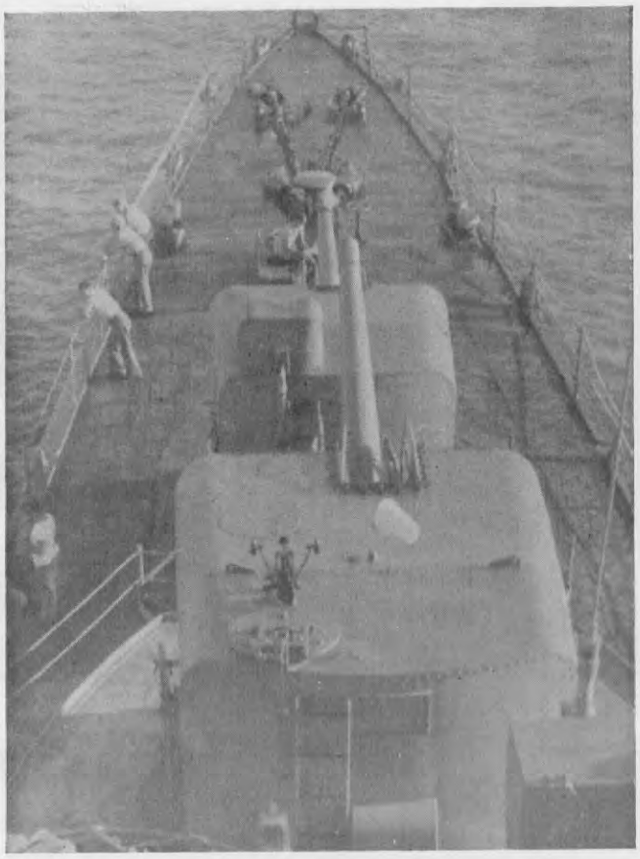
PBM patrol bomber sets herself down gently in a recently captured harbor. These patrol bombers are the eyes of the fleet searching miles from their home base sometimes deep within enemy territory.

capped by the darkness and their main hope was spotting a ship firing, but this mistake was never made, so their missions were usually unsuccessful. Upon completion of our escort duty, we returned to Santo for further assignment.

From time to time in Santo there was always a change or two. More anti-aircraft guns, new officers and men, new facts and figures and new equipment. Still there remained the strain of trying to accomplish a great deal of work in such a short time. However the tender overhauls we received periodically helped greatly.



Commander Benny Katz, commanding officer of the TAYLOR from commissioning until January 1944. Commander Katz while in command of the TAYLOR received three combat medals, the Navy Cross, the Silver Star and the Bronze Star.



Looking down from the flying bridge out over the forecastle.

Following a tender overhaul from June 15th to 25th we left Espiritu on what was to be one of the greatest assignments in the history of the TAYLOR. We were to act as part of the anti-submarine screen for the SANGAMON, a converted aircraft carrier. At the time she was furnishing air coverage for convoys enroute to and from Guadalcanal. However, our stay with the SANGAMON was only temporary. On July 6th, we received an urgent message from the commander of Task Force 18, to proceed to Tulagi at our maximum speed. The Japs were on the prowl again and all ships were needed to repel the attack.

Enroute to Tulagi with all four boilers on the line, we met with a stroke of hard luck. One of our screws went out of commission and we had to slow down. This casualty kept us from participating in one of the major battles in the Solomons, the First Battle of Kula Gulf. The cruiser HELENA had been sunk and a number of ships from our own squadron had been damaged.

We were all a bit disappointed when we learned what had happened. Most of us had been set for real action, but Lady Luck was against us. No sooner had we anchored than another urgent message came to us. The Japs were coming back again, to reinforce their positions on Vella La Vella and Munda. Our job was to intercept and destroy this enemy Task Force. We left Tulagi with other undamaged ships of our squadron along with the cruisers of Task Force 18, and steamed up the Slot at 35 knots with the hope of reaching Kula Gulf in time to stop the enemy fleet.

The Task Force arrived in the Gulf a little past midnight. The Japs had not arrived as yet, but our sources of information revealed that they would hit Kula Gulf at 0100. So we waited. All battle stations were manned and ready. Everyone was tense and excited. Here we were to meet the notorious Tokyo Express face to face. With four boilers on the line, plenty of ammunition and torpedoes ready, we started in. Contact was made with the enemy at 0127. Our radar screen showed two big fellows, possibly cruisers, and six smaller vessels, probably destroyers.

With a speed of thirty knots we started the attack on our designated target, a Jap cruiser. In the middle of the run the cruiser's searchlight found the TAYLOR and she opened fire. The Jap vessel stopped directly in the TAYLOR'S path and our torpedoes were released. The fish and

The bridge is the scene of much activity both during condition watches and General Quarters.



Transferring men at sea is a very delicate operation and requires much patience and practice.



five-inch projectiles had found their mark and the enemy cruiser went down. The other ships in our task force had engaged their targets and in no more than eight minutes two cruisers and four destroyers from the Imperial Japanese Navy had gone to the bottom. Our forces suffered only slight damage. The Second Battle of Kula Gulf had reached a successful conclusion. The rest of the Tokyo Express was finished off and the path was open for the landings at Munda and Vella La Vella.

Most of the ships began to withdraw from the Gulf, but we were ordered to remain and search the area for the two surviving Japanese destroyers and pick up any survivors, which was a policy totally unknown to the Japs. We nosed around the various inlets hoping to catch something. We did. Two hours after the battle, we were searching the lower end of the gulf when one of Hirohito's submarines surfaced. Possibly the same sub that had sunk the destroyer STRONG a few nights before. She was sailing along, never suspecting the presence of American ships. Here was a chance of a lifetime, a large Jap sub right within range of our five-inch guns. After several salvos from our main battery the sub disappeared from the radar scope. As a matter of policy we covered the area with depth charges and a strong odor of oil appeared on the surface; we were sure of a victory.

We reached Purvis Bay, an anchorage on the other side of Tulagi, late that afternoon, all hoping for a rest after that terrible night in Kula Gulf. Much to our disappointment, little time was afforded us even to take on ammunition, torpedoes and provisions. Back up the Slot we went. Another Japanese force was reported to be on the way down to work over our positions

on Russel Island, and we were dispatched to stop them. Although tired and over-worked, we tightened our belts, loaded our guns and set out. For once during our fighting career in the Solomons we didn't feel like meeting the Japs. Some of the fellows' prayers were answered, because the Jap Task Force turned around and went back to their base. It was on this particular patrol that the TAYLOR was nicknamed "THE TERRIBLE 'T' ".

There is one incident that happened in the life of the TAYLOR that week that will live in our memories forever. It happened the day after we returned from our wild goose chase up the Slot on the night of the 12th. We were all tired and hoped to have an overnight stay in Purvis Bay, but there was another job to do, a mission of mercy to accomplish. No sooner had we fueled and anchored, than we were ordered to get underway immediately and proceed up the Slot. Word had been received that a number of the HELENA'S crew had survived their holocaust, and were marooned on the Jap-held island of Vella La Vella. Our job was to offer coverage for a group of APDs that were going in to rescue them. A tough and difficult job.

I don't suppose anyone ever witnessed as dark a night as this particular night of July 15th. It's hard to say that any of us felt like sneaking in that narrow channel to get the HELENA'S survivors, but when we realized that it might have very easily been us under Tojo's nose, we grimly set about the task. Every man was rescued and we returned to Purvis Bay.

We were all beginning to feel at home in Tulagi or Purvis Bay, while spending a day or two there between operations. Although no physical or mental recreation was provided, swimming was always encouraged in the crystal clear waters of the bay. Perhaps we saw a movie at night, that is if "Washing Machine Charlie," the Japanese pilot with the thrashing machine engine, didn't appear. The vow of the entire American Army and Navy was to have revenge on "Washing Machine Charlie."

As the month of July passed, most of our days and nights were taken up by high speed runs up the Slot to bombard enemy positions. Most of the bombarding took place at night and nothing was visible to the human eye. However, we had our chance to see the Japs take a pounding on the morning of the 25. Our job was the memorable bombardment of Munda airstrip prior to the invasion. We steamed in that fine morning and gave the Japs their final working over. There are still many doubts, as to whether or not a single square foot of Munda airdrome was left untouched by our shells. Approximately one thousand rounds of five-inch shells were thrown at the Nips by the TAYLOR that morning. An average of two hundred rounds per gun. Seven destroyers took part in this bombardment, a total of seven thousand rounds.

The narrow channel, lagoon and gulf between Vella La Vella and Kolombangara were as familiar to us by now as our own Purvis Bay. We frequented these waters not only on bombardment missions or in the process of routing enemy forces, but on missions of mercy similar to that of the rescue of the HELENA'S survivors. On the nights of the 27th and 28th of July, we participated in the evacuation of wounded personnel from Enogai Inlet in Kula Gulf. Then there were always the odds and ends to be taken into consideration. Supplies had to be taken in to our

forces, sometimes passing strong enemy-held positions. Whatever it was that had to be done, it seemed as if the TAYLOR was always selected, rain or shine, night or day.

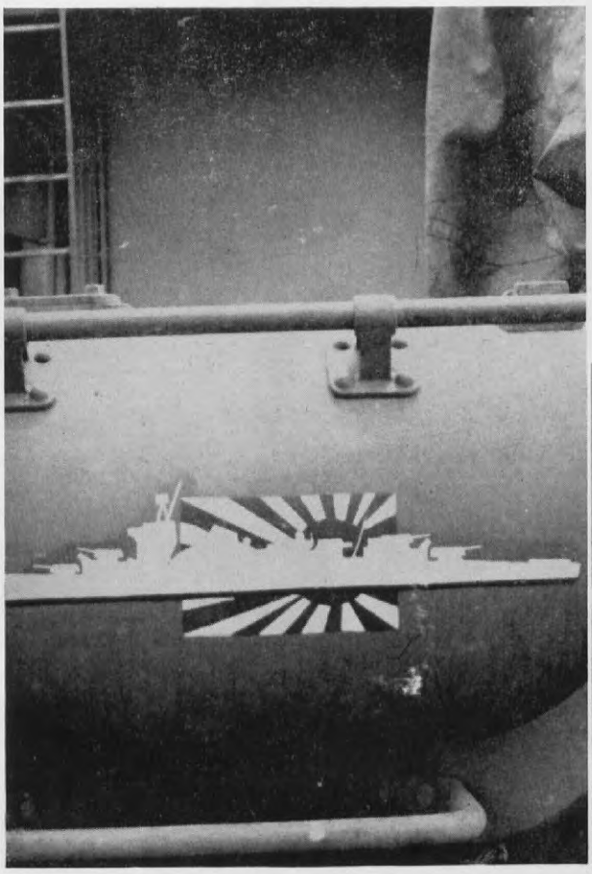
As August came into the picture, our job of driving the Japs from the Solomons was slowly drawing to a close. Getting away from the Slot, Guadalcanal, Purvis Bay or Tulagi, once again was more than a relief for all of us. After that trying month of July we were centainly near the point of exhaustion. On July 30th we departed from this area as an escort for a troop transport on our way to Noumea, New Caledonia. We thought at last that we were going to get a little rest, which we all needed. While enroute a small catch was added. We were told to report to Commander Task Force 37 at Havannah Harbor in the Hebredes for duty.

At Havannah, we found some of the other ships of our squadron also attached to Task Force 37. Something was brewing again and we were in on it. We waited for orders until the 11th of August. They were, "Destination Unknown." Was it the States, or back to the wars? The usual unreliable scuttlebutt was going around. Our destination turned out to be the Slot again. Were we to experience another month like the last? There was still work to be done in the Solomons, to keep the Japs from holding the islands, but now our job was to catch them in the process of abandoning them.

It was learned that the Japs were planning to evacuate their remaining troops on Vella La Vella and Barakona. Our specific job was to intercept and destroy any and all evacuation forces. The first part of the plan was to put troops ashore to force the enemy's hand. On August 15th, the TAYLOR acted as coverage for our troops landing on Vella La Vella and Barakona Islands. These troops forced the Japs out on August 17th. Jap barges came out by the hundreds. Each one filled to capacity. The engagement was one-sided for the barges were no match for our rapid-firing five-inch guns. The Nips had a plan of their own, and it was put into effect at 0200

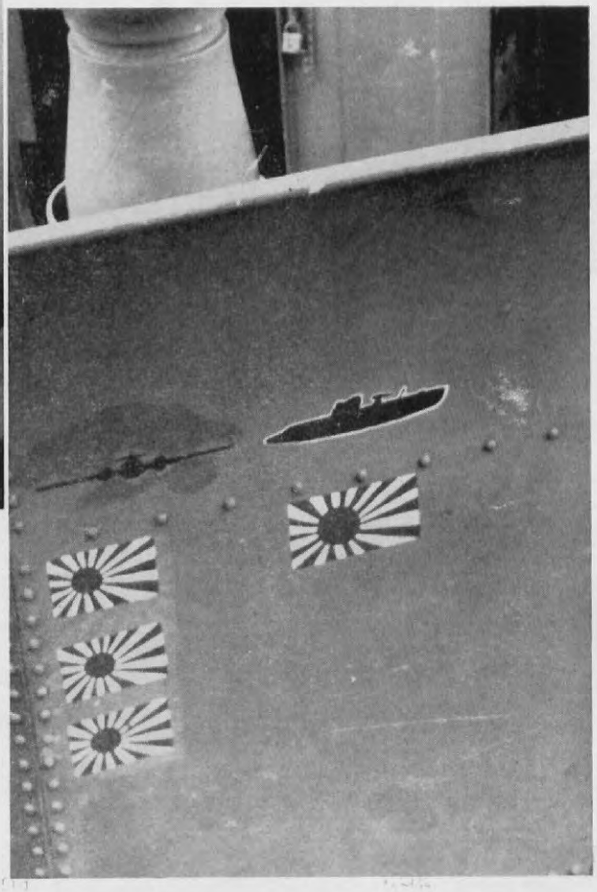


All engines ahead FLANK, the ship leaps out of the water and kicks up a wake that can be seen for miles.



After our first bag of planes the wing of the bridge received an additional paint job.

Chalk up one cruiser on our tropedo mount after the engagement in Kula Gulf.



on the morning of the 17th. Three enemy destroyers appeared on the radar screen. The barges were forgotten for the moment and the TAYLOR'S main battery concentrated on the three destroyers. The four destroyers of Destroyer Division 41, including the TAYLOR, NICHOLAS, O'BANNON and CHEVALIER sank two of the destroyers and heavily damaged the other one with torpedoes and gun fire. The plan was more than successful for the evacuation forces were destroyed and His Majesty lost three destroyers from his Imperial Fleet.

Tulagi was now a first class base. Ammunition, torpedoes, food, clothing, and all the supplies needed to run a fighting ship were available. The strain of inadequate supplies was over. When we steamed in we gave our order to the base officials, they supplied the articles and we were ready for another hunting trip.

The Japs always had a trick up their sleeves. They were usually ineffective, but one in particular had a striking effect on us all. On the night of the 19th, during one of the hunting expeditions, we were preparing to destroy more evacuation barges, when we were suddenly illumin-





Commander B. J. Katz receives the Silver Star for galantry in action during the Second Battle of Kula Gulf, a night action during which time "Des Div 41" sank four to six vessels.

ated by flares. It was supposed that we had destroyed most of their surface vessels; now they were using night bombers. It was usually our custom to hold fire during a night air raid because the Jap pilots couldn't locate us except for our gun flashes. The barges had to be destroyed so we abandoned our policy and opened fire on the barges. With each salvo fired from our guns, bombs would answer the challenge, but the Jap bombardiers failed to hit any of their targets. All of the barges were destroyed without a casualty to our forces.

It seemed as if the Japs were licked in the Solomons, for they abandoned all attempts to evacuate their marooned personnel. The remaining Nips were left to die or be killed by our advancing land forces. As a matter of precaution, their entire escape area was mined.

Before the Kula Gulf operation the TAYLOR was promised a rest and recreation period in Sydney, Australia. Each time we hoisted anchor the scuttlebutt said that we were going to Sydney, but we always headed in the wrong direction. On August 28th, the TAYLOR'S first birthday, the word was passed that we would proceed to Noumea for a tender overhaul and then shove off for Sydney. A complete change of atmosphere engulfed the ship. Dress blues began to appear on the line, there were more smiles and less complaining about the chow. Everyone, from the Captain on down, was planning on making this trip a complete success.

On September 12th the TAYLOR moored in Sydney. The next ten days supplied the best morale building entertainment and recreation the men of the TAYLOR had enjoyed since they left their homes to take part in the fight for freedom. The ship sponsored a dance for her per-

sonnel and their guests. All in all, an unforgetable time was had by all hands in the famous "Land Down Under."

After our pleasant sojourn in that land of paradise, our gang was champing at the bit for action. The TAYLOR spent a few days in Noumea recuperating before departing for Guadalcanal and the Slot, our old stomping grounds. Most of us felt that we were in for a change of duty after our rest; maybe New Guinea or a crack at the mighty Fifth Fleet, but evidently the Slot was DesRon 21's brand. We returned to Purvis Bay, or better known as "Sleepless Lagoon."

We were not long in waiting for the call to action. No sooner had we completed fueling in Tulagi than the TAYLOR was assigned to screen an APD group loading supplies at Guadalcanal. That evening the TAYLOR, FOOTE, JENKINS, TERRY and CONVERSE took screening stations and proceeded at 20 knots for landings on Vella La Vella. This was the one remaining

Straining eyes follow the progress of the bombardment from the bridge of one of the U.S. warships subjecting Tarawa to the steady hammering.





Shell cases litter deck as day comes. The night's work done, shell cases were scattered about the deck after the May 13th bombardment of Munda air strip. New Georgia.

Jap-held island of the New Georgia group. At 1500 our unit overtook five slow LSTs and joined forces. With the exception of reports of unidentified aircraft, the landings were uneventful. It wasn't until our return trip that the enemy showed his hand.

Divebombers and Zeros commenced strafing and bombing our beached LSTs, resulting in a direct hit on one. Our fighter planes and anti-aircraft batteries soon disposed of the menace. The TAYLOR finally made Tulagi where a little sleep was uppermost in everyone's mind.

On the afternoon of October 2nd, an urgent message came in, stating that enemy barges were attempting to evacuate troops from Kolombangara. The same old routine started. Over the PA system, "This ship will get underway immediately, all divisions make readiness reports to the executive officer on the bridge." The crack of safeties letting off steam, both boats being

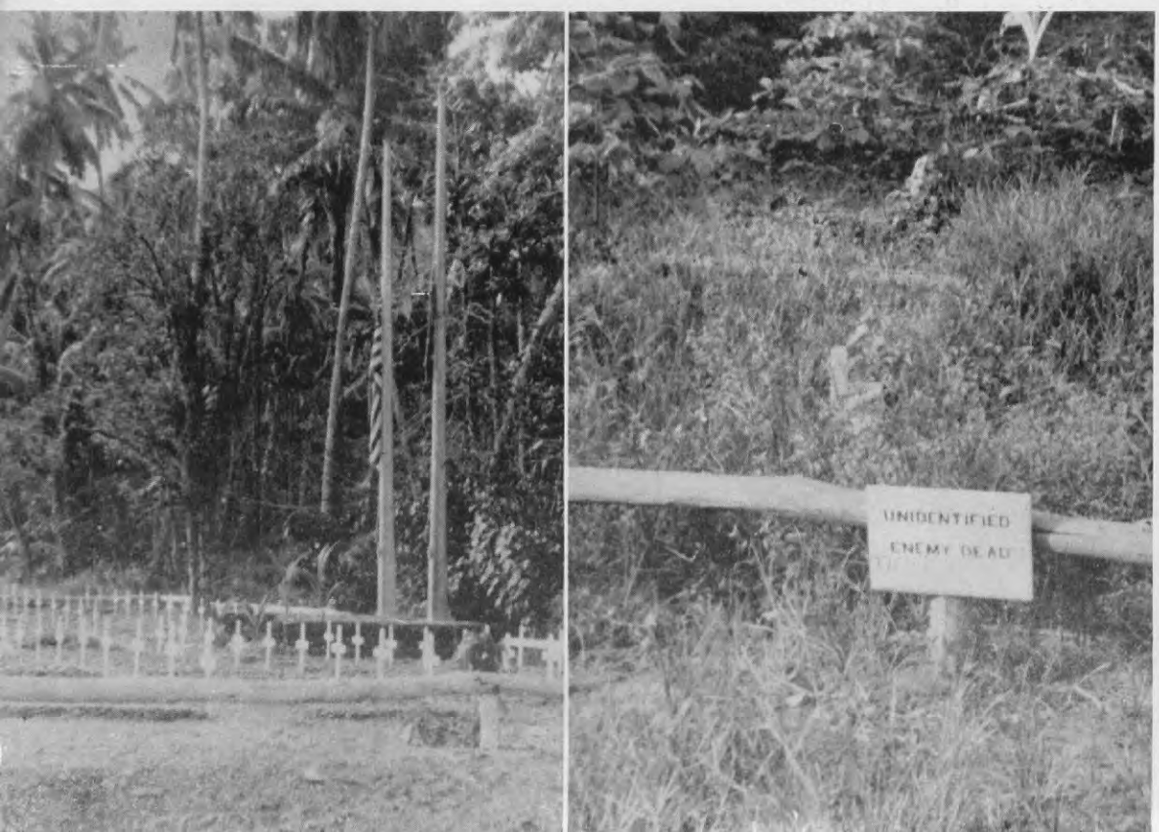
hoisted, testing main engines, and finally the whine of the windlass as the anchor is slowly heaved in. It was a scene of orderly confusion and to each man aboard it is a silent thrill as to what new adventure lies ahead in the trip to follow.

We steamed in company with the RALPH TALBOT and TERRY, proceeding up the all too familiar Slot. The hazy blue islands that covered the horizon will remain in our minds forever. The sea in this area is possibly the most calm in the world, for the only motion we felt was the throbbing of our engines churning out a creamy white wake.

As night closed in, all hands manned their battle stations as we commenced our patrol, waiting for the barges to stick their noses out from Kolombangara. Our snooper planes, Black-cats, were constantly reporting the position of the enemy barges until darkness obscured their visibility.

At 2110 the fun started. The RALPH TALBOT reported a barge in sight. The squadron commander executed various courses and speeds until we maneuvered within six thousand yards of the target. By now numerous barges, large and small, were sighted. As we opened fire with the main battery, it seemed as if the waters were full of enemy small craft. Control and plot were tracking them at 7 knots, plus the fact that they were loaded and cumbersome craft, they were easy prey for our gunnery department. For the onlookers it simulated a shooting gallery. We were lobbing them in with slow fire, taking our time, and making sure of the results. A few flares dropped by our planes for illumination, disclosed that our first attack had the Japs in utter confusion. Their escorting destroyers had fled at the first shot, abandoning the barges.

Twice we steamed through the remaining landing craft using our automatic weapons. They were so close at times, that by the flash of our guns we could see the barges clearly. The Nips



The price paid on the bloody beaches of Guadalcanal in American lives was terrific, but the boys who gave their lives on that insignificant island did not die in vain, they fought and died to give us a better world to live in.





Scenes from a short but sweet liberty in Sydney.

were trapped and they knew it. They were yelling frantically and firing with rifles and machine guns. Some falling shrapnel hit our decks, but was only picked up by our repair parties for souvenirs.

According to later reports, it was stated the approximately fifty barges were destroyed in the encounter, representing a large number of troops annihilated. The three destroyers were ordered by the Squad Dog to give chase to the fleeing Jap escorts. Our radars had their range at seventeen thousand five hundred yards, and the word was passed to stand by for a torpedo run. All engines went ahead to 30 knots and the range closed rapidly. At twenty-two hundred yards the order to "fire" was given, and with a sharp crack, ten deadly tin fish were away. We opened fire with our after guns to cover our retirement. Later reports stated that one enemy ship was sunk. As our attack group returned to the scene of the barges, more surface contacts were picked up and destroyed by gun fire. At 2358 surface radar reported clear of all contacts and at 0430 we returned to our base at Tulagi.

When we say returned to base, it by no means meant a rest. With all the ammunition fired and the torpedoes expended, the first job was replenishing. A long and tedious task which required all hands. The torpedomen worked all night loading the fish and putting them in readiness for another emergency. Then came fueling, a routine duty upon entering port and possibly the loading of stores. There was just no time out. When a chance for sleep did come it was closely followed by the order, "Station all the special sea detail" and up the Slot we would go, with general quarters and so forth. This is exactly what happened the next morning.

On October 4th, our next trip up was a false alarm. In company with the SAUFLEY five hundred yards astern, our after fire room lost oil pressure. The next few minutes were exciting. Our speed dropped rapidly as the SAUFLEY bore down on us at 27 knots. But for the alertness of the

SAUFLEY'S officer of the deck the TAYLOR'S fantail would have been split between the depth charge racks, for she swerved to port, narrowly missing the stern of the TAYLOR.

Another all night general quarters, and a fruitless sound contact ended the search for the enemy barges, and we retired to our base the next morning.

One of the most familiar sights to all hands on the TAYLOR was the oil begrimed ERSKINE PHELPS. I doubt whether a stranger looking ship ever floated. Now converted to a yard oiler, once upon a time she was a four-masted schooner. Nothing but ten foot stumps remained of her mast and held no possible resemblance to a sailing vessel. All the Slot destroyers fueled from the ERSKINE at one time or another, and she always had the welcome mat out. With no motive power the PHELPS sat out many air raids on Tulagi and accounted for four Jap planes with her main battery of 20 millimeter machine guns.

On the morning of October 6th, after fueling from the PHELPS, the TAYLOR preceeded to Guadalcanal to screen more loading APDs. At 1035 the TAYLOR, LA VALLETTE and RALPH TALBOT, screening the APD group, left for Vella La Vella as a supply echelon. At a speed of 23 knots our group overtook the NICHOLAS and one LST. CDS 21 ordered the TAYLOR to ex-

One deadly "tin fish" is shot out at the enemy. Our torpedo battery accounted for one Japanese cruiser, two destroyers and a gun boat.



Back in port the first job is loading ammunition and reloading the Torpedo mounts.



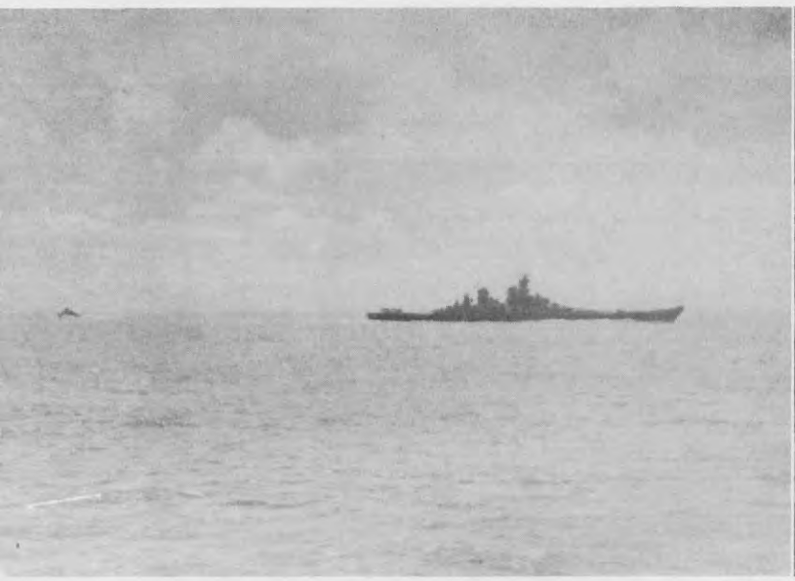
change stations with the NICHOLAS and escort the lone LST. Later in the afternoon the main body slowed to eight knots for the TAYLOR and her ward to rejoin the formation.

During evening readiness, the TAYLOR, RALPH TALBOT and LA VALLETTE were directed to join the O'BANNON, CHEVALIER and SELFRIDGE west of Vella La Vella and destroy enemy forces encountered. All four boilers were put on the line and we maneuvered astern of the TALBOT at a speed of 30 knots. At 2055, the RALPH TALBOT reported engine trouble and ordered us to proceed ahead at our best speed. Knifing through the water at 35 knots, the TAYLOR was fast putting the miles behind her At 2130, we received another message ordering us to slow to 20 knots to allow the TALBOT to catch up. Half an hour later the TALBOT was again at the head of the formation, making her best speed of 26 knots.

At 2208 all hands were called to battle stations, and ten minutes later we sighted several flares dead ahead on the horizon. Lookouts observed heavy gunfire and large explosions in the area of the flares. It was evident that we had arrived too late. The attack had already been made, and what was left of the enemy force was in full retreat behind a smoke screen. The CHEVALIER, O'BANNON and SELFRIDGE were damaged and reports came that the enemy had consisted of two groups of four DDs each.

We were now approaching our crippled ships and were told to stand by for anything. At 0151 the TAYLOR was designated to assist the damaged SELFRIDGE. In the dark we passed two sinking enemy destroyers and steamed among rafts and men in the water. The rafts were occupied by Japanese sailors. We were ordered to circle the SELFRIDGE before going alongside. We observed that the bow of the SELFRIDGE had been blown off just forward of the bridge. It was later learned that the damage was caused by an enemy torpedo. While we were approaching the SELFRIDGE word came in by radio that the CHEVALIER was slowly sinking. We came along the SELFRIDGE'S port side and a splendid job was done by our deck force and repair party. Working in the dark under difficult conditions, they had five lines over immediately.

The U.S.S. MISSOURI screened by destroyers.



Constant upkeep on all the guns is required to insure proper working order.



The Commodore on the SELFRIDGE radioed Tulagi for tugs to assist the damaged ships to port. All hands were reported to be off the CHEVALIER and she was still sinking slowly; she was to be finished off later if need be. By this time the SELFRIDGE reported she could make 5 knots and was doing so. We had our prow over amidships and began taking wounded personnel aboard. Commodore Walker transferred to our ship and directed operations from the bridge. All personnel from the SELFRIDGE were removed except those who were to bring her into port.

During the action, the CHEVALIER was hit in identically the same place as the SELFRIDGE. With considerable way on, the stricken ship was rammed on her starboard side amidships by the O'BANNON steaming at 25 knots, flooding the CHEVALIER'S engine room, thus the coup de grace. Part of the O'BANNON'S bow was torn off, but she proceeded to port unassisted. The LA VALLETTE was ordered to sink the CHEVALIER with torpedoes. The CHEVVIE died in a large explosion.

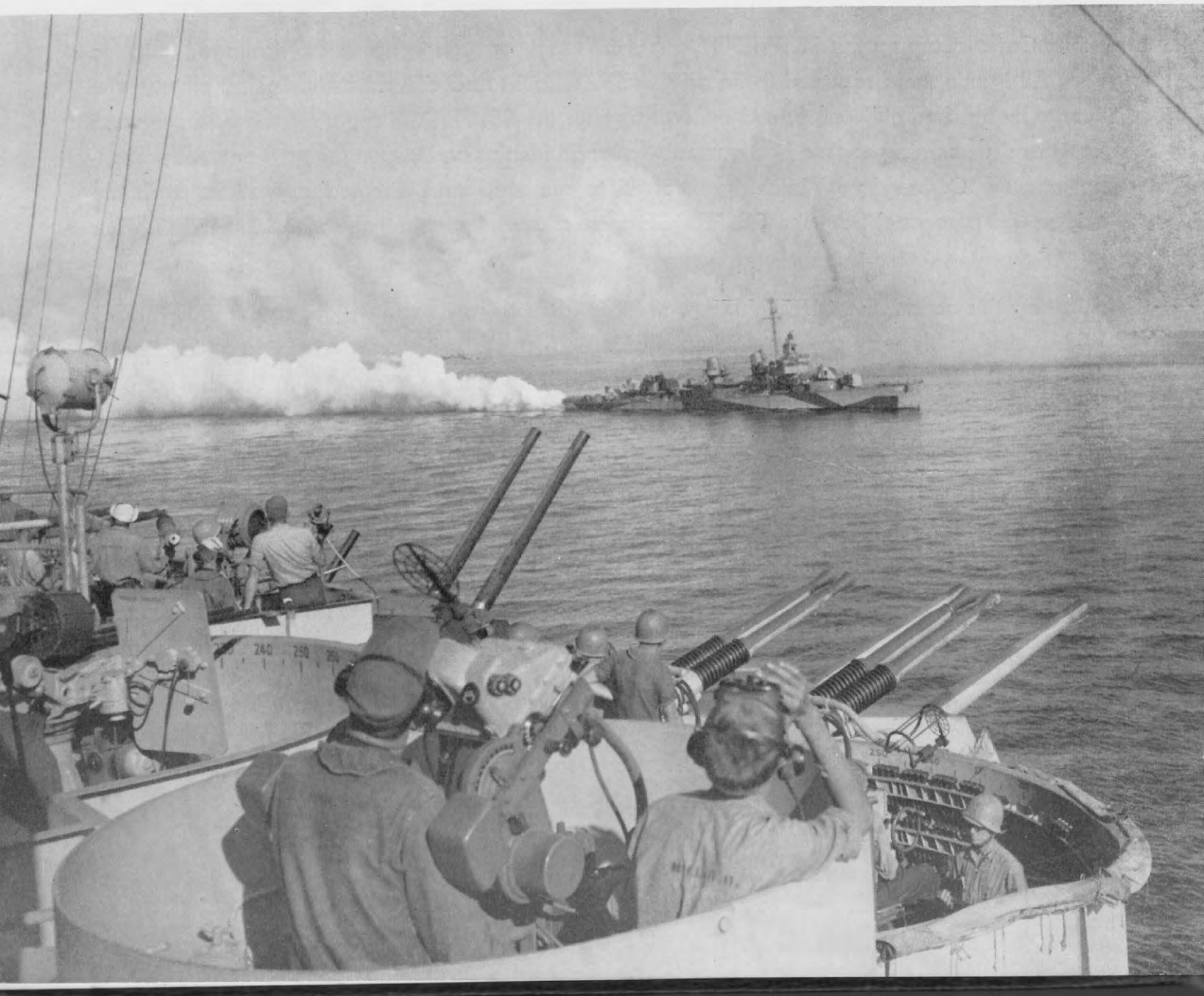
The war was never brought so close to everyone aboard the TAYLOR as it was the next few days and nights. Our ship was crowded with the SELFRIDGE'S personnel. Their wounded men were in officers' country, the wardroom, and crews' quarters. The doctors and pharmacist mates did a miraculous job, but many of the fellows died. All of our crew pitched in with clothes, toilet articles and a good word to help the unfortunate wounded.

By now we were under way and taking screening stations with the RALPH TALBOT to escort the damaged SELFRIDGE to Tulagi. She was a sorrowful sight with torn metal, mess tables,

and a gun barrel for a bow, pushing the sea like a snow plow. Just after morning twilight, Japanese planes were picked up closing in on us, but our fighter coverage engaged them and we witnessed a first class air show.

We steamed all that day and night. On the afternoon of October the 8th we made Tulagi and discharged all survivors. After this last tiring excursion the TAYLOR dropped the hook and rested for five days in Tulagi. On October 13th the TAYLOR, NICHOLAS, SPENCE, THATCHER and STANLEY escorted six LSTs to Vella La Vella as a supply unit. The mission was uneventful and we returned to port around noon of October 15th.

During the Battle of Leyte Gulf all destroyers layed heavy smoke about the transport area. The smoke made precision bombing impossible.

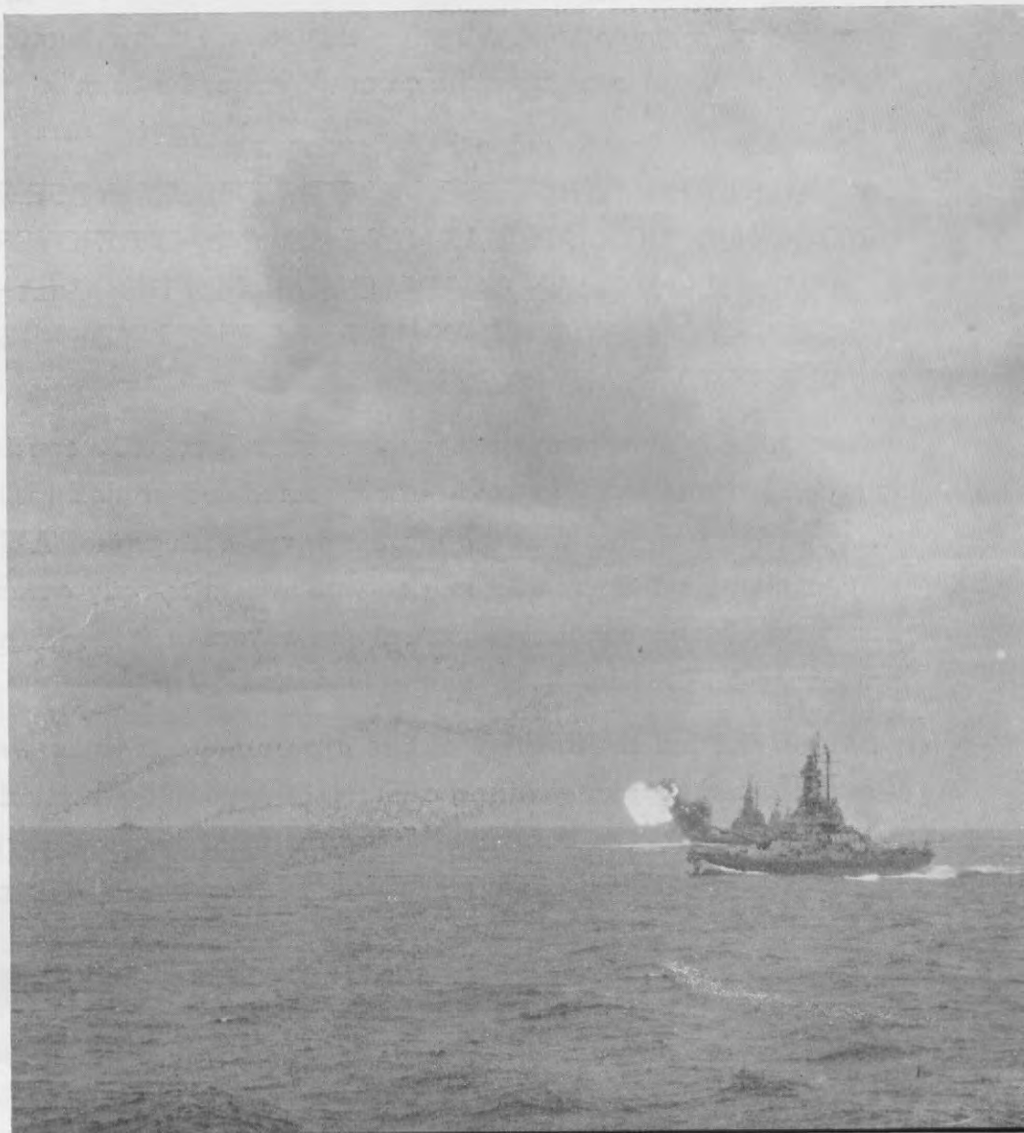


On October 17th Destroyer Division 41 proceeded to Guadalcanal to screen unloading transnports at Koli Point. All day the TAYLOR patrolled at ten knots. At twilight the transports got underway and sailed until daybreak and then returned to their berts. Jap planes would sneak in at night and strike at our anchored transports. We witnessed a Liberty ship loaded with lumber blown up. To foil the Japs, all ships got underway at night. After two days of patrol, the TAYLOR returned to Tulagi, unloaded ammunition, then returned to the patrolling grind. On October 20th we departed from the Guadalcanal area and escorted a troop transport convoy to Efate, New Hebredes Islands.

The TAYLOR spent several days in Havannah Harbor, Efate, taking aboard fresh provisions, ammunition, and in general continuing with ship's work. All hands enjoyed beer parties and sports in the recreation area ashore, plus trips to the Army canteens where cases of coke, boxes of cigars and bait were bought.

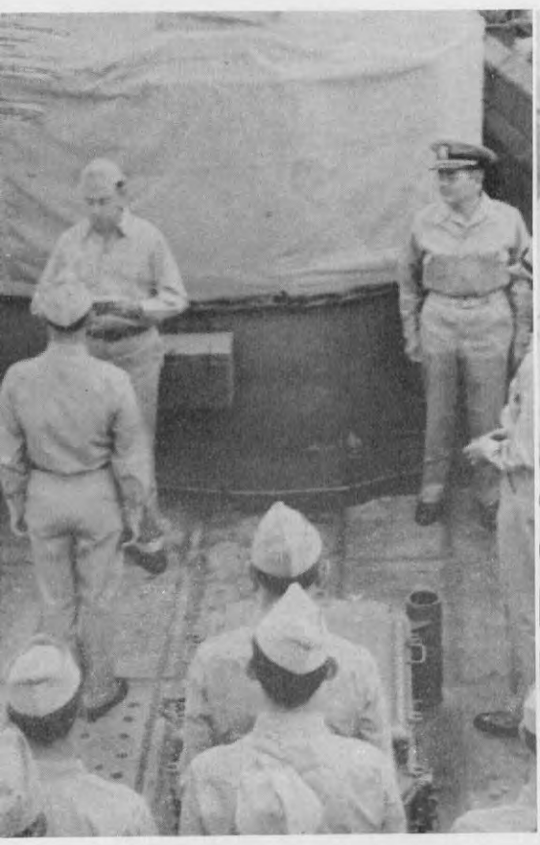
The TAYLOR'S commanding officer was presented the Navy Cross medal on October 23rd for interception and routing of four Jap DDs and many barges the nights of July 17th and 18th, 1943.

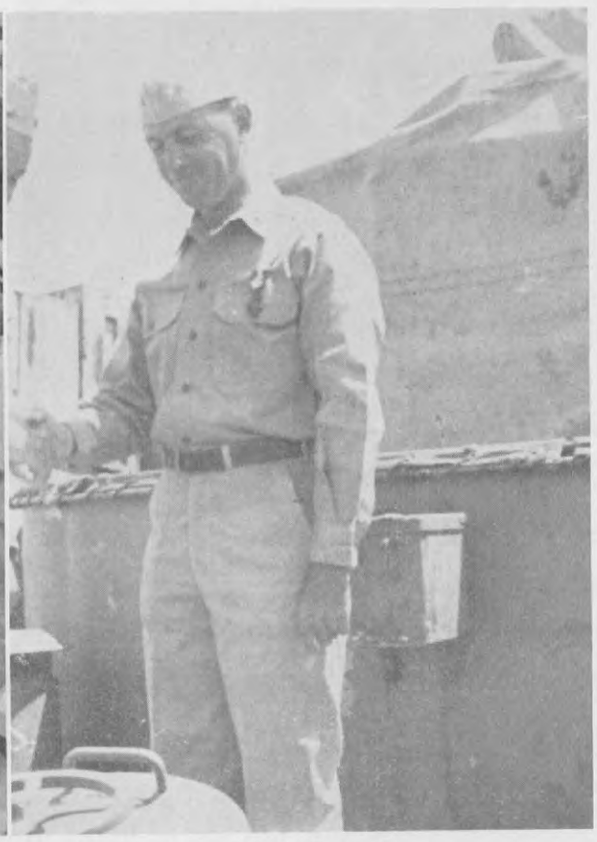
We escorted the ammunition ship LASSEN to Noumea, New Caledonia on October 24th, and returned with the ALDEBARAN and LASSEN to Efate on October 26th. On October 31st De-



Bombardment of enemy installation by units of the Third Fleet, as shown; even the heavy battleships of the South Dakota class were called into action.

The Fijis are beautiful islands, mountainous and covered with green and brown patchwork of cultivated lands. On the approach to our anchorage, what looked like an impenetrable ring of foaming reefs surrounded the island as far as the eye could see. Through a narrow break we steamed with creamy white breakers to the left and right forming a natural breakwater. As



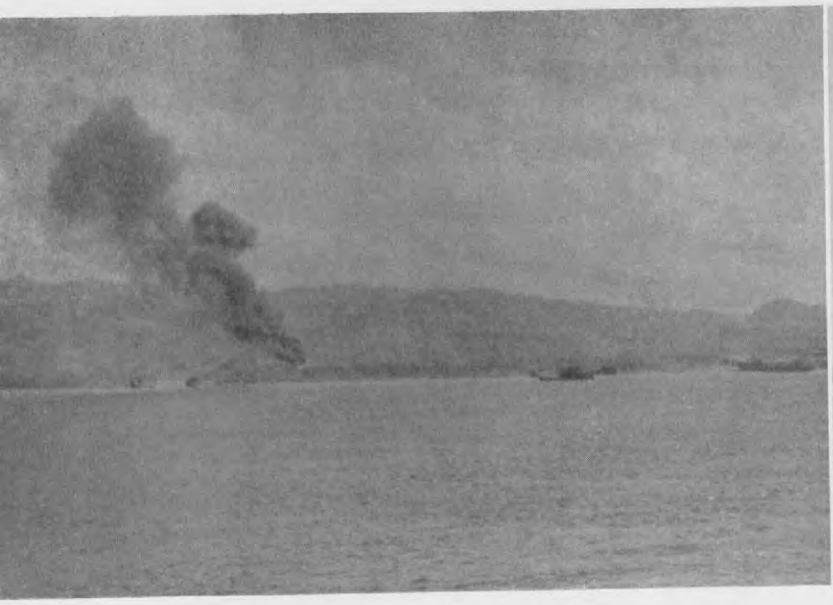


Commander Katz receives the Navy Cross for action near Vella La Vella when the TAYLOR accounted for two Jap destroyers and numerous barges loaded with Jap reinforcements.

we later saw on liberty, the Fijis are very modern and resemble the Hawaiian Islands with sugar cane, up to date homes, narrow gauge trains, and friendly inhabitants.

We lay at anchor in Nandi beach for five days and on the 12th of November, in company with the battleships steamed out of Nandi to rendezvous with Task Group 50.1. Outside of the usual amount of drills and maneuvering, the next three days were uneventful. The TAYLOR crossed the International Date Line at 2350 for the first time in almost a year since coming from Panama. The "hot dope" on the TAYLOR now was, that with our present operations with the Fifth Fleet, we had an even chance of going stateside by Christmas. Now that we were using the same time it raised our hopes all the more.

About the only interesting experience before we joined Task Group 50.1, was the day the WASHINGTON directed the TAYLOR to operate as her target during offset firing practice. At forty thousand yards we couldn't even see the WASHINGTON except for her tremendous gun



An enemy ammunition dump is left burning as tropic seasoned troops hit another beach during the early morn.



"Stand by the bag," as another signal goes up on the Flag Ship.

stroyer Squadron 21 was detached from duty in the South Pacific Forces. Now we had our chance with a fast carrier outfit, the mighty Fifth Fleet.

Squadron 21 departed from Efate escortingTask Group 53.2, consisting of the battleships WASHINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS, INDIANA, SOUTH DAKOTA and ALABAMA bound for Nandi Beach, Fiji Islands. On the first day out we encountered heavy seas and squally weather. It was a drastic change from the calm waters of the "Slot".

From Admiral Halsey came the following message: "I WISH YOU GODSPEED ON YOUR DETACHMENT FROM THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORCES. YOUR HABIT OF GETTING INTO WINNING SCRAPS WITH JAPS HAS MADE HISTORY. DESTROYER SQUADRON 21 ALWAYS WILL BE REMEMBERED WHEN GUADALCANAL, MUNDA, KULA GULF, VELLA LA VELLA AND THE SLOT ARE MENTIONED. YOU MAY BE SURE I WILL WELCOME YOU BACK WITH OPEN ARMS ANY TIME, ANY OCEAN."

November 2nd we rendezvoused with Task Group 53.3, consisting of large Essex class carriers, Independence class CVLs, and our old remodeled battleships, plus numerous cruisers and destroyers. To date, this was the largest group of ships the TAYLOR had operated with. From our station in the screen it was fourteen sea miles directly across to the other side of the formation. Task Groups conducted tactical maneuvers until the 5th of November when our group departed for the Fiji Islands.

During the full seven days of this trip, numerous drills were held for all ships; firing at sleeves towed by planes, firing at starshell bursts, flaghoist drills, tactical maneuvering and numerous others. On November 7th we sighted the islands with great anticipation, for scuttlebutt had it that the Fijis offered the best liberty outside of Australia.



Fueling at sea is a delicate operation. Here the TAYLOR has her lines over to a carrier and is receiving fuel through the large carrier hose.

flashes. The suspense was terrific as nine sixteen-inch shells sped our way. The projectiles would land a thousand yards astern, in our wake, with a terrific roar and splash. Most of us had the uncomfortable thought of where the "mighty T" would be if the WASHINGTON made a slight error in calculation. Now we knew what the Japs felt like.

At 0700 on November 15th we joined Task Group 50.1 and 50.2 which included carriers, battleships, cruisers and destroyers. We commenced fueling at sea immediately upon joining. All ships slowed to eight knots, and each ship took turns at the tankers. It required at least a day to fuel this large Task Force. To fuel at sea is a hard job and requires skill and full cooperation of all hands. Steaming at eight knots in a rough sea, the tanker and destroyer are only 20 yards apart, connected by two fuel hoses, fore and aft. Sometimes provisions and U. S. mail are taken aboard in the same manner and at the same time.

False sound contacts, planes crashing in the sea, fueling, provisioning, drills and four-hour watches constituted our days at sea during this trip. It grew very monotonous. Our Task Force was proceeding to an area between the Gilbert and Marshall Islands where we were to patrol, intercept and destroy any enemy surface or air contacts. Our group was protecting the landings and bombardment of the Gilberts during the period of November 19th through the 24th. The large carriers of our force, LEXINGTON, YORKTOWN, etc., sent many air strikes in support of D day landings on Tarawa, softening up the stubborn enemy.

Air strikes mean more than sending flights of planes against the enemy. To the task force it is a constant grind of changing courses and speeds into the wind for launching and recovering aircraft. It is a great show as the mighty air arm of the fleet hovers overhead, waiting their turn to land; the roar of flight after flight of Wildcats, SBDs and torpedo planes circling their

mother ship. Thrills like jammed landing gear or unjettisoned bombs, and that big threat of a crash into the sea are always present.

Here is where a destroyer shines. At her fastest speed she approaches the bobbing men and smoke float in the water. Then a crash party of doctor, pharmacist mate, signalmen, etc., are lowered in a boat to rescue and give aid to the waterlogged and dazed plane crew. The TAYLOR has always been a leader in this field; sharp lookouts spotting the crash, instantaneous response from the engine rooms and expert conning, have given the "T" a 4.0 record in rescuing the crews of crashed planes.

November 25th, Thanksgiving Day, was celebrated in a gala manner; fueling from the TAPPAHANNOCK, transferring survivors to the LEXINGTON and a turkey dinner with all the fixings.

On November 26th our large Task Group 50.1 was detached from present operations to proceed as previously directed. At nightfall we changed course and steamed north. This tremendous armada of carriers were to conduct a mass air attack on Kwajalein, an atoll in the Jap Mandated Marshall Islands. Kwajalein and surrounding atolls were strong fortresses covered with airfields and were a threat to our shipping.



Acting as plane guard during flight operations on the big carriers was one of our many duties.



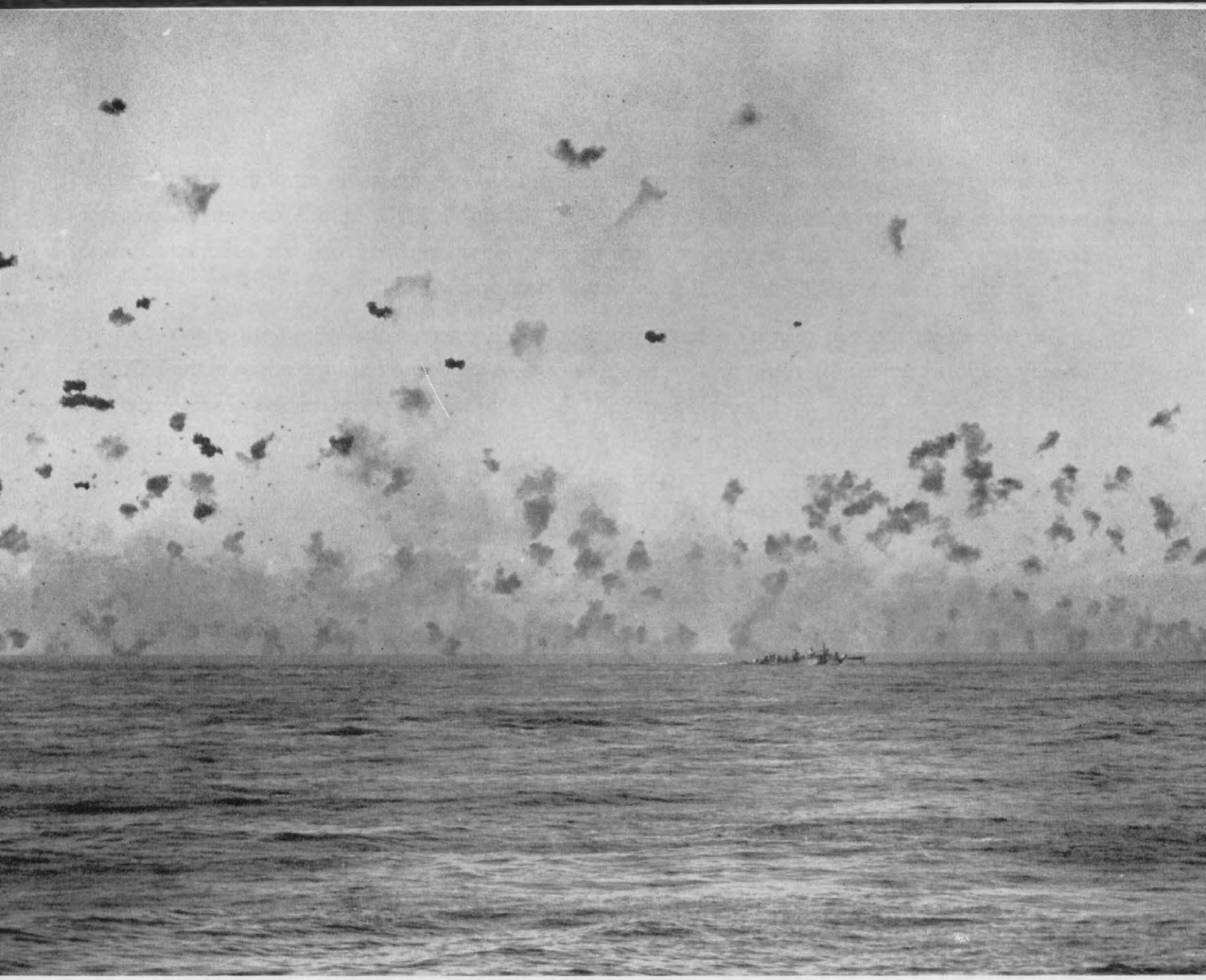
A Hellcat fighter comes in to land. The pilot has throttled back his engine and extended wing flaps in order to slow down.

The morning of December 1st will be remembered by everyone. Over the PA system the Executive Officer notified all hands that upon completion of present operations the TAYLOR was to proceed directly to the West Coast of the United States for overhaul. Whistles and cheers filled the air, and right then and there started the longest period of waiting any of us had gone through.

At daybreak on December 4th our task forces were in the center of the hundreds of islands making up the Marshalls, hostile and heavily armed. All ships turned into the wind for the first launching and this course put us on our homeward bound route. From the first crack of dawn

Sister ship of the TAYLOR, the U.S.S. HUTCHINS, has "affirm" two-blocked, indicating she is coming alongside.





Anti-aircraft fire from ships of a U. S. Task Force in Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, P. I., directed against attacking Jap planes.

until dark, strike after strike left our carriers and returned. All hands were at their battle stations and the task forces had formed in column in expectation of enemy counterattack from the air.

We were making an average speed of 20 to 25 knots, and in a rough sea. Every wave was taken over the bow and the spray thrown back over the bridge. At 1200 the first attack of torpedo planes arrived and all three planes were shot down by the LEXINGTON'S AA batteries and air coverage. More torpedo planes came in on our port beam, we opened fire with all guns, a terrific hail of lead from all ships went up to meet the oncoming Japs. They blew up one after the other and rocketed to the sea in a large, orange colored flame.

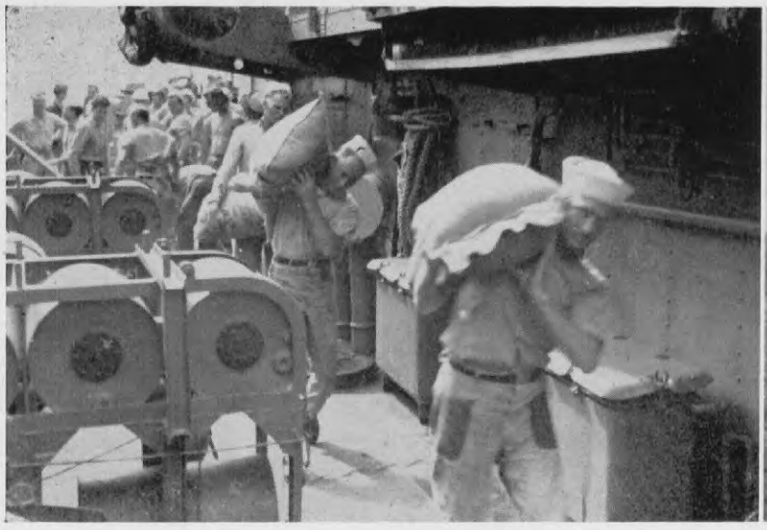
We remained at general quarters all afternoon and as night closed in all of the air strikes had returned to their carriers. During the raid at noon, the OAKLAND, an AA cruiser on our starboard bow, had fired too close to us and several shell fragments had torn our superstructure, at the captain's stateroom. Outside of that, no other damage was suffered.

The night was moonlit and all ships were silhouetted against the glimmering sea. Several enemy raiders came in all night and were shot down. A Jap torpedo plane came at the LEXINGTON low over the water and dropped its fish. As the plane came on, a shower of forty and twenty mm tracers converged on the target in a cone of bright colors. The plane escaped miraculously, but the LEX didn't. The fish caught her aft on the starboard side. This was the only damage caused by the Nips and the LEX could still make 25 knots. Only her steering was hampered.

After twenty hours of battle stations, we secured at 0158 for a little well earned sleep. The rough sea, continuous firing and the many dangers of being hit had worn our nerves thin.

The task force fueled the next day and then set sail for Pearl Harbor which meant homeward bound for Destroyer Squadron 21. The next few days were spent getting sun tans to show off at home. On December 9th we sighted Diamond Head, Oahu, T. H.

Most of the men on board had never been to Pearl Harbor before and it was with great interest for all to see the place where this terrible war had started. Admiral Nimitz, at his headquarters, greeted our squadron with this message: "SPECIAL GREETINGS TO YOU VETERANS OF THE SLOT. WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE YOU WITH US." Well, we were glad to be there; and the best Christmas present any of us ever had were our orders to the States for a forty-five day overhaul.



"All hands lay aft to the fantail to handle stores."



During long voyages the destroyers had to provision and fuel from the carriers.

We were moored alongside the NICHOLAS and in two hours we started unloading ammunition. The mail orderly came back with seventy-eight bags of Christmas mail. He spent most of the night sorting it, and the crew all night opening, reading and eating the food contents. No one could sleep well, they were too excited about going home. The next day the Squadron Commander and all the skippers of 21's tincans were called to a conference at Admiral Nimitz's headquarters where many complimentary remarks were made about our Squadron.

After fueling and taking on fresh stores, on the afternoon of December 10th, Squadron 21, consisting of the NICHOLAS, TAYLOR, LA VALLETTE, FLETCHER, RADFORD and JENKINS, left for Uncle Sugar Able. It was a distance of two thousand ninety-one miles to San Francisco and at 23 knots it would take five days but it seemed like five weeks. All was in readiness, dress blues washed and pressed, leave parties and liberty sections made out, the fifty men to be transferred were ready. Now we were waiting for the Golden Gate to loom up over the horizon.



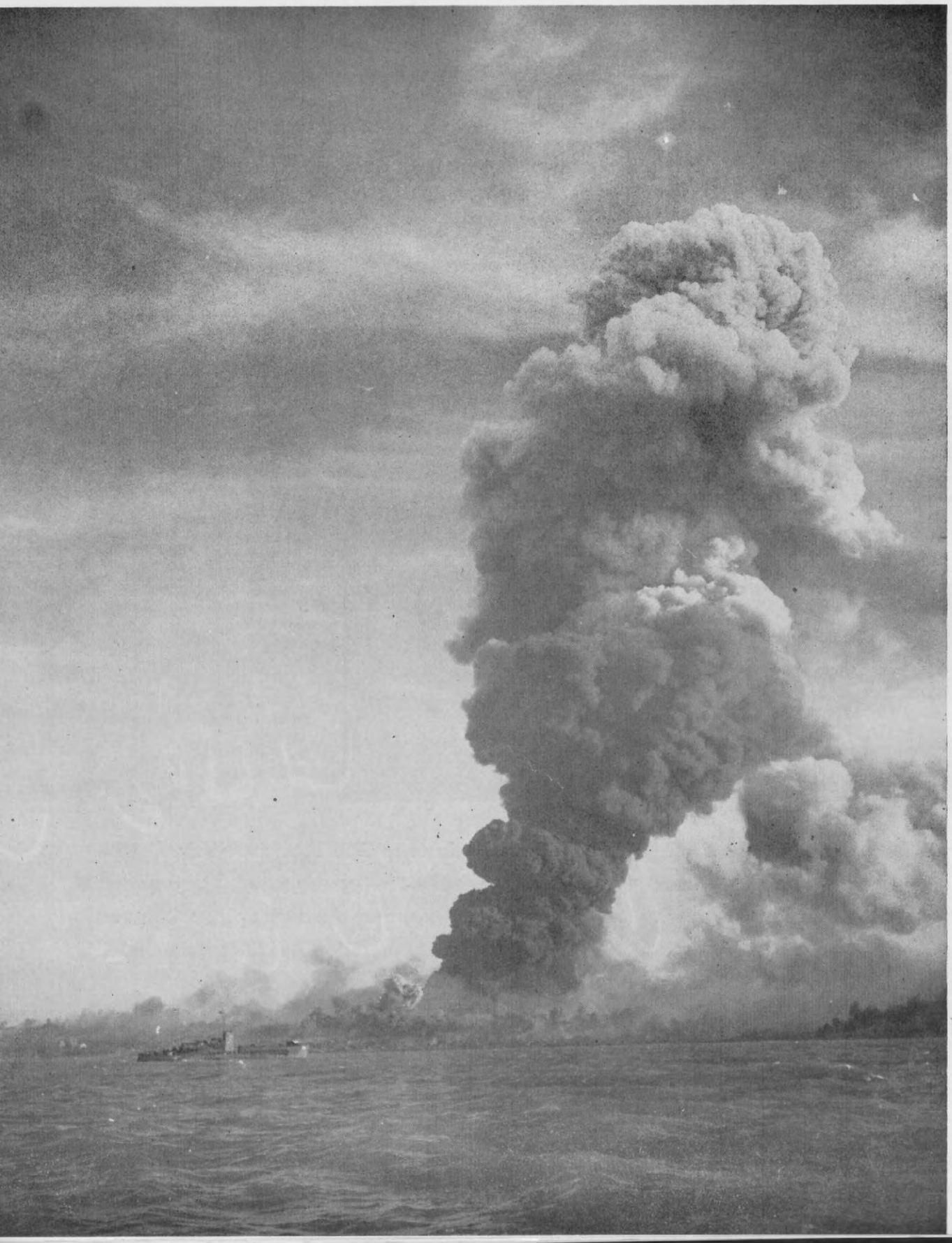
The TAYLOR during operations in the Philippines.

At dawn of December 15th the TAYLOR entered the channel to San Francisco Bay. It was freezing cold this early in the morning and foggy, but as the sun came up it cleared. There ahead of us was the Golden Gate Bridge, the most welcome sight in the world. All destroyers in column, we steamed under the Gate at 0733 and later passed Alcatraz to port. The TAYLOR proceeded to anchor off Goat Island with the Oakland Bay Bridge in full view.

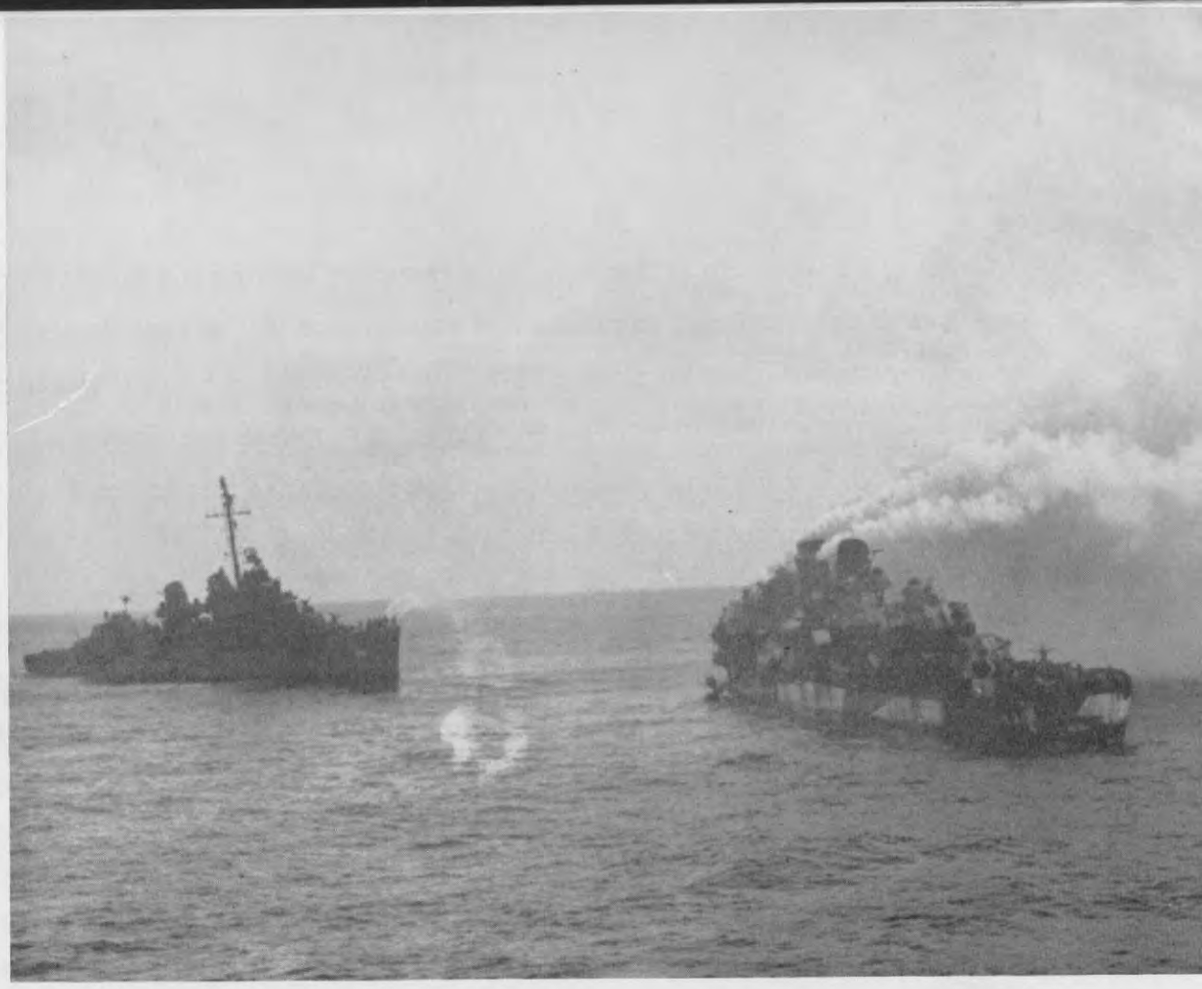
In the afternoon, the first leave party left the ship for fifteen days' leave. When the motor launch

carrying the leave party made a San Francisco pier it had difficulty. The gang were so anxious to touch U. S. soil that they all jumped the remaining two or three feet to the dock and beat it across Embarcadero Street for train tickets.

The fifty men to be transferred to New Construction left the next morning. The TAYLOR got underway that afternoon for Bethlehem Steel Yard for her overhaul. At 1945 the ammunition



A large oil fire breaks out as our five-inch projectiles hit a vital oil storage pit.



Having been hit by two Jap suicide planes, the Destroyer HAZELWOOD lies dead and smoking in the water off the coast of Okinawa. Another destroyer, its fire hoses already going full blast, can be seen closing in to render assistance to the burning and bomb-shattered ship.

lighter came alongside and with the few remaining men on board the crew unloaded all the ammo right down to the small arms. It was a big job and required about seven hours of hard labor.

There was plenty of liberty for everyone and all the different events that happened cannot be mentioned. Yard workers swarmed all over the "T" day and night. Welding, chipping hammers, air hoses and sand blasting were only a part of the woes the crew had on board. The galley was serving all kinds of foods that we never got at sea, like fresh milk, which was a luxury. On December 31st the entire first leave party came back, and the second leave party left for fifteen days. In the meantime, sixty new men, fresh out of boot camp, were logged aboard.

Towards January 15th the TAYLOR was fast turning into a new ship in looks and in crew. The second leave party returned and the rest of the days in the States were spent granting liberty. On January 16th in a formal ceremony on the fantail, Commander Benjamin J. Katz was relieved as commanding officer of the TAYLOR by Commander Nicholas J. Frank, Jr. After a farewell address by Commander Katz, he was assigned to duty in Washington, D. C.

After the remodeling work was finished and a fresh paint job, the TAYLOR went through a number of tests in San Francisco Bay, such as degousing and compass checking. Another tedious task of loading the new ammunition required another six hours time of the full crew.

On February 1st the dreaded day arrived which meant our departure from the United States. It was inevitable, but still hard to take.

Once more we were underway to do our part, leaving the famed San Francisco Harbor, proceeding to destinations unknown; just somewhere in the vast Pacific. As usual we had a rush of last minute men, but finally we stood out to sea with all hands aboard. On that afternoon, the first of February, 1944, most of us were strolling around the deck and as we passed under the Golden Gate Bridge many of us wondering if we would ever see it again and if so how many months this trip would last.

Aboard ship we had several passengers enroute to Pearl Harbor, and with a partial green crew they made quite a conjested condition about ship. Before this trip was over they were all just as seaworthy and just as salty as the old hands, for it didn't take long for one to learn the hazards and hard knocks of experience through naval combat.

On this voyage to Pearl we were not alone, as we were accompanied by two other destroyers, the TINGEY and the ABNER REED, who in later months met with misfortune. This voyage to Pearl Harbor took us about six days, in which constant drills and checking of equipment day after day were the main source of boredom.



On February 6th we arrived in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and moored alongside the TINGEY. Donning our whites we headed for liberty in the beautiful tropical islands of Hawaii. There were many of the new men who wanted to get off the ship and never return as they didn't feel as if they would ever get accustomed to sea life. For the next six days all hands were occupied with training courses and various schools located in and around the Navy base. One course took us off the coast of Hawaii for training in anti-submarine warfare and anti-aircraft practice.

February 12th saw us on our way again as we proceeded out, escorting the S.S. MORMAC. Seven days we steamed toward our destination, arriving at Kwajalien Atoll off Roi Island early in the afternoon of the 19th. We did not stay here long for we were off in the morning with several ships, escorting troop transports to establish a new island base at Eniwetok, arriving there on the 20th. Approaching the island we came across warships bombarding to the full extent of their capacity. Leaving Eniwe-

tok we joined a group of carriers and on March 3rd started towards Pearl with this group, arriving back in Hawaii on the 6th.

March 15th we sailed again for the Southwest Pacific, arriving in Purvis Bay, Solomons, several weeks later. This was a new base for many but for the old hands it was the same old stomping grounds. From Purvis we went to Milne Bay, New Guinea, anchoring off Cape Sudest on the 7th of April. For ten days we lay at anchor preparing for an operation scheduled shortly, then on the 17th one of the major operations in the South Pacific began to get rolling. Out of the channel we steamed, proceeding northward, escorting attack transports to Humbolt Bay, New Guinea for the invasion of the vital New Guinea coast. Patrolling and acting as the fighter director ship for two days occupied most of our time. On the 24th we were relieved by the SCHROEDER, who unfortunately was hit two hours later by a large number of torpedo planes. From Humbolt we retired to Merobe Harbor on the southern coast of New Guinea, from Mer-



The double outrigger type of canoe is used by the natives in and around the Philippines.

obe to Cape Cretin, from Cape Cretin to Humbolt Bay, from there to Cape Cretin and then to Buna Bay. In Buna we joined a group of LSTs and took them to the Russel Islands in the Solomon group. From Russel we went on to Noumea, New Caledonia, where we joined the rest of our squadron. In Noumea we put on a camouflage job that would really baffle the Japs. Even the members of our crew couldn't tell the bow from the stern at a short distance.

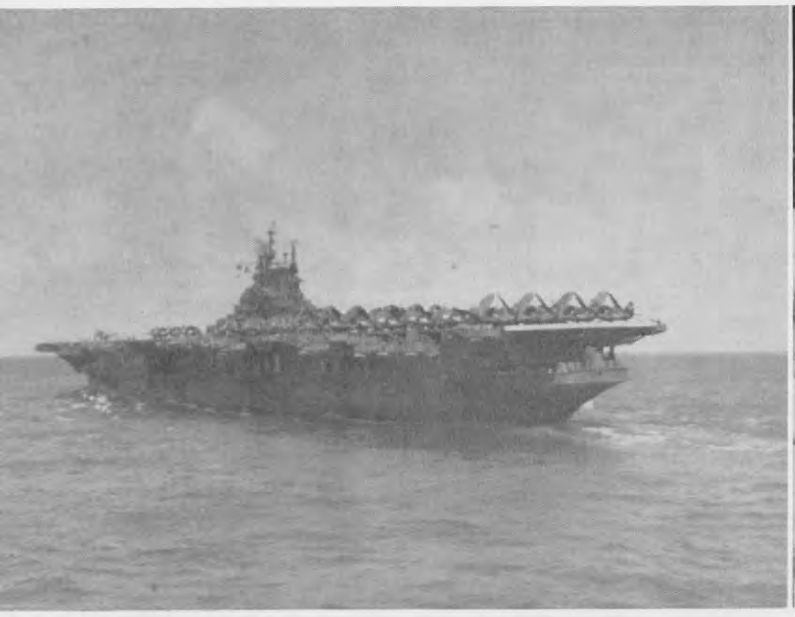
On the 25th of May we sailed out of the French Harbor for the Purvis Bay area. As we passed through the Solomons many of us recalled memories of the past when we had passed through this area under much different conditions. Leaving the Solomons we went into the Green Island group to a little island called Treasury, which was to be our home for some time to come.

Arriving in Treasury we were greeted by the most welcome gift of all, mail. After a short stay we continued on the road to Tokyo by opening the campaign for New Ireland with a shore bombardment of coastal gun emplacements. The Japs retaliated with mortar and small calibre fire which was inaccurate, causing little or no damage. After the invasion we returned to Treasury and for the next month we lingered around conducting combat drills and standard training exercises which slowly brought our still green crew into shape. Treasury was not all work because without a little recreation the fighting man is no match for his equal. Beer parties and ball games were the popular recreation, while there was always swimming and fishing. In late May again came the call to duty for DesDiv 41. We were ordered to proceed north to the equator where four Japanese destroyers were supposedly prowling around. At the time it seemed like we were finally to again meet enemy ships face to face, but upon arrival at our destination we

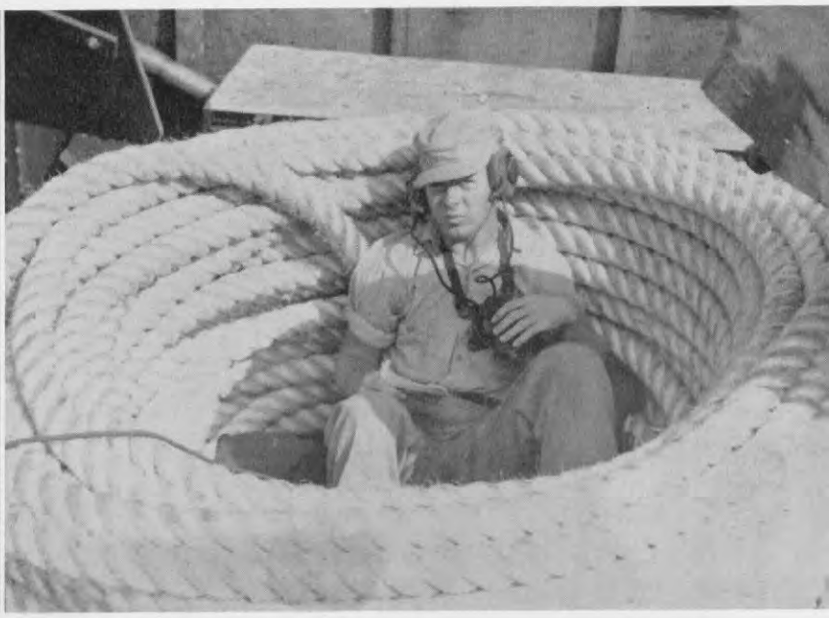


Looking out over the bow at units of the Pacific Fleet riding at anchor.

One of the large carriers whose planes took a heavy toll of Jap shipping



Condition watches were often long and tiresome.



were disappointed to find that the Japs had caught wind of our approach and moved on. From here we joined an anti-submarine group consisting of CVEs and destroyers.

On June 2nd we encountered our first air action, this trip out, when a Japanese heavy bomber came up astern. He closed to a distance of eight miles where we opened fire. Turning, he circled out to sixteen miles and started a second approach. On this run he closed to ten thousand yards and although not scoring any direct hits, our pattern of fire apparently disrupted his aim, causing him to drop his bombs aimlessly into the water astern of us.

On June 6th, "D" day in Europe, we were ordered to put into Manus Island, in the Admiralty group. The landings in France did much to boost our morale, as we all realized that the sooner it was over, over there, the sooner we would get some much needed help in the Pacific. Leaving Manus with the Hunter-Killer group, which is the name applied to an anti-submarine attack group, we went northward towards the Philippines. On the 10th one of our scout planes reported an oil slick and believed he had seen a submarine crash dive eight miles ahead of our formation. The TAYLOR was immediately directed to investigate and attack the sub if contacted. We quickly picked up the oil slick and started following it down with our anti-submarine detection gear. At 1400 that afternoon we picked up sound contact on what we believed to be a submarine. Five minutes later we dropped our first in a series of depth charges, turning we returned again and again trying definitely to make a kill. Approximately one hour after the first contact the submarine surfaced two thousand yards dead ahead. All guns came to bear and opened fire as soon as they were in position, several direct hits with the five-inch guns were noted while the automatic weapons strafed and cut the deck of the submarine to pieces. Within two minutes she went down again, this time for good. To make sure of the kill we dropped our last two depth charges over the spot where she had gone down and a few minutes later a terrific underwater explosion was heard, positively assuring us of a kill on one of Hirohito's submarines.

Some time later we returned to Treasury where we had the privilege of witnessing the Bob Hope Radio Show, sponsored by the USO. On the 19th we went into a floating drydock and began the tedious job of scraping and painting the bottom. These floating drydocks were the outcome for a much needed repair base in the far-flung outposts of our naval forces. These large cumbersome creations are just what the name implies, a floating dry dock capable of taking ships the size of a battleship. To the men that operated these ships we must give a lot of thanks, because without them our victory in the Pacific would have been delayed untold months.

From Treasury the squadron proceeded to Manus where for the next three weeks we went through simulated shore bombardment problems. On the 19th of August the TAYLOR and O'BANNON went to Aitape, New Guinea, where we set a four-day seige on the beach, throwing an average of two hundred rounds of five-inch shells on the beach per day. From Aitape we went to Humbolt Bay where we joined the rest of our squadron and went into training for further action.

On the 5th of September Rear Admiral Struble, Commander of the Seventh Fleet Amphibious Corps, came aboard the TAYLOR to observe practice landing exercises on Wadke Island. Our small formation, consisting of landing craft of various sizes and shapes, headed towards the practice beachhead with all the mock up of a real attack, because they knew that they were preparing for the big event which would come shortly thereafter. After the exercises we returned to Humbolt Bay and remained at anchor for the next few days. September 10th we teamed up with the STACK and proceeded to Wadke Island where we joined the main force of the Seventh Fleet. The next four days consisted of patrolling and waiting, waiting for the day when our troops would hit the beach and secure another island on our path to Tokyo and victory.



One of the Essex class carriers, her flight decks loaded after a busy day.

This time our mission was to attack and occupy Morotai Island in the Halmahara group. Our own particular assignment was to act as fighter director ship. In this duty we had control of all aircraft operating in the area. We kept track of all planes, friendly and enemy. It was our job to see that our planes met and destroyed all opposition before it reached the formation ."D" day was the 15th of September. After a strong bombardment by our Seventh Fleet ships and numerous air strikes against the beachhead, the jungle hardened troops hit the beach with scattered and light resistance. This was what they had been training for and they did their job with clock-like precision. That night and most of the next day we patrolled back and forth just off the beach, prepared to meet any and all enemy opposition but none appeared. Late in the evening of the 16th our squadron formed up and took twelve LSTs and three LCIs in hand and headed out of



Some of our friends down in New Guinea pose for a formal picture.

the district, retiring towards New Guinea. We arrived in Wadke on the 19th and quickly anchored. Four days later we were off again, taking a group of LSTs back up to Morotai. The only excitement that occurred during this trip were the constant reports of bogies or unidentified aircraft from the radar operators.

While patrolling off Morotai, on the 28th of the month, we went through a small scale air attack which was directed primarily at the troops on the island. Two more days of patrolling and our unit was reformed as we started back towards New Guinea. We had no more than formed when "Condition Red" was flashed from the beach, another air raid was on the way. Although we experienced none of the attack, intense AA fire could be seen coming from our emplacements on the beach. About half way to New Guinea a PBY patrol plane was forced to land

in the water due to engine trouble. We were directed to go to his aid and after investigating we decided to take him in tow as his destination was close to ours. We were quite a sight, proceeding along at a maximum speed of nine knots, with the damaged PBY towing along behind. On the 4th of October we came into Woendi Bay and dropped our passenger at the seaplane base.

The next two weeks saw us operating back and forth from Hollandia to Finschaven down in New Guinea. On the 18th of October Task Force 77 formed, consisting of several cruisers and destroyers. This operation was to be the initial landings of MacArthur's troops in the Philippines. The Island of Leyte was chosen for this delicate operation and it was the duty of the ships in our task force to screen and cover our troops landing on the beach. This was going to be one of the toughest jobs we had tackled in many a month. The Philippines had been in Japanese hands for nearly three years and opposition from both air and surface was expected. Following a pre-dawn bombardment by units of the Sevenh Fleet several divisions of the Sixth Army made the landing under heavy mortar and artillery fire. At 0700 the cruiser PHOENIX reported enemy aircraft overhead while our radar screen showed several unidentified planes in the vicinity. At 0800 a smoke screen was laid over the transport area and just in time at that, because at 0823 enemy planes made a heavy raid on the area. At the beginning of the raid we came into the transport area and began to lay our own smoke screen, but as the raid broke up we ceased making the smoke. Laying smoke over a heavily congested area like the transport area does not necessarily protect the ships from the raiders, but it does partially hide them and makes precision bombing inaccurate. Again that afternoon the transports underwent another air attack with negligible results. Later that evening we went into San Pedro Bay and anchored for the night.

All commands were notified to be on the alert and prepared for immediate action, as possible surface engagement might occur that evening. A Japanese Task Force had been sighted in Mindinao Straits. At 0235 on the morning of the 25th all ships in the area were notified that our surface forces had engaged an enemy task force in the Davao Sea and Surigao Strait. Enemy forces were reported to consist of two battleships, two cruisers, and several destroyers. 0425 we got underway and were ordered to patrol the entrance to Leyte Gulf. Our only contact with the enemy that night was with her aircraft. At 0600 reports came over the radio that the enemy was slowly retreating down Surigao Strait. 0800 a second report came in stating that a second Japanese Task Force had engaged our surface forces just to the south of us. We were then ordered to join forces with our unit under attack to the south. 0836 two Jap planes

Masterminds on the bridge plan out the day's operations.



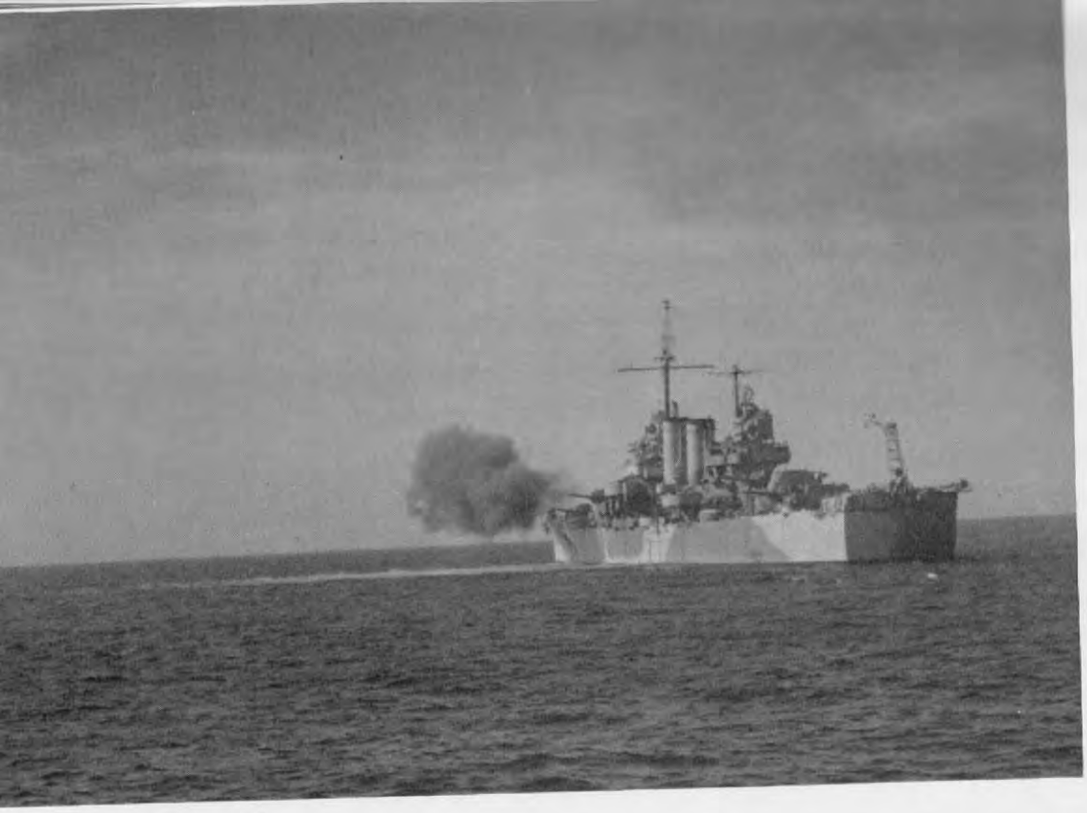
approached overhead out of firing range. Enemy action broke off to the south and we returned to our patrol. 1119 three enemy aircraft commenced attack on our ship from the port quarter, all guns opened fire as the planes passed overhead causing no damage. As the planes went off over the bow our five-inch battery clipped the tail off one, dropping him into the water for our first tally of the battle. 1130 radio reports enemy forces of four battleships, eight cruisers, and several smaller craft were attacking our escort carrier group. The enemy was divided into two columns eleven miles from us. Our entire squadron was immediately ordered to their assistance, but action was broken off prior to our arrival. It was in this battle that the destroyer JOHNSON and the carriers ST. LO and GAMBIER BAY were sunk. The next day action between our forces and the enemy continued although we were not engaged ourselves. 2200 on the night of October 26th our squadron, consisting of the NICHOLAS, TAYLOR and McDONEOUGH, formed column on the NICHOLAS in battle disposition to carry out a night torpedo attack against enemy forces operating near Dinagat Island. As usual our bad luck continued and contact with the enemy forces was not obtained, in fact, throughout the entire battle our only contact with the Japanese Task Force was on the radar screen. 0400 the transport area underwent another air attack without serious mishap to our own ships. 0800 a twin-engine fighter, later identified as a "Dinah," passed overhead, out of range. 0845 an enemy fighter returned, diving on the TAYLOR, all guns opened fire, causing the plane to turn away, hugging the cast as she pulled away. The rest of the day was spent patrolling our station near the entrance to Leyte Gulf. Early in the morning of October 27th we joined the CVE group that had suffered such terrific damage the day before. 0700 several Nip fighters engaged in a dogfight with our carrier planes directly overhead. Again our planes showed superiority in maneuverability and skill as the attacking force was quickly dispersed. 0830 another Jap dive bomber commenced a dive on our ship, but our accurate and rapid fire caused him to drop his bombs harmlessly. Later in the day the Australian cruiser SHROPSHIRE and the U. S. cruiser PHOENIX joined our group of CVEs and escorts. The rest of the day and most of the next remained uneventful. At 1500 on the afternoon of the 28th we proceeded into San Pedro Bay and anchored, but no sooner had we anchored than "Condition Red" was set in the bay and we were ordered to get underway again. The next

Native villages throughout the Pacific were the same. Shown here is one of these villages in New Guinea.



Carriers of the Third Fleet riding at anchor.





One of our many light cruisers during a shore bombardment.

two hours we kept pretty much on the move, trying to avoid contact with the enemy airforce. We passed one floating dead Jap in the water which was quite a sorrowful sight. The following two days were unoccupied and on the 30th we joined the cruiser LOUISVILLE and started for Seadler Harbor, Manus, Admiralty group. November 1st we were joined by the old Pearl Harbor battleships MARYLAND and WEST VIRGINIA, the cruisers DENVER and COLUMBIA, and the carriers SANGAMAN, NATOMA BAY, KADASHAN BAY, MARCUS ISLAND, SAVO BAY, OMNEY BAY, MANILA BAY, PETROF BAY and CHENANGO, plus seventeen destroyers. On the 3rd day of the month we arrived in Manus where we remained for five days until the eighth when the NICHOLAS, ourselves and the cruiser ST. LOUIS got underway for Ulithi, a small lagoon anchorage east of the Philippines. From Ulithi we went on to Kossol Rhoads in the Palaus where we were joined by the original group we had gone to Manus with. On the 14th, back we went to Leyte Gulf and assumed our old patrol station just off the entrance to the gulf. The 17th and 18th we witnessed a massive air attack, by the Japanese, on the transport area and a single attack on the cruiser DENVER. The next week was taken up with numerous patrols and several air attacks which was the beginning of the ill-famed suicide attacks by Japanese planes. The Japanese, seeing that our anti-aircraft fire was so intense that their pilots were incapable of getting through and dropping their load of bombs, resorted to a fanatical scheme of suicidal attacks. The planes, loaded with bombs, would make a normal diving run at their target and drop their bombs regardless of the prospects of hitting the target. After unloading his load of bombs the pilot then tried to dive his plane into the ship or ships nearby. At first these tactics were rough and unorganized but as time progressed and the attacks seemed to bring better results than their bombing, special suicide squadrons were organized and their pilots considered great heroes. On November 23rd we had our first taste of this suicide attack when one Judy, a single-engined fighter, dove out of a cloud at us. Fortunately for us he fell short of his target and

caused no damage. Again on the 27th the entire Task Force 77 was taken under attack by this special suicide corps but the results of the attack were poor considering the number of Japanese planes shot down. About noon of this same day we sighted a single-engine fighter snooping about the clouds. All guns were brought to train and the next instant he came diving out of the clouds at an angle of seventy-five degrees. All guns opened fire but the dive was so steep that few guns could come to train on him. Again our proverbial luck was with us and his bomb fell short, twenty-five yards off our bow. As the plane, later identified as a Judy, pulled out of his dive all our automatic weapons came to bear on him and the combined fire of the 20 mm and 40 mm shot his tail away. The plane went into a slight spin and hit the water a short distance off the bow. The skipper brought the ship alongside the wreckage and we recovered tactical information from the body of the pilot and his records in the plane. On the 29th, after delivering the material from the plane to the authorities on the beach, we joined Task Force 77 and were immediately put on the alert for suicide attackers. A little before noon several "Vals" approached over the formation and started their suicidal dives on the larger ships in the center of the formation. One plane, diving at the DENVER, came directly overhead and was caught in our light machine gun fire, dropping her before she reached her target. Later that afternoon units of the task force were ordered to proceed on to Manus for repairs. At the time our engines were acting up and we were also ordered to join this group now consisting of the battleship COLORADO, cruiser ST. LOUIS and four destroyers. Just after leaving the main group an air raid consisting of eight to ten planes attacked shipping in Leyte Gulf. The entire formation was attacked by our carrier planes and a major dog fight developed over the gulf. Several bomb splashes could be seen amongst the ships and every now and then a flaming suicide mass could be seen coming down out of the sky. At 1809 the battleship MARYLAND was hit by one suicide and a large yellow flame emerged from her superstructure deck. She reported that no serious



Relaxing in port. Movies were shown at every opportunity when in port.



The NICHOLAS and O'BANNON riding at anchor.

damage occurred, although casualties ran high, due mainly to the explosion on board ship. Late that night we pulled out of Leyte Gulf leaving behind us memories of one of the greatest naval battles in the history of our Navy. From tabulations later received as to the results of the battle we can now see that this battle was the final stand of the Imperial Japanese Navy, a stand that proved to be disastrous and brought about the complete ruination of the Nipponese fleet. We also later learned that the army made their last major stand on this little island in the Philippines. Between the Army and the Navy the battle of Leyte Gulf proved to be the beginning of the end which brought about complete victory for the allies.

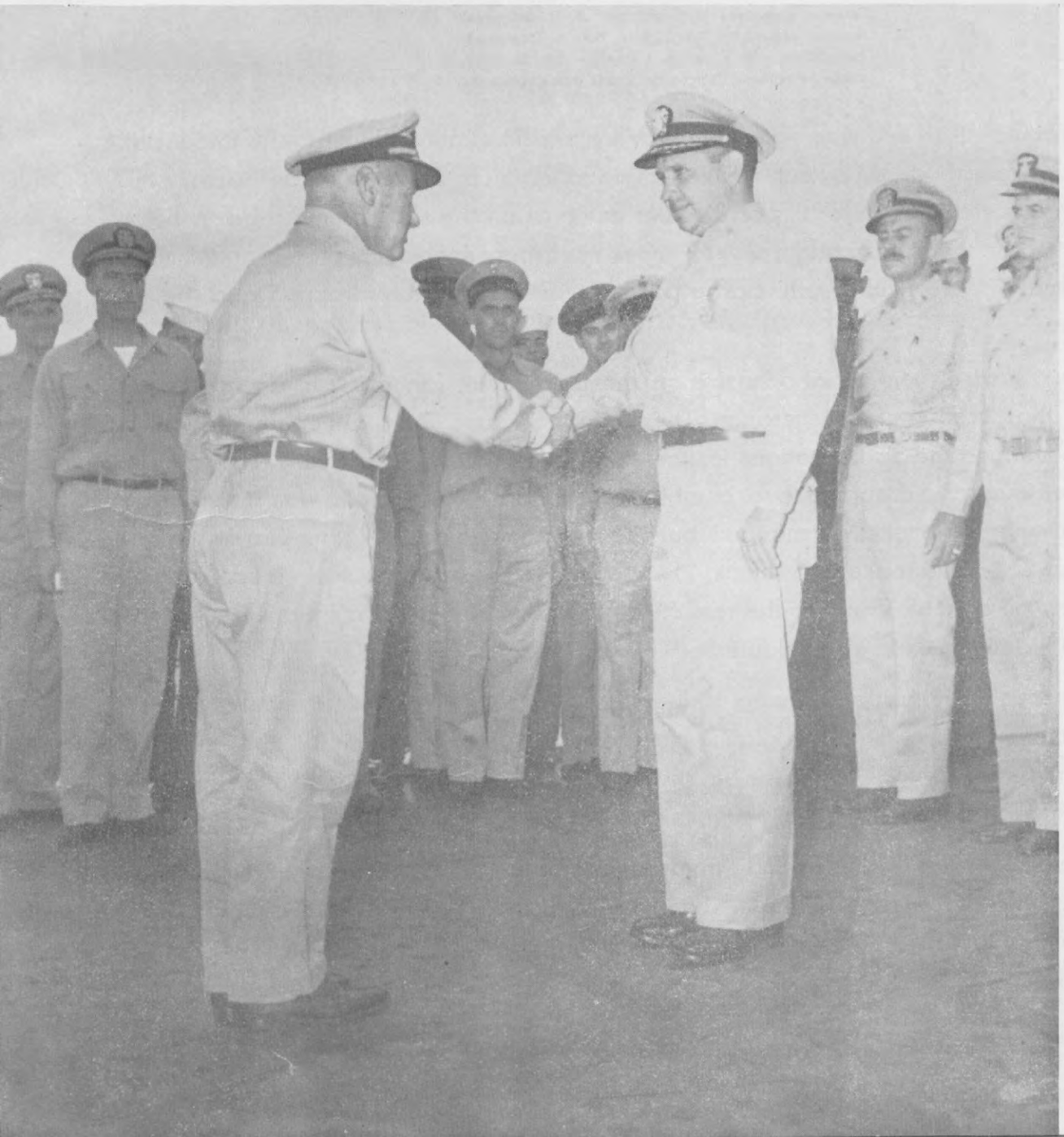
After reaching Manus we underwent an overhaul alongside the tender DIXIE and enjoyed a much-needed rest, with recreation and beer parties on the beach. The 15th of December found us underway with the battleships COLORADO, MISSISSIPPI, CALIFORNA and PENNSYLVANIA headed for Kossol Rhoads. Christmas Day, 1944, was spent at anchor in Kossol with our holiday routine interrupted by a false air raid shortly after noon. The day after Christmas we took the MISSISSIPPI and NEW MEXICO to Leyte, where we anchored just off the air strip in Tacloban. By this time life around the gulf was back to normal and the fight on the island had moved on to the other side, near the Village of Ormoc. Our only reminder of the current action was a nightly snooper raid which broke up our sleep and caused slight damage on the air strip, from the bombing and strafing runs.

The TAYLOR ushered in the New Year of 1945 while at anchor in Leyte Gulf. The traditional holiday dinner was served, followed by a discussion of the coming Lingayen Gulf operation. The gulf was chosen for the main point of invasion, from which the famous drive to Manila was launched by General MacArthur's forces. The chief concern over enemy opposition was the Japanese Kamakaze Corps. The Nips had started these suicide tactics during the Leyte Gulf Campaign and increased steadily in numbers until every enemy plane was a potential suicide bomber.

On the afternoon of January 4th, Task Force 77 was formed, consisting of the cruisers PHOENIX, BOISE, MONTEPELIER and DENVER, accompanied by the destroyers NICHOLAS, TAYLOR, O'BANNON, FLETCHER, HOPEWELL, RADFORD, EDWARDS and COGHLAN. This force, under the direction of Vice-Admiral Thomas Kincaid (Commander Seventh Fleet) was to be the interception fleet in the event of any Japanese surface or undersea activities.

The enemy's opposition started the second day underway. The TAYLOR'S helmsman sighted two torpedoes on our starboard bow, headed for the BOISE, which was carrying General MacArthur and his staff. The Captain notified the BOISE by TBS (inter-ship communication) in time for her to maneuver out of the torpedoes' path. The task force executed an emergency turn in order to place the TAYLOR in a position to protect the formation and launch an attack. With all battle stations manned and ready, the TAYLOR started the initial run. One depth charge attack brought the sub to the surface. The lookouts spotted the sub as it broke water dead astern. The Captain maneuvered the ship into position for a ram and the helmsman steadied

Rear Admiral R. S. Berkey presents Commander Frank the Legion of Merit for action against the enemy during July, 1944. The next day the TAYLOR rammed and sank a Japanese midget submarine between Mindanao and Negros Islands in the Philippines.







Between operations Lt. Commander H. H. deLaureal reported aboard the TAYLOR for duty as Commanding Officer. In a formal ceremony on the forecastle he relieved Commander Frank of his command.

on a collision course. The sub was several hundred yards dead ahead, navigating under difficulty due to damages rendered by our depth charges, when a TBF Avenger made a dive bombing run, scoring a near miss. Several seconds later our bow hit the sub, forcing it down below the keel. The sub hit the ship's bottom several times, shearing off the dome protecting the ship's underwater sound gear. A full depth charge pattern was immediately dropped and the run was completed.

The Japanese started their aerial offensive on the morning of January 7th, and continued their raids for the duration of the operation. The first attack came early in the morning, before the crew had manned the battle stations for the usual morning alert. An Irving (Jap bomber) made a surprise attack, dropping two bombs close aboard. The bomber was out of range before our anti-aircraft battery was manned, but one of our carrier based fighter planes downed the plane before he could make a re-attack. The ships took their anti-aircraft station and the raids continued on a small scale for the rest of the morning. All attacking planes were shot down and the formation suffered no damage.

That afternoon a large group of enemy planes approached the formation and launched a large-scale suicide attack. One of the planes made two dive-bombing runs on the PHOENIX and tried to crash dive her on the third, but the cruiser's gunners shot off the tail assembly and the pilot, having lost control of his plane, missed his target.

Another member of the "Divine Wind" made a suicide attack on the cruiser DENVER, but before his dive was completed, the combined fire power of the DENVER and TAYLOR disintegrated the plane in mid-air.





Subic City

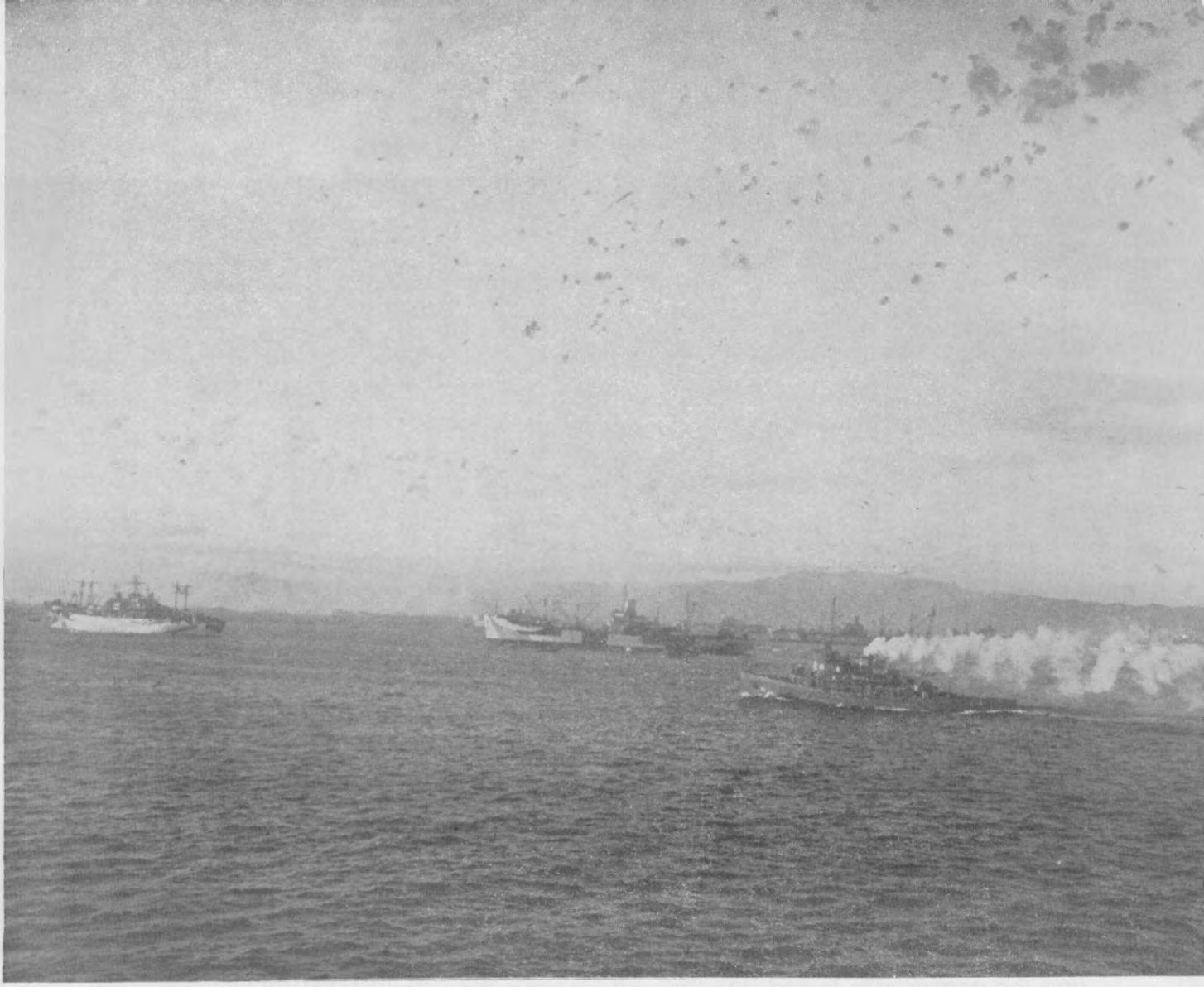
Task Force 77's most unfortunate incidents occurred the same day. The transport CALLAWAY was hit on the bridge by one of the deadly suicide planes. Shortly afterward a Jap fighter plane flew through a heavy barrage of anti-aircraft fire and successfully crashed into the flight deck of the escort carrier KITKUN BAY. All unnecessary personnel were immediately transferred and the carrier was towed into the gulf for protection. The KITKUN BAY was sent to the States for repairs and returned to the Pacific in time to participate in the carrier strikes on Okinawa.

On January 26th, during the last phase of the campaign, Lt. Commander H. H. deLaureal reported aboard the TAYLOR for duty as commanding officer, relieving Commander N. J. Frank, Jr. Our new captain was transferred to the TAYLOR from the destroyer JENKINS during operational exercises at sea. The TAYLOR'S third commanding officer was welcomed by all hands as he came aboard. Most captains obtain a nickname at one time or another in their naval careers, and Captain deLaureal was soon referred to as Captain "D".

On the morning of February 6th, Commander N. J. Frank, Jr., was relieved of his command by Lt. Commander H. H. deLaureal, in a formal ceremony held aboard the TAYLOR. Immediately following his farewell address, Commander Frank was detached from the TAYLOR and proceeded to the United States for temporary duty and further assignment.

Soon afterward, the TAYLOR got underway for a two-day anti-submarine patrol. This was our first assignment under our new commanding officer. Upon release from this patrol, we headed north for Subic Bay.

We entered Subic Bay for the first time on February 9th. In the center of the entrance to the bay lies Grande Island. Grande is a small island which was a concrete underground fortress



Shell-Canopy protects invasion fleet off Luzon. Thousands of black and gray puffs, denoting the explosions of anti-aircraft missiles, blankets the sky over Lingayen Gulf as ships of the U. S. invasion armada which moved in to the vital Philippines' stronghold go about the manifold tasks of an amphibious operation.

before the coming of the Japanese in 1941. It was evacuated before the surrender of the Philippines, and its numerous gun emplacements were dismantled to prevent their use by the enemy.

Subic Bay was the new home base for the Seventh Fleet. The harbor is small, but for all practical purposes it was an ideal anchorage for an interception fleet covering the entrance to Manila Bay. Ships can steam in and out any hour, day or night, navigating by nothing but radar. The main advantage being that the entire fleet could clear the harbor in less than thirty minutes.

Two villages surround the colorful bay, Subic and Olangapo. There are no modern buildings in either of the villages. The people live in grass huts elevated several feet above the ground. However, some of the well to do set live in wooden bungalows and Spanish styled

homes. The main attractions were the small primitive cafes, where fried chicken, eggs, fresh fruits and vegetables could be purchased. This was a welcome treat after subsisting on a dehydrated diet for many months.

Grande Island was chosen for the fleet's recreation center. The bombers had demolished most of the buildings and damaged the underground fortress. Wreckage and large projectiles literally covered the beach. Several of the remaining buildings were mined with cleverly constructed booby traps, which caused several casualties among the fleet's personnel. However, volunteer demolition crews cleared the island and it was converted into the fleet's favorite recre-

U.S.S. LONGSHAW, a 2100-ton destroyer, a later class design of the same tonnage as the TAYLOR.



ation center. Baseball diamonds, basketball courts, and a stage for the USO shows were constructed; diving boards were placed along the island's natural swimming pool. During our stay in Subic Bay the TAYLOR'S baseball team emerged the Squadron's champs.

For one of the engineering officers, our arrival at Subic was a happy occasion. He had been a resident of Subic and Manila before he left for Pearl Harbor in 1941. When the Japs took over the islands his family was interned in the Santo Tomas prison camp and he had been unable to establish communication since the enemy's occupation. Before Manila was completely secured he was on several days' leave and paid a surprise visit to his family. After the happy reunion ,he returned to duty and his family sailed for the United States.

LCIs and small craft hit another beachhead, bringing complete victory nearer. These small craft are the mainstay of the amphibious force.



On February 13th, the Seventh Fleet steamed into the entrance of Manila Bay for the initial bombardment of the island fortress of Corregidor. The cruiser BOISE fired the first shot in the campaign to recapture the famous island surrendered to the Japanese by General Wainwright in the beginning of the Pacific conflict. Shortly afterward all ships were firing coordinated salvos at the island's large gun emplocements. During the first phase of the attack no enemy return fire was encountered.

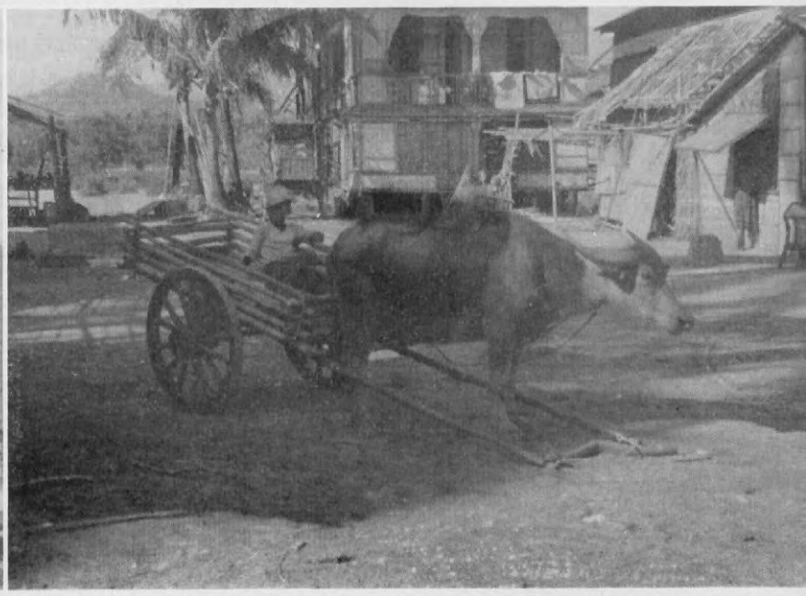
The bombardment was interrupted at designated intervals to permit large waves of B24 Liberators and A20 Havocs to make bombing runs on the island's summit. The hard-hitting bombers

Action off Corregidor where the small YMS mine sweeper was hit and sunk by shore batteries, later the Destroyer HOPEWELL went in to pick up survivors and was hit amidship by several large projectiles.





Thatched homes built on stilts were common throughout the Philippines.



Ox carts were the only means of transportation.



Captain "D".



U.S.S. JENKINS

created so much dust and smoke that the island was completely hidden and the surface ships were forced to cease fire until the targets again became visible.

One of the A20 Havocs, on a photographic mission, made a forced landing in the bay several hundred yards off our starboard bow. The motor whaleboat was dispatched with the ship's doctor and a pharmacist mate to rescue the survivors. The pilot and his photographer were brought aboard uninjured.



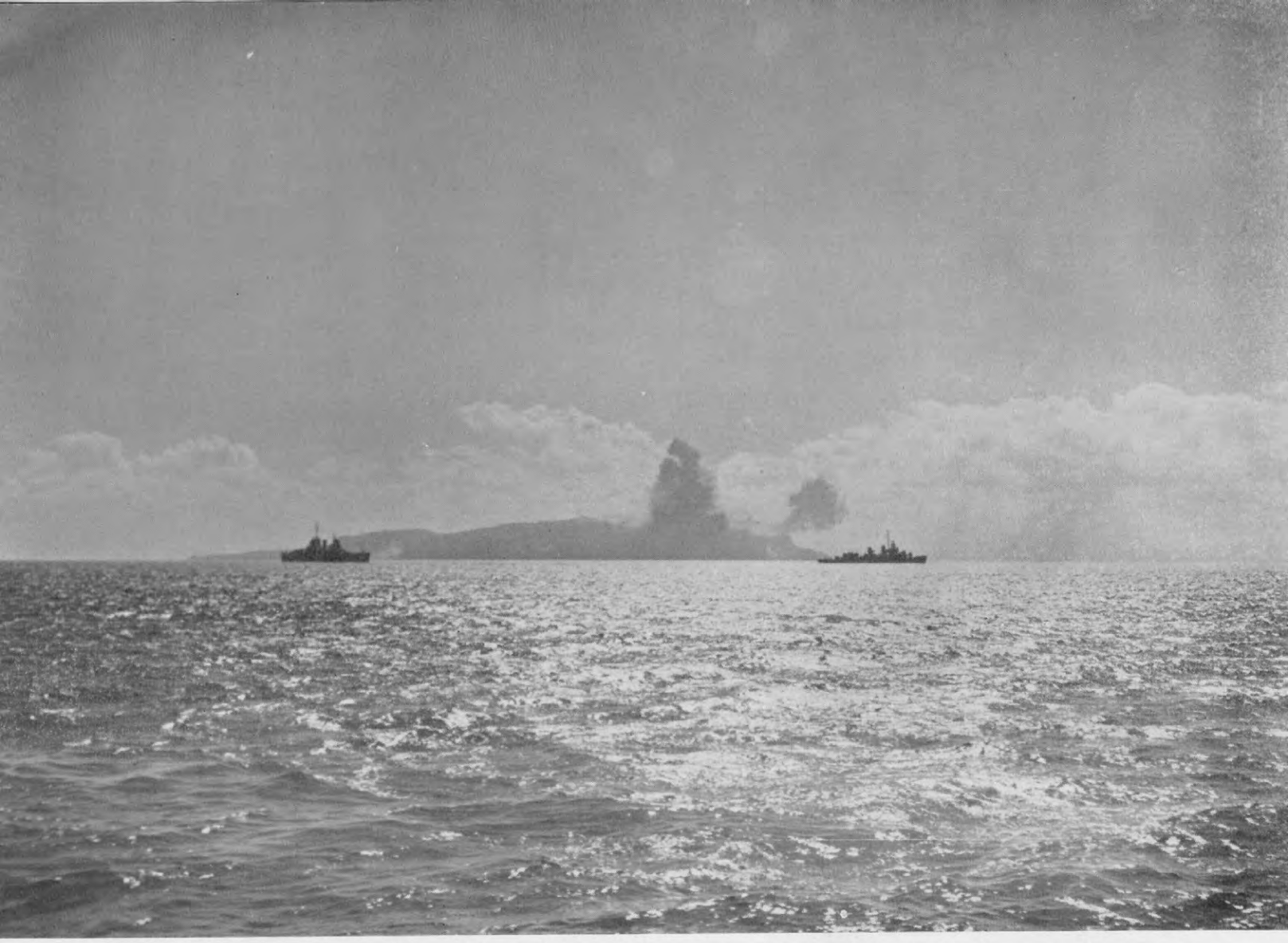
Corregidor under heavy bombardment.

The U.S.S. HOPEWELL, while picking up survivors from a sinking minesweeper, was taken under fire by a combined battery of guns from the northern cliffs of Corregidor and the U.S.S. FLETCHER while aiding the HOPEWELL in her duel with the shore batteries, was hit and her number one five-inch gun mount was destroyed. When the survivors of the minsweeper were picked up the tw oships moved out to care for casualties and the TAYLOR steamed in and finished off the remaining batteries. Most of Corregidor's guns were buried in the rocky cliffs and were entirely invisible. The destroyers were ordered in to purposely draw the enemy's fire so that the batteries could be located and destroyed.

The U.S.S. LA VALLETTE, while covering close inshore minesweeping operations in Mariveless Harbor, was put out of action by a mine. The U.S.S. RADFORD went to the aid of the LA VALLETTE, but before she could pull alongside, she was hit by an electrical controlled mine in an area already swept by the minesweepers. The TAYLOR started in to aid the two stricken members of Squadron 21, but was ordered to keep clear. The damaged destroyers were later towed back to base by salvage tugs.

On the fourth day of the operation, the amphibious rocket boats made their attack on Bataan. The rockets left the boats with a slight whizzing sound, flew through the air like a flock of birds and hit the beach, creating destruction surpassed only by the new atomic bomb. The infantry ladened landing craft followed with MacArthur's forces, determined to avenge their predecessors who held the peninsula until they were ordered to retreat to Corregidor. Some of the landing craft never reached the beach. They were hit by shore batteries and more of the deadly electrically controlled mines.

The fifth day of the campaign brought the historic landing of the veteran 503rd Paratrop Bat-



Pre-landing bombardment of Corregidor Island by the Cruiser BOISE and the Destroyer TAYLOR.

talion. Jumping from C47 Skytrains, the troopers landed amidst concentrated machine gun fire that caught them in mid-air. A small percentage of the troops missed the small island altogether and landed in the bay, but all were rescued by a fast PT boat squadron. The air-borne landing was coordinated by a sea-borne landing of American Rangers on Corregidor's inboard shoreline. While the Paratroopers were battling the fanatical Japs on the summit, the Rangers were swarming up the cliffs, dodging machine gun fire from hidden nests in the rocks. The Nips set off charges in caves that had been sealed, in an attempt to cover the advancing Rangers with tons of dirt and rock, but the largest percentage backfired in the caves and an estimated thousand or more of the sons of heaven perished by their own hands.

Upon completion of the joint landing, the Navy was ordered to abandon the Corregidor operation and concentrate its large guns on the Cavite shoreline. The bombardment of Cavite was only a one-day affair, but large storehouses, ammunition dumps and gun emplacements were

destroyed. The pilot that was spotting for the TAYLOR complimented the ship on its accurate bombardment and jokingly kidded us about the destruction of one friendly horse.

On February 24th, the TAYLOR returned to Corregidor with Rear Admiral Struble (Commander Seventh Fleet Amphibious Force, on an inspection tour and conference with Brigadier General Chase (Commander Army Occupation Forces Corregidor). Following the tour of Corregidor the TAYLOR carried Admiral Struble to Lingayen Gulf to complete the tour of inspection.

On March 2nd, the TAYLOR entered the drydock in Subic Bay to repair the sound dome that was destroyed during our encounter with the submarine during the Lingayen Gulf campaign.

The TAYLOR left for Mindoro Island on March 5th, to take charge of a task unit of minesweepers and then proceed to Zamboanga on the south shore of Mindanao.

While enroute to Mindanao, the TAYLOR went out to investigate a large two-masted sailboat sighted ahead of the formation. The boat was flying the American Ensign and the flag of

Heralding the dawn of a new day for Okinawa the first gleam of the sun on Easter morning reveals ships of the huge U. S. Navy task force which opened the campaign for the Ryukyus Island with an obliterating barrage on April 1, 1945.





An A-20 plane was shot down while photographing Corregidor during operations in early February, 1945. Our motor whale boat was dispatched to pick up survivors.



Brass cases litter the deck after the bombardment of Cebu.

the Philippine Commonwealth. Investigation disclosed that the twenty-one occupants were Filipinos sailing in search of food. The TAYLOR furnished several boxes of "K" rations to help tide them over. The Filipinos stated that there were no Japs on their island.

Our task unit entered Basilian Strait on the morning of March 8th. Two natives were encountered in a canoe. One of the Filipinos was brought aboard, and informed us in broken English that some of the Japs fled to the hills when the American ships entered the strait.

The TAYLOR was assigned to cover the minesweeping unit and render counter battery fire when required. While conducting a close inshore bombardment, the TAYLOR was straddled by shells from a combined shore battery. Captain deLaureal ordered all engines emergency back full and the TAYLOR backed down just as three more salvos landed in the spot that she had occupied several seconds earlier.

During the joint minesweeping operations and surface ship bombardment, General Kenny's

B24 Liberators were making almost continuous bombing runs on the invasion beach. On one of these runs two squadrons of Liberators crossed the target simultaneous one above the other. One of the bombs from the higher squadron hit the leading plane in the formation flying at a lower altitude. The plane burst into flames and in a few seconds was just a ball of fire falling over the target area. One of the airmen was thrown clear of the plane and as his chute opened the Nip machine gunners on the beach opened up in an attempt to catch him in mid-air. The man landed safely in the water and several seconds later a daring pilot in one of the cruiser-based sea-planes landed, picked up the only survivor, dodged the enemy's machine gun fire and returned to his ship uninjured.

The rocket boats launched their usual pre-invasion attack. Almost before the smoke had cleared, the landing craft hit the beach, discharging artillery, tanks, troops and supplies. The TAYLOR had a ringside seat to a well-organized land offensive. When the beachhead was secured the TAYLOR returned to her anchorage in Subic Bay.

On March 15th, the TAYLOR was called back to Corregidor for a bombardment under the direction of the American troops on the island. Our objective was a series of caves and concrete blockhouses in which the Japs had set up a heavy machine gun cross-fire that was impenetrable to General Chase's forces on the island. The TAYLOR moved into 20 millimeter range and picked out the targets. The combined fire from the TAYLOR'S main battery and heavy machine gun battery sealed all the caves and destroyed all the blockhouses in a few hours. After the completion of the operation, General Chase came aboard to visit. He congratulated the TAYLOR on a swift and efficient bombardment. This was the last action taken against

The small Yard Minesweepers (YMS) proved very effective in sweeping the harbors prior to the entrance by heavier units of the fleet. Here they are seen sweeping Mariveles Harbor at the foot of Bataan Peninsula, Luzon, P. I.



The Destroyer LA VALLETTE was hit in Mariveles by an electrically controlled mine which are nearly impossible to clear as they rest directly on the bottom of a bay.



the famous "Rock", and the remaining Japs, if any, were completely sealed in and left to commit hari-kari or starve.

Before dawn on the 24th of March the TAYLOR got underway from her anchorage in Subic Bay and jointed in formation with Task Group 74.3, composed of the cruisers PHOENIX, BOISE and HMAS HOBART, screened by the destroyers TAYLOR, NICHOLAS, O'BANNON, ABBOT,



Admiral Russell Berkey, U.S.N., hails a passing destroyer directing her to concentrate her fire on a certain target during the bombardment of Corregidor.

FLETCHER and JENKINS. We were off again to secure another island on the road to victory, this time we were enroute to participate in amphibious assault landing on Talisay, Cebu Island in the Philippines.

The next morning the Australian destroyer Warramunga joined the formation. Early the following morning the ABBOT reported a native boat off her port bow and shortly thereafter several other boats were picked up by other units of our formation. The extent of Japanese mines in this area was not known, but the water was shallow and the possibility of mines was great. We went to general quarters shortly after midnight to secure watertight compartments in the event of a casualty. Just about dawn we came into contact with the unit of minesweepers that were to precede us into the bay. Many small native canoes were observed coming toward us from the beach and the minesweepers reported that they believed the boats to contain Japanese with possible suicidal intentions. However, a closer investigation by our ship revealed them to contain native families leaving the beach to avoid being under the fire of the guns on the bombarding ships. Just before sunrise the PHOENIX let go a salvo of six-inch shells that opened the campaign to recapture Cebu Island. After an intense but brief bombardment, the rocket boats launched their attacks. Before the smoke had cleared the army hit the beach with tanks, artillery and troops. They met little opposition on the beachhead as the bombardment from the surface ships had either killed most of the Japs or driven them into the hills.

Late that afternoon our mission was completed and we retired to Mindoro for fuel and ammunition and then proceeded to Subic Bay. The following eight days were spent at anchor in Subic. Early on the morning of April 6th, we got underway and steamed out of the bay, taking our position on the PHOENIX. The formation proceeded enroute to Manila Bay to conduct educational tours of the recently recaptured City of Manila. We passed Corregidor abeam to port in entering the harbor, but this time however, everyone was at ease, in great contrast to the TAYLOR'S previous visits to the "Rock". We steamed into Manila Harbor, which was strewn with over two hundreds ships of all descriptions. Most of these enemy ships were sunk by carrier planes of the Third Fleet the previous month. The extent of the damage to Japanese shipping was unbelievable and a large percentage of the Nipponese merchant fleet was left on the bottom of Manila Bay.

Upon entering the harbor the TAYLOR moored starboard side to the NICHOLAS, who was anchored just off the breakwater, near the inner harbor. Immediately upon arrival the crew was divided into small groups with an officer in charge and sent ashore to conduct a tour of the war-torn Capitol. As the small boats carrying the groups neared the beach and dock section of the city it became more and more apparent that the battle of Manila had been a bloody, hard fight. All along the waterfront, buildings, docks, and shipping lay in ruin. The many bridges which spanned numerous canals throughout the metropolis were destroyed by the



The transfering of personnel at sea is an operation viewed by all. Sometimes, but very infrequently the passenger gets a dunking in the salty sea.

retreating Japanese forces and temporary bridges had been built by the Army engineers. The Japanese, upon surrender of Manila, had destroyed everything they possibly could before leaving it to the Americans. The combined destruction caused by the Japanese and the heavy artillery bombardment of the United States Army left Manila in complete ruin.



One of our newer 2200-ton destroyers battles heavy seas during a typhoon off the Japanese home islands.

The legislative section, which once boasted of its many beautiful government buildings, lay in shambles as did nearly all the business district. Priests could be seen searching through the rubble of their once majestic churches which the Japs had destroyed along with hospitals and shrines.

Signs of the bitter battle for the capture of the city were to be seen nearly anywhere one



Captain deLaureal

chose to look. Even the University of Santo Tomas, though unharmed, because the Japs used it as a prison camp, presented a war-scarred sight. Few automobiles were yet in running condition and as a result, horse-drawn carts were prominent throughout the city's streets. Many stands were set up along the streets and in the front of gutted buildings; here the Filipinos sold souvenirs to the Americans. The people were friendly toward the Americans even though they were undergoing untold hardships to re-build their city. The water situation was very acute and the water that was available was unfit for human consumption, as the Japanese still held the city reservoir in the hills back of the city.

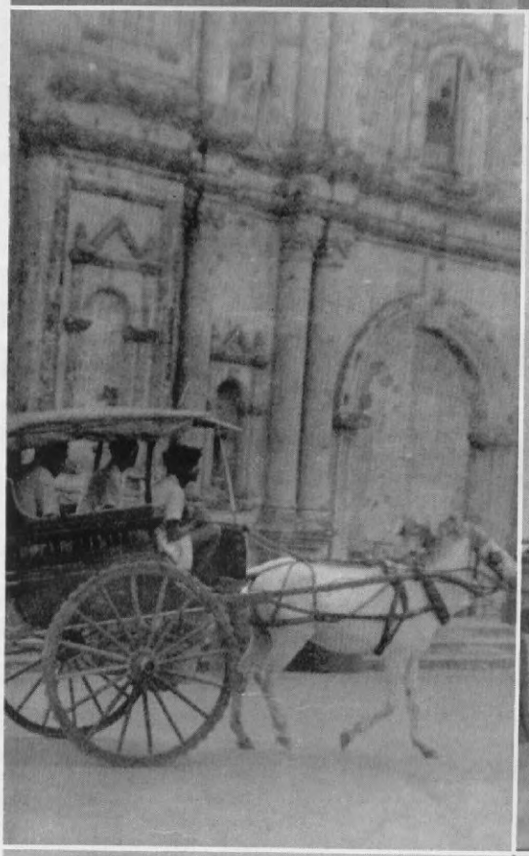
After two day of sightseeing, we returned to Subic Bay and stayed until the 8th of April when at 0200 all ships in the harbor were ordered to get underway. We sortied outside of the bay with the same group of ships that had made up our task groups on previous assignments. The task group proceeded at high speed to intercept an enemy surface force reported heading toward Luzon from the north. That same morning the cruisers launched their scout planes to search the area for our contact, but much to our disgust the planes reported back with negative results. The formation reversed course and headed home, only to learn that land-based planes had intercepted the enemy and attacked one battleship, two cruisers, and six destroyers. After returning to port we began a series of battle drills and problems that lasted for eleven days, including an inspection by the Commodore.

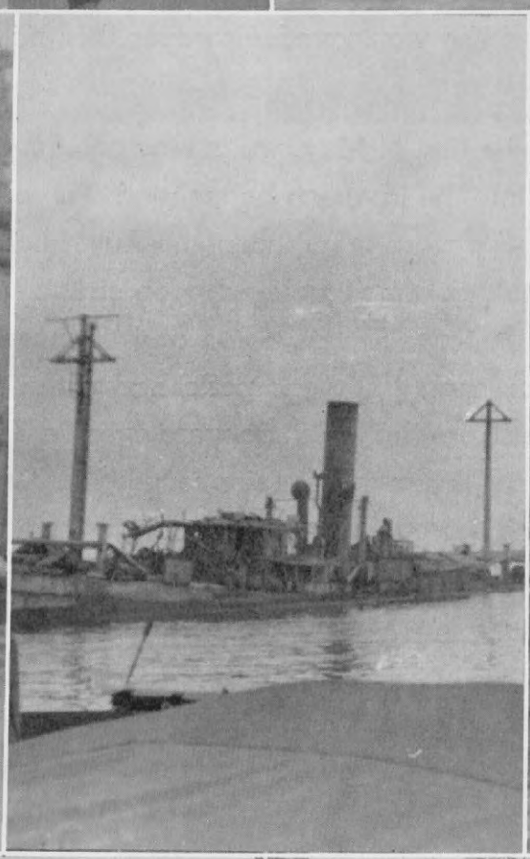
Soon after dawn on the 24th of April the TAYLOR was underway, standing out of the harbor, joining in formation with our cruisers and destroyers of the Seventh Fleet. Our destination this time was Tarakan Island on the north coast of Dutch Borneo. While steaming through Sibutu Passage, the afternoon of the 26th, several small boats were sighted ahead of the formation. The NICHOLAS was directed to investigate. As she approached one of the small craft an explosion occurred that disintegrated both the boat and its occupants. The TAYLOR was then designated to investigate another similar boat or raft. The NICHOLAS had reported that the occupants of the destroyed raft were Japanese who committed suicide with hand grenades rather than risk capture. Upon receiving this report from the NICHOLAS all hands were called to their battle stations, and as we approached the raft all guns were trained on it and its five Japanese occupants. We were ordered to take them prisoner without taking any unnecessary risks. The Japs seemed to prefer capture to their present plight for they swam, as directed,

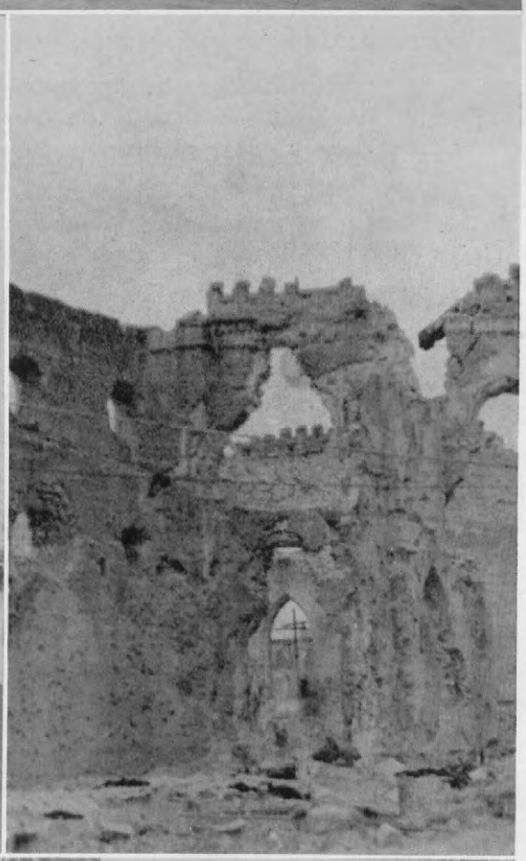
Scenes showing the destruction in Manila Harbor and in the city itself.

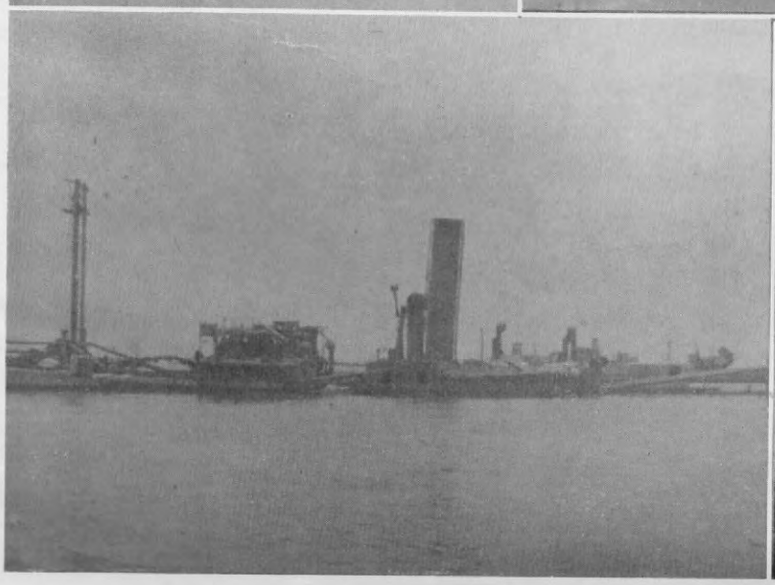


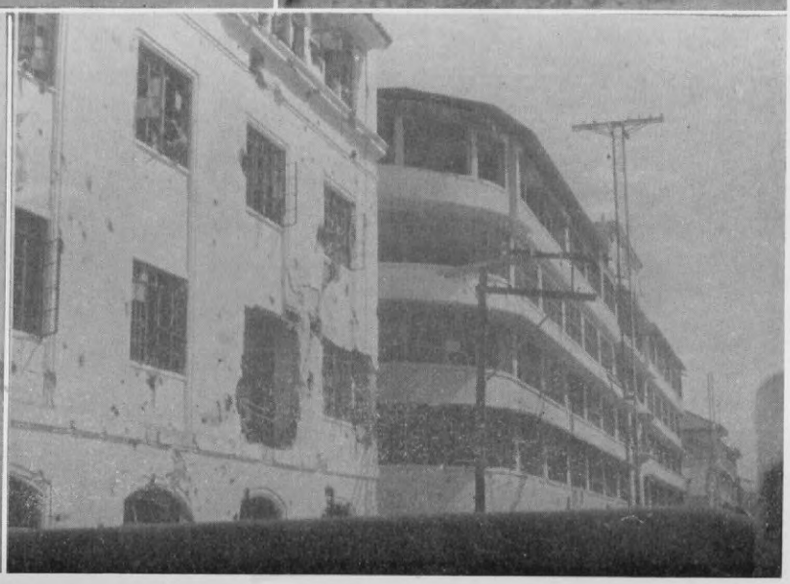












one by one, to our ship. Within fifteen minutes we had the Nips and their equipment aboard and were proceeding to rejoin the formation. Questioning revealed that the first of the prisoners was a naval doctor, and his three companions were pharmacist mates under his command. The fifth member of the group was a member of an Infantry Division. They were evacuating a small island just recently captured by American forces, and were attempting to reach Borneo.

Early in the morning of the 27th we arrived at a designated point off Tarakan Island and commenced our patrol in support of the minesweepers. The next few days were spent providing coverage for the minesweepers. Our main duty was to provide counter-battery fire. At noon on the 28th the JENKINS reported that she had struck a mine and was slowly sinking. Aid was rushed to the stricken ship and she was saved. However, her midship compartments were almost completely destroyed.

Shortly after midnight, on the first of May, we led the column of amphibious vessels through the narrow channel leading into the invasion beachhead. The attack force consisted of American landing craft, but the troops were members of the Australian Army. At five in the morning reports came in over the radio that one vessel had been struck by a torpedo, supposedly fired by a midget submarine; but the torpedo was a dud and bounced harmlessly off the hull of the ship. After the invasion it was found that the torpedo had come from a land-based launching station near the mouth of the river. The landings were executed on schedule and the troops hit the beach with little opposition. When the Aussies secured the beach-head and started their advance into the hills they found the opposition had strengthened and the drive lost some of its momentum. The surface vessels provided heavy barrages for the attacking Australians. All that day the TAYLOR concentrated her main battery on the retreating Japanese. Once a small motor launch put to sea, but she was immediately taken under fire and destroyed by the TAYLOR'S forty millimeter machine gun battery. Tarakan was the richest oil producing center that the Japanese had taken in their conquest .The oil could be used without being processed. The



The camouflaged TAYLOR lies at anchor in Subic Bay, Luzon, P. I.





A Japanese battle flag and several pieces of armament were taken from the five Japanese the TAYLOR captured during the Borneo operation.

Japs held to their reputation; as they retreated, they set fire to the large oil storage centers and all positions of importance, whether a military necessity or not. For fifty-two hours after the initial landing the crew of the TAYLOR remained at their guns, pounding the ground ahead of the advancing Australian troops.

Upon our release from the Tarakan area the crew, with the exception of the condition watches, headed for their bunks. On May 6th we anchored in Subic, remaining there effecting repairs and improvements until May 22nd. On that day several destroyers left for Manila for liberty. The TAYLOR'S crew enjoyed this liberty more so than the previous trip, because of the improvements made in the recreation facilities. We remained in Manila for four days. During this stay the crew enjoyed their first unsupervised liberty since our departure from the United States.

On June 1st we were ordered to join Admiral Halsey again, this time with the Third Fleet operating in and around the Japanese home islands. We departed from Subic Bay early in the morning with the remaining members of our squadron, the NICHOLAS and O'BANNON. We left Subic with mixed feelings of regret and relief at once more being underway. Subic Bay had been our home base for some time. We left many memories of liberty on Grande Island, ready duty, mail every day or so, USO shows, and of many native friends on the beach. Our trip to Leyte, where the Third Fleet was based, was uneventful except for frequent general quarters investigating friendly native canoes. Our hopes of going home were shattered when we were given ten days availability alongside a tender, prior to our joining the Third Fleet. Life along-

side a tender is one of constant complaint. Either the air is shut off or the water is salty; the tender can't do your job and you can't get underway until they do. Night and day the sound of the chipping hammer, the curse of the deck hand, keeps the otherwise silent tender alive. On the 15th day of June we joined the new cruiser OKLAHOMA CITY and proceeded out of Leyte Gulf northward. We were to join an escort carrier group which was lending air support to the army on Okinawa and carrying out air strikes against Sakishima in the Southern Ryukyus. Our formation consisted of ten CVEs, two light cruisers, and fifteen destroyers, which was a pretty formidable force for any man's navy. During this period we added one more pilot to our rescued list. One air attack was turned back on the 22nd of June by our combat air patrol. It was always a tense period of time upon hearing our CAP tally-ho a plane and after a brief

MAIL DELIVERY—The U.S.S. ENGLISH, a new 2200-ton destroyer, comes alongside to pass mail.





Off Palawan in the Southern Philippines this native boat was overtaken and investigated. Constructed entirely by hand and of materials characteristic to their own islands.



Down at Zamboanga we started many fires with our bombardment.

lapse of time hear him report, "Splash one Judy." Those pilots that flew in the CAP took the brunt of almost every air attack. It was our job to nail the planes that got through their cover and the ones that we both missed usually caused a lot of damage.

On the 23rd, our squadron was ordered to report back to Leyte for further orders to the Seventh Fleet. The week that followed was one of complete indifference. We were in the Third Fleet one day and the Seventh Fleet the next day. We all wanted to stay in the Third Fleet because that meant we would have a crack at Japan itself. Our wish came true; the first week in July saw us attached to the logistic group that would supply the mighty Task Force 38. On the 8th we started that memorable trip that none of us will ever forget. Screening five ammunition ships and an attack transport, we proceeded northeast towards our rendezvous point some 200 hundred miles off the coast of Honshu, Japan. Our skipper briefed us on what to expect; he said that we would probably be underway for at least a month, maybe more. This operation was to comply with Admiral Nimitz's order to destroy the Japanese will to resist. And, if possible, drive the Jap-



anese, through air power, into ultimate surrender. We knew the Japs, but our hopes were high, because this was an all-out drive for complete victory.

The first week of the trip was dull, a few sound contacts, with one attack which brought only fish to the surface. On the 17th of July we rendezvoused with the main replenishing group consisting of the old cruiser DETROIT, thirty tankers and five ammunition ships (plus the screen of twenty-four assorted DEs and DDs).

Our first encounter with Task Force 38 came on the 21st, when our unit resupplied the fleet. Everything from fuel and ammunition to fresh provisions were given to the fighting ships. A personal message from Admiral Halsey complimented all hands on the hard job, "WELL DONE." We repeated the performance again on nthe 26th and again on the 31st.



Dirty weather . . . for Jap planes. Smears of "flack" smudge the Pacific sky as anti-aircraft batteries aboard ships of the Task Force blast at Jap planes during recent battle action in the Pacific.

On August 2nd we joined Task Force 38 as a screneing unit. The force was divided into four units, each comparable to any modern fleet. Three of these units were American, the fourth consisted of British ships under the command of Admiral Sir Bruce Frazier. The TAYLOR joined the group under Admiral Radford, consisting of the battleships MISSOURI, IOWA and WISCONSIN, seven carriers, numerous cruisers and destroyers. We knew we had at last reached the top spot for any ship in the Pacific, the "Big League" as we called it.

Our association with Task Force 38 didn't last long as we were detached a day later to intercept a possible enemy transport or hospital ship and deliver secret mail to the DETROIT. We didn't find the Jap ship but we did have quite a time with one of our own hospital ships trying to identify her.

August 10th still found us with the logistic group. It was this night that the first signs of peace came from the Japanese. On the 12th the TAYLOR and LANDSDOWNE were detached to join 38 again; this time they were operating within 60 miles of Tokyo. Our two destroyers contacted the main fleet about noon, at which time the carriers were receiving planes aboard from the morning air strikes. When Japan offered to surrender we held up our strikes; one, two days. On the third day still no answer from the Japanese, so we struck again. On August 15th our carriers were ordered to launch every plane available for an all-out attack that would definitely make up the dickering Japanese minds. Well over fifteen hundred planes of every description were sent into the air headed for downtown Tokyo. There was no doubt as to which way Tokyo was—our planes formed an endless path pointing at the heart of Japan. All through the early morning we waited. Our Combat Air Patrol was continuously engaged with prospective suiciders but fortunately for us their shooting was inaccurate and we were not forced to fire once.

At 0805 word was received from Admiral Nimitz to cease hostilities, Japan had accepted our unconditional surrender ultimatum. For us peace meant no let up of our vigilence and stern gun watches, as several Nips, either unaware of the cessation of hostilities, or unwilling to quit, came at the formation in a do or die air attack. Fortunately for all involved, the Combat Air Patrol came to our assistance again and shot them all down before they could reach the ships.

On this morning, the day of surrender, we were operating with the world's largest fleet. Our own group which was one of four, consisted of the battleships IOWA, MISSOURI and WISCONSIN; carriers YORKTOWN, BON HOMME RICHARD, WASP, SHANGRI LA, COWPENS and INDEPENDENCE; cruisers ST. PAUL, SAN DIEGO, BOSTON, CHICAGO, FLINT and QUINCY; and sixteen destroyers of Squadrons 21, 53 and 54.

Our air strikes were called in and the fleet retired southward to await further developments. During the next few days the fleet broke up into smaller units, some of which would take over the occupation of Japan. This time DesRon 21, consisting of the NICHOLAS, O'BANNON and TAYLOR, landed the number one spot assigned to screen the fleet command group.

Led by the UNITED STATES DESTROYER TAYLOR, Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet steamed into Sagami Wan, Monday, August 27th, within sight of Japan's shore batteries. Lines of American and British warships stretched for miles, as twelve hundred carrier planes ranged overhead. Close behind the TAYLOR were the battleships MISSOURI and IOWA and the British battleship DUKE OF YORK, Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser's flagship. Our ship passed within three miles of Oshima, once heavily fortified island guarding Sagami Wan. The fleet reached the north end of Sagami Monday afternoon and dropped anchor under the towering Mount Fujiyama. Meanwhile, minesweepers began sweeping the two and one-half mile wide Uguga Strait, in preparation for the fleet's entry into Tokyo Bay. A delegation of twenty-one Japanese, carrying mine field and fortification charts, met the fleet outside Sagami Wan early in the morning. The small twin stacked destroyer Hatuzakara met the UNITED STATES DESTROYER NICHOLAS just off our starboard bow. The NICHOLAS kept her guns trained on the Japanese ship which kept its gun muzzles depressed. Two Japanese naval captains, thirteen pilots and six interpreters were transferred to the NICHOLAS and then taken to the MISSOURI. Admiral Halsey watched the delegation as they were delivered to the MISSOURI, but did not talk with them. They received instructions and were returned to their destroyer. However, some of the pilots remained to guide some fleet units through Uruga Straits.

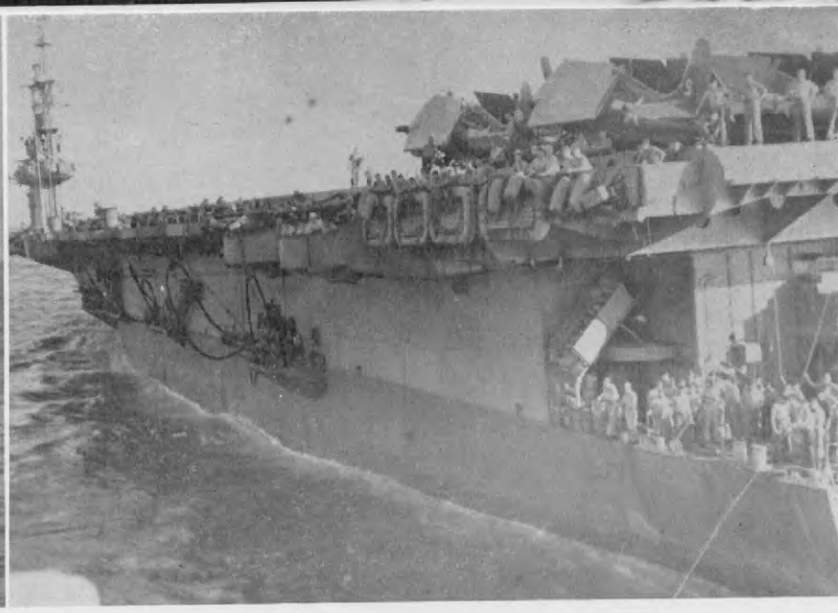
Monday night the U. S. Pacific Fleet lay at anchor in Sagami Wan. Above us rose majestically the sacred Mount Fujiyama. For most of us who had never been farther from home than our own back yards, this was a glorious scene as Mount Fujiyama represented everything that was symbolic of Japan.

Early the next morning we got underway to enter Tokyo Bay forming column on the NICHOLAS followed by the O'BANNON, MISSOURI and IOWA. On the shores of the bay many large factories were seen still burning from recent air attacks and all fortifications flew a large white flag which pleased us all immensely. We anchored shortly before noon approximately half way between Yokohama and the naval base at Yokosuka.

Our long trail in the Pacific was brought to a dramatic climax on Sunday, September 2, 1945 (Tokyo time), when the TAYLOR participated in the formal surrender ceremonies in Tokyo Bay. Saturday night four destroyers, that had long battled the Japanese in the Pacific, were directed to proceed to Yokohama and furnish transportation for the dignitaries participating in the surrender ceremonies. We would transport them to and from the U.S.S. MISSOURI, where the peace ceremoy was to be held. The NICHOLAS, LANDSDOWNE, BUCHANAN and the TAYLOR arriv-



Units of the Third Fleet steaming off the home islands of Japan.

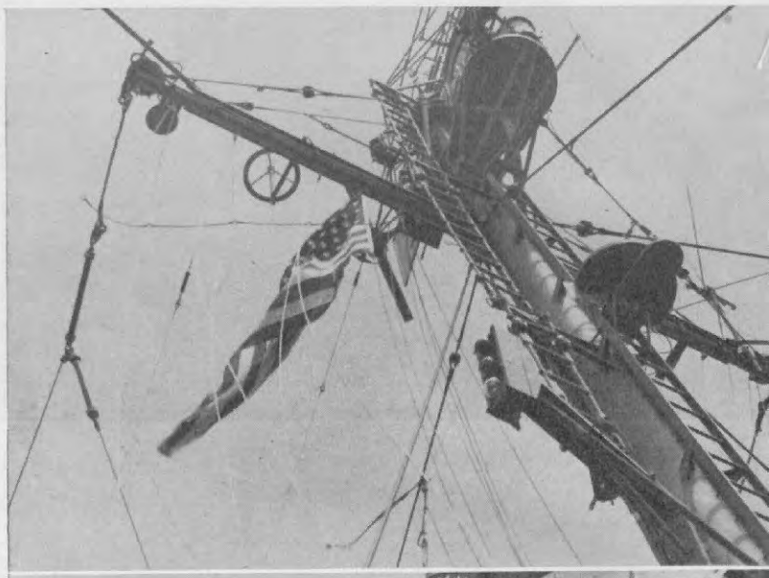


Coming alongside one of the light carriers for mail.

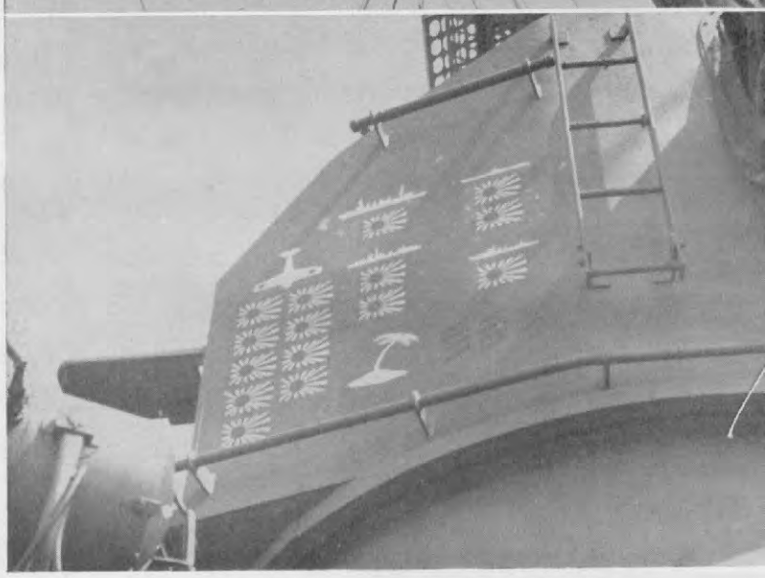
ed along side the docks in Yokohama about dusk Saturday night. That night the skippers met and discussed the coming ceremony while the men wandered around the docks and nearby beaches, collecting souvenirs. In the morning the four destroyers were assigned their various personages to take to the MISSOURI. We had quite a crowd as we were assigned the task of transporting the pressmen of all nations; Russian, Chinese, British, Japanese, Americans, French; 174 in all. The Russians couldn't speak English and the French couldn't speak Russian while the Japs could speak neither.

Aboard the MISSOURI the pressmen were distributed throughout the ship so as to cover every single angle of the ceremony. Several of the United States representatives were already aboard the MISSOURI. Among those present were Admiral Halsey, Commander of the Third Fleet, Vice Admiral McCain, Commander of the famous Task Force 38, and several other admirals from various ships in the bay. Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz was the first allied representative to arrive, coming along side in his five-starred motor launch. He was piped aboard with all the formality of sideboys and a Marine Band. Nimitz was followed shortly thereafter by the other allied representatives.

The ceremony took place on the large quarterdeck of the forty-five thousand ton, superdreadnaught MISSOURI, directly under her big number two sixteen-inch gun turret. The allied representatives formed a line athwartship behind the surrender table, while the flag officers of the United States Army and Navy formed along the inboard side of the quarterdeck. The surrender table was covered with a green felt cloth upon which the two copies of the document were placed. The Allied Supreme Commander, General of the Armies, Douglas MacArthur, wore a simple field uniform, open at the neck and without decorations, as did the other United States



0805, August 15th, 1945, Battle Colors hoisted to the main mast as Japan accepts unconditional surrender.



The sum total of our Pacfiic operations is chalked up on the main director. Quite a score to steam into Japanese waters with.

representatives. MacArthur, Nimitz and Halsey retired to the wardroom of the MISSOURI to await the arrival of the Japanese delegation.

Shortly before 0900 the Japanese delegation of eleven men came aboard. When they had formed facing the surrender table and the allied representatives, General MacArthur entered and addressed them. He told them the surrender was not one which would be carried out in a spirit of distrust, malice or hatred, and that he would rule them with justice and tolerance. MacArthur said, however, he was taking "all necessary dispositions to insure that the terms of the surrender are fully, promptly and faithfully complied with." He said it was up to both victors and vanquished to rise to higher dignity which alone befits the sacred purpose we are about to serve.

Then without a word, Japanese Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu, in top hat and striped trousers, stepped forward to be the first to sign. Shigemitsu, representing Emperor Hirohito and the Japanese government, fumbled several moments with two watches and a pen and received a stern glance from General MacArthur. There was not a sign of emotion in his face as he finally signed the document, formally ending history's bloodiest war. Shigemitsu penned his name in English on one document. There were two documents, on in Japanese, suitably bound in black, and one in English, bound in green and gold.

Following Shigemitsu, was General Yoshijiro Umezu, Chief of the Japanese Imperial General Staff, who signed quickly and stepped aside. A Japanese colonel wiped his eyes. All eleven members of the Japanese party were tense. Then General MacArthur signed as Supreme Commander for all United Nations. MacArthur signed with five pens. The first pen, silverplated especially for the occasion, he handed to General Wainwright who was forced to surrender Corregidor. The second pen was given to General Percival who had to give up at Singapore. Both Generals smiled and saluted smartly. They had been rescued only a few days prior to the ceremony from Japanese prison camps. MacArthur's third pen was an ordinary pen from the battleship MISSOURI. The fourth apparently was a souvenir for President Truman and the fifth MacArthur himself kept.



August 27th the Pacfiic Fleet was led into Sagami Wan at the base of Mount Fujiyama by the United States Destroyer TAYLOR. The fleet resting at the foot of the sacred snow-clad mountain was an indication of complete victory.

After MacArthur, Fleet Admiral Nimitz signed for the United States. Beside him stood Admiral Halsey. Nimitz said, "The process of bringing Japan into the family of civilized nations, which was interrupted when Japan launched her program of conquest, will soon begin again."

Next, General Su Yang Chang signed for China, then Admiral Sir Bruce Frazier for Britain, Lieutenant General Kuzma Derevyanko for Russia, General Sir Thomas Blaney for Australia, Colonel Lawrence Moore Cosgrave for Canada, General Jacques LeClerc for France, Admiral C. C. Helfrick for the Netherlands, and Air Vice Marshal Issit for New Zealand. Then MacArthur stepped to the microphone and said, "May peace return to the world and may God preserve it always. These proceedings are closed." At that historic moment, just before nine A.M. Sunday, Japan, under the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, was reduced to her four main islands and such minor islands as the allies might grant her. Her very life came under allied rule and will remain there until she is deemed worthy of rejoining the family of nations in a world dedicated to peace. MacArthur became the overlord of Japan and Emperor Hirohito a puppet.

MacArthur handed Shigemitsu general order number one, directing Japanese forces in Asia and Pacific islands to surrender to commanders acting for the United Nations. It gave instructions for demilitarizing planes and ships and the ending of manufacturing of army equipment and the release of all war prisoners. Even as he spoke, allied prisoners were pouring aboard hospital ships in Tokyo Bay. Thirty minutes after the Japanese arrived they were gone, and so was their dream of world conquest. It was the first time in twenty-six hundred years that Japan had been beaten.

Three destroyers tied side by side at the docks in Yokohama.



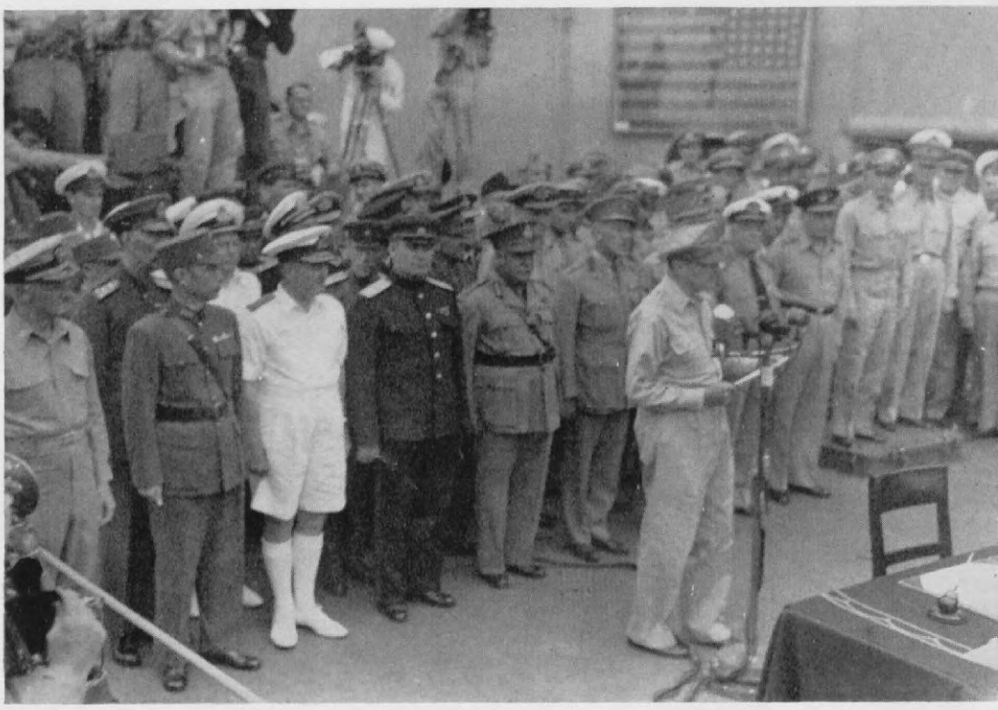
Our mission in the surrender was the role of a taxi; here are seen many of the news men that the TAYLOR transported to and from the scene of surrender.



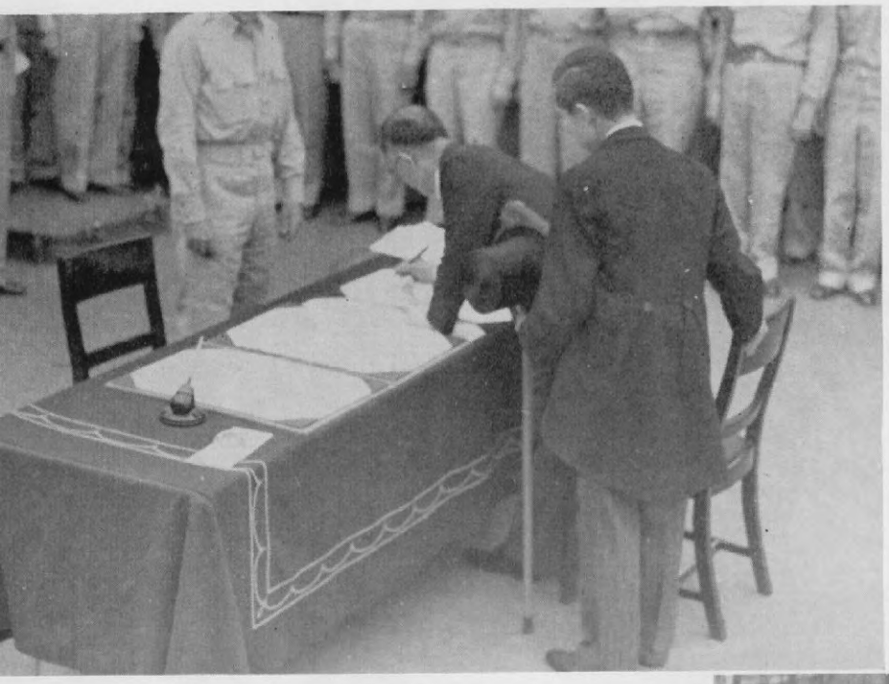
↑
TAYLOR

The Japanese delegation headed by Foreign Minister Shigemitsu and General Umezu stand facing the surrender documents and the United Nations delegates.

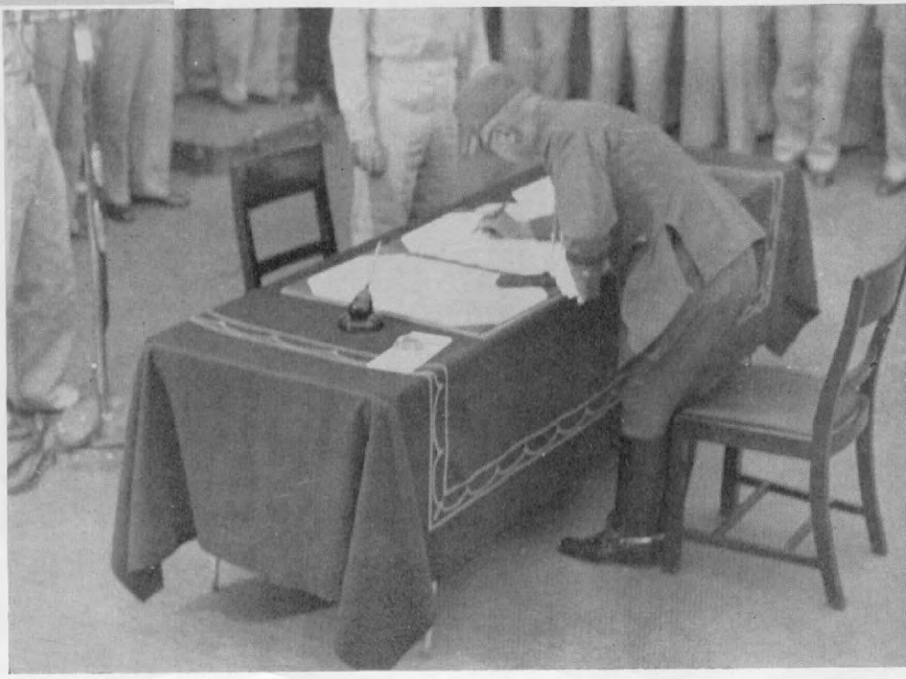




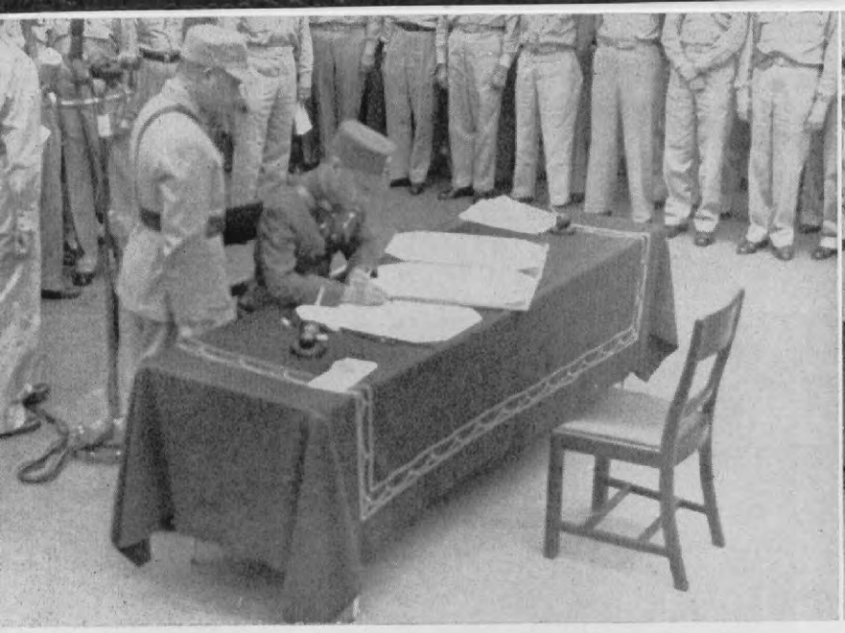
General Douglas MacArthur stands in front of the delegates representing the United Nations as he addresses the Japanese.



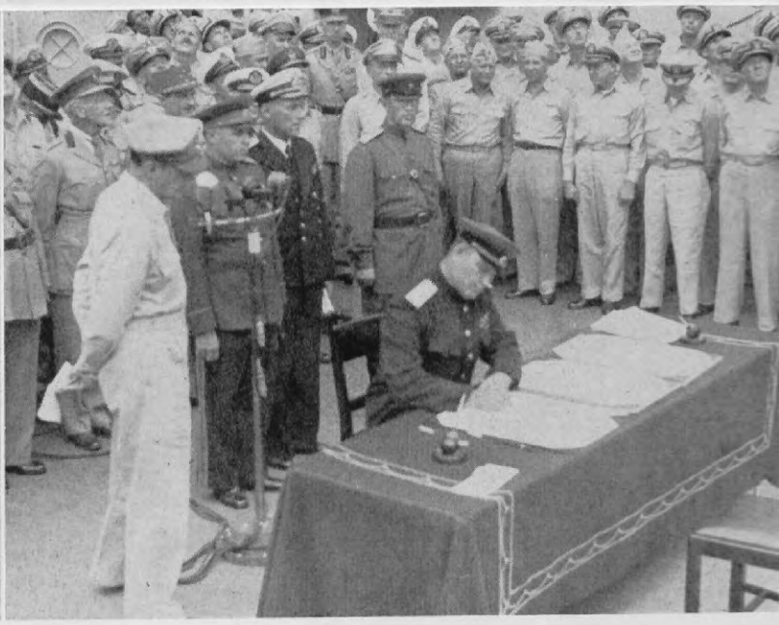
Foreign Minister Shigemitsu signs for the Emperor and the Japanese people. Thus was brought to an end the bloodiest war in history.



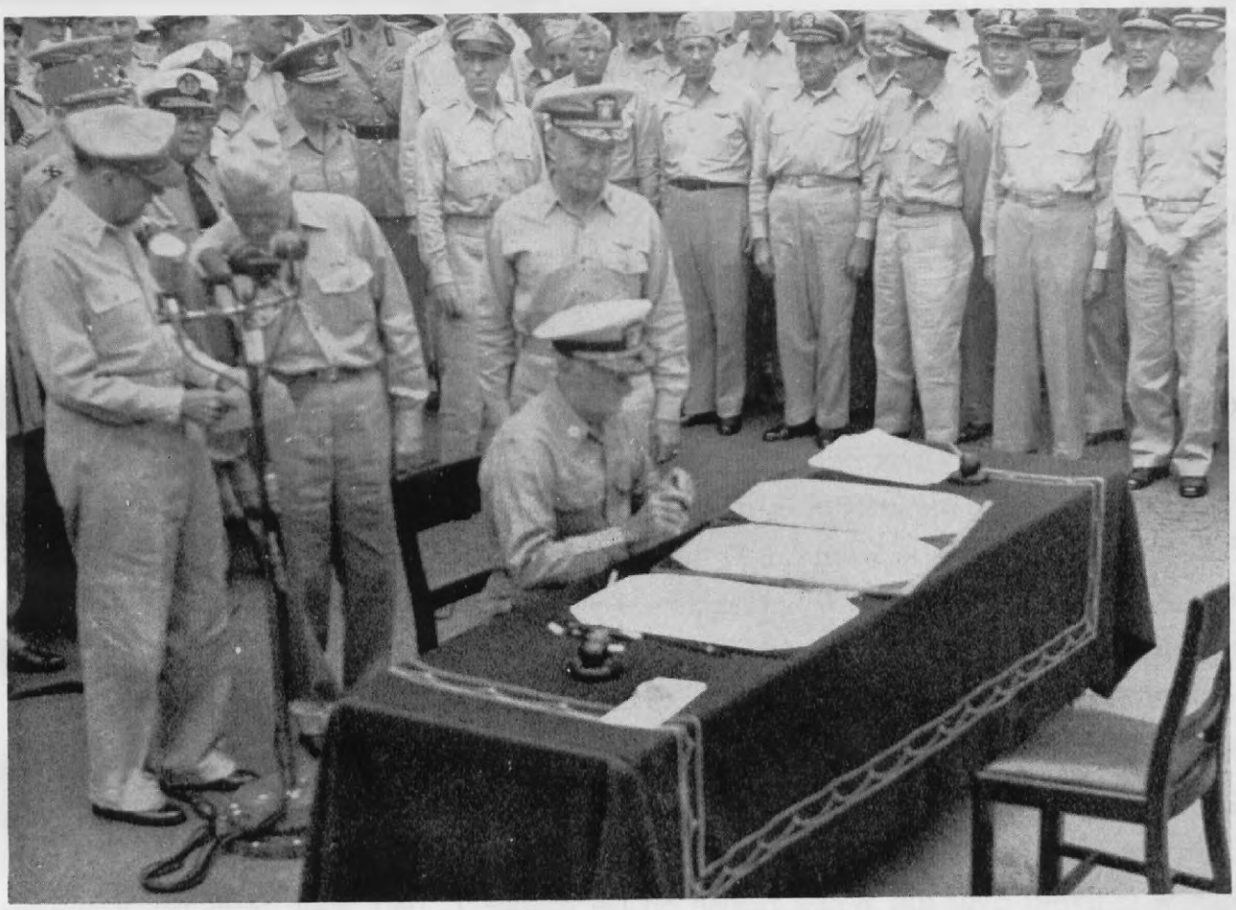
General Umezu signed as a representative of the Imperial Army.



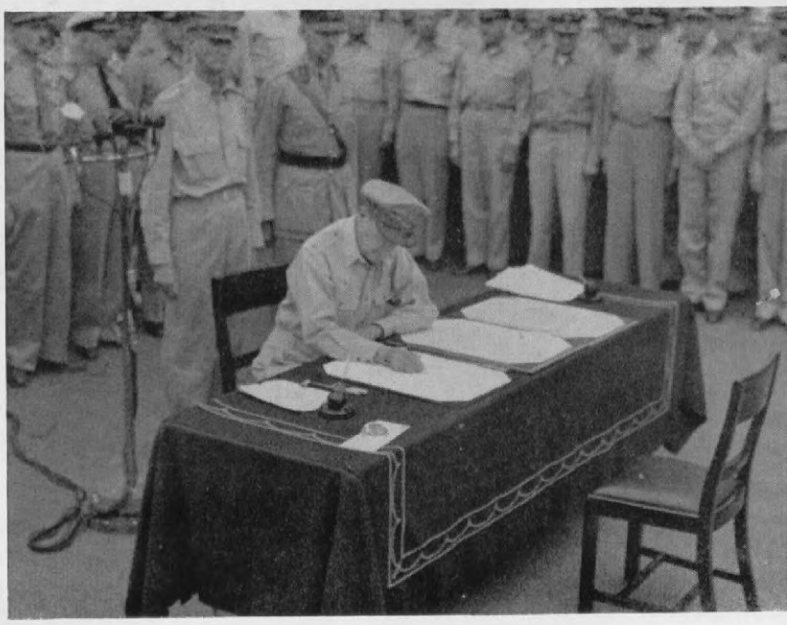
Chang of China signs.



Derevyanko signs for Russia



Fleet Admiral Nimitz signs for the United States.



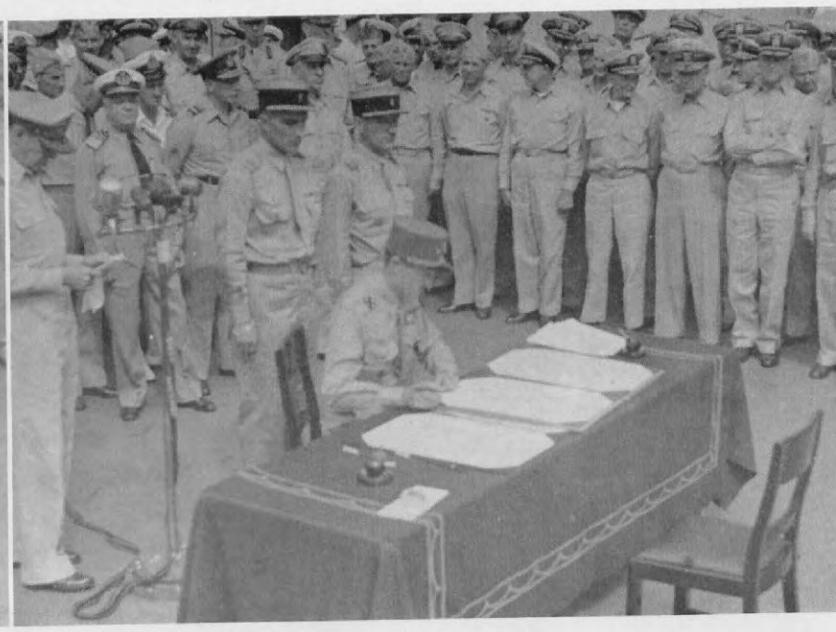
MacArthur signs for the United Nations.

General MacArthur then spoke to the nation by radio. He said, "A great tragedy has been ended. A great victory has been won." He said that he spoke for the thousands of silent lips, forever stilled among the jungles and the beaches and in the deep waters of the Pacific which marked the way. Then he went on, "I thank a merciful God that he has given us the faith, the courage, and the power from which to mould victory." He closed by saying, "And so my fellow countrymen, today I report to you that your sons and daughters have served you faithfully. They are free from the bonds of war. Take care of them."

In Washington, President Truman proclaimed Sunday, September 2nd, as "VJ" day, saying, "We shall not forget. The Japanese militarist will not forget the U.S.S. MISSOURI." War came to a formal end exactly six years after Hitler marched into Poland on September 1, 1939. The flag which was flying over the White House on December 7, 1941, flew from the battleship MIS-



Admiral Sir Bruce Frazer signs for Great Britain.



General LeClerc signs for France.

SOURI during the surrender ceremony. In between, it had flown over Rome and Berlin. Among some two hundred war correspondents aboard the MISSOURI were several Japanese newsmen. One reporter for the Domei News Agency ducked instinctively as American Corsair fighters flew over. Beside these Navy fighters were several hundred B29 Superfortresses and nearly two thousand Navy fighters and bombers performing in the greatest air show of all time.

The TAYLOR did her part in transporting over three hundred persons to and from the ceremony. Aboard our ship were many of the aforementioned notables, including the Japanese delegations of Shigemitsu and Umezu. The last Japanese official to leave the TAYLOR came to attention and smartly saluted our colors flying from the main mast, thus ending our part in the Pacific war.