

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

U. S. S. COMFORT (AH-6)
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

AH6/A6-5/AEM/jm
Serial 30

21 February 1946

From: The Medical Officer.
To : The Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.
Via : The Commanding Officer.

Subject: Historical Supplement to the Annual Sanitary Report, Cumulative Report for the period of World War II.

Reference: (a) BuMed Ltr BuMed-Y-BHL, A2-2/EN10 of 30 November 1944.

Enclosure: (A) 205th Hospital Ship Complement letter of 21 December 1944, subj - History of USS COMFORT from 5 June 1944 to 21 December 1944.
(B) 205th Hospital Ship Complement letter of 22 May 1945, subj - History of USS COMFORT from 21 December 1944 to 28 May 1945.

SECTION (a) - CHRONOLOGY:

PORT	ARRIVED	DEPARTED	EVENT
San Pedro, Cal.	5/5/44		Commissioning.
San Pedro, Cal.		6/5/44	The Ship departed for Brisbane, Australia, but had to return on the third day for repairs.
San Pedro, Cal.	6/11/44	6/21/44	
Brisbane, Aus.	7/12/44	7/15/44	
Hollandia, N.G.	7/22/44	7/25/44	First patients were embarked on 7/25/44.
Milne Bay, N.G.	7/29/44	8/1/44	
Hollandia, N.G.	8/4/44	8/6/44	
Langemak Bay, N.G.	8/10/44	8/13/44	
Beli Beli	8/14/44	8/16/44	
Biak Isl.	8/20/44	8/22/44	
Hollandia, N.G.	8/23/44	8/25/44	
Manus Isl.	8/26/44	8/27/44	
Brisbane, Aus.	9/2/44	9/6/44	
Milne Bay, N.G.	9/9/44	9/10/44	
Hollandia, N.G.	9/17/44	9/27/44	
Manus Isl.	9/28/44	9/29/44	
Langemak Bay, N.G.	9/30/44	10/1/44	
Milne Bay, N.G.	10/4/44	10/6/44	634 patients were disembarked, the largest number ever to be disembarked at this port up to that time.
Hollandia, N.G.	10/10/44	10/12/44	
Biak Isl.	10/13/44	10/20/44	Received orders to proceed to a secret rendezvous for support in the Leyte Invasion.

Section (a), Chronology (continued):

PORT	ARRIVED	DEPARTED	EVENT
150 miles off Leyte Gulf, P.I.	10/22/44	10/24/44	While slowly steering a circular course at this position, the ship underwent a bombing attack by unidentified aircraft at 0202 on morning of 10/24/44. Three bombs were dropped but none hit near enough to ship to do any damage. All clear was sounded two hours later.
350 miles S.E. of Leyte, P.I.	10/25/44	10/28/44	
Leyte	10/29/44	10/29/44	At 1400 the embarkation of patients was started; they were mostly litter patients. The ambulatory patients were loaded from three LST's and three PCER's.
Hollandia, N.G.	11/2/44	11/5/44	
Kossol Passage	11/9/44	11/14/44	
Leyte, P.I.	11/16/44	11/16/44	Patients were embarked from Leyte.
Hollandia, N.G.	11/20/44	11/28/44	Orders were received to evacuate patients to U.S.
San Pedro, Cal.	12/21/44	1/8/45	Loaded medical supplies for Leyte where they were badly needed. The ship received a letter of thanks from Army Service Forces, Office of Surgeon General for this.
Leyte, P.I.	1/31/45	2/6/45	
Hollandia, N.G.	2/10/45	2/12/45	
Leyte, P.I.	2/16/45	2/18/45	
Hollandia, N.G.	2/22/45	2/24/45	
Subic Bay, P.I.	3/2/45	3/4/45	
Lingayen Gulf, PI	3/5/45	3/6/45	
Hollandia, N.G.	3/12/45	3/16/45	
Ulithi, W. Carolinas	3/18/45	3/29/45	Orders were received to proceed to Okinawa and participate in the invasion of the Ryukyu Islands.
Okinawa, R.I.	4/2/45	4/9/45	On April 6 while loading patients, an alert was sounded at 1615 when enemy aircraft were sighted in the vicinity. Six planes were shot down by our ships, one landing in the water about 50 yards from this ship. The plane was presumably heading for a suicide dive. During this barrage, an Army enlisted man was hit by a 20 m.m. shell. On April 9, at 0445, while 20 miles from Kerma Rhetto an alert was sounded when an unidentified plane tried to attack the ship. Two bombs were dropped about 50 yards off the starboard side and another was dropped off the port beam but no damage or casualties were sustained from either attempt. It was later determined that this attack was made by a U.S. plane from USS ENTERPRISE.

Section (a), Chronology (continued):

PORT	ARRIVED	DEPARTED	EVENT
			The Commanding Officer, H. F. FULTZ, Commander, U.S. Navy, was relieved by A. TOOKER, Commander (DM), U.S.N.R., on April 15, 1945, and was detached.
Guam	4/14/45	4/19/45	
Okinawa, R.I.	4/23/45	4/28/45	At 2042, on the night of April 28, thirty miles southeast of Okinawa, a Japanese suicide plane dived into the ship on the starboard side of the superstructure deck, instantly killing 1 Navy and 5 Army medical officers, 6 nurses, 1 Navy and 8 Army enlisted men, and 7 patients. 31 Army and 7 Navy men of the ship's crew were injured, also 10 patients sustained injuries. The plane ended up on the 2nd deck after crashing through three decks. The body of the Japanese pilot, an Army First Lieutenant, was recovered and turned over to Naval Intelligence at Guam.
Guam	5/3/45	5/8/45	
Terminal Isl, San Pedro, Cal.	5/28/45	8/12/45	Ship was repaired and made ready for sea.
Subic Bay, P.I.	9/6/45		The ship was assigned the duty of a Station Hospital at Subic Bay for a period of one month.

SECTION (b) - ORGANIZATION:

The U.S.S. COMFORT was commissioned on 5 May 1944 at the Consolidated Steel Co., Wilmington, California, under contract to the United States Maritime Commission, and fitted out by the Bethlehem Steel Co.

From the date of commissioning, 5 May 1944, through 18 March 1945, the ship was assigned to the Seventh Fleet for operational control. From the 18th of March to the time of the attack by the Japanese suicide plane off Okinawa on 28 April 1945, it operated with the Fifth Fleet, following which it returned to the United States for repairs. On the termination of the period of availability for repairs on 28 July 1945, the ship was reassigned to the Seventh Fleet and ordered to function as a Station Hospital in Subic Bay, P.I. The ship departed from San Pedro, California, on 12 August and arrived at Subic Bay, P.I., on 6 September 1945.

As an AH, the Type Commander of this vessel has been the Director of Naval Transportation Service.

SECTION (c) - NARRATIVE ACCOUNT:

This ship is under Naval Command and manned by a Navy crew. The hospital aboard is staffed by the Army. The Navy medical department has played a minor part as far as the function of the hospital is concerned. The Navy medical department consists of one medical officer and two hospital corpsmen. During wartime evacuation of patients, the medical officer and the corpsmen were given assignments in the hospital wards and operating rooms.

This ship had no Navy medical officer from 23 November 1944 to 12 March 1945. The Navy medical officer, Lt. Comdr. H. G. ROBERTS, (MC), U.S. Navy, developed hemoptysis and was transferred ashore at Hollandia, N.G., on 23 November 1944.

Lt. Comdr. W. L. CHESERD, (MC), U.S. Navy, reported for duty on 12 March 1945. This medical officer was one of 31 of the ship's personnel killed on 28 April 1945 as a result of an attack by a Japanese suicide plane during the invasion of Okinawa, R.I.

As a result of this attack, the Navy sick bay was flooded and many of the medical records and equipment were destroyed due to flooding of this area of the ship from broken fire mains and the water used to put out the fire created by the burning and exploding Japanese plane. The engine of the Jap plane landed about five feet aft of the Navy sick bay.

This was the last duty with combatant forces for the U.S.S. COMFORT. The ship was ordered to the United States for repairs, arriving in San Pedro, California, on 28 May 1945. The ship returned to the Pacific Theatre, leaving San Pedro, California, on 12 August 1945 with 500 passenger nurses for Manila, P.I., and the ship was assigned the duty of Station Hospital, Subic Bay, P.I.

SECTION (d) - ADDITIONAL DATA:

The Naval medical department has not participated in the organization, care, or treatment of casualties received aboard this vessel as the hospital aboard has been staffed by Army medical personnel under the direction of the War Department.

SECTION (e) - CONCLUSION:

No remarks.

A. E. Morrison
A. E. MORRISON,
COMMANDER, (MC),
U. S. NAVY.