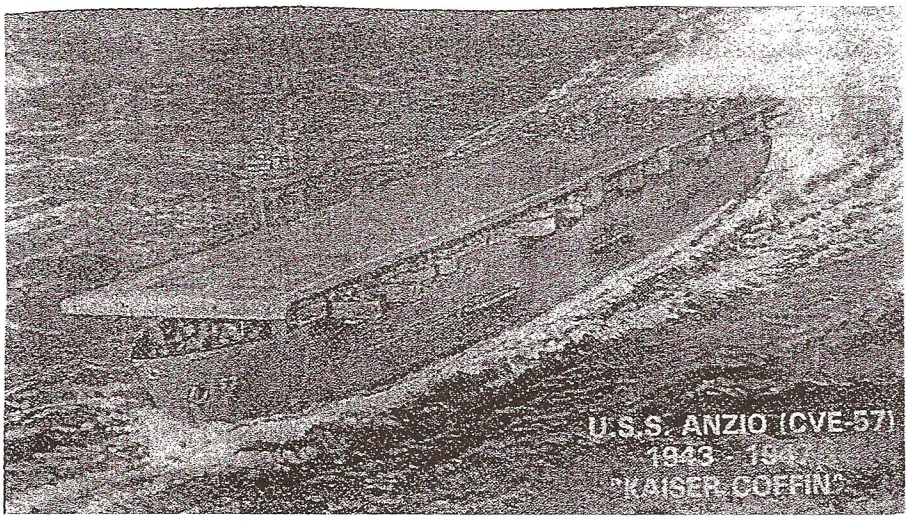


HISTORY OF USS ANZIO (CVE 57)

FORMERLY NAMED USS CORAL SEA

FORMERLY NAMED USS ALIKULA BAY

Briefly the problem was this: Naval aviation had zoomed into the fore in the wake of the Coral Sea and Midway battles. But how was the U.S, to mass produce the huge number of plane carriers needed if it took two years to complete just one?

Nearing completion at his Vancouver, Washington, shipyards, Henry J. Kaiser announced on 18 March 1943, was the first in a projected fleet of dual-purpose flat-tops. Although short on armor, speed and gun power, these auxiliary carriers could (1) ferry fueled- up military planes to within flying range of combat areas (2) launch their own strikes against a target, using catapults if adverse weather conditions prevented take-offs from their short flight decks. Adaptation of the Kaiser cargo shipbuilding technique would transform merchant hulls into "jeep" carriers at the rate of six per month. A 5OO-foot child of expediency, the CVE was born.

Third of the Kaiser-built CASABLANCA Class escort aircraft carriers, the USS CORAL SEA was housed in a mammoth dome of girders at Vancouver on 1 May 1943, ready to take her initial plunge. On hand to watch the CORAL SEA slip down the ways was Vice Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, who had helped to put the fight in her name by conning a task force in the 1942 Battle of Coral Sea. Speaking to the assembled group

of top Army-Navy officers, yard workers and officials, Admiral Fletcher bade "good luck and good hunting" to the CORAL SEA, also made grim reference to the recently announced execution of Doolittle's fliers in Japan: "The splendid young Americans who man the CORAL SEA will help avenge their comrades murdered in cold blood."

Climaxing the Saturday ceremonies, the Admiral's attractive wife poised to wield the traditional ribboned christening bottle, took a swipe at the carrier and missed. Kaiser's son Edgar jumped in to save the day, grabbed the bottle and scored a sudsy bull's eye on the sharp prow seconds before escort carrier CORAL SEA plowed stern-first into the water.

Civilian workers and a few chosen members of her crew took the newly-floated CORAL SEA out of Vancouver 14 August 1943 and down the Columbia River to Astoria, Oregon. Trouble with the carrier's boiler plant twice delayed her commissioning, but on the morning of 27 August 1943, USS CORAL SEA was made an official fleet unit in ceremonies at Astoria's Pier 3. There were speeches pointing up the significance of her name and the battle from which it was taken, thumping martial airs played by the Tongue Point Naval Air Station band, and prayers by the CORAL SEA' s Chaplain Will-Mathis Dunn. Captain Herbert Watson Taylor, USN, installed as the vessel's first commanding officer, read his orders and set the first watch.

For a month the CORAL SEA lay berthed at Astoria, taking aboard supplies, organizing her departments and readying for sea. Enveloped by a dense fog, she stood out of the Columbia River on 24 September, moved through the Pacific and anchored next morning at Sinclair Inlet off the Bremerton Navy Yard. Skipper Taylor ran his new command through the Puget Sound degaussing range on the 27th, then commenced conducting her through post-commissioning exercises out of Port Townsend on the 29th. Radar and radio direction-finding gear were calibrated, and structural firing tests held. Bombs were loaded at Port Townsend before tying up at Seattle on the 30th.

Adjustment and calibration of her standard compass was effected on 1 October, and the CORAL SEA departed Seattle the following day, and stopped off at Blake Island for ammunition before slipping through fog-blanketed Admiralty Inlet. San Francisco-bound, she stood through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, then nosed south in the Pacific.

Daily dawn alerts, gunnery training and lecture classes held enroute gave the CORAL SEA's 800 sailors a foretaste of future forward area activities, welded them into a security conscious, enthusiastic fighting unit. Arriving in San Francisco Bay, the new ship spent one day at anchor within the shadow of Golden Gate Bridge, and shifted her berth to nearby Oakland on 5 October. Supplied with general aviation spare parts, she sailed from Oakland on the 6th, embarked Composite Squadron Thirty-three and planes at North Island, San Diego on the 8th and eagerly put to sea for her first flight operations.

Weather was ideal off the California coast, as Skipper Taylor put the ship through her nautical paces in the sunlit "proving ground" during the subsequent week. Anxious to make a good showing, Squadron Thirty-Three's aviators continually rehearsed taking off and landing on the redwood planking of USS CORAL SEA's flight deck. Although accidents during this rigorous welding of the CORAL SEA and her air group occurred frequently, there was no loss of personnel. By 15 October 1943, when the escort carrier entered San Diego harbor for minor alterations, Captain Taylor found his squadron and crew coordinating like the works of a fine Swiss watch.

Loaded .with planes, cargo and passengers for delivery to Pearl Harbor, CVE-57 sailed west-ward from San Diego on 25 October. Lookouts sighted Diamond Head's uneven silhouette several days later, and the outline of Pearl Harbor's waterfront wharves and warehouses were seen within view. From Admiral Nimitz came a warm "Welcome to the Pacific Fleet." To prepare for her first assignment as a combatant "jeep" carrier, the CORAL SEA promptly joined sister CVE LISCOME BAY for a 4-day refresher run off the Hawaiian Islands.

Back at the Naval Base, the CORAL SEA underwent a final, week-long refit. A large antennae. yardarm was removed, and an entire catwalk installed at the base of her spiring island. One of the first of a new, untitled species of ship, the USS CORAL SEA left Pearl Harbor to meet the test of combat on 10 November 1943. A unit of Carrier Division 24 (others in CarDiv24: LISCOME BAY, BARNES, NASSAU, CORREGI-DOR), the CORAL SEA steamed southwest in formation. For the CASABLANCA Class, this was to be a red-letter day.

Despite the proximity of the enemy, appropriate ceremonies were held when CVE-57 crossed the equator 15 November. Continuing west she cut the 180th Meridian on the 18th, then joined Task Group 52.13, of which the 25-year-old battleship, NEW MEXICO was Flagship. Mission of Task Group 52.13 was to crack the Nip defenses on the Gilbert Island seaplane base of Makin, to the north of Tarawa and 2,500 miles southwest of Pearl Harbor.

D-Day at Makin was the 20th of November. Aboard the CORAL SEA, taut-faced sailors sat gulping their breakfast on the messing compartments' bare decks, all tables and chairs having been stacked in conditioning for battle. In the pre-dawn darkness, the crew welcomed with cheers the first salvoes from the venerables of Battleship Division 3, plus the heavy cruiser BALTIMORE. Description of the ensuing bombardment of Makin was passed through intercommunication circuits to all hands.

For the next three days torpedo bombers and fighters from the CORAL SEA gave powerful air support to the troops of Major General Ralph C. Smith's 27th Infantry Division who were slugging their way onto Makin. At Guadalcanal in 1942, U. S. Marines had gone ashore without benefit of an aerial umbrella. Here in the Gilberts

was developed the new concept of air support for amphibious landings which was to set the pattern for CVE participation in the westward push across the Pacific.

Thousands of pounds of bombs and bullets were donated by CORAL SEA aircraft to the destruction of enemy troop concentrations, gun emplacements and shore installations on Makin. In the beginning, every flight was an experiment. Frequent changes in types of bombs and fuses were made, various methods of target designation were tried, and air-to-ground communications received particular attention. Keen co-ordination on the CORAL SEA flight deck evinced a polish which led to her later reputation as one of the most efficient of her class at launching and recovering aircraft. More than once her decks accepted the emergency landings of other carriers' planes, and in turn some of her planes were caught short on fuel, and forced to land on the LEXINGTON. Only one CORAL SEA plane was lost in the Makin fight.

Reveille was sounded 12 minutes before General Quarters on the morning of 24 November 1943. Officers and men of the CORAL SEA were dressing calmly when, at 0510, the ship lurched from the thunderous blast of an underwater explosion. A scant 2200 yards off her port beam, the carriers' own Flagship and formation-guide had caught a Jap sub skipper's well-aimed torpedo. Button-eyed, the CORAL SEA' s sailors looked out across the water at the exploding LISCOME BAY. For twenty-three minutes, escort carrier continued to break out in a rash of rat-at-tats as her 40 and 20mm ammunition went off, punctuated by deep blasts from the bigger stuff. She spewed flame, smoke, and red hot plane parts for miles around; some of the wreckage even smashed on the CORAL SEA's flight deck. Press Correspondents on a large carrier sixty miles away saw the glow of the stricken "jeep", but not for long. Men on board the CORAL SEA stood in stunned silence, star- ing at the smooth Pacific swells where the Flagship had sailed. With her to the bottom had gone Rear Admiral Henry M. Mullinnix, task force commander, Captain Irving D. Wiltsie and 700 of his 900-man crew. Observers on the fantail reported without confirmation that a second torpedo had barely missed USS CORAL SEA.

To the CVE sailors witnessing one of their running mates in her fiery death throes, their vulnerability hit home. Much had been sacrificed in the construction of these plane-toting merchantmen, so that the CORAL SEA and her sisters faced the future in the Pacific with sizeable handicaps. Comparatively thin-skinned, the CASABLANCAs would find it hard keeping up with swift task forces in view of their 18-knot top speed, would also have but one 5-inch .38 calibre gun, plus a slew of smaller anti-aircraft guns, to fend off a skyward attack. Glumly, Captain Taylor and his men remembered the smooth Pacific swells where the Flagship had sailed.

Enemy snoopers harassed the carriers at Makin during the following week's operations by dropping illuminating flares at dusk. Through Skipper Taylor's evasive zig-zagging maneuvers the CORAL SEA escaped the light, thus came through her first engagement unscathed. Makin's occupation was four days old when, on 28 November,

the CVEs' departed the Gilbert Islands area with heavier warships and escorts. Violent pitching caused some concern among the "jeeps" on the return to Pearl Harbor, one BOGUE Class CVE requesting permission to avoid the heavy pounding by dropping her speed. On 5 December 1943, the formation arrived at Pearl Harbor.

Tied up at Ford Island, the CORAL SEA took on a large consignment of old PBYs and various non-operational craft, then left Pearl Harbor 8 December with the seaplane tender POCOMOKE. A heavy fog was met as the two vessels entered San Francisco Bay 14 December 1943 and proceeded to the Alameda Air Station. While the carrier swapped her cargo of "obsoletes" for brand new planes, her crew got a morale boost during a week of pre-Christmas liberty. Refueled, provisioned, and jammed with aircraft USS CORAL SEA stood out of San Francisco Bay on 22 December.

CORAL SEA sailors found themselves back in a familiar neighborhood when their carrier swung into Pearl Harbor 28 December. They celebrated the New Year by strolling along Honolulu's sidewalks or romping in the frothy white surf at Waikiki Beach, and then on 3-5 January took the ship on a work-out along with USS CORREGIDOR. Both "jeeps" had another practice session 9-10 January, each putting her air group through its paces while the gunners banged away at moving targets. On the 13th the escort carrier put to sea once more, exercised with MANILA BAY, CORREGIDOR, NATOMA BAY and NASSAU in the Oahu area until the 18th. Battle-wise CORAL SEA sailors were ready to fight their CVE again.

Commissioned to pluck enemy-held Marshall Island strongpoints, the U. S. Fifth Fleet swarmed out of Pearl Harbor 22 January 1944. Amid a sea full of lumbering battleships, Old ASTORIA Class cruisers, destroyers and gaunt, gray transports, the USS CORAL SEA steamed southwest with the MANILA BAY and CORREGIDOR. These three CVE's plus their protective screen comprised Task Group 52.9, with the Flag in USS MANILA BAY. Captain Taylor's aircraft complement had been upped with the CORAL SEA boasting sixteen Wildcats and twelve Avengers as compared with the twelve and twelve of the Makin assault.

The CORAL SEA arrived in the vicinity of Kwajalein on 31 January 1944, two days after the fast carrier forces had battered airfields on the Atoll. Flying anti-submarine patrol, combat air patrol, and strikes on Kwajelein, the CORAL SEA settled to a smooth running routine of direct and indirect air support for the amphibious landings. Receiving radioed instructions from Army and Marine observers, the CORAL SEA fliers laid bombs ranging in size from 100 to 2000 pounds on ground targets. Day and night the carrier's radar screen produced "bogies" (unidentified aircraft: "bandits" are those established as enemy) which, on the 5th of February, sent her scurrying to General Quarters at midnight, again at 0143 and again 0223.

Task Group 52.9' s commander, Rear Admiral Ralph E. Davison, initiated an innovation by dispatching his carriers into Kwajalein's 80-mile-long lagoon one at a

time for refueling and re-arming. Beachhead battling was still raging when the CORAL SEA entered the isle-bound enclosure on 5 February. Inasmuch as the Marshalls had been uncontested pre-war territory of the Nipponese Empire, this made the CORAL SEA the first American aircraft carrier to anchor in Japanese waters. She received a mail delivery the following day, and the crew aired their bedding on the flight deck beneath a glaring afternoon sun. Watchers meanwhile trained their binoculars on the butt-and-bayonet battle shore. Motion pictures were run off on the hanger deck in the evening, but many sailors drifted topside to watch the continuing bombardment and the dull red glow of resulting fires.

Fueling was not easy. In a 22-knot wind, the tanker GAZELLE and the escort carrier got together, dropped their respective hooks and rigged fuel hoses between them. Tugs with stem lines held the two vessels steady, but the absence of camels (buoyant buffers) left the CORAL SEA with a damaged catwalk. Before leaving, the carrier's compressed air machine shot several Grummans aloft, the first time the CORAL SEA had catapulted while at anchor. Sailing out past the pagoda-like Nip buoys on 7 February, the CORAL SEA remained off Kwajalein, and was reassigned with the other CVEs on the 11th to Task Group 51.6, Rear Admiral Davison in the MANILA BAY retaining command.

Japanese planes were seen in the distance on 12 February, bombing subdued Roi at the northwestern extremity of the lagoon. Also on the 12th, one of Squadron Three's pilots developed engine trouble on his way back to the CORAL SEA, set his plane down on the semi-complete Kwajalein airstrip, making the first American landing on Japanese soil since the war's start. Course was set for Eniwetok, westemmost of the Marshalls, on 24 February, but orders received on the 25th diverted the CORAL SEA and CORREGIDOR to Pearl Harbor. Journeying without incident, the two CVEs arrived with their escorts off Oahu on the 3rd of March 1944.

A brief between-engagement respite at Pearl Harbor, and the CVE partners, CORAL SEA and CORREGIDOR, put to sea with screening destroyers on 11 March 1944. They experienced , another routing change while enroute to Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides group and consequently swung toward jungle-encompassed Purvis Bay in the Solomons. It was during this trip that the CORAL SEA sustained her first and most tragic operational loss.

Fully armed with depth charges unused during an anti-submarine prowl, a TBF Avenger circled its ship until " in the groove" then swooped in on the CORAL SEA' s stern. Missing its mark, the plane overshot the flight deck and careened off the port bow. Instantly the ship shuddered as one of the depth charges let go close aboard, then balked again from a second underwater blast. Fortunately the ship incurred only a few strained seams and some broken compressed air lines, but the plane and its three occupants were lost.

Tropical heat grew in intensity as CVE 57 bore down on the Solomons. On the night of 18 March the group passed through an awesome electrical storm, the sky was aflame with nearby lightning, radio reception blacked out, and the SK radar screen rivaled Broadway's neon twilight. After taking a landfall on Malaita Island on 21 March, the CORAL SEA churned past mountainous, green Guadalcanal, and later in the day stood into Tulagi Island's Purvis Bay.

Topping off with fuel and stores, Task Unit 36.3.1 (CORREGIDOR with Officer in Tactical Command, CORAL SEA, and escorts) shoved off 30 March 1944. They steamed up through the Solomons, emerged between Santa Ysabel and Florida Islands, passed the Green Islands, and skirted New Ireland to reach the St. Matthias group on 2 April. There they relieved the MANILA BAY and NATOMA BAY in providing aircraft for the landings on Emirau Island.

On 6 April a CORAL SEA Wildcat shot down a twin-engined Nip bomber, first enemy plane credited to the ship. lap aircraft frequently passed high over the CORAL SEA, which were presumed to be evacuation planes whisking away the garrisons of Rabaul and Kavieng. Airstrips on Emirau were operative by the 11th, and Task Unit 36.3.1 backtracked to Tulagi, entered Purvis Bay 15 April 1944.

Still hanging on to the northern end of New Guinea's hogbacked coast from Madang to the Moluccas were some 60,000 Japs, whom General MacArthur was now in a position to crush. To get in on the closing phase of the arduous New Guinea campaign, the CORAL SEA left Tulagi on 16 April with Task Force 78. Captain Taylor's men began to take note of the 6,000 miles separating them from the United States when radio communication with Pearl Harbor was broken off, replaced with transmissions beamed from New Caledonia and Canberra, Australia. Task Group 78.2, an air-support unit for the spearheads at Aitape and Hollandia, was formed on 19 Apri11944 when the CORAL SEA maneuvered into position with the CORREGIDOR, MANILA BAY and NATOMA BAY.

Almost unopposed, the U. S. 41st Division secured footholds at Hollandia's Tanahmerah Bay and Aitape 22 April. On hand at Aitape, the CORAL SEA' s Squadron Thirty-Three aided in destroying.one hundred enemy aircraft and ripping up enemy alrflelds before the landing, but, when the invaders found that most of the Japs had taken to the hills there was little call for direct aerial assistance. Up from down under came the Australian heavy cruisers AUSTRALIA and SHROPSHIRE plus three destroyers to join Task Group 78.2 on 23 April. Thirty-Three's Avenger pilots, who remembered almost fondly the flat, sandy Gilbert and Marshall Atolls as they sought to pluck targets out of New Guinea's tangled, steaming forests, shifted their operations to the Hollandia area on 25 April. Task Group 78.2 left on the 26th for Seeadler Harbor in the Admiralties.

At Seeadler Harbor, Manus 28 April, the CORAL SEA and her sisters fueled, packed their galleys with Aussie-contributed cranberries, mutton and husky rabbit, then sailed again on the 29th for a return to Hollandia. Things there were progressing smoothly and the CORAL SEA anchored once more in Seadler Harbor, on 4 May 1944. During her Aitape-Hollandia stint the CORAL SEA, operating with a fleet of younger CVEs, saw the full capabilities of the CASABLANCA Class exploited thoroughly for the first time. On one occasion the "jeeps" of Task Group 78.2 brought into play their polo-pony characteristic of being able to turn on a dime, slipped neatly through another group of four escort carriers with their respective courses at near right angles. A result of twin-screw and well-designed hulls, just this sort of agility was to prove a deciding defense against the Imperial Air Force in the forthcoming Marianas incursion, and later against high calibre gunfire in the Battle for Leyte Gulf.

Broken piston rings in the forward main engine had been giving CORAL SEA trouble for some time. A 3-day stay in Manus ended on 7 May as CVE 57 left for Espiritu Santo to effect necessary repairs. Rising blue on the Pacific's sunny brow, the New Hebrides loomed before the USS CORAL SEA early on 12 May.

Captain Taylor gave his men in their gleaming whites the official once-over for the last time. On 14 May 1944, two days after the CVE anchored in Segond Channel at Espiritu Santos, Captain Taylor was relieved as Commanding Officer by Commander Paul Wesley Watson, USN, Executive Officer of the CORAL SEA since commissioning. Air Officer Lieutenant Commander E. W. Davis made Commander and took over as Executive Officer, while Skipper Watson donned a fourth gold stripe on 21 May.

By this time, the projected invasion of the Marianas Islands had long since outgrown the map consultation stage; America had the forces plus the initiative to pierce Japan' s inner defense perimeter. In advance U. S. bases, the salient sword was being sharpened. Engine repairs completed, the CORAL SEA departed Espiritu Santo with USS CORREGIDOR and destroyers on 2 June 1944.

Entering waters which she had helped to win, the CORAL SEA reached Kwajalein in the Marshalls on the 8th of June, anchored in the atoll's northern anchorage near Roi Islands. Over her shortwave radio came word of the landings at Normandy and an air of excitement pervaded the ship for the next few days as further reports of Allied progress in France were received. But invasion on her side of the world was the CORAL SEA' s immediate concern. Ready to operate once more with the CORREGI-DOR, Flagship of Carrier Division 24's Rear Admiral Felix Stump, CVE-57 set sail 10 June 1944. With the twin carriers to the Marianas went a formation of transports, light cruisers HONOLULU and SAINT LOUIS, and a battleship division.

Saipan lay tranquil as the CORAL SEA, CORREGIDOR, GAMBIER BAY and KITKUN BAY bobbed up in the Marianas on 14 June. When Lieutenant General Holland M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith's 2nd Division Marines lanced into the southwest quadrant of

Saipan the following day, the sole source of their air support was the CVE force lying off the island, since the first-line U. S. carriers were arrayed in the Philippine Sea to cope with an enemy surface fleet reportedly roaming that area. Japanese planes were sighted from the CORAL SEA on the night of the 15th, but the disposition went unmolested.

17 June told a different story. At 1750 that afternoon the CORAL SEA' s radar screen produced more bogies than the operators had even seen before. As the CVEs bustled to General Quarters at 1803, their fighters were vectored to meet the closing Japanese aircraft. Twenty-seven miles from the CVE formation, the planes clashed with the oncoming Japanese waves, tried to stave them off. However, at 1848, the precise minute of sunset, enemy dive-bombers droned over the CORAL SEA and her CVE cohorts. Wispy vapor trails criss-crossed in the shadowy sky as the task group opened up with its anti-aircraft guns. First to be attacked was the GAMBIER BAY; a twin-engine bomber pounced on her from dead ahead and dropped a bomb some 100 feet on her port bow, also gave her a sound strafing. From the CORAL SEA gun galleries came a 40mm shower which ripped into the Jap plane, sent her screaming into the water where she burst into flame.

Three minutes later an enemy plane took a pass at the CORAL SEA, let go with a bomb 100 feet off the carrier's starboard quarter. Bracketed in CORAL SEA fire as it tried to pull out of its dive at 1500 feet, the plane spun and crashed 300 yards off the starboard quarter. Low across the water, another Jap snarled in on the port bow at 1853, ran smack dab into flak, cartwheeled and disintegrated 400 feet astern. A fourth plane was downed by CORAL SEA guns 200 yards off the port quarter at 1905, after it had skimmed across the carrier's bow.

Damage had been negligible, the task group's evasive maneuvers during the fray having thrown off Japanese bombsights. Several planes on the CORAL SEA's flight deck were punctured by bomb fragments; the stern searchlight was splintered and two crew members slightly injured. On Sunday, the 18th of June, after false alarms at 0425 and 1022, more of the Mikado's winged emissaries beat through the U.S intercepters.

Out of the setting sun, six Nips dove on the CORAL SEA's task group at 1755. Whipping the sea in a welter of white water, the carriers dodged and darted, and filled the sky with fire: One torpedo was launched at the GAMBIER BAY, one at the CORAL SEA, both of which went awry. Thirty yards off the CORAL SEA' s starboard beam, a bomb exploded but did no damage. Several enemy planes began dropping around the CORAL SEA, victims of her crack shooting.

Starboard batteries shot up one plane which splashed 800 yards off the port bow. A second, in flames, attempted to crash on deck but was knocked down 300 yards short of the starboard bow. Another buzzard was taken under fire, trailed smoke as it missed a swipe at the CORREGIDOR, got no higher than 300 feet before it pitched into the sea. Port batteries pumped shells into a fourth plane which flew 50 feet above the

CORAL SEA' s flight deck, dropped a bomb off the starboard beam, caught fire and crashed 1500 yards off the port quarter. Three minutes before her guns ran out of targets, the CORAL SEA at 1755 launched two fighters. Scattered bogies appeared from time to time on the screen, but the escort carrier found it safe to secure from General Quarters at 1947.

Morning brought more work for Captain Watson's Gunnery Department. Weary sailors took their battle stations at 0619 on 19 June, just in time to meet four bombers coming out of the rising sun. A near miss geysered up 50 yards ahead of the CORAL SEA; two bombs landed astern of the GAMBIER BAY. Scant specks high in the sky (10,000 to 12,000 feet), the planes had nothing to fear from the CVE guns, still made no further attack. Her radar screen clear, the CORAL SEA secured from General Quarters at 0750.

CORAL SEA gunnery had been fast, accurate and effective, the result of many previous hours of gunnery practice. Morale, in contrast to that at Makin, was high for all hands felt that the Japs were mastered. Originally it had been planned to put troops ashore at Guam three or four days after the Saipan landings, and the CORAL SEA sailed south to commence softening-up operations against that island. But when the Marines on Saipan were stopped cold in their advance on squalid Garapan town, the CVE group was recalled from Guam for further help.

Commencing 21 June the CORAL SEA and CORREGIDOR provided air cover for a herd of transports east of Saipan, then retired with the task group on 25 June to Eniwetok, where the CORAL SEA remained from 28 June through 1 July. Accompanied by the CORREGIDOR and escorts CVE-57 went back to the Marianas, there carried out air strikes against Guam from 9 to 12 July 1944. Leaving the Marianas area on the 12th of July, the CORAL SEA made Entwetok on the 15th.

Phase 2 of the Marianas occupation was the reconquest of Guam Island. Undisputed control of Marianas approaches had been gained by the whipping which Admiral Marc Mitscher had given the Japs in the Battle of the Philippine Sea (19-20 June). Scheduled to be on hand for the 21 July storming of Guam, the CORAL SEA left Eniwetok lagoon in formation on the 17th, but unfortunately suffered an engineering casualty just outside of the anchorage and was forced to bow out.

Throughout the CORAL SEA' s action-filled days on duty in the Marianas, her casualties had been kept to a minimum. One pilot was fatally injured on 18 June when he fluffed a landing; several CORAL SEA planes were felled in a bombing strike at airfields on Tinian on 20 June. Though chagrined at missing out on the first landings on Jap occupied American soil, CORALSEA sailors found no little comfort in the fact that a much-needed yard availability had resulted in their being ordered home to the United States. Escorted by PC 1139 the CORAL SEA stood out of Eniwetok on 23 July 1944.

Pausing at Roi Island, Kwajalein on 25 July, the CORAL SEA changed escorts, and set out the next day for Pearl Harbor with the minesweeper COMPEL. On 2 August the CORAL SEA pulled into the nearly empty navy yard and tied up. Later that day she proceeded singly to San Diego, California. Immediately upon reaching San Diego's North Island 9 August 1944, the escort carrier discharged her veteran Squadron Thirty-Three and, after shifting her berth to the USN Repair Base the next day, half of her ship's company shoved off for a 15-day leave.

Liberty for the crew during the 5-week yard availability was minimized and more than once cancelled due to the urgency and amount of work to be accomplished. Toward the end of August the CORAL SEA went into Drydock No. 1 at the Repair Base where the fat underside of her hull was scraped and cleaned. Hissing acetylene torches and rattling hammers restored the CVE to her peak of fighting trim; a new coat of camouflage paint was applied. On the 12th and 13th of September post-repair trials were conducted off San Diego, whereupon the rejuvenated CORAL SEA returned to North Island.

Ready for battle once again the CORAL SEA stood out of San Diego and slipped past Point Loma on 16 September 1944, her course set for Pearl Harbor. Aboard her flight and hanger decks were 71 aircraft, spares, ammunition and approximately 200 Hawaii-bound passengers. Leaving her blimp escort at sunset the first day out, the CORAL SEA made an uneventful voyage, reached her destination on the 22nd of September.

Final alterations and material additions, including special night landing lights were made for the next two weeks, while many of her personnel went ashore for formal training in the use of newly developed instruments and weapons. Captain F. Massie Hughes of the sunken CVE BLOCK ISLAND delivered a lecture on anti-submarine warfare which he and others had long and successfully pursued in the Atlantic, and which was generally credited with the near removal of the sub menace in those waters. While anti-submarine warfare was far from new to the Navy, it was the USS CORAL SEA who was to pioneer 'round-the-clock hunter-killer tactics in the Western Pacific.

With her Squadron Eighty-Two the CORAL SEA operated in and out of Pearl Harbor until 8 October, familiarizing herself with her new task, coordinating her escorts and planes to make a permanent team, bringing highly specialized; radar and underwater sonar into play against simulated attacks by U. S. submarines. An example of split-second thinking was afforded the conning officers of the CORAL SEA during these exercises when, on one occasion, a friendly submarine surfaced directly in her path. Swift judgment on the bridge sent the CVE lurching to one side, avoided a potential tragedy. Her deck crews and pilots trained in night flight operations; her guns banged away at towed sleeves. Amid all these preparations at Pearl Harbor, the CORAL SEA lost her name.

Notification that one of the 45,OOO-ton MIDWAY Class carriers building at that time was to be dubbed USS CORAL SEA arrived along with a new label for CVE-57. As the USSANZIO, CVE-57 would continue to carry the fight to the Japanese, continue to deliver on time and at the right time powerful aerial forays. (Her new name commemorated the early 1944 beachhead at Anzio, which held fast in Italy's western coast, despite desperate Nazi pincers). On the 16th of October the USSANZIO left Pearl Harbor in her foamy wake.

With her as she set out for Eniwetok Atoll went five destroyers of Escort Division 72, a close-knit team of killers. In the destroyer escort lineup: LAWRENCE C. TAYLOR (DE 415), MELVIN R. NAWMAN (DE 416), OLIVER MITCHELL (DE 417), TABBERER (DE 418), ROBERT F. KELLER (DE 419). These ships together with the ANZIO comprised Task Group 12.3, of which the ANZIO's Captain Watson had been designated commander.

Nestled among the destroyer escorts enroute to Eniwetok, the ANZIO rehearsed a search plan which she employed for the remainder of her war service. Simple in operation but effective as a search medium, the system involved the use of only two planes, one to port and one to starboard.

When the force anchored at Eniwetok on 25 October for fuel, aviation gas, supplies and ammunition, the ANZIO came under command of the THIRD Fleet. ANZIO and Company was then redesignated Task Group 30.7, directed to proceed on an anti-submarine warfare mission enroute to Ulithi Atoll in the Western Carolines:

Sustaining several plane crashes on the way to Ulithi, involving loss of aircraft as well as death and injury to Squadron Eighty-Two's personnel, the ANZIO made port on 1 November. Three days later Task Group 30.7 was underway once more, headed for the assigned patrol area, but orders to aid the torpedoed light cruiser RENO in the Philippine Sea precluded of anti-submarine warfare work. Rendezvous was made with the stricken cruiser on the afternoon of 5 November and, after pumping diesel fuel into her tanks, the task group went scouting for other Japanese underwater craft in her vicinity. When the tug EXTRACTOR arrived to tow USS RENO to Ulithi, the ANZIO gave her a suggested course to avoid an approaching typhoon, and for two days provided her with air cover. Flight operations were-several times prevented by the progressively heavy weather.

On 8 November the task group went west to take on fuel from tankers of Task Force 38's logistic support outfit. Continuing on her anti-submarine prowls, the ANZIO wallowed like a gray ghost in boiling seas, while winds which frequently exceeded 50 knots howled across her flight deck. Early on the morning of 18 November the tedium of 24-hour-a-day landings and launchings, repeated false contacts and the searches which followed them finally paid-off.

Before dawn on the 18th Lieutenant Commander C. H. Holt, chief of Squadron Eighty-Two, got a surface contact on his plane's radar, dropped flares which sent the submarine clawing for depth. Holt flashed word of his find to Captain Watson, dropped float lights to mark the spot. Destroyer escorts rushing at flank speed arrived on the scene with ANZIO planes, and finally established an underwater contact about dawn. USS LAWRENCE C. TAYLOR drove home the assault.

Sailors on the TAYLOR's stern began dropping huge explosive filled drums over the side which sank in the ship's wake. Three violent underwater explosions were heard, followed by a deeper, duller one. Oil, papers, deck planking and other debris soon littered the surface. Numerous stunned sharks rose partially out 0f the water in an unusual state of excitement, and even attacked the boat which was lowered from a the TAYLOR to recover samples of wreckage and oil.

Continuing to give the area close attention from her DEs and aircraft, the ANZIO next day became confident of her first sure kill when she passed through two miles of diesel oil slick, spreading and still rising to the surface over the place of the attack. To the ANZIO, Admiral Halsey wired kudos: "Action makes you member of the plucking board for Nip submarines, Well done to all hands." Added the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet: "Congratulations on your ably following the example set by your predecessors. We are confident of additional successes by your task group. Well done."

Course was set for Ulithi on the 23rd of November, and Task Group 30.7 patrolled around the atoll for two days before anchoring on the 28th. There, on 4 December, Captain George Cannn Montgomery, USN, took over the rains from Captain Watson. Along with the skipper ship of USS ANZIO went control of the anti-submarine warfare task group.

With Captain Montgomery at the helm, the ANZIO steamed out of Ulithi with her DEs 10 December. In support of the landings on Mindoro Island in the Philippines, the task group spent a few days watching over the logistic vessels in that area, then sped northwest with the THIRD Fleet on 16 December. Nature on the rampage then opened up a full-scale offensive against Halsey's famed armada.

Aboard the ANZIO all hands pitched in to rig the escort carrier for the oncoming typhoon, lashed aircraft and movable objects to the decks and ballasted the ship. With the destroyer escorts stationed astern, the ANZIO took maximum distance on other groups to minimize the danger of collision during the storm. During the morning of 18 December the barometer dropped to a startling 28.88 inches and a 90-knot wind force was clocked before the ANZIO's anemometer vanes were whisked away.

Since the ANZIO's great weakness lay in bogging and sagging stresses, wind and sea were kept as near the quarter as possible. Bucking a gale of titanic fury (estimated at 120 knots), the threatened little carrier swayed and rolled among mountainous crests,

as her crew braved the driving sheets of wind and spray to keep aircraft from taking to the air prematurely. For an hour the ship dipped 38 arid 39 degrees. Weight of the island reduced the list to port compensating in part for the wind on the starboard hand.

Steering control was so limited during the worst of the typhoon that with 30 degrees left rudder, starboard engine ahead 15 knots, and port engine 5 knots, it was impossible to hold the storm more than 10 degrees abaft the starboard beam. Danger from fires was kept in mind; two false alarms were chalked up. Water broke over the edge of the flight deck and small amounts poured down her port stacks. Sea that crashed against the ANZIO pulverized one of her motor whaleboats, bent stanchions on her fantail, twisted catwalks and forward lookout stations, swept overboard two planes, some liferafts and a radio antenna. Only personnel injury occurred when an aircrewman broke his arm in fighting to secure a plane which came adrift on the hangar deck and smashed into a bulkhead. In the afternoon the typhoon abated and storm-battered ANZIO resumed flight operations.

Interference by another task group and limited steering control had separated the ANZIO and her DEs in the typhoon. Only destroyer escort TAYLOR remained with the ANZIO, although the KELLER and MITCHELL rejoined in the evening. Both the TABBERER and NAWMAN were dismasted, but those ships had the satisfaction of rescuing numerous survivors of the capsized destroyers HULL and SPENCE. With the TAYLOR, KELLER and MITCHELL, Captain Montgomery's ANZIO was ordered to further reconnoiter the area for other sailors of the lost destroyers, and discovered four HULL men on a liferaft 21 December. Task Group 30.7, less-the TABBERER and NAWMAN, got underway for Ulithi on 22 December, arriving there the morning of Christmas 1944.

Final operation of consequence in the Southwest Pacific was the Lingayen Gulf invasion of the Philippine jack-pot -Luzon. Destroyer KALK was attached to the ANZIO and her three remaining destroyer escorts at Ulithi, and on 29 December the task group steamed to assume anti-submarine warfare duties in support of the crucial Lingayen landings. For a month off Luzon the ANZIO followed her rigorous curriculum of day and night hops, false contacts and occasional bogies, at the end of which ANZIO and Company made its way back to Ulithi. Before entering the lagoon on 28 January 1945, the CVE flew anti-submarine patrol for three days around Ulithi's outskirts.

The ANZIO, KELLER and MITCHELL, left 2 February for Entiwetok, conducted extensive training in night landing technique enroute which had a marked effect in the further quality and success of flight operations after sunset. Arriving in Entiwetok on 6 February, the anti-submarine warfare group made a quick turn-around, and set out the next day to provide air coverage for two Saipan-bound amphibious groups.

In ever increasing numbers, American Marianas-based aerial heavies were soaring 30,000 feet over the Empire's home island to rupture with their lethal calling cards vital arteries of sustenance to the palsied Jap war machine. Six hundred miles north of our bomber strips in the newly-won Marianas lay Iwo Jima, diminutive isle of volcanic ash and boulders, also the jumping off point for frequent Nip bombing and strafing blows against Saipan and Tinian. Neutralization and annexation of Iwo was essential to assure the giant B-29s an attack-free home base.

Reaching the vicinity of Saipan on 11 February 1945 the ANZIO group continued their sweeps until the 13th, then sortied with the CVEs LUNGA POINT, MAKIN ISLAND and BISMARCK SEA, on St. Valentine's Day. Off tiny Iwo on the 16th the ANZIO got a taste of her old fighting tactics once again as she flew strikes and provided combat air patrol. In addition she operated independently at night on anti-submarine patrol. On the 19th the ANZIO launched a strike to the north to hit Chichi Jima in the Bonins. Frequent "Flash Reds" and bogie reports roused an excitement on board not experienced since the Marianas campaign.

Enemy aircraft pressed down an attack about sunset on the 21st of February. Macabre and effective, sparked by a powerful propaganda campaign, the Imperial Air Force's newly-organized Special Attack Corps (Kamikaze Corps) constituted the last play of a nation facing suicide. At the time the suiciders closed on the ANZIO she was cruising in formation just prior to separating for the night to stalk submarines. Bogies first, appeared on the screen at 1707, at which time General Quarters and an air defense disposition were ordered. At 1825 they were again reported and 24 minutes later the group was attacked by five Jap planes which zoomed in low over the water on the ANZIO's starboard hand.

On the horizon could be seen the glow from the carrier SARATOGA, who had sustained several kamikaze crash-dives .Bearing the brunt of the attack on the CVEs were the LUNGAPOINT and BISMARCK SEA. One of the Japs careened into the sea near the LUNGAPOINT; another hit her flight deck, set fire to couchant planes and ricocheted into the sea off port. Two kamikazes picked the BISMARCK SEA and, though one missed its mark the other slashed into the escort carrier after parts. It was the LISCOME BAY all over again. Explosion after explosion followed until gutted and blistered, the USS BISMARCK SEA heeled over on her side and sank. A fifth plane moved in on the ANZIO about 60 feet above the water but was turned away by heavy anti-aircraft fire, seen shot down by a destroyer escort.

After a short breather more bogies appeared on the radar screen and between 1918 and 1948 the disposition opened fire on unidentified planes. Immediately they turned away, indicating that they might have been friendly. No further attacks were made that night and the ANZIO was detached with the TABBERER for her night-time anti-submarine duties, having been at General Quarters for 4 hours and 40 minutes.

Four groups of unidentified planes approached the same formation on the night of 23 February. While the disposition twisted evasively in emergency turns, the bogies wheeled around in the sky looking for an opening. At 1936 a single engine fighter apparently found one and flew in astern toward the ANZIO, after most carrier in the formation. Destroyer BAGLEY on the port beam and the MELVIN R. NAWMAN on the port quarter teamed to discourage him, their combined gunfire turning him back at 2,000 yards.

Lieutenant (jg) W. J. Wilson, USNR, was flying an ANZIO plane on the night of 26 February when he was vectored to the assistance of destroyers BENNION and NEWCOMB, who were working an underwater contract in his sector. For 80 minutes his search was unproductive, but at 0220 he made a radar contact on, and almost simultaneously sighted an "I" Class Nip submarine about three miles away. Having delivered an aggressive assault on the sub, he was relieved at 0300. Enlarging oil slicks near the position of contact indicated a successful kill.

Fellow flier Lieutenant (jg) F. M. Fay, USNR, was on patrol the following night, 27 February, when he made a radar contact and at 0308 saw a submarine plunge below the surface just 25 miles off-shore. An attack was impractical at that moment but vigilance was rewarded when, a half-hour later, the submarine resurfaced and Fay dove to get her. Oil began to appear on the spot shortly afterwards and the ANZIO had another probable "B" assessment.

From 19 February through 4 March the ANZIO stuck to her schedule of launching her first flight just before sunset and landing her last just after dawn. During these operations she completed 106 sorties with 657.5 hours of night flight, without a single launching or landing accident at night. In addition to her routine antisubmarine warfare activities, ANZIO aircraft inflicted severe damage on Iwo Jima's command posts, trenches, block houses and gun positions. One Hellcat fighter and its pilot were lost in combat, along with one Avenger lost operationally.

Her seventh operation tucked firmly beneath her bulging bowline, the ANZIO departed the Iwo Jima area 7 March in company with destroyer DALY: In San Pedro Bay off Leyte on 12 March the ANZIO anchored for the first time in Philippine waters. Her sea-wobbly bluejackets went ashore to the Fleet Center on muggy Samar Island, most of them not having been off their carrier since departure from Pearl Harbor five months before. On 14 March Composite Squadron Eighty-Two was transferred. Replacing them were the planes and pilots of Composite Squadron Thirteen, hardy veterans of a year's anti-submarine warfare operations in the North and South Atlantic.

Scheduled for Easter Sunday, 1 April 1945, was the most ambitious amphibious push of the Pacific war. For the invasion of Okinawa Jima U. S. Pacific planners had marshalled 1213 vessels of every nomenclature, 564 carrier-based support aircraft, and 451,866 Army-Marine ground forces. Squadron Thirteen was to begin its work against Japan in the big leagues.

Standing into already-historic Leyte Gulf on 19 March, the ANZIO conducted refresher landing operations for her new air arm, returned to the San Pedro anchorage that night. On 21 March she formed Task Unit 51.1.2 with the CVEs MARCUS ISLAND and SAVO ISLAND and departed Leyte with a number of escorts. After providing air cover for an Okinawa-bound amphibious group the ANZIO's unit joined with Task Group 52.1 in the vicinity of the Ryukyus on 26 March. Preliminary to the Okinawa landings, nearby Kerama Retto in the Ryukyu chain was seized to provide an advance base for the Fleet. There the ANZIO took time out from flying day and night anti-submarine patrols to render air support. At 0830 on the lst of April a tidal wave of landing craft, tanks, trucks and taut-faced men rolled in and smashed at Okinawa. Thereafter the ANZIO was flying direct support missions in addition to her anti-submarine warfare job.

As the tempo of Japanese suicide counter-attacks rose, the lot of the U. S. Navy at Okinawa grew progressively worse. On the 6th of April a group of ANZIO fighters were sent out to help the COLHOUN, who was caught in the thick of it, later returned to their ship with a tally of seven Jap planes. On the 9th the ANZIO replenished at Kerama Retto and got out few minutes before the enemy executed a fierce aerial jab at the anchorage. A section of ANZIO fighters intercepted enemy planes closing on their ship 16 April, but the Japs had speed advantage over the Hellcats and were able to escape to safety.

And the ANZIO had her share of heroes. As leading chief of the escort carrier's ordnance crew, Roy D. Gibson had the responsibility of seeing that the dangerous task of loading Avengers with ammunition was carried off without mishap. Once the planes were armed and ready for take-off his work was over, but he still liked watching them soar safely away on their missions. This day Gibson was standing on the cat-walk next to the catapult, watching Squadron Thirteen's Grumman aircraft being dispatched. They took off like clock-work, each thrown after the-other, skidding a little, then banking and climbing to the right, chasing the one ahead to the rendezvous point.

Into position went the last. Its pilot gunned the motor to maximum turn-over, braced his head firmly against the cockpit's headrest to absorb the shock of the initial impetus. At a signal from the Catapult Officer the plane shot off the flight deck, took a sickening dip towards the water and slowly pulled itself aloft. But the force of the catapult had yanked off its gasoline-filled fire bomb which lay alive on the deck. Gibson went into action.

Making a bee-line for the bomb he fumbled with it, ignored bums from the phosphorous external ignitor and successfully removed the internal fuse. Gibson tossed the detonator overboard like a hot potato, then assisted in the removal of the bomb from the flight deck. Later, Chief Gibson was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps-Medal, accompanied by a citation which concluded with: "By his quick-witted and courageous act in the face of great danger to himself, he saved many persons from the possibility of death or serious injury and the ship from the possibility of very serious damage. His conduct was in keeping with the highest tradition of the United States Naval Service.

Repairs to the ANZIO's rudder bearing were a must, and she returned to Ulithi 30 April. There necessary repairs were effected, fuel and provisions taken aboard and her dazzle paint covered over with Navy gray. On 18 May she took departure for the Rylikytis, three days later resumed anti-submarine warfare operations in the Okinawa area with her five destroyer escorts. When her part in the Okinawa campaign terminated 27 May, the ANZIO planes had taken a toll of Japanese surface craft including 29 suicide boats, 20 landing craft and one 500-tonner, had bombed and rocketed well camouflaged enemy strong-points on Okinawa, had incurred the loss of only two of their number.

USS ANZIO's task unit commander saluted his ships: "You have been congratulated by those in authority for your work in the current operations. Your spirited performance of duty and devotion have been superb. I worked with the big fellows and this outfit can hold its head up to any of them."

With her task group' s designation changed to 30.7, on 28 May the ANZIO went under Admiral Halsey's direct control, began a series of anti-submarine warfare sweeps southeast of Okinawa. She got off to a propitious start with a submarine kill 30 May, when Lieutenant (jg) S. L. Stovall, USNR, picked up a radar pip on the last leg of a 51/2 hour search. Alerting the task group, he maneuvered into position, attacked an "I" Class Nip pig-boat as it hurriedly submerged.

Relief planes spotted an oil slick over the area a half-hour later, which continued to increase in size until it was some 300 yards wide and 4,000 yards long. Destroyer escorts began retrieving evidences of the sinking, i.e. deck planking, a report form printed in Japanese, cork, and Nip light bulbs. Radioed Admiral Halsey: "A rousing well done to you and your gang for pulling the plug on that Nip for the last time."

Day and night the ANZIO carried into operation her never ending flight schedules. From 23 May to 15 June she had planes in the air every minute of the day, round-the-clock with but -three momentary breaks -once for bad weather and twice for fueling. It was while she was proceeding with these routine movements southeast of Okinawa that the ANZIO was selected to carry out some Halsey trickery, formally called deception radio traffic.

Essentially the plan involved the transmission of messages skillfully designed to give the appearance of those sent from Halsey's own flagship. From the THIRD Fleet Commander's flag complement the ANZIO was given a radioman (monitors readily recognize one operator's style from another) and on 11 June, the very day that Halsey's roving Task Force 38 quit mauling Kyushu, the ANZIO's radio began sending out the fake messages. As Halsey's mighty concentration of ships moved south for replenishment, maintaining strict radio silence enroute, Japanese radio monitors and analysts still got Halsey directives. As far as they were concerned Admiral Halsey was still at large off the Empire's southernmost home island. Thus was Captain

Montgomery's escort carrier left as a bait for Kyushu-based aircraft, inviting attack either if her deception was successful or if it was discovered. USS ANZIO had relieved the whole U. S. Task Force 38.

On the date of commencing the actual deception radio traffic, the ANZIO ruptured her aviation gasoline tanks while receiving the high-octane gas. For the rest of the day her volds, cofferdam and tanks had to be educted of aviation gas, and small leaks later proved to be more serious then at first suspected. Alongside a tanker to fuel 17 June the ANZIO found herself unable to take on aviation gasoline, promptly brought to a close her false broadcasting and set course with her task group for Leyte.

Put in first class condition by the San Pedro repairmen, the ANZIO left on the morning of 6 July accompanied by the destroyer escorts, headed for a rendezvous about 600 miles due east of Tokyo. This sub-fighting group was to fight the remainder of the Pacific war under the designation Task Group 30.6 arriving at the prescribed location, the ANZIO went to work scouring the sea off Honshu to obviate any underwater attempt on Halsey's vulnerable logistic fleet.

There ensued the spectacular "Month of Fire" raids on Japanese home islands with Halsey beginning his skyward siege of Honshu 10 July and then thundering north to plaster Hokkaido. Also coming in for her share of the glory was the battle-wise CVE ANZIO. Fittingly, the final wartime act of this anti-submarine warfare champion was the sinking of a Nipponese submarine.

At 0747 the morning of 16 July, Avenger pilot Lieutenant (jg) W. M. McLane, USNR, sighted a submarine, attacked at once and damaged her so badly that when the boat dove she left a trail of oil. Capt Montgomery sent the TAYLOR and KELLER ahead to the scene and followed with the two remaining DEs. A relief Avenger, piloted by Lieutenant R. J. Nelson, USNR, tracked the leaking sub by its oil slick and made a new attack at 1000, inflicted further damage to the scurrying craft. Just before noon the TAYLOR made a sound contact at the position in the slick indicated by Nelson and depth-bombed viciously. There were several heavy thuds from below followed by two terrific underwater explosions. To the ANZIO went another "B" assessment, also more warm from Admiral Halsey: "Violent explosions emanating from Nip subs are music to all ears. Well done."

Task Force 38 stepped up the momentum of its brazen strikes, drenching the Dragon's lair with incendiary bombs and rockets; Task Group 30.6 kept its vigil over the logistic support units east and south of Tokyo. Carrier ANZIO made the closest approach of any combat CVE to Tokyo prior to the surrender when on one occasion she steamed within 241 miles of Honshu; generally she managed to keep clear of Honshu by some 500 miles. It had been expected that Halsey's hammering, and consequent need of the ANZIO would be completed at the end of the first week in August. However, delivery of the Potsdam Declaration on the 16th of July, Soviet Russia's eleventh hour decision to

stab Japan in Manchuria and the awesome atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki made it mandatory that Halsey's task force stay right on the job.

Rumors trickled in to the ANZIO on the lOth of August that Japan was ready to give up the ghost. For five long, nerve-wracking days a nervous watch was kept waiting for developments in the radio shack. At two minutes past 0800 on the morning of 15 August 1945, ANZIO sailors were hustling topside for muster at General Quarters and physical drill. They were met with an announcement from the bridge: "President Truman announced Japanese have accepted Allied counter proposal on the surrender terms without qualifications!" With the dam of mixed hope and anxiety thus broken, a deluge of joy broke across the ANZIO flight deck. Amid the Mardi Gras of old costumes and joyous processions, one crewmen masqueraded as a Jap militarist while others "hung" him from the bridge in mock gravity. Two hours later the Chief of Naval Operations messaged to "cease all offensive operations against Japanese forces."

Night flight operations were discontinued, but daylight defensive searches were made until the 19th of August when orders routed the ANZIO to Guam for a relief squadron. Entering Guam's Apra Harbor the morning of 22 August, Task Group 30.6 was dissolved and availability for machinery repairs was granted CVE-57. That night her crew read with disappointment press dispatches which listed the great force of men-o-war and auxiliaries slated to enter Tokyo Bay with Halsey's occupation force. Not included was the only escort carrier offensively to engage the enemy during the final July forays. But hope of a quick return to the United States gave way to the realization that there was still work to be done as Squadron Thirteen left the ship, only to be replaced by Composite Squadron Sixty-Six.

Sailing from Guam 29 August the ANZIO practiced with her new pilots, next day reformed her old unit with the destroyer escorts. After encountering heavy seas and high winds enroute to Okinawa, the ANZIO's Task Group 78.3 entered " Buckner Bay on 3 September, reported for duty to the commander of the Seventh Amphibious Force. On 5 September the ANZIO stood out of the anchorage to provide air cover and anti-submarine patrol for the last time.

ANZIO aircraft hovered protectingly over the troop-laden transports which moved out of Buckner Bay, ear-marked for the occupation of Korea. In the China and Yellow Seas numerous mines were destroyed by the task group. When the disposition had passed through a swept channel in the vicinity of Kokuzan Tu, the troop carriers proceeded to the Korean capital of Jinsen while Task Group 78.2 remained in an assigned area west of Korea. Squadron Sixty-Six saw the U. S. ships safely into the harbor while the ANZIO on 9 September cruised close enough to the Chinese mainland to see the Shantung Peninsula. On 10 September the support mission was completed. Task Group 78.3 was disbanded.

U. S. Pacific Fleet Advance Headquarters at Guam transmitted 11 September Press Release No 275: "The first American aircraft carrier to anchor in Korean waters was the USS ANZIO which at noon today anchored in the Yellow Sea Port of Jinsen. Mutual curiosity was expressed by U. S. bluejackets who had never seen oriental sailing vessels before and by Korean sailors getting their first look at an aircraft carrier. The escort carrier ANZIO accompanied the SEVENTH Fleet as "just in case" air cover for American occupation landing. The ANZIO had been the first American carrier to anchor in Kwajelein Lagoon in February 1944.

With some 400 officers and enlisted men billeted as passengers on her hangar deck the ANZIO sortied from Jinsen 13 September with the high speed transport BALDUCK and destroyer escort ROLF. On the following day the ROLF was detached and the ANZIO and BALDUCK continued enroute to Okinawa. Realization of peace gradually came over the ANZIO's sailors as they experienced the luxury of steaming with ports and sponson doors wide open at night, the pleasant tones of a bugle again heralding taps, the free ventilation where once dogged ports and hatches had made compartments at night-time stuffy and oppressive. Crowning comfort of all came when weighty lifebelts, helmets and gasmasks were discarded.

Near the Okinawan capital of Naha, the ANZIO anchored in Hagushi Wan on 15 September, dismissed her escort and prepared to embark more high-point men. However a storm raging to the southward caused her to put into execution on 16 September her typhoon plan for retirement westward. With the cruiser SAINT LOUIS, the CVE sailed west, waited till the typhoon passed Okinawa 16-17 September. She pitched in the high seas but her crew, remembering the December typhoon in the Philippine Sea held nothing under 25 degrees to be a real roll, nonchalantly lashed all gear securely and paid the weather little heed.

On 18 September, the storm having passed well clear to the northward, ANZIO stood into Buckner Bay, dropped her hook and refueled. Streaming a 700-feet homeward-bound pennant which indicated a lapse of thirteen months since she had last seen home waters, the ANZIO got underway 19 September 1945, a unit of Rear Admiral Kendalls; Magic Carpet task group. Several days after her 30 September arrival in San Francisco, the ANZIO' sailors were marching down Market Street in the THIRD Fleets victory parade.

Bunks were welded to the hangar deck during a short availability, while her crew was cut down to a bare minimum required to operate the ship for a maximum passenger accommodation. One quick trip was made to Pearl Harbor, and the ANZIO returned with a cargo of 1200 veterans. Again she sailed westward, this-time to Shanghai, China, where she arrived 1 December 1945. Departing 4 December jam-packed with troops the ANZIO made a 2-day stop-over in Pearl Harbor 15-17 December, arrived in Seattle, Washington the 23rd.

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure commending the UNITED STATES SHIP ANZIO (EX-CORAL SEA) and her attacked Air Squadrons participating in the following operations: VC-33 VC-33 VC-33 VC-33 VC-82 VC-82 VC-82 VC-82 VC-13 VC-13 VC-13 for service as follows:

> "For outstanding heroism in action against enemy Japanese forces in the air, ashore and afloat. Operating in the most advanced areas, the USS ANZIO and her attached air squadrons penetrated enemy-controlled waters to destroy or damage hostile warships, aircraft, merchant shipping and shore installations despite furious enemy air attacks. The ANZIO launched her planes boldly in the face of unfavorable weather and pioneered in around-the-clock hunter-killer tactics which resulted in the destruction of four Japanese submarines by the Task Unit under her direction. On June 17, 1944, she brought her own guns to bear on a large enemy dive-bombing attack group and shot down four and possibly five of the attackers. Operating as a highly disciplined and superbly coordinated team, the ANZIO and her air groups achieved an outstanding record of distinguished service in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

All personnel attached to and serving on board the USS ANZIO and her embarked air squadrons as noted during one or more of the designated periods are hereby authorized to wear the NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION RIBBON. -

Secretary of the Navy

Plowing out of Seattle Harbor 18 January 1946, the escort carrier paused at San Francisco 20-22 January, then continued south to transit the Panama Canal on the 31st. Upon arrival at Norfolk, Virginia, the ANZIO awaited her turn at the decommissioning blocks. Weather-proofed and rust-proofed, USS ANZIO was placed out of commission 5, August 1946. A unit-of the U.S. Atlantic Reserve Fleet, the CVE occupied a permanent post-war berth at the Norfolk Naval Operating Base.

The USS ANZIO (CVE 27) earned six (6) battle stars on the Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Ribbon for participating in the following operations:

One star--<u>Marianas Operation:</u>

Capture and Occupation of Saipan 11 June 10 August 1944

Capture and Occupation of Guam 12 July -15 August 1944

One star--<u>Leyte Operation:</u>

LuzonAttacks 15.17-19 October 1944, 5-6, 13-14, 19-25 Novemberl944. 14-16 December, 1944