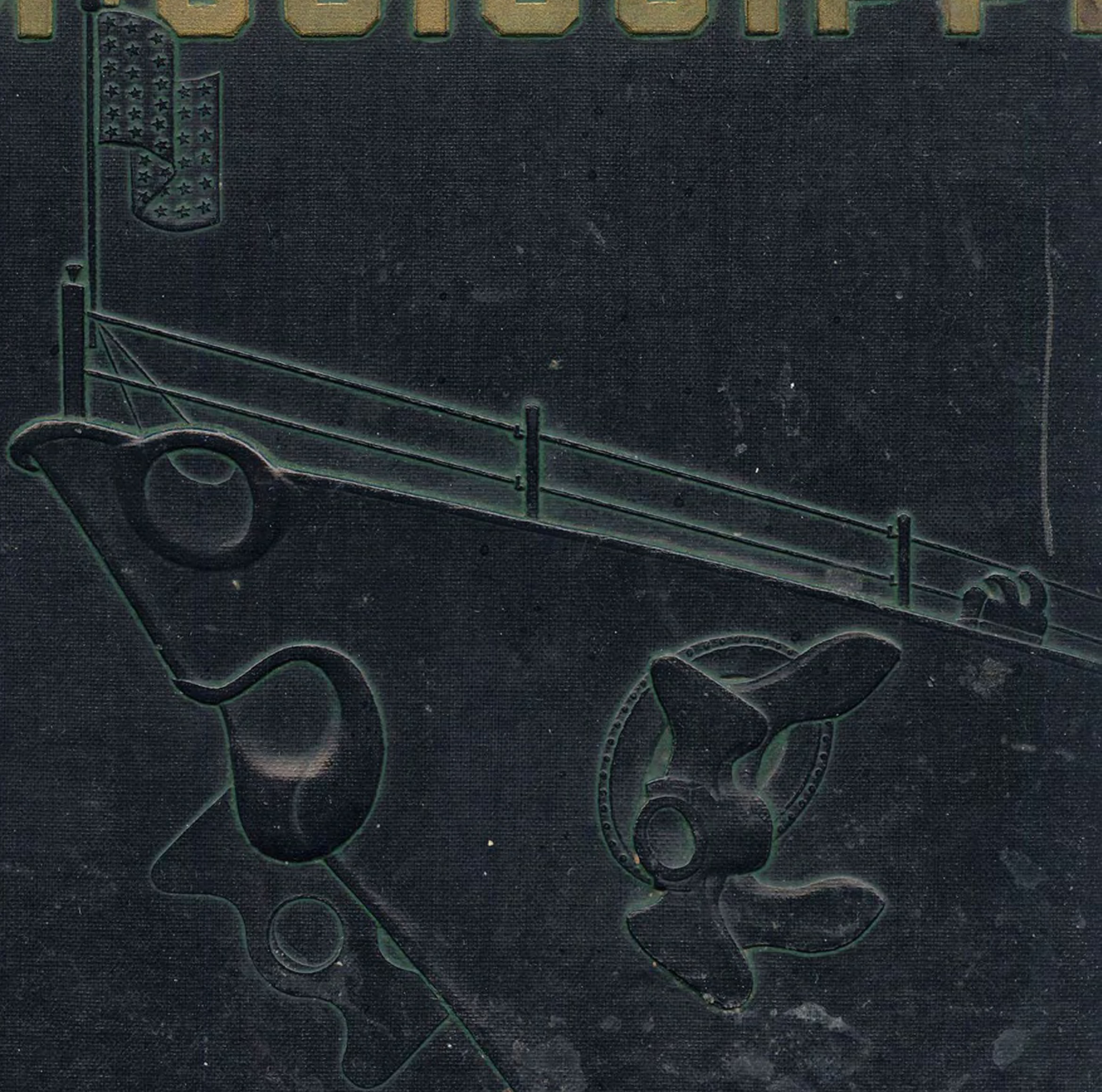


USS

MISSISSIPPI



1941-1945



Captain Heman J. Redfield

26 APRIL 1944—18 JULY 1945

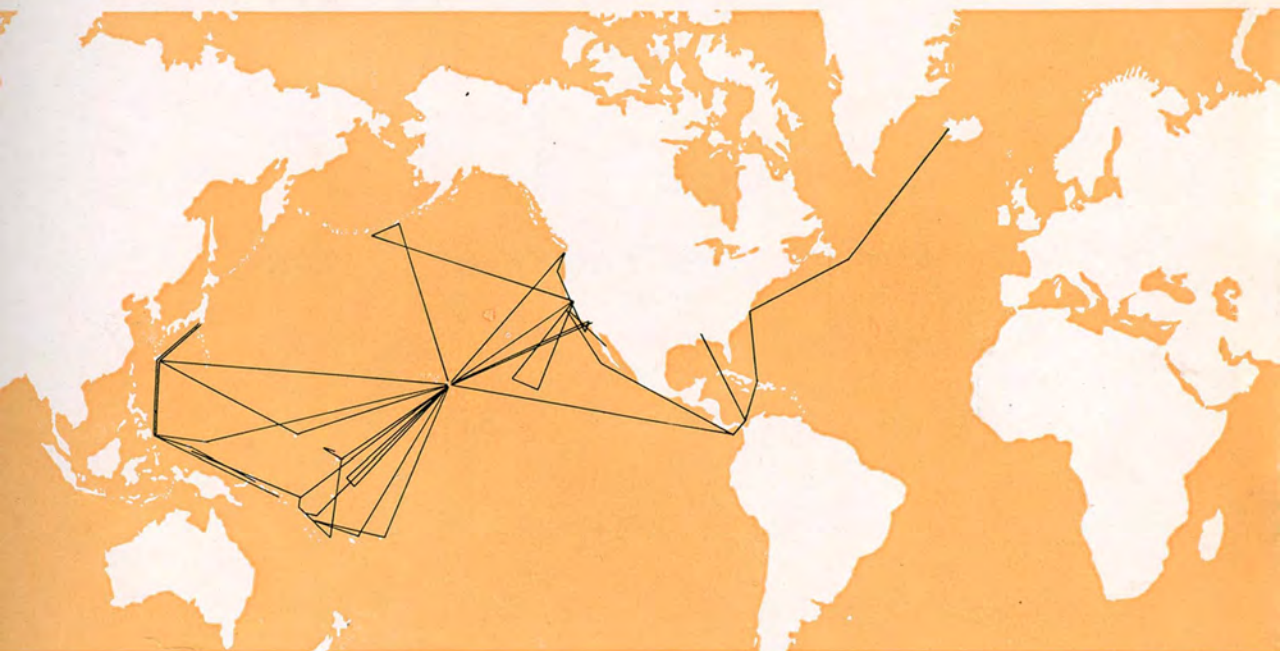


Captain John F. Crowe, Jr.

18 JULY 1945—10 MAY 1947



U.S.S. MISSISSIPPI



WAR RECORD ★★★★★ 1941-1945

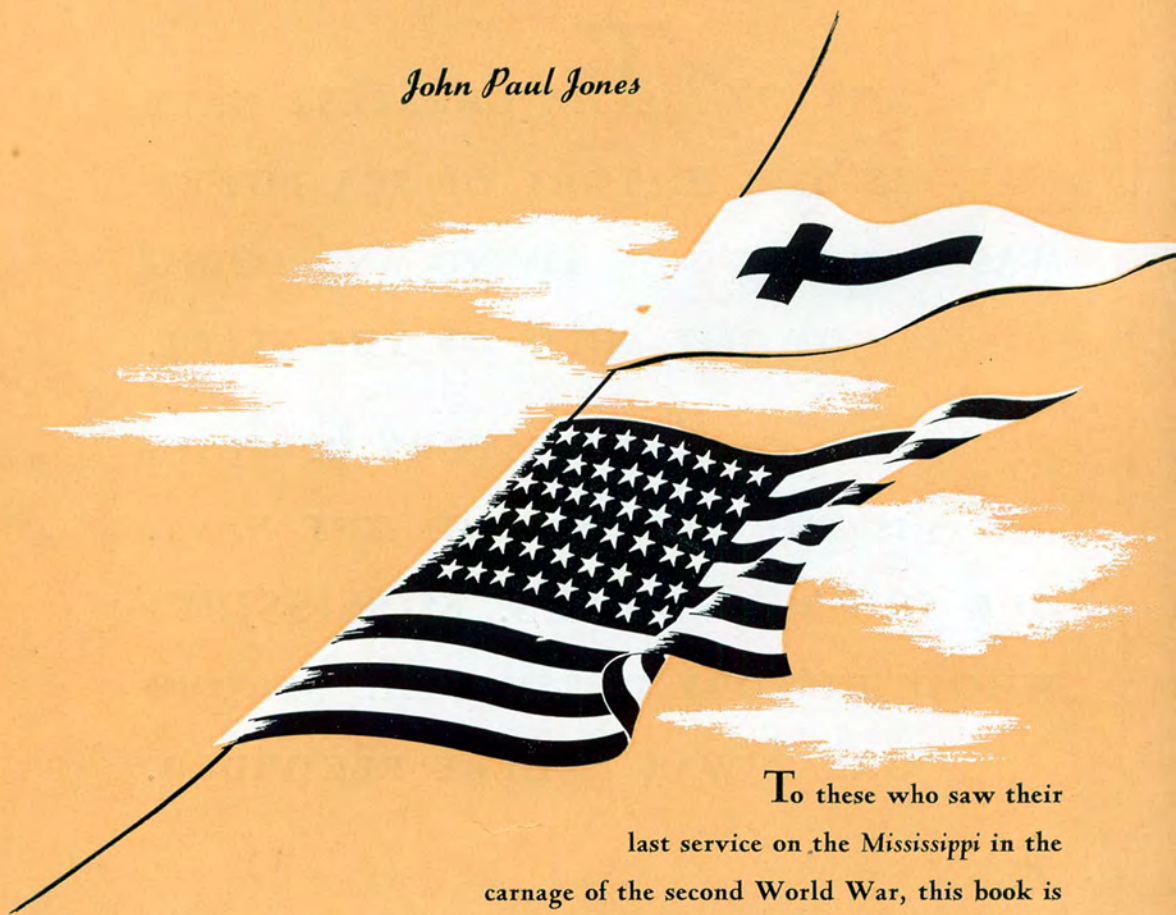


THE GREATEST NAVY
IN THE HISTORY OF SEA POWER
WAS BUILT BY MEN LIVING AND DYING
ON THE SHIPS OF THE FLEET.

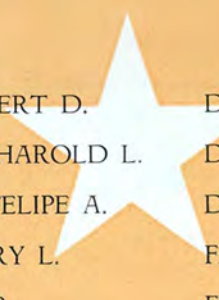
THE HISTORY OF SHIPS
IS THE HERITAGE OF THE NAVY.
OUR SHIP IS THE U.S.S. MISSISSIPPI
WHOSE HISTORY DURING THE SECOND
GREAT WAR IS HERE RECORDED.

FOR THE MEN
NOT THE GUNS
RATE A SHIP

John Paul Jones



To these who saw their
last service on the Mississippi in the
carnage of the second World War, this book is
humbly dedicated with the respect and humility of those still living.



ABEYTA, ALBERT D.	DEADERICK, DONALD S.	LAWRENCE, VERNON L.
APPLEGATE, HAROLD L.	DEVORICH, JOHN V.	LEADER, RICHARD T.
ARELLANO, FELIPE A.	DYE, KENNETH C.	LEONARD, JOSEPH
BAACK, HARRY L.	FAGER, JOHN J., Jr.	McDONALD, JAMES J.
BACA, ELUE B.	FERRIS, ALLEN O.	McELDUFF, THOMAS J.
BACA, JUAN F.	GARZA, VINCENT, Jr.	MEARKLE, PERRY F.
BAGGETT, WILLIAM E.	GIECHRIST, ARTHUR J.	MYRICK, CLARENCE C.
BARBEREE, EARL B.	GILLEN, JOHN L.	NEALE, DIXIE T.
BARNETT, ROBERT L.	GLASE, CHARLES R.	PADILLA, JOSE C.
BARRICKS, PAUL "B."	GOSSAGE, ROBERT B.	PAINTER, ALLEN K.
BAYLESS, BILLY B.	GREEN, HARLE H.	ROBERTS, EUGENE
BENN, HARVEY N., Jr.	GRIGERY, CLYDE H.	ROBINS, CHARLES E.
BETTS, CHARLES R.	HALL, LAWRENCE C.	RITTER, EDWARD B.
BLACKWELL, THOMAS C.	HALSEY, CHARLES L.	RUBEN, HAROLD
BRABHAM, MARVIN L.	HANSEN, JOHN P.	SAJOVIC, JACK C.
BRACK, THEODOR	HANSON, RALPH E.	SCHALLIE, MILTON W.
BROWN, WILLIAM L.	HARRISON, ELISHA J.	SHRIDER, NORMAN K.
BRYANT, JAMES R.	HELTON, JOSEPH C.	STEWART, MORRIS E.
BRYANT, WILBURN C.	HERNANDEZ, ROBERT	VALDEZ, ERNEST R.
CAFFEY, LEONARD C.	HIGHLAND, JOHN C.	VELIKIE, CHARLES P.
CAMPBELL, JAMES L.	HOLCOMB, EDWARD K.	WEBB, HERBERT L.
CASSERLY, KEVIN G.	ICE, JOHN L.	WISE, CHARLES L.
CAVALIER, PASQUAL P.	INGRAM, VEO M.	WITHROW, FLOYD,
CHAMBERS, JAMES C.	JASICA, MICHELL J.	<i>Chaplain</i>

WEARERS OF THE PURPLE HEART

*FRANCIS, H. T., CGM
GUNTHER, R. H., S₁
GUTIERREZ, G. L., EM₃
HODGES, R. E., S₂
JANEWAY, R. L., S₁
JOHNSON, W. E., MM₂
BUMANN, C. E., RM₃
KELLAR, A. A., S₁
STEADMAN, G. A., AMM₁
TOLENTINO, A., ST₃
BIRGE, P. G., S₁
BOUDRA, E. F., S₂
BRINKLEY, J. J., S₁
BROWN, E. A., S₁
BROWN, F. W., JR., S₁
CHAMPAGNE, R. J., EM₁
FAGAN, W., S₂
FISHER, N., S₂
FOSTER, C. L., S₁
GUNNOE, C. J., S₂
HEIDEN, G. L., S₂
HOCKER, L. R., S₂
JACKMAN, C. R., Y₃
KESLER, F. M., GM₃
LAZZAROTTO, A. P., S₁
LOVE, A. F., S₂
PACAK, J., S₁
REAGON, I. C., JR., S₂
SAYLES, E. H., S₁
SHARKEY, G. F., S₂
WRIGHT, O. W., GM₃
CHASTAIN, R. A., AMM₂
PAINE, A. L., CORP, MSMCR
ARNOLD, F. R., PFC, USMCR
JENSEN, M. K., PFC, USMC
LEONHARDT, J. J., PFC, USMCR
SOSNOWSKI, J., PFC, USMC
WARREN, E. C., PFC, USMCR

BAUER, E. J., LTJG
HOYLE, W. H., LTJG
PEMBERTON, J., ENS
MONTGOMERY, W. L., CHGUN
DISBRO, V. L., ELEC
LEWIS, G. A., LTJG
GAMBLE, R. W., LCDR
BROUILLETTE, C. B., LT
COCKRILL, R. E., S₁
COYLE, R. "E," FC₂
CURRY, D. A., GM₃
DAHER, K. G., S₁
DAY, C. H., S₂
DOROUGH, H. L., S₁
EPPERSON, M. C., S₂
ESPINOZA, R., S₂
FISHER, O. H., S₂
FLYNN, J. N., S₁
GONZALES, C., JR., S₁
HARGER, W. T., S₁
HIDALGO, J. R., S₁
HOWARD, L. F., MM₁
JANKE, H. A., GM₂
LARSON, D. O., S₂
LEUTZINGER, E. J., S₁
MADDEN, R., S₁
RAMIREZ, S., BM₂
RODY, J. K., GM₂
SCHMIT, N. S., JR., S₂
VODENIK, J. C., CM₂
ZAMMUTO, R. A., MM₂
LINDY, F. L., CORP, USMCR
DANIEL, L. R., ACK, USMCR
HUBBARD, M. S., PFC, USMCR
LEE, R. A., PFC, USMCR
NASH, E. T., PFC, USMC
TAYLOR, W. S., PFC, USMCR
THARP, E. D., PVT, USMCR

*Gold Star in lieu of Second Purple Heart



THIS HISTORY BEGINS
WITH THE COMMAND THAT
DIRECTED THE NATION, THE
NAVY, THE FLEETS, AND FORCES
AND THE SHIP AGAINST THE ENEMIES
OF DEMOCRATIC CIVILIZATION.



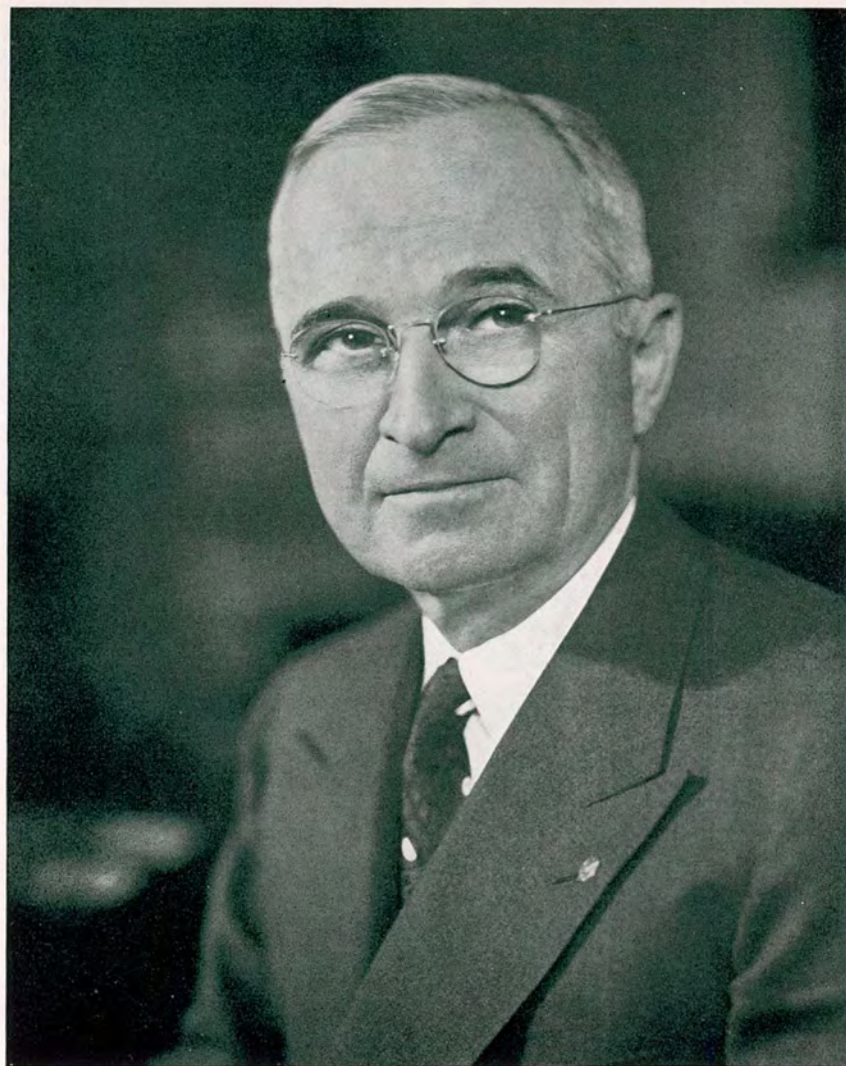
C O M M A N D E R I N C H I E F



Franklin Delano Roosevelt



COMMANDER IN CHIEF



Harry S. Truman



SECRETARY OF THE NAVY



James V. Forrestal



COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF U.S. FLEET
CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS



Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King



SECRETARY OF THE NAVY



Frank Knox



COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PACIFIC FLEET
AND PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS



Fleet Admiral Chester A. Nimitz

COMMANDERS OF THE FLEETS

WITHIN PACIFIC COMMAND
IN WHICH MISSISSIPPI SERVED



Fleet Admiral William F. Halsey
COMMANDER, THIRD FLEET



Admiral Raymond A. Spruance
COMMANDER, FIFTH FLEET



Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid
COMMANDER, SEVENTH FLEET

COMMANDERS OF DIVISIONS AND SQUADRONS

IN WHICH THE MISSISSIPPI SERVED



Vice Admiral Jesse B. Olendorf

COMMANDER,
BATTLESHIP SQUADRON ONE



Rear Admiral George L. Weyler
COMMANDER,
BATTLESHIP DIVISION THREE



Vice Admiral Lynde D. McCormick
COMMANDER,
BATTLESHIP DIVISION THREE

COMMANDING OFFICERS

U.S.S. MISSISSIPPI

1941-1945



Rear Admiral Walden L. Ainsworth

20 DECEMBER 1941—20 JUNE 1942



Rear Admiral Calvin H. Cobb

20 JUNE 1942—15 NOVEMBER 1942



Captain Lunsford L. Hunter

16 NOVEMBER 1942—26 APRIL 1944



Captain Heman J. Redfield

26 APRIL 1944—18 JULY 1945



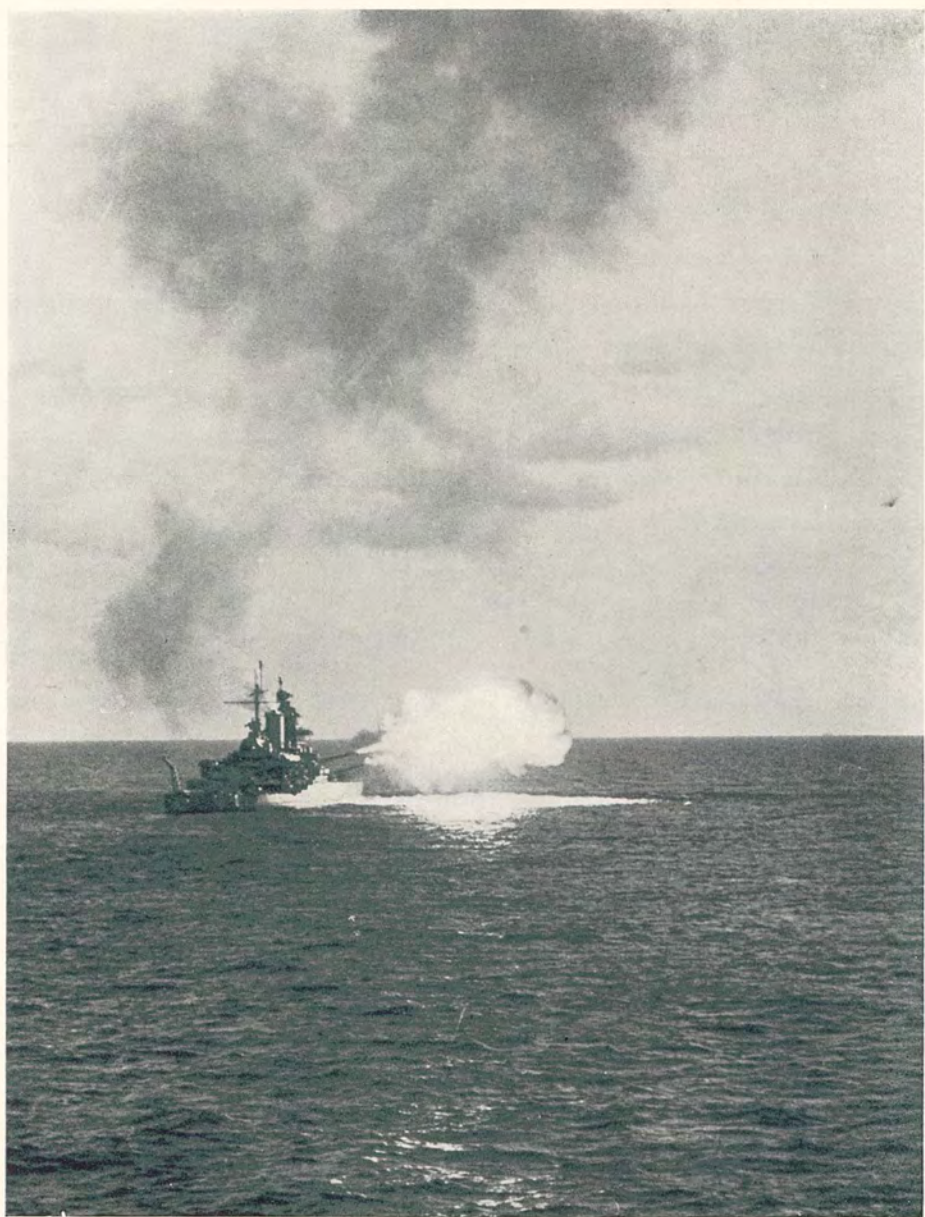
Captain John F. Crowe, Jr.

18 JULY 1945—10 MAY 1947

Commanding Officers

U.S.S. MISSISSIPPI

CAPTAIN JOSEPH L. JAYNE	18 December 1917 to 31 January 1918
CAPTAIN PHILIP ANDREWS	31 January 1918 to 6 September 1918
CAPTAIN BENJAMIN F. HUTCHINSON	6 September 1918 to 29 November 1918
CAPTAIN WILLIAM A. MOFFETT	10 December 1918 to 7 December 1920
CAPTAIN POWERS SYMINGTON	7 December 1920 to 15 December 1921
CAPTAIN ORTON P. JACKSON	15 December 1921 to 14 November 1923
CAPTAIN WILLIAM D. BROTHERTON	14 November 1923 to 6 June 1925
CAPTAIN THOMAS C. HART	6 June 1925 to 2 June 1927
CAPTAIN CHARLES M. TOZER	2 June 1927 to 27 June 1928
CAPTAIN EDWARD B. FENNER	27 June 1928 to 4 June 1930
CAPTAIN HARRY L. BRINSER	14 June 1930 to 5 July 1932
CAPTAIN WILLIAM D. PULESTON	5 July 1932 to 1 June 1934
CAPTAIN SAM C. LOOMIS	1 June 1934 to 30 November 1935
CAPTAIN WILLIAM P. GADDIS	30 November 1935 to 7 June 1937
CAPTAIN FERDINAND L. REICHMUTH	7 June 1937 to 30 April 1938
CAPTAIN RAYMOND A. SPRUANCE	30 April 1938 to 6 January 1940
CAPTAIN WILLIAM R. MUNROE	6 February 1940 to 30 January 1941
CAPTAIN THEODORE S. WILKINSON	30 January 1941 to 22 September 1941
COMMANDER GERAULD WRIGHT	23 September 1941 to 28 November 1941
CAPTAIN PENN LEARY CARROLL	29 November 1941 to 19 December 1941
CAPTAIN WALDEN L. AINSWORTH	20 December 1941 to 27 June 1942
CAPTAIN CALVIN HAYES COBB	28 June 1942 to 15 November 1942
CAPTAIN LUNSFORD LOMAX HUNTER	16 November 1942 to 26 April 1944
CAPTAIN HEMAN J. REDFIELD	26 April 1944 to 18 July 1945
CAPTAIN JOHN F. CROWE, JR.	18 July 1945 to May 1947





U.S.S. Mississippi 1842

INTRODUCTION

ON June 30, 1914, when Congress authorized the construction of the *U.S.S. Mississippi*, the third United States warship to bear that name, the stockholders—the American people—made a seven million dollar investment, destined to pay them large future dividends in protection of their democracy.

The two previous investments had also paid off well. The first *Mississippi*, a steam frigate largely designed about 1840 by the renowned Capt. Matthew Calbraith Perry, USN (later Commodore), was the celebrated dreadnaught of her day, a third bigger than “Old Ironsides” (the *U.S.S. Constitution*) and mounting ten enormous pivot shell-firers. This *Mis-*

Mississippi was later the backbone of Commodore Perry's small squadron of vessels when he sailed on his celebrated mission which opened Japan to the Western world after other major sea powers of that time had failed. This first *Mississippi's* visit to Okinawa Gunto and Shuri Castle and her anchorage off Tokyo during the 1853 treaty negotiations were to be relived by

her present-day namesake ninety-two years later, when the Navy was again "peace-making" with the Japanese. The second *Mississippi*, after a short but honorable career with our Fleet, was sold to Greece shortly before World War I, where she still serves.

The keel of the third *Mississippi* was laid on April 5, 1915 at the Newport





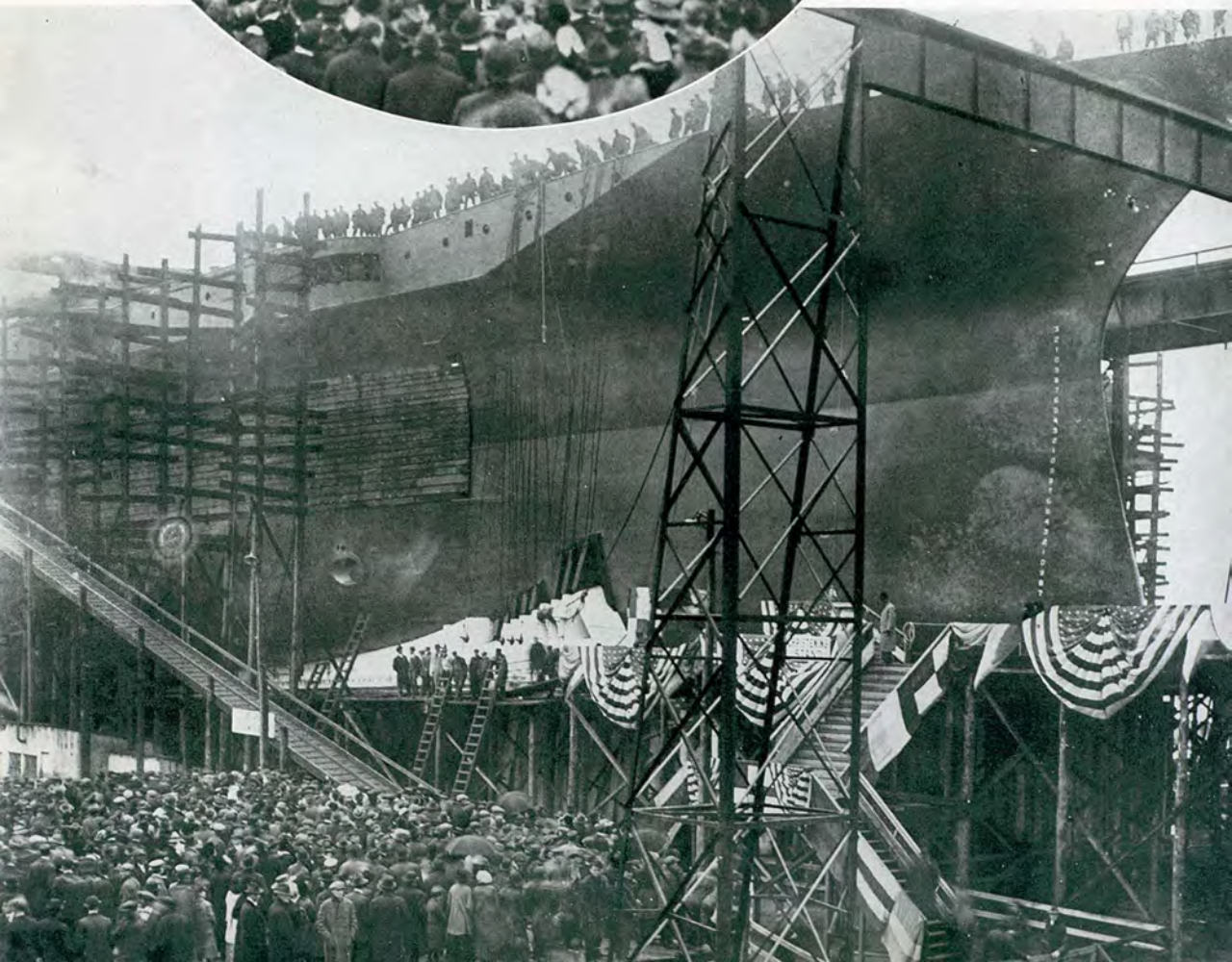
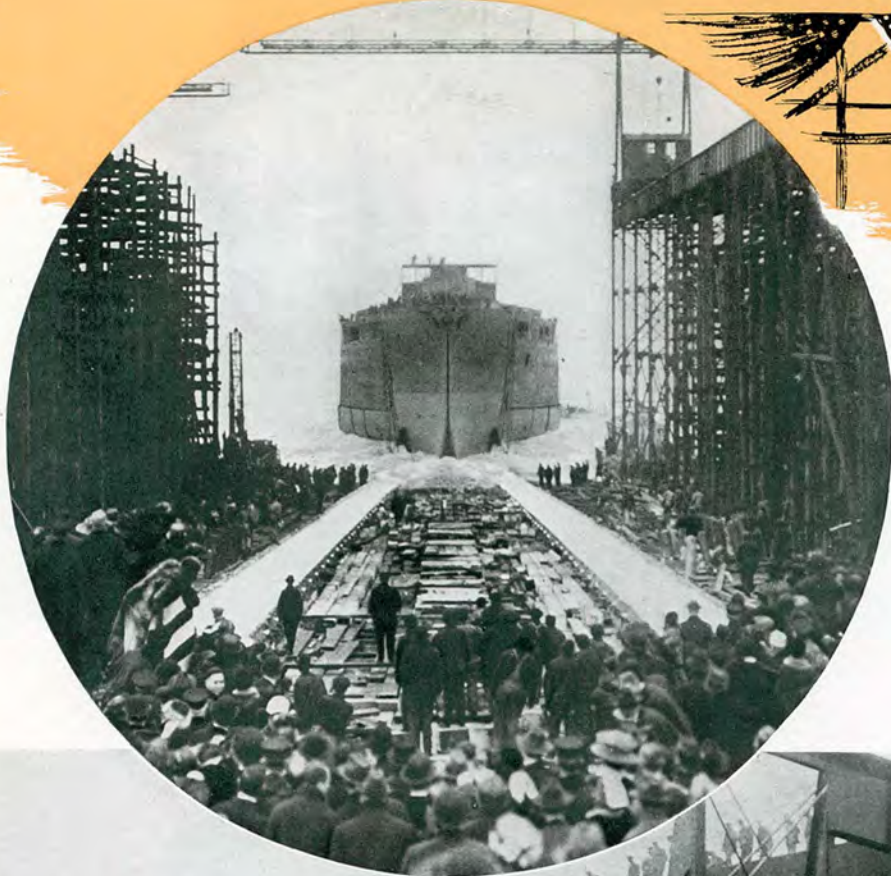
Second Mississippi

News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company in Virginia. The ship was launched on January 25, 1917 and commissioned on December 18, 1917 as the mightiest single element of American Sea Power at that time.

The trials went according to schedule, and the shakedown soon showed that the indefinable magic which makes a ship great was indeed present in the *Mississippi*. She had many new items of equipment and, in general, her construction was the product of years of American naval ingenuity—a true super-dreadnaught fully capable of carrying on the best traditions of the Fleet.

At this time, the *Mississippi* displaced 32,000 tons, made a top speed of 21 knots and carried an armament consisting of twelve 14-inch guns, fourteen 5-inch broadside guns and an antiaircraft battery of four 3-inch guns. Thus equipped, she served with the Atlantic Fleet during World War I, as it convoyed troops and supplies to Europe, and, with the British battle squadrons, kept the Imperial German Navy harmlessly bottled up in their own harbors. The *Mississippi* effectively contributed to the traditional role of the American Navy of keeping control of the seas.

In 1919, naval strategy dictated the



formation of a powerful fleet in the Pacific and the *Mississippi*, along with other major combatant ships and auxiliaries, was transferred to the Pacific Fleet, the forerunner of the world's most powerful naval force.

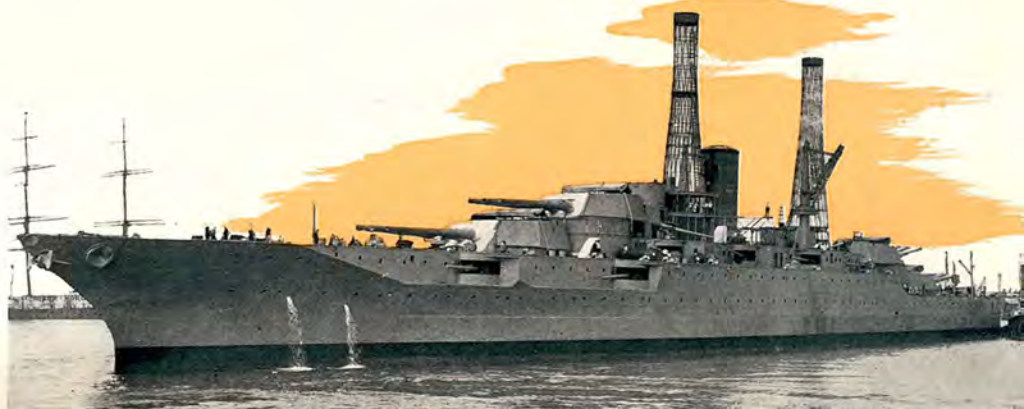
Between the two World Wars, the *Mississippi* carried out training routines along with the rest of the highly trained Pacific Fleet. These long periods of seemingly routine training were demonstrated during World War II to be the solid basis upon which our expanded Navy was built, and only the backlog of experienced personnel trained on such "Old Ladies" of the Fleet as the *Mississippi* made this enormous expansion possible.

The *Mississippi* was a proud ship during these years of peace. She won the coveted award for gunnery and engineering efficiency many times, and to prove that she was good at play as well as at work, she also won the "Iron Man" symbol of the Fleet Athletic Championship for six consecutive years. Her reputation

as a crack fighting ship, combined with her known high morale, made her a coveted duty assignment for officers and men.

It was during this period of training that she weathered a trying ordeal. When firing off San Pedro, California, on June 12, 1924, a major explosion and fire gutted Turret No. 2, killing three officers and forty-four men. The *Mississippi* continued to fire her other three turrets until the exercise was over and then asked permission to drop out of the battle line to fight her fires. The Division Commander, Rear Admiral W. V. Pratt, USN (later Chief of Naval Operations), in delivering the funeral oration for these men on the quarterdeck three days later said, "I am proud to have such a ship as the *Mississippi* in my division. Her action in this past tragedy could not have been improved upon. Her conduct can truly be said to be in keeping with the highest traditions of our Naval Service."

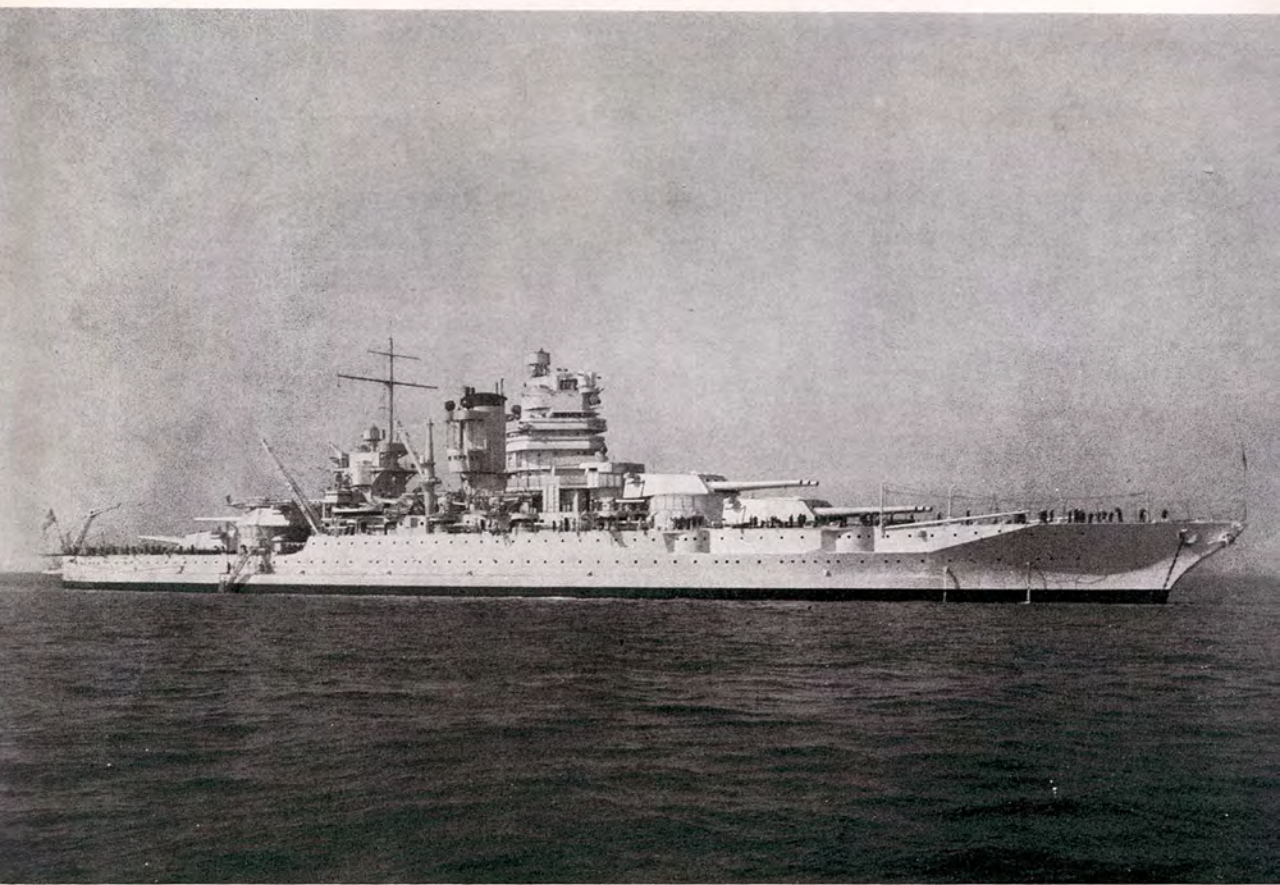
In 1933 the ship was modernized; her cage masts were removed, her armament



was improved by the addition of a modern fire control system, the engineering installation was replaced and many alterations made in the hull design. This considerably improved the ship's combat

potential and when she rejoined the Pacific Fleet with her new five-inch antiaircraft battery she was again one of the most potent units of American sea power.

After Modernization—1933





Chapter II

OLD MISS GOES TO WAR

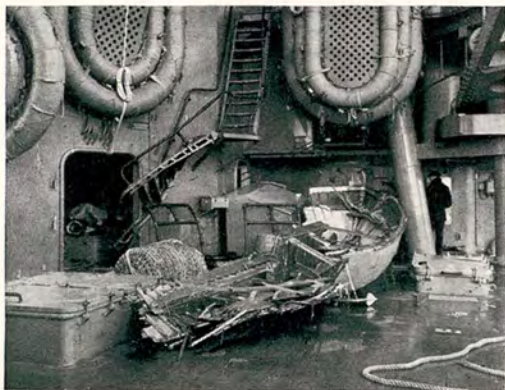
WITH the beginning of World War II in Europe, the *Mississippi* began to put those finishing touches on her organization which turn a good ship into a keen combat weapon. In May of 1941, when secretly ordered from the Pacific Fleet to the East Coast, she reported to the Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, ready and able for any kind of duty.

During this time of national emergency when the military forces of our country were rapidly expanding and reorganizing,

the *Mississippi*, from June to December before our own war officially began, was already performing rugged combat duty in guarding our frontiers while the country mobilized behind her. Acting under Presidential "shoot-on-sight" orders, she patrolled the storm-swept Atlantic convoying British ships loaded with vital Lend-Lease equipment. With other units of the American Fleet, she bolstered up the hard pressed British Royal Navy and in the face of Germany's greatest submarine and surface challenge, including



Mississippi in a North Atlantic storm



Damage caused by heavy seas

the *Bismarck* and *Scharnhorst*, kept open the all-important sea lanes of communication. This necessitated long periods of patrol in the icy, gale-torn North Atlantic from our East Coast to the shores of Iceland and to the reaches of the North Sea. On one scouting mission during these pre-war operations, the *Mississippi* went through one of the worst North Atlantic storms of recent times, losing some of her boats, much topside equipment, and finally having her main catapult torn loose from the quarterdeck and washed overboard like a matchstick.

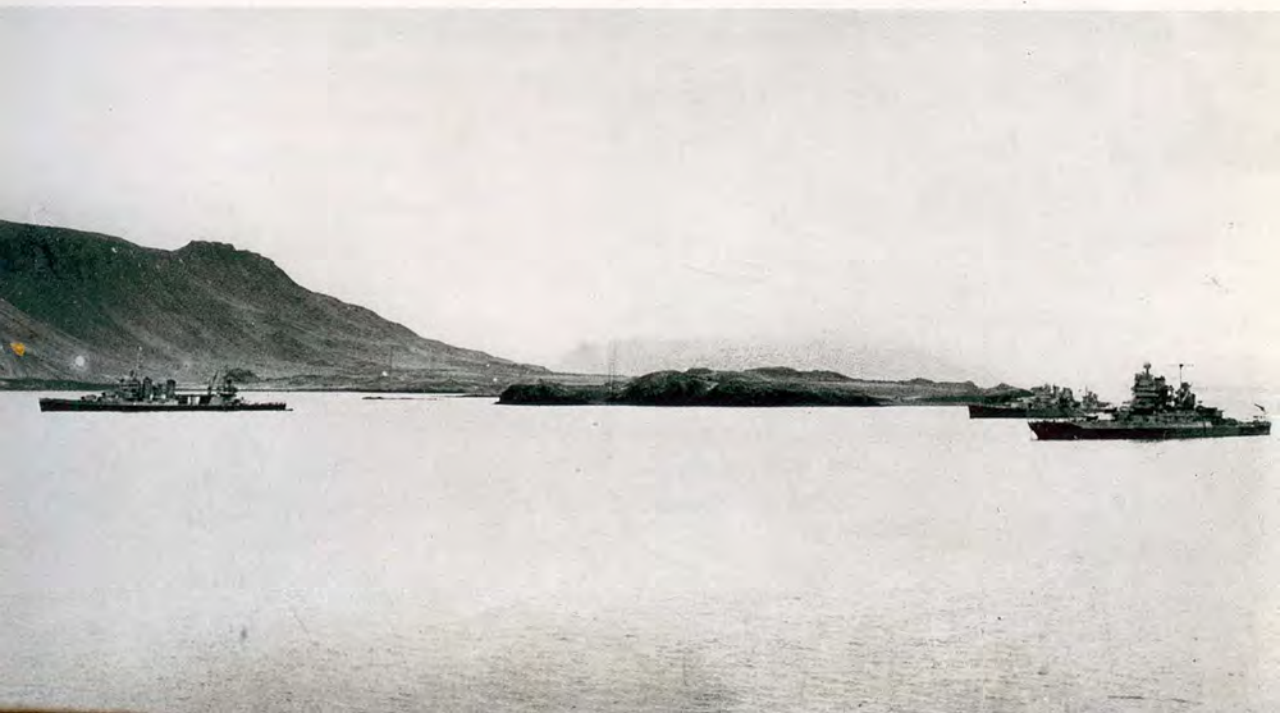
On the morning of December 7, 1941, after the Japanese carrier task force had attacked Pearl Harbor, the *Mississippi* and her sister ships of Battleship Division Three, lying quietly at anchor at Hvalfjörður, Iceland, represented most of the remaining battleship strength of the United States Navy. At this time Capt. W. L. Ainsworth, USN (now Rear Admiral), became Commanding Officer.

It was during this crisis in our sea power that the *Mississippi* was again transferred to the Pacific Fleet in order to hold our remaining lanes of communication in the Pacific. From January to July, 1942, the *Mississippi* was continually based on the West Coast escorting various convoys and forming our last bulwark of defense



Handling stores

At anchor at Hvalfjörður, Iceland, December 7, 1941





We were welcomed at Fiji

against an expected amphibious attack on the continental United States. In June, Capt. C. H. Cobb, USN (now Rear Admiral) relieved Captain Ainsworth as Commanding Officer. During the battle of Midway, she was stationed with other old battleships, in a supporting position to the eastward of Pearl Harbor. From August to November, after the carrier battles of the Coral Sea and Midway had somewhat eased the force of the Japanese attack, she was tactically deployed as an uncommitted reserve for our Central Pacific Forces, operating mostly in Hawaiian waters, in strategic support of our light scouting forces and carrier task forces as they bore the brunt of the Japanese attack. The tactical disposal of these heavy elements of our sea power prevented the Japanese from concentrating and attacking in sufficient strength at any one point to overwhelm our hard-pressed forces, for our carriers, cruisers and destroyers had suffered extremely heavy losses.

As the purely defensive phase of the Pacific War gradually changed into the defensive-offensive phase, the *Mississippi*, then in Nandi Waters, Fiji Islands, during November and December, acted as a supporting force for the Solomons task groups during the crucial battles of Guadalcanal

and Santa Cruz. In November 1942, Capt. L. L. Hunter, USN, relieved Captain Cobb as Commanding Officer.

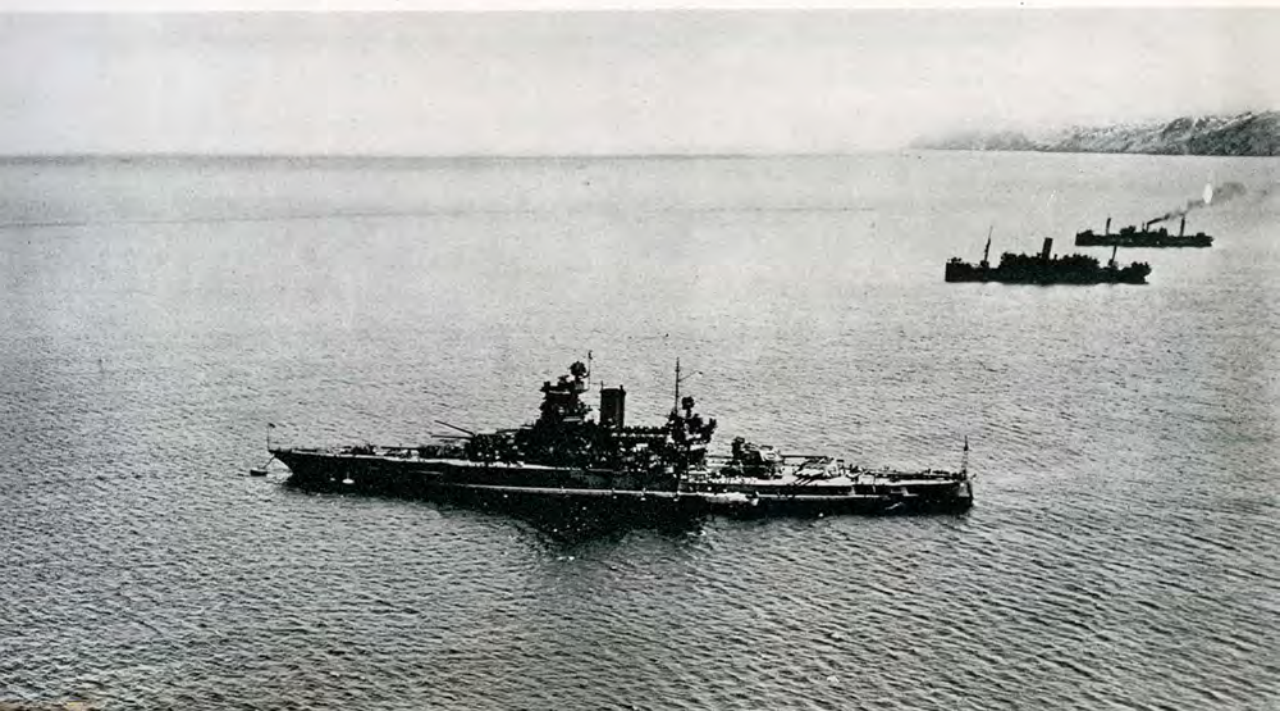
In the opening months of 1943, the *Mississippi* continued to operate with our South Pacific Forces and, among other duties, formed the backbone of a task force which extricated the battle-damaged cruiser *Pensacola* from the Solomons area after the Battle of Tassafaronga and escorted her to the vicinity of Samoa. Towards the end of February, the *Mississippi* returned to Pearl Harbor as escort for the badly damaged cruiser *Minneapolis* and herself underwent much needed repairs.

The desperate shortage of major combat ships allowed the *Mississippi* only a short stay in Hawaii before she was ordered to North Pacific Waters, arriving



Securing ground tackle

We arrived in the North Pacific—Kuluk Bay, Adak





at Kuluk Bay, Adak, in May of 1943. While our forces had concentrated every effort to go over to the offensive in the South Pacific, the Japanese had moved into the Aleutians at the time of the Midway battle in 1942, occupying Kiska and Attu. The *Mississippi*, along with other of our naval units, conducted screening operations against Japanese forces to protect our bases and communication lanes so that material could be concentrated and personnel staged to retake these islands. The weather was continually foggy and rough; a high wind made a bad climate even worse on our personnel. However, by the 22nd of July, 1943, our forces were poised for the assault, and the *Mississippi* conducted a highly successful preliminary bombardment of Kiska before our first

wave hit the beaches. It was a strenuous, physically exhausting operation, fought under the worst weather conditions, but we re-took the Aleutians.

Finally after four months of continuous operation in this semi-Arctic climate, the *Mississippi* returned to San Francisco for well-earned dry-docking and repairs.

At the end of this two months yard overhaul, followed by gunnery practice in the San Diego area, the *Mississippi* proceeded to Pearl Harbor, ready for her next role in the Pacific War. It wasn't long in coming, for on November 10, 1943, she shoved off to begin the Gilbert Islands Operation—our first major offensive campaign. The neutralization of enemy defenses on heavily fortified Makin Island was the *Mississippi's* objective.



Aleutian Islands topography

It was here on the 20th of November, while laying a devastating barrage on the main Japanese fortifications, that a flare-back in Turret No. 2 killed one officer and forty men and wounded many more. The *Mississippi* never missed a salvo with her remaining guns and continued to effectively cover her assigned objectives throughout the rest of the bombardment. After our troops had successfully landed, Com-

mander Cruiser Division Four flashed the following commendation for this action:

"All hands admired the manner in which *Mississippi* continued bombardment without interruption despite disastrous fire which we saw."

Later, the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, noted with approval that the *Mississippi* never ceased firing any of her undamaged guns during the bombardment.



Flare back in No. 2
turret caused heavy
casualties





Landing craft transport troops and supplies

To establish beachhead on Makin Island





We bombard



Makin Island



to destroy



enemy personnel,



equipment



and installations

The refitting of the gutted turret again took the ship to Pearl Harbor for most of two months, but late in January, after a short rehearsal, the *Mississippi* was underway once more, this time for the Marshall Islands Operation. The Island of Kwajalein in the atoll of the same name was the main objective, and the *Mississippi* was assigned the western end as her fire support sector. Prior to the main assault on D-Day, her principal missions were to destroy an eight foot concrete seawall which ran along the landing beach—an obstruction which, if left intact, would have made the landing very costly if not impossible—and to knock out coastal defense and dual purpose guns in order to prevent fire on our transports which were unloading troops for the assault on the island. Another of her tasks was to give close fire cover and protection to a small boat crew—the forerunner of the Underwater Demolition Teams—as they made their daring high and low tide surveys to find boat lanes through the reefs and Japanese defenses. These missions were completely accomplished by methodical, accurate, close-range bombardment. The seawall was demolished, and neither our transports nor our close-in reconnaissance team received any hostile fire as they carried out

their vital work.

The *Mississippi* gave the beach a concentrated preparation for the landings on D-Day, January 31st, and after the first waves had hit the beach destroyed many routine targets, most of which provided no special problem beyond that of gunfire of pin-point accuracy. Troop commanders ashore were lavish in their praise of the *Mississippi's* firing, calling it "superlative," "excellent," and "outstanding." In one of the target areas fired upon, a large and elaborate blockhouse of heavily reinforced concrete and palm logs became noticeable as gunfire blasted away its camouflage. Earlier near misses by all calibers and even direct hits by five-inch guns had left it intact. Its construction and strategic location indicated that it was one of the main command posts of the island garrison, and so its complete and immediate destruction was assigned the highest priority by the Joint Amphibious Commander. Faced with the necessity of demolishing—not just superficially damaging—this vital target, the *Mississippi* decided to close the range to a dangerous 1500 yards and, finally, even to 1200 yards to take it under point-blank fire using armor piercing projectiles. This was the first known time that point-blank destruc-



Mississippi leaves her calling-card at Kwajalein

tive fire had been attempted in the Pacific War. Although the amount of damage to be expected from shore batteries couldn't be exactly estimated, the great potential danger to the ship was carefully weighed against the importance of this target and the risk deemed justified. But so accurate and thorough had the *Mississippi's* earlier bombardment been, that when she closed in for the kill, she was not hit by a single large caliber shell. Soon the blockhouse with its integrated network of trenches and defenses was utterly destroyed by direct hits of armor piercing projectiles from the *Mississippi's* big guns. Only a mass of rubble remained.

When the assault wave hit the *Mississippi's* beaches, they found the devastation so complete that for the first time in an attack on a heavily fortified island the actual landing phase was unopposed and even the advance inland from the beach was uncontested for over 2000 yards. The Commanding General of the 7th Infantry Division highly praised the *Mississippi's* work, directly attributing the Army's low losses to the devastation created by the ship's guns, and in gratitude named this area *Mississippi Beach*.

So successful was this destruction of the Japanese defenses that the original fire support plan for D-Day plus 1 was altered by

the Amphibious Commander and the *Mississippi* was again sent in to point-blank range of the Western beaches to demolish other heavy defense works and obstacles further inland which were blocking our troops' advance. With the complete destruction of their main fortifications, the Japanese defense soon went to pieces and all organized resistance was quickly over.

The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, in describing the effect of Naval gunfire on this island as devastating, attributed the complete neutralization of the enemy defenses to the point-blank broadsides of the *Mississippi's* fourteen-inch guns, stating that the island looked "as if it had been picked up to 20,000 feet and then dropped. . . . It was impossible to tell where the seawall had stood. . . . All beach defenses were completely destroyed."

After Kwajalein had been secured, the Commanding Officer went ashore to inspect the remains of the Japanese defenses. He viewed the wreckage of the seawall and the large command post. The Commanding General of the Assault Forces declared that the elimination of these key defenses had greatly aided the early securing of the island. On returning to the ship, the Commanding Officer made the following report:

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AND PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS

HEADQUARTERS OF THE
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

The Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet,
takes pleasure in commending

CAPTAIN LUNSFORD LOMAX HUNTER, UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For distinguished service in the line of his profession as Commanding Officer of a fire support ship engaged in operations for the capture of the southern half of Kwajalein Atoll of the Marshall Islands during the period from January 6, 1944, to February 15, 1944. By his initiative, energy, and devotion to duty, he took his ship close in to enemy shore installations and laid down a withering bombardment against important enemy installations that lay in the path of our assault forces. His deliberate, accurate, and entirely effective fire contributed materially to the success of this operation. His conduct throughout was in keeping with the highest traditions of the naval service."

C. W. NIMITZ,
Admiral, U. S. Navy.

Commendation Ribbon Authorized

"We have just come back from an inspection of the Western end of Kwajalein Island and particularly that portion which was the *Mississippi's* target. The destruction is really beyond description, shell and bomb craters are everywhere, with trees uprooted or cut down and all vegetation destroyed. *Mississippi Beach* was defended by a concrete seawall at the corner, and farther down towards the Eastern end was a heavy log revetment with the logs inclined at about 30 degrees from the horizontal to act as tank traps. Behind these barriers, there were any number of machine gun nests protected by concrete walls or log revetments. In the northwest



Captain Hunter and ships officers inspect damage

corner, there were several dual 5-inch mounts built up on very heavy foundations with concrete walls around them. There was a large and very strongly built command post of reinforced concrete in this area and also numerous 3-inch guns scattered around at various places. Our fire leveled the seawall and log revetments and literally blasted the pillboxes apart and blew all the guns off their foundations. We were helped by one large bomb hit which blew two 5-inch guns over 100 feet from their foundations. We wrecked the heavy concrete command post completely. This post had a lot of underground passageways, and I was informed that over 250 dead Japs were picked up in the dugouts connected with this post. Everything in this area was literally blasted out of the ground and after looking at it, you could not see how anyone could have stayed there and not been killed. We can readily understand now how the Army was able to land on this beach without opposition. An Infantry Captain told us that after this exhibition and support, 'the Infantry is all for the Navy'. We were struck by the large quantity of Japanese ammunition scattered over the area. Some of it had exploded and some still was intact, mostly 5 and 3-inch ammunition.

We got up to the storehouse area and all of these buildings had been demolished, with their contents destroyed by fire. We were struck at the large quantity of fuel oil and gas which had been stored in drums on various parts of the island and there were literally thousands of these drums which had been burned. We also noted a lot of small power stations scattered around in various places which had been destroyed by shell fire or fire. We noted a good many dead Japanese still lying around at various places. Many of them seem to have been badly burned.

"Thousands of soldiers are now on the island with tanks, artillery and all sorts of motor equipment. They all seem to be in good spirits and are very happy over the fact that the Navy was able to clear the way for them so that they could finish the job without losing many men.

"Again, everything on the island I saw presents the picture of utter destruction and desolation and makes us all realize the destructive effect of gunfire at close range. My only regret is that all of you cannot see what a good job the *Mississippi* did."

From Kwajalein, the *Mississippi* moved down to Majuro and from this base went out to bombard the Island of Taroa on the 20th of February and the Island of Wotje

on the following day, thus completing in two days a double-barrelled destruction of the enemy defenses on both islands. A few days later, with our forces securely entrenched on Kwajalein and the surrounding atolls, and her work for the moment completed, the *Mississippi* steamed to Efate in the New Hebrides, which was to be her new base for the next strike at the enemy.

But there was not much rest in those days for the few fully operational heavy combat ships of our Fleet, and so in the middle of March the *Mississippi* again shoved off to carry her shells to the enemy. This time the target was Kavieng, New Ireland, where the *Mississippi*, in order to create a diversion in support of the concurrent Emirau landings, laid down a simulated, heavy pre-invasion barrage on the extensive enemy fortifications. At first numerous well-located shore batteries energetically returned the fire. A routine shoot had suddenly developed into a real duel, and so with increased interest the *Mississippi* really got down to serious action. One after another the Japanese guns were taken under fire and knocked out. As the splashes from the near misses became less and less numerous some of the *Mississippi's* guns took more tempting

enemy targets under fire. Then, just as the last of the shore batteries were silenced, large explosions followed by fires broke out on the beach as a major Japanese supply dump received direct hits. When this little diversion was over, the *Mississippi* steamed away leaving her beaten target completely obscured by smoke, and returned to Efate to await further orders.

With her rifles shot out as a result of all this combat during the last two years, and seriously in need of regunning, the *Mississippi* was ordered back to the States. She arrived at the Bremerton Navy Yard in Washington, on the 24th of April 1944. Here Capt. H. J. Redfield, Jr., USN,

relieved Captain Hunter as Commanding Officer. Throughout the next three months, workmen struggled in twenty-four hour shifts to regun, remodel and repair the ship and install the latest available equipment, for she was much needed in our continually rolling Pacific offensive. In August the *Mississippi*, completely regunned and fitted with some of the newer developments in combat equipment, again reached Pearl Harbor. She took aboard many members of her crew who had been schooling there and immediately shoved off for Purvis Bay on Florida Island in the Solomons, where she anchored the latter part of August 1944.

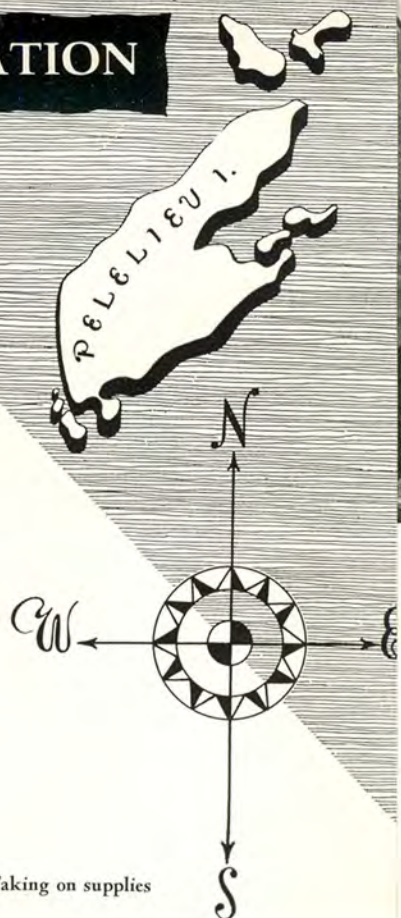
We paraded at Seattle



WESTERN CAROLINE OPERATION

Chapter III

PURVIS BAY had been designated as one of the main staging points for the Western Caroline Islands Operation, and on September 6, the *Mississippi*, in company with a large task force, sortied for the Palau Islands, the assault objective. The operation placed the *Mississippi* in the Western Fire Support Group in the task group commanded by Rear Admiral J. B. Oldendorf, USN (now Vice-Admiral). On D minus 3 Day, the 12th of September, the detailed, thoroughly planned bombardment of Pelelieu Island, our main objective, got underway. The *Mississippi*, using her own Kingfishers for aerial spotting, began the routine destruction with her main and secondary batteries of oil dumps, ammunition storage areas, pillboxes, dual purpose guns and general beach defenses.



Taking on supplies





One of our Kingfishers

North of the *Mississippi's* assigned fire support sector, coral hills, heavily covered by lush vegetation, reached down close to the beach. Various indications marked this as a strongly defended area and, as an experiment, when all of the visual targets in her assigned areas had been destroyed, the *Mississippi*, on D minus 2 Day, closed the beach to 40mm range and let the automatic weapon boys work over all likely-looking spots along those hills. At first, flashes followed by tracers were seen and small caliber splashes sprinkled about the ship like rain, but this was short-lived and, as the foliage was beaten from the coral cliffs, only the mouths of many caves remained. A few heavy projectiles were

lobbed into these and the job for the day was considered complete.

Throughout the preliminary bombardment, the main battery concentrated, in general, on covering the more inaccessible inland ridges, while the secondary battery took care of the visible beach targets. The Demolition Teams were given concentrated support throughout the whole afternoon of D minus 1 Day while they blasted a hole through the reefs off the southern part of the island. By 0800 on D-Day, the bombardment by ships and planes had reached its zenith and the southern part of the island was completely covered with smoke. The landing areas had been well prepared, for as our first assault



En route to Pelelieu

waves hit the beaches they met no frontal fire or opposition. However, some scattered mortar fire began from the coral hills flanking these beaches to the north, setting some of our small amphibious craft on fire and causing considerable casualties. These mortars were located in the same coral hills, later infamous as "Bloody Nose Ridge," that the *Mississippi's* Commanding Officer had recognized as dangerous and, although not in his ship's assigned area, had fired on before on D minus 2 Day. The *Mississippi* quickly estimated the situation and on her own initiative took "Bloody Nose" under full fire. True, it was not in her sector, but it was fire on her beaches, which she al-



We watch at night



Bombardment of Bloody Nose Ridge

ways sharply resented, and so the offending mortars were quickly knocked out. When the *Mississippi* shifted to general call-fire missions our Pelelieu foothold had been firmly established.

For the next five days, as our Marines advanced north on the island, the *Mississippi* took under fire and destroyed enemy strong points that held up our advance. The Shore Fire Control Parties and airborne spotters were excellent in their control of the guns against targets which could not be seen from the ship. On D plus 1 Day the Shore Fire Control Party working with the *Mississippi* reported that strong enemy mortar fire was coming from areas which they could not directly observe but, following their general control, the *Mississippi's* main and secondary

batteries silenced them with what was termed "excellent shooting."

During the daylight hours of D plus 2 Day the *Mississippi's* crew worked hard to refill her magazines so that she could return to her fire support area that night. Thus, at dark, she was back in her assigned area, illuminating and providing interdiction fire as called for by the Marine's most forward unit.

The firing was routine until about 0340 when the Shore Fire Control Party at the Marine Brigade Headquarters reported that their most advanced unit, in a precarious position at the foot of "Bloody Nose Ridge," was receiving heavy enemy artillery fire and feared a counter-attack at any time. The *Mississippi* immediately opened up on the areas in which the Jap

artillery was located and also on the areas adjacent to the Marines' position where the enemy was grouping for the assault. Soon the Marines reported that the enemy shelling had ceased and that there was no immediate sign of a counter-attack, but requested that the *Mississippi* continue to neutralize and illuminate these areas at a reduced rate until reinforcements could be brought up. The *Mississippi* continued to fire. The Japanese did not attack. When dawn broke, at the special request of the

Brigade Commander, the *Mississippi* delayed being relieved in her fire support sector in order to lay down a barrage so that the Marines could advance. At 0700 the Marines began to move up behind the *Mississippi's* barrage and by 0730 had consolidated their newly won positions, their Commander sending us a "Well Done."

Routine firing and support missions filled the next few days. "Bloody Nose Ridge," still tenaciously held by the Japa-

Gun crew in action





Pelelieu

nese, was among the targets. They had constructed an underworld of marvelous complexity within this coral hill and only after many fourteen-inch projectiles had been put directly into the cave mouths, exposed several days before when the *Mississippi* had blasted away the camouflage and natural foliage, were the Marines finally able to advance and isolate this stronghold. Even then, snipers continued to dig themselves out of the blasted tunnels and to give trouble for weeks thereafter. Finally, on D plus 4 Day, the 19th of September, after firing more than 6,000 fourteen-inch and five-inch projectiles at the Japanese, and with the island secured, the *Mississippi* ended her bombardment.

The Senior Aviator, a veteran of many spotting missions, in his report, summar-

ized the results of this bombardment as follows:

"Communication on our spotting circuit was excellent throughout. The main battery in particular shot extremely well—the best I have ever seen. The fire control setup was excellent and the main battery's response to air spots was most gratifying. We wasted a minimum of shells."

When the island of Pelelieu and the nearby airfield on Ngesebus had been secured and the long and bitter mopping up phase began, the *Mississippi*, along with other units of the fire support group, proceeded to Kossol Passage to establish a new Fleet Anchorage there, while protecting our newly won island base from enemy surface forces. As soon as this anchorage had been firmly established and it became apparent that the Japs would not risk a Fleet engagement, the *Mississippi* was ordered to Manus Island in the Admiralty Group to begin immediate preparation for the Philippines Operation; this operation had been advanced two months and only a short time remained for final planning.

We finish our job at Bloody Nose Ridge





LEYTE OPERATION

Chapter IV

ON October 12, 1944, the *Mississippi*, with Rear Admiral G. L. Weyler, USN, Commander Battleship Division Three and Task Unit Commander, embarked, sortied in company with a powerful invasion force from Seeadler Harbor, Manus, in the Admiralty Islands, for Leyte Gulf in the middle of the Philippines. On October 18, she slid by Homohon Island into Leyte Gulf on schedule despite a typhoon, one of the first heavy units of American naval might to return to those islands. For the next two days, operating in heavily mined waters, by now only partially swept, the *Mississippi* conducted a bombardment of the northern beaches of Leyte

Island, destroying all types of Japanese defenses. After this intensive preparation, the actual landings on D-Day, the 20th of October, took place on the southern beaches against only meager initial opposition and on the northern beaches, where the *Mississippi* had fired, encountered even less. The beachheads were quickly consolidated and extended and, as the troops ran into stiffening Japanese opposition, the *Mississippi* stood by to give them any necessary fire support.

However, by the 23rd, various reports relayed from our submarines and air searchers clearly indicated that a major Japanese reaction had been touched off by this attempt to cut the empire in two and

thereby shut off the supply of oil and other vital raw materials to the Japanese main islands. By late afternoon on the 24th, although intelligence reports were fragmentary, it was clear that strong Japanese forces, including battleships, were converging on Leyte Gulf from at least two directions.

The beachhead was in grave danger for the Japanese seemed to be throwing in every available operational unit for this greatest surface attack of the war. The most imminent threat was from the Japanese task force approaching Surigao Strait from the south in an apparent attempt to

pass through Surigao Strait and force an entrance into Leyte Gulf sometime that night. To meet this threat, Rear Admiral J. B. Oldendorf, USN (now Vice-Admiral), the Task Group Commander, stationed the six old battleships of the fire support units across the mouth of Surigao Strait and with the flanks of his battle line covered by cruisers and destroyers, and with motor torpedo boats stationed on both sides of the approaches, awaited the Japanese attack. The *Mississippi*, with Rear Admiral Weyler on board, was flagship of the battle line.

Till three o'clock in the morning of the

Sky 9 director crew and control officer





Night action

25th the main body waited in a dark, calm, tropical night. Our motor torpedo boats, scouting deep in Surigao Strait, made the first contact and reported "heavy enemy units proceeding up the Strait." Then star shells appearing on the horizon marked the Japanese forces as they approached at full speed. The enemy column sped into the arc of our waiting guns, thereby crossing their own "T" by putting our ships in this most advantageous, yet seldom achieved tactical position. Finally, when the range now closed to 26,000 yards, our ships opened fire pouring a continuous stream of tracers across the sky, and in a few minutes the Japanese force of battleships, cruisers and destroyers in this largest surface action of World War II was annihilated.



At Surigao Strait

As a result of the Battle of Surigao Strait and the concurrent battles of Samar and Cape Engano, which constituted the entire battle for Leyte Gulf, the enemy fleet was rendered ineffective for the re-

mainder of the war. Our initial foothold in the Philippines was insured. The following messages received aboard the *Mississippi* are indicative of the strategic importance of this victory:



"You have proven your value and sunken Jap ships attest your skill. As stout fighting men you have earned all praise given. Well done to all who have contributed to our great victory."

(Signed) THOMAS C. KINKAID,
Commander Seventh Fleet.



"I and the entire Sixth Army extend congratulations to Vice-Admiral Kinkaid and the Seventh Fleet on its splendid victory over the Jap Naval Forces."

(Signed) WALTER KREUGER,
*Commanding General,
Sixth U.S. Army.*



"An inspiring chapter has been added to the history of the United States Navy by the magnificent skill and courage displayed by forces of the Seventh Fleet in repelling powerful elements of the Japanese Fleet."

(Signed) WILLIAM F. HALSEY,
Commander Third Fleet.



"I send my heartiest commendation of the magnificent naval victory of the Seventh Fleet. It was our Navy at its best. Under adverse odds and heavy attack, the outstanding courage, indomitable determination and splendid efficiency of Vice-Admiral Kinkaid, Rear Admiral Sprague, Rear Admiral Oldendorf and all Commanders and men engaged, overcame all obstacles and turned a crisis into a glittering success. Our own tactical planning and inspiring leadership mark Vice-Admiral Kinkaid for one of the greatest of modern sailors."

(Signed) DOUGLAS MACARTHUR,
*Commander in Chief,
Southwest Pacific Area.*



"The recent naval engagements near and in the Philippines have effectively disposed of a large part of the enemy navy forever and the remainder for sometime to come.

"All hands give heartiest admiration to all officers and men of the participating fleets for their persistence, valor and success.

"To each and all, well done."

(Signed) ERNEST J. KING,
*Commander in Chief,
U.S. Fleet.*



Our destroyers lay smoke screens

We fire on torpedo launched by one of our
destroyers (below) after being hit by Jap
Kamikaze



Shore bombardment



For the next twenty-three days, the *Mississippi* continued to cover the Leyte Landings with Admiral Weyler acting as Task Group Commander of the heavy combat ships during this extended cruise in the confined waters of the Gulf. The day following the night battle, the dread Kamikaze attacks first began and took a heavy toll among our ships. The *Mississippi* was probably the first OBB to be honored by an attack from the "Divine Wind Special Attack Corps" when a few days earlier, on the 21st of October her terrific AA barrage had changed the mind of a diving pilot, and forced him to look for an easier target. Air attacks became almost continuous, for in the thirty-six consecutive days that the *Mississippi* prepared for, supported, and covered MacArthur's return to the Philippines, general quarters for air defense was sounded sixty-two times with thirty-eight actual air attacks developing. With insufficient air coverage, the *Mississippi* and the other ships of the task group had to beat off these constant attacks by themselves and the *Mississippi's* official score of five planes destroyed does not reflect the many melees in which Jap planes were shot to pieces in a sky thick with flak. Twice more Kamikazes dove on the ship. Both

times they missed, destroying themselves harmlessly in the water. Once, one of our destroyers, mortally wounded by a suicide crash, jettisoned its torpedoes in a final desperate measure to remain afloat. The wakes of several of them came straight for the *Mississippi*; all hands tensely awaited the explosion but the Commanding Officer turned the ship sharply to port and let them slide harmlessly by.

Throughout this operation, air support was at best meager and usually non-existent. The Japanese were able to attack our ships at will with all their available air strength. Even after their surface units had been decisively defeated and driven back from Leyte Gulf, they were able to continue to land reinforcements on the western side of Leyte Island. Prospects were dark indeed for our Task Group when, with our ships suffering heavy damage from the Kamikazes and with no combat air patrol in the foreseeable future, Vice-Admiral T. C. Kinkaid, USN, Commander Seventh Fleet, urgently radioed Lieutenant General Kenny, USA, MacArthur's air commander, that unless air support was provided at once, the Task Group would cease to exist as an effective fighting force. Things were tough, but we were tougher, and when air support

finally did wing in over the Gulf there below it was our Task Group still protecting our beachhead against all attacks the enemy could muster. The *Mississippi* supported our troops' advance as long as they remained within range, and even when the fighting had moved off to such extreme ranges that pin-point support was no longer possible, the Commanding Officer experimented with possible methods for firing at the Japanese transports and destroyers landing reinforcements on the opposite side of Leyte Island. This, however, was impracticable.

After thirty-six continuous days in combat, during which she weathered thirty-eight air attacks, three direct Kamikaze crash-attacks, a salvo of stray torpedoes, an unswept mine, and one major sea engagement and came out unscathed, the *Mississippi* was at last relieved and sent back to Manus for much needed rest and repairs. As she sortied from Leyte Gulf, Admiral Weyler, who had commanded the embattled covering forces from her Flag Bridge blinked out the following message for the information of the rest of the ships of the task group.

"Please convey to the officers and men of your (the *Mississippi's*) Combat Information Center my appreciation of their



40 MM crew in action

splendid assistance during the past operation, night engagement, and subsequent extended cruise in Leyte Gulf."

Back at Seeadler Harbor, Manus, the *Mississippi* spent the remainder of November and the first part of December training and refitting. Before her scheduled rest period was over, she was called on to support the Mindoro Operation and had to steam to Kossol Passage where she remained as the ready reserve on one-half hour notice during the crucial phase of the Mindoro landing. However, this deeper penetration into the inner Jap defense circle did not produce the expected reaction, and so the *Mississippi*, by merely showing the Jap reconnaissance that she was ready for anything, was able to sit that one out.



U.S.S. Reed receives a hit

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the **BROWN STAR MEDAL** to

CAPTAIN HEMAN JUDD REDFIELD, UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For heroic achievement as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. MISSISSIPPI, during operations against enemy Japanese forces at Leyte, in the Philippine Islands, from October 18 to 24, 1944, and in the Battle of Surigao Strait on October 25, 1944. A skilled and fearless leader, carrying out the dangerous mission assigned to his ship, Captain Redfield rendered invaluable assistance in conducting vital assault and bombardment operations at Leyte as our forces continued to advance deeper and with ever-mounting strength into seas and territories controlled by the Japanese in the vast Pacific Area. Maneuvering his vessel into position as a unit of the battleline formed across the northern end of Surigao in readiness for the advancing enemy battleships, cruisers and destroyers, on October 25, Captain Redfield directed the shattering broadsides of his heavy guns into the confused hostile force, waging fierce battle against the enemy in a prolonged engagement which resulted in the destruction of two Japanese battleships and three destroyers before effective return fire could be brought to bear upon our ships. Brilliantly handling the MISSISSIPPI in combat against enemy aircraft units and surface vessels at Leyte and in Surigao Strait, Captain Redfield contributed materially to the success of these important operations and to the decisive defeat of a hostile force which had threatened interference with our occupation of Leyte. His superb tactics, courageous conduct and unwavering devotion to duty reflect great credit upon himself, his gallant ship's company and the United States Naval Service."

Captain Redfield is hereby authorized to wear the Combat "V".

For the President,

James Forrestal
Secretary of the Navy

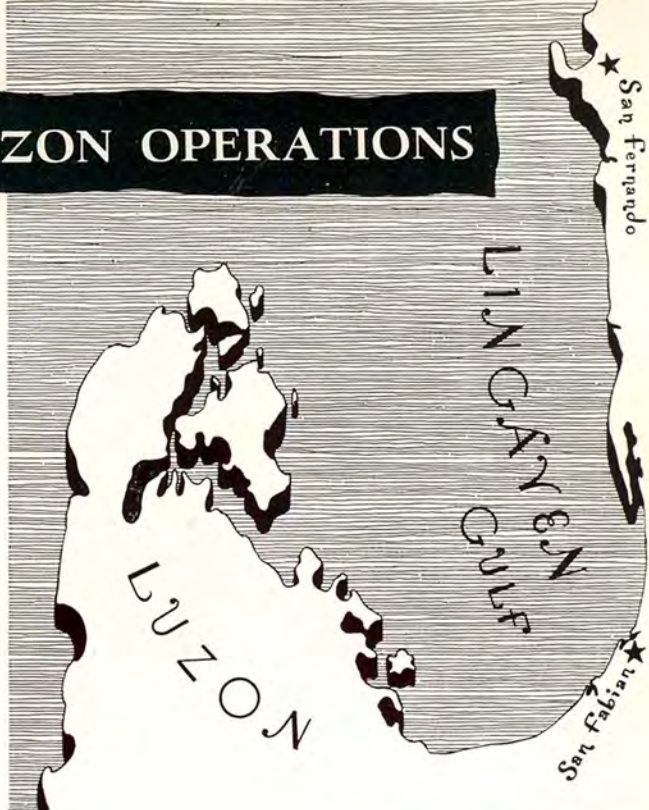
Citation received by C.O.
for Leyte campaign

LINGAYEN AND LUZON OPERATIONS

Chapter V

CHRISTMAS DAY, 1944, found all hands feverishly loading ammunition that had arrived at the last possible moment. Work continued at top speed all Christmas night because the ship had been ordered to depart Kossol Passage the next day and return to Leyte Gulf. Here the amphibious forces were gathering for the next step in the retaking of the Philippines, the assault on Luzon via Lingayen Gulf. This operation was another in which the *Mississippi* was attached to the Seventh Fleet. On January 2, 1945, the *Mississippi*, as part of the Lingayen Attack Force, sortied south from Leyte Gulf through Surigao Strait and began her dangerous penetration of the hitherto enemy-held waters on the way to Luzon. As the task group under the over-

At Kossol Passage we received ammunition aboard





—and proceeded to Leyte Gulf

all command of Rear Admiral Oldendorf proceeded through the narrow channels of these restricted waters, the enemy mounted continuous air attacks from their many small airfields throughout the Philippines. Kamikazes were plentiful. The enemy could watch every move of this first full-scale return of American sea power to the China Seas and they showed their resentment by throwing everything they had at this force as it sawed away at the Empire's middle. As the task group moved towards Manila, the attacks intensified and at times not even the combined AA fire of the whole group was able

to account for all the bandits that broke through the Combat Air Patrols. At sundown on the fourth of January the escort carrier *Ommoney Bay* was hit by a Kamikaze and was soon flaming from stem to stern. About 2330, a few hours after a torpedo from the destroyer *Burns* had administered the coup-de-grace to the doomed carrier, the *Mississippi* received 158 survivors aboard. There were few unsuccessful Kamikaze attacks and before our objective had been reached many of our heavy units, including the *Louisville*, *Manila Bay*, and H.M.A.S. *Australia* were substantially damaged.

On January 6, the Task Group formed column and turned south into Lingayen Gulf to begin the pre-invasion bombardment of selected shore installations. It was an imposing sight, that long line of American Naval might, as it flaunted the flag in the tense faces of the Jap defenders. The numerous coastal defense guns, shore based torpedo tubes and oil tank concentrations in the San Fernando-Poro area were the *Mississippi's* morning targets. The first pillars of black smoke—vivid witnesses to the quick effectiveness of her shooting—were not high in the sky, when suddenly all Hell broke loose. The Kamikazes came in, group upon group, in every combination and from all possible angles. In the first attacks, several major ships were seriously damaged and, as they checked fire, the *Mississippi* quickly took over their bombardment targets while simultaneously putting out her maximum volume of antiaircraft fire.

In the midst of the fury of the Kamikazes, a shore battery opened up on the

bombardment group but was rapidly silenced with the *Mississippi* leading the return fire. One Kamikaze which picked the *Mississippi* when his group dove out of the sun had little time to regret his choice as he shot past the foremast and was brought down in flames close aboard. In this attack the *Mississippi* suffered one fatality and six wounded when assisting AA fire struck the ship. Shortly afterwards the *Mississippi* shot a second attacking plane to pieces before it could

Mississippi (foreground) bombarding beach at Luzon



Fires started near landing beach, Lingayen Gulf,
by our main battery





The Kamikazes were given a hot reception

make such a close approach. The numerous assists in kills which the ship earned that morning will never be known, for in that melee of smoke and shrapnel one ship's burst could not be distinguished from another's.

In the afternoon, the bombardment force, with the *Mississippi* in the forefront of the column, began the penetration of the supposedly heavily mined inner Gulf to begin working over the landing beaches. The enemy's reaction was more desperate than in the morning. The Japanese had apparently scraped up every remaining plane in the Philippines, loaded them with whatever explosives were handy and in

final desperation sent them against our attacking forces as they approached the landing beaches.

In an attempt to tighten our defenses and hold them off, the *Mississippi* assumed visual fighter direction duty for the Task Group on one half hour's notice from the Task Force Fighter Director, thus becoming one of the first battleships to visually control a Combat Air Patrol in combat. Ship after ship continued to be crash-dived and although our full air strength was thrown into Combat Air Patrol and the air blackened with all caliber of antiaircraft bursts, the Japanese couldn't be completely repulsed. It was a

bad time for the Lingayen Attack Force. Many of our heavy units were seriously damaged that day, but their determination was never shaken. That night, the *Mississippi*, along with the other units, withdrew from the Gulf.

The next day, behind an improvised system of roving Combat Air Patrols, the assault units again entered the Gulf and

began the bombardment of the southern landing beaches. The Kamikazes continued to come and some of our ships continued to be hit, but the Japanese air effort had passed its initial fury. With her air spotters up, the *Mississippi* proceeded with the systematic destruction of pillboxes, gun emplacements, and beach defenses, generally wiping out all possible



Personnel and equipment were landed on Luzon

—and our beachhead was established



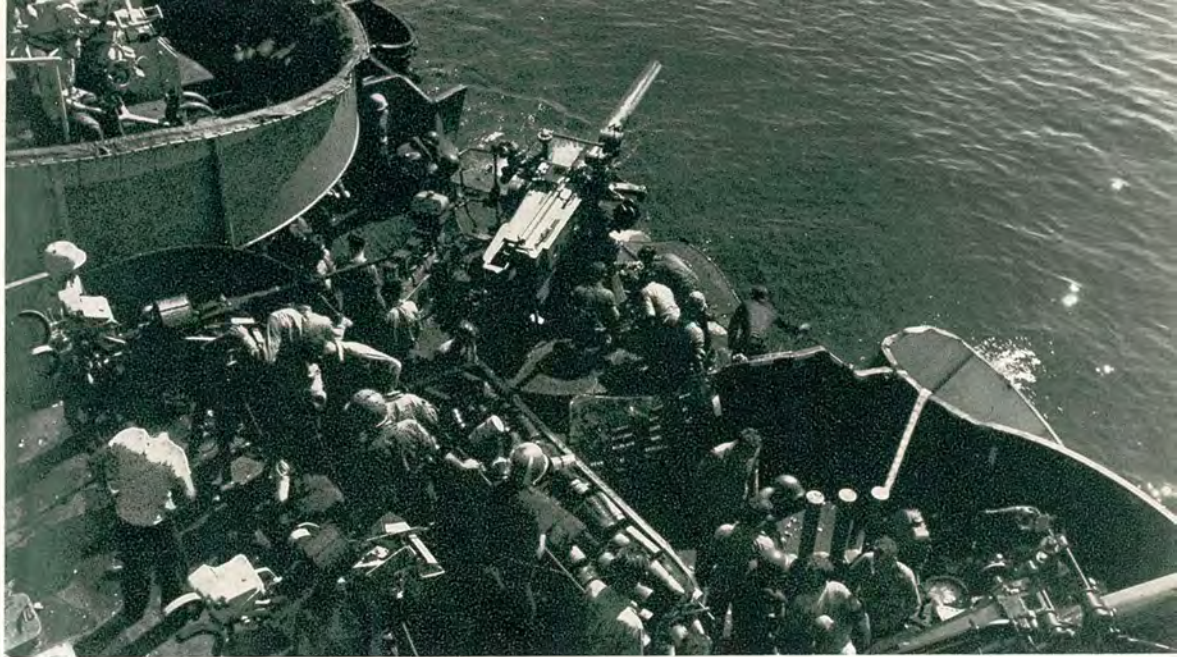
opposition to the initial landings. She worked as an expert, rapidly and effectively performing her specialty, the trusted friend of Army and Marine Divisions alike and the careful guardian of the Underwater Demolition Teams. For a period of two days, particularly around dawn and dusk, bombardment operations were interspersed with Kamikaze-killing. The *Mississippi* went through some busy moments with the suicide specialists but came through unscathed, even though several of the other heavy units experienced repeated disaster.

Prior to the landings on January 9, the *Mississippi's* air spotters confirmed earlier reports from Filipino guerillas that the Japanese had experienced enough American Naval gunfire support and had withdrawn from the vicinity of the beaches. They had learned their lesson well in earlier bombardments. Nevertheless the last minute, intensive support missions were fired for the sake of certainty, and as the troops hit the beaches unopposed, the *Mississippi* shifted her fire far inland in order to preclude any enemy movements in the area.

By that afternoon our troops were firmly established ashore, and with no further work to do at the moment the *Mississippi*

lay quietly off her assigned beaches. She already had three planes to her credit in the furious antiaircraft actions of the last several days and numerous assists which no one could accurately evaluate in the heavy barrage of those hectic hours. This was the first breathing spell for days; a temporary lull and rest from general quarters. Suddenly from over the beaches and out of the sun a Kamikaze came diving at terrific speed; no radar warning had been received; no Combat Air Patrol had spotted a bandit in the vicinity. The *Mississippi* went to general quarters with a rapidity and ease borne of long training. But the warning was too short. The guns would not stop the Jap as he screamed in, brushing the bridge structure with one wing and crashing down on the crowded boat deck among the antiaircraft guns.

Like all Kamikazes he had aimed for the bridge in order to destroy the most valuable personnel and equipment possible. He missed, and almost before the first flames shot up from the wreckage, the Commanding Officer, who, from his position on the wing of the bridge, had watched him approach, scrape past him and crash on the deck below, was personally organizing the fire fighting. Ready-box ammunition began to explode, but



A Kamikaze crashed on the boat deck

as other hoses joined the one manned by the Captain's Marine orderly, the fire was soon under control. Twenty-six dead and sixty-three wounded were removed below and as the smoke cleared away, the ship was back in action except for the damaged guns.

Although the ship was ready for any task as soon as the fires had been extinguished, the terrific impact of the plane and the explosion of the 250-pound bomb it carried had caused serious structural damage. The partially flooded blisters demanded immediate attention, so as soon as there was a lull in the firing the Construction and Repair Department began



—and left scattered debris

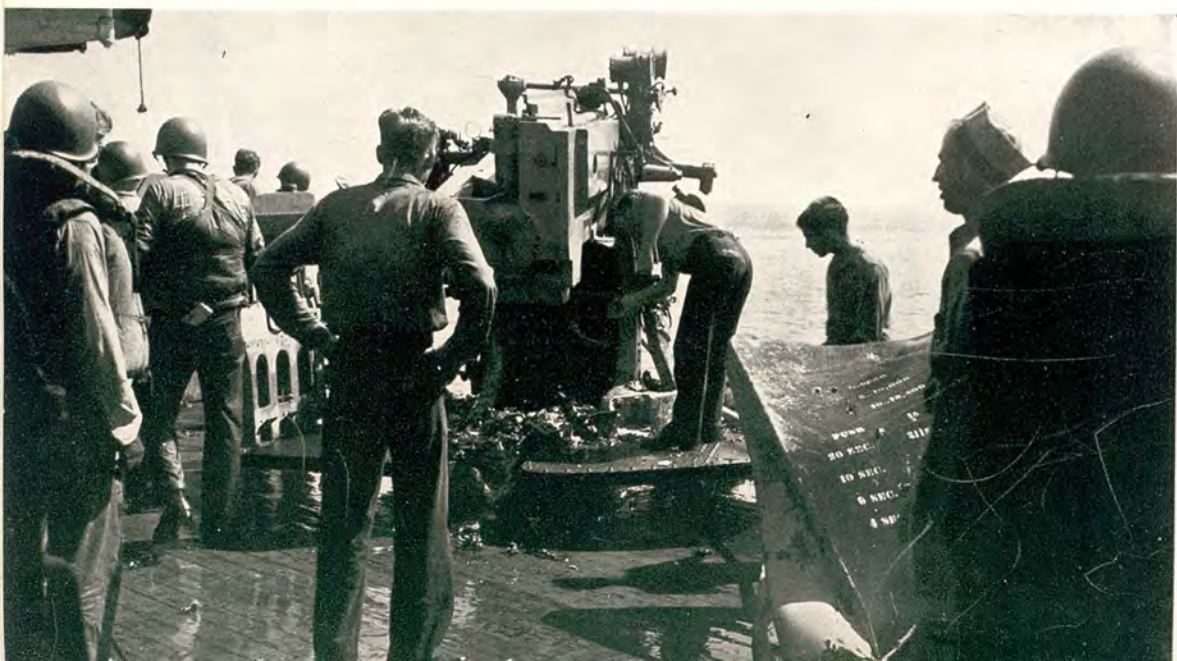
to construct a wooden cofferdam on the quarterdeck. When it became apparent that the ship's crane could not lower the cofferdam into position, the First Lieutenant was momentarily halted. However, he discovered that the job could be done by training out Turret No. 4 and using the center gun as an emergency crane. Forced into position by flotation pressure, this cofferdam kept out the ocean long enough to enable welders and cutters to repair the shrapnel holes. Divers went over the side to plug the numerous other holes in the skin of the ship not reached by the cofferdam. Working long hours in the hot, confined innards of a homemade cofferdam or over the ship's side in a cumbersome diver's rig, the ship's force soon

completed temporary repairs that enabled the ship to continue to support effectively the operation for the next thirty-four days.

When the front lines were shoved forward beyond naval gunfire range and heavy support was no longer possible, the *Mississippi*, although in need of major repairs, was one of the four heavy units chosen as the covering force that General MacArthur insisted upon maintaining against Japanese surface attack—a threat which had been considered imminent throughout the operation. No Jap surface ships appeared, but the Kamikazes continued to be an active, if decreasing, menace.

Forty days after the beginning of the

We surveyed our damage





and make repairs





Commendations were awarded

Lingayen Operation, the *Mississippi* lay at anchor still assigned to covering force duty. The recent intensive antiaircraft actions of both the Leyte and Lingayen Operations had convinced the Commanding Officer that the ship's obsolete antiaircraft defenses were inadequate to protect her against even the limited number of Japanese planes that broke through our Combat Air Patrols. Even our newest combatant ships with their greatly increased antiaircraft batteries and radically improved fire control equipment could not protect themselves against energetically

pressed normal air attack, much less against the radical suicide attack. He knew that our best method of defense was a vigorous air offensive, but he also knew that after such an offensive had been fully exploited, our surface ships still could not protect themselves from damage by the remaining enemy attackers. Air defense was definitely the crucial problem.

The *Mississippi* clearly needed more modern antiaircraft guns and directors but neither the time nor equipment for an adequate modernization appeared available in the foreseeable future. So the Commanding Officer began developing plans that would increase the *Mississippi's* antiaircraft fire power as much as possible with the limited material that would probably be available during the period which the *Mississippi* would have to repair her combat wounds. These plans included doubling the number of 5"/25 caliber antiaircraft guns, increasing the 40mm quadruple mounts and substituting twin 20mm for the present single mounts. It was planned to locate these five-inch guns so as to give more complete coverage to the previously blind sectors directly ahead and astern. Also included was a system for controlling the 40mm guns from the five-inch directors.

Luzon was finally declared secure and about the middle of February the *Mississippi*, released from her covering duties, steamed from Lingayen, anticipating an immediate return to Pearl Harbor to repair her battle damage and rest her personnel. But such was not to be, and upon arriving in Leyte Gulf she found orders to

proceed to Ulithi Lagoon in the Western Carolines as support for the Iwo Jima assault, then about to begin. With the battle damage she had received almost two months ago still only temporarily repaired, the *Mississippi* stood by in Ulithi as the un-committed reserve for another operation. She had been in combat with only



short periods of rest since the preceding September, a period of almost six months, as she waited, damaged but still full of fight.

Although the Iwo Jima Operation was hard fought and bloody for our ground forces, the small amount of enemy air and surface reaction encountered permitted her to be released from her support duties and ordered back to Pearl Harbor for repairs and rest.

When the *Mississippi* arrived at Pearl Harbor on March 3, 1945, she was granted thirty-four days emergency availability to repair the serious Kamikaze-inflicted damage she had carried through the last two months of combat. Before her arrival the Commanding Officer had completed his original plans for redesigning the antiaircraft battery. Since the beginning of the war, the *Mississippi* had never been allowed enough time in a navy yard to bring her antiaircraft battery up to modern standards. Although the thirty-four-day period had originally been granted only to repair the battle damage, it was decided after careful consultation with the Navy Yard officials that this period would also be sufficient to remodel the antiaircraft battery as planned, as well as to effect much modernization in Combat Informa-

tion Center, main battery plot, fire control equipment and in the main bridge structure. All hands earnestly wanted to get aboard every available piece of new equipment that would increase the combat efficiency of the ship.

The final success of this seemingly impossible program was best stated by the Planning Officer for the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard, in his subsequent report on this work.

"However, the Commanding Officer, to whom the matter of a good, first-class antiaircraft battery was of considerable importance, had been thinking things over for many months. He arrived at Pearl Harbor with a well-worked out proposition for markedly increasing the effectiveness of the ship's antiaircraft battery. It was so practical in its conception that it was enthusiastically received both by the Navy Yard and by the Navy Department. The project required changes in types of guns, relocations of other, additional guns, and changes in the general upper steel structure of the ship.

"Although the job could be done in less than the three months required for a complete modernization, it didn't seem possible to do it in the time allotted to the ship. The improvements, however, were

so much to be desired that it didn't seem right or proper to have the ship leave without them. Estimates were studied and restudied. The time estimates required for the plans, design, and the work in the shops were pared down to the point where it looked as if the Yard could squeeze through in the allotted time, if everything 'clicked,' and if the highest priority was given to the work.

"Needless to say that with pressure behind and a lot of timely assistance by the ship's force, the date was not only met, but anticipated by two days.

"The Commanding Officer made a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of the antiaircraft batteries, old and new. The improvement in arc of fire, and ele-

vation of fire was over 200 per cent, and moreover, the ship now is well protected from angles of attack that before were only scantily defended. The officers and men on board the *Mississippi* are confident that they can give a good account of themselves in any future engagement with suicide bombers."

But even in the midst of this intensive work, the *Mississippi* did not forget her obligations to those who supported her at home. So one afternoon, the Commanding Officer found time from his hectic program to present to the representative of the Governor of the State of Mississippi, the battle flag flown from the *U.S.S. Mississippi* during the famous night action in Surigao Strait in the Philippines.

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the SILVER STAR MEDAL to

CAPTAIN HEMAN JUDD REDFIELD
UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. MISSISSIPPI, in action against enemy Japanese forces from October 17 to November 18, 1944, and on Luzon, Philippine Islands, on Leyte, Philippine Islands, from December 29, 1944, to February 10, 1945. Participating in the assault and landings on these vital strongholds, Captain Redfield skillfully directed his ship in delivering prolonged and highly effective fire support despite continuous enemy air attacks which damaged his ship. By his leadership and devotion to duty, he contributed materially to the success of the operations and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

For the President,

James F. Power, Jr.
Secretary of the Navy

Surigao Strait Battle Flag





THE NEW MISSISSIPPI

Our damages were repaired and armament increased—

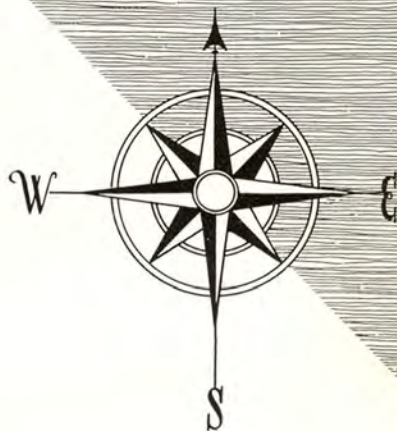
Destination TOKYO

OKINAWA OPERATION

Chapter VI



ON the 18th of April 1945, the *Mississippi* departed Pearl Harbor to join in the Okinawa Operation. She was repaired and rested and with her greatly increased antiaircraft defensive power looked forward with confidence to the coming combat. That confidence was to stand her in good stead for, as history now relates, she was about to enter the longest, most intensive naval operation of the war where, as Fleet Admiral C. W. Nimitz, then Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet and now Chief of Naval Operations, testified before the Joint Congressional Naval Affairs Committee in 1946, "We incurred greater casualties and had more ships put out of action than in any other operation in history." The *Mississippi* joined a Fleet



Refueling at sea





We arrive off Okinawa—May 5, 1945

which had anchored in the enemy's front yard, a Fleet which had come to stay.

On May 5th, the morning of her arrival off Okinawa, the *Mississippi* was greeted by one of the heaviest air attacks of the entire campaign and thus began her forty-four days' stay under the wings of the Kamikazes. Drove of planes made conventional as well as suicide attacks throughout each day, while at night smaller groups of radar-equipped planes harassed our forces almost continuously. Shore bat-

teries fired on our ships as they closed the beaches to destroy enemy strongpoints in support of our troops ashore. At night our illumination and harassing missions were menaced by submarines and suicide boats.

Immediately upon arrival, the *Mississippi* was assigned to the eastern fire support group and, taking her station in Buckner Bay, began working with the Shore Fire Control Parties in destroying various Japanese fortifications—now an old and familiar job. Whenever no fire support

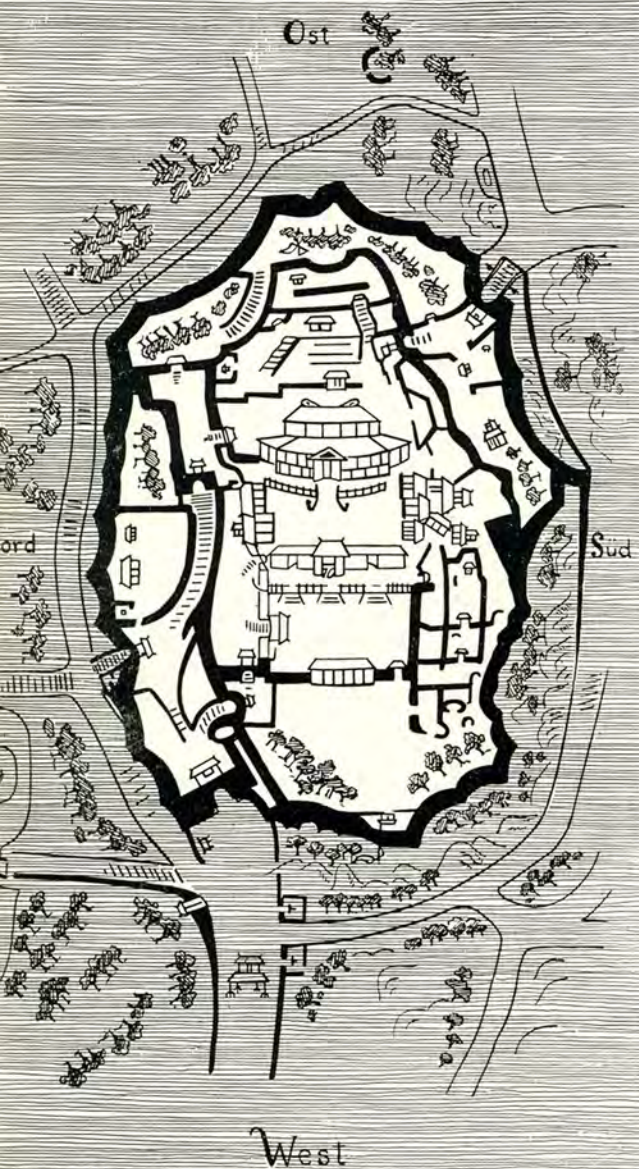
missions were called for by the troops, the *Mississippi* fired on targets of opportunity, using her own planes as scouts and as spotters. Frequently, after pin-point firing all day, the *Mississippi* would continue to fire routine illumination and harassing assignments throughout the night. In fact, sometimes for a period of days on end there was hardly an hour when some of her guns were not firing. During this whole period air raids were frequent, reaching the fantastic figure of thirty-four on one terrible night.

The Japanese, stubbornly fighting, retreated foot by foot to the southern part

of the island, finally establishing their main defense line from Naha, the capital city of Okinawa, through Shuri Castle as its central anchor, to Yonabaru airport on the eastern shore. Against this line our offensive stalled and, in spite of intensive fire support from numerous heavy combatant ships, our troops made only slight progress for several weeks. The major fortress of this line was the same medieval Shuri Castle which the Captain of the first *Mississippi*, Commodore Perry, had visited years ago in 1853 on his way to Japan. But it was now greatly changed, for the Japanese garrison had converted

Helldiver over Okinawa





GERMAN MAP OF
SHURI CASTLE

it into a great, modern stronghold, surrounding its thirty-foot walls with all types of modern defense.

At this crucial stage in the campaign an Army target coordinator made his way to the *Mississippi* one night as she lay at air defense beneath a thick protection of smoke. He brought orders for "Plan Imperial Special," in which the *Mississippi* had been chosen from all the old hands of the fire support ships to prepare Shuri Castle so that it could be taken by assault within three days with acceptable losses. The heavy walls had to be breached in two definite places, the huge gate destroyed and the Castle itself neutralized in so far as possible. Before the *Mississippi* was assigned to this task, Shuri Castle had been undergoing almost continuous bombardment from ships, planes and the Army's heaviest artillery for over a week, and sporadic fire for a much longer time, without accomplishing the necessary destruction. Other battleships had fired and failed. Time was precious, for the incessant air attacks were taking a heavy toll of our supporting ships and the burden of their losses was being felt throughout the Fleet. So with the First Marines, who remembered the *Mississippi* with gratitude from Pelelieu, and the

77th Division, who also knew her from Leyte as well as from the last strenuous weeks, waiting to advance, the *Mississippi* commenced firing on the Castle—the most important target of her career.

On the first day of “Plan Imperial Special,” there was almost no visibility and so the *Mississippi* went to work on her target using indirect fire. On the second day, the weather was not much better and, although air spots were not possible, the Shore Fire Control Party reported that the *Mississippi*’s fire was taking effect. Finally, on the third day, the weather broke and with her spotting planes flying low over the target, the *Mississippi*’s gunners began their specialty—accurate destruction of a tough enemy target. Over 200,000 pounds of steel rained on Shuri that day from her fourteen-inch guns and 90 per cent of the projectiles were officially reported by the Shore Based Fire Control Party as direct hits. Lieut. Gen. S. B. Buckner, USA, Commanding General of the 10th Army, who had gone to the front lines to witness the *Mississippi*’s firing, at the end of that third day decided the target had been obliterated and ordered his troops to attack. As the First Marines and the 77th Infantry moved in for the assault, the *Mississippi* walked her fire



Old Glory is hoisted over the remains of Shuri Castle

back in a supporting barrage allowing the Marines to enter the Castle without the loss of a single man. Fewer than fifty Japs were left alive to oppose their entrance; the Castle was a mass of rubble; dead Japs, as many as 500 in a single sector, were scattered throughout the underground tunnels and chambers. Maj. Gen. P. A. Del Valle, USMC, Commanding General of the First Marines, was amazed at this lack of opposition, for he had previously declared that it would be worth



The power of destruction in our main battery was evident at Shuri Castle

We left our marks on Okinawa



the greater part of a battalion to take the fort. It was not long before the few Japs remaining alive were taken care of and, at 1345 on the 30th of May, the Stars and Stripes went up over the Castle that a captured Japanese Major had boasted "would never be taken." The strongest, single enemy position taken by American troops in the Pacific War was ours with small loss of life. The taking of Shuri broke the main Japanese defense line and marked the beginning of the end of organized resistance on the island.

Just at dusk, after the ship had completed her firing on Shuri Castle, three or four Japanese shore batteries, apparently brought up that afternoon to drive the *Mississippi* away, opened up at point-blank range. The first salvos straddled the ship. Near misses sprayed water over the boat deck or screamed through the rigging. They had our range and although numerous coral shoals near the beach made radical evasive action almost impossible, something had to be done right away. In a brilliant maneuver the Commanding Officer headed the ship directly into the flash-ing guns, and by closing the range, caused the Jap shells to overshoot while our gunners got on target. Soon the entire main and secondary batteries opened up

and the Japanese flashes disappeared. Again the *Mississippi* had accomplished her mission without harm to herself.

After the brilliant Shuri Castle action, the *Mississippi* received the following message from the Headquarters of the 77th Infantry Division:

"Shuri Castle has been taken . . . with no opposition. It was the strongest single position yet taken. This was made possible by the murderous fire delivered by the *Mississippi*. When Shuri is safe for visitors, and if the Captain of the *Mississippi* is interested, Headquarters 77th Infantry Division extends an invitation for an inspection party from the *Mississippi* to observe the results of its fourteen-inch shells. This inspection should be possible in about a week. An opportunity will also be possible to inspect a blockhouse also destroyed by the *Mississippi*."

"For further information, the *Mississippi* is being given credit for these and other jobs in a separate report."

The Shore Fire Control Officer in charge of "Plan Imperial Special," sent the following message:

"Target that *Mississippi* has been firing at for past three days is now in American hands and is a mass of rubble as shown by aerial photographs."



Secondary battery in action

From the Commander of the Task Group, Rear Admiral J. L. Hall, Jr. (now Vice-Admiral), Senior Officer Present Afloat, Hagushi Beach, Okinawa, came the following blinker:

"For successful completion of Plan Imperial Special, well done."

But the campaign was not yet over for the *Mississippi*, for she was kept continually busy giving all kinds of support to the various Marine and Army Divisions as they pushed the Japs nearer to the southern end of Okinawa. In the first days of June, as our troops were mopping up the concentrated Japanese defenses on the peninsula south of Naha, they ran into a defense line composed of heavily con-

structed pillboxes joined by rifle trenches, which obviously required artillery fire of the largest caliber. The approaches prevented Army artillery from being brought to bear, and so one afternoon the *Mississippi* got a rush call asking for immediate and rapid fourteen-inch fire on these targets, then only four hundred yards ahead of our front lines. Anything within three hundred yards of the bursting point of a fourteen-inch shell is in danger, so the *Mississippi*, not knowing the urgency of this situation, requested authentication for this unusual mission. A few ranging shots two hundred yards off the target would have killed many of our troops. In fact, the Commanding General later admitted that he had considered the possibility of losing some of his own men to our gunfire, but he knew that the destruction of the heavy pillboxes would save many more in the long run. After the authentication was received, the *Mississippi* commenced firing and dropped her first one-gun salvo right on the middle pillbox. Then, opening up with three-gun salvos, she destroyed the defense line without causing a single casualty to our own troops.

A few days later the *Mississippi*, having checked fire after destroying an enemy



Another score

the quarterdeck. The wreckage blazed up, but the Damage Control Parties soon had the fire under control. Serious structural damage had been done, several blisters were flooded, the ship's skin punctured, one aircraft was put out of commission and worst of all it was feared that Turret Four would not be able to fire. Then, working furiously, the ship's company made emergency repairs, which enabled the *Mississippi* to fire an harassing assignment that very night and to continue to render fire support with all of her turrets until she left the operation.

Finally on June 17, with the Japanese resistance on the island just about crushed,

the *Mississippi* was relieved and ordered to Leyte for repairs. Her main engines had not been secured for fifty-three days and Turret Two, by shooting more than one million pounds of ammunition, had set a record for the greatest amount ever fired by a single turret in one engagement.

The Commanding General of the 77th Division Artillery, Brig. Gen. R. L. Burnell, USA, who had worked with the ship earlier at Leyte, officially commended the *Mississippi* for her outstanding fire support work during this campaign. This commendation, forwarded to the Commanding Officer through official channels, had enthusiastic endorsements added by Maj. Gen. A. B. Bruce, AUS, Commanding the 77th Division; Maj. Gen. J. R. Hodge, USA, Commanding the XXIV Army Corps; Brig. Gen. E. D. Post for Lieut. Gen. S. B. Buckner, USA, the Commanding General 19th Army; and Vice-Admiral H. W. Hill, USN, Commander 5th Amphibious Force, as follows:



"The fire support furnished by your command to the 77th Infantry Division during the Okinawa phase of the Ryuku campaign was outstanding and contributed markedly to the success of this division. The earnest desire of personnel under your command to cooperate to the fullest was evident throughout the operation.

"I desire to express my appreciation and commend you and your personnel for this outstanding achievement."

(Signed) RAY L. BURNELL,
Brig. Gen., U.S. Army,
Commanding, 77th Division Artillery.



"It is a pleasure to heartily indorse and forward this commendation. Your fire support contributed immeasurably to the gains made by our doughboys in this operation."

(Signed) A. B. BRUCE,
Major General, U.S. Army,
Commanding, 77th Division.



"It is with pleasure that I forward this letter of commendation and the remarks of the Commanding Generals, 77th Infantry Division and 77th Infantry Division Artillery. I desire to add my commendation for the excellent services rendered in support of units of this command."

(Signed) JOHN R. HODGE,
Major General, U.S. Army,
Commanding, XXIV Army Corps.



"Forwarded, with much pleasure. Another example of the splendid teamwork that has prevailed throughout this campaign."

(Signed) E. D. POST,
Brig. Gen., U.S. Army,
Chief of Staff for
Lieut. Gen. S. B. Buckner, U.S. Army,
Commanding, Tenth Army.



"Forwarded, with much pleasure.
"The excellent fire support rendered the troops ashore by the *Mississippi* contributed in no small amount to the success of the capture of Okinawa."

(Signed) H. W. HILL,
Vice-Admiral, U.S. Navy,
Commander, Fifth Amphibious Force.

As the *Mississippi* was shoving off, the Commander of the Gunfire and Covering Force, flashed the following goodbye message:

"The *Mississippi's* heavy guns are as important as any weapon around here and the dragging effect on the enemy is solid."

The Senior Naval Gunfire Liaison Officer for whom the ship had often fired, said in part:

"The *Mississippi's* work has always

been outstanding throughout the campaign. Troop Commanders frequently requested you by name to work with them . . . Marine regimental and battalion commanders were often present during your firing and praised it highly."

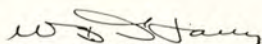
As she pulled out, Vice-Admiral Hill sent this farewell commendation:

"Your fine work here has contributed much to the successful outcome of this campaign. Regret the damage received by

In the name of the President of the United States,
the Commander Battleships-Cruisers, Pacific, presents
the Bronze Star Medal to:

CAPTAIN HEMAN J. REDFIELD,
UNITED STATES NAVY

"For meritorious achievement in connection with operations against the enemy as Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. MISSISSIPPI during the occupation of Okinawa Jima from 5 May to 17 June 1945. The performance of his ship in shore bombardment was outstanding, particularly in accomplishing the destruction of Shuri Castle defenses after these installations had resisted other measures and had held up the advance of infantry forces for a considerable period. By his fine leadership and cooperation, his ship maintained a high state of combat discipline which materially assisted the ship in delivering effective fire against the enemy positions and installations. The U.S.S. MISSISSIPPI systematically and efficiently continued the action until the assigned mission was accomplished. His courage, leadership, and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."


W. S. DeLANY
Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy.

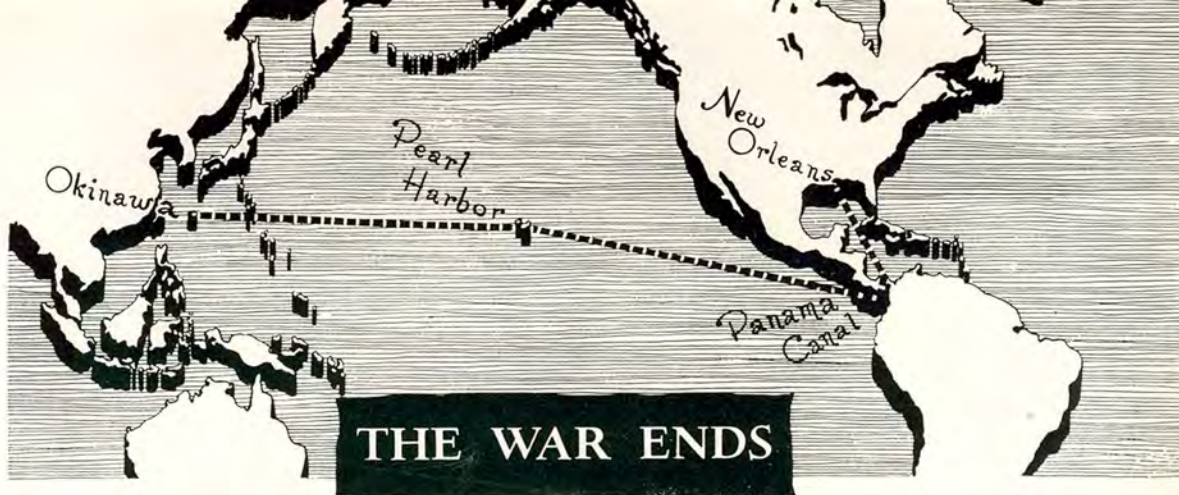
Temporary Citation

your ship but know that you will be back
raring to go when the time comes."

From Okinawa the *Mississippi* returned to her old base, San Pedro Bay in Leyte Gulf. There she was the first battleship to enter a floating drydock in the Philippine Area. Her battle damage was completely repaired, many minor combat-suggested improvements were made and all possible routine work was completed. Thus, not many weeks after leaving Okinawa, the most costly amphibious operation in all naval history, the *Mississippi* was again structurally sound and fully ready to meet the enemy.

Entering floating drydock at Manicani, P.I.





Chapter VII

IN July, at Manicani, P.I., Capt. J. F. Crowe, Jr., USN, relieved Captain Redfield as Commanding Officer. Rigorous training exercises, interspersed with short cruises into open water, were conducted to thoroughly and meticulously prepare her personnel for future fighting. The coming operation against the Japanese home islands was expected to be the toughest one of them all and the *Mississippi* meant to be ready. Every detail in each department of the ship had to be perfected and her long combat experience fully integrated into her smooth-working fighting machine. Even when a severe epidemic of dysentery was experienced, the *Mississippi* still continued her training, though almost all of her personnel were, at one time or another, affected. It

was at the peak of these preparations that the Japanese suddenly surrendered. Their fleet had been destroyed, their merchant marine mostly sunk, and our Navy, firmly in control of their sea and air lanes, had their country under continual and devastating attack. They had lost control of the sea and with it the war. In this hopeless condition they could only surrender. The *Mississippi* had successfully waged her second war.

After the American surrender terms had been accepted by the enemy, the *Mississippi* on August 18th moved north to Okinawa arriving there on August 22nd. There she waited in newly named Buckner Bay while the Japanese emissaries flew south to Manila to arrange the Armistice details with General MacArthur. A land-



Our battle damage was repaired

ing force of blue jackets and marines was hastily organized for possible use in occupying Yokosuka Naval Base. Then, on August 24th with the occupation arrangements complete, she departed Okinawa in company with the *Idaho* and escorts under the command of Rear Admiral L. D. McCormick, USN (now Vice

Admiral), as part of the Surrender Task Force and dodging a powerful typhoon en route, headed for Sagami Wan, an anchorage area south of Tokyo Bay, on the main Japanese island of Honshu. During the night of August 26-27, the *Mississippi* joined the main body of the Third Fleet and the combined over-whelming display of naval and air strength steamed on toward Sagami Wan. Sacred Fujiyama was lying broad on her port bow as she dropped her anchor on August 27, 1945.

On August 28, the *Mississippi* hoisted the State Flag of Mississippi, given to the ship by Governor Bailey of Mississippi, at the main to the strains of Dixie at a brief ceremony.

The surrender details had been definitely settled and agreed upon, but no one was sure that the Japanese High Command intended to carry them out, and, even if they did, whether they could control their local commanders. So the *Mississippi* stood by the entrance to Tokyo Bay expecting anything and ready for it. The *Mississippi*, prepared to give fire support if needed, covered the landings of the Allied Occupation Forces in the Tokyo Bay area. When the Army's airborne forces landed at Atsuki Air Field, she moved in close to the Northern shore of



At a brief ceremony conducted by Rear Admr.
L. D. McCormick, U.S.N., the Mississippi state
flag was hoisted to our mainmast while at anchor
at Sagami Wan





Relaxation, later inspection

Sagami Wan, because this airport was about ten miles inland and the *Mississippi* had to be ready to support the troops with deep fire if they were attacked as they deplaned.

However, the first phases of the occupation went smoothly; none of our forces were attacked. On the 31st of August, with the day for the formal surrender ceremonies drawing near, the *Mississippi* was ordered to enter Tokyo Bay, and to anchor in approximately the same berth where Commodore Perry's first *Mississippi* anchored in 1853. On September 1st, the *Mississippi* moved slowly through the victorious Allied Fleet off Yokosuka and Yokahama and took her berth 9,000 yards off the capital's waterfront, the second ship of that name to victoriously carry the naval might of the United States to the very heart of the Japanese Empire. The *Mississippi* was thus honored for her brilliant war record, for by now her name was well-known to several generations of Japanese as well as Americans. As a tribute to the State whose name she bore, she flew the Mississippi State Flag below her ensign as she steamed into Tokyo Bay and flew it proudly as she quietly rested in her berth off the capital city of Japan.



Chief Petty Officers Mess





Passing through the Panama Canal—homeward bound

300 miles from the Canal





We returned from the war—New Orleans, Louisiana, October 16, 1945

There she lay on the 2nd of September 1945, surrounded by vessels of all types of the great U.S. Pacific Fleet and the British Pacific Fleet when the surrender document was signed. All had gone well; the crucial phase of the occupation was over. As more

and more of our troops landed and took over the vital centers of the country, the *Mississippi*, with her job well done, departed Tokyo Bay as a unit of the First Carrier Task Force on September 6, 1945, under command of Vice-Admiral F. C.



Battle flag of the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea was presented to Governor Bailey of Mississippi

Sherman, USN, homeward bound at last.

The news quickly spread throughout the ship that our first continental U.S. port in fourteen months was to be the fabulous city of New Orleans. The *Mississippi* was to represent our Fleet there on Navy Day, the first battleship to visit that city in many years and the heaviest vessel to transit the Mississippi River as far as New Orleans. When she arrived on October 16, after brief stops at Okinawa, Pearl Harbor and the Panama Canal, she was greeted by the largest crowd ever to assemble on the Mississippi waterfront at New Orleans. During her six weeks' stay, the ship entertained many thousands of visitors who had traveled far and wide from all the surrounding Southern States,



Capt. J. F. Crowe, Jr., U.S.N., presented the Mississippi state flag to Governor Bailey



Navy Day 1945 in New Orleans, Louisiana

especially Mississippi, to see this legend of the United States Navy.

While at New Orleans, the Commanding Officer, along with a small contingent of officers and enlisted men whose homes were in Mississippi, flew up to Jackson, the capital of the State of Mississippi and in a formal ceremony, the Commanding Officer returned to Governor Bailey the

State Flag flown in victory at Tokyo Bay.

After this pleasant interlude, the *Mississippi* was ordered to Norfolk, Virginia, her new home port. She was destined to become the Fleet's experimental vessel and to continue her career by lending her long combat experience and honorable traditions to the newer ships and men of the Fleet.

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in commending the

UNITED STATES SHIP MISSISSIPPI

for service as follows:

"For outstanding heroism in action against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific War Area, from October 12, 1944, to June 19, 1945. As Flagship of our battle lines during the historic night battle of Surigao Strait, the U.S.S. MISSISSIPPI led our forces in annihilating the heavy Japanese surface units. For thirty-six continuous combat days, she conducted bombardment missions to cover the Leyte landings and, in the face of vicious Kamikaze attacks with almost no air support, led our embattled Naval forces as they guarded our foothold in the Philippines. In making the daring initial penetration of Lingayen Gulf on January 6, 1945, she fought off suicide planes in their supreme attempt to cripple our heavy ships and, for the next forty days, effectively bombarded shore installations, supported our amphibious forces on the landing beaches and provided a covering force until Luzon was finally secured. Undeterred by either the continuing Kamikaze attacks or by the sudden and rapid fire from enemy shore batteries, she again provided effective fire support to our troops on the Okinawa beaches. Climaxing her career by the brilliant three-day bombardment of the most strongly fortified position encountered in the Pacific War, she completely destroyed Shuri Castle and enabled our Marines to capture this stronghold almost without opposition. A sturdy veteran, handled superbly by skilled officers and men, the MISSISSIPPI fulfilled all her missions despite the intense opposition, attaining an outstanding combat record which reflects the highest credit upon herself and the United States Naval Service."

All personnel attached to and serving on board the U.S.S. MISSISSIPPI from October 12, 1944, to June 19, 1945, are authorized to wear the NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION Ribbon.

James F. Jones
Secretary of the Navy

C I T A T I O N

Chapter VIII

WHILE in the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth, the *Mississippi* received news that her activities and the service of those aboard had not gone unnoticed. Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, had commended the *Mississippi* "for outstanding heroism in action against enemy Japanese forces in The Pacific War Area," for the period from October 12, 1944 to June 19, 1945, by the award of the Navy Unit Commendation.

In her twenty-nine years of active duty, the *Mississippi* was representative of one





Admiral Briscoe reads the citation at Norfolk

"The Mississippi filled all her missions"



An outstanding
combat record . . .



of the great eras of U.S. Naval History. As a battleship in peacetime, she was outstanding among the ships of the Fleet in maintaining the highest standards of gunnery and engineering efficiency, smartness, discipline, and morale—the qualities which became the basis of our Navy's wartime greatness. In war, she was confronted with every test a ship has ever met—surface engagements, prolonged bombardments, submarine attacks, duels with land artillery, endless air attacks and long periods of

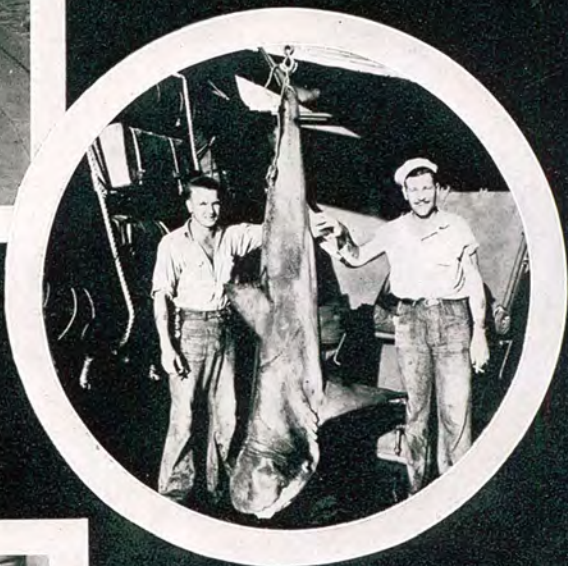
grueling patrol duty. These tests were imposed under every conceivable condition—in the Atlantic and in the Pacific, in the Arctic and in the tropics, by day and by night. Her outstanding performance in meeting these hazardous tests of war as recorded in this history is a tribute to the versatility of the greatest Navy in World History. The *U.S.S. Mississippi* had proved a good investment for the people of the United States in freedom and democracy.



We leave a job well done



Anchor detail



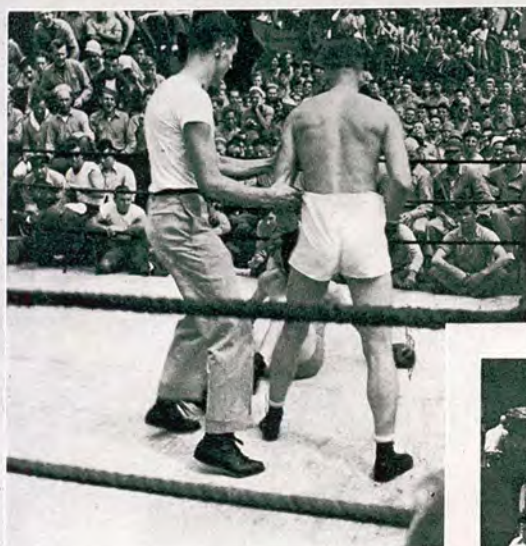
Time for fishing too



No tickee, no washee



Ah, Mail!



"Sports"

Ten - and you're out



Boxing squad - 1945



Basketball 1946 Champs

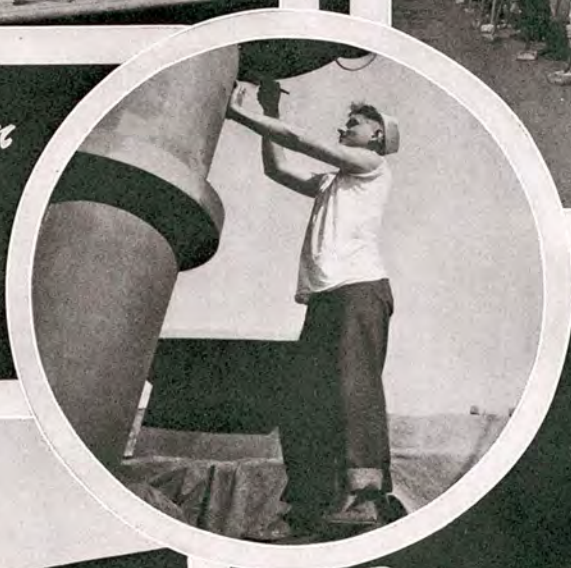


Passing the medicine

"Hold field day"



Naval tradition



*What's hot
about a stor*



Definitely no work of a

We're proud of our marines



Cross-pointing hatch legs

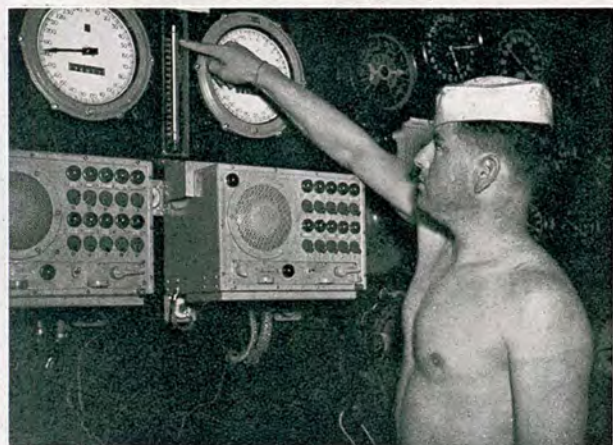
"Black gang"



*Yes, even "Snipes" have
a pin-up girl*



There's no wrench in this engine



Tropics in the engine room



"Butchers"



"Boilermakers"



"Belly-robbers"



"Book-worms"

"Here and There"



Streamlined salts

Old salt



Heimly's beauty salon



Buglemasters



Work-out



Jumping jack-by the numbers



Baseball stars



Recreation on a raft

Reveille



Line forms to the right



Holiday routine



Chiefs play soft-ball



Hoisting in



Loafing



Our police force

Divine services



Burial at sea

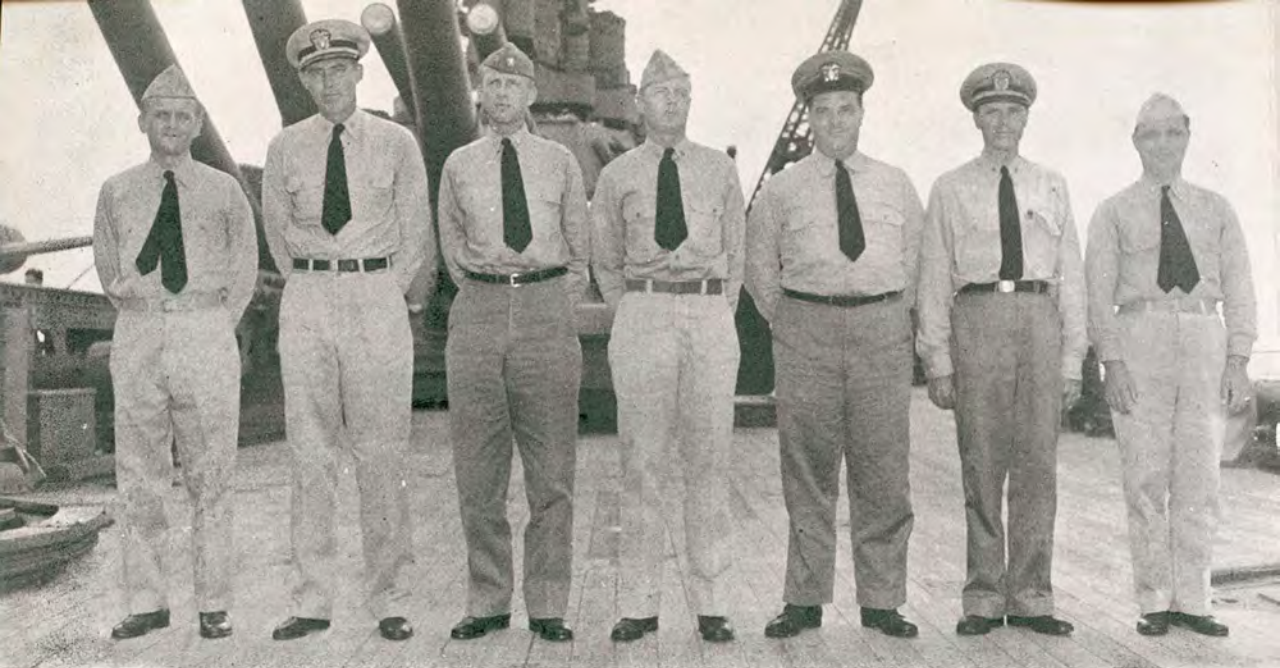


Captain inspects personnel

After work-time



Comes mud-time



Department Heads

First Division

Gunnery Department





Second Division

Gunnery Department



Third Division

Gunnery Department



Fourth Division

Gunnery Department



Fifth Division

Gunnery Department



Sixth Division

Gunnery Department



Seventh Division

Gunnery Department



Eighth Division

Gunnery Department

Ninth Division

Gunnery Department





F Division

Gunnery Department

I Division

Gunnery Department





I Division

Gunnery Department



C Division

Communications Department



H Division

Medical Department

N Division

Navigation Department





R Division

Construction and Repair Department

S Division

Supply Department





S Division

Supply Department

A Division

Engineering Department





B Division

Engineering Department



E Division

Engineering Department



E Division

Engineering Department

M Division

Engineering Department



STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF WAR SERVICE

A. Number of Operation Against the Enemy.

1. Aleutian Campaign.
 - (a) Bombardment of Kiska.
 - (b) Night Action in Aleutians.
 - (c) Attu Supporting Operations.
2. Gilberts Campaign.
 - (a) Bombardment of Makin.
3. Marshalls Campaign.
 - (a) Bombardment of Kwajalein Island and Adjacent Islands in Kwajalein Atoll.
 - (b) Bombardment of Taroa on Maloelap Atoll.
 - (c) Bombardment of Wotje Atoll.
4. Diversionary Actions in Bismarck Archipelago.
 - (a) Bombardment of Kaveing during Emirau Landings.
5. Palau Islands Campaign.
 - (a) Peleliu Bombardment.
 - (b) Ngesbus Bombardment.
 - (c) Supporting Operations.
6. Philippine Campaign.
 - (a) Leyte Bombardment and Supporting Operations.
 - (b) Surigao Strait Battle.
 - (c) Lingayen Bombardment and Support Operations.
7. Okinawa Campaign.
 - (a) Bombardment of Eastern Okinawa.
 - (b) Bombardment of Shuri Castle.
 - (c) Bombardment South of Naha.
 - (d) Counter-battery Fire.

B. Number of Days in Combat Area.

1. Iceland—6 days.
 2. Aleutians—108 days.
 3. Gilberts—16 days.
 4. Marshalls—34 days.
 5. Bismarck Archipelago—6 days.
 6. Palau—28 days.
 7. Philippines—87 days.
 8. Okinawa—51 days.
 9. Efate—35 days.
 10. Fiji—78 days.
 11. Christmas Islands Area—13 days.
 12. Pearl Harbor (1942)—125 days.
 13. Steaming in Central and South Pacific Waters, etc.—89 days.
- Total—677 days.

C. Aircraft Shot Down; Enemy Ships Destroyed.

1. Aircraft.
 - (a) Leyte—5
 - (b) Lingayen—3
 - (c) Okinawa—1

Total—9.
2. Ships.
 - (a) Unit of Battle line at Suriago Strait when 2 Battleships sunk. *Mississippi* credited with 12-gun straddle on a BB.

D. Miles Steamed During Each War Year.

1. 1941—4,235 miles.
 2. 1942—44,931 miles.
 3. 1943—52,186 miles.
 4. 1944—45,896 miles.
 5. 1945—22,199 miles.
- Total—169,446 miles.

E. Number Personnel Casualties.

1. Makin Island—1 officer, 42 men killed; 19 wounded.
2. Kavieng—4 men wounded.
3. Leyte—8 men wounded.
4. Lingayen Gulf—23 killed, 3 missing, 5 officers and 58 men wounded.
5. Okinawa—1 officer killed, 2 officers and 4 men wounded.

Number of Officers Killed in Action—2

Number of Men Killed in Action—65

Total Killed in Action—67

Number of Officers Wounded in Action—7

Number of Men Wounded in Action—93

Total Wounded in Action—100

Number of Men Missing in Action—3

Total Missing in Action—3

F. Ammunition Expended Against Enemy.

1. 14" HC—6,511 rounds or 8,299,525 lbs.

2. 14" AP—345 rounds or 517,500 lbs.

Total 14"—6,856 rounds or 8,817,025 lbs.

3. 5"/51—9,178 rounds or 495,612 lbs.

4. 5"/25—13,956 rounds or 682,968 lbs.

Total Rounds

All guns—

30,090 or 9,995,605 lbs.

Total Weight

of Powder

Expended 2,596,890 lbs.

Total Weight 12,592,495 lbs.

5. Total 40 mm and 20 mm ammunition—Approximately 325,250 rounds.

G. Addition Interesting Information.

1. Ammunition Expended Against the Enemy by Operations.

	14" HC	14" AP	5"/25	5"/51
Kiska	63			150
Aleutian Night Action		220		
Gilberts	391		373	358
Kwajalein	867	30	1333	1204
Taroa	80			350
Wotje	70			448
Kavieng	276			1067
Peleliu	1244		2301	3247
Leyte and Surigao Strait	657	12	1586	1060
Lingayen	657		1295	1294
Sub-Total	4305	262	6888	9178
Okinawa	2206	83	7068	
Grand Total	6511	345	13956	9178

2. Mileage steamed during 5 war years is greater than total of any previous 8 years steaming.
3. 24,832,600 gallons of oil burned during 5 years combat period.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the following individuals and activities for their assistance in obtaining and preparing material for this book.

ENSIGN WILLIAM R. PORTER, USN, ENSIGN KENT J. CARROLL, USN, who acted as editors of this book.

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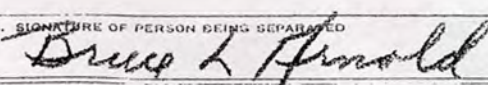
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NOTICE OF SEPARATION FROM U. S. NAVAL SERVICE
NAVPERS-553 (REV. 8-45)

1. SERIAL OR FILE NO.		2. NAME (LAST) (FI) (MIDDLE)		3. RATE AND CLASS/OR		5. PLACE OF SEPARATION	
638 61 83		ARNOLD, BRUCE LOREN				USN PerSepCen Minneapolis, Minn.	
RANK AND CLASSIFICATION		4. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES					
EM1/C V-6 USNR		HON(EM) Electricians Mate first class 2632 3RD AVE. SO. MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. HENNEPIN COUNTY					
6. CHARACTER OF SEPARATION		7. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE SOUGHT					
HONORABLE		Same as #4					
8. RACE		9. SEX		10. MARITAL STATUS		11. U.S. CITIZEN (YES OR NO)	
W		M		M		Yes	
12. DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH		13. REGISTERED					
11-13-40 Minneapolis, Minn.		YES ☒ NO ☐					
14. SELECTIVE SERVICE BOARD OF REGISTRATION		15. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE					
Hennepin Co., Minn		2632 3rd Ave So. Mpls, Minn.					
16. MEANS OF ENTRY (INDICATE BY CHECK IN APPROPRIATE BOX)		17. DATE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE		18. NET SERVICE (FOR PAY PURPOSES)			
☒ ENLISTED ☐ INDUCTED ☐ COMMISSIONED		4-27-42		3 5 27			
19. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE		20. QUALIFICATIONS, CERTIFICATES HELD, ETC.					
Minneapolis, Minn.		See Rating Description Booklet					
21. RATINGS HELD		22. FOREIGN AND/OR SEA SERVICE WORLD WAR II				23. SERVICE SCHOOLS COMPLETED	
AS, S2c, EM3c, EM2c, EM1c		☒ YES ☐ NO				Electrical	
24. SERVICE (VESSELS AND STATIONS SERVED ON)		25. KIND OF INSURANCE					
NTS, Great Lakes, Ill; NTS, Detroit, Mich. USS Mississippi		N					
26. EFFECTIVE MONTH OF ALLOTMENT CONTINUANCE		27. MO. NEXT PREMIUM DUE		28. AMOUNT OF PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH		29. INTENTION OF VETERAN TO CONTINUE INS.	
10-45		11-45		10.40 3.35		Yes	
30. TOTAL PAYMENT UPON DISCHARGE		31. TRAVEL OR MILEAGE ALLOWANCE INCLUDED IN TOTAL PAYMENT		32. INITIAL MUSTERING OUT PAY		33. NAME OF DISBURSING OFFICER	
\$40.43		None		\$100.00		D.J.Hart, Lt.(jg) SC USNR	
34. REMARKS				35. SIGNATURE (BY DIRECTION OF COMMANDING OFFICER)			
---				 H. J. VOLLMER Lieut, USNR			
36. NAME AND ADDRESS OF LAST EMPLOYER		37. DATES OF LAST EMPL'MT.		38. MAIN CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND D. O. T. NO.			
Warner Hardware Minneapolis, Minn		FROM 2-1941 TO 4-1942		Salesman			
39. JOB PREFERENCE (LIST TYPE, LOCALITY, AND GENERAL AREA)		40. PREFERENCE FOR ADDITIONAL TRAINING (TYPE OF TRAINING)		41. NON-SERVICE EDU. (YRS. SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED)			
Same as 38		---		GRAM: 8 H. S. 4 COLL: - - -			
42. DEGREES		43. MAJOR COURSE OR FIELD		44. VOCATIONAL OR TRADE COURSES (NATURE AND LENGTH OF COURSE)			
-		-		---			
45. RIGHT INDEX FINGERPRINT		46. OFF DUTY EDUCATIONAL COURSES COMPLETED					
		---					
47. DATE OF SEPARATION		48. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED					
10-23-45							

TO: BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL

svf