

**USS
BILOXI
(CL-80)**

**PACIFIC
ACTION**

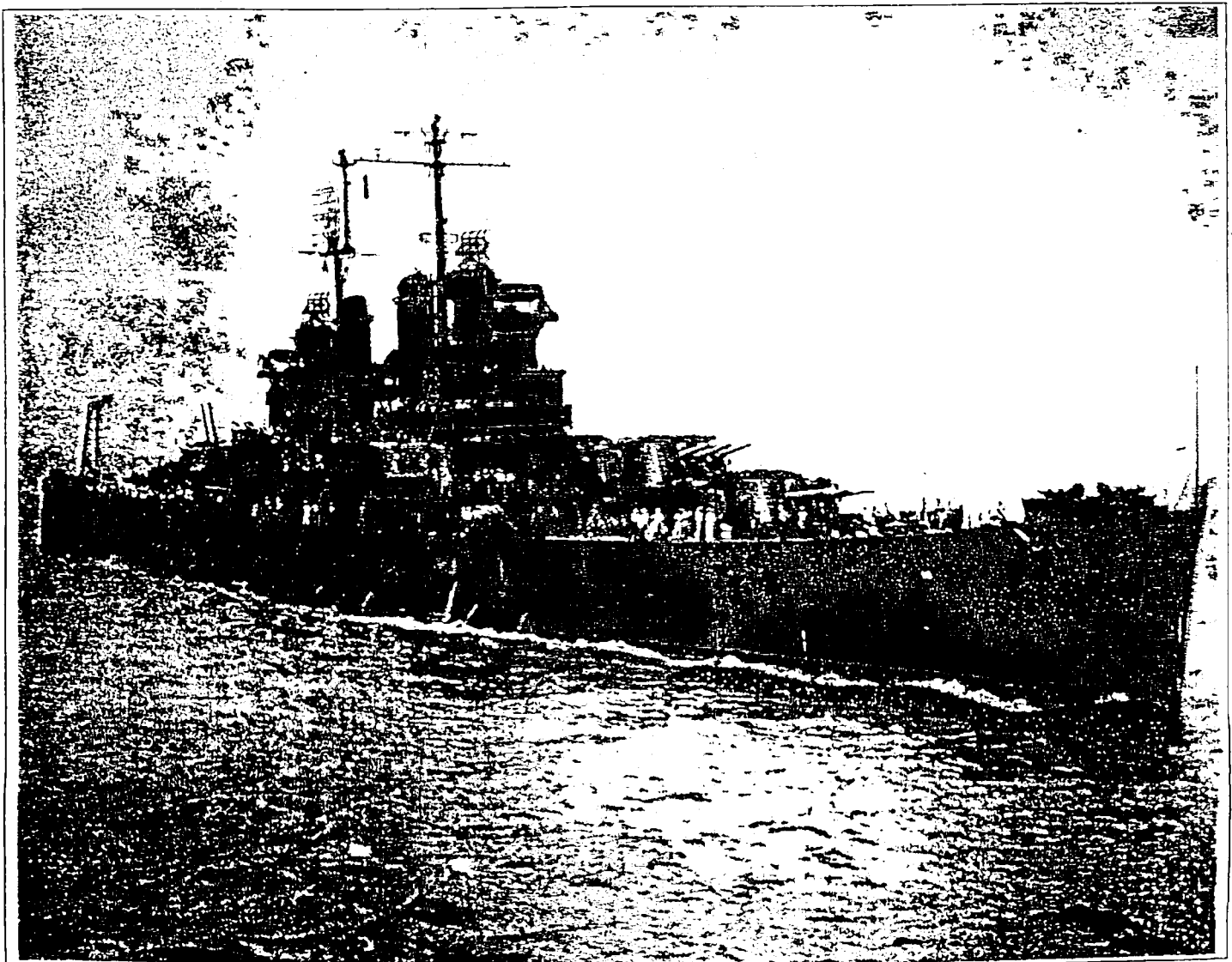
4 World War II Press Releases
give vivid testimony to many
battle engagements.

HISTORY

of the

U.S.S. BILOXI (CL 80)

In action almost uninterruptedly from January 1944 to May 1945, the light-cruiser BILOXI never missed a major operation in the Pacific, during this period. Each time, she struck with harder, more telling blows until her battle reports read like a terse history of naval warfare in the Pacific.



BILOXI deservedly was nicknamed "Double Lucky", for during her career of intense warfare not a single member of her crew was lost.

Her keel was laid on 9 July 1941 at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company, Newport News, Virginia, and 19 months later, on 23 February 1943, BILOXI slid down the ways. The first U.S. Navy ship to be named for the city of Biloxi, Mississippi, the CLEVELAND Class light-cruiser was sponsored by Mrs. Louis Braun, wife of a former mayor of that city.

After the usual fitting out period, the ship got underway ...

USS BILOXI was commissioned on 31 August 1943 with Captain Daniel M. McGurl, USN, as her first commanding officer. After the usual fitting-out period, the ship got underway the following month for Trinidad, British West Indies, for her shakedown cruise. A short period was spent in various practices and training maneuvers in southern waters, before returning to the Chesapeake Bay by way of Culebra Island, where she engaged in bombardment practice. After a brief overhaul and further training, she stood out of Norfolk for a short post-overhaul cruise to Penobscot Bay, Maine. Shortly thereafter she returned to Hampton Roads, and in a few days BILOXI departed on her first war cruise to Pearl Harbor via the Panama Canal and San Francisco.

Rehearsals and bombardment practices in the Hawaiian area occupied four days, and the ship then departed for San Francisco, where she was to join a task force for the forthcoming amphibious operations against the enemy occupied atoll of Kwajalein.

BILOXI sortied from San Francisco on 13 January 1944, in company with other cruisers and a destroyer screen. After a brief stopover at Hawaii, the cruiser proceeded to Wotje, joining the bombardment there on the 30th. The purpose of this operation was to prevent the enemy from using this base to attack our amphibious forces taking part in the occupation of Kwajalein. She carried out a deliberate neutralizing bombardment from dawn until noon, effectively plastering the airfield, during which she was hit

by a dud shell from an enemy shore battery.

The following day the cruiser moved to Roi Island, where she served as close support unit for the Marine landing. In two days of blasting this Jap-held island beachhead, BILOXI was straddled several times by the enemy shore batteries.

Two weeks later, the ship took part in the attack on the Japanese stronghold of Truk in the Caroline Islands. This was a carrier strike with BILOXI and other ships acting as protectors for the carriers. Following this raid the cruiser logged the Saipan, Tinian, and Guam strikes, during which time she shot down her first enemy plane.

After a quiet day on 20 March, during which the landings on Emirau Islands were accomplished, BILOXI then took part in the



raids on the Western Carolines, Palau, Yap, Woleai, and Truk. She swept in as support for the carriers, then paved the way and gave cover for the Marines on Saipan and Guam, finally winding up in the battle of the Philippine Sea.

On 29 and 30 April and 1 May, BILOXI engaged in carrier strikes against Truk and Ponape. The landing on Saipan and its capture, 11 to 24 June, were accomplished, despite attacking enemy planes, which were taken care of in a business-like manner.

BILOXI celebrated the Fourth of July 1944, by bombarding the island of Iwo Jima in the Bonins, smashing at the airfields and the many gun emplacements that were to cause trouble in the subsequent invasion six months later.

Next stop on the itinerary of the ship was the island of Guam, where she gave support to the landing forces. This was done with a minimum of trouble, and the vessel was ready for its next foray.

This came quickly, in the form of carrier strikes against Yap Island and Ulithi Atoll in the Caroline Islands. These operations proved uneventful as far as the cruiser was concerned, and her next encounter with the enemy came on 4-5 August when she participated in the attacks on Chichi Jima in the Bonin Islands.

In this attack, BILOXI put several harbor boats out of action, and then bombarded her designated targets with good effect. Later, from 28 August to 3 September, BILOXI made a return visit and riddled Chichi Jima, throwing in another bombardment of Iwo Jima for good measure.

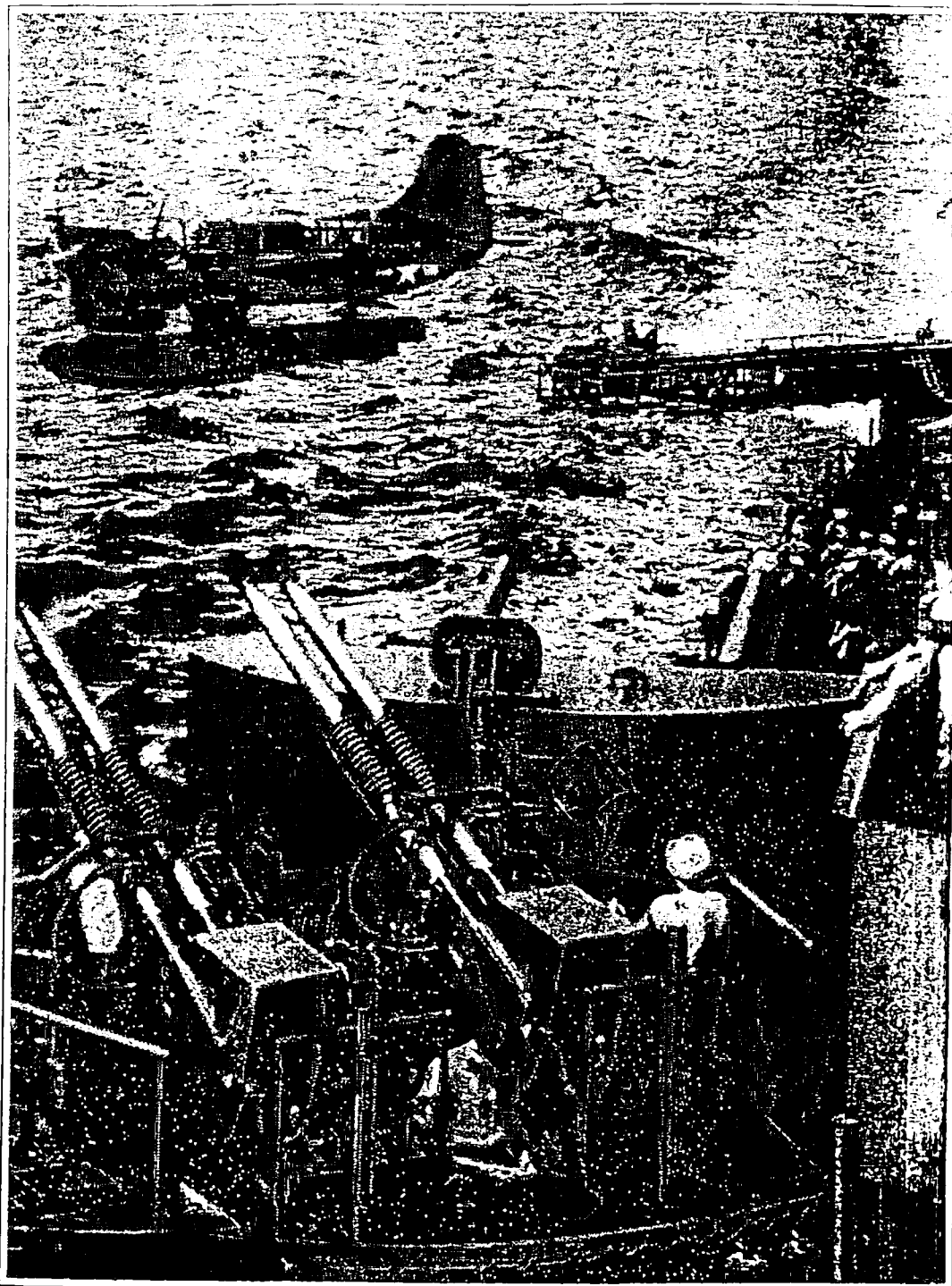
Yap Island was again plastered by the light-cruiser on 7-8 September, with excellent hits being observed on shore installations, oil tanks, and a small gauge railway.

From 27 September to 5 October BILOXI operated in support of fast carriers, which were providing air cover for the landings of amphibious forces in the Palaus. Early success here freed the ship for air strikes against Okinawa and Formosa.

The 13th of October was an action-filled day for the task group, which was attacked by low-flying torpedo planes just before sunset while off Formosa. Five attackers

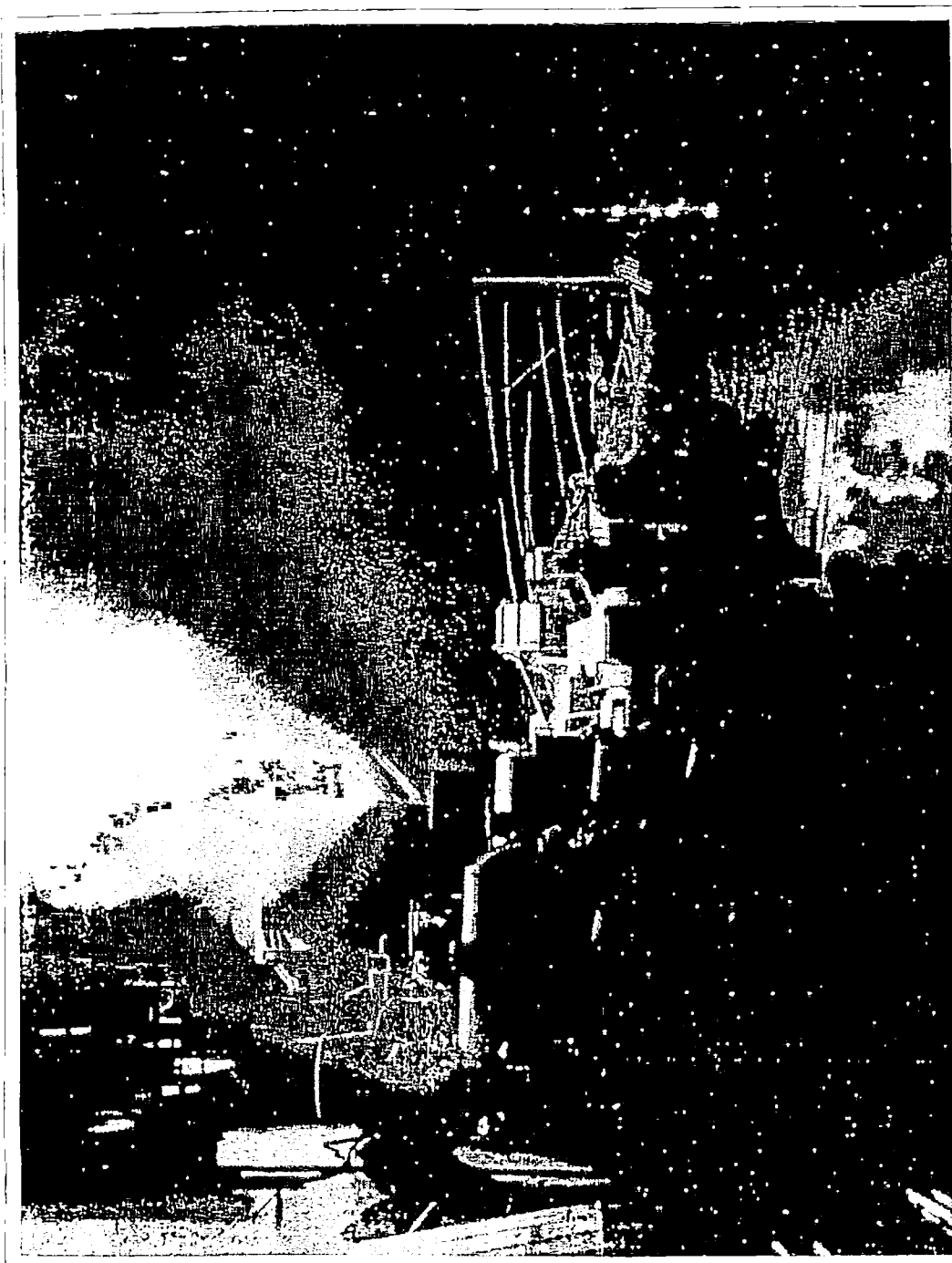
appeared out of a rain squall flying very low, and apparently heading for the carriers. BILOXI immediately opened fire, turning away one plane, and probably hitting all four of the others, one of which burst into flame; believed to be a victim of the ship's fire. All four of the enemy planes were shot down by the task group.

The light-cruiser operated as part of a force furnishing air support for landings by amphibious forces on Leyte Island from 14 to 19 October. The group was heavily attacked by Jap fighters, but the



"Biloxi operated in support of carriers making air strikes against the very heart of the enemy homeland."

“Okinawa was more than a battle. It was the blow which began the disintegration, not only of the Japanese air force, but of the entire enemy war effort as well. Between 3700 and 4000 Jap planes and pilots met a flaming end.”



attackers failed to cause any damage. The 26th was a red-letter day for BILOXI. Admiral Halsey's attacks had left the Jap fleet in a battered condition, and the cruiser was on the prowl for any enemy ships that might still be in the vicinity of the Philippines.

Early that morning, an enemy ship, later found to be a good-sized cruiser, was discovered trying to make her way back to her group. BILOXI, along with two other cruisers, took up the chase, and when within range, all opened fire. Almost instantly the Jap ship burst into flame, with intermittent explosions shaking her from stem to stern. With the target burning fiercely, a destroyer was dispatched to move in and finish it off.

BILOXI operated in Philippine waters with a fast carrier group from 22 November to 1 December 1944. It was here that the Japanese planes made some of their first suicide dives, although on several former occasions Jap planes had fallen uncomfortably close to ships.

From 3 to 23 January 1945, the light-cruiser was engaged in support of a fast carrier task force that struck the Ryukyus, Formosa, Luzon, French Indo-China, and the China Coast. During these air strikes, Hong Kong, Hainan, Saigon, and Camranh Bay were battered by planes of this group.

BILOXI operated in support of carriers making air strikes against the very heart of the enemy homeland, Tokyo itself, on 16 February. An indication of how completely the Japs were taken by surprise in this maneuver is the fact that there was no counterattack either by plane or surface ships.

Just three days later, BILOXI was on hand for the invasion of Iwo Jima. Here the accurate and effective shelling of the ship helped to make possible the landings and advance of the U.S. Marines.

Following another strike at the Tokyo area, after the Iwo Jima invasion, BILOXI proceeded to the lair to the Japanese suicide planes, the vitally important island of Okinawa. It was here that the fanatical enemy, sensing their approaching doom, used thousands of suicide planes in hopes of stopping the United States advance. This new and fantastic type of warfare failed, but only because of the skill and determination of the American forces.

Okinawa was more than a battle. It was the blow which began the disintegration, not only of the Japanese air force, but of the entire enemy war effort as well. Between 3700 and 4000 Jap planes and pilots met a flaming end at Okinawa.

Arriving at Okinawa several days in advance of "D-Day", which had been set for Easter Sunday, 1 April, BILOXI's first duty was to escort minesweepers through the dangerous waters about Kerama Retto, an island group dominating the west approach to Okinawa. On 27 March, at dawn, enemy suicide planes were observed heading for our fleet units, which were approaching Okinawa to give it its daily dose of shore bombardment.

A group of these planes attacked the ships, with BILOXI accounting for three attackers within ten minutes with intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire. Other fleet units were putting up a terrific curtain of fire also, making it difficult to establish who was hitting the enemy planes.

In the midst of this attack, an enemy plane began a suicide run on BILOXI from off her port beam. Although hit almost squarely and with its pilot apparently dead at the controls, the plane came on, while gunners of the ship grimly stood their ground in the path of the oncoming plane, pouring a steady withering fire into it. The ship then made an emergency turn, but the plane, out of control, did a freak half-roll, and, describing a huge arc, came back toward the ship and struck it on the port side at the water line.

There was no explosion, and repair parties were on the scene immediately. Investigation revealed two compartments flooded, parts of the suicider strewn about, and lying alongside the plane parts was a 1,100 pound enemy bomb that had failed to explode. Experts rendered the bomb harmless, and afterwards it was mounted on the ship's quarter-deck; souvenir of a narrow escape.

While the firing was at its height, an anti-aircraft shell from a friendly ship landed on BILOXI's deck, and spun around, ready to explode, when a quick-thinking member of the crew dashed over to the "hot" shell, grabbed it in his bare hands, and threw it over the side.

Air attacks throughout the Okinawa invasion and thereafter were commonplace, but BILOXI had a shore bombardment to complete, and this she did, getting her port side repaired by night at Kerama Retto by her own crew.

As a result of the effective job the U.S. fleet units performed by raking the beaches with shell fire, the landing forces were able to cross the beaches on invasion day without the loss of a man.

After one of the longest continuous tours of combat duty by any United States warship, BILOXI headed for the U.S., to undergo a major overhaul, during which the latest improvements were installed in her framework. Stronger, more powerful and more dangerous than ever, she headed outward again to take her place with the fighting fleet, departing San Diego on 20 July 1945.

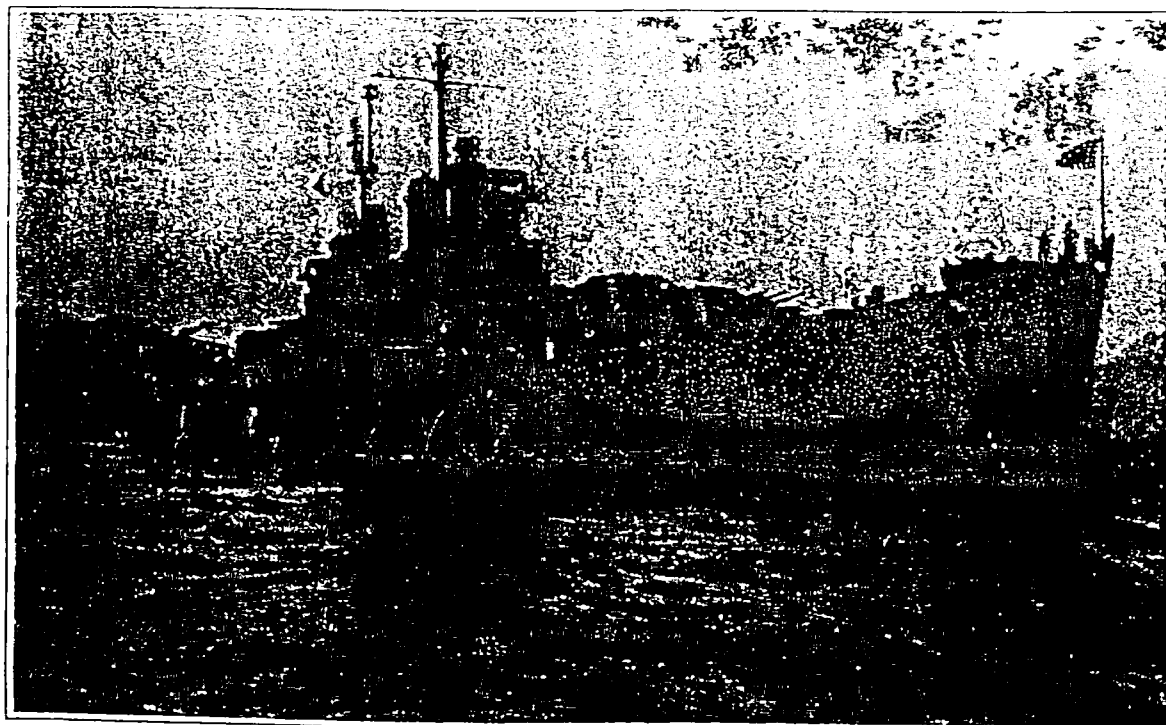
While enroute, BILOXI held countless drills and gunnery practices, to acquaint the new members of her crew with battle conditions. After an understandably ragged start, the new men quickly perfected the smoothness in timing and performance that was expected of BILOXI.

Enroute to the battle zone, BILOXI stopped to bombard the dwindling Jap garrison at Wake Island, and then proceeded onward. However, while heading for the Japanese Empire the war ended almost as suddenly as it had started on 15 August 1945.

BILOXI continued to Japan, where she was one of the first ships to evacuate Allied prisoners-of-war from Nagasaki, Japan, making two trips shortly after the war's end.

After being released from this "Magic Carpet" duty, BILOXI returned to San Francisco, docking there on 14 January 1946, and the following day she moved to Port Angeles, where inactivation was started on her. She was placed "in commission" in the Pacific Reserve Fleet on 25 May and on 29 October 1946 BILOXI was placed "out of commission" in the Bremerton Group of the Pacific Reserve Fleet.

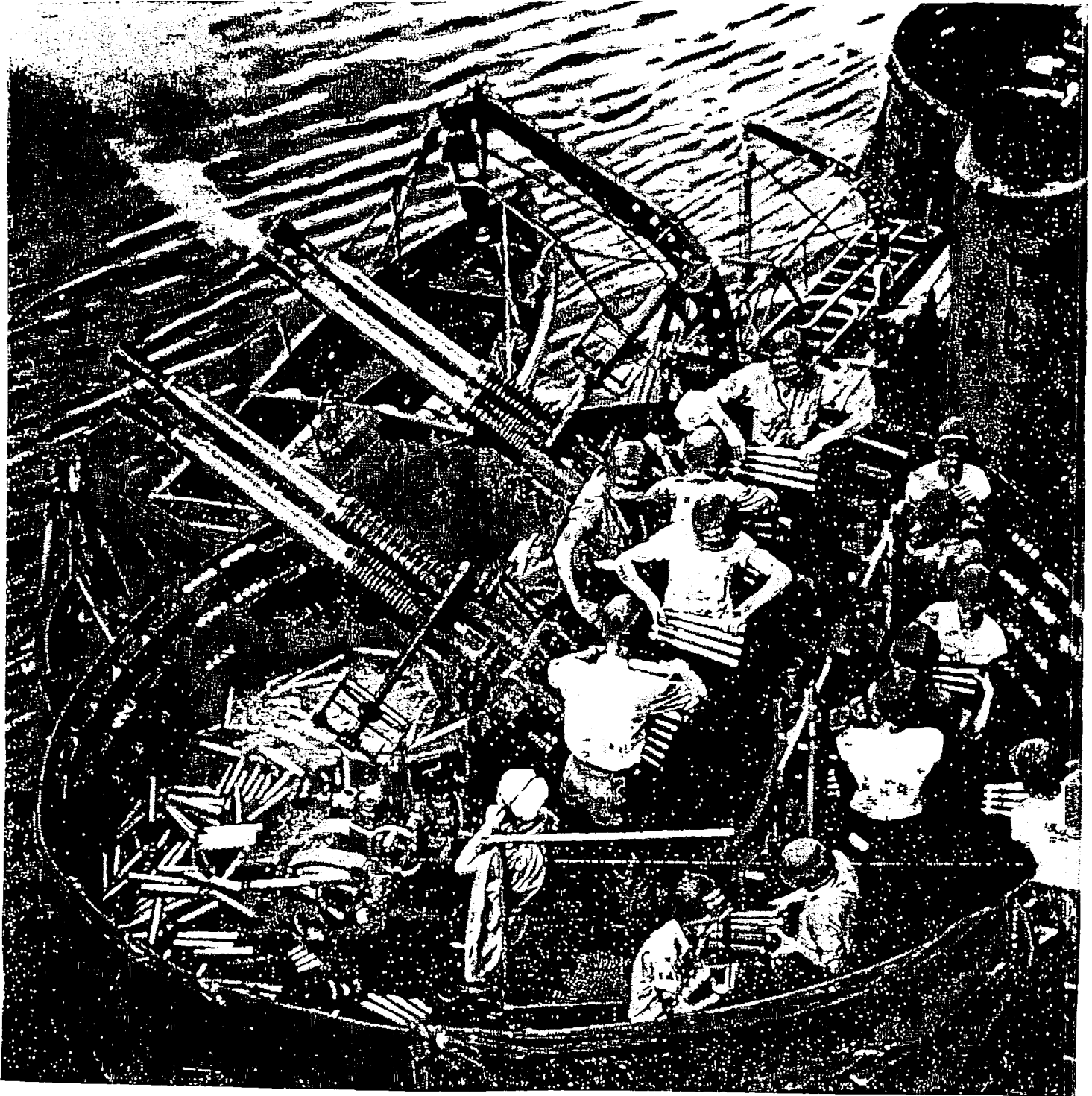
USS Biloxi at anchor, Kure Bay, Japan, 1945



TWELFTH NAVAL DISTRICT OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION
Room 301, 83 McAllister Street, San Francisco, 2, California
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Berkley Officer Relates Kamikaze Episodes On Biloxi

SAN FRANCISCO, California - The "Double Lucky" - light Pacific Fleet cruiser, USS BILOXI, veteran of 16 months' continuous action against the Japanese - merits her nickname. She "took everything"



in the Japs' book but not a man aboard received a scratch or was lost from enemy action during all this time.

The BILOXI put in here for a much-needed overhaul after having participated in every major Fleet action in the Pacific since January, 1944. She didn't have to put in for battle damage - too lucky for that. When workmen at the San Francisco yards of the Bethlehem Steel Company's Shipbuilding Division swarmed aboard with their welding torches and air hoses it was for the constructive job of improving the fighting facilities of a gallant ship, not for patching up after the Japs.

"The Good Lord must ride this ship," declared Commander E.F. McDaniel, USN, of Blackstone, Virginia, her Executive Officer, whose wife, Mrs. Laura Luman McDaniel and two sons, Roland Edward, 14, and Robert Lee, 12, reside at 296 Arlington Avenue, Berkeley, California.

The "Double Lucky" ran the full gamut of Japanese fanaticism. A Jap "suicide" pilot tried to crash-dive her off Okinawa early one morning last March. Small Jap surface craft, loaded with explosives, attacked the BILOXI and companion ships. Even hysterical Jap swimmers carrying hand grenades stabbed at the vessel.

A Jap flier, bent on suicide for the Emperor, failed in his mission of putting the BILOXI out of action during the bombardment of Okinawa. He succeeded only in suicide. The ship's gun crews poured so much lead into him that his plane caught fire and exploded as it crashed off the BILOXI's port quarter. Two holes were made in the hull by an unexploded bomb and the plane engine. These were quickly patched by a ship repair crew. A permanent patch was made later at an advanced base in the Pacific. The ship lost no time and never turned aside from her mission of bombarding Okinawa.

"To my mind, fighting the Japs was like fighting insane children. They were as dangerous as hell because no one could predict what the fools would do next," declared Commander McDaniel.

That unexploded bomb caused some tense moments, however. No one knew whether it was a delayed action bomb or a dud. Some aboard thought it might even have been a torpedo. The "object" was in the provisions storeroom.

Lieutenant Commander Benjamin F. Edwards, USN, Winchester, Massachusetts and Montross, Virginia, ordered the hatch of the provisions storeroom opened and found coffee and navy beans floating around and flour and sugar soaked with salt water. The room was pumped dry and Lieutenant Commander Edwards with George Burl Boone, Shipfitter, Third Class, who volunteered to assist, entered the room not knowing whether they would be blown to bits the next minute or not. Boone, son of Mrs. Velma Bell, 1318 Dodson Street, Ocala, Florida, is praised by his shipmates and officers for his courage in this act. He's been recommended for a medal.

When the inspection disclosed the object actually was a bomb and not a torpedo, Lieutenant (junior grade) William T. Bell, USNR, 1619 Jonquil Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C., assistant first lieutenant and bomb disposal officer, entered the room and "de-fused" the bomb,

which was very much alive. The "Double Lucky" and her crew felt easy again. The bomb - a 500 pound Japanese Army type - is part of the BILOXI's souvenir collection.

When a 40-millimeter shell from another American warship hit the BILOXI's navigating bridge, it fell on the deck and spun around. The ship's bugler, Leonard Orville Yandle, Bugler, Third Class, USN, son of Orville Art Yandle, 405 East Beach Street, Henryetta, Oklahoma, picked it up and tossed it overboard.

While these individual cases of bravery and heroism are found in the BILOXI's story, the ship's real history is in the unity of her crew and the spirit of her officers and men.

The BILOXI's men pay tribute to their skipper, Captain Paul R. Heineman, USN, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and 200 Duke of Gloucester Street, Annapolis, Maryland, and to Commander McDaniel, their "exec".

One of the secrets of the BILOXI's success is that she is a well-informed ship. Each afternoon at sea the ship has its own broadcast. News is summarized. The progress of the Fleet action is described. What is going on on the bridge and also on other ships nearby is described. Shiplside problems are discussed. The "Exec" has a complaint and suggestion box outside his office. Sometimes these matters are handled privately. If it is of general enough interest to concern the ship it is discussed over the ship's public address system.

The BILOXI has, by this time, "weighed anchor" and departed from her berth at the Bethlehem yard. But this cruise will not be a fighting one. She will take her place with the rest of the fleet to help establish the peace.

HOLD FOR RELEASE
PRESS AND RADIO
UNTIL 9:00 A.M. (E.W.T.)
SEPTEMBER 7, 1945

U.S.S. Biloxi Sets Record For Combat Participation

ABOARD THE USS BILOXI IN THE PACIFIC-The light cruiser USS BILOXI, observing her second anniversary, August 31, 1945, has spent more than 15 months of that time operating West of the International Date Line.

In action almost continually from January, 1944, to May, 1945, the BILOXI, with little fanfare, has established two records which are probably without parallel in the Pacific War. From her initial bombardment of Wotje in the Marshall Islands where she received her first shell hit to the fight for Okinawa where she took a suicide plane crash below her hangar deck, the BILOXI has not missed a major operation in the Pacific.

Even more unique in view of all this action - and no ship can boast a more impressive array of enemy engagements - the 10,000-ton cruiser has never lost a man.

Highlights of the busy cruiser's career are almost too numerous to name. In some cases, narrow escapes have bordered on the incredible. Following the shell hit at Wotje, the BILOXI moved in as a close support unit for the Marine landing at Roi Island. In two days of blasting this Jap-held Marshall island beachhead, the ship took several straddles from enemy batteries.

The following month, during the Fleet's first air attack on the Marianas, anti-aircraft gunners bagged their first Jap plane, an enemy bomber which unsuspectingly approached the ship in the black of night.

"... although riddled with bullets and burning furiously ... (the kamikaze) crashed crazily into the U.S.S. Biloxi's portside aft."

When the BILOXI took part in the Fleet attack on Tokyo, February, 1945, it was hardly more than a return engagement. As early as August of the year before, the BILOXI, in company with a special attack group had chased back and sunk a convoy bound for Iwo Jima to within 300 miles of the homeland. Alone, during this night-running engagement, the ship, its guns going full blast to both beams, sank a Jap destroyer-escort and a transport, and assisted in sinking others.

In the prelude to the return to the Philippines, the BILOXI partici-



Three twenty millimeter gun crews rapid-fire their guns at airborne target.

pated in the sea-air battle off Formosa during early October. For three days the Fleet had had its own way within the shadows of the Formosa shoreline. Then, out of the haze which enveloped the force on the third evening, Jap BETTY torpedo planes attacked from all directions.

Almost every gun, including the BILOXI's main battery guns, opened up on the attacking planes. The BILOXI received credit for two planes shot down for sure, while assisting in bringing down or turning away many others. Five burning BETTIES were counted in the water close aboard the cruiser at one time during the battle.

During the Battle for Leyte Gulf, the BILOXI was with the Navy's central force. It gave chase to the Japs' northern carrier force which routed in the Philippine Sea. In a full power run, the BILOXI, in company with a special group picked by Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., Commander, Third Fleet, scurried back to San Bernardino Straits, arriving in time to head off a Jap cruiser returning from Leyte. The BILOXI, along with two other cruisers, opened fire. So accurate was the fire that almost instantly the Jap ship burst into flames. A torpedo from one of the BILOXI's escorting destroyers finished off the Jap ship.

At Iwo Jima, between strikes on Tokyo, the BILOXI, for three days and three nights, furnished close support and illumination to Marines locked in the death struggle ashore. Four times the cruiser took near-misses from Jap shore batteries, but refused to move from her position only 2,500 yards off the beach. Pin point shelling of

Mount Suribachi was one of the cruiser's primary targets, and not until the crew had witnessed the raising of the flag over the strongly-defended volcano did the BILOXI retire from the area to return to Tokyo.

Then came Okinawa! The BILOXI, operating with bombardment force, arrived in these Jap-dominated waters a week before the invasion forces. For three days the cruiser escorted mine sweepers up and down the enemy coastline. In between times, she had proceeded to neutralize assigned beach defenses. Then came the suiciders - the Jap Kamikaze planes.

Already, the crew of the BILOXI had noted the Jap tendency towards suicide crashes during the Philip-pines campaign. But early during the morning of March 27, the suiciders attacked in full force. In 10 minutes the BILOXI was attacked by four planes. Three of the planes were shot down by BILOXI gunners, but the fourth, although riddled with bullets and burning furiously, and with its pilot already obviously dead, crashed crazily into the BILOXI's portside aft.

"A later investigation revealed an unexploded 500 kilogram bomb had penetrated below the hanger deck..."

Not a man left his post when the plane crashed, sending flames leaping high into the air and debris flying over the ship. Two holes, one below the waterline, were knocked in the port side, and the ship took a list to port. Water flooded many storeroom compartments, leaving the ship without ample provisions. A later investigation revealed an unexploded 500 kilogram bomb had penetrated below the hangar deck. Rendered harmless, the bomb was removed and now occupies a prominent place on the BILOXI's main deck, a reminder of their closest battle escape.

Despite her condition, the ship carried out its bombardment assignment throughout the day. During the night that followed, the ship retired from the area and members of the damage control gang made temporary repairs. The next morning found her back

on the firing line, and Easter Sunday, on the day of the initial Okinawa invasion, the BILOXI loosed all its explosive might in leveling beaches preceeding landings by Marines.

For the next 20 days, the BILOXI delivered close support to both Army and Marine advances in North and South Okinawa and on the tiny island of Ie Shima. At one time while supporting Marine advances in the North, the ship's fire proved so effective

that the shore fire control party sent this message: "Shooting excellent. You're so far ahead of us, suggest you either take time out for 'joe' (coffee) or come ashore for a chicken stew."

A few days later the ship did take time out. Having steamed over 150,000 miles, including one stretch during the Philippines operation of 55 days, the BILOXI was ordered to return to the West Coast for routine overhaul.

"There had been a lighter side too... swimming, occasional beach parties, movies ...and now and then a program (by the) Rainmakers"

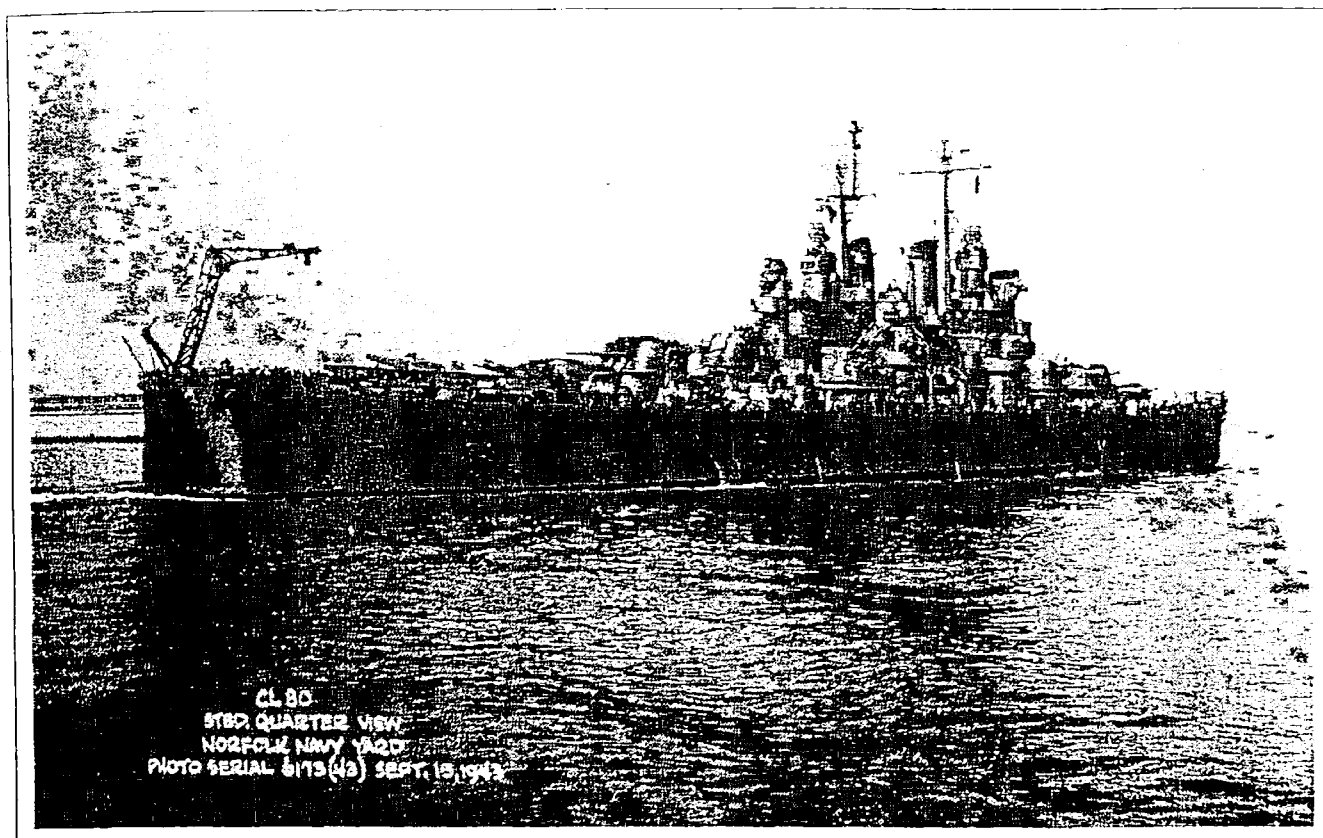
The respite was well earned. Added to the so-called highlights which the crew had experienced during the almost year and one-half in the forward area, they could well remember also the night bombardments of New Guinea, the sneak attack on Truk, the three-time bombardment of Iwo Jima months before its capture, the great air Battle of the Philippine Sea, the carrier sweep through the South China Sea, the Jap suicide attack on the TICONDEROGA with the BILOXI dispatched to escort her to safety, and the

typhoon which hit the fleet off the Philippines in December.

There had been the lighter side too. Long remembered would be the Christmas celebration at Ulithi after a year's duty away from home which brought Rear Admiral Morton L. Deyo, U.S.N., then the Division Commander, who was visiting aboard, to say, "The BILOXI's crew has the most ship's spirit I've ever seen." Two times out of its 14 crossings, the crew had also enjoyed the fun of 'Crossing the Equator' Ceremonies. Athletic contests in the hangar, daily swimming calls while in port, an occasional beach party, movies,



"...while supporting marine advances ... the ship's fire proved so effective that the shore fire control party sent this message: ... suggest you either take some time out for joe, or come ashore for chicken stew"



U.S.S. BILOXI (CL-80)



"Captain Dan"

The ship was accepted at commissioning ceremonies August 31, 1943 by Captain D.M. McGurl, U.S.N., the Biloxi's first Commanding Officer.

and, now and then, a special program by their own group of amateur entertainers, the RAINMAKERS - all of these had their place in making of the ship's fine record.

Following overhaul and refitting of the ship at the Navy Yard, Mare Island, California, another job which was done in record time by Navy civilian workers, the BILOXI returned to the battle line in the Pacific. The end of the war found the BILOXI where she had spent the major part of her career - close on the heels of the retreating Japs.

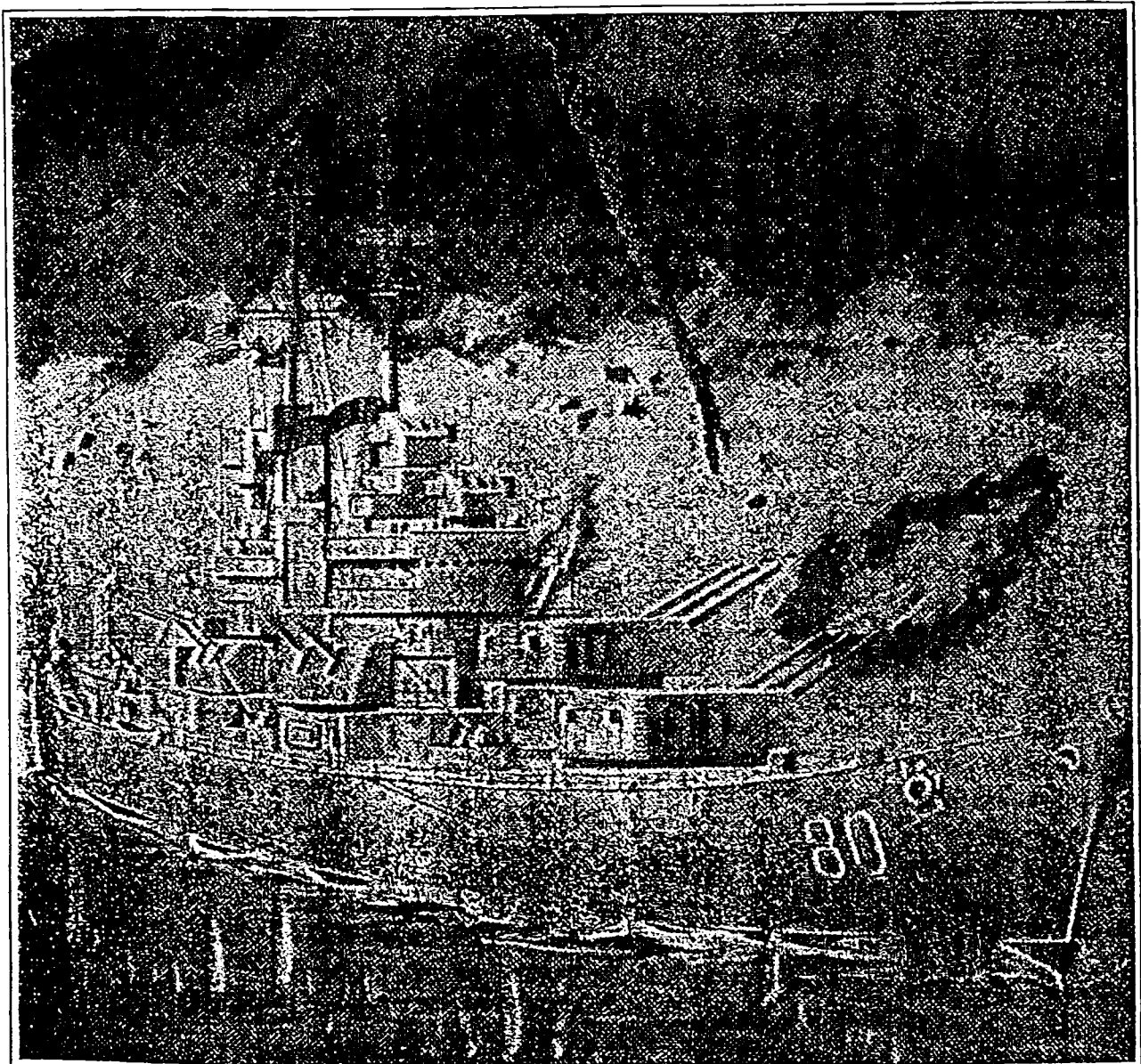
The "Busy Bee," as her crew prefers to call her, was built at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company, Newport News, Virginia. The ship was accepted at commissioning ceremonies, August 31, 1943, at the Navy Yard, Portsmouth, Virginia, by Captain Daniel M. McGurl, U.S.N., of 559 Sunbury Street, Minersville, Pennsylvania.

Captain McGurl was relieved of command following the air battle off Formosa by Captain Paul R. Heineman, U.S.N., present skipper of the ship, whose home is 107 East Gorgas Lane, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Captain (then Commander) Edward L. Woodyard, U.S.N. of Monterrey, Mexico, was executive officer aboard the BILOXI through the Battle of the Philippine Sea. He was followed by Commander Eugene F. McDaniel, U.S.N., of Blackstone, Virginia.

Commander McDaniel, in his previous duty and in the temporary rank of Captain, established the Sub Chaser Training Center, Miami, Florida.

The USS BILOXI
Earned Nine Battle Stars on the
Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Ribbon
for Participation in the Following
Operations and Engagements.



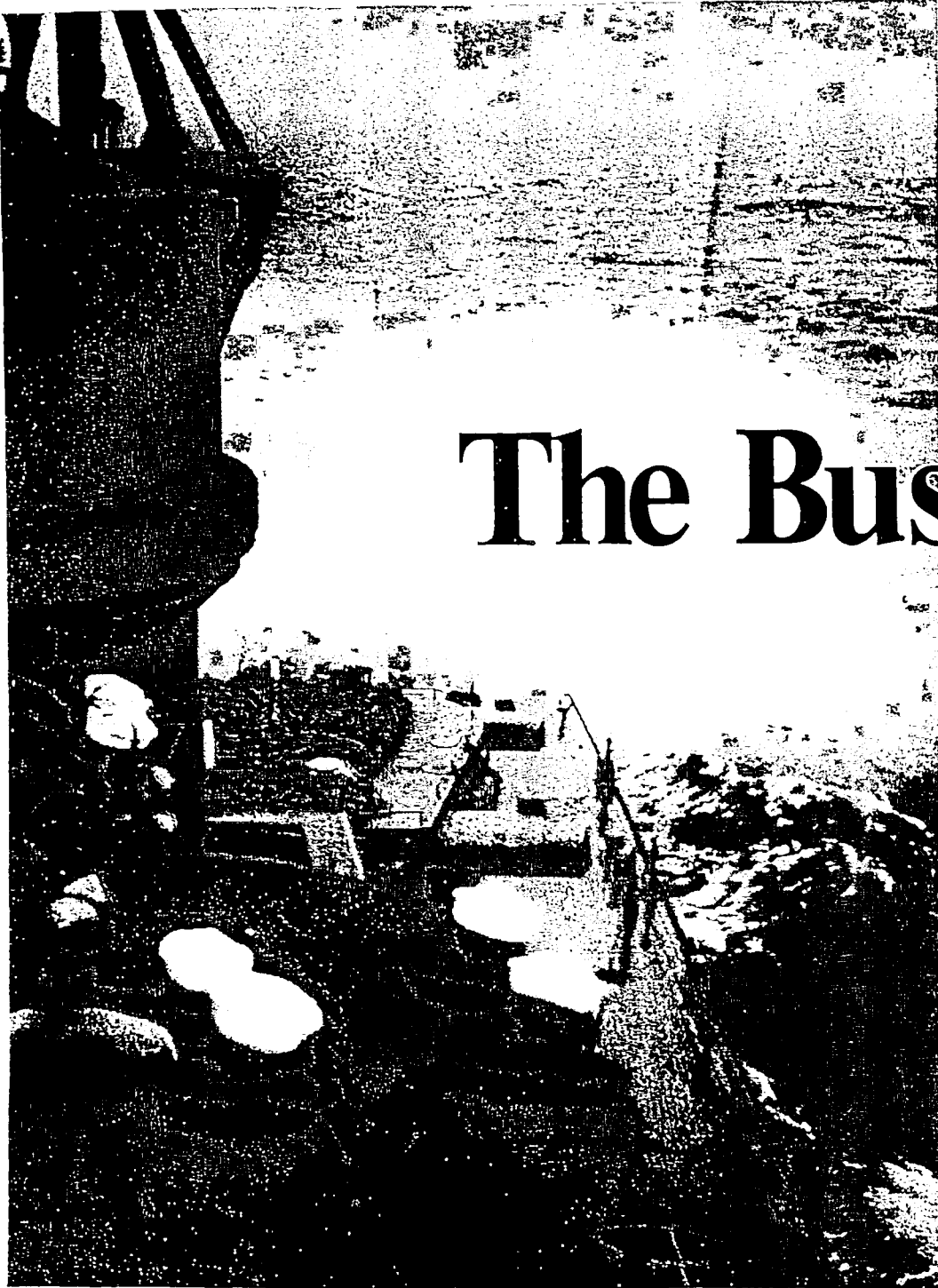
- ☆ 1 Star **Marshall Islands Operation 1943-1944**
Occupation of Eniwetok Atoll - 17 Feb to 2 Mar 1944
- ☆ 1 Star **Asiatic-Pacific Raids 1944**
Truk Attack 16-17 February 1944
Marianas Attack 21-22 February 1944
Palau, Yap, Ulithi, Woleai Raid 3 March to 1 April 1944
Truk, Satawan, Ponape Raid 29 April to 1 May 1944
- ☆ 1 Star **Western New Guinea Operations 1944-1945**
Hollandia Operation (Aitape-Humboldt Bay-Tanahmerah Bay) 21 April to 1 June 1944
- ☆ 1 Star **Marianas Operation 1944**
Capture and Occupation of Saipan 11 June to 10 Aug 1944
Battle of the Philippine Sea 19-20 June 1944
Third Bonins Raid 3-4 July 1944
Capture and Occupation of Guam 12 July to 15 August 1944
Palau, Yap, Ulithi Raid 25-27 July 1944
Fourth Bonins Raid 4-5 August 1944
- ☆ 1 Star **Western Caroline Islands Operation 1944**
Raids on Volcano-Bonin Islands and Yap Island 31 August to 8 September 1944
Capture and Occupation of Southern Palau Islands 6 September to 14 October 1944
Assaults on the Philippine Islands 9-24 September 1944
- ☆ 1 Star **Leyte Operation 1944**
Battle of Leyte Gulf (Battle off Samar) 24-26 October 1944
Third Fleet Supporting Operations Okinawa Attack 10 October 1944
Northern Luzon and Formosa Attacks 10-14 October 1944
Luzon Attacks 15, 17-19 October; 5-6, 13-14, 19-25 November; 14-16 December 1944
- ☆ 1 Star **Luzon Operation 1944-1945**
Luzon Attacks 6-7 January 1945
Formosa Attacks 3-4, 9, 15, 21 January 1945
China Coast Attacks 12, 16 January 1945
- ☆ 1 Star **Iwo Jima Operation 1945**
Assault and Occupation of Iwo Jima 15 February to 16 March 1945
Fifth Fleet Raids against Honshu and the Nansei Shoto 15 February to 16 March 1945
- ☆ 1 Star **Okinawa Gunto Operation 1945**
Assault and Occupation of Okinawa Gunto 24 March to 30 June 1945

LIST OF SUCCESSIVE COMMANDING OFFICERS

Capt. D.M. McGurl, USN - 31 August 1943 to October 1944
 Capt. P.R. Heineman, USN - October 1944 to August 1945
 Capt. A.D. Blackledge, USN - August 1945 to May 1946
 Comdr. R.H. Kerr, USN - May 1946 to September 1946
 Lt. Comdr. B.F. Edwards, USN - September 1946 to
 29 October 1946

STATISTICS

STANDARD DISPLACEMENT 10,000 tons
 ARMAMENT Twelve 6"/47 calibre batteries plus twelve
 5"/38 calibre dual purpose guns, and 40
 and 20 MM AA guns.
 LENGTH OVERALL 608 feet 4 inches
 BEAM 63 feet SPEED 33 knots
 COMPLEMENT 1200 plus, officers and men



The Busy Bee

The
USS Biloxi
Has
Had a
Full
Schedule.

Their eyes fatigue circled, officers and men of the proud new cruiser which honors Biloxi, Mississippi with her name gathered recently for a festive first anniversary dinner somewhere in the West Pacific. Their year had been an epic one; it made history, the kind which lives alike in men's minds and in books. It will live in Japanese minds and books too and in the word-of-mouth saga which make up the history of the world passed from father to son. The *Busy Bee*, as her men call her, has plastered the Jap wherever she found him.

Each time, she struck with harder, deadlier blows until her battle reports read like a terse history of the past year of war in the Pacific.

Her logs show 112,727 miles of travel. Each of her propellor shafts, they say, has turned more than 66 million times in their hardwood bushings, and her bridge shows, with neat rows of painted Jap flags marking her record of kills, that her mileage was not piled up by taking sight seeing tours. The *Busy Bee*, manned by her recruits from inland farms and small South Atlantic coastal towns, under the command of Capt. Daniel M. McGurl, first saw action in the Marshalls drive, then she dove in to help neutralize Wotje and smear steel carpets on the beaches at Roi before the Gyrenes went in. Her first hit came there, a small gash in her forward superstructure; only one man was slightly wounded. Then swirling her foamy skirts

around her, she settled down to collect damages, Truk was logged; on its heels the Saipan, Tinian and Guam strikes. At Guam, a flak battery under Lt. Comdr. Richard H. Woodfin put the first air craft scalp on her bridge. Next came Emirau raids on the Western Carolinas, then Palau, Yap, Woleai, and Truk again; she swept in as support for the carriers and paved the way for the subsequent invasions.

Living up to her name, *Busy Bee*, she buzzed into the Bonins and Volcanoes, darted over to Iwo Jima as a guard for the carriers intent on softening the place for the landings, then out of nowhere she appeared off the coasts of Rota and Yap. Early last August, according to official reports the *Bee* was back again in the Bonins

where she got her first crack at enemy shipping and slammed her stingers into a Jap convoy; a tanker, a destroyer and a transport slid under. Finding no more floating targets but still looking for excitement, the *Bee* and her sisters unlimbered their guns on Chichi Jima and that night they sailed closer to the Jap mainland than any U.S. surface craft since the war's beginning; they were 390 miles off Honshu and 440 miles from Tokyo.

On the last day of the month they celebrated the *Bee's* birthday as the Captain dined in the wardroom and cut a huge birthday cake; brief hours later they roared into the Peleliu and Anguar landings by way of dessert.

It had been a big first year for any gang of fighting men; nine shore bombardments were on the *Bee's* battle log including a blistering night attack against Wadke and Samar on Northern New Guinea at the onset of the Hollandia drive by General MacArthur. It had been a tough year, ten months without liberty, save for the few times they hove to in a quiet lagoon while her men scrambled ashore for baseball, a swim and refreshments on a deserted tropic beach.

Next the *Bee* nosed westward to smash into the central and northern Philippine area and finally to screen the General's forces when they punched into Leyte for their Philippine Come Back.

While the *Bee* and her sister cruisers guarded their carriers, fleet aircraft roared over Aparri across Clark Field and on over Nichols Field knocking scores of Jap airmen from the skies, blasting hundreds of Nip aircraft on the ground. On October 20, her men cheered the news of the success at Leyte; that day too they greeted a new skipper, Capt. Paul R. Heineman and Skipper McGurl was given a spell of leave and a new assignment. Three days later, still guarded by the *Bee* and others, the carriers shot their planes at a reported Jap force of four battleships, eight cruisers and 10 destroyers heading for the Sibuyan Sea. By late afternoon the carrier airmen were slamming bombs, and torpedoes into the 22 ship Jap fleet; one cruiser of the Sun Risers rolled over and sank and the Nips finally turned tail for home. A second group of two Jap battlewagons, a heavy cruiser and four destroyers tried to slip through Mindanao Sea but they caught hell too. At the day's end another search plane spotted two large groups of Japs northeast of Luzon including two large carriers, a light carrier, four battleships or heavy cruisers, eight light cruisers and eleven destroyers. All night U.S. forces searched and early next day a contact spiked the Nips at 140 miles northeast with four carriers, instead of three, in their group. The fliers landed like a ton of bricks while the *Bee's* men impatiently waited to polish off the cripplés. Then came hurried word



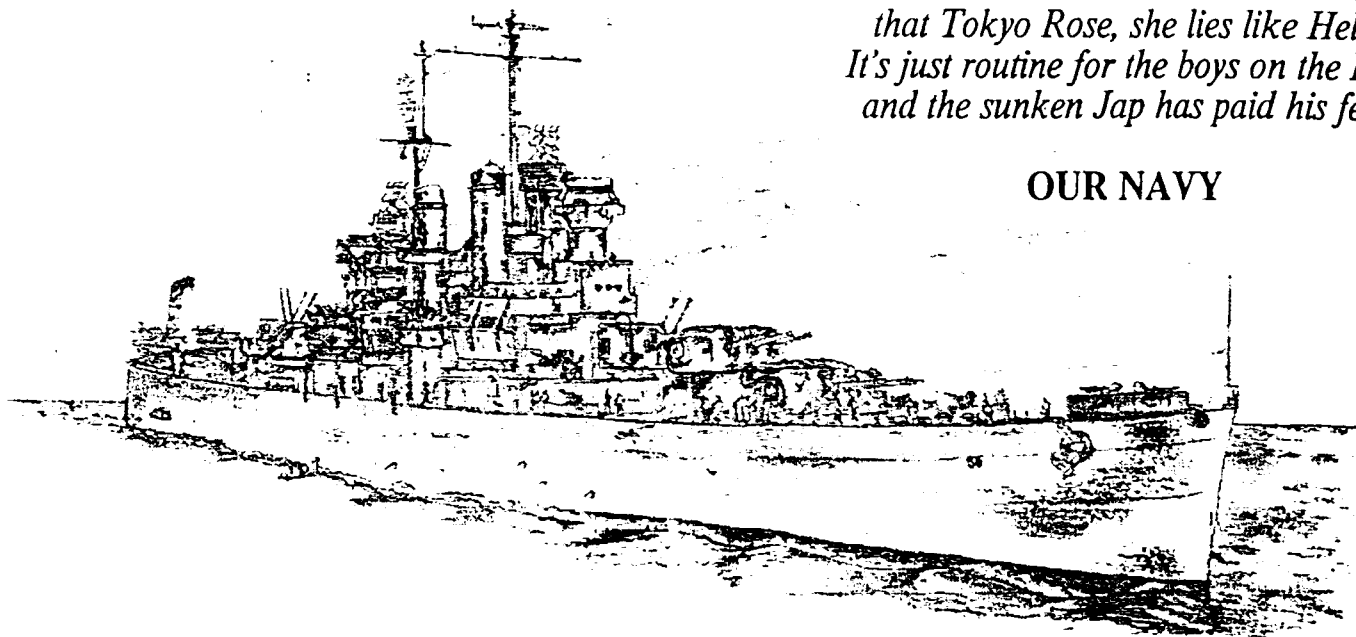
that drowned the hopes of the men; the *Bee* and her group were needed elsewhere. The enemy's southern force had been smashed but their central group had not been turned back and was blasting the escort carriers off Leyte.

In a desperate effort to intercept the central Jap fleet a swift small striking force was made up of fast vessels, including the *Bee*; the boys perked up when they learned that a Jap battlewagon, a heavy cruiser and a destroyer had been left dead in the water. Just after midnight the fireworks flamed as the *Bee* and her mates poured

it on the Jap cruiser. The tin cans slid in for the kill and the enemy ship burst into flame when a fish bored through the hull. The fires roared high and were suddenly extinguished as the enemy hulk slipped under. Like eager hounds the Biloxi and the pack went in search of more victims, but none appeared. The next day *Tokyo Rose* radioed news of the "punishment" Yank service units suffered from the Nip fleet during the preceding hours. It was that outburst that gave birth to the Biloxi's Busy Bee Song, sung to the tune of Casey Jones:

*We've been there and we know well
that Tokyo Rose, she lies like Hell.
It's just routine for the boys on the Bee
and the sunken Jap has paid his fee.*

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