

NND 978133

By OPNARS, Date 4/1/97

U. S. S. NEW MEXICO

(10-jdn)

EB4C/A16-3
Serial 0161Care Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, Calif.,
1 July 1944.CONFIDENTIALFrom: The Commanding Officer.
To: The Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.Via: (1) Commander Task Unit 52.10.7.
(2) Commander Task Group 52.10.
(3) Commander Task Force 52.
(4) Commander Task Force 51.
(5) Commander FIFTH Fleet.
(6) Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet.Subject: Action Report, Bombardments and Operations in Support of the
Assault and Occupation of SAIPAN ISLAND, MARIANAS ISLANDS,
14-25 June 1944.References: (a) Pacific Fleet Confidential Order 2CL-44.
(b) CTF 52 Attack Order ALL-44.
(c) ComCruDiv NINE Operation Order 1-44.Enclosures: (A) Navigational track of bombardments. - p.13
(B) Executive Officer's Report. - p.21
(C) Gunnery Officer's Report. - p.22
(D) Communication Officer's Comments. - p.44In accordance with Reference (a), the following Action Report
is submitted:PART ONE1. General Narrative - (a) The U.S.S. NEW MEXICO engaged in
bombardments and covering operations in support of the assault and occupa-
tion of SAIPAN ISLAND, MARIANAS ISLANDS, during the period from 14 June to
25 June, 1944.(b) The NEW MEXICO bombarded assigned targets on TINIAN ISLAND
with main, secondary and 5 inch 25 caliber anti-aircraft batteries on 14 June
and 15 June, the day prior to and the day of initial landings on adjacent
SAIPAN ISLAND. On 16 June the ship bombarded assigned targets on GUAM ISLAND
with the three batteries.(c) The bombardments were uneventful for the NEW MEXICO.
Scheduled fire was delivered as planned, in general. There were only two
opportunities for counter battery fire. The total ammunition expenditure was:
213 14 inch high capacity projectiles; 135 high capacity and 27 common five
inch 51 caliber projectiles, and 484 five inch 25 caliber AA rounds.

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(d) The covering operations from 17 June to 25 June were more eventful - twelve times Japanese aircraft closed within attacking range. Only twice, however, did they drop bombs or torpedoes within 2000 yards or less of the NEW MEXICO; only once was the NEW MEXICO able to fire at the attackers.

(e) No significant material or personnel casualties were suffered by this ship.

2. Preliminaries - (a) The departure of the Task Group from ROI, the last staging point, on 10 June is detailed with other preliminaries in the Chronology (Part II of this letter.)

(b) The ship's mission was to assist in providing fire support for the assault and occupation of SAIPAN as directed by References (b) and (c) and other plans and orders of both higher and lower commands. (All are not referenced in this report.) The ship's assumptions were as given in those references. The ship's plans, prepared in detail on a basis of the information given in the reference plans and in dispatches, are forwarded as Appendix 4 of Enclosure (C).

(c) Own forces at the outset of the action were disposed as directed by higher authority. The Chronology gives the general disposition of the Task Unit with which this ship operated.

(d) The only enemy forces encountered by the NEW MEXICO (those on the MARIANAS did not direct any fire at this vessel) were in enemy bombers and other aircraft. This command has no independent information about the whereabouts of these aircraft in the preliminary stage of the assault.

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P A R T T W O

1. For chronological account of action see next page and the following pages. For navigational track see Enclosure (A).

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C H R O N O L O G Y

(All dates East longitude: all times Zone Minus 10)

- 10 June Departed ROI anchorage, KWAJALEIN ATOLL, MARSHALL ISLANDS, with Task Group 53.15 (ComCruDiv NINE, Rear Admiral AINSWORTH in HONOLULU).
- 12 June NEW MEXICO fueled BULLARD, CHAUNCEY and ANTHONY.
- 13 June At 1143, Task Unit 52.10.7 was formed, consisting of NEW MEXICO, MINNEAPOLIS and SAN FRANCISCO, LEFORD, TERRY, BRAINE and DICKERSON (ComBatDiv THREE, Rear Admiral WHEELER in NEW MEXICO), and proceeded ahead of the remainder of the Task Group in order to arrive at objective in time to commence bombardment as scheduled.

14 JUNE - DOG MINUS ONE DAY

- Midwatch Passed between ACUIJAN and ROTA Islands, proceeded toward Fire Support Sector SEVEN for bombardment of TINIAN ISLAND in accordance with CTF 52 Attack Order All-44. Sector SEVEN is West of TINIAN between a line bearing 255° (T.) from USHI Point, TINIAN, and a line bearing 180° (T.) from LALO Point, TINIAN.
- 0510 Went to General Quarters, set Material Condition ZEBRA. 7 03791
- 0519 Launched plane No. 2, Pilot, Ensign H.K. ANDERSON; passenger, KURZAWA, E.W., ARM3c.
- 0527 Launched Plane No. 1, Pilot, Lt.(jg) T.H. MOORE; passenger, CAIRNS, A.E., ARM2c.
- 0538 Steadied on course 000° (T.), first firing course. (See NAVIGATIONAL TRACK, Enclosure A, for track during firing.) NEW MEXICO, MINNEAPOLIS and SAN FRANCISCO in column in that order initially, but these three heavy ships operated independently within the Fire Support Sector during the majority of the remainder of the firing period; screening vessels maneuvered as directed.
- 0544 Commenced firing Main Battery (14 inch 50 caliber) at assigned targets on TINIAN Island. (See statistical summary in Gunnery Officer's Report, Enclosure (C), for detail of ammunition expenditure, target, range, time of salvos.)
- 0810 Ceased firing Main Battery.

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0813 Secured from General Quarters, set special condition of readiness for aircraft servicing.

0846 Recovered CALIFORNIA Plane No. 23 for servicing.

0853 Recovered CALIFORNIA Plane No. 24 for servicing.

0858 BRAINE reported she was hit by gunfire from shore battery on TINIAN Island.

0938 Catapulted CALIFORNIA Plane No. 24.

0947 Catapulted CALIFORNIA Plane No. 23.

1003 BRAINE came alongside; NEW MEXICO Junior Medical Officer and Hospital Corpsman transferred to her to aid in caring for casualties from gunfire.

1021 BRAINE cast off.

1045 Recovered Plane No. 1.

1053 Recovered Plane No. 2.

1114 BRAINE came alongside, transferred three enlisted patients (casualties from gunfire) to NEW MEXICO and returned Medical Officer and Corpsman to NEW MEXICO.

1142 BRAINE cast off.

1150 WENT TO GENERAL QUARTERS, set material condition ZEBRA for further scheduled bombardment of TINIAN Island.

1153 Launched Plane No. 2; Pilot, Lt.(jg) W. C. O'NEARA, passenger, KURZAWA, E. W., ARM3c.

1159 Launched Plane No. 1; Pilot, Lt.(jg) T.H. MOORE, passenger, CAIRNS, A.E., ARM2c.

1221 Commenced firing Main Battery at assigned targets on TINIAN Island.

1341 Shifted Main Battery fire to shore battery which fired at BRAINE.

1410 Ceased firing Main Battery on shore battery.

1438 Resumed firing Main Battery at assigned targets on TINIAN Island.

1520 Ceased firing Main Battery.

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- 1545 Commenced firing Secondary Battery (5 inch 51 caliber) at assigned targets on TINIAN Island
- 1616 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
- 1619 Commenced firing 5 inch 25 caliber Anti-Aircraft Battery at assigned targets on TINIAN Island.
- 1739 Ceased firing 5 inch 25 caliber Anti-Aircraft Battery. Completed scheduled firings for Dog Minus One Day.
- 1801 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1807 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 1819 Secured from General Quarters and from Material Condition ZEBRA.
- 1821 MINNEAPOLIS and SAN FRANCISCO formed column on NEW MEXICO; Task Unit proceeded to off-shore portion of Fire Support Sector to maneuver during darkness.

15 J U N E - DOG DAY

Task Unit returned to inshore portion of Fire Support Sector to continue scheduled firing on assigned targets on TINIAN Island, to stand by for counter-battery fire, and to service own and other ships' aircraft.

- 0500 Went to General Quarters, set material condition ZEBRA for further Scheduled bombardment of assigned targets on TINIAN Island. Heavy ships of Task Unit operated independently within sector, generally, as on previous day.
- 0520 Launched Plane No. 2; Pilot, Ensign H. K. ANDERSON; passenger, KURZAWA, E.W., ARM3c.
- 0526 Launched Plane No. 1; Pilot, Lt.(jg) T. H. MOORE; passenger, CAIRNS, A.E., ARM2c.
- 0537 Commenced firing Main Battery at assigned targets on TINIAN Island.
- 0625 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 0634 Commenced firing 5 inch 25-caliber Anti-Aircraft Battery at assigned targets on TINIAN Island.
- 0643 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.

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- 0645 Commenced firing 5 inch 51 caliber Secondary Battery at assigned targets on TINIAN Island.
- 0654 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
- 0705 Secured from General Quarters, set special condition of readiness, stood by for counter-battery fire and for servicing own and other ships' aircraft.
- 0732 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 0737 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 0831 Launched Plane No. 1, Pilot, Lt.(jg) T. H. MOORE; passenger, CAIRNS, A.E., ARM2c.
- 0844 Launched Plane No. 2, Pilot, Lt.(jg) W. C. O'MEARA; passenger, KURZAWA, E.W. ARM3c.
- 0850 Recovered COLORADO Plane No. 4, Pilot, Lt.(jg) BARGHES; passenger, WILLIAMS, H.G., ARMLc, for servicing.
- 0857 Recovered COLORADO Plane No. 5, Pilot, Lt.(jg) AUSTON, passenger, McKENNETT, ALMLc, for servicing.
- 0942 Launched COLORADO Plane No. 5.
- 0948 Launched COLORADO Plane No. 4.
- 0958 Recovered CALIFORNIA Plane No. 24, Pilot, Lt.(jg) WARD, passenger, Lieut. HEADLEY.
- 1006 Recovered CALIFORNIA Plane No. 23, pilot, Lt. WEST, passenger, McGAUGHIE, ARM2c.
- 1043 Launched CALIFORNIA Plane No. 23.
- 1049 Launched CALIFORNIA Plane No. 24.
- 1259 Commenced firing 5 inch 25 caliber Anti-Aircraft Battery at TINIAN target designated by NEW MEXICO spotting plane - enemy anti-aircraft gun which spotter observed firing at him and other aircraft.
- 1305 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft Battery.

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-
- 1330 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1338 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 1427 Launched Plane No. 2, pilot, Ensign H. K. AMERSON, passenger, KURZAWA, E.W., ARM3c.
- 1433 Launched Plane No. 1, pilot, Lt.(jg) T. H. MOORE, passenger, CAIRNS, A.E., ARM2c.
- 1748 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1756 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 1807 Task Groups 52.10.7 and 52.10.8 commenced joining in accordance with CTF 52 Retirement Plan A19, forming Covering Group TWO (CBD-3, R.Adn. WEYLER in NEW MEXICO) to cover the retirement of Task Force 52 transports.
- 1820 NEW MEXICO designated base unit for formation of cruising Disposition FIVE ROGER TWO.
- 1835 Went to General Quarters, set material condition ZEBRA, to repel JAPANESE aircraft.
- 1846 Commenced firing automatic weapons at enemy planes. One bomb dropped 2000 yards ahead to starboard, near MINNEAPOLIS.
- 1848 Ceased firing; expended 65 rounds 40 mm. and 159 rounds 20 mm. ammunition.
- 1954 Secured from General Quarters.
- 20-24 Covering Group TWO took position approximately 10 miles ahead on Southern bow of Retirement Groups, steamed generally west and south of SAIPAN-TINIAN area.

16 J U N E

Steaming westward of SAIPAN-TINIAN with Covering Group TWO.

- 0224 Changed course to 200⁰ (T.), proceeded toward GUAM; shifted to Task Force 53 organization, NEW MEXICO a ship of Task Unit 53.15.1. (CBD THREE, R.Adn. WEYLER in NEW MEXICO.)
- 0447 Went to General Quarters for routine sunrise alert.
- 0533 Secured from General Quarters.

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- 0730 NEW MEXICO detached from group, proceeded independently, approaching GUAM for scheduled bombardment in accordance with CTF 53 Attack Order A165-44 and Comcrudiv NINE OpPlan 2-44.
- 0735 Launched Plane No. 2, pilot, Ensign H. K. ANDERSON, passenger, KURZAWA, E.W., ARM3c.
- 0741 Launched Plane No. 1, pilot, Lt.(jg) T. H. MOORE, Passenger CAIRNS, A.E., ARM2c.
- 0745 Went to General Quarters, set material condition ZEBRA, for bombardment. Steaming in Fire Support Area ONE, in subsector between a line bearing 315° (T.) from ASAN Rock and a line bearing 307° (T.) from westerly end of CABRAS ISLAND.
- 0820 Commenced firing Main Battery at assigned targets on GUAM.
- 0850 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 0901 Commenced firing five inch 25 caliber Anti-Aircraft battery at assigned targets on GUAM.
- 0918 Ceased firing Anti-Aircraft battery.
- 0918 Commenced firing five inch 51 caliber Secondary Battery at assigned targets on GUAM.
- 0937 Ceased firing Secondary Battery.
- 0949 Commenced firing Main Battery at assigned targets on GUAM.
- 0950 Ceased firing Main Battery.
- 1008 Ceased all firing on orders of CTG 53.15.
- 1020 Recovered Plane No. 2.
- 1024 Recovered Plane No. 1.
- 1045 Rejoined other units of Task Group 53.15, proceeded northeasterly and thence to fueling area.
- 2138 FARRAGUT came alongside to starboard to receive fuel.
- 2301 FARRAGUT cast off, fueling completed.

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17 JUNE

- 0233 HOGAN came alongside to starboard for fueling.
- 0445 HOGAN cast off, fueling completed.
- 0551 CruDiv SIX and DesRon FORTY FIVE detached; remaining units proceeded to SAIPAN area to serve as covering group.
- 0900 Task Group designation changed from 53.15 to 52.10. Ships of Task Group present: NEW MEXICO, IDAHO, PENNSYLVANIA, HONOLULU, ST. LOUIS, FARRAGUT, AYLWIN, DALE, STANSBURY, DICKERSON, HOGAN, TALBOT and WILLIAMSON. Task Group commander remains ComCruDiv NINE, Rear Admiral AINSWORTH, in HONOLULU.
- 1813 Went to General Quarters, set material condition ZEBRA, to repel enemy planes reported by radar. No planes were sighted.
- 1937 Secured from General Quarters.

18 JUNE

Operating SAIPAN area as covering group.

- 0447 Went to General Quarters, set material condition ZEBRA, to repel enemy planes reported by radar. This ship was not attacked.
- 0551 Secured from General Quarters.
- 1703 Went to General Quarters, set material condition ZEBRA, to repel enemy planes reported by radar. This ship was not attacked.
- 1721 Secured from General Quarters.
- 1817 Went to General Quarters, set material condition ZEBRA, to repel enemy planes. Two planes closed this Task Group but did not attack.
- 1859 Secured from General Quarters.

19 JUNE

Operating in SAIPAN area as covering group.

- 0920 Went to General Quarters, set material condition ZEBRA, to repel enemy planes reported by radar. No attack made.
- 1000 Secured from General Quarters.

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1730 Went to Air Defense because of radar reports of enemy aircraft closing
formation. Planes passed ahead of formation three or four miles.
1804 Secured from Air Defense.

20 JUNE

Operating in SAIPAN Area as covering group. Fueled DICKERSON.

21 JUNE

Operating in SAIPAN Area as covering group.

22 JUNE

0147 Went to Air Defense; radar reported enemy planes closing.
0225 Secured from Air Defense.
0419 Went to Air Defense; enemy planes closed formation.
--- PENNSYLVANIA and ST. LOUIS fired on enemy aircraft.
--- Shrapnel from friendly ships' fire caused minor injury to two NEW
MEXICO men at topside gun station.
0435 Went to General Quarters for routine sunrise alert.
0537 Secured from General Quarters.
0755 HONOLULU and ST. LOUIS, with screening vessels, left formation for
SAIPAN anchorage.
1130 NEW MEXICO, IDAHO and PENNSYLVANIA ordered to SAIPAN anchorage to fuel
destroyers of transport screen and fire support groups.
1341 Anchored off SAIPAN. Fueled PHILLIP, REMEY and KANE.
1950 Patrolling destroyers off shore reported enemy planes overhead.
--- Enemy bomber (probably a BETTY) flew aft along port side of NEW MEXICO,
altitude about 100 feet, distance a few hundred yards, after dropping
two bombs (or one bomb and torpedo) 700 to 1000 yards off starboard
bow of NEW MEXICO, near two other anchored ships. One ship reported
she was torpedoed.
--- Went to Air Defense, prepared to get under way.

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1955 Cast off KANE.

2005 Went to General Quarters, set material condition ZEDRA.

2021 Underway in accordance with CTG 52.10 orders.

2040 Task Group began forming, IDAHO and PENNSYLVANIA in column astern of
NEW MEXICO, HONOLULU and ST. LOUIS in column 2000 yards on port beam
of NEW MEXICO. Eight screening vessels assigned stations.

2108 Secured from General Quarters, proceeded toward area northward of
SAIPAN.

2321 Went to Air Defense because of radar report of enemy aircraft.

23 JUNE

0032 Secured from Air Defense.

----- Proceeded toward fueling area southeast of SAIPAN.

0718 Tanker MARIAS came alongside.

1143 Radar reported four to eight enemy aircraft distant about 63 miles,
closing.

1202 Went to Air Defense.

Enemy aircraft closed two CVE's astern of fueling formation, dive
bombed the ships without success.

1211 Cast off MARIAS.

1235 Secured from Air Defense.

24 JUNE

Operating southeast of SAIPAN and TINIAN.

----- Proceeded to new assigned area northeast of SAIPAN.

1300 Formation joined by TG 52.11 (KITKUN BAY, GAMBIER BAY and screen) OTC
remains CTG 52.10

25 JUNE

----- Operating northeast of SAIPAN as before. Task Group 52.11 detached.

1700 Directed to proceed to ENIWETOK.

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PART THREE

1. Performance of own ordnance material and equipment is detailed in Gunnery Officer's Report, Enclosure (C) to this letter.

2. The performance of enemy ordnance material and equipment was not observed intimately, i.e., no damage was inflicted on this vessel nor was there any evidence that this vessel was the target of any enemy fire.

PART FOUR

1. Own battle damage - None

2. Enemy battle damage - is discussed, to the limited extent possible for shipboard observers, in the Gunnery Officer's Report, Enclosure (C) to this letter. Enemy damage observed or surmised by the spotting aviators is reported in the same enclosure.

PART FIVE

1. Special comment is appropriate on the following matters:

(a) Communications - See Enclosure (D).

(b) Radar and enemy air operations - See Commanding Officer's letter, Serial 007 of 30 June 1944, copies furnished all addressees.

2. The Executive Officer's Report is submitted as Enclosure (B) to this letter.

PART SIX

1. All officers and men performed their duties satisfactorily.

2. There were no personnel casualties worthy of mention.

E. M. Zacharias
E. M. ZACHARIAS.

Copy to: CTF 53
ComBatPac

Advance copy to:
CominCh
CinCPac