

By DP NND 978133
 NARS, Date 4/1/97
 U. S. S. NEW MEXICO

orig - off

BB40/A16-3
 Serial 0292

Care Fleet Post Office,
 San Francisco, Calif.,
 31 July 1944.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ **DECLASSIFIED**

From: The Commanding Officer.
 To: The Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.

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Via: (1) Commander Task Unit 53.5.1 (Commander Task Unit 53.1.13).
 (2) Commander Task Group 53.5.
 (3) Commander Task Force 53.
 (4) Commander Task Force 51.
 (5) Commander FIFTH Fleet.
 (6) Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Action Report, Bombardments in Support of the Assault and Occupation of GUAM, MARIANAS ISLANDS, 12-30 July 1944.

References: (a) Pacific Fleet Confidential Letter 2CL-44.
 (b) ComFifthFleet Operation Plan CEN 10-44.
 (c) CTF 53 Attack Order 165-44.
 (d) ComCruDiv NINE Operation Order No. 7-44.
 (e) ComBatDiv THREE Bombardment Order No. 2-44.

Enclosures: (A) Navigational Track of bombardments. - p. 22
 (B) Executive Officer's Report. - p. 30
 (C) Gunnery Officer's Report. - p. 31
 (D) Intelligence Officer's Comments. - p. 89

In accordance with Reference (a), the following Action Report is submitted:

P A R T O N E

1. General Narrative - (a) Eleven hundred tons of explosive projectiles were fired on Japanese installations and forces on GUAM by the NEW MEXICO during the period from 12 to 30 July 1944, while the ship was engaged in a series of bombardments in support of the assault and occupation of the former American possession.

(b) The NEW MEXICO bombarded selected targets in assigned areas with Task Unit 53.1.13 on 12, 13 and 14 July, replenished ammunition at SAIPAN 15 and 16 July, and returned on 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 July for pre-landing bombardments with an ever growing number of other fire support ships of Task Force 53. From 21 July to 30 July, when the NEW MEXICO left the GUAM area, the ship engaged in harassing and illuminating call fires as directed.

(c) The NEW MEXICO used Main, Secondary and Anti-Aircraft batteries in the bombardments and expended a small amount of 20 mm and 40 mm ammunition in close-in fire on the landing beaches. The total number of projectiles fired on GUAM during the 19-day period was: 1621 14 inch high capacity; 964 5 inch 51 caliber high capacity and 475 5-inch 51 caliber common; 2333 5 inch 25 caliber AA common and 422 5 inch 25 caliber starshells.

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(d) The operation was marked by a complete absence of enemy opposition, as far as this ship is concerned. There was no evidence of the presence of enemy aircraft in the vicinity during the period covered; no enemy shore batteries opened up against this ship.

(e) The NEW MEXICO's firing was effective, reports to the ship said. Force and Group commanders gave the ship "well done" as did Shore Fire Control parties on several occasions. After one night's starshell firing the Commanding General, Third Marine Division, signaled the ship: "ONCE AGAIN MANY THANKS FOR YOUR FINE WORK THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT. FROM ALL INDICATIONS YOU SAVED THE DAY..."

(f) Incident to night retirement of the night of 25-26 July, the NEW MEXICO, with two cruisers, bombarded the enemy air strip on ROTA, MARIANAS ISLANDS, with Main and 5 inch 25 caliber batteries.

2. Preliminaries - (a) The NEW MEXICO departed ENIWETOK, MARSHALL ISLANDS, 9 July as a part of Task Unit 53.1.13 and proceeded directly to GUAM.

(b) The ship's mission was to assist in providing fire support for the assault and occupation of GUAM as directed by References (b)-(e) and other plans, orders and despatches. (All are not referenced in this report.) The ship's assumptions were as given in those references. The ship's plans, prepared in detail on a basis of the information given in those references and in despatches, are forwarded as Appendix 2 of Enclosure (C).

(c) Own forces were disposed as directed by higher authority. The Chronology (Part II of this letter) gives dispositions immediately concerning this vessel.

(d) This command has no significant independent information on the disposition of enemy forces.

P A R T T W O

1. For chronological account of the action see next page and the following pages. Gunnery details, including specific targets, rounds fired, range, et cetera, are given chronologically in Appendix 1 to Enclosure (C). Navigational tracks for all bombardments except those when the ship was lying-to in a fire support area are given in Enclosure (A).

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C H R O N O L O G Y O F E V E N T S

(All dates are East Longitude; all times are Zone Minus TEN)

12 J U L Y 1944

Enroute GUAM as part of Task Unit 53:1.13 (CBD-3, Rear Admiral WEYLER in NEW MEXICO) comprising NEW MEXICO, IDAHO and PENNSYLVANIA, and screen of seven vessels, for bombardments in accordance with Commander Task Force Fifty Three despatch orders and Commander Battleship Division Three Bombardment Order No. 2-44.

- 0754 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- 0759 Battleships directed to act independently. Commanding Officer NEW MEXICO assumed tactical command of NEW MEXICO, HAGGARD and WILLIAMSON, commenced maneuvering this unit in approach to firing area.
- 0800 Went to General Quarters, set Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 0801 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.
- 0902 Commenced firing Main Battery (14 inch 51 caliber).
- 1043 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 1051 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber).
- 1130 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.
- 1133 Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber).
- 1145 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
- 1146 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA. HOGAN relieved WILLIAMSON in screen.
- 1210 Recovered Planes No. 1 and No. 2.
- 1255 Went to General Quarters, set Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1258 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.
- 1305 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.

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- 1319 Commenced firing Main Battery.
- 1503 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 1510 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber).
- 1612 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.
- 1614 Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber).
- 1635 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
- 1636 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1647 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 1650 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1725 IDAHO and PENNSYLVANIA rejoined NEW MEXICO and unit, with five screening vessels, proceeded on night retirement directed by Commander Task Unit 53.1.13.

13 JULY

Task Unit returned to firing sector off GUAM for second day of bombardment in accordance with Commander Battleship Division THREE Bombardment Order No. 2-44.

- 0700 PENNSYLVANIA and screen of three vessels left formation; Commanding Officer NEW MEXICO took tactical command of NEW MEXICO, IDAHO and four screening vessels - HAGGARD, WILLIAMSON, HOGAN and FRANKS. Went to General Quarters and set Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 0704 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- 0714 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.
- 0745 Commenced firing Main Battery.
- 0908 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 0916 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 Caliber).
- 0946 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.
- 0958 Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber).

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- 1016 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
- 1050 Commenced firing Main Battery.
- 1051 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber.)
- 1101 Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber.)
- 1109 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 1132 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
- 1144 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.
- 1145 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1158 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1203 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 1255 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane. Went to General Quarters, set Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1301 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- 1320 Commenced firing Main Battery.
- 1444 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 1610 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber.)
- 1625 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.
- 1627 Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber.)
- 1638 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
- 1639 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1700 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 1703 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1745 PENNSYLVANIA and screen rejoined and Task Unit proceeded on night retirement under tactical command of Commander Task Unit 53.1.13.

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14 J U L Y

Task Unit returned to firing areas off GUAM for third and final day of preliminary bombardment in accordance with Commander Battleship Division THREE Bombardment Order No. 2-44.

- 0658 PENNSYLVANIA, screened by two vessels, left formation. Commanding Officer NEW MEXICO took tactical command of NEW MEXICO, IDAHO and screen of four vessels.
- 0700 Went to General Quarters, set Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 0702 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- 0710 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.
- 0738 Commenced firing Main Battery.
- 0900 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 0905 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber.)
- 0921 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.
- 0927 Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber.)
- 0935 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
- 0938 Commanding Officer IDAHO took tactical command of IDAHO, NEW MEXICO and screen of four vessels.
- 0943 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 0953 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1128 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1150 Commander Task Unit 53.1.13 resumed tactical command.
- 1240 Went to General Quarters, set Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1244 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- 1248 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.

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1255 Commanding Officer NEW MEXICO took tactical command NEW MEXICO, IDAHO and screen.

1300 Commenced firing Main Battery.

1430 IDAHO left formation. NEW MEXICO closed ASAN POINT to cover beach reconnaissance of ASAN and AGANA beaches by DD's, APD's and LCI's of Task Unit 53.1.14.

1450 Ceased firing Main Battery.

1548 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber.)

1604 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.

1617 Commenced firing 40 mm. Battery.

1621 Ceased firing 40 mm. Battery.

1623 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber.)

1625 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.
Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber.)

1632 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber.)

1705 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.

1723 Recovered Plane No. 1.

1725 Recovered Plane No. 2.

1730 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA. Commander Battleship Division THREE took tactical command of NEW MEXICO, PENNSYLVANIA and three screening vessels - HAGGARD, HAILEY, and HAMILTON - in Task Unit 53.1.13. (IDAHO reported to Commander Battleship Division FOUR as a ship of Task Unit 53.1.15.)

Task Unit 53.1.13 departed GUAM area for SAIPAN.

15 JULY

0637 Arrived SAIPAN, anchored, removed empty ammunition cans.

1730 Commenced retirement for night with Task Unit 52.17.6

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16 J U L Y

- 0631 Returned SAIPAN, anchored, replenished ammunition from SHASTA.
- 1857 Underway to return to GUAM area. Proceeded with PENNSYLVANIA and screen of three - HAMILTON, HAGGARD and HAILEY - as Task Unit 53.1.13 (Task Unit Commander is Commander Battleship Division THREE, Rear Admiral WEYLER, in NEW MEXICO.).

17 J U L Y

- Returned to GUAM for W-4 Day bombardment in accordance with Commander Task Force FIFTY-THREE despatch orders.
- 0758 Went to General Quarters, set Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 0803 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.
- 0809 NEW MEXICO and screen, HAILEY, commenced acting independently.
- 0813 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- 0845 Commenced firing Main, Secondary and Anti-Aircraft batteries.
- 1155 Ceased firing all batteries.
- 1158 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1200 NEW MEXICO, IDAHO, PENNSYLVANIA, COLORADO and screen of nine vessels shifted task organization to become Task Unit 53.5.1 (Commander Battleship Division THREE, Rear Admiral WEYLER, in NEW MEXICO.) Other ships not present; NEW MEXICO still acting independently.
- 1212 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1219 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 1233 PENNSYLVANIA joined NEW MEXICO with her screen.
- 1414 Screen directed to operate to seaward.
- 1430 Went to General Quarters, set Material Condition ZEBRA.
Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- ⑨ 1435 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.

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1448 NEW MEXICO commenced acting independently.

1526 Commenced firing Main Battery.

1530 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber.)

1531 Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber.)

1538 Ceased firing Main Battery.

1718 Commenced firing Main Battery.

1730 Ceased firing Main Battery.

1754 Commenced firing Main Battery.

1757 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.

1758 Ceased firing Main Battery and Anti-Aircraft Battery.

1810 Recovered Plane No. 1.

1815 Recovered Plane No. 2.

1817 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.

1835 PENNSYLVANIA and APPALACHIAN joined NEW MEXICO and, with screen of five vessels, commenced night retirement.

18 J U L Y

Returned to GUAM for W-3 bombardment in accordance with Commander Cruiser Division NINE Operation Order No. 7-44.

0603 Went to General Quarters, set Material Condition ZEBRA.

0608 APPALACHIAN, screened by GUEST and HOPKINS, left formation.

0623 NEW MEXICO, screened by HAGGARD, commenced acting independently.

0648 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.

0656 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.

0706 Commenced firing Main Battery.

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- 0813 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 0818 Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber.)
- 0830 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
- 0834 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 0843 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 0845 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 0945 **Went to General Quarters**, set Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 0948 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.
- 0954 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- 1025 Commenced firing Main Battery.
- 1032 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber.)
- 1045 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.
- 1052 Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber.)
- 1107 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
- 1108 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 1120 Commenced firing Main Battery.
- 1205 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 1229 LCI 472 came alongside.
- 1339 LCI 472 cast off; having received 2000 rounds 40 mm and 3200 rounds 20 mm ammunition, 2900 gallons of fresh water, bread and ice cream.
- 1404 Commenced firing Main Battery.
- 1451 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 1502 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber.)
- 1509 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.

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- 1519 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1528 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 1532 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1810 NEW MEXICO joined HONOLULU, PENNSYLVANIA, APPALACHIAN and screen of eight vessels for night retirement under tactical command of Commander Task Group 53.5 (Commander Cruiser Division NINE, Rear Admiral AINSWORTH in HONOLULU).

19 JULY

Returned to GUAM for W-2 bombardment in accordance with Commander Cruiser Division NINE Operation Order No. 7-44.

- 0610 Went to General Quarters, set Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 0615 HONOLULU left formation, Commander Battleship Division THREE took tactical command of Task Unit 53.5.1.
- 0641 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- 0646 NEW MEXICO commenced acting independently, screen to seaward as directed by Commander Task Group 53.5.
- 0650 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.
Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber.)
- 0718 Commenced firing Main Battery.
- 0731 Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber.)
- 1015 Plane No. 1 directed to reservice from WILLIAMSON.
- 1030 Plane No. 1 reported completion of reservicing.
- 1045 Plane No. 2 went alongside WILLIAMSON for reservicing.
- 1100 Plane No. 2 completed reservicing.
- 1134 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
- 1236 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.

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- 1336 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 1339 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1352 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1355 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 1952 Commenced night retirement with IDAHO, PENNSYLVANIA, TENNESSEE, COLORADO, HONOLULU and APPALACHIAN, screened by 10 vessels. Commander Task Group 53.5 (Commander Cruiser Division NINE, Rear Admiral AINSWORTH, in HONOLULU) in tactical command.

20 J U L Y

Returned to GUAM for W-1 bombardment in accordance with Commander Cruiser Division NINE Operation Order No. 7-44.

- 0710 NEW MEXICO commenced acting independently again screened to seaward as directed by Commander Task Group 53.5.
- 0830 Went to General Quarters, set Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 0833 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.
- 0839 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- 0900 Commenced firing Main Battery.
- 1020 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber.)
- 1045 Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber.)
- 1310 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
- 1415 Ceased firing Main Battery and Anti-Aircraft Battery.
- 1422 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1433 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 1437 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1717 Commenced night retirement with IDAHO, PENNSYLVANIA, TENNESSEE, COLORADO, HONOLULU and INDIANAPOLIS, screened by 11 vessels. Commander Task Group 53.5 (Commander Cruiser Division NINE, Rear Admiral AINSWORTH in HONOLULU) in tactical command.

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21 JULY

Returned to GUAM for W Day bombardment in accordance with Commander Task Force FIFTY-THREE Attack Order A165-44.

- 0453 NEW MEXICO commenced acting independently. Screen this date and for remainder of operation, while in firing area, operated to seaward as directed in Commander Task Force 53 screening plan.
- 0500 Went to General Quarters, set Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 0526 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- 0539 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.
- 0544 Commenced firing Main Battery.
- 0554 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber.)
- 0555 Ceased Firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.
- 0612 Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber.)
- 0955 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 0957 Ceased firing Secondary Battery. (Completed all firing scheduled in operation orders; standing by for counter-battery and call fires.)
- 0958 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1012 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1017 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- Lying to in Fire Support Area ONE off GUAM, awaiting call fire or counter-battery fire.
- 1234 Went to General Quarters and set Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1240 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.
- 1256 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- 1729 Recovered Plane No. 2.

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- 1732 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1740 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA, Commenced night retirement with PENNSYLVANIA and screen of five vessels.

22 J U L Y

- 0650 Returned to GUAM Fire Support Area ONE to stand by for counter-battery and call fires; NEW MEXICO commenced operating independently, lying-to. While standing by, swung ships for adjustment of magnetic compasses.
- 1116 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- 1755 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber) on harassing call fire mission.
- 1225 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery. Lying to in Fire Support Area SEVEN.
- 2100 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber), illuminating shore area with starshells as directed by Shore Fire Control Party.

23 J U L Y

- Continued illumination with starshells, lying to in Fire Support Area SEVEN.
- 0530 Ceased firing 5 inch 25 caliber starshells.
- 0940 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber) on harassing call fire mission.
- 1040 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery. Continued lying to in fire support area.
- 1825 NEW MEXICO, PENNSYLVANIA and screen of three vessels commenced night retirement.

24 J U L Y

- 0619 Returned to GUAM, Fire Support Area ONE; NEW MEXICO commenced operating independently, lying to.

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- 1223 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.
- 1230 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane. Proceeded to Fire Support Area THREE.
- 1445 Went to General Quarters, set Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1510 Commenced firing Main Battery on harassing call fire mission.
- 1739 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 1742 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1753 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 1757 Recovered Plane No. 1.
Proceeded to Fire Support Area SEVEN.
- 1956 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber), illuminating APRA HARBOR with starshells as directed by Shore Fire Control Party.
- 2045 Ceased firing starshells from Anti-Aircraft Battery.

Continued lying-to in fire support area.
- 25 J U L Y
- Lying to in Fire Support Area SEVEN.
- 1512 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber) in harassing call fire mission.
- 1613 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.
- 1628 NEW MEXICO relieved in Area SEVEN by IDAHO.
- 1805 Commenced night retirement under Commander Task Unit 53.5.1.
- 1911 Joined by WICHITA, MINNEAPOLIS and screen of six vessels.
- 2245 Went to General Quarters and set Material Condition ZEBRA for bombardment of ROTA, MARIANAS ISLANDS, in accordance with Commander Task Force FIFTY-THREE despatch orders.

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26 J U L Y

- 0030 Commenced firing Main Battery at Japanese air strip on ROTA.
- 0038 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 0124 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber.) at Japanese air strip on ROTA.
- 0143 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.
- 0149 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 0645 Returned to Fire Support Area SEVEN off GUAM, acting independently, lying-to in area awaiting call.
- 1030 Moved to Fire Support Area THREE, again lying-to.
- 1150 Returned to Fire Support Area SEVEN, lying-to.
- 2020 Commenced firing 5 inch 25 caliber starshells to provide illumination as directed by Shore Fire Control party.
- 2046 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber) in harassing fire as directed by Shore Fire Control party.
- 2057 Ceased firing harassing fire.

27 J U L Y

Lying-to in Fire Support Area SEVEN, firing starshells.

- 0540 Ceased firing starshells.
- 1305 Launched Plane No. 1, primary spotting plane.
- 1311 Launched Plane No. 2, secondary spotting plane.
- 1331 Commenced firing Anti-Aircraft Battery (5 inch 25 caliber) as directed by Shore Fire Control party, but with own air spot.
- 1515 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery
- 1525 Recovered Plane No. 1.

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- 1531 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 1923 Moved to Fire Support Area ONE, again lying to.
- 2000 Commenced firing 5 inch 25 caliber starshells and common for illumination and harassing fire as directed by Shore Fire Control party.

28 J U L Y

- * Lying to in Fire Support Area ONE, firing 5 inch 25 caliber harassing and illumination fire.
- 0546 Ceased firing 5 inch 25 caliber harassing and illumination fire.
- Lying to in Fire Support Area ONE in the morning and in Fire Support Area SEVEN in the afternoon and night.
- 2020 Commenced firing 5 inch 25 caliber illumination fire.

29 J U L Y

- Lying to in Fire Support Area SEVEN.
- 0530 Ceased firing 5 inch 25 caliber illumination fire.
- Transferred 14 inch projectiles, 5 inch 25 caliber starshells and AAC ammunition, 40 mm and 20 mm ammunition to LCI 466 and LCT 971 for further transfer.
- Moved to Fire Support Area ONE.

30 J U L Y

- Lying to in Fire Support Area ONE.
- 1200 Departed GUAM area, NEW MEXICO participation in operation completed.

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P A R T T H R E E

1. Performance of own ordnance material and equipment is detailed in Gunnery Officer's Report, Enclosure (C) to this letter.
2. Performance of enemy ordnance material and equipment was not observed closely. The only time enemy shore batteries were observed firing at ships, the evening of 28 July, they missed their targets.

P A R T F O U R

1. Own battle damage - None.
2. Enemy battle damage is discussed in the Gunnery Officer's Report, Enclosure (C), insofar as it was possible to observe it.

P A R T F I V E

1. (a) Communications for the operation were highly satisfactory. TBS traffic was held to a minimum. All stations maintained circuit discipline. Communications with the shore fire control parties and naval liaison officers were excellent.
 - (b) It is recommended that the controlling station on the Task Force FOX circuit use a machine for transmitting. This would greatly facilitate reception by fleet units. It is considered necessary because of the lack of sufficient trained personnel aboard ship.
2. (a) Radar was of special interest only in connection with the navigational approach to ROTA for bombardment. This is discussed in Enclosure (C).
3. (a) The dependence placed upon air spotting in this operation emphasized more than ever before the need for VO pilots well trained in bombardment spotting. Bombardment has become the principal mission of the older battleships; it follows that bombardment spotting must be the principal mission of pilots on the older battleships. Yet VO pilots fresh from school report aboard without any training in that aspect of naval aviation; they are virtually useless to their ship until they know what an M Square Grid is, until they have searched an unfamiliar terrain for concealed gun emplacement, until they have moved a salvo and achieved a "no change, no change."
 - (b) If the ship's operation permit, every opportunity is given the new pilot to see a projectile hit a land area and to learn the details of the air spotter's art. (First, regrettably often, it is necessary to "check out" the aviator in his initial recovery at sea.) But such opportunities may not.

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occur when a ship is in a forward area, with but short periods between bombardment missions. As a result, the Commanding Officer of a ship with four pilots, two of whom are experienced, may find himself confronted with this alternative: Use the trained spotter-pilots to be the "eyes of the ship" in locating targets and spotting destructive fire onto them, or train the novices at the expense of the ship's firing accuracy against the enemy. The choice is obvious; it leaves the novice still inexperienced -- perhaps until his trained fellows are lost (by mishap or orders) and there is no alternative but to use an inexperienced pilot.

(c) It is recommended that VO pilots be trained in bombardment spotting before they are ordered to the Fleet. This training should include practical problems in locating targets and in spotting gunfire. It could be accomplished effectively with shore-based guns, thus obviating dependence on ships more sorely needed in forward areas. The training might well include a short period of study in aerial photography and photo interpretation. Familiarity with these two photographic fields would increase the air spotter's efficiency as a target finder and make him more valuable to his ship before and during bombardments.

(d) The advantage that would accrue to pre-Fleet practice in recoveries at sea must long have been apparent. The Commanding Officer realizes the difficulties involved and mentions the problem only because of a conspicuous although non-typical result aboard this ship. A pilot who reported aboard the NEW MEXICO in May is still not available for ship-based flights because he has not yet been "checked out" in his first recovery at sea; operations have prevented it. And the present prospect is that he can not be "checked out" aboard this ship until November.

4. (a) The fighting effectiveness of the ship was the prime criterion which the Commanding Officer considered in setting conditions of readiness for action. The intention was to set the condition of readiness which would afford the maximum efficiency in aggression and defense for any particular occasion and at the same time maintain efficiency for the over-all period (which stretched into 19 days and included 16 days firing in this operation.)

(b) In the preliminary bombardments, when the enemy's strength was untested, there was no question about going to General Quarters. But the situation changed as the operation progressed into the stage of standing by for call fires. No enemy plances appeared and there were provisions for adequate warning and combat air patrol if any approached; an efficient sound screen protected the fire support areas against underwater attack; enemy shore batteries that remained usable also remained silent. Consequently, the NEW MEXICO was not kept at General Quarters through the days of the call fire period. Regular Condition III watches were ~~used for Anti-Aircraft Battery harassing~~

BB40/A16-3
Serial 0292

30 July 1944.

CONFIDENTIAL

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used for Anti-Aircraft Battery harassing and illumination fire. The men were physically and mentally alert, far more so than they could have been if they had been in Condition I or Condition II for long periods. The excellent result of their firing was attested by the "well done" comment of Force and Group commanders and Shore Fire Control parties.

(c) The experience of this operation, in which the NEW MEXICO twice exhausted its bombardment allowance, leaves no doubt that a ship of this type can pound enemy shores continuously as long as it can get ammunition. Whether the period be days (as in earlier amphibious operations), weeks (as in this operation), or months - the ships and the men of the Navy can "take it."

5. Intelligence maps and data are discussed in the Intelligence Officer's Report, Enclosure (D).
6. The Executive Officer's Report is submitted as enclosure (B).

P A R T S I X

1. All officer and men performed their duties satisfactorily.
2. There were no personnel casualties worthy of detailing.

E. M. Zacharias
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