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U. S. S. L E X I N G T O N

(CV-16)

17 February 1943 - 31 March 1945

1 April 1945 - 30 June 1945

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U. S. S. LEXINGTON

SECRET
S E C R E T

11 June 1945

From: Commanding Officer.
To: Office of Chief of Naval Operations, Aviation History Unit
Op-33-J-6.

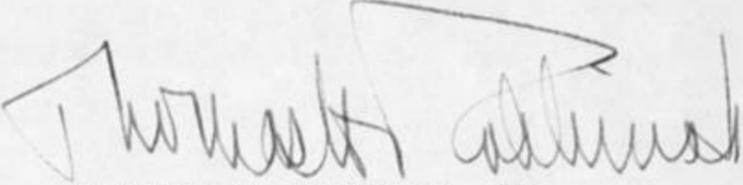
Via: (1) Commander Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
(2) Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Unit History - forwarding of.

References: (a) Aviation Circular Ltr. No. 74-44, Op-33-J-6-JEJ,
Serial 356533 of 25 July 1944.
(b) Manual for Historical Officers, NavAer 00-25Q-26.

Enclosure: (A) History of U.S.S. LEXINGTON (CV16) from 17 February 1943
(date of commissioning) through 31 March 1945.

1. In accordance with references(a) and (b), enclosure (A) is submitted herewith.


THOMAS H. ROBBINS, JR.

*Revised copy for
C.N.O.*

SECRET

**HISTORY OF
U.S.S. LEXINGTON CV-16**

From Date of Commissioning (17 February 1943)

Through

31 March 1945

S-E-C-R-E-T

HISTORY OF
U.S.S. LEXINGTON (CV 16)
from 17 February 1943 (date of commissioning)
through
31 March 1945

Part I - Chronology

Part II - Narrative and Documentation

Part III - Appendix

SECRET

PART I - CHRONOLOGY

1943 -

17 February Ship commissioned in South Boston Navy Yard. Captain (now Rear Admiral) F.B. Stump assumed command.

23 April First take off and landing effected by planes of Air Group 16.

11 May Departed Norfolk for shake-down cruise.

8 June Returned to Boston for post shake-down availability.

4 July Departed Boston for duty in Pacific.

26-27 July Passed through Panama Canal.

28 July Sortied from Balboa as a unit of Tg 52.6 composed of Lexington (CV), Princeton and Belleau Wood (CVL's) and destroyers.

9 August Entered Pearl Harbor.

11 September Sortied from Pearl Harbor as flagship of CTG 15.5 (Rear Admiral C.E. Pownall).

18 September First combat - attack by Air Group 16 on Tarawa.

5-6 October Strikes on Wake Island.

19-24 November Strikes on Mille and support of occupation of Gilbert Islands.

4 December Strikes on Kwajalein and Wotje in the Marshall Islands. Torpedo dropped by a Betty hit ship on starboard quarter, killing seven and injuring thirty nine.

22 December Docked at Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington.

1944 -

20 February Left Puget Sound Navy Yard.

24 February Sortied from San Francisco with Air Group 19 and other passengers aboard.

28 February Arrived Pearl Harbor, Air Group 19 disembarked; Air Group 16 embarked.

3 March Sortied from Pearl Harbor.

8 March Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher came aboard at Majuro and U.S.S. LEXINGTON became flagship of TF 58.

18 March Strikes on Mille.

SECRET

PART I - CHRONOLOGY (Con't)

1944 -

30-31 March	Strikes on Palau Islands.
10 April	Captain Stump, having been promoted to Rear Admiral , relieved as Commanding Officer by Captain (now Rear Admiral) E.W. Litch.
21-26 April	Strikes on Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea and support of landing operations there.
29-30 April	Strikes on Truk.
11-19 June	Support of landings in the Mariana Islands (Saipan, Guam and Tinian).
19-20 June	Engagement with Jap fleet in First battle of the Philippine Sea.
25 June - 5 July	Strikes on Guam.
9 July	Air Group 16 relieved by Air Group 19.
18-21 July	Support of landings on Guam.
25-27 July	Strikes against Palau Islands.
4-5 August	Strikes on Bonin Islands.
10 August	Arrived Eniwetok.
29 August	Sortied from Eniwetok.
6-8 September	Strikes on Palau Islands and support of landings on Peleliu.
9-10 September	Strikes on Mindanao Island.
12-14 September	Strikes on Visayan Islands.
21-22 September	Strikes on Manila, Luzon Island.
23-24 September	Strikes on Visayan Islands. Retirement to Ulithi.
6 October	Sortied from Ulithi.
10 October	Strike on Okinawa.
12-14 October	Strikes on Formosa.

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PART I - CHRONOLOGY (Con't)

1944 -

24-25 October

Engagement with Jap Fleet in Second Battle of the Philippine Sea ("Battle for Leyte Gulf").

31 October

Vice Admiral Mitscher and staff left the ship.

5 November

Strikes on Luzon. Ship damaged by suicide plane hitting secondary conn.

6 November

Strikes on Luzon continued. Retirement to Ulithi.

23 November

Air Group 19 relieved by Air Group 20 at Ulithi.

11 December

Sortied from Ulithi as flagship of CTG 38.2 (Rear Admiral G.F. Bogan).

14-16 December

Strikes on Luzon in support of Mindoro landings.

23 December

Arrived at Ulithi after riding out typhoon with only minor damage.

30 December

Sortied from Ulithi.

1945 -

3-4 January

Strikes on Formosa.

6-7 January

Strikes on Luzon.

9 January

Strike on Luzon.

12 January

Strike and anti shipping operations Camranh Bay, Indo China.

15 January

Strikes on Formosa.

16 January

Strikes on Hong Kong.

21 January

Strikes on Formosa.

22 January

Strike and photo mission Okinawa.

30 January

Captain Litch ~~having been promoted to Rear Admiral~~, relieved as commanding officer by Captain Thomas H. Robbins Jr..

31 January

Rear Admiral R.E. Davison on board, relieving Rear Admiral Bogan as CTG 58.2.

SECRET

PART I - CHRONOLOGY (Con't)

1945 -

2 February	Air Group 20 relieved by Air Group 9.
10 February	Sortied from Ulithi.
16-17 February	Strikes on Tokyo area.
19, 21-22 February	Support of landings on Iwo Jima.
25 February	Strikes on Tokyo area.
1 March	Strike and photo mission Amami Gunto, Nansei Shoto.
4 March	Arrived at Ulithi.
5 March	Rear Admiral Davison and staff left ship.
6 March	Air Group 9 left the ship. Air Group 3 and passengers embarked for transportation home.
7 March	Sortied from Ulithi.
17 March	Arrived Pearl Harbor, homeward bound pennant flying.
20 March	Sortied from Pearl Harbor.
31 March	Entered Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Wash. for routine overhaul.

PART II - NARRATIVE:

The U.S.S. LEXINGTON, sixth ship of the U.S. Navy so named, was commissioned in South Boston Navy Yard on February 17, 1943. Captain F. B. STUMP, USN, in the presence of Governor Saltonstall of Massachusetts, assumed command of the ship.

The fourth of the ESSEX type of carrier to be commissioned, she embodied in her construction and design all the latest developments of the modern aircraft carrier and was to play a vital part in the operations of the Pacific Fleet in the ensuing months of the war.

After a fitting out period in Boston, she left on April 13th for Chesapeake Bay. Here on April 23rd Commander B.W. WRIGHT, USN, Air Officer, made the first take off and landing from her deck, and Air Group SIXTEEN, which was to be her Air Group for the first months of her career, joined her for practice maneuvers. During this period which lasted from April 16th to May 11th, she paid a visit to the U.S. Naval Academy, at which time she was inspected by the Naval Affairs Committee of the United States Senate led by Senator Walsh.

On May 11th she left Norfolk with her Air Group embarked for a shake down cruise to the Gulf of Paria, Trinidad, B.W.I.. Four weeks were spent in this area, which proved itself ideally adapted for training purposes. A return to Boston for post shake down availability was made on June 8th, 1943.

After completion of this availability period, the LEXINGTON proceeded via Norfolk to the Panama Canal Zone to transit the Canal and join the Pacific Fleet. On 26 July at Cristobal she rendezvoused with the BELLEAU WOOD and the PRINCETON, CVL's with whom in the next months she was destined to join in many an operation. The Canal was transited on 26-27 July, and preparations for sea were made at Balboa. At 1215 on 28 July, Task Group 52.6, composed of the LEXINGTON, PRINCETON, and BELLEAU WOOD, STEVENS, GUEST, SIGSBEE, RINGGOLD, WADSWORTH, and HARRISON, sortied from Balboa and set their course west.

The voyage to Pearl Harbor was uneventful. All ships and Air Groups conducted training operations during the period, culminating in an attack launched on Oahu by the planes of the Task Group on the day of arrival which was answered by a magnificent attack against the Group by shore based PBO's, Torpedo Planes, and Dive Bombers. At 1530 on August 9th, the LEXINGTON entered Pearl Harbor and reported to ComAirPac for duty. The preliminaries were over, and she was a part of the Pacific Fleet.

Several weeks were spent in Pearl Harbor, during which time necessary Navy Yard work was done and one training cruise conducted. Finally on September 11th, as Flagship of Rear Admiral C.E. POWNALL, CTG 15.5, LEXINGTON left on her first war mission. Our Task Group consisted of the LEXINGTON, PRINCETON and BELLEAU WOOD, the cruisers SANTA FE, MOBILE, and BIRMINGHAM, and the destroyers MC KEE, STEVENS, JOHN ROGERS, HARRISON, HAZELWOOD, RINGGOLD, DASHIELL, SCHROEDER, and the tanker GUADELOUPE. The mission of this group was

to make a destructive raid on enemy air installations at Tarawa Atoll in the Gilberts.

The ensuing raid was highly successful and the first of what were to be many similar operations by groups of carriers in the coming months. Approach to the objective was made without detection, and at dawn on September 18th the first strikes left the ship. During the day 196 sorties were flown with a loss of only three of our planes. The ships Air Group proved itself to be well trained and full of fight. Under the outstanding leadership of Commander L. B. SCOTTERLAND they gave evidence of the qualities that were to make them among the outstanding Air Groups of the Fleet.

All day the Task Group cruised back and forth, sending wave after wave of planes against the enemy installations. No attacks were made against the group, and little air opposition was encountered over the target. Anti-aircraft fire, however was intense, as it was evidenced by the fact that over one half of our fighters received damage from this source.

The Task Group as a whole received invaluable experience during this raid. Fighter direction and communication procedures were tested, and all ships given practice in operating under combat conditions. At sunset the mission was declared to have been successfully completed and the group headed eastward. A year later these same ships, plus many others, would be threatening Formosa and the Philippines, putting to good use the technique established and lessons learned at Tarawa.

After another period in Pearl Harbor LEXINGTON sortied on September 29th for her second raid, the carrier strike on Wake Island. Just as Tarawa was the forerunner of operations by several carriers operating together, so Wake was the first major raid by several groups. LEXINGTON was Flagship of the second carrier attack unit, commanded by Rear Admiral Radford, while the Task Group as a whole was under the command of Rear Admiral MONTGOMERY in the YORKTOWN. In addition to these two carriers, the ESSEX, COWPENS, INDEPENDENCE, and BELLEAU WOOD participated, as well as one division of cruisers and many destroyers. The coming operations by huge carrier Task Forces which were to take place during 1944 were mirrored in the Wake raid.

Complete surprise was again attained and Air Group SIXTEEN again proved itself a potentially outstanding group of airmen. For two days the Task Group sent its carrier strikes in to the island, and on the second day cruisers bombarded the shore installations. The LEXINGTON Air Group flew 305 sorties with a loss of two fighters and one bomber plane. The crew of the bomber were rescued by submarines. Damage to the objective was extensive, and all hands could again feel that they had participated in a highly successful action.

The next operation in which the LEXINGTON participated was the occupation of the Gilbert Islands. During the period of November 19-24, together with the YORKTOWN and the COWPENS, she took station about 100 miles southeast of Mille in the Marshalls group. The mission of these carriers was to intercept any enemy aircraft being staged from the Marshalls to the support of the Gilbert group that was being invaded. This mission for the first time gave the Air Group an opportunity to put in use their training in combat interceptions. At the same time, a number of highly destructive strikes were

made against the Mille installations.

On November 19th, six strikes were directed against the target, followed by single strikes on the 20th to the 22nd. These strikes effectively neutralized the aircraft installations on Mille, while at the same time four enemy bombers were destroyed on the ground, and AA positions were dealt severe damage.

On November 20th, fourteen of our SBD's made 150 mile two plane searches. During the course of one of these the planes piloted by Lieutenant Cook CLELAND and Lieutenant (junior grade) C. T. SCHRADER intercepted a Betty 150 miles from the Force. After a twenty-two minute chase, Lieutenant CLELAND's rear seat gunner, W. J. HISLER, ARM3c, shot the Betty down.

On November 21st, routine patrols and searches were conducted, and on the 22nd another strike was sent to Mille. It remained for the next two days to provide the high spots of this mission in support of the Gilbert landings.

At about 1000 on November 23rd, many bogies were picked up by LEXINGTON radar 90 miles north of the formation. Lieutenant Commander FLEMING, LEXINGTON Fighter Director Officer, vectored out 12 of the 24 plane Combat Air Patrol then in the air. The interception was perfectly conducted, and contact was made 50 miles out with our planes having an altitude advantage of 4000 feet. The bogies consisted of a group of twenty enemy fighters flying in close formation. The 12 LEXINGTON Hellcats immediately shot down 17 sure and 3 probables, with the loss of only one plane, the pilot of which bailed out near the formation and was recovered. The outstanding individual performers were Lieutenant (junior grade) HANKS, who shot down five planes, and Lieutenant (junior grade) FLEMING who got three. Needless to say the "screen was clear" after this interception.

On the next day, another group of many bogies was picked up 102 miles to the northwest. Twelve LEXINGTON fighters were again vectored out, and intercepted 2 Bettys accompanied by 18 Zekes. Our planes shot down both Bettys, 10 Zekes and two probables, in spite of the fact that some of the Zekes had an altitude advantage on them at the time interception was made. From November 19th through November 24th, our Air Group, perfectly controlled by Lieutenant Commander FLEMING had shot down thirty enemy aircraft and destroyed one bomber on the ground.

The period described above marked the first supporting operation to amphibious assaults in which we were to take part. During these six days the pressure on the Air Group and the crew as a whole was severe. General Quarters was sounded every evening and while our particular group was not attacked, there was much enemy activity in the vicinity, and numerous alerts were sounded. On the evening of November 24th we were requested to take aboard several lost planes from the LISCOMBE BAY. While the ship stayed at General Quarters the deck was spotted forward, and the planes were finally safely brought aboard, although it is doubtful if the pilots had ever before been forced to land at night.

The ship by this time had become a well trained unit, hardened in

the practical field of actual operations. The performance of the Flight Deck crews and all other units of the ships company was becoming outstanding for experiences and smoothness of operation.

As soon as the Gilberts occupation was completed the supporting carrier groups withdrew to refuel and then immediately proceeded on their next mission, which was to raid Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshalls Group. The LEXINGTON was in T.G. 50.1 for this operation, in company with the YORKTOWN (Rear Admiral POWNALL), COWPENS, the cruisers MINNEAPOLIS, SAN FRANCISCO, NEW ORLEANS, BALTIMORE and OAKLAND, and a screen of destroyers including the CHAUNCEY, KIDD, BULLARD, NICHOLAS, TAYLOR and LA VALLETE. T.G. 50.3, was commanded by Rear Admiral MONTGOMERY, with the carriers ESSEX, ENTERPRISE, BELLEAU WOOD and six cruisers.

Kwajalein lying as it does in the center of the Marshall's group, approach had to be made from the northeast within range of Japanese searches from other Marshall bases. On the afternoon of the run-in Admiral POWNALL sent a message to the group, "Be ready for anything after 1700". It was well known that Kwajalein had been heavily reinforced during the weeks preceding, and all hands knew that the hardest mission they had yet faced was ahead of them.

Surprisingly enough, approach was made without detection and the first strike was launched on schedule at 0630 in the morning of December 4.

Intelligence information to the effect that the target had been heavily reinforced proved to be correct. Our Air Group on arrival found two CL's and one large AK in the lagoon, and the airfield literally packed with medium bombers. Enemy fighters from nearby Roi Island were alerted, and soon were in the air. Twelve LEXINGTON Hellcats were directed to strafe the airfield while the VB and VT attacked the harbor shipping. These twelve immediately had their hands full combating approximately 30 Zekes which arrived from Roi.

The performance of these LEXINGTON fighters under these adverse conditions was magnificent. In spite of the intense enemy opposition 19 enemy VF and 1 Betty were destroyed in the air, and 3 Bettys on the ground. Meanwhile the bombers and torpedo planes attacking the shipping had damaged both cruisers and blown up the AK. While returning from this strike the SBD's encountered enemy fighters and bombers and shot down six Zekes and one Betty on their way back to the ship. The total score of our group for this one strike was 27 enemy aircraft shot down in the air, three bombers destroyed on the ground, one large AK sunk, one CL sunk and one probably sunk.

The remainder of the day of December 4, 1943 will long be remembered by those taking part in this action. It was obvious that while much damage had been done to the enemy shipping at the target, large numbers of torpedo planes and bombers had escaped. The Task Group was now faced with retirement during the day and at night within easy range of enemy bases, under weather conditions that included an extremely bright half moon.

As soon as the returning strikes were landed course was set northeast at high speed. The Captain secured from General Quarters in order to give the crew some rest in anticipation of the rugged evening which all knew was in the

offing. At 1201, radar reported a few bogies at 19 miles, closing fast and General Quarters was sounded. Before General Quarter stations could be manned, however, two enemy torpedo planes were sighted by lookouts coming in on the starboard side. The LEXINGTON immediately opened fire, the first ship in the group to do so. It was the first chance our Gunnery Department had had, and they took full advantage of it, shooting down both planes, which crashed in flames, the first 200 yards ahead and the second 500 yards astern of the ship. A third plane was immediately sighted which closed to 1800 yards and dropped it's torpedo before being hit and crashing on the starboard beam. Our gunners achieved a 4.0 score in their first effort.

The torpedo dropped by the last plane passed astern of the ship, thanks to a skillfully executed evasive turn by the Commanding Officer. The entire action had lasted only one and one half minutes.

The ship went to General Quarters that night all knowing that a difficult period lay ahead. The half moon was bright, as only a tropic moon can be, and the Japanese Marshall bases were still in easy range in spite of the high speed retirement that had been conducted all afternoon. The night attack which followed was to be repeated many times in the future, but in no case was one as long drawn out or as efficiently conducted as this one. It was easily evident that we were up against a group of the enemy's most skillful and relentless pilots.

All planes were down at sunset. At 1846 radar reported the first bogie, and immediately thereafter other groups at varying distances. From that time until moonset at 0127 the Task Group was under continual attack.

At 1925 bogies began closing and the MOBILE, in the other Task Group, began firing. Both groups were maneuvering at high speed on evasive courses, and firing by the screen was continuous. Three planes were shot down by various ships, burning long on the water, and adding to the illumination of the moonlight. To those of us with topside battle stations it seemed like a long drawn out unreal dream, the ship silently steaming through the water, throwing out a brilliant phosphorescent wake, the moonlight reflected against the planes on the flight deck and all the while the bright streamers of tracer bullets and the flash of 5 inch bursts from the ships of the screen firing at targets which we knew to be there, but which being unseen were rendered even more terrifying.

At 2150 float lights were dropped on the water to guide the attackers in to the target. At 2322 four parachute flares appeared on our port beam. They were beautifully placed to silhouette the ship, and it was obvious that we had been picked out as the target. At 2325 the ship opened fire, bogies were closing fast on the starboard bow. A torpedo was seen to drop from a Betty on the starboard beam who immediately was heavily fired upon but came in close and got away at high speed directly over the ship.

At 2332 the torpedo hit. The ship immediately settled 5 feet to starboard and lost steering control. For some twenty minutes she turned in a circle to port, streaming a dense cloud of smoke from ruptured FS gas tanks on the fantail.

The conduct of the crew during this period was exemplary. Still under attack by many planes, with no steering control, and dense poisonous gas fumes flooding the entire spaces, nevertheless all hands stuck to their jobs with calmness and efficiency. The NEW ORLEANS, OAKLAND, and CHAUNCEY were detailed to stand by the LEXINGTON, and the remainder of the Task Group likewise remained in the immediate vicinity. In about 20 minutes the rudder was brought amidships, by using an emergency hand operated hydraulic unit which had been installed by our own crew during the last availability. Steering only with the main engines, within half an hour after being hit we were proceeding eastward at 20 knots.

The next day retirement continued without further attacks, although we were still in range of land based planes. At 1500 bogies were picked up at about 80 miles, General Quarters was sounded, and the ship prepared to launch fighters, but the bandits faded to the south and we were not molested further. Several cruisers and destroyers were detached to provide a separate screen for the LEXINGTON, and this Task unit proceeded at best possible speed to Pearl Harbor.

On arrival at Pearl Harbor the ship entered dry dock to effect temporary repairs. The Air Group was transferred ashore, and on December 17th, we sortied from Pearl Harbor enroute to Bremerton for permanent repairs.

The trip to Bremerton gave the crew a much needed opportunity for rest and relaxation. Full sized basketball courts were set up on the hangar deck, and all hands took advantage of the opportunity to indulge in every possible form of physical activity. On December 22nd we docked at Bremerton Navy Yard.

The Commanding Officer during the trip from Pearl Harbor had told the crew that he would make every effort to grant as much leave as possible during the stay in Bremerton. Immediately upon arrival the first leave party left the ship on a 21 day leave, and on their return the other half of the crew did likewise. Many of the men were able to reach their homes for Christmas.

On February 12th the Navy Yard availability was completed, and on February 20th the LEXINGTON got underway for NAS Alameda. There she took aboard Air Group NINETEEN, which was slated to relieve Air Group SIXTEEN in July, as well as approximately 2500 passengers and much miscellaneous freight. On February 24th she passed through the Golden Gate and again headed for the Pacific battle zone.

Arriving at Pearl Harbor on February 28th, our old Air Group, SIXTEEN, immediately came aboard. It was a pleasant reunion for all hands. During the time we had been out of the combat area much had happened, the Marshalls were now in American hands, and carrier Task Forces had raided the menacing Japanese fortresses of Truk and Saipan. We knew that we were to proceed west, and all felt sure that there would be plenty of activity for us once we got there.

Leaving Pearl Harbor on March 3rd the Captain announced over the loud speaker system that our destination was to be Majuro, an atoll in the Marshall group. We did not realize at the time that we had moored alongside a dock for the last time, and that "port" from then on would be a succession of coral atolls,

in which one lay at anchor for days on end with only shipboard exercises and occasional beach parties for recreation.

Shortly after our arrival at Majuro on March 8th Vice Admiral MARC A. MITSCHER moved his Flag to the LEXINGTON. From then until October we were to be the Force Flagship of Task Force 58, which was in the ensuing months to create for itself an enviable record in Naval History. Admiral MITSCHER's lovable personality, his great brilliance as a tactician and the cooperative spirit shown by all members of his staff towards the ship's company, made his stay aboard a memorable experience for all hands. We were proud to have been chosen for his flagship, and all hands did their best to make him equally proud of us.

On March 18th the LEXINGTON conducted air strikes on Mille Atoll, which was still in Japanese hands. Considerable damage was done to the local installations, and the operations gave the Air Group an opportunity to carry out combat operations for the first time since the Kwajalein raid.

On March 22nd we sortied from Majuro enroute to our next major operation, a raid on the Palau Islands. Looking back on the first raids on Wake and Tarawa scarcely more than six months previous, the aggregation of aerial power assembled for this operation gave conclusive proof of the growth of American Naval power in the Pacific. We were but one of several Task Groups, any one of which was equivalent in size to those that carried out the operations the previous autumn. The move toward Palau seemed an incredibly bold one, taking the Force as it did into the heart of the enemy's island empire. There seemed to be no chance of effecting surprise, as snoopers were active all during the approach, and in spite of the fact that several were shot down, we knew that the whole area had been alerted and all hands steeled themselves for a warm reception.

On March 28th the destroyers were topped off and the run in commenced. That afternoon the crew had callisthenics on the flight deck in the warm tropical sun, and afterwards the band played while all tried to relax as much as possible. The next day every one was ready for whatever lay in store, for by that afternoon we would be in range of land based attacks.

Promptly at 1712 many bogies were reported and the Captain sounded General Quarters. With the recollection of December 4th fresh in every one's mind, everyone waited for a night attack of similar or greater intensity. The enemy technique appeared to be the same as we had previously encountered, with snoopers first appearing to spot the Group's position and flares dropped over the formation and finally over us by the attacking planes. But the enemy was neither numerous nor determined. Two planes were shot down in flames as they made their attacks, and the runs of the others were not pressed home. The anti-aircraft fire put up by the ships of the screen was breath taking in it's volume and evidently highly discouraging to the Japanese. By 2200 it was apparent that the main damage that was to be suffered was loss of sleep and shortly thereafter the ship secured from General Quarters.

Another attack was expected in the morning and night fighters were launched early to intercept it. This one however, did not materialize at all,

and at 0633 the first strikes were launched and continued uninterruptably throughout the day. That evening another night attack was launched against the Task Force, but proved no more effective than had the preceding one. Many bogies circled the formation, and one crossed between the LEXINGTON and the YORKTOWN without being shot down, but by 2300 the attacks abated, and the crew secured to the normal cruising condition of readiness.

For two days Task Force 58 pounded the Palaus. Extensive damage was done to shipping, aircraft and installations, with so many planes taking part that it is difficult to determine with exactness the responsibility for specific acts of destruction, in as much as ships damaged by one Air Group would be subsequently sunk by another, Air Group SIXTEEN, however, continued to show that it was a hard hitting and efficient unit. Under the leadership of Lieutenant Commander B.D. BUIE the Fighting Squadron for the first time executed mast head bombing attacks with great success, and the Torpedo Squadron accomplished the difficult feat of sowing mines in the harbor entrance.

On completion of the second days strikes the Task Force again prepared for major attacks. General Quarters was sounded at 2001, and the ships moved in to the aircraft defense disposition. Except for a single bogey passing astern, however, there were no contacts, and secure was sounded at 2253. The Palaus, which had been approached with trepidation, but proved to be easier than anyone had dared to imagine, and American sea power had boldly struck at the heart of Japan's Pacific holdings and emerged without damage.

On the next day strikes were launched against Woleai, and that Atoll permanently put out of commission as a Japanese staging base. During the morning a returning F6F missed the arresting gear wires and barriers and crashed into the planes spotted forward on the flight deck, carrying two other fighters besides himself into the forward elevator pit, the elevator being lowered at the time. Thanks to efficient work on the part of the hangar deck fire fighting crews the resulting blaze was quickly extinguished. The pilot of the plane which was on the elevator at the time was, unfortunately, killed instantly by the crash.

No attacks were made against the force during this day, although General Quarters was sounded once when another Task Group reported sighting a large group of bogies in their vicinity. By 1330 air operations were completed, and the Task Force returned to Majuro. Arriving on April 6th.

During this period in port, Captain F.B. STUMP, who had been our Commanding Officer since commissioning, received the promotion to Rear Admiral and was relieved by Captain E.W. LITCH. The high state of efficiency to which the LEXINGTON had been brought and splendid manner in which all hands performed their duties under combat conditions, was in large measure directly the result of Rear Admiral STUMP's tireless training since the inception of his command. Vitally interested at all times in the well-being of his crew, he had won for himself the unswerving loyalty of each of its members, and by his tremendous energy, enthusiasm and courage had set them an example they will long remember. In a ceremony on the flight deck on April 10, 1944 Captain LITCH accepted the command and pledged himself to carry on the principles of his predecessor.

The next operation of Task Force 58 was the support of landings on Hollandia, New Guinea, by the Army. Leaving Majuro on April 13th, the Force commenced operations against the target on the 21st, the day before the scheduled landings. Although it had been expected that the enemy would resist this operation strenuously, bringing into play their forces from the East Indies, it soon became apparent that the opposite was true, and the bulk of their strength had been withdrawn from the area. Army bombers had made destructive raids on the air fields prior to our arrival, and most of the planes present had been destroyed. The most serious opposition encountered by our pilots was the weather, which was uniformly poor, and rendered air operations difficult.

A total of six strikes, totaling 212 sorties was flown on D-1 Day. Our pilots found the airfield littered with planes destroyed by the Army, but were able to account for 29 of those remaining undamaged, as well as destroying two small coastal vessels, and doing damage to ground installations. At night fall the Task Group retired northward, returning the next morning to support the landing operations.

Scheduled strikes on D Day were delayed by weather, but by 0622 the first launch got off the deck. Reports from the beach were anxiously awaited, and word soon came from the Support Air Controller that landings were proceeding on schedule with practically no opposition. Only 74 sorties were flown this day due to lack of suitable targets. The next day 6 VT and 6 VB were launched as a support air group, and these bombed installations in the Sentani Cyclops area, at the same time destroying 3 planes on the ground. By this time it was apparent that large scale air support was not needed, and no further missions were scheduled, the force standing by to render assistance as called for.

Up to this time we had not been favored by any night attacks. In view of the enemy's relatively near by bases, however, it was to be expected that sooner or later we would have some of these now familiar visitations. Sure enough at 1902 on the evening of the 23rd, radar picked up a bogie. A night fighter was launched, but did not make interception. It was later learned that this bogie dropped his bombs on our troops on the landing beach. The next evening, after a day spent in launching only one six plane reconnaissance mission, word was received that an attack on the force was imminent, and General Quarters was sounded at 1727, one of the other groups having reported "many bogies closing". This turned out to be a false alarm, and secure sounded at 1745. An hour later, however, bogies again appeared and battle stations were manned. One of the other carriers launched night fighters, who shot down one enemy bomber at 1921. Then, as the crew stood by tensely, word was received from one of the night fighters that he had intercepted a flight of nine Jap bombers, on which he was flying wing. The enthusiasm with which this interception report was received was dampened by his further report that he was out of ammunition! The nine Sons of Heaven in question were in all probability searching for our force, but they were not successful and by 2220 all contacts had cleared the screen.

On the 25th the Force withdrew from direct support of the Hollandia Operations and fueled. The next day was spent cruising 150 miles north of Hollandia, ready to support the landings if called on. Being at the confluence of enemy searches from Guam, Palau, and Biak, the main activity of the day consisted of shooting down inquisitive Bettys, no less than five of which were bagged by Combat Air Patrol. Of these two fell to LEXINGTON planes. In each case, a destroyer would be sent to the scene of the crash to rescue survivors and bring them to the LEXINGTON for a "conference" with the Staff, and all day long Nipponese were being transferred to the hospitable confines of our brig.

The big question after our withdrawal from Hollandia was the nature of our next operation. Scuttlebutt soon was whispering the magic name of "Truk", and this was confirmed when the order came out to brief all pilots on that group of islands. Truk was still surrounded with the glamour of it's reputation as Japan's strongest Pacific base, and all held it in respect. This, we were convinced, would be no pushover.

The run in during the evening of the 28th, however, was uneventful, and the morning of the 29th found us in the launching position. The weather was squally, and for some time launching was delayed. Finally at 0722 the first fighter sweep left the deck. At a few minutes after eight, bogies were reported at 55 miles, closing. Interception was not successful due to the squally weather, and at 0814 two dive bombers made a high speed run on the LEXINGTON from the port bow. One was shot down by the ship's batteries, which again were the first in the Task Group to open fire, and the other dropped it's bomb just off our fantail and made it's escape through the formation, the members of which by this time were firing with great enthusiasm, both at the plane and at each other.

Our fighter sweep and first strike reached the target area to find that our presence had been detected, and many enemy fighters were in the air. A heavy layer of cloud caused for difficult conditions, as the Japs were afforded ample concealment. In the resulting melee, our fighters shot down 17 enemy planes with a loss of four planes and three pilots. The LANGLEY fighters meanwhile, were engaging another group above the cloud layer and bagged a score of twenty planes. From this time on, enemy air resistance was negligible and for two days Task Force 58 systematically "worked over" once proud Truk, while it's cruisers and battleships bombarded the neighboring islands of Satawan and Ponape. At times the Force closed in to about 15 miles of the outlying islands, which were visible on the horizon, as strike after strike left the deck, the short distance to the target enabling a large number of sorties to be flown.

At 1900 on the second evening of the attack, another dive bomber closed the formation and dropped a bomb which landed close aboard the LEXINGTON's port beam. Except for this incident there was no further enemy activity over the force, and retirement was made to the Eastward that evening.

Several weeks were spent in Majuro after this operation. On June 6th, Task Force 58 again sortied with it's mission the assisting of the capture of the Marianas. Three days of carrier strikes were scheduled prior to

the actual occupation, beginning on June 12th.

There were no enemy contacts during the approach, in spite of the fact that the Japanese were known to operate long range searches from their Marianas Bases. The monotony of the daily routine was broken on the afternoon of the ninth by an Army B-24, who circled the formation at low altitude to make a message drop.

The original plan for this operation called for initial strikes to begin at dawn on June 12th. For several months the Air Group Commander and the squadron Commanders of Air Group SIXTEEN had discussed among themselves the practicability of varying this standard practice of a dawn attack by a fighter sweep in the late afternoon, an unconventional time for such a manœuvre. They communicated their ideas to members of Admiral Mitscher's Staff, and largely through their influence it was decided to give this method a try.

Plans were therefore changed and the launching of a large fighter sweep on the afternoon of June 11th was decided upon. By steaming at high speed the Force could reach a proper launching point, and if undetected, it was hoped that they would be able to catch the enemy in comfortable enjoyment of their afternoon tea, or the Japanese equivalent thereof.

During the morning of the eleventh three enemy patrol planes were shot down near the force. We had no way of knowing whether or not they had been able to report our presence prior to their destruction but it appeared by the early afternoon as though we were still undetected. The fighter sweep was launched at 1307.

Although 100 enemy planes were shot down by the Task Force fighters on this sweep, our planes did not happen to be assigned an area where enemy had airborne opposition. They thoroughly strafed a large number of planes on Aslito Airfield, but returned to the ship disappointed that they had not been able to increase their score of planes destroyed in combat. The mission of the force, on the whole, however, was highly successful, and this sweep virtually destroyed air opposition over Saipan. We were intermittently bothered however by attacks from torpedo planes based on Guam through out this operation. As a result the ship's company was forced to remain at General Quarters for long periods at night, and the Air Department was frequently called upon to launch night fighters. This made the operation an especially tiring one for all concerned.

Shortly after midnight on June 12th, bogies were picked up, and remained continually around the formation until dawn. It was evident that the Nips were going to attempt a night attack, and night fighters were catapulted at 0300. At 0330 gunfire was observed on the horizon and Signal Bridge passed the word to Conn "Flares above us". General Quarters was sounded and preparations made to repel a torpedo attack. The attacking group however proved to be definitely third-rate, and although one closed to $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles, by dawn all bandits were opening, and the screen was soon clear.

Our initial fighter sweep was launched on schedule at dawn, and was followed by no less than six deckloads for strikes on Saipan. Severe damage

was inflicted by our group to installations and facilities in our target area, and two cargo ships as well as many small craft were destroyed. Air operations were concluded at sunset without incident.

On the next day a fighter sweep and four strikes were launched and the battleships left the Force to conduct an independent bombardment of the island. In addition a special strike of TBF's loaded with incendiaries hit Garapan Town and very thoroughly burned it. After dark the carrier groups rendezvoused with the battleships, who had completed their bombardment. The many fires on the island which could be plainly seen as we maneuvered off shore were confirming evidence of the damage which had been done.

The success of the day's operations was clouded by the loss of the Commanding Officer of our Torpedo Squadron, Commander Robert Isley. Hit by AA fire, he had crashed on Aslito Airfield, later to be named in his honor. He was a fearless leader, and his ever cheerful and tremendously vital personality made him one of the ship's most popular officers. His loss, both as an individual and an American was keenly felt.

June 14th was spent in making strikes on enemy installations on nearby islands to the north, and further strikes on Saipan itself. There was a marked reduction of AA fire encountered, in all probability due to the heavy damage done on the previous days. The next day was D day, and after a dawn strike and one at How hour to support the landing, four strikes were launched in support of the amphibious operations. No air opposition was encountered by the Task Force during the day, but that evening we underwent a torpedo attack, which in contrast to the one mentioned above, was distinctly of high grade calibre.

At 1803, while still in the process of landing planes from the last strike of the day, a bogey was picked up by Radar at 22 miles and shot down by CAP from one of the other ships. At 1818 General Quarters was sounded and landing operations continued. Groups of bogies were picked up in rapid succession until by 1845 no less than 5 raids were on the screen. Combat Air Patrol from the San Jacinto intercepted a group of Tony's at 30 miles, and shot down 6 of them. One of the other Task Groups opened fire on the horizon shortly thereafter, and at 1907 our lookouts reported sighting ten twin engine planes dead ahead closing fast. The screen immediately opened fire, and as soon as the planes were within range the carriers did likewise.

This attack was executed at very high speed and with great determination. The volume of fire put up by the group was so great that at times the attacking planes were completely blacked from view. When the LEXINGTON opened fire with automatic batteries eight planes were plainly visible on both port and starboard bow. A few minutes later five had crashed and were burning in the water around the formation. Two torpedoes were launched at the LEXINGTON and passed along the length of the ship on either side in plain view and very close aboard. Skillful maneuvering by the Commanding Officer kept the ship directly between the path of each of these. One of the attacking planes burst into flames on our starboard bow, and flew the length of the flight deck and only a few feet above it before crashing on the port quarter. Those with battle stations topside had their faces scorched by the heat of the flames as it passed by. None of the ships of the group were damaged and only eighteen minor personal casualties occurred on the LEXINGTON.

The attack described above was the fiercest so far encountered by this ship. Although short in duration it was characterized by great speed of approach and a high degree of coordination on the part of the attacking planes. Our gunners performed in their usual exemplary fashion, and claimed five planes sure and two assists for the action.

On the sixteenth, one strike was launched in support of the landings, and for the rest of the day the group fueled. Operations on this day were not the main point of interest, however, as word was received through that never failing source, "scuttlebutt", that the Jap fleet had decided to risk an action and was out loaded for bear. This appeared to be confirmed the next day when our battle ships left the formation to form a heavy striking force. Air operations on this day were confined to a special strike on Guam, and routine patrols. Two groups of bogies were picked up that evening and General Quarters sounded, but no action ensued.

The next day was spent in cruising to the west of the Marianas in search of the Jap fleet, and although several snoopers were shot down by CAP no definite contacts were made. A number of long range searches were launched but none of these missions were successful. June 19th, which was to be a date made famous by the first Battle of the Philippine Sea, dawned with our having no clue to the whereabouts of the enemy, although because of the unusual number of single bogies intercepted from time to time, it was obvious that carriers were somewhere between us and the Philippines.

In the early part of the morning planes from the BELLEAU WOOD which were investigating an enemy contact at Guam, reported many planes landing on that island. We were ordered to launch a division of fighters to help them out, which was done at 0825. Shortly thereafter a very large group of bogies was reported closing from the west, and it was obvious that "this was it". Our deck being spotted for a strike, the bombers and torpedo planes were immediately launched in order to clear the deck, while at the same time all available fighters were scrambled. Immediately after this launch Admiral M.A. MITSCHER sent instructions to the VB and VT to drop their bombs on Guam. This word did not get through to our bomber skipper, Ralph WEYMOUTH, but being an individual of resource and imagination, he decided to do so on his own, and proceeded to tear up the Guam airfields while the fighters were taking care of the attacking planes.

This engagement has been described many times already, and there is no need for this narrative to cover it in detail. The LEXINGTON Air Group did its full share, the fighting squadron accounting for 45 planes during the day's engagement. Through the day successive waves of planes in very large groups of as many as 70 at a time attacked the force. The few that were able to break through the magnificent interception of our fighters were shot down by ship's gunfire.

It was apparent by noon that our fighter direction and fighter planes were more than a match for the attacks that were being made. The ship's company, while remaining on General Quarter Stations, seemed to feel a complete confidence in the ability of our airborne defense, and all went about their duties with calmness and confidence. The flight deck crews did magnificently in executing quick respots as groups of fighters would come in to be refueled

and immediately take off again to maintain the protective umbrella above us.

As reports from the other Task Groups came in to Flag Plot during the day, the results seemed unbelievable. By mid-afternoon, the total of planes shot down had reached over 300 and as is well known, totalled more than 400 when the final count was in. One of our pilots, had made a forced landing several days previously on another carrier. His plane repaired, he had been launched to return to us, a few minutes before the first attack was picked up. When he landed, he had bagged 3 planes on the way!

During the afternoon we launched several teams of TEF's escorted by fighters in search missions for the Jap ships. One of these teams ran into a group of Zekes and shot down eight of them in the resulting melee.

We steamed east all day, launching and recovering fighters, and by late afternoon Guam was in plain sight dead ahead. Cdr. Buie led a strike group to that Island to search for straggling enemy planes attempting to land there, and shot down several bringing the total score of our groups for that day to 45, and their grand score to 143. Late in the afternoon we were alerted for a dive bombing attack, but the planes turned out to be friendlies returning from Guam. Except for a few straggling bogies the balance of the evening passed uneventfully.

The next day resolved itself into a search for the Japanese surface units. Cdr. Snowden volunteered to take a group of twelve fighters armed with bombs on a long range search, and, his request being granted, these planes left our deck at noon. They reached a point 450 miles from the ship before turning back without having sighted the enemy. Although their mission was unsuccessful, it proved that fighter planes could be used on long range flights of this type, and was typical of the bold and courageous attitude displayed at all times by our Air Group Commander.

At 1545 a search plane from one of the other Task Groups sighted the enemy. In spite of the lateness of the hour and the great distance involved, it was decided to send one strike against them and 11 VF, 7 VT and 15 SED's were launched from the LEXINGTON at 1635. At 1759 Cdr. Snowdens' fighter group returned, having been in the air since 1200, just a minute short of six hours.

It was clear to every one that the strike group would return late, so all hands were prepared for that which all carrier sailors dislike, namely night landings. It was hoped, however, that the majority of the group would be back in time to land while there was still some daylight. Sunset came, and there was not a sign of any planes. As darkness enveloped the force it became obvious that the whole strike would have to be landed at night. We intercepted a transmission from a returning pilot that many planes were running low on gas and landing in the water, and the vision of the bulk of the strike group being lost confronted us. Soon, however, individual planes began straggling in, and were taken aboard without regard to which carrier they belonged to. The Task Force presented a strange sight that night, with all ships turning on their lights to guide in the planes, and a destroyer playing a searchlight in the sky as a long range beacon. All thoughts of light security were abandoned in order to bring in the planes.

In spite of the extreme difficulties which they were faced, the LEXINGTON flight deck organization did a magnificent job of completing this operation. The landing Signal Officer, Lt. Hanson and Lt. (jg) Shuff never faltered, and all flight deck personnel backed them up to the full. The landing was marred by one plane from another carrier whose pilot, badly wounded, came in against a wave off, clearing all barriers, and crashed in the midst of the planes parked forward. Two men were killed in this crash and several injured, and only the alertness of the flight deck crew prevented further casualties. By 2200 all landings were completed. We had taken aboard 22 of our own aircraft and twelve from other carriers. Fourteen of our planes landed on other ships and seven were lost. Three of these were shot down over the target, the crew of one of them being recovered and four landed in the water near the formation and were recovered.

During these landings a sociable bogie joined the planes of the force in circling the formation. He could not be persuaded to land aboard but was content to circle the groups, and was visually identified several times by searchlights which were played upon him. His eventual fate was never ascertained but it is probable that he too ran out of gas and made an un-honorable water landing. This same evening another slightly confused Son of Heaven made a good landing on Isely Field, only to find it no longer a Japanese haven.

Our bomber and torpedo planes attacked two Hitaka Class Carriers in the Japanese force, while the fighters engaged defending Zeroes. A number of good hits were obtained, but since planes from other carriers also attacked these groups, individual credit will not be claimed here. The general result of this action is well known, and was a crippling blow to Japanese Naval power.

Lt. McClellan, of VT16, was shot down over this target, and with his crew, had the unusual opportunity of spending the night in a rubber boat with the entire Japanese fleet spread before him. He reported seeing one carrier sink during the night, and another burn furiously and explode. He was rescued the next day by a Dumbo plane.

The following day one strike was launched against the enemy, but the latter had managed to retire during the night. Thereafter, the main activity of the day was the unscrambling of the numerous pilots and planes which had landed on carriers other than their own. The Task Force retired toward Saipan and for the next two days reformed and fueled.

From 25 June to 5 July our Task Group remained in the Marianas area with the mission of making daily air strikes on Guam, to deny the use of its airfield to the enemy. Every day one "Milk run" strike was launched for this purpose, and the balance of the time was spent in routine patrols. Air Group 16 was due to be relieved on the completion of this operation, and these strikes on Guam marked their farewell effort as an operating unit. They were by this time a beautifully coordinated group of fliers, and it was a joy to watch them perform their daily mission.

In addition to the strikes on Guam, these two weeks were enlivened

by considerable night fighter activity. The Japanese were sending planes each evening between Palau and Truk, and in the bright moonlight then present, the Task Group night fighters were successful in shooting down a number of these. Lt. Abercrombie of the LEXINGTON night fighter unit accounted for one of these on July 22nd which he was able to splash in spite of the fact that two (2) of his guns were inoperative. In most of these night interceptions the enemy planes passed very close to the Task Group, and the crew would be treated to the sight of the night fighters tracers flying to their target followed by the bursting into flame of the Japanese plane.

The occupation of Saipan was continuing during this period, and our forces had begun to subject Tinian to night bombardments. On the night of July 5th several Japanese planes from Guam raided Saipan, passing near our group, which was stationed mid-way between the two islands. Although we launched interceptors, we made no contacts, as the raiders soon passed north of us into the area allocated to shore based fighters. Later that evening as we steamed northward star shells from the surface units bombarding Tinian were plainly visible on our starboard bow. This was our last day of operations, and the next day we were relieved by another Task Group and departed for Eniwetok.

At 0636 on 9 July, Air Group SIXTEEN was launched for the last time. They had compiled an enviable record and were ranked among the top three Air Groups in the Pacific. This launch also marked the last time that SBD's would take off from our flight deck. Long one of the Navy's work horses, they had continued to operate with us even though other carriers were using SB2C's.

As the old group left, the planes of our new unit entered the landing circle and by 0846 they were all aboard. Air Group NINETEEN had made the trip from San Francisco with us in February, and the personnel, therefore, were for the most part known to many of us. We watched with interest, however, as they brought aboard their SB2C's. Although we looked at first at these planes a bit dubiously, we were soon to be convinced of their worth, and our new Bombing Squadron proved itself an outstanding unit. The Air Group itself was from the beginning cooperative to a marked degree, and by this together with the tremendous enthusiasm shown by each one of the members, very quickly won the esteem and affection of the whole ship's company.

On July 14th we sortied from Eniwetok and once again headed for the Marianas. From the 18th to the 21st we gave support to the landings on Guam, making a total of 591 sorties against this island. Thanks to the destruction wrought upon the enemy during the Saipan occupation no air opposition was encountered and not a single bogie appeared on the screen. Although inexperience was often evident, the new group performed creditably, and it was evident that they were to be a first class fighting outfit.

On the 24th after a day of fueling we left the Marianas area to conduct strikes against Palau, Yap, and Ulithi. This operation and the one subsequent to it against the Bonins will not be dealt with in detail in this narrative, inasmuch as throughout the period air opposition against surface units was nonexistent, and our activities consisted entirely of routine operations.

After three days of strikes on Palau, the Task Group returned to the Marianas Area to refuel and re-arm. We approached Saipan on a sunny July afternoon, and as we came within visual distance, the operations of our amphibious forces attacking Tinian could be plainly discerned. On the afternoon of the thirty-first we anchored in Saipan harbor, where only a month and a half previous Japanese sea and land power had been firmly entrenched. Now the harbor was filled with our own shipping and star shells were visible over Tinian throughout the night. The bright lights of Isely Field were a reminder of our old Air Group, and the busy times we had had with them while operating in this area.

After replenishment at Saipan we proceeded to the Bonins, where another three days of strikes were accomplished on Iwo Jima, Haha Jima, and Chichi Jima. The Task Groups were at no time under attack, and operations were conducted smoothly in spite of the unfavorable weather existing a good part of the time. On completion of these strikes, we returned to Eniwetok, arriving on August 10th and remaining there until the twenty-ninth.

Up to this time, a narrative account of the LEXINGTON has coincided with those of the Fast Carrier Task Force in the prosecution of a series of separate operations. With the formation of the Third Fleet, however, under the Command of Admiral W.F. HALSEY, a series of events were set in motion which were correlated with the activities of General MC ARTHUR and the Seventh Fleet, together with the entire Pacific Fleet organization. These operations, embracing the initial raids on the Philippines, the invasion of Palau, the raids on Nansei Shoto and Formosa, and the eventual occupation of the Philippine territory itself, gave rise to a continuing series of actions whereby our carriers, instead of carrying out isolated strikes, were in constant support of the activities of other units. In addition, we were now operating in areas so close to the Empire that it became impossible to neutralize enemy territory in the operation, and we were called upon to strike again and again at areas which had already been covered.

The strain on personnel and material in this type of operation was tremendous. Although they had been in forward areas since early March, officers and men never wavered in their outstanding devotion to duty and in the enthusiasm with which they went about their work.

On the 6th, 7th and 8th of September our Task Group conducted strikes on Palau, in preparation for the coming invasion of that island. This was the third time that we had been in this area, and each time the going had become progressively easier. No airborne opposition was encountered in this instance and our new Air Group was beginning to despair of being able to compile a score of planes shot down.

These strikes on Palau marked for us the last assaults on the Japanese outlying islands. From there on our attention and that of the entire Third Fleet was to be focused on the Philippines, and the inner circle of Empire defenses. On the 9th and 10th of September, Mindanao was hit by concentrated strikes by the entire Task Force, and in spite of the fact that strong opposition had been expected, the main feature of the operation turned out to be a lack of targets. As a result Admiral HALSEY immediately swung northward, and commenced a series of strikes against the Visayan region. Here for the first time our fighters en-

countered the opposition they had been waiting for. The first fighter sweep on September 12th ran into planes taking off from airfields in the Cebu area, and in the resulting melee our VF accounted for fifteen, from that time on they were given many opportunities of rolling up an enviable score.

The Visayans were worked over for three days, and except for one isolated bogie that dropped a bomb, as usual near the LEXINGTON, the Force was not attacked. On September 15th Palau was invaded, and although we stood by to give assistance if needed, the precocious and rapidly growing CVE Navy appeared to have the situation well in hand, and we were not called upon. The Task Force therefore again turned north and on the 21st and 22nd of September made the first of what was to be many strikes against the Manila Area.

Approach to this target was made undetected, and four deckload strikes were launched on the first day of the operation. "Extensive damage was done, not only to aircraft on the ground in the Manila area, but also to hangars and other installations. In addition two convoys proceeding up the west side of the island were heavily attacked. All felt that this was "Pearl Harbor in Reverse", and that we're really paying back the Japs for what they had done in the early part of the war.

The success of the day was clouded by the loss of our senior night fighter pilot, Lt. Abercombie, who crashed astern of the ship while making an approach to land. He was one of our most popular shipmates, and had distinguished himself on a number of occasions.

The next morning was a hectic one. Bgies closed the formation at 0522, and the first launch was accomplished to the accompaniment of intermittent fire by the ship's batteries. Fortunately, no coordinated attacks were made, the enemy activity consisting solely of individual attacks by isolated planes. These had a definite nuisance value, however, and the flight deck crews performed admirably in continuing the launch under circumstances which were, to say the least, disconcerting.

These operations were brought to a close by another day of strikes against the Visayans as we retired from Manila. In addition to attacking the central islands, a long range attack by F6F's and SB2C's was made on shipping in Coron Bay. The target area in this case was 350 miles from point of launch, and the flight has a further proof of the long range capabilities of our carrier based aircraft.

On our retirement from the Philippines area, the various Task Groups split up to go to different bases for replenishment. Those more fortunate than us made their way towards such hospitable and **relatively** civilized spots as Saipan and Manus. We however, were afforded the privilege of several days in **Kosole** Roads, a garden spot situated eight miles north of Babelthuap, the main island of the Palau group still in Japanese hands. Our replenishment period was therefore spent with all hands keeping a weather eye on the nearby shore, where eight inch mortars were known to be in existence. We experienced no untoward incidents, **however**, and after having received our bombs got underway for another newly captured American Base, namely, Ulithi. This, having only recently been occupied, proved to be devoid of all but the barest necessities,

so no opportunity for recreation ashore was afforded. Variety was added to our usual routine, however, by the necessity of getting underway in order to avoid a typhoon which caused high winds in the area.

Sortie was made on Oct. 6 in order to begin a memorable series of operations, starting with an attack on the Nansei Shoto Islands of Japan proper, and ending with the second "Battle of the Philippine Sea". On the date of Oct. 25. The attack on Okinawa Jima on Oct. 10th proved itself as the easiest part of the whole operation. Although isolated enemy planes appeared on the screen during the day, no attacks were made, and all strikes were successfully launched and recovered. After fueling on the 11th, a high speed run was commenced to Formosa, which was to be attacked on the 12th and 13th.

The three days which were spent at Formosa proved to be "rugged" in the extreme. The enemy was aware of our approach, and all preparations were made to repel a dawn attack. This did not occur, however, and all strikes were launched without interference. The first fighter sweep encountered many planes in their area, shooting down 28 over the Target. Strikes were launched against shipping in the Pescardores Islands, as well as at airfields, on Formosa Mainland.

Although they left us alone during the day, the Japanese had no intention of letting us go scot free, and on the completion of landing our last strike of the day, "few bogies" immediately appeared on the radar screen. From that time on the Force was subjected to a determined night attack which lasted until 0345 the next morning. Although runs were made on the ship, and many torpedoes were dropped, no damage was done to any member of our group or to the Force as a whole. The strain of remaining at General Quarters through out this night and subsequent one, was however, severe.

Although many bogies remained in the area the next morning, Air Operations were not interfered with, and strikes went off as scheduled. Late in the afternoon an interception of a large group of Jap planes by the Belleau Wood revealed the fact that the enemy was bringing in planes from Luzon to attack the force. Although several were shot down, the remainder were able to continue to their destination, and that evening we were again under attack. Shortly after 1800 we received word that the Camberra, in Task Group 38.1 had received a torpedo hit, and that the Force instead of retiring, would stand by to assist her, meanwhile making further diversionary attacks on Formosa.

The retirement of the next day was commenced on the return of the fighter and bomber sweep which had been launched prior to dawn. Numerous snoopers surrounded the disposition through out the afternoon, making it obvious that another attack was in the making. There was a high wind blowing from the east, with heavy seas, and as a result the Camberra, being towed by another cruiser, was making very little headway. Early in the afternoon General Quarters was sounded and the ship opened fire at a single bogie which made a run astern of us and dropped a bomb in our wake. Shortly after this the screen was clear, the ship secured from General Quarters, and chow was piped down. The meal was rudely interrupted, however, by the firing of our starboard side batteries, and sounding again the General Alarm.

The LEXINGTON had once again been the first to spot an incoming attack group, and as we went to battle stations the loud speaker system announced that torpedo planes were closing on the starboard quarter. A group of Jills came in fast and were taken under fire by all the ships in the screen. One torpedo narrowly missed the Essex, and a Japanese plane crash dived on the fatail of the Reno, causing only minor damage. Meanwhile a group of enemy bogies was reported closing at 30 miles while we stood by for a further attack. CIC announced that the C^AP from the Princeton had intercepted this group and eliminated them, shooting down a total of 18 planes.

This turned out to be the climax of the attack which the Nips had been planning. Although bogies remained on the screen until late that night, no further attacks were made, we accomplished our retirement to fueling rendezvous without incident.

After fueling, several days were spent in an area to the north hoping to intercept the Japanese fleet units which were reported to be on the move. LEXINGTON also on several occasions dispatched a special CAP to assist in protecting our damaged cruisers, which were proceeding slowly to the south-east under constant air attack. On October 21st our group made a series of strikes on Southern Luzon and the Visayens, including another long range sweep to Conron Island. After again standing by for three days, we were ordered to proceed to Luzon for Strikes against that area on the 24th.

Our Task Group was the only one assigned to the Luzon area on this day, the others being to the south of us, attacking the Visayens and guarding the entrance to the San Bernadino Straits. We found ourselves at dawn, therefore, alone in the area to the east of Luzon. Enemy surface forces had been sighted by submarines the day previous approaching the Philippines from the west, and LEXINGTON was ordered to launch five search teams of 4 VF and 4 VB each to search a 300 mile area in the same direction. Planes from the other ships were meanwhile to strike the Manila area.

At 0800, Radar Plot reported "many, many" bogies closing and we scrambled all available fighters. From this time on our Group was under constant dive bombing attack throughout the day both from shore based and Carrier borne planes. Although the bulk of our planes had departed on search and strike missions, the remaining CAP took care of all raids as efficiently as they had done in the Saipan action of the previous time.

The Task Group was further aided by the presence of a large rain squall, under which Adm. Sherman skillfully maneuvered while the fighters were intercepting the attacking planes. Isolated planes, however, were able to break through from time to time, and it was one of these that dropped a bomb on the Princeton and made his getaway in the clouds. The Princeton with several cruisers and destroyers left the formation, and for awhile it appeared as though she was not badly hurt. The torpedo planes on her hanger deck, however, which were ready for the next strike, shortly began exploding, and eventually we received word that she would have to be abandoned and sunk. Ever since TARAWA she had been closely associated with our ship, and at all times had been a gallant companion. A number of her survivors were later transferred to us and taken to Ulithi for a well earned trip to the States.

While this attack was in progress reports were received of the sighting of the large enemy force in the Sibuyan Sea. All available planes were immediately ordered launched to strike this group. Unfortunately there was not time to change the arming of these planes, and they were forced to make their attack with General Purpose bombs. The torpedoes which caused the sinking of the Princeton were sadly missed. In spite of this handicap considerable damage was done, and the progress of the enemy slowed. Our planes obtained hits on a BB and three cruisers. One of our pilots was shot down, and made his escape to a nearby island in his rubber boat in full sight of the enemy ships. Although they fired at him with their 5" batteries, he made good his escape, and it is believed fell into friendly guerrilla hands.

The presence of enemy carrier forces to the northeast of us was now suspected, and we were ordered to launch searches in the afternoon in that direction. At about 1500 "many, many bogeis" were again reported, this time from bearing 035°, and the above suspicion appeared to amply proven. Again fighters were scrambled, and again a splendid interception was made, the bulk of the enemy attack being broken up. Although we had some anxious moments when a group of bogies appeared to be between us and our CAP, one of whom managed to get through the screen and drop a bomb on us, which landed in our starboard quarter, by 1600 we had ceased our intermittent firing, and the attacks appeared to be concluded.

One of the search planes meanwhile had sighted the enemy carrier force, one group of 1 BB of the new type with flight deck aft, 4 to 6 cruisers and 6 DD's, and another group of four carriers (1 large and 3 CVL) and three DD's. The carriers launched 6 Zekes at the time of sighting, forcing our planes to leave the area, although he shot down one of the Zekes in the process.

Having born the brunt of the enemy attack throughout the day, all hands were hoping that we would not be expected to repeat the process on the day following. It was a great relief, therefore when a course of 130° was set that night, and it was announced that we would rendezvous with the other two Task Groups. Although the next day was to prove to be the decisive day of battle, nevertheless for us October 24th will always remain the most harrowing.

In spite of the very strong attacks made on us, our Task Group shot down over 150 planes during this day. Many of these had undoubtedly been launched from the Japanese carriers force, and their destruction, therefore, contributed greatly to the stunning victory of the 25th.

Although the exact position of the enemy force was not known on the morning of the 25th, they had been located by night search planes in the early hours, and all carriers launched strikes at dawn. These orbited near the force until the enemy ships were located by carrier search planes, which had been sent out at the same time as the strikes. As soon as the sighting was received all the airborne strikes were given a vector and proceeded to the target, which was about 130 miles from the force.

This engagement marked our second encounter with the enemy carrier

forces, and our first opportunity to carry out heavy strikes throughout the day upon them. Having flown the bulk of their planes in to Luzon on the previous day, they were unable to furnish any air opposition, except for about 20 Zekes launched at the start of our attack which were immediately smothered by our Hellcats.

The ships loud speaker system began announcing the days action as soon as our planes sighted the target. With no fighter opposition the VB and VT were able to work slowly and deliberately, and throughout the day strike after strike was thrown against the helpless enemy. Since all ships in the force participated in the attacks, LEXINGTON took no credit for any particular damage. Cdr. Winters AGC-19, who acted as Target Coordinator of the afternoon strikes, became, however, the first aviator in this war, or any other, to actually see 3 carriers sink. Upon his return, he described vividly the complete destruction of one CV and two CVL's in addition to one CL sunk and a BB a CL and another CVL damaged.

A total of five strikes were launched that day. At sunset the cruisers of our group were detached in order to finish off the one CVL left dead in the water, and after lading six planes from the Enterprise which had become separated from their group, we turned southward. After standing by east of the Visayans for two days, we returned to Ulithi for replenishment, returning again to the Visayans on November 1st.

Two days of strikes were conducted in the Luzon area on Nov. 5th and 6th. The first day passed without incident throughout the forenoon, aircraft and installations being attacked in the Clark Field area, and a heavy cruiser being definitely sunk by LEXINGTON planes in Manila Bay. At 1315 however, few bogies were reported, closing. As soon as CIC reported them in to 10 miles and still not intercepted, it was obvious that we were to come under attack.

A heavy layer of cloud covered the area, and two Zekes dove on the ship thru it at 1337. All batteries opened fire, and the first was shot down, when a 5" shell knocked off his tail. The second although on fire from hits received, continued into the ship, and crash-dived it just aft of secondary Conn. Heavy fires immediately ensued, and numerous casualties were suffered. The fires were quickly brought under control by the ship's Repair Parties and many volunteers, and although several batteries were put out of commission, the flight deck had not been injured, and we continued to operate aircraft. At the time of the hit, two strikes were air-borne and they were successfully landed in spite of the confusion existing due to the battle damage.

The performance of the crew, and of the Medical personnel in particular, was outstanding in this emergency. Forty-two men had been killed and eight were missing and 132 injured. The bulk of the casualties were concentrated in the island structure, and the care and removal of the injured from these spaces presented many difficulties. Many casualties were given first aid and temporary care in Flag Plot, Air Plot and in the spaces adjacent to the Flight Deck and Signal Bridge. In practically all cases severe burns were present, and too much credit can not be given to the

many officers and men who took care of their shipmates and alleviated their intense suffering, while at the same time carrying on their regular duties. After all casualties had been removed below, many of the ship's company volunteered to assist the Medical Department in caring for the injured and in giving blood transfusions.

Air Operations against Luzon were continued on November 6, and no further attacks were suffered. On retirement that evening course was set for Ulithi and the wounded were transferred to the U.S.S. SOLACE upon arrival.

The ship remained for the balance of the month alongside a repair ship undergoing repairs. During this period Air Group 19 was detached and left for a well deserved rehabilitation period in the States. They had been operating with us since the occupation of Guam, and had developed into a really magnificent Air Group. The ship was proud of them, and sorry to see them leave. They were relieved by Air Group 20 from the ENTERPRISE and at the same time our complement of planes was altered to allow for the new ration of 73 VF, 15 VT, and 15 VB.

After a short training cruise in the vicinity of Ulithi, during which the additional VF were flown from Guam and successfully landed aboard, LEXINGTON sortied on December 11th with other units of the Third Fleet to participate in further strikes against Luzon in support of the landings on Mindoro by Gen. MC ARTHUR's forces. As Flagship, of Task Group 58.2, she flew the flag of Rear Adm. B.F. BOGAN. Three days of highly successful strikes were made against the Luzon area on December 14, 15, and 16. The primary mission was to so blanket the enemy air fields that no aircraft could interfere with the landings, and this policy was so successful that no enemy opposition was encountered throughout the period. On the morning of the 16th a small group of Bettys and Zekes left the coast flying in the direction of the Force, but these were intercepted by LEXINGTON and HANCOCK strike planes and all shot down.

For the next several days the Force battled weather instead of Japanese, as it found itself in the center of a typhoon. Although several ships suffered damage, LEXINGTON rode it through successfully, and proved that her personnel were seamen as well as "airdale" sailors. The entire Force returned to Ulithi on December 23rd, in time to spend the holiday season at that well known resort.

Christmas Day was characterized by a real effort on the part of the hands to make the day one resembling a holiday insofar as possible, and after Church Services in the morning, movies were shown in the afternoon, and that evening all hands attended a highly successful entertainment put on by members of the ship's company. Although they hoped for return to the States "after the next operation" had not as yet materialized, the ship's spirit was still outstanding, and there was no doubt in any one's mind that the LEXINGTON would continue giving her best as long as it was asked for.

Christmas week was spent in relaxation and preparation and on the morning of 30 December the Lexington, flagship of ^{CTG} 38.2 (Rear Admiral G.F. Bogan) sortied from Ulithi with Task Force 38. The series of actions which ensued during the following three weeks had as a common basis the support of the landings effected by SoWestPac forces at Lingayen Gulf, Luzon, on 9 January 1945. These actions fall into three phases. The first, comprising attacks on the airfields of Formosa and Luzon, terminated when Task Force 38 cleared Bashi Channel on the night of 9 January and entered the China Sea. The second phase which continued until 20 January was primarily a persistent search for major units of the Japanese Fleet constituting a threat from the west to our forces in the Lingayen Gulf area. These major units were not located, but in the course of the search Task Force 38 carried out attacks on shipping and airfields ranging from Saigon in southern Indo-China to Formosa. During this phase planes of Air Group 20 on the LEXINGTON made attacks on the Camranh Bay area of Indo-China, the Pescadores Islands off Formosa, and on Hong Kong. The third phase may be said to have begun on the evening of 20 January when Task Force 38 passed eastward through Balintang Channel (Luzon Straits). During this final phase attacks were made against Formosa on 21 January and against Okinawa (Nansei Shoto) on 22 January, following which Task Force 38 received orders to retire to Ulithi.

For the pilots of Air Group 20 this operation will probably be remembered chiefly for the bad weather encountered on all but three of the strike days and on most of the days on which patrols and searches were flown. Even to veteran fliers the conditions on many of the days seemed to be about as bad as men could fly in. The Jap air force failed to appear in force for defense or offense and the operation developed into what was primarily a far flung hunt for Jap shipping. Shipping was found and sunk but the lesson was learned

that in relation to the effort expended there was disappointingly little reward when ships were attacked in such strongly fortified harbors as Hong Kong and Takao on Formosa. The most successful day of the operation was off Camranh Bay, Indo-China on the 12th of January when planes of Air Group 20 together with planes from the Hornet and Hancock wiped out one convoy of four merchant vessels and four escorts and destroyed at least 12 vessels in another convoy or convoys. Among the ships sunk was the 5800 ton training cruiser Kashii.

The relative inactivity of the Jap air force is indicated by the fact that during the operation only 9 planes were shot down in the air and 39 destroyed on the ground. Our losses were 19 planes classified as "combat losses", two planes lost operationally and 7 others which had to be jettisoned. The shipping results showed six vessels sunk, six probably sunk and sixty damaged. The Lexington's luck held and despite frequent reports of "bogies" the ship's guns never opened fire. The operation did not include any close support missions for our amphibious forces on Luzon. After steaming 9758 miles the Lexington dropped anchor at Ulithi on 27 January and began replenishment for the next operation.

On 29 January, at a ceremony on the hangar deck, awards were presented by the Commanding Officer to officers and men who had sustained wounds or whose actions had contributed in a noteworthy manner to the defense of the ship at the time of the damage by a suicide plane off the Philippines on 5 November 1944. The Executive Officer, Commander Thomas A. Ahroon, received the Legion of Merit, six officers and 71 enlisted men received the Purple Heart in recognition of wounds received in action, six officers and 34 enlisted men received Letter of Commendation from Com 3rd Fleet and 14 officers and 48 enlisted men received the Commanding Officer's Letter of Commendation. On 30 January Captain Litch was relieved as Commanding Officer of the ship by Captain

Thomas H. Robbins, USN. The disappointment of the ship's company in losing Captain Litch was in some measure tempered by the understanding that his promotion to Rear Admiral was imminent. On the following day Rear Admiral R.E. Davison USN (ComCarDiv 2) raised his flag aboard the Lexington, relieving Rear Admiral Bogan of command of TG 58.2.

On 2 February Air Group 20 was detached from duty on board this ship and was relieved by Air Group 9, Commander P.H. Torrey Jr. USN, Commanding. The new Air Group was new not only to the Lexington but to combat operations and there was a good deal of speculation as to the nature of the operation which would constitute its first test. The group did not have long to wait. When we left Ulithi on 10 February the Air Group got the word: no "milk-run missions"; no warming up process; the first combat mission would be aimed at the heart of Japan, the area surrounding Tokyo itself. It was a big assignment and despite the handicap of weather that was none too good and the early loss of the Group Commander, the new Air Group met the test in admirable style.

The new operation, which was marked by the return of Admiral Spruance as Com Fifth Fleet and Vice Admiral Mitscher as CTF 58 (ComFirstCarTaskForPac), had as its mission the capture of the tiny island of Iwo Jima in the Volcano Is., some 700 miles south of Japan. February 19 was fixed as "D" day for the landing of the Marines. Leaving Ulithi, Task Force 58 passed eastward of Guam and Saipan and then headed north to the Tokyo area. In order to attain surprise, planes and destroyers preceded the force during the final days of its advance with a view to destroying Jap picket boats which were known to be on station.

For the strikes against Tokyo scheduled to begin on 16 February, CTF 58 had apportioned the area among the four Task Groups which were to participate in the daytime strikes. The area assigned to TG 58.2 lay to the east and southeast of the city and was bounded on the north by 35-30N and on the west by 139-47-30E. It included all of the Chiba Penninsula except the southern tip and embraced

fifteen airfields and a seaplane base. Among the airfields was that at Kizarazu, listed first in priority of targets in the Tokyo Area, and the fighter fields at Katori and Mobarra. Enemy planes, airborne and on the ground, were to be the primary targets. The fields in TG 58.2's area were not subdivided among the three carriers of the group.

The initial attack of the day, consisting of a fighter sweep of 20 VF, was launched at 0641 from 33-49N, 141-50E, 110 miles off the coast of Honshu. Enemy airborne planes were encountered soon after our planes reached the coast, but many of these were trainers and the absence of AA fire during the initial strafing passes at 70 grounded planes on the Katori airfield established that the enemy had not been forewarned of the attack. This element of surprise may have been due in part to the weather. Clouds, rain squalls and a low ceiling over the force had served as protection. The weather over the target area was considerably better with a ceiling of at least 8 or 10 thousand feet over most of the territory to which our planes penetrated. After destroying eight grounded planes at Katori the Lexington planes swung to the southwest. The many enemy planes encountered in the air failed to pursue any coordinated plan of defense and thirteen were shot down with the loss of one of our fighters. As the day progressed - enemy airborne fighters became more aggressive over the Chiba Peninsula and the fields to the north, but the day's total showed 25 enemy planes destroyed in the air and 18 on the ground. A change in plans sent a strike of 16 VF, 13 VB and 15 VT to hit the Koizuma Ota airframe assembly plants, 45 miles northwest of Tokyo, outside the area assigned to TG 58.2. The strike attacked the Ota plant with effective concentration and coverage.

Commander P.H. Torrey, Jr. USN, the Air Group Commander, was lost during a fighter sweep which he was leading. His plane is believed to have been hit by fire from an enemy plane in the vicinity of the Imba

airfield, east of Tokyo. Three other pilots were lost in combat during the day.

The ship remained at General Quarters during the day and until 1915. On two occasions, at 1132 and 1652, Torpedo Defense was sounded and guns were manned because of radar contacts, but no enemy plane is known to have approached within 15 miles of the ship.

On the following day (17 February) the second anniversary of the commissioning of the Lexington, air activities were limited to two fighter sweeps. The first, finding Kisarazu closed in, attacked aircraft at Mobarra field east of Tokyo. Twenty seven Jap planes were seen over various parts of Chiba Peninsula. Air group 9 planes shot down 3 Zekes and 1 Oscar and probably destroyed one plane on the ground.

The second sweep, flying high cover for a Hancock strike against Kisarazu, did not attack planes on the ground. Fifteen or twenty silver-colored Jap fighters withdrew in the direction of Tokyo before any attack could be made. On this sweep "CAVU" conditions existed at the target, but on the basis of earlier weather reports, principally from other areas, all further operations were cancelled.

A friendly plane, unidentified because its IFF was not working, caused the ship to be brought to Torpedo Defense at 0603. Again at 1644 Torpedo Defense was sounded on orders of O.T.C.. Firing was observed over the horizon but enemy planes failed to close this formation.

From the Tokyo area the Task Force retired towards Iwo Jima where the Lexington and the other carriers of the TG sent planes on direct support missions on 19, 21, and 22 February. On the last of these days napalm-filled belly tanks were dropped on gun positions, Pilots estimated that as high as 50% of those dropped failed to ignite.

On 20 February the ship rearmed at sea for the first time, successfully receiving 44 tons of bombs and rockets from the U.S.S. Shasta in one hour and 25 minutes by burtoning with a forward whip and the forward crane.

On 23 February the Task Force moved north. For this second visit the composition of the Force was somewhat changed and it no longer included a separate night-fighter group. Two sweeps and one deck-load strike were launched against the Tokyo area on 25 February. Bad weather precluded effective use of our planes. No Jap airborne opposition was evident. On a snow covered field (Tsukuba), well to the north of our target area, one plane was destroyed, one probably destroyed and five damaged. The strike finding the area south of Tokyo closed in, jettisoned its bombs and returned to the ship.

The force moved westward but plans for further blows were nullified by continued bad weather. Finally on 1 March the Nansei Shoto were attacked, the target for the Lexington being three small islands in the Amami Gunto. Two airfields in the target area revealed only a few planes and the day was chiefly spent in attacks on shipping. Eleven vessels were damaged in addition to luggers and small craft. Following this attack the Force retired to Ulithi, arriving there on 5 March after having steamed 8111 miles.

During the operation Air Group 9 destroyed 34 Jap planes in the air and 21 on the ground. They lost 5 planes in combat and 11 operationally, of which 7 were jettisoned. Their effective operation reflected credit upon Lieut. Comdr. H.N. Houck, USN, who became Air Group Commander upon the loss of Commander Torrey. The operation was noteworthy not so much for the damage inflicted upon the enemy as for the demonstration of the feasibility of carrier based attacks upon the Empire. For the first time the Lexington operated in an area in which cold weather (as low as 41°) was encountered. No appreciable loss of efficiency was noticed because of the cold. Particularly noted was the need for more fighter direction training and for more anti-aircraft training.

No Jap air attacks were directed against the Lexington although on the night of 21 February off Iwo Jima, the ship fired by radar control 38 rounds of 5" at a Jap plane 5 miles distant. Other firing was confined to infrequent target practice.

Shortly after dropping anchor at Ulithi on the afternoon of 4 March preparations were made for the trip back to the United States for routine overhaul. Rear Admiral R.E. Davison, ComCarDiv 2, and staff were detached and departed from the ship on 5 March. On the following day Air Group 9 disembarked and Air Group 3 reported aboard for transportation with directives to fly routine patrols on the homeward trip. At 1024 on 7 March the Lexington sortied from Ulithi in company with Boston (CA) and Cowpens (CVL) with DE's Eisele and French as escorts. These vessels were designated as TU 94.13.18 with CTU on the Boston. At Eniwetok Atoll on 11 March the two DE escorts were released. The other three vessels left Eniwetok on 13 March and proceeded to Pearl Harbor without escort. On the following day a special air search reported negative results in an effort to verify existence of vigia (Schjetman Reef) shown on charts at 16°-07'N 179°-00' W. On 17 March all flyable planes were flown off and that afternoon the Lexington returned to Pearl Harbor, with crew in unfamiliar whites mustered on the flight deck, two bands playing, and homeward bound pennant streaming. On 20 March the Lexington designated as TU 19.12.3 sortied from Pearl Harbor for Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton Washington. Except for delay caused by high winds and heavy seas this passage was uneventful and was completed on 27 March, the first leave party disembarking the next morning. The ship lay in the stream while ammunition was unloaded and entered the Navy Yard on 31 March.

SECRET

DOCUMENTATION

1944 -

- Cominch and CNO secret despatch 202038 (June) - Organization of carrier divisions effective 1 July.
- AirBasCom Eniwetok secret despatch 081009 (July) - Orders to receive CVG 19 aboard on 9 July.
- CinCPac confidential despatch 100725 (August) - Discontinuance of designation "Fast Carrier Task Force" and creation of First and Second Carrier Task Forces.
- CTF 58 secret despatch 122354 (August) - Composition of Task Force 58 as of 17 August.
- CTF 58 secret despatch 250044 (August) - TF 58 to be replaced by TF 38 on 26 August.
- Lexington confidential despatch 081638 (November) - Report of personnel injured in action.
- ComSeron 10 secret despatch 170704 (November) - Advice of completion of ship's repair work.
- Com 3rd Flt. secret despatch 220104 (November) - Orders for CVG 20 to relieve CVG 19.
- Com 3rd Flt. secret despatch 281100 (November) - Organization of TF 38 effective 1 December.
- ComCarDiv 4 secret despatch 291030 (November) - Advice that Rear Admiral Bogan (ComCarDiv 4) had shifted flag to Lexington.
- CTF 38 secret despatch 300315 (November) - Plan for sortie from Ulithi on 1 December.
- Com 3rd Flt. secret despatch 010214 (December) - Modification of organization of TF 38.
- Com 3rd Flt. secret despatch 040545 (December) - Task Force 38 organization effective 10 December.
- Com AirPac secret despatch 122308 (December) - Advice as to relief of CVG 20 by CVG 9.
- CTF 38 secret despatch 260545 (December) - Plan for sortie from Ulithi on 30 December.

SECRET

DOCUMENTATION (Con't)

1944 -

ComAirPac Admin. secret airmailgram 290039 (December) - Directing plane composition of air group.

1945 -

BuPers restricted despatch 062208 (January) - Capt. Litch to be detached from duty as C.O. when directed by CinCPac.

CinCPac confidential despatch 100650 (January) - Organization of carrier divisions effective 1 Feb.

Com AirPac secret despatch 190156 (January) - CVG 9 to be ordered to Lexington.

ComFifthFlt secret despatch 261401 (January) - ComFifthFlt takes over from ComThirdFlt.

BuPers restricted despatches 221519 and 270447 (January) - Captains Robbins ordered to Lexington.

BuPers restricted despatch 302330 (January) - Captain Litch detached.

ComCarDiv 2 secret despatch 310357 (January) - Rear Admiral Davison (ComCarDiv 2) relieves Rear Admiral Bogan on board.

CTG 58.2 secret mailgram 051212 (February) - Plan for sortie from Ulithi on 10 February.

CinCPac Adv. Hdqs. secret despatch 282355 (February) - Ordering Lexington to Pearl Harbor.

CTF 58 secret despatch 040933 (March) - CVG 3 to relieve CVG 9.

Boston (CA) secret despatch 060930 (March) - Plan for sortie from Ulithi on 7 March.

P.D. Ulithi secret despatch 070314 (March) - Homeward route to Pearl.

ComAirPac secret despatch 200130 (March) - Lexington ordered to Navy Yard, Puget Sound, Bremerton, Washington.

Com 13th Naval District confidential despatch 310413 (March) - Authorization to enter Navy Yard.

SECRET

DOCUMENTATION

Note:

The source material necessary for a proper documentation of the narrative history appearing above was contained largely in operation orders and highly classified despatches. With a view to security care was taken to see that these were burned when their purpose had been served. Accordingly identification of such material is no longer possible except as appears above.

SECRET

PART III - APPENDIX

- A. Brief resume of Combat history.
- B. Brief summary of combat operations.
- C. Certain statistics concerning U.S.S. Lexington.
- D. Track chart including all operational movements.

Note:

War Diaries and Action Reports are not included in this Appendix as they have been submitted separately.

C O P Y

U.S.S. LEXINGTON (CV16)

10/mjc.

23 March 1945.

The aircraft carrier, U.S.S. LEXINGTON, sixth ship of the U.S. Navy so named, was commissioned at the Boston Navy Yard on 17 February 1943. Since that date the ship has steamed 160,000 miles along a route which has embraced most of the major steps in the reclaiming of the Central Pacific as well as many of those which in the South West Pacific Area have marked the progress to the Philippines. She has participated in some 30 series of attacks upon the enemy including: two fleet engagements; direct air support for troops in seven amphibious operations; and other air attacks against targets ranging from Tarawa to Tokyo. The amphibious operations receiving direct air support, began with the occupation of the Gilberts and included Hollandia, both Saipan and Guam in the Marianas, Palau, Mindoro in the Philippines, and Iwo Jima in the Bolcano Islands. Air Groups operating from the LEXINGTON have destroyed 372 enemy planes in the air and 475 on the ground, have sunk or destroyed 300,075 tons of enemy shipping and damaged 568,320 tons. The ship's own guns have shot down 15 enemy planes and are entitled to assist on 5 others. In addition, during the battle off the Philippines on October 24 and 25, 1944 Air Group NINETEEN, operating from the LEXINGTON, cooperated with other units in sinking 3 enemy aircraft carriers and a NATORI class cruiser.

The first Captain of the LEXINGTON was Captain (now Rear Admiral) Felix B. Stump, U.S. Navy, who brought her to the Pacific and was in command during the ensuing strikes against Wake Island, Mille, Kwajalein, Wotje, and Palau. He was relieved on April 10, 1944 by Captain (now Rear Admiral) Ernest W. Litch, U.S. Navy, under whom the LEXINGTON operated against Hollandia, Truk, the Marianas, the Bonins, Palau, the Philippines, Formosa, Indo China, Hong Kong and Okinawa in the Nansei Shoto. Captain Litch was in turn relieved on January 30, 1945 by the present Captain, Captain Thomas H. Robbins, U.S. Navy, who commanded the ship during her recent participation in the operations against Tokyo, Amami Gunto in the Nansei Shoto, and in the direct support missions at Iwo Jima. From March 1944 to the end of October of that year the LEXINGTON served as flagship for Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher, U.S. Navy.

Four Air Groups have had combat tours on the LEXINGTON. A brief compilation of their records is as follows: Air Group 16 had a total of 2,794 combat sorties in which they destroyed 150 aircraft in the air and 81 on the ground, sank or

destroyed 10 ships and damaged 19; Air Group 19 flew 2,983 combat sorties in which they shot down 167 aircraft in the air and destroyed 310 on the ground, sank or destroyed 39 ships and damaged 75; Air Group 20 in only two months aboard, flew 1,133 combat sorties in which they shot down 21 aircraft in the air and destroyed 63 on the ground, sank or destroyed 27 ships and damaged 41; AirGroup 9 in one month aboard, flew 562 combat sorties, shot down 34 aircraft in the air, destroyed 21 on the ground, and damaged 13 ships. The numerous small craft destroyed or damaged are not included in the foregoing totals.

C O P Y

U.S.S. LEXINGTON

S-E-C-R-E-T

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TYPE OF OPERATIONS</u>	<u>TARGET</u>
18 Sept. 1943	Strike	TARAWA
5-6 Oct. 1943	Strike	WAKE ISLAND
19-24 Nov. 1943	Strike	MILLE
	Support	Occupation of GILBERTS
4 Dec. 1943	Strike	KWAJALEIN, WOTJE
18 March 1944	Strike	MILLE
30 March 1944	Strike	PALAU IS.
31 March 1944	Strike	PALAU IS.
21-26 Apr. 1944	Strike	HOLLANDIA
	Support	HOLLANDIA LANDING
29-30 Apr. 1944	Strike	TRUK
11-19 June 1944	Strike	SAIPAN, GUAM, TINIAN
	Support	SAIPAN LANDING
19-20 June 1944	Engagement	JAP FLEET (First battle of the Philippine Sea)
5 July 1944	Strike	GUAM, (AGANA A/F)
18-21 July 1944	Strike	GUAM
	Support	GUAM LANDING
25-27 July 1944	Strike	PALAU
4-5 Aug. 1944	Strike	BONINS
6-8 Sept. 1944	Strike	PALAU IS.
	Support	PELELIU LANDING
9-10 Sept. 1944	Strike	MINDANAO IS.
12-14 Sept. 1944	Strike	VISAYAN IS. (CEBU)
21-22 Sept. 1944	Strike	LUZON, MANILA
23-24 Sept. 1944	Strike	VISAYAN, CORON BAY, CEBU
10 Oct. 1944	Strike	OKINAWA
12-14 Oct. 1944	Strike	FORMOSA
21 Oct. 1944	Strike	VISAYAN
24-25 Oct. 1944	Engagement	JAP FLEET (Second battle of the Philippine Sea also called "Battle for Leyte Gulf")
5-6 November 1944	Strike	LUZON
14-16 Dec. 1944	Strike	LUZON
	Support	MINDORO LANDING
3-4 Jan. 1945	Strike	FORMOSA

C O P Y

S-E-C-R-E-T

6-7 Jan. 1945	Strike	LUZON
9 Jan. 1945	Strike	LUZON
12 Jan. 1945	Strike	CAMRANH BAY, INDO CHINA
15 Jan. 1945	Strike	FORMOSA
16 Jan. 1945	Strike	HONG KONG
21 Jan. 1945	Strike	FORMOSA
22 Jan. 1945	Strike	OKINAWA
16-17 Feb. 1945	Strike	TOKYO AREA
19, 21-22 Feb. 1945	Support	IWO JIMA LANDING
25 Feb. 1945	Strike	TOKYO AREA
1 March 1945	Strike	AMAMI GUNTO (NANSEI SHOTO)

4 days of fleet engagements
78 days of strike or support
82 days in action or 1 day in action out of every 6½ during
18 months.

C O P Y

S E C R E T

STATISTICS CONCERNING U.S.S. LEXINGTON (CV16)

(As of March 7, 1945 - date of departure from Ulithi, homeward bound).

Ship's Company:

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted Men</u>	<u>Total</u>
Number of "Plank Owners".	29	570	598
Number of others on board more than 18 months.	7	558	567
Number of others on board more than 12 months.	15	898	914
Number on board less than 12 months.	<u>106</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>502</u>
Total number on board.	<u>157</u>	<u>2426</u>	<u>2583</u>

Number by Departments:

Administration.	5	-	5
Gunnery.	29	541	570
Engineering.	23	463	486
Medical	8	34	42
Communications.	13	102	115
Navigation.	4	70	74
Hull.	9	205	214
Supply.	16	246	262
Air.	<u>50</u>	<u>765</u>	<u>815</u>
Total.	<u>157</u>	<u>2426</u>	<u>2583</u>

Air Combat Statistics: (commissioning (17 Feb.'43) to 7 March 1945).

Aircraft shot down by ship	15 plus 5 assists.
Air Group Totals:	
Combat sorties.	7472
Aircraft shot down in air.	372
Aircraft destroyed on ground.	475
Shipping sunk or destroyed.	300,075 tons
Shipping damaged	568,320 tons
Planes lost in combat.	95
Planes lost operationally	129 (of which 49 were jettisoned)
Bombs dropped.	2335 tons
Rockets fired.	2542
Torpedoes launched.	88
Aerial mines expended	35
Ammunition fired by planes:	
50 cal.	1,923,023 rounds
30 cal.	218,212 rounds
20 mm	90,543

Medical Department Statistics: (Commissioning (17 Feb.'43) to March 7, 1945).

Number of Patients. 2,858

Appendix C.

C O P Y

Medical Department Statistics: (Cont'd)

Total number of sick days	12,299
Killed in action (Ship's company)	82
Wounded in action (ship's company)	516
Number of pints of plasma used.	200

Statistics concerning the Ship

Number of deck levels	17
Number of water tight doors	434
Number of water tight hatches	189
Fuel oil capacity.	1,920,529 gallons
Fresh water produced daily	92,000

Navigation and Engineering Statistics: Total (from commissioning One Year
(Feb.17'43) to 7 March'45 3/7/44 to 3/7/45

Total miles steamed	152,805	100,250
Fuel consumed	673,260	434,951
Water distilled	42,070,300 gals	29,021,400 gals.
Number of days underway	370	
Passage across Inter. Date line	7 times	
Passage across Equator	22 times	

Air Dept. Statistics.

Number of planes landed aboard.	18,988	12,966
Aviation gasoline consumed(gallons)	4,334,110	3,038,911

Supply Department Statistics

Meals served	3,729,182	2,732,148
Meat consumed	2,055,272 lbs.	1,335,926 lbs.
Coffee consumed	528,000 gals	316,800 gals.
Rags used for cleaning	166,200 lbs.	94,300 lbs.

Gunnery Statistics:

Ammunition expended in action:

5"/38	590	526
40 mm	22,083	18,027
20 mm	32,088	30,701

Ammunition expended in training:

5"/38	3,100	1,321
40 mm	52,087	30,319
20 mm	160,806	89,201

Total tons of ammunition brought on board: 7,743 tons.

A12

41495

FF12-5/A12-1
(WTK-15-nr)

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AIR FORCE, PACIFIC FLEET

Serial 001421

SECRET

18 JUN 1945

FIRST ENDORSEMENT to:
CO, CV16 Sec. Ltr.
Serial 0010 dated
11 June 1945.

From: Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet.
To : Office of Chief of Naval Operations, Aviation
History Unit Op-33-J-6.
Via : Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
Subject: Unit History - forwarding of.
1. Forwarded.

A. N. McGEOCH, Jr.

A. N. MCGEOCH, Jr.,
By direction.

RECEIVED S-C FILES

03 Room 2055
DATE 5 JUL 1945
Op File No (by) A12-1/0V16
175874
Iss No. 1 of 1
Copy No. 20304
Vol. No.

Copy to:
CO, CV16.

A12

003000

30 JUN 1945

2ND Endorsement
CinC Pacific Fleet
To: CNO, OP-33-J-6
Via:

1. Forwarded.

R. E. Keeton

R. E. KEETON
By direction

OFFICE OF
COMMANDER IN CHIEF

JUN 18 6 00 PM 1945

RECEIVED

FILE NO.
A12-1/CV16

Serial: 0012

U. S. S. LEXINGTON

119

S-E-C-R-E-T

14 JUL 1945

From: Commanding Officer.
To: Office of Chief of Naval Operations, Aviation
History Unit Op-33-J-6.

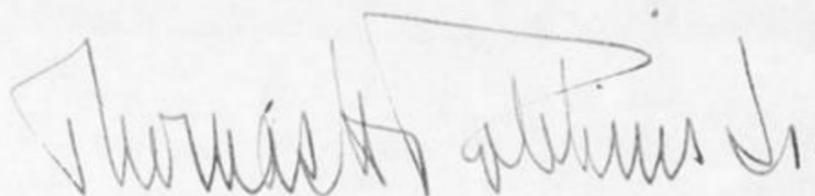
Via: (1) Commander Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
(2) Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Unit History - forwarding quarterly installment
of.

References: (a) Aviation Circular Ltr. No. 74-44, Op-33-J-6-
JEJ, Serial 356533 of 25 July 1944.
(b) Manual for Historical Officers, NavAer 00-
25Q-26.

Enclosure: (A) History of U.S.S. Lexington (CV16) from
1 April 1945 through 30 June 1945.

1. In accordance with references(a) and (b),
enclosure (A) is forwarded herewith.


THOMAS H. ROBBINS JR.

*Original to
Cominch*

S-E-C-R-E-T

HISTORY

OF

U.S.S. LEXINGTON (CV16)

Quarterly Installment

1 April 1945 through 30 June 1945

(5)

S-E-C-R-E-T

U.S.S. LEXINGTON (CV16)

-
Commanding Officer - Captain Thomas H. Robbins Jr., U.S. Navy.
-

PART I - CHRONOLOGY

PART II - NARRATIVE and DOCUMENTATION

PART III - APPENDIX

S-E-C-R-E-T

PART I - CHRONOLOGY

1945

- 3 April Entered drydock #4, Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington.
- 6 May Left drydock and moored portside to pier #6, Puget Sound Navy Yard.
- 12 May Navy Yard availability period concluded.
- 14 May Underway from Navy Yard. Engaged in trial run. Anchored north of Blake Island.
- 16 May Engaged in high speed trial run.
- 17 May Reentered Navy Yard.
- 18 May Underway from Navy Yard. Engaged in official full power trial run. (Developed 150,000 H.P. speed 31.75 knots, 265 r.p.m.). Anchored southeast of Blake Island, East Passage.
- 22 May Readiness for sea period concluded. Underway for Alameda, California.
- 24 May Arrived Alameda Naval Air Station, mooring starboard side to north side of pier #2.
- 29 May Underway for Pearl Harbor.
- 4 June Arrived Pearl Harbor, mooring portside to berth Fox 13, Ford Island.
- 5 June Reported for temporary operational control to ComCarDiv 11. Air Group 94 (CAG - Commander Stevan Mandarich USN) officially reported aboard.
- 6 June Underway for training exercises and tests in accordance with Operation Plan CV16 No. 1-45, dated 5 June. Planes of Air Group 94 flown aboard. Total of 94 planes aboard: 32 F6F, 32 F4U, 15 SB2C and 15 TBM.
- 9 June Air Group 94 temporarily replaced on board by Air Group 2.

S-E-C-R-E-T

PART I - CHRONOLOGY (Con't)

1945

- 10 June Air Group 2 having completed training exercises on board, replaced by Air Group 94. Landing #20,000 made on board by Lt. (jg) Richard C. Posterick, USNR of VF-94 in F6F.
- 11 June Entered Pearl Harbor, mooring portside to berth Fox 9, Ford Island.
- 13 June Underway from Pearl Harbor in accordance ComCarDiv 11, operation Order 1-45, dated 9 June.
- 20 June Strike on Wake Island.
- 26 June Entered Leyte Gulf and anchored in berth 67, San Pedro Bay, Leyte, Philippines Islands. Reported to CTF 38 and CTG 38.1 for duty in Third Fleet.
- 28 June Rear Admiral T.L. Sprague, USN (CTG 38.1 and ComCarDiv 3) shifted his flag to this ship, coming aboard temporarily with Chief of Staff and six officers.
- 29 June Rear Admiral Sprague left this ship and shifted flag to USS Bennington.

S-E-C-R-E-T

PART II - NARRATIVE

The Lexington spent all of April and the first part of May at the Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington. The work done was principally that incident to a routine overhaul but included the construction of a complete C.I.C. on the gallery deck, the enlargement of flag plot and the navigation bridge (made possible by the removal of the number one 40 mm quad. mount to the fantail), the installation of a new bull gear and complete set of pinion gears in the #2 reduction unit, the removal and realignment of the rudder and the substitution of a new steering gear unit.

Full power was not developed during trial runs on 14 and 16 May, necessitating return to the Navy Yard. A satisfactory full power trial run was made on 18 May. The readiness for sea period terminated on 22 May, on which day the Lexington left Seattle for Alameda, California. Here planes and passengers were taken aboard for transportation to Pearl Harbor. Among the passengers were Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, USN (Ret.) and the personnel of Composite Squadron 7 (VC-7). The Lexington made the trip from Seattle to Pearl Harbor without escort.

Upon arrival at Pearl Harbor on 4 June, the Commanding Officer reported to ComAirPac and the Lexington was assigned for temporary operational control to ComCarDiv 11

S-E-C-R-E-T

PART II - NARRATIVE (Con't)

(Rear Admiral R.E. Jennings USN) for purposes of training and movement to the forward area. Air Group 94 (CTG - Commander Stevan Mandarich USN) reported aboard. The arrival of this Group gave the Lexington her first opportunity to work with the F4U (Corsair) fighter plane. The Group consisted of four squadrons with a normal plane complement of 103 planes as follows: 31VF (F6F), 4VFN (F6F), 2VFP (F6F), 36VBF (F4U), 15VB (SB2C) and 15VT (TBM).

Between 6 and 11 June the Lexington, as a unit of TG 19.5, engaged in extensive training exercises and tests in the Hawaiian area. Captain Robbins served as CTG 19.5. Other surface vessels in the task group were the destroyers Madison (DD 425) and Strong (DD 758). On the 9th and 10th Air Group 2 replaced Air Group 94 on board for purposes of training.

Upon reentering Pearl Harbor on 11 June final preparations were made for return to the forward area. On 13 June the Lexington got underway from Ford Island as a unit of TG 12.4 (CTG 12.4 - Rear Admiral R.E. Jennings who was also ComCarDiv 11). The task group proceeded to Leyte, Philippine Islands, making a one-day strike enroute against Wake Island. Other vessels in the task group were the flagship, Hancock (CV19), Cowpens (CVL-25) and five

S-E-C-R-E-T

PART II - NARRATIVE (Con't)

destroyers. Training exercises for ships and air groups were conducted throughout. The strike against Wake Island was designed not only to afford the test of actual combat but as an important step in weakening the morale of the isolated Japanese garrison.

The attack on Wake took place on 20 June (East Longitude Date) and consisted of one fighter sweep and five strikes. One hundred and seventy-three combat sorties were flown from the Lexington in addition to four photo sorties and four planes flying CAP over the rescue submarine. A total of 63 tons of bombs and 470 rockets (including 8 Tiny Tims) were dropped over the target. There was no surface bombardment. No enemy aircraft were seen and the AA fire was described as meager to moderate and generally inaccurate, although the two planes of Air Group 94 lost at Wake (1 F6F and 1 F4U) were believed to have been hit by flak. White phosphorous bombs and V-T (influence) fuses were used, but observations and photographs made by Air Group 94 did not afford sufficient basis for any conclusive judgment as to their effectiveness. Photographic assessment indicated slight damage to the primary targets assigned to the Lexington, but did show one building destroyed, six buildings damaged and numerous hits in bivouac and stores areas.

The trip from Wake to the Philippines was uneventful. The ship anchored on 26 June in San Pedro Bay, Leyte, and the

S-E-C-R-E-T

PART II - NARRATIVE (Con't)

Commanding Officer reported for duty in the Third Fleet. The Lexington thereupon became a unit of TG 38.1 (CTG 38.1 - Rear Admiral T.L. Sprague USN who was also ComCarDiv 3) and a part of TF 38 (CTF 38 - Vice Admiral J.S. McCain USN who was also ComSecondCarrier Task Force, Pacific) and of Third Fleet (Com 3rd Fleet - Admiral W.F. Halsey, USN).

Documentation.

1. Commander Western Sea Frontier secret serial QS 1 (0-50-1) dated 17 May 1945, directing Commanding Officer to proceed from Seattle to Alameda, California.
2. U.S.S. Lexington conf. despatch 220001 (May) "reporting ready" to ComFairWestCoast.
3. Commander Western Sea Frontier secret movement order No. 351-CR, dated 25 May, including as Annex "A", routing instructions of like date, directing Commanding Officer to proceed from Alameda to Pearl Harbor.
4. ComAirPac secret despatch 030250 (May) ordering CAG 94 to report to Lexington for duty on 5 June and to embark air group thereafter.
5. ComAirPac conf. despatch 050330 (June) directing Lexington to report to ComCarDiv 11 for temporary operational control during period 6-11 June.
6. U.S.S. Lexington conf. despatch 050935 (June) reporting for duty to ComCarDiv 11.

S-E-C-R-E-T

PART II NARRATIVE (Con't)

7. ComCarDiv 11 secret despatch 040510 (June) directing composition of TG 19.5 for exercises 6-11 June.
8. U.S.S. Lexington secret serial 009, dated 5 June, constituting operation Plan CV16 No. 1-45 and setting forth Task Organization of TG 19.5 and exercises to be conducted. (Captain Robbins - CTG 19.5)
9. CinCPac Pearl secret despatch 060645 (June) constituting CinCPac Op-order 7-45.
10. ComCarDiv 11 secret serial 006, dated 9 June, constituting ComCarDiv 11's Operational Order 1-45, derived from CinCPac Op-order 7-45 (see #9 above)
11. U.S.S. Lexington secret despatch 260441 (June) reporting to CTF 38 and CTG 38.1 for duty in Third Fleet, pursuant to CinCPac Op-order 7-45 (see #9 above).

S-E-C-R-E-T

PART III - APPENDIX

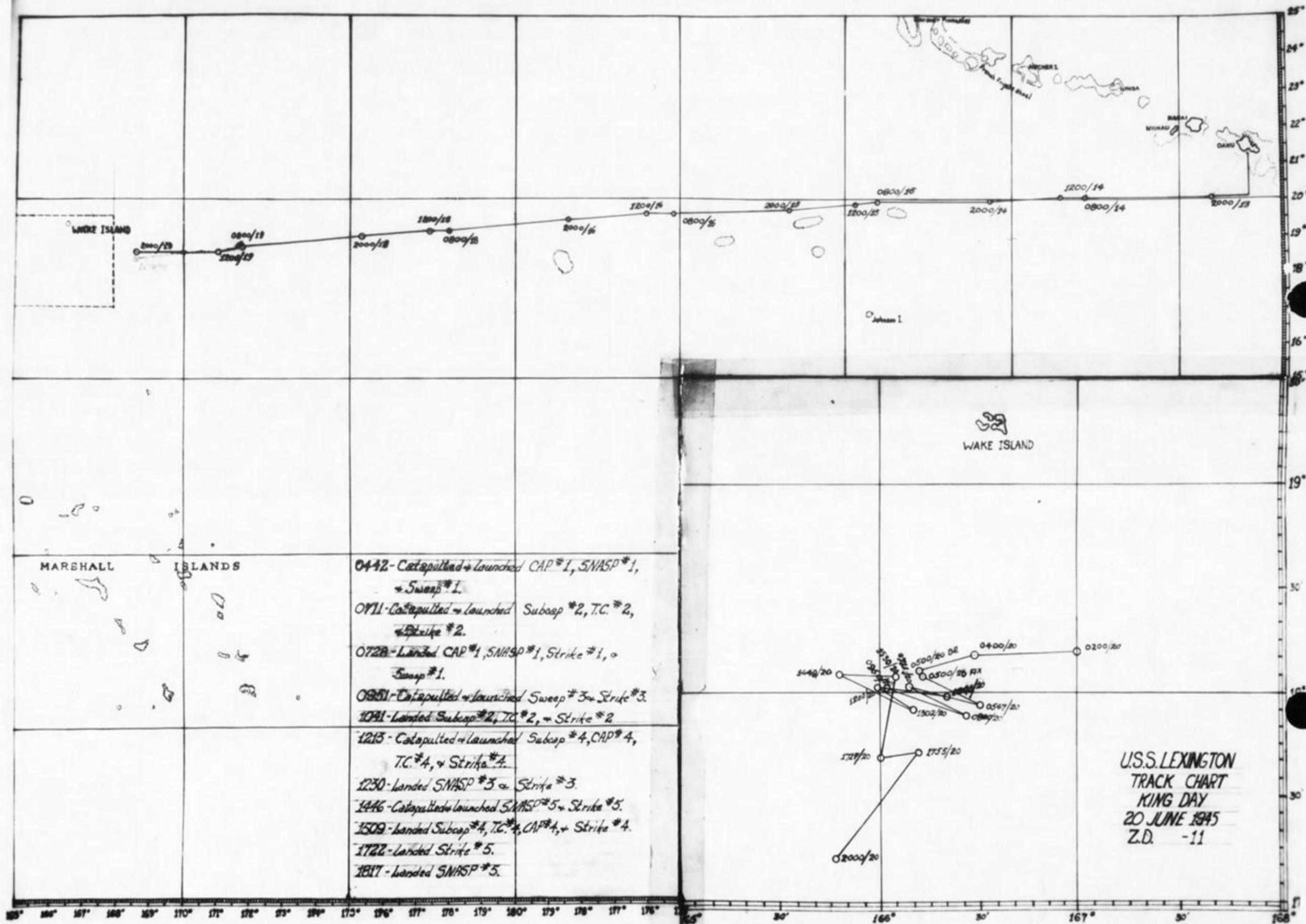
A - Awards presented on board

B - Track chart for strike against Wake Island,
20 June 1945.

S-E-C-R-E-T

AWARDS PRESENTED ON BOARD.

- 15 June Commander Warren E. Oliver (SC) USN -
Letter of Commendation from Cinclant with
right to wear commendation ribbon for
services prior to reporting aboard this
ship.
- 26 June Lieut. (jg) Jesse A. Reiser (HC) USN -
Letter of Commendation of Commander
Third Fleet with right to wear Comm-
endation ribbon for a highly commendable
performance of duty during and after
an attack upon this ship in November 1944.



- 0442 - Catapulted & launched CAP #1, SNASP #1, Sweep #1.
- 0711 - Catapulted & launched Subcap #2, T.C. #2, Strike #2.
- 0728 - Landed CAP #1, SNASP #1, Strike #1, Sweep #1.
- 0851 - Catapulted & launched Sweep #3 & Strike #3.
- 1041 - Landed Subcap #2, T.C. #2, Strike #2.
- 1213 - Catapulted & launched Subcap #4, CAP #4, T.C. #4, Strike #4.
- 1230 - Landed SNASP #3 & Strike #3.
- 1446 - Catapulted & launched SNASP #5 & Strike #5.
- 1509 - Landed Subcap #4, T.C. #4, CAP #4, Strike #4.
- 1722 - Landed Strike #5.
- 1817 - Landed SNASP #5.

U.S.S. LEXINGTON
 TRACK CHART
 KING DAY
 20 JUNE 1945
 Z.D. -11

Appendix B

A12

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22480

FF12-5/A12
WTK-15-sib

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AIR FORCE, PACIFIC FLEET

Serial 001917

SECRET

9 AUG 1945

FIRST ENDORSEMENT to:
CO, USS LEXINGTON ltr
A12-1/CV16, Ser 0012
dated 14 July 1945

From: Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet.
To : Office of Chief of Naval Operations, Aviation
History Unit Op-33-J-6.
Via: Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.
Subject: Unit History - Forwarding quarterly installment of.
1. Forwarded.

RECEIVED S-C FILES
03 Room 7055
AUG 14 25 AUG 1945
Sp File No (cv) A12-1/CV16
Job. No. 183830
Copy No. 1
Trs. No. OM-27030

F. N. Gilreath

F. N. GILREATH,
By direction.

2
003890

A-12

21 AUG 1945

2ND Endorsement
CinC Pacific Fleet
To: CNO, OP-33-J-6
Via:

1. Forwarded.

Copy to:
CO, USS LEXINGTON

AUG 12 1945
O. R. THORNE,
By direction
RECEIVED
OFFICE OF
COMMANDER IN CHIEF

FILE NO.
CV16/A12-1

(095/gl) ✓

Serial: 0546

U. S. S. LEXINGTON
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

26 SEP 1945

CONFIDENTIAL

[Handwritten signature]

CONFIDENTIAL

From: Commanding Officer.
To: The Secretary of the Navy.
Subject: Unit History, forwarding of.
Reference: (a) Aviation Circular ltr. No. 74-44, Op-33-J-JEJ,
Serial 356533 of 25 July 1944.
(b) Manual for Historical Officers, NavAer 00-25Q-26.
(c) Cincpac-Cincpoa Adv. despatch 142240 (Sept.)
(Alpac 202).
Enclosure: (A) History of USS LEXINGTON (CV-16) from 1 July through
15 September 1945.
1. In accordance with reference (c), Enclosure (A) is forwarded
herewith.

[Handwritten signature: Thomas H. Robbins, Jr.]
THOMAS H. ROBBINS, JR.

RECEIVED S-6 FILES
03 Room 2055
OCT 6 1945
File No. (ob) A12-1/0V16
Copy No. 1 of 2
756

copy: Cincpac, Pearl

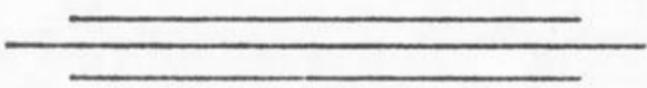
Original

Confidential

U. S. S. LEXINGTON CV-16

SHIP'S HISTORY

1 July - 15 September 1945



**The final chapter
of the war**

USS LEXINGTON (CV-16)

Commanding Officer - Captain Thomas H. Robbins, Jr., U.S.N.

SHIP'S HISTORY
1 July - 15 September 1945

Part I - Chronology

Part II - Narrative and Documentation

Part III - Appendix

Dates are East longitude calendar days. Times
are expressed in Item (-9 zone) time.

PART I - CHRONOLOGY

- 1 July Sortie from Leyte Gulf as a unit of T. G. 38.1.
- 2 " Training en route to target area.
- 3 " " " " " " " .
- 4 " " " " " " " .
- 5 " " " " " " " .
- 6 " " " " " " " .
- 7 " " " " " " " .
- 8 " " " " " " " .
- 9 " " " " " " " .
- 10 " "D" Day - airfields north of Tokyo.
- 11 " En route to Hokkaido.
- 12 " Fueling.
- 13 " Scheduled as "X" Day - Hokkaido, no air operations due weather.
- 14 " "X" Day - Hokkaido.
- 15 " "X / 1" Day - Hokkaido.
- 16 " Fueling.
- 17 " Scheduled as "X / 3" Day - Tokyo area, air operations incomplete.
- 18 " "X / 3" Day - Tokyo area.
- 19 " En route to replenishment group.
- 20 " Fueling.
- 21 " Rearming.
- 22 " Re provisioning.
- 23 " En route to target area.
- 24 " "A" Day - Nagoya area and Kure.
- 25 " "B" Day - Nagoya area and Kure.

PART I - CHRONOLOGY (Continued)

26 July Fueling and rearming.

27 " Maintaining fueling course.

28 " "C" Day - Nagoya area and Kure.

29 " Steaming northward.

30 " "D" Day - Nagoya area.

31 " Rearming.

1 August Fueling south of Honshu and withdrawal.

2 " Preparedness for typhoon.

3 " Continued fueling south of Honshu.

4 " En route to northern Honshu.

5. " En route to northern Honshu.

6 " En route to northern Honshu.

7 " Fueling off northern Honshu.

8 " Scheduled operations against Hokkaido cancelled due weather.

9 " "G / 1" Day - northern Honshu.

10 " "G / 2" Day - northern Honshu.

11 " Standing by to eastward to avoid typhoon.

12 " En route to Tokyo area.

13 " "F" Day - Tokyo area.

14. " Fueling.

15 " Repetition of "F" Day - Tokyo area. Hostilities ceased.

16 " Retiring from Tokyo area.

17 " Fueling.

18 " Standing by. Vice Admiral SHERMAN, ComFirstCar Task Force, Pac,
broke flag, making LEXINGTON his flagship.

19 " Standing by.

PART I - CHRONOLOGY (Continued)

20 August Standing by. Vice Admiral Sherman transferred to WASP.

21 " Standing by. Rearming.

22 " Standing by. Fueling.

23 " Standing by. Fueling.

24 " En route to northern Honshu.

25 " Patrols and POW supply drops - northern Honshu.

26 " Patrols - Hokkaido.

27 " Patrols and POW supply drops - northern Honshu.

28 " Re provisioning.

29 " Patrols and POW supply drops - Tokyo.

30 " Patrols and POW supply drops - Tokyo. Detached from T.G. 38.1.

31 " Reported for duty to C.T.G. 38.3 south of Honshu. Vice Admiral Sherman broke his flag on board.

1 Sept. Patrols - Nagoya - Hamamatsu area.

2 " Patrols - Nagoya - Hamamatsu area. Japanese surrender signed.

3 " Patrols - Nagoya - Hamamatsu area.

4 " Detached from T.G. 38.3.

5 " Entered Tokyo Bay and anchored for first time since 1 July. Vice Admiral Sherman left the ship.

6 " Departed Tokyo Bay to join T.G. 38.2.

7 " Reported for duty to C.T.G. 38.2 east of Honshu.

8 " Patrols and POW supply drops - northern Honshu.

9 " Fueling and provisioning.

10 " Arrived Tokyo Bay.

11 " At anchor Tokyo Bay.

12 " At anchor Tokyo Bay.

PART I - CHRONOLOGY (Continued)

- 13 Sept. At anchor Tokyo Bay.
14 " At anchor Tokyo Bay.
15 " Departed Tokyo Bay to continue patrols.

PART II - NARRATIVE

On 1 July 1945 the LEXINGTON departed San Pedro Bay, Leyte, Philippine Islands, as a unit of Task Group 38.1 (C.T.G. 38.1, Rear Admiral T. L. SPRAGUE, USN, ComCarDiv 3, in BENNINGTON), one of the three task groups comprising Task Force 38. At that time we could not know that when next the LEXINGTON dropped anchor it would be in Tokyo Bay, three days after the surrender of Japan.

Throughout the period covered in this installment of the ship's history the air group on board was Air Group 94 (C.A.G. - Commander Stevan MANDARICH, USN). The Group consisted of four squadrons with a normal complement of 31 F6F-5, 4 F6F-5(N), 2 F6F-5(P), 36 F4U-4, 15 SB2C-4E and 15 TBM-3E.

The Task Force moved northward for an operation against the main Japanese islands. The first nine days were used in intensive training en route to the target. On the tenth of July the Task Force struck the Tokyo area. Task Group 38.1 was given responsibility for an area to the north of the city and the LEXINGTON was assigned as her specific targets seven fields, the most southerly being 60 miles north of Tokyo.

In certain respects this day set the pattern for the weeks to come. The primary mission was and continued to be the destruction of Japanese planes in the air and on the ground. On this day as on all succeeding days the Japanese refused to take to the air to protect the homeland. Although on ensuing days half-hearted attacks against units of the Task Force were made by enemy planes, individually and in small groups, no air borne opposition was at any time encountered by our planes and no enemy planes ever approached so near the ship as to cause any of the ship's guns to open fire. Use of the V-T fuse to explode bombs in the air over grounded aircraft made estimate of damage difficult but the total for the opening day of the operation was believed to be 6 planes

destroyed, 13 probably destroyed and 21 damaged. It was evident that the Japanese had taken extensive precautions for the wide dispersal and careful concealment of their planes. During the following weeks effective attacks were made only when study of photographs enabled our pilots to concentrate on good planes and to leave alone the more obviously placed duds and dummies. The technique of destroying grounded planes involved low-level flying over areas well protected with AA fire and was an important cause of the Air Group's casualties during the operation: 10 pilots and 4 aircrewmembers listed as killed or missing in action. Another factor which had to be reckoned with throughout the operation was the weather. Low lying clouds and fog frequently blanketed target areas, particularly in the north, and necessitated repeated changes of plans.

The second strike day of the operation was 14 July with the island of Hokkaido as the target area. Bad weather prevented our planes from reaching the assigned airfields on the north coast but they found numerous industrial targets of opportunity to the south and east, particularly in the vicinity of Kushiro. Planes from the LEXINGTON, on combat air patrol and photographic missions, covered the battleship and cruiser bombardment of the Imperial Iron Works at Kamaishi, first surface bombardment of the war against the main Japanese islands.

On 15 July Hokkaido was again the target area. On 16 July the British Task Force 37, under command of Vice Admiral Rawlings, joined Task Force 38 and began operations much as if it were a fourth Task Group. After fueling, Task Group 38.1 moved south and on the 17th and 18th again struck air fields north of Tokyo, also engaging on the 18th in a large scale attack on the battleship NAGATO at the Yokosuka Naval Base, an attack which damaged

but did not sink the vessel. This day's strikes concluded the first phase of the operation, and the Task Force withdrew for several days of rest and replenishment.

The attack was resumed on 24 July. For the strikes on that day the force had moved to the northwest and from a position south of Kobe, some 130 miles off the island of Honshu, four strikes were launched against Hamamatsu and five other fields assigned to the LEXINGTON. No Jap airborne opposition was encountered during the day. Two planes were destroyed and eight damaged on the ground. More effective were the two strikes against remnants of the Japanese fleet at Kure where three hits were scored on the CV KATSURAGI, two hits on the BB - XCV ISE, seven hits on the CA AOBA, two hits on the CL OYODO, and two hits on the unfinished CV ASO. South of Kure a 5200-ton tanker was sunk and a small merchant ship left in a sinking condition.

Efforts on the following day, 25 July, were largely abortive, due to weather, but on 28 July Air Group 94 enjoyed its most successful day to date. Effective attacks were made against Jap planes at Oi, Mikatagahara, Hamamatsu and other airfields southeast of Nagoya. Only two planes were seen to burn but on the basis of repeated low level strafing the day's total was claimed to be 41 planes destroyed, 16 probably destroyed and 26 planes and 2 gliders damaged. Two strikes went back to Kure to finish the damaged ISE and AOBA. Hits were scored on both ships, which were last seen badly battered with the ISE in flames, the AOBA awash at the stern, and both resting on the bottom.

On 30 July effective attacks were made against planes concealed in the vicinity of the fields southeast of Nagoya which had been targets for Air Group 94 on three previous days. At dusk on this day the Task Force retired

for another period of replenishment. A scheduled strike against Kyushu was called off and the LEXINGTON was moving northward, some 300 miles off Honshu, as the world was rocked by news of the destruction of Hiroshima by the atomic bomb. The Task Force continued northward and on the 9th and 10th of August, as Japan fumbled with the preliminaries of her surrender, Air Group 94 launched attacks against airfields and shipping in the northern neck of Honshu, finding many planes which burned easily at Jimmachi, west of Sendai, and at the nearby field of Yamagata, and destroying merchant and naval vessels on both the east and west coasts.

Following retirement on the evening of the 10th the next two days were occupied only with normal air patrols and the fueling of destroyers. Returning to the attack on 13 August, Air Group 94 was sent against the Tokyo-Shibura Electric Company #1 (Target 496) at Kawasaki. Haze and low clouds in the Tokyo area prevented most of the planes from reaching the target where results were unobserved. Alternative industrial targets were hit and other strikes of the day made a good score in strafing and bombing planes dispersed around Nasuno and other fields in the valleys north of Tokyo. As was true throughout the operation, our strikes met no opposition in the air but in the vicinity of the force our combat air patrol splashed an itinerant Jill, first and only airborne victim of Air Group 94.

After fueling on the 14th the Task Group returned to hit the Tokyo area again on the 15th. The first strike bombed installations at Hyakurigahara, but before the succeeding strike could reach the assigned targets it was recalled, orders having been received to suspend all further air operations in view of the Japanese agreement to surrender. Although for the next day or two occasional Japanese planes were reported near the force,

none approached this ship and none was seen by planes of Air Group 94.

A table of statistics showing the losses suffered by Air Group 94 and the damage to enemy planes inflicted by the Air Group is enclosed as Appendix (D) to this installment of the ship's history.

The termination of hostilities naturally brought about a respite from the steady pounding of the preceding weeks. After fueling destroyers and engaging in gunnery exercises on the 16th and 17th the Task Force rendezvoused with the replenishment group at dawn on the 18th and for the following week, in an area 200 miles southeast of Honshu, contented itself with replenishment, routine patrols over the force, anti-aircraft gunnery training, and exercises in which the Task Groups drew together and the full strength of American and British ships were maneuvered as a unit.

A landing force party consisting of marines and a bluejacket detachment was organized for possible use in the initial occupation of Tokyo Bay and the Yokosuka Naval Base, for which purpose Task Group 38.1 had been called upon to make three battalions available to Commander Tokyo Bay Emergency Naval Occupation Force (Commander Task Group 31). Daily shipboard training was conducted and on 19 August the Marine Detachment was transferred to the USS GARRARD (APA), subsequently going ashore at Yokosuka on the 30th of August. The bluejacket detachment remained in readiness and continued daily drills, but was never called upon to leave the ship.

The LEXINGTON's commission pennant was hauled down at noon on 18 August when Vice Admiral Frederick C. SHERMAN, USN, Commander First Carrier Task Force, Pacific, came aboard and broke his personal flag, making the LEXINGTON his flag ship until his departure to the WASP on 20 August.

The period of marking time terminated on 25 August when the

LEXINGTON moved to within approximately 100 miles of the coast of Honshu and began a series of patrol missions designed to precede and accompany the initial occupation landings to be made in the Tokyo area. Our planes were directed to patrol coastal waters and airfields, to fly over populated centers, to locate prisoner-of-war camps and to be constantly on the alert for any indication of treachery on the part of the Japanese. The area of responsibility assigned to the LEXINGTON covered the northern neck of Honshu between 37N and 38N. The initial patrols of the day reported no opposition of any kind. At all airfields the only planes seen were dressed in lines on the aprons or nearby open spaces. Five prisoner-of-war camps were located, each marked with large letters "PW" and identified by hundreds of enthusiastic white men. Further patrols were cancelled but two special supply dropping missions were hastily organized and a total of 19 bags containing "K" rations and other supplies were dropped, three or more bags reaching the prisoners at each of the five camps.

Similar patrols in Hokkaido on 26 August encountered the familiar bad weather and were unable to locate prisoner-of-war camps. On the 27th the LEXINGTON returned to the area in Honshu which had been covered on the 25th and dropped supplies to prisoners at three camps. Our CAP planes spotted a Japanese submarine on the surface flying the black flag of surrender. Report was made and a prize crew from the Task Group went aboard and raised the American flag. Two VFN, launched as an escort for a second Jap submarine sighted during the day, made the first scheduled night landings by Air Group 94.

For operations on the 29th and 30th of August, Task Group 38.1 relieved Task Group 38.4 in the Tokyo area. The LEXINGTON was given responsibility for an area which included the city of Tokyo, the waters of Tokyo Bay

and Sagami Wan, the Kawasaki water front and the Chiba Peninsula. The missions assigned were combat air patrols incident to the movements of allied occupation forces into the Tokyo area and flights to locate and drop supplies to prisoner-of-war camps. LEXINGTON planes were flown overhead as General MACARTHUR landed on Atsugi airfield and as the first of our occupation forces made their way ashore in the vicinity of Yokosuka. On both days supplies were dropped to prisoners in numerous camps of the area. After 61 days of continuous operations as a unit of Task Group 38.1 the LEXINGTON was detached from that group at 1800 and left on a southwesterly course to join Task Group 38.3.

On 31 August the LEXINGTON, with DD's MURRAY and MCKEE as escorts, moved to the southwest to join T.G. 38.3 at a fueling rendezvous south of central Honshu. The three vessels were under C.T.U. 38.1.13, Captain ROBBINS, in LEXINGTON. Prior to first light the Task Unit passed within 16 miles of Honshu, closer than the LEXINGTON had ever approached to the main Japanese islands. No part of Honshu was seen but shortly after daybreak the ships passed between the two islands of Nii Shima and Miyake Shima, first land sighted by the LEXINGTON since leaving Leyte Gulf 1 July. This also was the first sight of a large American carrier for the population of the Japanese homeland. At 0935 the LEXINGTON landed 1 VT from the WASP with Vice Admiral Frederick C. SHERMAN, USN, Commander First Carrier Task Force, Pacific, who thereupon shifted his flag from the WASP to the LEXINGTON. Shortly thereafter T.G. 38.3 appeared on the radar screen and at 1145 the LEXINGTON reported to Rear Admiral G. F. BOGAN (ComCarDiv 4), for duty in Task Group 38.3.

The LEXINGTON's operations as a unit of Task Group 38.3 were of short duration. Patrols and prisoner-of-war supply dropping missions were

flown on the first three days of September, the LEXINGTON's area of responsibility including the city of Nagoya and airfields to the southeast of that city. As had been the case in the other areas over which Air Group 94 planes had flown since the cessation of hostilities, Japanese planes were exposed in orderly lines at all airfields, no enemy planes were in the air and no evidence was seen of any hostile action.

On the 4th of September the LEXINGTON was detached from Task Group 38.3, and on the afternoon of the fifth set a precedent for CV's by entering Tokyo Bay. The crew was at quarters for muster as she left Sagami Wan, rounded Kannon Saki light, passed to port the towering cranes of Yokosuka Naval Base and the cluttered pagoda bridge of the still floating NAGATO and to starboard the more familiar battleships and cruisers of the Third Fleet. Off the water front of Yokohama she dropped anchor, halting the restless movement which had never ceased since quitting Leyte Gulf 67 days earlier and bringing to the most appropriate conclusion her fighting history begun off the beaches of Tarawa two years before.

Vice Admiral SHERMAN and staff disembarked as did Commander P. P. BARRICK, U.S.N.R. who had been relieved as ship's Air Officer by Commander R. E. STIELER, U.S.N. After embarking the Marine Detachment which had been on the beach since 30 August the LEXINGTON departed Tokyo Bay on the afternoon of the 6th and on the following morning rejoined Rear Admiral T. L. SPRAGUE's Task Group. By a reorganization of the carrier task force effective on 5 September, this Task Group (previously T.G. 38.1) had become Task Group 38.2, one of two task groups comprising the new Task Force 38. For two days the Task Group flew patrols and prisoner-of-war supply missions over northern Honshu, then headed for Tokyo Bay, entering on the 10th of September for a

period of rest and replenishment which continued until the Task Group left on the 15th to resume the duty of patrolling in the waters off Honshu. The LEXINGTON, in common with other ships, took advantage of the period in Tokyo Bay to effect an exchange of personnel, sending to one of the ships scheduled for an early return to the United States well over a hundred enlisted personnel whose high point rating entitled them to immediate discharge.

DOCUMENTATION

Documentation for the foregoing consists of the following operation plans, operation orders and controlling despatches, all as from time to time amended and supplemented:

Commander SECOND Carrier Task Force, Pacific, and Commander Task Force 38, Top Secret Operation Order 2-45, serial 00037, dated 25 June, covering operations 1 July through 19 July.

Commander SECOND Carrier Task Force, Pacific, and Commander Task Force 38, Top Secret Operation Order 3-45, serial 00042, dated 20 July, covering operations 20 July through cessation of hostilities 15 August.

Commander Task Group 38.1, Top Secret Operation Plan 1-45, serial 00019, dated 28 June, covering operations 1 July through 4 September.

Commander THIRD Fleet Secret Despatch 160531 (August) providing for patrols which continued through 8 September.

Commander THIRD Fleet Secret Despatch 220425 (August), constituting Operation Order 10-45 for support of occupation landings

in Tokyo-Sagami Wan area. (Note: Although dated 22 August this despatch was evidently prepared previous thereto as it is referred to in, and constituted basis of, C.T.F. 38's Secret Despatch 200230 (August)).

Commander Task Force 38's Secret Despatch 200230 (August) providing for support of occupation landings in Tokyo-Sagami Wan area.

Commander THIRD Fleet's Secret Despatch 212327 (August) constituting reorganization of THIRD Fleet and directives for landings in Tokyo Bay area.

Commander Task Group 38.3's Top Secret Operation Order 4-45 dated 21 August providing for patrols.

Commander Task Force 38's Secret Despatch 290652 (August) directing LEXINGTON to report for duty in Task Group 38.3.

Commander THIRD Fleet's Secret Despatch 030201 (September) directing Commander FIRST Carrier Task Force, Pacific (Vice Admiral SHERMAN), in LEXINGTON, to proceed on 5 September to Tokyo Bay.

Commander THIRD Fleet's Secret Despatch 030759 (September) reorganizing Task Force 38, effective 5 September, and assigning LEXINGTON to Task Group 38.2.

Commander Task Force 38's Secret Despatch 040454 (September) providing for continuation of patrols.

Commander Task Group 38.2's Secret Despatch 041308 (September) constituting ComCarDiv 3 and ComTask Group 38.2's Operation

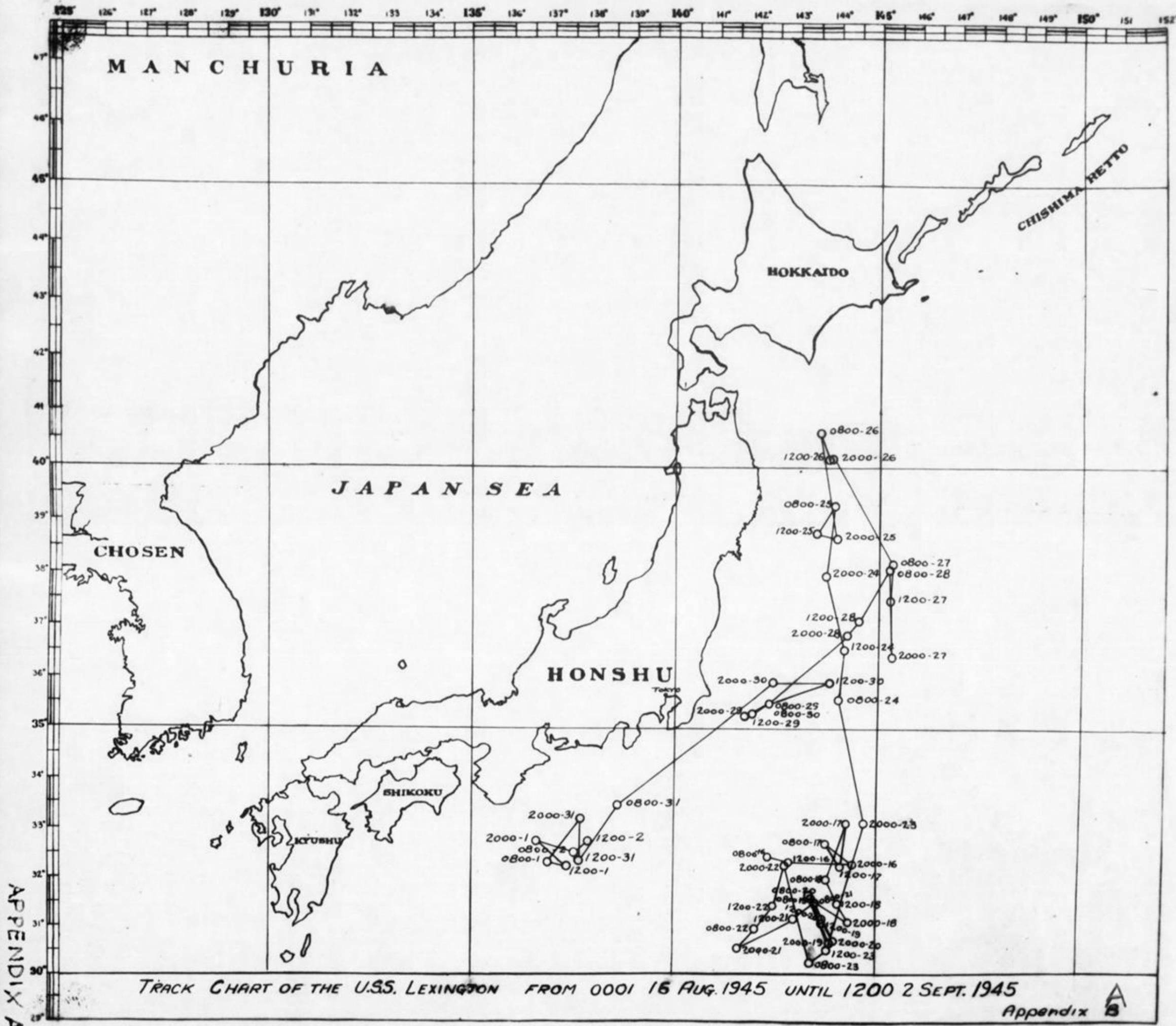
Plan 2-45 setting out organization of Task Group and providing for continuation of patrols.

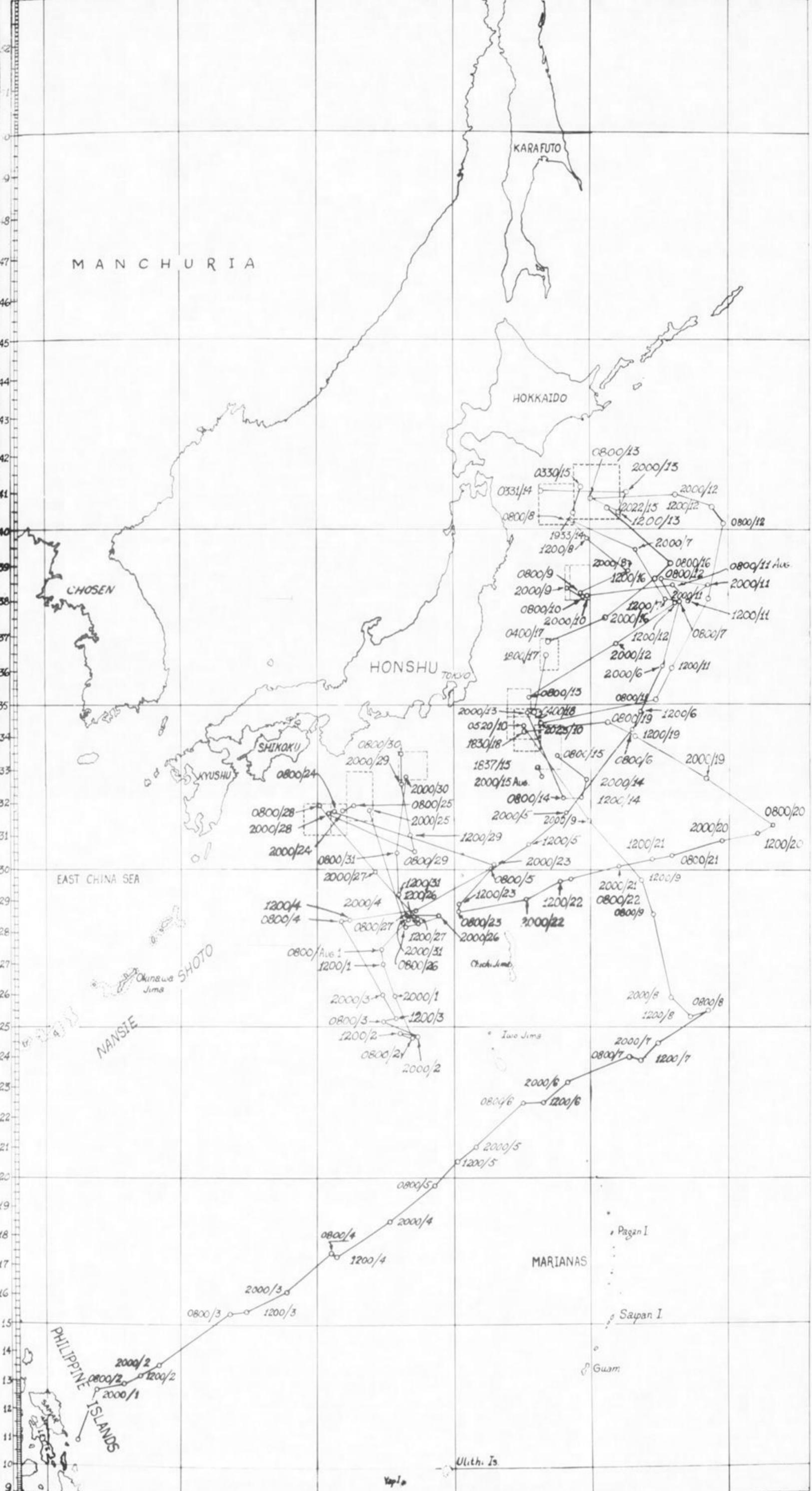
Commander THIRD Fleet's Secret Despatch 070741 (September) directing Task Group 38.2 to depart operating area 9 September and proceed to Tokyo Bay.

Commander Task Group 38.1's illustrated memoranda: Hunt 'em Out and Bastille Baedeker.

PART III - APPENDIX

- (A) Track charts 1 July - 2 September (day of Japanese surrender).
- (B) Awards presented on board.
- (C) Plan of Day and Flight Schedule for 15 August (day hostilities ceased).
- (D) Damage inflicted and casualties suffered by Air Group 94.
- (E) Photographs.





U.S.S. LEXINGTON TRACK CHART FROM 1 JULY TO 15 AUGUST

Awards presented on board to ship's company during period
 1 July - 15 September.

On 9 September:

Comdr. L. A. MARBET, USNR	- Bronze Star Medal
HOVEY, H. H., PhM3c, USNR	- Silver Star Medal
Lt. Comdr. J. M. ELSON, USNR	- Third Fleet Commend. Ribbon
Lt. A. J. BLOCK, USN	- " " " "
Lt. C. B. ROBINSON, USNR	- " " " "
Lt. E. T. COPE, USNR	- " " " "
EHRMIN, S. V., HA1c, USNR	- " " " "
HOBBS, P. G., Slc, USN	- " " " "
STOUGHTON, V. B., AM3c, USNR	- " " " "
SMITH, T. E., AMM3c, USNR	- " " " "
PETERS, W. D., SM3c, USNR	- " " " "
KEENAN, J. T., GM3c, USNR	- " " " "
MALONE, D. A., SF2c, USNR	- " " " "
KORZENIECKI, S. F., SM2c, USNR	- " " " "
Lt. K. L. JOHNSON, USNR	- Purple Heart

FLIGHT SCHEDULE

PLAN OF THE DAY - WEDNESDAY, 15 AUGUST 1945

15 August 1945

GENERAL DIRECTIVE:

DUTY DIVISION: V-1
DUTY SECTION: 2nd

- (1) Strike TOKYO Area. (6) Wear life belts topside.
(2) Haul over bunk covers. (7) Wear dog tags.
(3) Keep ship in Materiel Condition AFFIRM. (8) Look up and look out.
(4) Wear long sleeves and keep them down.
(5) Wear flash gear when alerted.

- 0030 - Early breakfast for 130 men of V-5 Division.
0140 - Early reveille for Air Department.
0200 - Early breakfast for Air Department in Crew's Mess.
0203 - (1) Reveille for all hands.
(2) Open all washrooms.
(3) Div. Petty Officers must make complete reveille and deck clear report.
0215 - Early breakfast for Air Department Officers and 30 pilots in wardroom.
0223 - Breakfast for all hands in Crew's Mess.
0253 - Breakfast in Wardroom for all Officers.
0300 - Flight Quarters.
0353 - General Quarters. All hands carry flash gear, gas masks and helmets.
Wear life belts and I.D. Tags. Wear full length sleeves.
0415 - First launch.
0453 - Sunrise. Be prepared to top off destroyers.
0800 - 0900 - Second meal for below deck personnel.
0800 - 1100 - Second meal for topside personnel including officers.
0800 - Muster on Stations. Division officers shall see that complete muster is made prior to reporting to General Quarters if necessary. All muster reports should be made by phone not later than 0900. Written reports must be submitted as soon as possible.
1100 - Buffet lunch in Wardroom for below deck officers only.
1300 - 1400 - Third meal for below deck personnel.
1300 - 1500 - Third meal for topside personnel including officers. Feeding time will be extended if there are a large number of alerts.
1718 - (About) Prepare to darken ship.
1818 - (About) Sunset. Darken ship.
1918 - (About) Secure from General Quarters.
1920 - Supper in Crew's Mess and Dinner in Wardroom.

O.O.D.	J.O.O.N.	J.O.O.N.
08-12 - Ens. Kalina	Lt. (jg) Van Dyke	
12-16 - Lt. (jg) Million	Ens. Bayer	
16-18 - Lt. Streater	Lt. (jg) Lee	
18-20 - Ens. Prier	Lt. Larson	
20-24 - Ens. Conover	Lt. (jg) Van Dyke	
00-04 - Lt. (jg) Million	Ens. Bayer	
04-08 - Lt. Streater	Lt. (jg) Lee	

GENERAL INFORMATION AND DIRECTIVES:

- New mess cooks will muster at the M.A.A. Shack at 0900 today.
- Today is a strike day, but if there is a change in plans or an opportunity permits, outfitting and training the landing force parties will be continued. The Maintenance Section and the Communication Section must receive basic training as well as the Marine detachment and the Bluejacket Company (Company L, Second Battalion). The 279 officers and men scheduled as part of the Landing Force must concentrate on their training and be well versed in all of their duties as well as the use of their equipment. Every precaution must be used to take good care of equipment.

T. A. AMROON.

- 0140 - Early reveille for Air Department.
0203 - Reveille for all hands.
0200 - Early breakfast for Air Department in crews mess.
0215 - Early breakfast for Air Department Officers and 30 pilots in wardroom.
0223 - Regular breakfast in crews mess.
0253 - Regular breakfast in wardroom.
0300 - Flight Quarters.
0353 - General Quarters.
0350 - Pilots for DCAP #1 and ABLE #1 will man planes on order.

0415 - LAUNCH DCAP #1 4 VFN 4 VBF } Target: Utsunomiya
Wx Recco 1 VBF 1 VB } Utsunomiya South
ABLE #1 1 VFP 11 VF } Tobe
TC from
Lex leader (Lt. GUINN VF)

0515 - LAUNCH SUBCAP #2 4 VF } Target: Tokyo - Shibaura
CHARLIE #2 16 VBF 15 VT 13 VB } Electric Co #1
TC from HANCOCK } Kawasaki
Lex leader (Lt. Cdr. MESTER VB)

0715 - LAUNCH BAKER #3 8 VF 4 VDF } Target: Imaichi
TC from } Hasuno
Lex leader (Lt. MELHUSE VF) } Kanonawa

0800 - CATAPULT RAPCAP #2 4 VF
DCAP #2 8 VBF

0845 - LAND DCAP #1 4 VFN 4 VBF } Weathered out from target.
Wx Recco 1 VBF 1 VB } Hit Hyakuriga-hara
ABLE #1 1 VFP 11 VF } Damaged: 2 hangars 1 ship.

0945 - LAUNCH ABLE #4 12 VF } Target: not assigned.
TC from }
Lex leader (Lt. Cdr. Mac GREGOR VF)

0955 - LAND SUBCAP #2 4 VF
CHARLIE #2 16 VBF 15 VT 13 VB - on order, jettisoned & returned

1045 - CATAPULT DCAP #3 4 VFN 4 VBF

1145 - LAUNCH SUBCAP #5 4 VBF
CHARLIE #5 4 VF (AGC) 12 VBF 15 VT 14 VB - Target: same
TC from LEX (Cdr. MANDARICH VF) as Charlie #2
Lex leader (Lt. Cdr. ROCKWELL VT)

1155 - LAND RAPCAP #2 4 VF
DCAP #2 8 VBF
BAKER #3 8 VF 4 VBF

1345 - LAUNCH SUBCAP #6 4 VF
DCAP #4 4 VF 4 VBF
BAKER #6 8 VF 4 VBF } Target: not assigned
TC from }
Lex leader (Lt. Cdr. WALL VBF)

1415 - LAND ABLE #4 12 VF

1515 - LAND DCAP #3 4 VFN 4 VBF

1615 - LAND SUBCAP #5 4 VBF
CHARLIE #5 4 VF (AGC) 12 VBF 15 VT 14 VB

1745 - LAND BAKER #6 8 VF 4 VBF

1800 - LAND SUBCAP #6 4 VF
DCAP #4 4 VF 4 VBF

PEACE - IT'S WONDERFUL

Note: All future offensive air operations are suspended.

TABLE OF STATISTICS

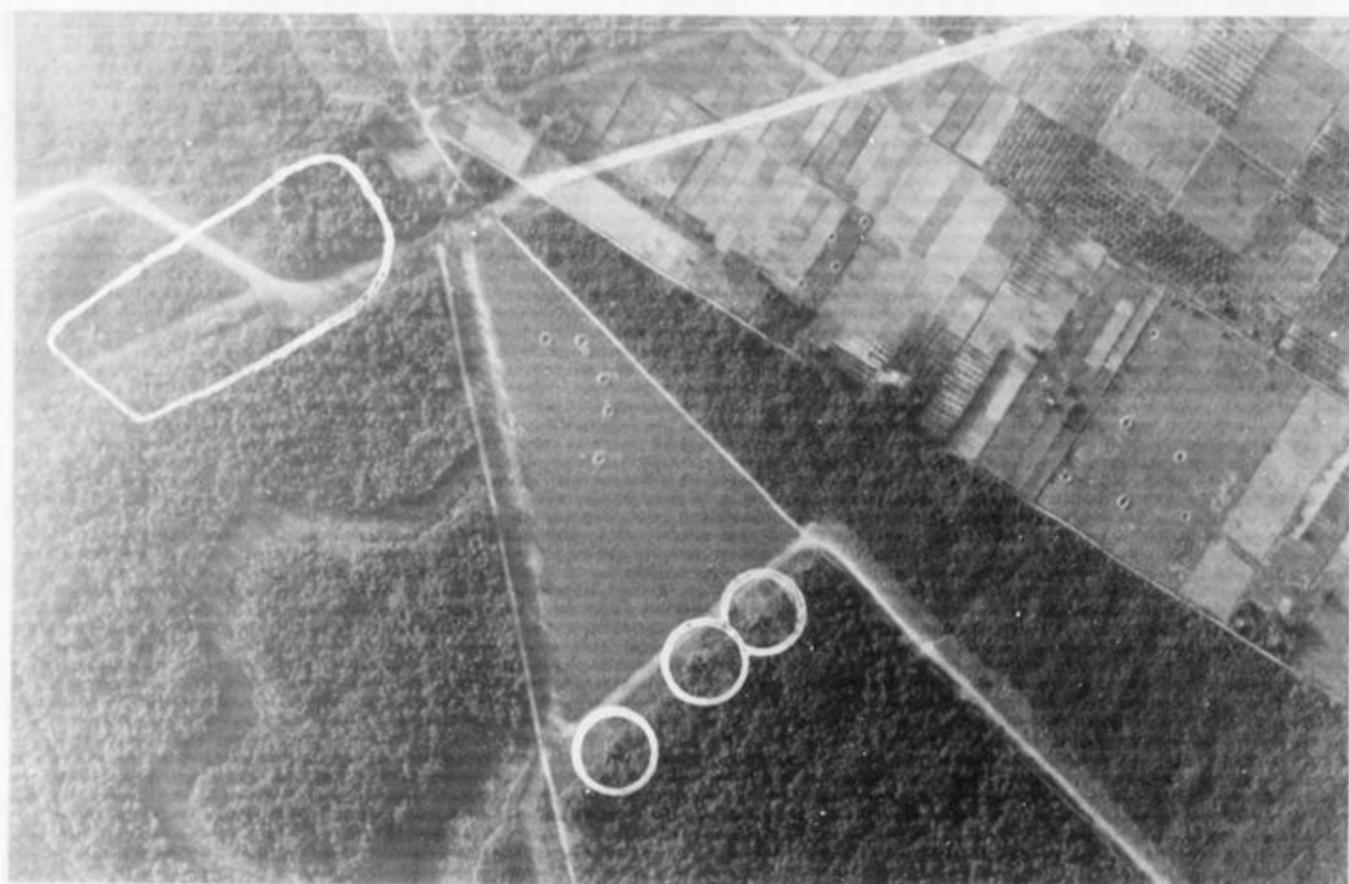
1 July - 15 September 1945

Damage inflicted by Air Group 94

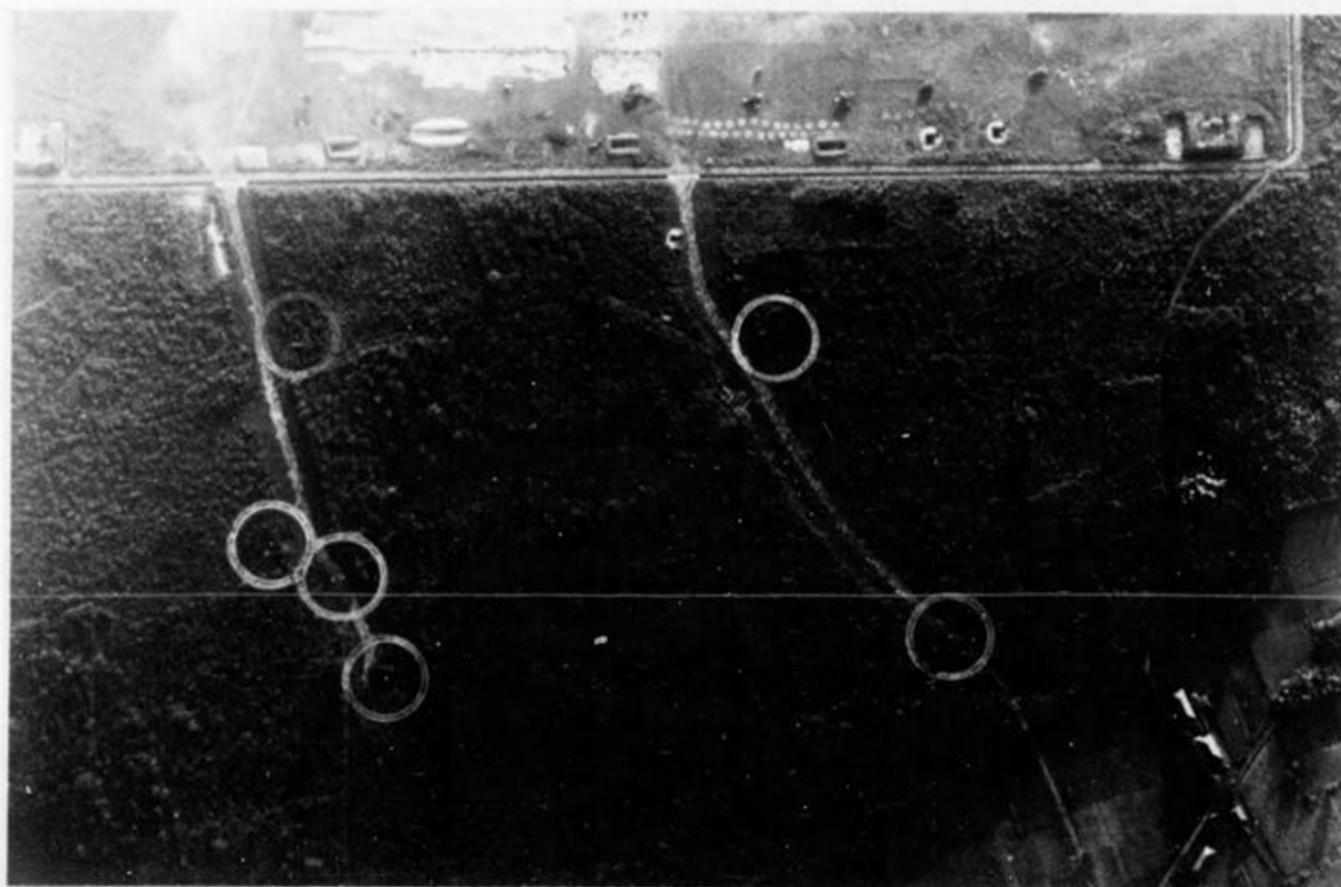
Planes destroyed in the air	1
Planes probably destroyed in the air	0
Planes damaged in the air	0
Planes destroyed on the ground	190
Planes probably destroyed on the ground	64
Planes damaged on the ground	176
Naval shipping sunk, destroyed, or damaged	1 BB, 1 CV, 2 BB-XCV, 1 CA, 1 CL, 2 DD, 1 DE, 1 PF
Merchant shipping sunk, destroyed, or damaged	27,000 G.T.
Damage to ground installations	As listed in Action Reports

Casualties suffered by Air Group 94

	<u>Pilots</u>	<u>Aircrewmen</u>
Killed or missing in action	10	4
Operational deaths	3	0



Dispersal 3 miles north of Mikatagahara

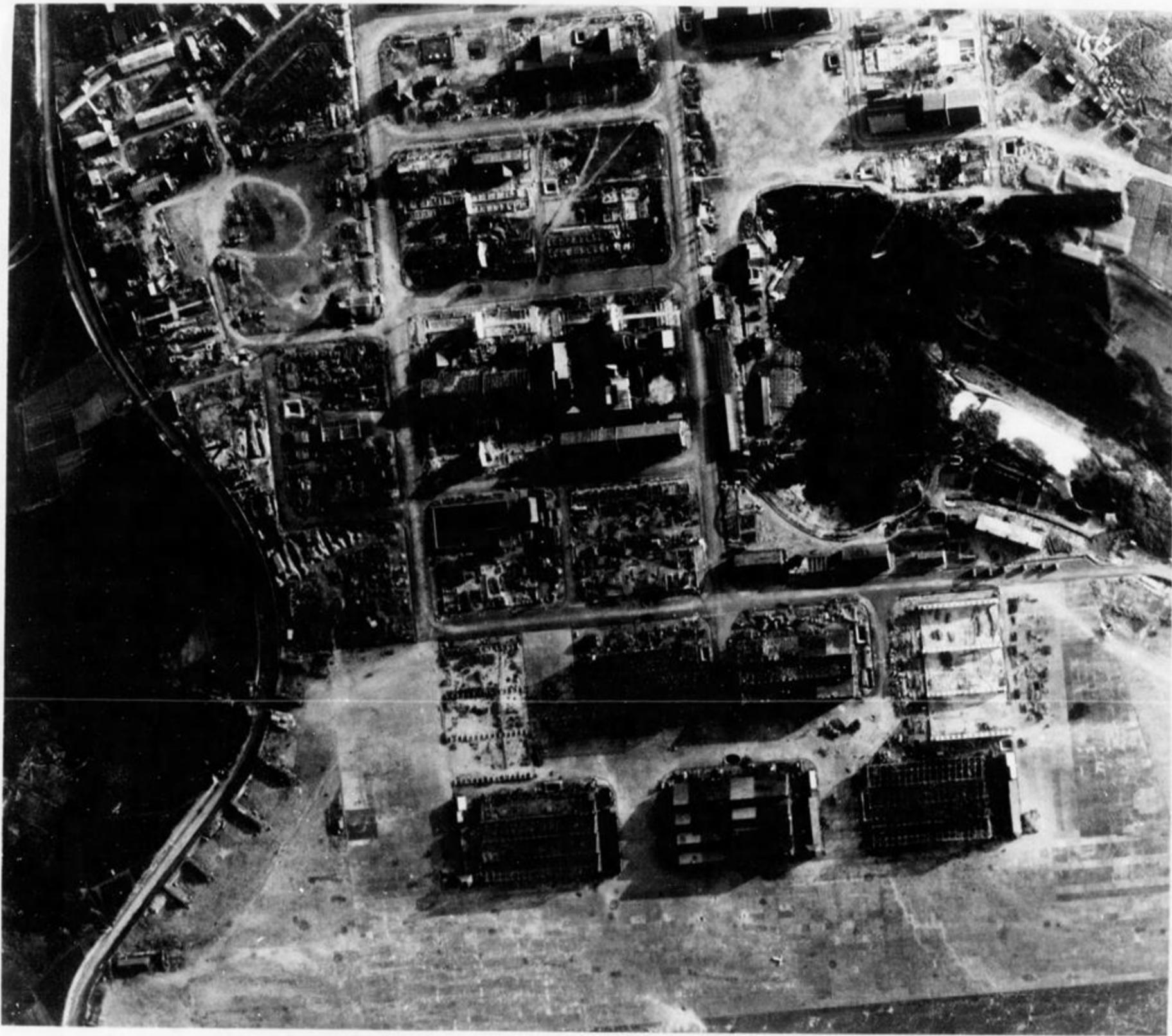


Nasuno Airfield

Early morning photographs enable pilots to return during day and burn out camouflaged planes.



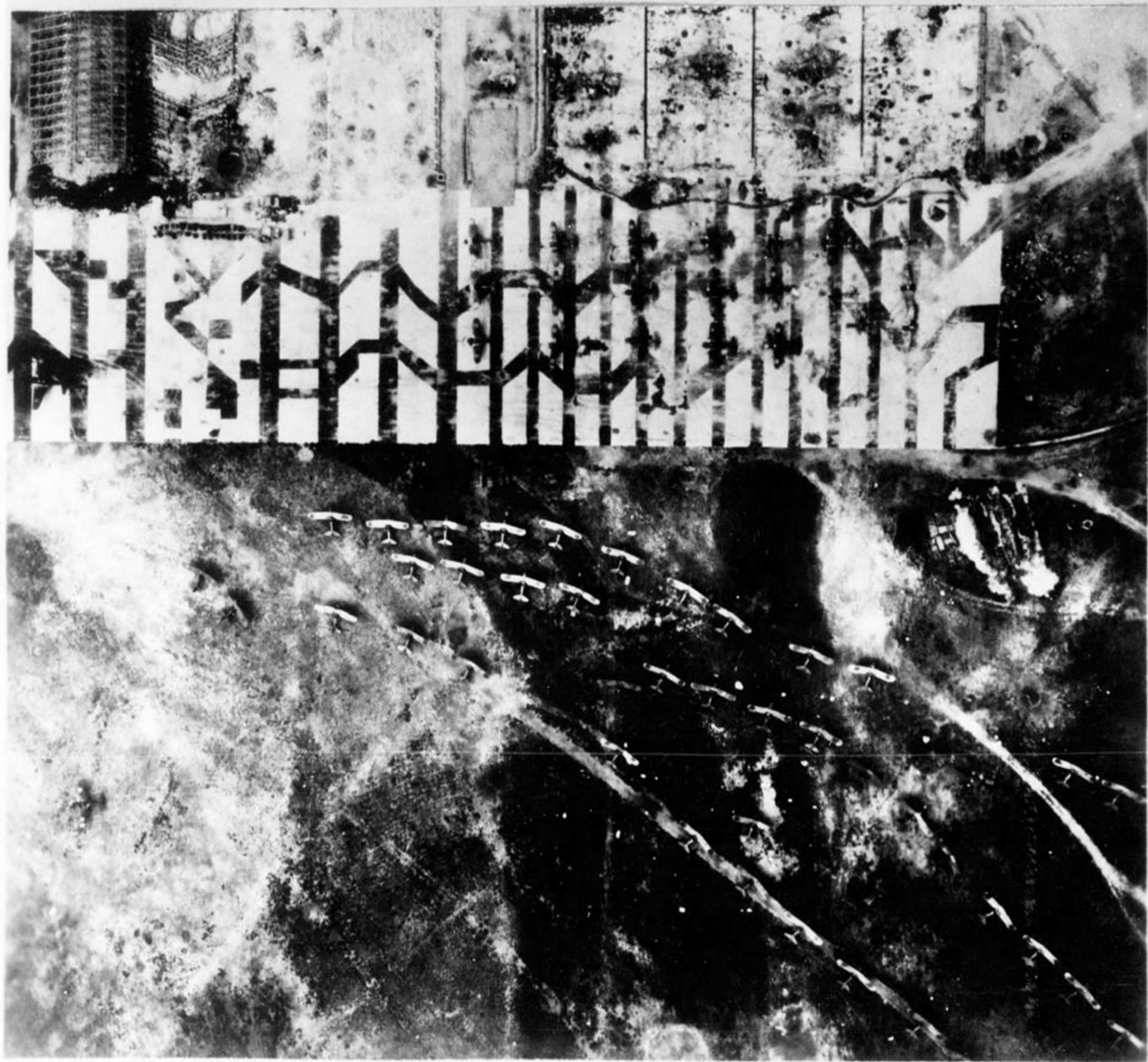
Hermaphrodite ISE Given Housewarming
KURE 24-28 July



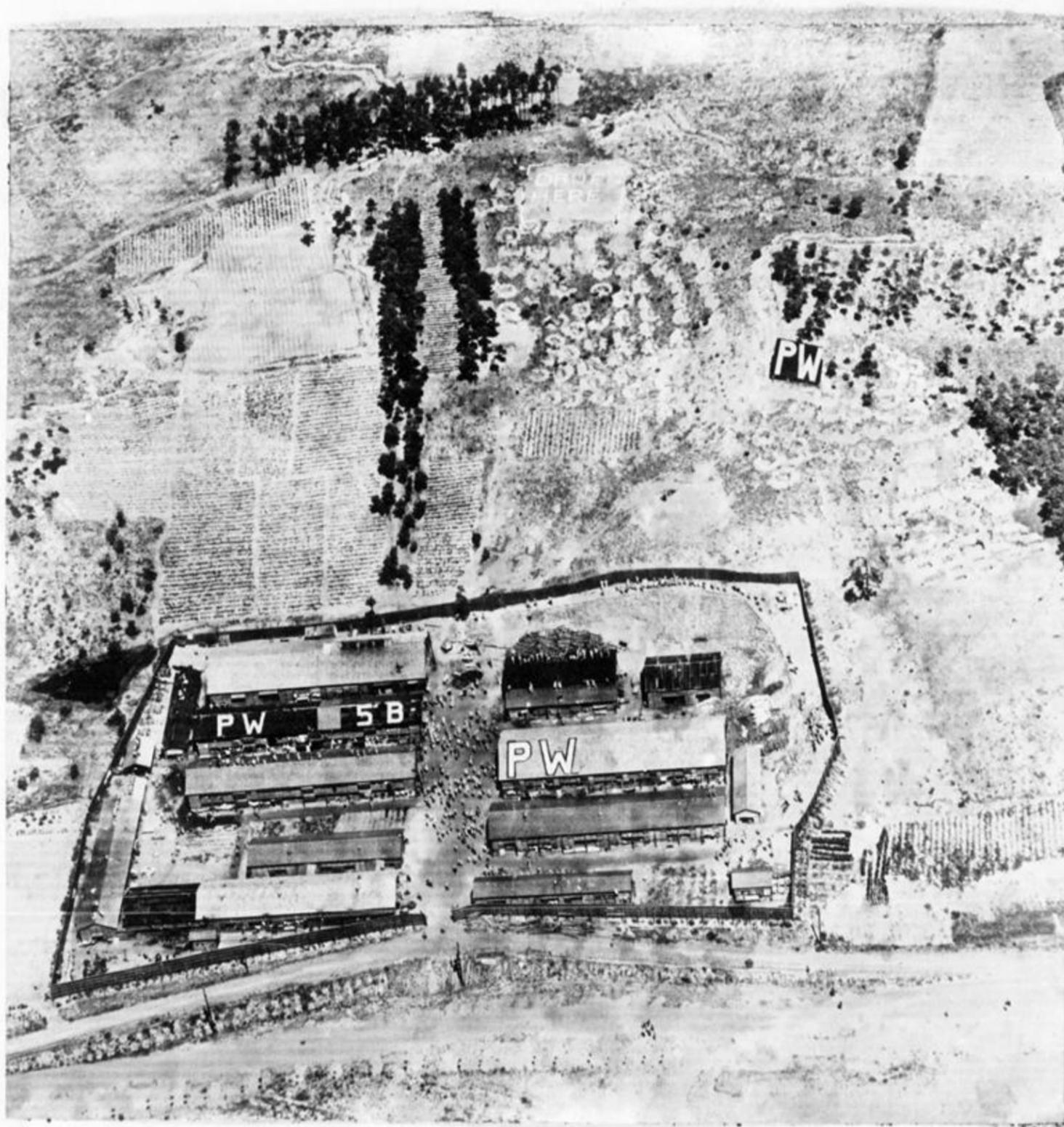
Hangar and Shop Installations Pounded at OI, 30 July



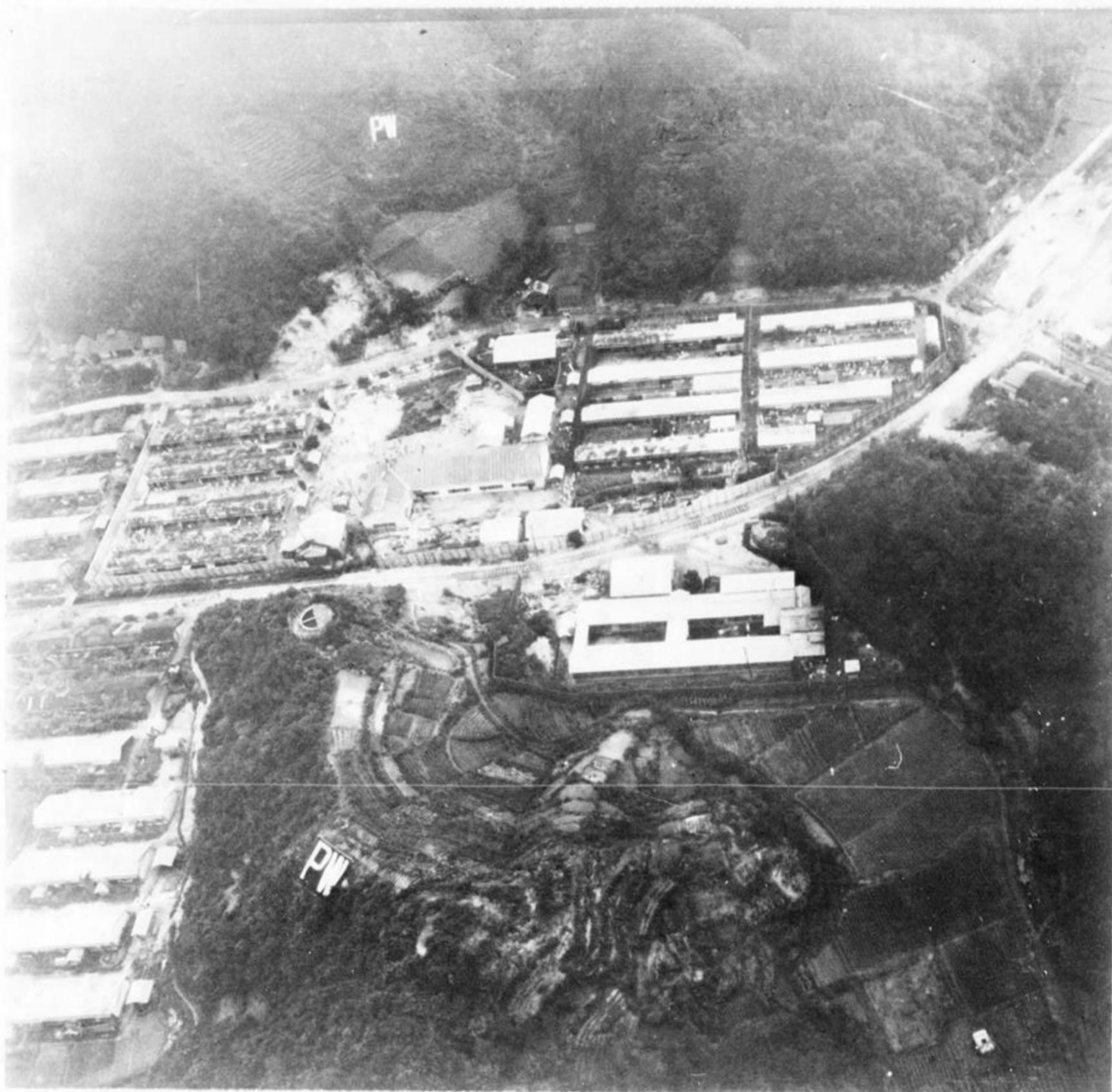
Marine detachment leaving Lexington prior to landing at Yokosuka with occupation forces.



Planes line apron in surrender, Koriyama Airfield.
Most of this group are navy trainers.



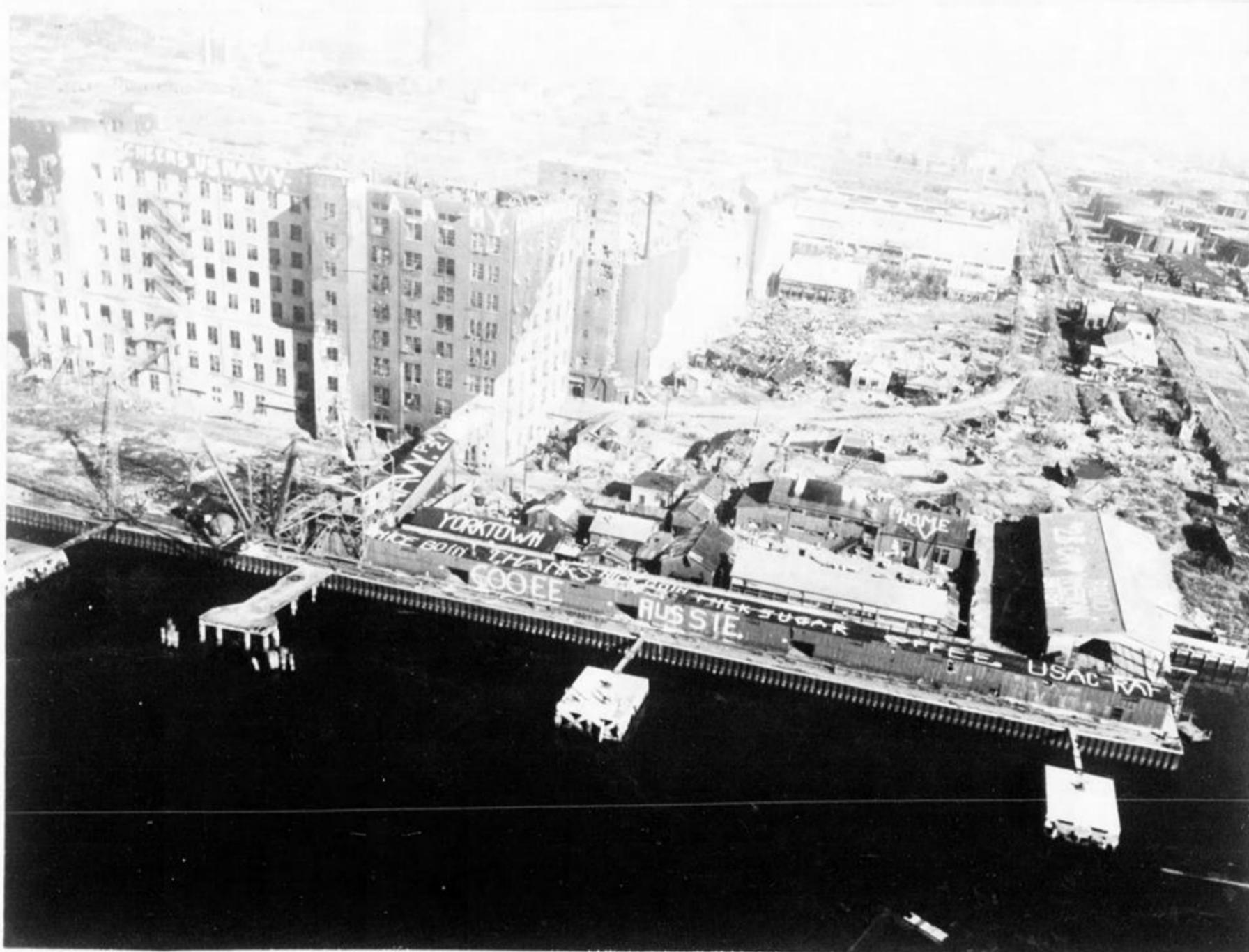
Prisoners anticipate return after first Lexington visit,
Niigata, 27 August.



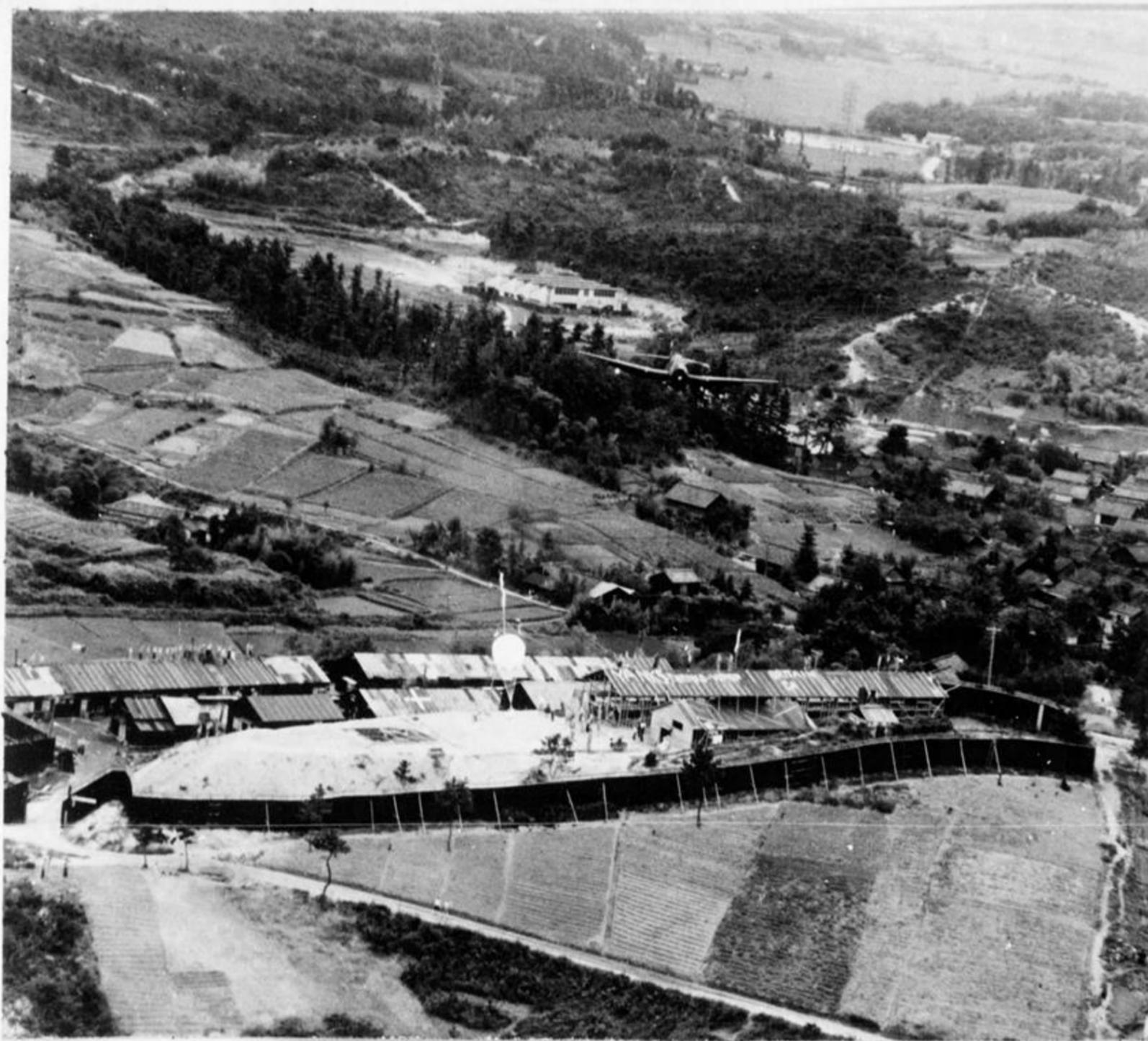
Lexington fliers discover camp at Taira South,
Iwake Coal Mine District.



Air Group 94 pilots find Marine Major "Pappy" Boyington among prisoners at Omori. Boyington, ex-flying tiger and leader of the famous "black sheep squadron" had been reported missing in action since February 1944.



Kawasaki industrial area south of Tokyo was marked by jubilation.



Lexington supply mission, Narumi, Southeastern Honshu,
3 September.



First Lexington liberty party goes ashore
at Yokosuka. Nagato is passed enroute.