

USS NASSAU CVE-16





Captain Elias - USS Nassau CVE-16

1944

HISTORY

of the

U.S.S. NASSAU

CVE-16

**Escort Aircraft Carrier
United States Navy**

USS NASSAU (CVE-16)

Specifications:

Class:	BOGUE
Length:	495' 8"
Beam:	111' 6"
Draft:	26'
Speed:	18 knots
Complement:	890
Displacement:	9,800 tons
Armament:	2 - 5" 20 - 40mm 34 - 20 mm 21 aircraft

FOREWORD

NASSAU (CVE-16) was laid down on 27 November, 1941, by the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation, Tacoma, Washington, as M. C. Hull No. 234; launched on 4 April, 1942; sponsored by Mrs. G. H. Hasselman, Tongue Point, Oregon; acquired by the U.S. Navy on 1 May; towed to the Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, Washington, and converted to an escort carrier.

By the time conversion had started a few officers had been assigned to NASSAU and they had set up temporary offices in the Navy Yard. The first draft of 135 enlisted men arrived from San Diego in late June, followed by another 200 men in early July of 1942. Among the ship's original crew were more than 100 survivors of the old USS LEXINGTON which had been lost in the Coral Sea. Until late in August the men were quartered ashore in the Navy Yard barracks.

In early August the NASSAU was floated in her dry dock, when on 20 August, 1942, she was officially commissioned under the command of Captain Austin K. Doyle, USN of Pensacola, Florida. Ceremonies were simple, and with all the ship's crew aboard, the NASSAU was turned over to Captain Doyle, the commission pennant hoisted, work was resumed by 2000 workmen readying her for sea duty.

U.S.S. MASSAU
SHIP'S HISTORY
PART I - CHRONOLOGY

1942

- 20 August: Commissioned at Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton, WA.
Capt. Austin K. Doyle, USN, of Pensacola, FL., Commanding.
- 19 Sept - 6 Oct: Conducted trial runs and fitting out activities in
Seattle area. Loaded 9 F4F's of VGS 16.
- 7 October: Underway from Port Angeles, WA. for Alameda, CA.
- 10 October: Arrived at Alameda, CA. Moored at Naval Air Station.
Loading aircraft for ferrying and 12 TBF's of VGS 16.
- 14 October: Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H. Operating under ComAirPac.
- 20 October: Arrived at Pearl Harbor, T.H. Moored at Naval Air Station.
Unloaded aircraft.
- 21 October: Moved to Navy Yard, Pearl Harbor.
- 21-23 Oct: Underwent repairs and installations.
- 23 October: Moved to Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor. Embarked
passengers. Loaded aircraft, including 12 TBF's,
20 SBD's and 5 P-40's for ferrying.
- 25 October: Shifted berths to mooring alongside, MEDUSA, for additional
repairs and installations.
- 27 October: Underway for Palmyra Island.
- 30 October: Arrived at Palmyra; departed for Noumea, New Caledonia
ferrying passengers and aircraft.
- 8 November: Arrived at Noumea, New Caledonia. Anchored in Great Roads.
- 9 November: Launched 6 F4F's. Underway for Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides
ferrying aircraft and passengers, operating under ComSoPat.
- 11 November: Launched 20 SBD's, 12 TBF's and 5 P-40's. Arrived at
Espiritu Santo. Anchored in Second Channel. VP 72 and
VT 6 embarked for operations.
- 19 November: Underway for Noumea, New Caledonia, conducting flight
operations.
- 23 November: Arrived at Noumea. Anchored at Great Roads.

- 23 Nov - 20 Dec: Anchored at Noumea. Conducted flight operations intermittently, cruising in vicinity of Noumea.
- 23 December: Vice Admiral William F. Halsey, Commander South Pacific Force, came aboard to award stations to members of Air Group.
- 27 December: Underway for Espiritu Santo, conducting flight operations.
- 30 December: Arrived at Espiritu Santo. Anchored in Second Channel.

1943

- 1-6 January: Anchored at Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides.
- 7 January: Underway for Viti Levu, Fiji Islands, conducting flight operations under CTF 65.
- 13 January: Arrived at Viti Levu, moored to buoy in Tombaka Nandi. VGS 16 embarked for operations.
- 14-17 January: Moored at Viti Levu. Conducted flight operations.
- 18 January: Underway for sea in vicinity of Nandi for flight operations, fighter director exercises and radar calibrations.
- 19 January: Returned to Viti Levu. Moored.
- 19 Jan - 5 Feb: Moored at Viti Levu, conducting Flight operations intermittently. Debarked VF 72, VT 6 and VGS 16.
- 6 February: Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H.
- 14 February: Arrived at Pearl Harbor.
- 14-20 February: Moored at Navy Yard for repairs and alterations.
- 21 February: Loaded personnel and aircraft of MAG 21, including 54 F4F's. Underway for Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides, operating on ferrying mission under ComAirPac.
- 3 March: Catapulted 54 F4F's. Arrived at Espiritu Santo, anchored in Second Channel.
- 10 March: Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H.
- 19 March: Arrived at Pearl Harbor, moored at Naval Air Station.
- 19-20 March: Loaded cargo and embarked passengers.
- 21 March: Underway for San Francisco, CA.
- 27 March: Arrived at Alameda, CA. Moored at Naval Air Station. Disembarked passengers and unloaded cargo.
- 28 March: Moved to Pier #20, San Francisco, General Engineering Co.
- 28 Mar - 12 Apr: Undergoing repairs and alterations.

- 13 April: Underway for San Diego, CA.
- 14 April: Arrived At San Diego. Moored at Naval Air Station.
- 17 April: Underway to conduct flight operations with VC 21 for training purposes.
- 22 April: Completed training exercises. Returned to Naval Air San Diego.
- 23 April: Underway to rendezvous with TF 51.1, en route to Cold Bay, Alaska with VC 21 Aboard.
- 30 April: NASSAU anchored in Cold Bay, where she joined IDABO, MEYABA, J.F. BELL, CHANDLER, DALE, FARRAGUT, KANE, HULL, MACDONOUGH, HARRIS, LONG, KEYWOOD, ZEILIN, MONAGHAN, PHELPS, ABNER READ, MEADE, EDWARDS, HEED, SICARD, ARDIS, PRUITT, PERIDA, AND W.L. THOMPSON.
- 6 May: Infantry landed on Attu.

At 0623 NASSAU commenced launching two eight plane flights of F4F-4s, and another flight consisting of two -4s and two F4F-3s to act as spotters. The Wildcats were to strafe and bomb in advance of Army troops landing at Attu. The first returning Wildcat landed at 0800, but it hit the barrier and suffered some damage. The pilot was not injured.

At 0810, Paul Beaumont, flying #4 (11822), was ordered to ditch alongside of MONAGHAN because the fog was considered too thick for a safe landing aboard. He had flown four hours attacking Attu and believed he could have landed safely. He made the mistake of landing too close to the DD and it over ran him and the DD crewmen lost sight of him. He just barely survived the immersion in the cold Bering Sea waters. After being picked up by MONAGHAN he remained on board until long after NASSAU had left the combat area, therefore this was his sole combat flight in the Aleutians. While aboard the DD he was pressed into more or less appropriate duties.

Ted Condo, in 12019, bombed Holtz Bay and returned to NASSAU without incident. Bud Kelly, in 11805, flew "air combat patrol over ships to fight off any attempt made to attack them from Attu."

At 0828, "ole #97," 3997, an F4F-3, crashed on deck, but the pilot was not injured. As another F4F-3 was landing at 0915, a parachute flare broke loose and fell on deck. It was quickly tossed over the side and the fire was extinguished. The last aircraft landed at 0918.

The second wave started catapulting at 1445 and by 1453 the last of the eight F4F-4s was on its way to Attu. One pilot made an emergency landing at 1518 and at 1535 A.J. Kostrzewsky, in #16 (03519), ditched and was picked up by ATLEWIN. The flying day ended at 1603 when the last Wildcat returned to NASSAU.

12 May: Weather did not permit an early launching, but finally at 1143 the first of two F4F-4s took off, followed at 1147 by the second. The mission was simply to reconnoiter Attu and return to NASSAU. At 1237 the first of eight -4s loaded with two 100 lb. bombs each commenced launching and by 1245 they were all on the way to Attu. All aircraft had been catapult launched because of insufficient wind velocity.

Condo, in 03490, attacked an AA battery at Holtz Bay and scored some hits, but the AA gunners scored some hits also. Condo lost his tail wheel and a 40mm projectile creased the hump behind his head. With the ceiling at only 1500 feet the AA gunners were fairly accurate. Attacks against the targets were made by flying in a "daisy chain," so the last man in was likely to get stung! Kelly, in 12135, "Bombed and strafed enemy positions holding up advancement of our troops. Attack very successful." The landing on CVE-16 was his 17th carrier landing.

The two early aircraft landed at 1310 and 1313, and, although some of the other planes had received damage from the heavy AA fire, the mission had been successful and all eight planes had landed between 1325 and 1330.

The late shift began launching at 1710, all eight being airborne by 1720. By this time the sorties were more or less routine, and by 1820 the last Wildcat had been recovered.

"On 12 May from 0200 until 0900 attacking enemy planes invaded the mists of Attu, soaring over the island ceaselessly, relentlessly, as they strafed and bombed it. At this time absurd leaflets urging surrender were dropped in the Chichagof Harbor sector." (JD)

Inclement weather prevented flying by VC-21 until late in the afternoon, but some improvement allowed nine Wildcats to head for the target area, the first departing at 1713. By 1848 all had been recovered by NASSAU.

14 May: The shadow of bad luck returned to NASSAU with a vengeance. General Quarters was sounded because of a sonar report of a submarine. Aircraft were scrambled at 1234, with Condo first off and seven others following short order. At 1247 another flight of four was launched. Wilson C. Kelly, in #13 (11836).

At 1406 the first Wildcat was taken aboard NASSAU, but when the last trap had been made there were three aircraft missing. Douglas Henderson, flying #2 (12019) had crashed into a mountain on Attu, probably hit by AA fire. Aircraft #10 (12074), flown by Ernest D. Jackson, suffered the same fate. Condo had been joined by the Air Group Commander, L.E. Greenmyer, on top of the cloud layer and had attacked Sarana Bay. Climbing away from the target they flew into the clouds, but when Condo emerged from the soup Greenmyer was nowhere to be seen. Condo, in 02043, returned safely to the carrier, but Greenmyer, flying #22 (03490), failed to return.

Four aircraft and three pilots had been lost.

At 0915 Crusoe and Thorson were launched in #25, and Evins and Allenby were launched in #24 at 0927 for spotting Attu shelling. At 1258 a Grumman crashed in the water to starboard (of PENNSYLVANIA) and the pilot (W.C. Kelly) was rescued at 1304 by ALWIN.

16 May: NASSAU launched four F4F-4s and one F4F-3 between 0738 and 0746. At 0843 five more F4F-4s commenced launching and at 0851 the first flight commenced landing. Another five F4F-4s commenced launching at 0920 and ten minutes later W.P. Breeden, USMC, flying F4F-3 2526, dived into the water after being catapulted. His body was not recovered. Breeden was quite young and had not been able to carrier qualify on the way to Cold Bay. Before leaving North Island he had crashed coming aboard and almost went over the side of the ship.

Five Wildcats returned at 0943, but at 1007 Francis R. Register, flying D2043, was seen to crash into Holtz Bay, probably the victim of AA fire. Forty-seven minutes later the last of the Wildcats started landing, all being recovered successfully.

17 May: Weather prevented operations from NASSAU.

18 May: Weather prevented operations from NASSAU.

19 May: NASSAU entered the arena again at 1209 when four F4F-4s began launching. By 1313 these Wildcats had completed their work and were back aboard. Between 1548 and 1549 four other aircraft were launched, followed by three more between 1632 and 1637. Wildcat #6 damaged its landing gear upon landing and #11 crashed into the barrier. By 1724 all aircraft had been recovered. Condo flew 12138 on one of the missions and Kelly, in 03422, flew air combat patrol.

20 May: Weather permitted a great number of sorties from NASSAU, commencing at 1310. Attacking Chichagof Ridge in 03420, Condo was strafing up a valley when he realized that he was going to have a hard time getting turned around. He had to lower his wheels, drop his flaps, and open his cowl flaps, and even then the Wildcat shuddered as it turned back toward the sea. On the way out he strafed some more Japanese. Kelly, again in 03422, bombed and strafed Chichagof Harbor area, noting, "Good Hunting."

When recoveries were completed at 1918 twenty sorties had been flown.

21 May: En route to Adak.

With the missions of the 20th NASSAU and VC-21 had completed their duties in the unfriendly Aleutians and were ordered back to California and thence to the Western Pacific for further fame and glory. Carrier "A", as it had been called in official dispatches, was the first CVE in Aleutian waters; was the first to launch aircraft over Alaskan waters; and was the first CVE involved in amphibious landings. Wildcats had been launched on seventy-six missions, with one hundred eleven individual sorties.

22 May: En route to San Diego, CA.

1 June: Arrived at San Diego. Moored at Naval Air Station.

1-7 June: Moored at Naval Air Station, San Diego.

7 June: Underway for Alameda, CA.

8 June: Arrived at Alameda. Moored at Naval Air Station.

9-11 June: Loaded 45 P-38's.

12 June: Underway for Brisbane, Australia, ferrying aircraft, Operating under ComAirPac.

1 July: Arrived at Brisbane, Australia. Moored.

2 July: Unloaded aircraft.

3 July: Underway for Noumea, New Caledonia.

6 July: Arrived at Noumea. Anchored in Uvea Bay.

7 July: Loaded cargo and 4 DC-3's. Embarked passengers.

8 July: Underway for San Diego, CA.

9 July: Set course for San Francisco, CA.

23 July: Arrived at San Francisco. Proceeded to Navy Yard, Mare Island. Moored. Unloaded aircraft, disembarked passengers.

23 July - 26 Aug: Undergoing repairs and alterations at Navy Yard, Mare Island.

26 August: Underway for San Diego, CA.

27 August: Arrived at San Diego. Moored at Naval Air Station.

1-3 Sept: Conducted flight operations for training off San Diego.

4 Sept: Returned to Naval Air Station, San Diego.

6-8 Sept: Conducted flight operations for training off San Diego.

9 Sept: Returned to Naval Air Station, San Diego.

13-15 Sept: Conducted flight operations for training off San Diego.

16 Sept: Returned to Naval Air Station, San Diego. Capt. Austin K. Boyle, USN, was relieved as Commanding Officer, by Capt. Stanley J. Michael, USN, of Washington, D.C.

19-22 Sept: Conducted flight operations for training off San Diego.

23 Sept: Returned to Naval Air Station, San Diego.

23-25 Sept: Loaded personnel and aircraft of MAG 31, including 35 SBD's and 36 F4F's.

26 Sept: Underway on ferry mission to Samoa, Fiji Islands.

6 October: Arrived at Samoa. Moored at Naval Air Station.

6-7 Oct: Launched 26 F4U's and 35 SBD's. Embarked passengers for return trip.

8 October: Underway for San Diego, CA.

19 October: Arrived at San Diego. Moored at Repair Base. Disembarked passengers.

19 - 23 Oct: Underwent repairs at Repair Base, San Diego.

23 October: Moved to Naval Air Station. Embarked VMF-225 for passage. Loaded aircraft, including 14 SBD's, 4 JRB's, 2 SNB's, 3 SB2C's, 10 TDC's, 5 SBC's, 1 GM, 26 F6F's and 13 F4U's.

24 October: Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H.

30 October: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station. Unloaded aircraft, disembarked passengers.

5-6 Nov: Conducted air operations in training area off Pearl Harbor.

7 November: Returned to Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor.

7-10 Nov: Loaded 22 F6F's. Embarked VF-1.

10 November: Underway to Gilbert Islands; operating under CTF 52, VF-1 aboard.

21-25 Nov: Conducted air operations supporting the capture and occupation of Tarawa Island; operating under CTF 53.

25 November: Launched 22 F6F's, which proceeded to Tarawa.

28 November: En route to Pearl Harbor, operating under CTF 52.

5 December: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station.

5-7 Dec: Loaded aircraft, including 13 A-24's and 37 P-39's.

8 December: Underway for Makin Atoll, Gilbert Islands, ferrying aircraft.

14 December: Arrived in vicinity of Makin. Catapulted all aircraft; set course for Pearl Harbor.

20 December: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored in X-ray area.

24 December: Moved to Naval Air Station.

25-31 Dec: Moved to Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor. Ship's force conducted necessary repairs.

1944

4 January: Embarked personnel of VC-66.

5 January: Underway for training area off Pearl Harbor.

6 January: Conducted flight operations with VC-66.

7 January: Completed training exercises. Returned to Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor.

11 January: Loaded 14 F4F's and 9 TMB's of VC-66.

13 January: Underway for training area off Pearl Harbor, to conduct flight operations during amphibious training exercises.

13-19 Jan: Conducted training operations.

18 January: Returned to Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor.

23 January: Underway for Marshall Island, conducting flight operations under TG 51.2.

28 Jan - 21 Feb: Conducted flight operations, including ASP and CAP over Majuro, and air strikes, ASP and CAP over Motje and Taroa Islands.

22 February: Anchored at Majuro Atoll.

23 February: Launched operational aircraft to USS NATOMA BAY. Received dud aircraft.

25 February: Underway for Pearl Harbor.

3 March: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station.

5 March: Disembarked VC-66. Embarked passengers, loaded cargo and following aircraft: 18 SBD's, 5 J2F's, 5 OS2U's and 3 SOC's.

6 March: Underway for Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands, on ferrying mission, operating under ComAirPac.

12 March: Catapulted 18 SBD's. Proceeded to anchorage at Kwajalein. Unloaded 7 J2F's, 2 OS2U's. Disembarked passengers.

13 March: Underway for Majuro Atoll, Marshall Islands.

14 March: Arrived at Majuro. Anchored. Unloaded: 3 SOC's, 3 OS2U's, and disembarked passengers. Received cargo and passengers for return trip. Underway for Tarawa, Gilbert Islands.

- 15 March: Arrived at Tarawa. Anchored in Bettio Anchorage. Disembarked passengers.
- 16 March: Unloaded cargo. Embarked passengers and loaded aircraft for return trip.
- 17 March: Completed loading following aircraft: 18 SBD's, 26 P-40's and 6 FM's. Steamed to Makin. Loaded passengers and freight. Underway for Pearl Harbor.
- 23 March: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station. Unloaded aircraft, disembarked personnel.
- 26 March: Completed embarkation of passengers and loaded following aircraft: 5 PEY's, 1 R4D, 1 OS2U. Underway for Alameda, CA.
- 1 April: Arrived At Alameda. Moored at Naval Air Station. Disembarked passengers, unloaded aircraft.
- 2 April: Moved to Navy Yard, Mare Island, CA.
- 7-29 April: Underwent repairs and alterations at Navy Yard, Mare Island. In dry-dock 6-15 April.
- 15 April: Captain Stanley J. Michael, USN, was relieved as Commanding Officer by Captain Norman W. Ellis, USN, of St. Louis, MO.
- 30 April: Moved to Navy yard, Hunter's Point.
- 1 May: Conducted test run off San Francisco. Returned to harbor. Anchored in San Francisco Bay.
- 2 May: Moved to Naval Air Station, Alameda.
- 3-4 May: Loaded cargo and following aircraft: 26 P-47's, 6 P-38's, 4 A-26's, 11 A-20's and 4 P-61's. Embarked passengers.
- 5 May: Underway for Finschafen, New Guinea. Ferrying aircraft, operating under ComCarTransRonPac.
- 23 May: Arrived at Finschafen, New Guinea. Moored at Dreger's Harbor.
- 24 May: Unloaded aircraft, disembarked passengers. Took on passengers and the following aircraft for the return trip: 43 P-47's and 1 P-40.
- 25 May: Underway for San Diego, CA.
- 12 June: Arrived at San Diego. Moored at Naval Air Station. Unloaded aircraft, disembarked passengers.
- 13-17 June: Loaded 32 SBD's, 25 FG-1's and 10 TBM's. Embarked VNF 314, VMSB 333, and other passengers.
- 18 June: Underway for tactical data range. Conducted test runs. Set course for Pearl Harbor, T.H.

- 24 June: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station. Disembarked all passengers.
- 25 June: Embarked VMF 312, VBSB 133, and other passengers. Underway for Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides.
- 6 July: Arrived at Espiritu Santo. Anchored in Fellikulo Bay. Disembarked passengers and unloaded aircraft.
- 7 July: Completed unloading. Loaded aircraft and cargo for return trip.
- 8 July: Moved to Second Channel. Completed Loading aircraft, including 36 F4U's, 19 F6F's, 2 SOC's and 1 F4F.
- 9 July: Embarked CASO 12 and other passengers. Underway for Port Mueneme, CA.
- 23 July: Arrived At Port Mueneme.
- 24 July: Unloaded aircraft and cargo. Underway for San Diego, CA.
- 25 July: Arrived at San Diego. Moored at Naval Air Station. Disembarked passengers. Moved to Naval Repair Base.
- 26 July - 5 Aug: Underwent repairs and alterations at Repair Base, San Diego.
- 5 August: Embarked passengers. Underway for Alameda, CA.
- 7 August: Arrived at Alameda. Moored at Naval Air Station.
- 8-9 Aug: Loaded cargo and aircraft, including 15 1 V's, 20 FM's, 5 SB2C's, 1 TBM, 1 P-58 and 2 UC-45's. Embarked passengers.
- 9 August: Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H.
- 15 August: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station. Unloaded aircraft, disembarked passengers.
- 16-17 Aug: Unloaded cargo.
- 18 August: Inspected by Rear Admiral Samuel P. Ginder, USN, and Staff ComCarTransRonPac.
- 18-20 Aug: Loaded aircraft, including 35 F6F's, 12 TBM's, 20 SB2C's. Embarked replacement pilots and crewmen.
- 21 August: Underway for Manus, Admiralty Islands.
- 1 September: Arrived at Manus. Anchored in Seeadler Harbor.
- 6 September: Underway to rendezvous with units of TF 38. Operating as replacement carrier for raids on, and occupation of, Palau island, under CTG 30.8.

9 September: Rendezvoused with TG 58.4. Launched 6 F6F's, 2 TBM's and 2 SB2C's.

11 September: Rendezvoused with TF's 38.1 and 38.3. Catapulted 12 F6F's, 9 SB2C's, and 6 TBM's. Delivered replacement pilots and crewmen. Set course for Manus.

15 September: Arrived at Manus. Anchored in Seeadler Harbor.

16-17 September: Embarked 15 F6F's, SB2C's and 7 TBM's.

18 September: Underway for rendezvous with units of TF 38.

23 September: Rendezvoused with TG's 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, east of Mindanao. Launched 16 F6F's, 9 SB2C's and 4 TBM's. Delivered replacement pilots and crewmen.

24 September: Set course for Manus.

27 September: Launched 6 TBM's and 4 replacement crews to CVE's of TF32.

30 September: Arrived at Manus. Anchored in Seeadler Harbor.

1-3 Oct: Loaded aircraft, including 13 F6F's, 3 TBM's and 10 SB2C's.

4 October: Underway for rendezvous with units of TF 38.

11 October: Rendezvoused with TF 38 east of Luzon. Delivered 12 TBM's and 22 F6F's.

12-15 Oct: Standing by for rendezvous.

15 October: Rendezvoused with TG's 38.2 and 38.3. Delivered replacement crews, 7 F6F's and 10 SB2C's. Landed 6 F6F's, 1 SB2C and 5 TBM's, all flyable duds.

16 October: Launched 2 TBM's for Peleliu Island, Palau Group, with photographic intelligence of TF 38 operations. Set course for Manus.

20 October: Arrived at Manus. Anchored in Seeadler Harbor.

21-24 Oct: Unloaded duds. Received additional replacement pilots and 70 F6F's.

25 October: Underway for Ulithi Atoll, Caroline Islands.

28 October: Arrived at Ulithi. Anchored.

31 Oct - 1 Nov: Unloaded 70 F6F's by lighter to carriers of TF 38. Transferred all replacement pilots.

2-4 Nov: Received passenger, cargo and following dud aircraft: 10 F6F's and 2 SB2C's.

5 November: Underway for Pearl Harbor, ferrying aircraft.

16 November: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station. Discharged aircraft, cargo and passengers.

17 November: Embarked passengers and loaded 56 SB2C's, 2 FM's and 1 TBM.

18 November: Underway for San Diego, CA. Operation under ComCarTransRonPac.

25 November: Arrived at San Diego. Moored at Naval Air Station. Discharged aircraft and passengers.

26 November: Moved to Naval Repair Base, San Diego.

27 Nov - 5 Dec: Underwent repairs and alterations at Naval Repair Base, San Diego.

6 December: Moved to Naval Air Station.

7-9 Dec: Loaded 34 F6F's, 14 TBM's and 22 F4U's.

9 December: Underway for Pearl Harbor, I.H.

15 December: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station.

16 December: Embarked CVG 17 for passage. Unloaded 22 F4U's and loaded 5 TBM's and 17 F6F's.

17 December: Underway for Guam, Marianas Islands.

28 December: Arrived at Guam. Moored to buoy in Apra Harbor. Discharged aircraft and passengers.

29 December: Embarked VMF 216 and VMF 217 for passage. Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H.

1945

1-7 Jan: En route from Guam, Marianas Islands to Pearl Harbor, T.H.

7 January: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station.

8-10 Jan: Loaded cargo and 23 F6F's, 12 FM's, 8 SBD's, 5 SB2C's, 15 SNJ's, 1 JRB, 11 TBM's and 10 F4U's. Embarked passengers.

10 January: Underway for Guam, Marianas Islands.

21 January: Arrived at Guam. Moored to buoy in Apra Harbor. Unloaded aircraft and disembarked passengers.

22 January: Underway toward designated areas west of Guam to conduct refresher landing qualifications for CVG 17.

23-25 Jan: Conducted refresher flight operations.

25 January: Set course for Pearl Harbor, T.H.

3 February: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station.

4 February: Loaded 53 F4U's, 12 TBM's, 11 SB2C's and embarked passengers.

5 February: Underway for San Diego, CA.

11 February: Arrived At San Diego. Moored at Naval Air Station.
Disembarked passengers and unloaded aircraft.

12-14 Feb: Embarked passengers. Loaded cargo and 19 F4U's, 23 F6F's
and 26 TBM's.

15 February: Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H.

21 February: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Supply Depot.
Disembarked passengers.

22 February: Embarked CVG 83 for passage. Underway for Guam, Marianas
Islands.

4 March: Arrived at Guam. Moored to buoy at Apra Harbor.

2-5 March: Unloaded aircraft and cargo and disembarked passengers.

6 March: Loaded 8 F6F's and 4 TBM's. Embarked for passage 115 patients,
veterans of Iwo Jima. Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H.

15 March: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station.
Unloaded aircraft.

16 March: Loaded 12 PV's and 17 F6F's. Embarked passengers.

17 March: Underway for Alameda, CA.

23 March: Arrived at Alameda. Moored at Naval Air Station. Capt.
Norman W. Ellis, USN, relieved as Commanding Officer by
Comdr. Frank Turner, USN, of Savannah, GA. Unloaded
aircraft and disembarked passengers.

24 March: Moved to berth at United Engineering Company docks, Alameda.

25 March - 2 April: Underwent repairs and alterations by United
Engineering Company.

3 April: Moved to Naval Air Station.

4-5 April: Loaded 19 FG's, 41 F6F's 3 FM's and 18 TBM's. Took on
cargo and passengers.

5 April: Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H.

11 April: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station.
Discharged cargo, aircraft and passengers.

12 April: Loaded 6 F6F's and embarked passengers for return trip.

13 April: Underway for Alameda, CA.

19 April: Arrived at Alameda. Moored at Naval Air Station. Unloaded aircraft and discharged passengers.

20-23 April: Loaded cargo and following aircraft: 48 F4U's, 8 FM's and 23 F6F's. Embarked CVG 94 for passage.

24 April: Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H.

30 April: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station. Unloaded all aircraft except 8 FM's and 2 F6F's. Disembarked passengers.

1-2 May: Loaded cargo and following aircraft: 43 F4U's, 5 SC's, 6 SOC's and 8 OS2U's. Embarked passengers.

3 May: Underway for Guam, Marianas Islands.

13 May: Arrived at Guam. Moored to buoy in Apra Harbor. Unloaded all aircraft and some cargo. Disembarked and embarked passengers. Loaded cargo.

14 May: Underway for Manus, Admiralty Islands.

17 May: Arrived at Manus. Anchored in Seeadler Harbor. Unloaded and loaded cargo. Loaded the following aircraft: 18 F6F's, 5 FG's, 7 TBM's, 4 FM's, 1 AE, 1 J2F, 2 JRB's, 1 HE, 14 SBD's and 5 SNJ's.

18 May: Underway for Samar, Philippine Islands.

22 May: Arrived at Samar. Anchored in Guiuan Roadstead. Unloaded aircraft.

23 May: Unloaded cargo. Took on passengers and cargo including 1 F6F for return trip. Underway for Manus, Admiralty Islands.

27 May: Arrived at Manus. Anchored in Seeadler Harbor.

27-28 May: Loaded 61 SB2C's. Embarked passengers, including VJ-2.

28 May: Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H.

6 June: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station.

6-8 June: Discharged aircraft, cargo and passengers. Loaded 9 FG's, 5 TBM's and 2 FM's. Embarked passengers.

8 June: Underway for San Diego, CA.

14 June: Arrived at San Diego. Moored at Broadway Landing. Disembarked passengers.

15 June: Moved to Naval Air Station. Unloaded aircraft.

16-17 June: Loaded the following aircraft: 30 P6F's, 8 F4U's, 10 FG's, 3 SNJ's, 15 TD2C's, 12 SB2C's and 8 FM's. Embarked passengers.

18 June: Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H.

24 June: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station. Disembarked passengers. Loaded cargo. Embarked passengers, including VC-7.

25 June: Embarked CVEG 33 for passage. Underway for Saipan, Marianas Islands.

5 July: Arrived at Saipan. Disembarked passengers, including VC-7. Underway for Samar, Philippine Islands.

9 July: Arrived at Samar. Anchored in Guiuan Roadstead. Disembarked all passengers.

9-10 July: Unloaded aircraft and cargo. Loaded the following aircraft: 6 P6F's, 8 TBM's, 5 F4U's and 1 FM. Embarked CVEG 25 and other passengers.

10 July: Underway for Alameda, CA.

27 July: Arrived at Alameda. Moored at Naval Air Station. Discharged passengers.

28 July: Unloaded aircraft.

28 July - 8 Aug: Moored at Naval Air Station, Alameda, undergoing repairs by United Engineering Company, Ltd.

7-8 August: Loaded cargo and the following aircraft: 6 PV's and 6 PBY's. Embarked passengers, including VC 20 and VPB 115.

9 August: Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H.

15 August: Arrived at Pearl Harbor. Moored at Naval Air Station. Unloaded aircraft and disembarked passengers.

15-21 Aug: Unloaded cargo. Loaded 6 PBY's. Embarked passengers, including VB 149.

21 August: Underway for Alameda, CA.

27 August: Arrived at Alameda. Moored at Naval Air Station. Unloaded aircraft and disembarked passengers.

18-30 Aug: Loaded cargo and embarked passengers.

31 August: Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H.

6 September: V-J Day. En route Pearl Harbor.

1945

6 September: Arrived at Pearl Harbor
14 September: Arrived at San Diego
19 September: Underway for Pearl Harbor
25 September: Arrived at Pearl Harbor
28 September: Underway for Guam
8 October: Arrived at Guam
10 October: Underway for Okinawa
14 October: Arrived at Okinawa
17 October: Underway for Tsingtao, China
20 October: Arrived at Tsingtao, China
22 October: Underway for Samar, Philippine Islands
27 October: Arrived at Samar, Philippine Islands
28 October: Underway for Guam
1 November: Arrived at Guam
3 November: Underway for Philippine Islands
11 November: Arrived at Philippine Islands
15 November: Underway for the States
21 November: Arrived at Mare Island, Vallejo, CA
8 December: Underway for Pearl Harbor
14 December: Arrived at Pearl Harbor
17 December: Underway for Guam
27 December: Arrived at Guam
28 December: Underway for Pearl Harbor

1946

- 6 January: Arrived at Pearl Harbor
- 9 January: Underway for San Diego
- 16 January: Arrived at San Diego
- 22 January: Underway for Pearl Harbor
- 28 January: Arrived at Pearl Harbor
- 31 January: Underway for Guam
- 10 February: Arrived at Guam
- 12 February: Underway for Pearl Harbor
- 21 February: Arrived at Pearl Harbor
- 25 February: Underway for Alameda, Calif.
- 3 March: Arrived at Alameda, Calif.
- 4 March: Underway for Pearl Harbor
- 11 March: Arrived at Pearl Harbor
- 12 March: Underway for Alameda, Calif.
- 18 March: Arrived at Alameda, Calif.
- 13 May: Underway for Tacoma, Washington
- 28 October: Nassau was decommissioned and entered the Pacific Reserve Fleet.

1955

- 12 June: Designated for modifications for aircraft transportation purposes, her classification was changed to CVE-16. Shortly thereafter she was transferred to the Bremerton Reserve Group.

1959

- 1 March: U.S.S. Nassau (CVE-16) was struck from the Navy register.

1961

- June: U.S.S. Nassau (CVE-16) was towed to Japan for scrapping.

SUMMARY OF AIRCRAFT LAUNCHINGS AND LANDINGS

1. Operational and Training Purposes	
(a) Launchings	2717, including 998 by catapult
(b) Landings	2678
2. Transport Purposes	
(a) Launchings	369, all catapult
(b) Landings	12
3. Total	
(a) Launchings	3085, including 1366 by catapult
(b) Landings	2690

SUMMARY OF MILES STEAMED

<u>Year</u>	<u>Miles*</u>
1942	11,510
1943	76,651
1944	81,020
1945	<u>65,698</u>
Total wartime steaming - 254,887	

NASSAU received five Battle Stars for World War II service.

- 1 Star/Aleutian Operation
Attu Occupation -- 11-22 May 1943
- 1 Star/Gilbert Island Operation -- 20-30 November 1943
- 1 Star/Marshall Islands Operation -- 29 January-8 February 1944
- 1 Star/Western Caroline Islands Operation
Capture and Occupation of Southern Palau -- 6 September-
14 October 1944
Assaults on the Philippine Islands - 9-24 September 1944
- 1 Star/Leyte Operation
Leyte Landings - 11-14 October 1944
Luzon Attacks - 15. 19 October 1944

SUMMARY OF AIRCRAFT TRANSPORTED

NAVAL AIRCRAFT

Fighters		
125 F4F, FM; 363 F4U, FG; 461 P6F		949
Torpedoes		
TDF, TBM		167
Scout Bombers		
159 SBD; 184 SB2C, SBW, SBF; 5 SBU		348
Observation and Scout		
14 OS2U; 11 SOC; 15 SC		40
Patrol		
17 PBV; 33 PV		50
Miscellaneous		
6 J2F; 2 JRF; 5 JRB; 2 SNB; 9 SNJ; 3 R4D;		
1 GH; 1 HE; 10 TDC; 15 TD2C; 1 AE		55
		<hr/>
	Total Naval Aircraft -	1609

ARMY AIRCRAFT

Attack		
11 A-20; 13 A-24; 4 A-26		28
Pursuit		
52 P-39; 37 P-39; 32 P-40; 69 P-47; 4 P-61		194
Miscellaneous		
4 DC-3; 2 UC-45		6
		<hr/>
	Total Army Aircraft -	228
 <u>Grand Total</u>		 1837

PART II - NARRATIVE

U.S.S. NASSAU

THE U.S.S. NASSAU (CVE 16) -- "The Princess"

"I do not expect anybody except my shipmates to see the "Princess" as I do. I am not going to knock your hat off and yell at you to stand at attention as her short, hippy lines come into view. I'm not even sure she's a lady, in spite of her name...

"She doesn't even act courageous when she is in danger. She is thin-skinned and can't take it. She just turns around and runs as fast as she can, which isn't very fast. She was never built speed. And she is always looking for escorts, a lot of the time unsuccessfully ...

"To the Bureau of Ships she's a three-letter symbol meaning a little flat-top. To her officers and crew --- she is home."

Thus fondly the first navigator of the USS NASSAU, Commander Kenneth D. McCracken, of Chicago, Illinois, described his ship in his book, Baby Flattop, which immortalized this vessel as "The Princess."

HOW SHE GREW

The USS NASSAU comes of humble origin. The hull of the ship was built by the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation in May of 1942. She was originally destined to become a merchant vessel. Caught up in the nation's frantic efforts to produce

carriers in large numbers, she was towed shortly thereafter to the Puget Sound Navy Yard in Bremerton, Washington. There work was begun to convert her into an ACV, the symbol then in use to denote an auxiliary carrier.

By the time work had begun in the conversion, a few officers had been assigned to the NASSAU. They early set up temporary offices in the Navy Yard. The first draft of one hundred thirty-five enlisted men assigned to the NASSAU arrived in Bremerton from San Diego in late June, followed shortly in early July by another draft of two hundred. Among the ship's original crew were more than one hundred survivors of the old aircraft carrier LEXINGTON, all of them key personnel. This experienced nuclear group expedited the training of the remainder of the crew with a speed and thoroughness not otherwise possible. Until late in August, the men were quartered ashore in the Navy Yard barracks.

Early in August, the NASSAU was floated in her dry-dock. On the twentieth of that month, she was officially commissioned under the command of Captain (now Rear Admiral) Austin K. Doyle, USN, of Pensacola, Florida. Ceremonies were simple. All of the ship's assigned crew marched aboard; the ship was turned over to Captain Doyle; the commission pennant was hoisted; and work was resumed by the two thousand workmen then engaged in the project. Less than two weeks later, as soon as living spaces were habitable and most of the work had been somewhat reduced, the officers and men moved aboard the ship.

The first trial run of the NASSAU was made September 19, 1942. This was followed three days later by a second run of two days. From the twenty-third until the thirtieth of September, life was indeed hectic for all those aboard. A multiplicity of details clamored for attention: ammunition had to be loaded, fuel taken aboard, stores and provisions loaded, the ship given protection against magnetic mines. This was followed by flight operations and structural firing tests.

Although there were many of the wise old hands who shook their heads dubiously over the NASSAU's readiness for sea, the exigencies of the time would permit no more preparation.

ON TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC

On the afternoon of October 7, 1942, the USS NASSAU departed Port Angeles, Washington, steaming toward San Francisco. She was escorted by the USS BROOKS (APD 10), who was relieved the following day by the USS BARKER (DD 213). Nine fighters of the NASSAU's squadron, VGS 16, were taken aboard in Washington; the remainder, twelve torpedo planes, were picked up in San Francisco upon her arrival there on October 10. Four days were spent at the Naval Air Station at Alameda, loading aircraft and cargo for transportation to Pearl Harbor. Because of the capacity load, no flight operations could be conducted enroute.

Task Group 9.7, composed of the NASSAU, USS KITTYHAWK (AKV 1) and USS BARKER, with Captain Doyle as Group Commander, departed San Francisco on October 14, and reached Pearl Harbor on the

20th. There the aircraft, carried as cargo, were removed and some minor repairs and installations were effected. After having once more taken aboard aircraft for ferrying and having embarked passengers, the NASSAU was again ready for sea. Sailing from Pearl Harbor on October 27, she arrived at Palmyra Island three days later, where she was to rendezvous with the KITTYHAWK and the USS DALE (DD 353) to form Task Group 2.4. Upon her arrival, the NASSAU learned that the KITTYHAWK had encountered a delay in loading at Palmyra. Accordingly, as Task Unit 2.4.1, the NASSAU proceeded independently to Noumea, New Caledonia.

This voyage was one long to be remembered by those who were taken aboard.

For a vessel of the NASSAU's type to proceed unescorted through waters known to be the scene of Japanese submarine activity was risky, at best. She was steaming into an area entirely new to a great majority of her crew. All hands felt much more comfortable, then, when the NASSAU anchored in the Bay at Noumea on November 8, after what turned out to be an uneventful voyage.

With the NASSAU as senior ship, Task Group 66.3, composed of the NASSAU, USS MAURY (DD 401), USS STACK (DD 406) and SS DEL BRAZIL, got underway from Noumea on November 9, headed for Espiritu Santo Island in the New Hebrides. Prior to getting underway, six of the fighter aircraft were launched so that the NASSAU might be sufficiently disburdened for launching the remainder of her aircraft. On Armistice Day of 1942,

thirty-seven aircraft were launched: twenty SBD's, twelve TBF's and five P-40's. These planes flew to Espiritu Santo Island, then on to Guadalcanal, in the Solomons. There they participated in the battle fought off Guadalcanal on November 12-15. Shortly after launching these planes, Task Group 66.3 anchored in Second Channel in Espiritu Santo.

While the NASSAU was anchored at Espiritu Santo, she took along two squadrons VF 72 and VT 6. They were both survivors of carriers recently sunk in fleet action by the Japanese.

Although the United States' war with Japan was about to enter its second year, the situation in the Pacific was grave. Naval activity was necessarily limited by an inadequacy of practically everything except fervent desire to fight. The NASSAU lay at anchor in Espiritu for a week before being given an opportunity to operate. In company with the AYLWIN (DD 355) and the RESSELI (DD 414), she departed Espiritu to steam to Noumea on November 19.

While enroute, flight operations for routine anti-submarine patrols were conducted daily. On the morning of November 23, the group anchored in the bay at Noumea.

Except for sporadic flight operations, on November 30, December 5, 6, 8, 12, 13 and 22, the NASSAU was resigned to one of the most difficult tasks which confront men in war-time: waiting. Recreation facilities at Noumea were scanty at that time. A large part of this period, it was necessary to be in an

alert condition because of the possibility of enemy air attacks. The, too, the climate was not exactly the most comfortable in the world. Flight operations were conducted inside the reef which guarded the entrance of the bay, because of a lack of escorts for plane guards.

During this trying time, however, two events took place which did serve to make life more interesting. Vice Admiral (now Admiral) William F. Halsey, Jr., USN, then Commander of South Pacific Forces, came aboard the NASSAU on December 23, for a short visit. His purpose in coming aboard was two-fold: to inspect the ship and to present citations to several fliers of the NASSAU's squadron for gallantry in action when their previous carriers were sunk. The presentations were made by Admiral Halsey in simple ceremonies on the forward elevator.

Moreover, an admiral came aboard to make the NASSAU his flagship. Rear Admiral Charles P. Mason, Commander of Task Force 65, established on the NASSAU what was the first flag headquartered on any escort carrier. Having a flag aboard necessitated certain changes in the ship's structure. With the aid of a few Seabees and a couple of welding machines, the NASSAU's shipfitters built two six-men bunk rooms forward, directly beneath the flight deck, for warrant officers.

A flag plot was constructed in the same area. The NASSAU's bridge also came in for alterations. A flag shelter was built inside the mast structure; the platform extension behind the mast was enlarged; and the after range-finder was removed to make room

for a flag bridge.

At noon on December 27, Task Force 65 sailed from Noumea. The force consisted of the NASSAU (flagship), USS ALTAMAHA (CVE-18), USS ST. LOUIS (CL 49), HMNZS ACHILLES, USS NICHOLAS (DD 449), USS MCCALLA (DD 488), USS CRAVEN (DD 382), USS MCCALL (DD 400). Enroute to Espiritu Santo Island, the NASSAU and the ALTAMAHA rotated the duty of maintaining a continuous anti-submarine patrol during daylight hours. Task Force 65 anchored in Second Channel at Espiritu Santo on the afternoon of December 30.

New Year's Day, 1943, found the NASSAU and the other vessels of Task Force 65 playing the old game of waiting, lying at anchor in Espiritu instead of at Noumea. For a week all ships stood by under a condition of readiness of two hours. Finally, on January 7, they were on the move again, this time to rendezvous with Task Group 66.7 well to the northwest of the Fiji Islands. Their mission was to escort the USS MINNEAPOLIS (CA 36) and USS PENSACOLA (CA 24), which had been recently damaged by enemy action, to Suva in the Fiji Islands.

The NASSAU (flagship), these two cruisers, the ALTAMAHA, MCCALLA, USS WOODWORTH (DD 460), USS BUCHANAN (DD 484), USS CUMMINGS (DD 365), USS STACK (DD 406) AND USS VIREO (AT 144) comprised the Task Force. On the second day at sea, the MINNEAPOLIS, towed by the VIREO and escorted by the WOODWORTH and BUCHANAN, was forced to turn back to Espiritu Santo because of salt water in her turbine generator. Continuous anti-submarine patrols were maintained by the NASSAU and ALTAMAHA around the

Task Force.

Rendezvous with Task Group 66.7 was effected early on January 10, and the USS NEW MEXICO (BB 40), USS MISSISSIPPI (BB 41), USS MARYLAND (BB 46), USS COLORADO (BB 45), USS HULL (DD 350), USS MONAGHAN (DD 354) and USS FARRAGUT (DD 348) were added to the force. Command of Task Force 65 was shifted to Vice Admiral H.F. Loery on the NEW MEXICO. On the following day additional changes in the formation took place, the PENSACOLA and her escorts dropped out, and the COLORADO and her escorts also leaving because of the COLORADO's engine trouble. The latter group rejoined the formation on January 12. Just before force anchored in the bay at Nadi, in the Fiji's, on January 13, the NEW MEXICO and MISSISSIPPI were detached and command of Task Force 65 was once more transferred to Admiral Mason aboard the NASSAU.

Again the NASSAU had a siege of waiting. From January 13 until February 6 the ship was anchored at Nadi, with only two days of flight operations for VGS 16 on January 18 and 19. Prior to February 6, VF 72, VGS 16 and VT 6 were disembarked. On that date, the NASSAU embarked on another unescorted run, this time back to Pearl Harbor. Even this, however, was preferable to enforced idleness. The NASSAU arrived at Pearl Harbor eight days later, and then spent a week in the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard, undergoing repairs and installations.

THE SUBMARINE PLAGUE

The afternoon of February 21 saw the NASSAU again underway,

this time to transport personnel, aircraft and equipment of Marine Air Group 21 to Espiritu Santo. The USS STERETT (DD 407) was escort.

The trip to Espiritu was undoubtedly the most exciting of all the NASSAU's transport runs.

At noon on the 24th, the STERETT reported an underwater sound contact astern of the NASSAU, possibly a contact with a submarine. The NASSAU immediately went to General Quarters, increased speed and began a series of radical changes in course. The STERETT, remaining behind in a screening position, dropped three depth charges. Being then unable to regain contact, the STERETT resumed her position ahead of the NASSAU.

At about the same time, three days later, the STERETT again picked up a sound contact, in the same approximate relative position, astern of the NASSAU. General Quarters, an increase in speed and radical maneuvering followed in short order. And again the sound contact was lost. The following day, February 27, precisely the same thing occurred. Once more, the STERETT searched astern of the NASSAU, but in vain.

This procedure was not exactly conducive to quiet nerves on the part of the crew of either ship. It seemed that the task unit was being shadowed by a submarine, but by a miraculously elusive one. And the excitement was not yet ended.

On February 28 the STERETT picked up the same sound contact shortly before noon. The same procedure followed: General

Quarters, increased speed, radical maneuvering. The contact was lost. At 1500 it was regained. Back to General Quarters. The contact was lost. At 1730 it was regained. Still more General Quarters -- but no submarine. By this time, all hands were wishing for a submarine, instead of whatever was giving them such a hectic cruise.

Twice on March 2, the STERETT picked up the sound contact still with no success in holding it. When the NASSAU anchored in Second Channel at Espiritu Santo on the following day, after having catapulted all the marine aircraft, great sighs of relief were heard on all sides.

The Aerology Officer was still unhappy. He took his troubles to the Executive Officer. It seems that the aerological laboratory had lent him a bathythermograph to take readings on the voyage back to Espiritu Santo, but he had met with no success. He complained that each time he had the bathythermograph in the water, ready to take readings, General Quarters were sounded. As a result, he had to stop to go to his battle station. The Executive Officer quizzed him carefully. Peculiarly enough, the times of trailing the bathythermograph on a long cable aft of the ship coincided exactly with the times of the sound contacts which had plagued the entire cruise from Pearl Harbor. The mystery was explained: the bathythermograph, then, had been the "submarine." The Aerologist's face was, to put it mildly, red!

BACK TO THE STATES

Underway again on March 10, the NASSAU headed for Pearl Harbor, escorted by the USS LANSDOWNE (DD 486). Since the Aerologist's bathythermograph was securely locked up, the trip was a quiet one. Seven days later the NASSAU was moored at the Naval Air Station at Pearl Harbor, unloading oil, aviation gasoline and ammunition, and taking on freight mail and passengers for San Francisco. On March 21, the NASSAU and LANSDOWNE were again at sea. En route to San Francisco, arriving there on March 27.

The NASSAU spent seventeen days at San Francisco receiving some badly needed overhaul. On April 13, she began her first trip to San Diego. The NASSAU remained in San Diego for three days after her arrival on April 14, before going out for extensive flight operations and training purposes.

THE ATTU CAMPAIGN

At this time, preparations were being made for the Aleutians campaign which resulted in the recapture of Attu and subsequently of other Aleutian Islands. Extreme secrecy of something was evidently in the air: "scuttle-butt" flew thick and fast since it was necessary to take aboard an ample supply of cold-weather gear and since this added fuel to the flames of rumor. The Captain allowed himself to be seen studying maps of the North Atlantic. This bit of "red herring" on his part served to allay the suspicions of many. Still, after the NASSAU had trained off the

West Coast from April 17 to 22, speculation was greatly increased. Accordingly, the ship made a quick trip into San Diego on the evening of April 22 and left early the next morning, with no one having gone ashore.

On April 23, then, the NASSAU, the AYLWIN and WILLIAMSON (DD 244) left San Diego steaming for Alaska. On the same day this group fell in with the PENNSYLVANIA (BB 38) and her escorts to make up Task Group 51.1. Two days later a rendezvous was made with four troop-laden transports and their destroyer screen.

It was on this trip that the engineering plant of the NASSAU suddenly developed difficulties which would ordinarily have required extensive navy yard availability for repair. Under the leadership of the Chief Engineer, Lieut. (now Lieut. Comdr.) Leslie W. Rivard, USNR, of Allen Park, Michigan, the repairs were effected while the ship maintained her position in formation. For this feat, all officers and men of the Engineering Department were commended by Commander Air Forces, Pacific Fleet.

On the last day of April, Task Group 51.1 anchored in the harbor at Cold Bay, Alaska. It sailed from Cold Bay on May 4, bound for Attu.

This expedition was a memorable one. The weather was cold, the seas rough. Then, too, there were a number of "firsts" which the NASSAU chalked up during the Aleutians campaign.

By virtue of her participation therein, she became the first escort carrier to sail in Alaskan waters; the first to operate

aircraft in that area; and the first escort carrier to participate in an amphibious landing.

At dawn on D-Day, May 11, the NASSAU and her screen were about ten miles east of Attu. In spite of heavy fog and resultant poor visibility and light, she launched three flights of fighters that day. Each time a group returned to the ship, they were literally "sweated" aboard by all who were watching. Some pilots reported they could not see the ship until they came down to the level of the top of the ship's mast. The Landing Signal Officer, Lieut. Rolla S. Lemmon, USN, (subsequently lost in action while leading his own squadron) was indeed busy those days.

Despite adverse weather conditions, the NASSAU's Composite Squadron 21 continued to support the ground troops by strafing and bombing from May 11 through May 20. On only three of those days were no flight operations conducted, and then because of the fogs having completely closed in all targets on the island. During the first six days of operations, eight planes were lost, three of whose pilots were recovered.

These losses and the courageous work of the pilots inspired the following message to the NASSAU on May 17 from Rear Admiral Rockwell, Commander of Task Force 51:

"SHARE YOUR REGRET FOR PILOT LOSSES X MY PERSONAL ADMIRATION FOR HEROIC WORK OF YOUR PILOTS X YOU HAVE EVERY REASON TO BE PROUD OF NASSAU PERFORMANCE AND HAVE FILLED A VERY VITAL GAP DURING BRIEF INTERVALS WHEN HOLTZ BAY WAS OPEN WHILE ARMY AIR

UNABLE REACH THIS AREA AND OUR TROOPS IN CRITICAL POSITION SIGNED ROCKWELL X"

A total of 111 missions were flown by pilots of VC 21. All members of the squadron were subsequently given citations for their achievements. Two officers of the ship's company were also given personal commendations by Admiral Rockwell: Lieut. Comdr. (now Commander) Howard E. Born, USN, of Long Island, New York, who directed flight operations as Air Officer; and Lieut. (now Lieut. Comdr.) John A. Adair, USNR, of Mobile, Alabama, who was Communications Officer. When fleet communications were about to break down, the NASSAU's Communications Department, under Lieut. Adair's supervision, took over the job of relaying messages to all units, with great success.

None aboard the NASSAU felt a tinge of regret when the ship was ordered to Adak with her screen on May 20. When the group arrived off Adak late on the following day, it was directed to rendezvous northeast of Adak the morning of May 22 with the PENNSYLVANIA and other ships of Task Force 51. The formation proceeded through Amukta Pass and returned to the United States, the NASSAU reaching San Diego on the morning of May 31.

Late in the Attu Campaign, provisions aboard the NASSAU became low. Ostensibly ample stores had been taken aboard in the States prior to her departure, but the appetites of officers and men while up north exceeded all expectations. In fact, hardly a man aboard did not put on considerable weight as a result of hearty eating. During the last two weeks prior to the ship's

arrival in San Diego, however, all hands were treated to a meat diet of ham and a well-known meat product whose name is anathema to most men who have been overseas. Still, as may have already been suspected, no one suffered.

"JEEPERS CREEPERS"

One NASSAU institution which cannot be left unnoticed is "Jeepers Creepers".

This euphonious title was applied to a time-honored SOC airplane which was carried aboard during the first year of the ship's history. Whenever there were any short utility trips to be made, Jeepers Creepers was always ready. She was usually flown by the Air Officer. Any time she climbed proudly into the air, more slowly than most but with just as much dignity as any, was an occasion for enthusiastic cheering by the crew. It is not known what became of J.C. One iconoclast who dared suggest she had been turned in for scrap was almost thrown overboard by irate friends of hers. If she did pass on to her reward, her many friends sincerely hoped that hers would be a fitting one.

THE NASSAU GOES TO AUSTRALIA

The NASSAU remained in San Diego for a week before leaving on June 7 to steam to San Francisco. There, she loaded 45 Army P-38's, plus some cargo, and departed on June 12 for Brisbane, Australia. On this long trip, eighteen steaming days, the NASSAU again travelled unescorted. As an incidental part of the voyage, she took continuous soundings of the ocean's depth each day,

which figures soon appeared on all Hydrographic Office maps of that part of the Pacific Ocean.

On the first day of July, the NASSAU arrived in Brisbane. This was the first time a carrier of any type had entered the harbor of this Australian city. The harbor, in fact, was not equipped for accommodating ships of her size. All hands who were then aboard still remember how she fairly crept up the channel, with scant inches of water depth to spare, and with mud flats on either side so close they seemed almost to brush the sides of the ship.

The NASSAU's stay in Brisbane was short. On July 3, she departed Brisbane and proceeded to Noumea, New Caledonia.

HMAS STUART escorted her for twenty-four hours, then returned to Brisbane. Upon her arrival in Noumea on July 6, the NASSAU was loaded with passengers, a few Army C-47's and a large assortment of scrap material to be transported to San Diego. On July 9, the NASSAU, USS PRINCE WILLIAM (CVE 31) and USS MONTGOMERY (DM 17) left Noumea on the return trip to the States. Later on the same day, the NASSAU left the formation and proceeded alone. Before reaching the States, the NASSAU was diverted to San Francisco, where she arrived on July 23. Upon entering San Francisco Bay, she was directed to proceed to the Mare Island Navy Yard for extensive overhaul.

QUALIFYING DUTY

On August 26, after having conducted post-repair trial runs

in the San Francisco Bay region following completion of her Navy Yard availability, the NASSAU left once again for San Diego. There, on September 1, she began a series of qualifying and training cruises out of San Diego. This period of duty was perhaps the crew's favorite of all the NASSAU's assignments. Short training cruises of a few days' duration were regularly rotated with stays in San Diego of an equal length. Such cruises were made September 1-4, 6-9, 13-16, and 19-23.

The man who had taken the NASSAU well through her first year of duty in the Pacific Fleet, Captain Doyle, was relieved of the command of the ship by Captain (now Commodore) Stanley J. Michael, USN, of Washington D.C., on September 16. In honor of this occasion, a long-to-be-remembered ship's party was held in San Diego on two consecutive nights, in order that all hands might have an opportunity to attend.

SAMOA-BOUND

At the conclusion of the last training period, the NASSAU returned to San Diego on September 23. After two days of loading provisions and fuel, plus taking aboard officers, enlisted personnel and planes of Marine Air Group 31, the NASSAU sailed for Samoa. As was becoming the custom by this time, she went alone. On the day of her arrival in Pago Pago Harbor, October 6, half the planes were catapulted from the ship while she was moored at the Naval Station Pier. The remainder were similarly unloaded the next day.

NASSAU officers and men had anticipated being able to do some shrewd bargaining with the Samoan natives for assortments of souvenirs. The business acumen, the ability to drive a hard bargain picked up by the Samoans from considerable experience with Marines and soldiers stood them in good stead. After the NASSAU left Samoa on October 8, it was generally conceded that more men had had the bargaining tables turned on them than in any port the NASSAU had previously touched. Still, the ship was well loaded with souvenirs.

After her arrival in San Diego on October 19, the NASSAU spent four days at the Naval Repair Base before being loaded at the Naval Air Station at North Island. She was given an assortment of seventy-eight planes and officers and enlisted personnel of Marine Fighter Squadron 225 for transporting to Pearl Harbor. The NASSAU departed San Diego on October 24, reaching Pearl Harbor on October 30.

THE GILBERTS CAMPAIGN

The flurry of activity at Pearl Harbor indicated that something was about to happen somewhere.

On November 5 and 6 the NASSAU, escorted by USS ALLEN (DD 66) and USS CHEW (DD 106), conducted firing tests and flight operations in the vicinity of Oahu, returning late on the evening of the sixth.

On November 10, with pilots of VF 1 and twenty-two F6F's aboard, the NASSAU departed Pearl Harbor with Task Force 52 to

participate in the capture and occupation of the Gilbert Islands. The NASSAU's mission was to transport VF 1 and its planes to Tarawa, and send them ashore as soon as facilities were available for basing them there. This was in accordance with squadron's primary task, that of a shore-based defensive force for Tarawa.

The invasion of Tarawa, begun on November 20, did not go off as planned. The bitter resistance, the murderous arrangement of Japanese defensive fortifications necessitated a change in many plans. As a result, VF 1 was ordered to conduct combat air patrols in the vicinity, and to make bombing and strafing runs in support of the assault troops.

All hands took great pride in the operational record of the squadron pilots. Practically all landings made aboard the NASSAU took place with less wind across the deck than was specified for the F6F's. This should have resulted in extensive damage to the planes. Yet late in the evening of November 25, all of the twenty-two planes were sent ashore in first-class operating condition, to be based on Tarawa. VF 1 had flown 106 missions, had spent 237 hours of flying time (not including the final flight to the base) in four days of operation, without losing a single plane or pilot.

From November 26 to November 28, the NASSAU cruised in the vicinity of the Gilbert Islands, in company with Task Group Division 22 (USS SANGAMON (CVE 26), USS SUWANNEE (CVE 27) and USS CHENANGO (CVE 28)). On the latter date, the NASSAU and BARNES were detached from Task Group 53.6 and ordered to rejoin Task

Force 52 to proceed to Pearl Harbor. The Force was back in Pearl Harbor on December 5.

THE NASSAU CATAPULTS P-39's

On her next trip the NASSAU achieved another "first" for her record. Her assignment was to carry a squadron of Army Fliers, with thirty-seven P-39's and thirteen A-24's (Navy SBD's) to the vicinity of Makin Island in the Gilberts group and launch them for basing on that island. Accordingly, on December 8, Task Unit 19.9.3, composed of the NASSAU and USS MILLER (DD 535), departed Pearl Harbor. These were the first P-39's to be catapulted from a carrier. Although all Army fliers were thoroughly instructed in flying away by catapult while en route to Makin, they seemed a bit dubious, never having undergone this experience. Throughout the day, various pilots could be seen on the flight deck, standing around the catapult and scratching their heads.

On the night of December 13, the NASSAU crossed the equator at the one hundred eightieth meridian, thereby inducting all her crew into the Realm of the Golden Dragon.

Catapulting of the 50 Army planes took place on the morning of December 14, when the NASSAU was about fifty miles from Makin Island. Contrary to what were probably the sceptical expectations of the Army fliers, all the planes were sent into the air without the slightest incident. After the P-39 pilots had been catapulted, they came back to zoom around the ship with such gusto and enthusiastic abandon that the NASSAU's skipper, Captain

Michael, warned them to stay clear of the ship.

The NASSAU returned to Pearl Harbor on December 20, and was given two weeks' respite for overhaul by the ship's force. The turn of the year found her moored to a Naval Air Station pier on Ford Island, anticipating more excitement in the very near future. Again, it was obvious that big things were underway, to judge by the amount of naval activity at Pearl Harbor.

THE MARSHALLS CAMPAIGN

Two training periods followed shortly. On January 4, 1944 Composite Squadron 66 reported aboard, but left again to fly to the ship later. Underway on the following day, the NASSAU was escorted by the USS HICKOX (DD 673) and USS HUNT (DD 674). On January 6, VC 66 flew aboard from Pearl Harbor, and flight operations were conducted until the ship's return to Pearl Harbor on the seventh. Once more, on January 13, the NASSAU left Pearl Harbor to exercise with Task Group 52.9, whose flagship was the USS MANILA BAY (CVE-61). These operations continued for five days, at the conclusion of which time the group returned to Pearl Harbor.

On January 23, the NASSAU, USS NATOMA BAY (CVE-62), USS BLACK (DD 666) and USS CHAUNCEY (DD 667) proceeded from Pearl Harbor as Task Unit 51.2.5, with Captain Michael commanding the Unit. This unit steamed with Task Group 51.2, the Majuro Atoll Group, and provided air cover en route to the Marshall Islands.

January 31 was D-Day of the Marshall Islands invasion.

Strikes planned for Majuro were called off because of the rapid occupation and possession of that atoll. Instead, VC 66 continued its anti-submarine and air combat patrols.

From January 28 to February 21, inclusive, the pilots of VC 66 flew 23 days, all of it being accounted combat flying during the attack and occupation of the Marshalls.

The NASSAU's principle duty, as ordered by Commander of Task Force 51, was to protect the fleet anchorage in Majuro Lagoon and the surface forces engaged in bombarding the enemy bases at Taroa and Wotje. The secondary duty of the NASSAU was to assist the surface forces in keeping those airfields neutralized. Fifteen flying days were spent in the vicinity of Majuro Atoll, flying anti-submarine and combat air patrols, with occasional search and photographic missions to the adjacent enemy atolls to the north, west and south. The anti-submarine patrol, in addition to its routine patrol, was kept busy relaying messages to surface forces over a wide area, taking photographs, keeping track of friendly forces, and dropping messages, photographs and plans on flagships.

Eight flying days were spent in the vicinity of Maloelap and Wotje Atolls, flying anti-submarine patrols and combat air patrols around cruiser and battleship task groups shelling the airfield. Both fighter and torpedo pilots spotted for heavy bombardment on several days when it was too rough for launching scout observation planes. They were commended several times for the excellence of their work.

One fighter pilot was forced down inside the lagoon at Taroa Atoll when enemy anti-aircraft fire struck his engine. He was rescued an hour and a half later by an OS2U dispatched from the SALT LAKE CITY (CA 25). This scout plane made a courageous landing inside the lagoon, picked up the pilot and calmly flew away. The astonishment of the Japanese on the beach undoubtedly added to their poor marksmanship.

A total of 487 combat sorties were flown by VC 66 pilots, involving 1477.6 combat hours of flying. Two planes, one pilot and two crewmen were lost; one of these planes and the personnel were lost en route to the Marshalls.

On February 23, the NASSAU transferred to the NATOMA BAY all her planes that were in first-class condition and took aboard the NATOMA BAY's damaged planes. On the following day, seventeen Japanese prisoners were received aboard for transportation to Pearl Harbor. Early morning of February 25 saw the NASSAU underway from Majuro Atoll, escorted by the USS O'BRANNON (DD 450). The next day, the NASSAU effected rendezvous with Carrier Division 22 and its escorts for the return trip to Pearl Harbor, which the group reached on March 3.

Escorted by the USS WATERMAN (DE 740), the NASSAU left Pearl Harbor once more on March 6, after having been loaded with planes and passengers bound for various atolls in the Marshalls and Gilberts. Six days later, the NASSAU catapulted twelve planes of VS 52, whose destination was Roi, and six planes of Marine

Fighting Squadron 13, bound for Majuro via Roi. Then began a series of dodgings in and out of various lagoon anchorages to disembark passengers and freight, and to take aboard passengers bound for Pearl Harbor.

First, on March 12 the NASSAU arrived in Kwajalein, departing the following day. On March 14, she steamed into Majuro Lagoon, anchored to transact her business, and got underway six hours later. The afternoon of March 15 found her at anchor just off Tarawa Atoll, loaded passengers and freight, and was again underway late in the afternoon of the same day. She arrived at Pearl Harbor on March 23.

Brighter things were in store there for the NASSAU. She was hastily loaded and sent on her way on March 26 to San Francisco.

Upon her arrival in San Francisco, she was unloaded at the Alameda Naval Air Station and sent to the Mare Island Navy Yard for a month's availability.

On April 15, Captain Michael was relieved as Commanding Officer by Captain Norman W. Ellis, USN, of St. Louis, Missouri.

THE NASSAU JOINS THE CARRIER TRANSPORT SQUADRON

During her stay in the Mare Island Navy Yard, the NASSAU was transferred to the control of Rear Admiral Samuel P. Ginder, Commander of Carrier Transport Squadron, Pacific Fleet. The task assigned to the escort carriers of this group was to transport aircraft and flight personnel to various parts of the Pacific

Ocean Area, wherever they might be needed. This marked the end of the NASSAU's days as an operating carrier. Yet the gloomy few who predicted an end had come for her days of usefulness were subsequently shown to be far in the wrong.

FERRYING TO NEW GUINEA

First assignment for the NASSAU as a part of ComCarTransRon's fleet was a ferry trip to Finschhafen, New Guinea. She departed San Francisco on May 5, carrying fifty-one Army aircraft and a capacity load of passengers. The load of aircraft included four P-61's and four A-26's. These were reported to be the first of their respective types to be sent to the South West Pacific.

Arriving in Dreger Harbor at Finschhafen on May 23, the NASSAU spent two days in unloading her passengers and cargo and in taking aboard over-age aircraft and passengers for return to the States. She left Finschhafen on May 25, bound for San Diego, and arrived there on June 12.

In San Diego, the NASSAU found still more aircraft to be moved.

Officer and enlisted personnel of Marine Fighter Squadron 314 and of Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 333 were embarked, as were sixty-seven aircraft. On June 18, the NASSAU headed for Pearl Harbor. Most of the first day of this trip was spent on the tactical data range north of San Diego, making calibration test runs, before setting course for Pearl Harbor. All passengers were disembarked when the NASSAU reached Pearl Harbor on June 24, and

the officer and enlisted personnel of VMF 312 and VMSB 133 came aboard.

In the afternoon of June 25, the NASSAU designated as Task Unit 19.8.6, left Pearl Harbor en route to Espiritu Santo.

THE RECREATIONAL PROBLEM

On these transport runs, all available passenger space was filled, and recreation was a highly important item. Loaded as she was, the NASSAU had little room on her hanger deck or flight deck for organized entertainment. Much of the credit for making these voyages as pleasant as possible for crew and passengers was due to the indefatigable efforts of Chaplain Herbert R. Smith, USNR, of Attleboro, Massachusetts.

Movies were shown across the forward elevator at hanger deck level or on the forward end of the hanger deck each evening. Programs and boxing matches were presented as often as possible. A long series of quiz contests, featuring teams from all divisions of the ship, as well as from the passengers and the ship's officers, proved to be entertaining. Another of the Chaplain's inaugurations was the daily noon broadcast, over the ship's loudspeaker system, of the latest news as copied by radio operators detailed for the job. Volleyball and basketball tournaments on the forward and after elevators aroused much interest.

The Chaplain's efforts were appreciated by all. One of the first questions invariably asked of crew members by former

passengers when they met was "Is Chaplain Smith Still Aboard?"

The NASSAU arrived at Espiritu Santo on July 6. Three days were required to unload and complete return loading. On July 9, then, the NASSAU sailed for San Diego. Ten days later, she was diverted from her route to proceed to Port Hueneme, north of Los Angeles, for unloading the aircraft brought back from Espiritu Santo. On July 23, the NASSAU arrived at Port Hueneme and anchored off Point Mugu, to find that she was the first carrier to have put in at this debarkation point. On the night of the following day, having put off her aircraft, the NASSAU steamed toward San Diego, reaching port on July 25.

The NASSAU was given a ten-day availability at the Naval Repair Base in San Diego. Completing her availability ahead of schedule, she left San Diego on August 5, headed for San Francisco. At the Alameda Naval Air Station, she was quickly loaded and dispatched to Pearl Harbor on August 9.

ADMIRAL'S INSPECTION

Relatively few of the NASSAU's officers and men had ever undergone the Navy's rigor of rigors: an Admiral's Inspection. They were about to be indoctrinated in this respect. On the trip to Pearl Harbor, each day was spent in scrubbing, painting, preening the ship's interior until it fairly glowed. Throughout officers' quarters, division officers could be heard in their rooms, practicing for the inspection. The maneuver of bringing their divisions to attention and leading them in a hand salute to

the admiral when he made his personnel inspection was particularly important. It was not uncommon, then, to hear such accolades as "R Division or Second Division: Haaaand SaLUTE! Good Morning, Admiral -- TWO!"

On August 15 the NASSAU arrived in Pearl Harbor. Three days later, Rear Admiral Ginder and his staff came aboard to inspect the crew and the ship. Contrary to the apprehensions of the more timorous, no heads were bitten off. The inspection lasted several hours; it was thorough; some of the division officers muffled their lines which they had studied so assiduously. Yet all those for whom this was the first of such inspections agreed they had over-estimated the gravity of the situation.

The NASSAU celebrated her second birthday in Pearl Harbor on August 20. The following day, operating as senior ship of Task Unit 30.8.12, she proceeded in company with the USS STEAMER BAY (CVE 87) to Seeadler Harbor at Manus Island, in the Admiralties.

THE CARRIER BEHIND THE CARRIERS BEHIND THE PLANES

Upon her arrival at Seeadler Harbor on September 1, the NASSAU reported to Commander of Task Group 30.8 for duty. Thus began her tour of duty with Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet, which was to make unprecedented naval history in the following months. The NASSAU's mission was to operate out of the Admiralties with other escort carriers to provide replacement aircraft and pilots for the carriers of Task Force 38. Proceeding in company with oiler groups, which supplied the ships of Task Force 38 with fuel

at sea, the NASSAU made three cruises into the Western Pacific with new planes and pilots. She brought back to the Admiralties over-age aircraft to be further transported for reconditioning either in Pearl Harbor or in the States.

The next two months were not soon to be forgotten by the NASSAU. The heat of the climate in this area was the worst the ship had encountered: sleeping conditions below decks were far from desirable. Morning General Quarters, held an hour before sunrise, came practically in the middle of the night. ("But that's alright," observed one member of the crew. "It's too hot down below to sleep anyway.") Much of what went on during these cruises was interesting. At least for a few days, the NASSAU was privileged to operate in company with the mightiest aggregation of naval might in history.

The first of these replacement runs was begun on September 6. The NASSAU left Manus with the USS SARGENT BAY (CVE 83), the STEAMER BAY, three oilers and a screen of four destroyer escorts. Three days later, this group met four carriers of Task Group 38.4 two hundred miles east of Angaur Island, in the Palaus. The NASSAU transferred four pilots by destroyer and launched ten aircraft to these ships, while the oilers refueled them. Thus the ship participated in the practice of carrying to the major war vessels the supplies they needed to stay at sea indefinitely as part of the system later referred to by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz as the Navy's "secret weapon".

This and subsequent rendezvous were sufficiently

characterized by an old-timer aboard the NASSAU:

"Reminds me of a peddler traveling through the country to sell his wares to the farmers. He says, 'I've got such-and-such available. What would you like?' The farmers tell him what they want, the transaction is made, and the peddler goes somewhere else to rid himself of more stock."

On September 11, the replacement group met Task Groups 38.1, 38.2 and 38.3. An entire day was spent in supplying these ships with fuel oil, aircraft and personnel.

The NASSAU launched twenty-seven aircraft ordered by the carriers of these task groups. Only one incident marred an otherwise perfect day. An impatient SB2C broke loose while being warmed up, before the catapult was released, and went over the NASSAU's bow into the water. The pilot was quickly rescued by a destroyer escort, uninjured.

Having successfully completed its mission, the replacement group returned to Manus to load again, arriving there on September 15. Three days later, the NASSAU was again underway with more planes, steaming in company with Task Units 30.8.3, 30.8.5, 30.8.7, 30.8.12 (of which unit the NASSAU was senior ship) and 30.8.16.

The first rendezvous of this second "peddler's run" was made on September 23. Twenty-nine aircraft plus some pilots and aircrewmembers were transferred from the NASSAU to Task Groups 38.1, 38.2 and 38.3, which ships were again given fuel by the tankers

operating with the NASSAU. Two days later the NASSAU and her Task Unit 30.8.12 left the other units to make contact with the combatant escort carriers of Task Force 32. She did not meet these carriers as scheduled on September 27, since they were 165 miles west of her position, but she sent six aircraft and additional replacement personnel to them. The task unit thereupon returned to Manus, arriving there on the last day of September.

The first of these replacement trips had been in support of the strikes against Palau, the second in support of operations of Task Force 38 against the southern and central Philippines. As Task Force 38 shifted to more northerly targets in the Philippines and on Formosa, replacement units of necessity made longer trips and came closer to Japanese-held territory.

On October 4, the NASSAU departed Seeadler Harbor with three other transport carriers, six oilers and seven escorts en route to a rendezvous with Task Force 38 at a point approximately 375 miles northeast of Luzon in the Philippines.

A week later, the first contact with Task Force 38 was made. Thirty-four aircraft were catapulted from the NASSAU to fly to various carriers requesting them. Fueling operations took considerable time. The carriers of Task Force 38 had to steam westward into the wind in order to take aboard fuel and to land aircraft simultaneously. Although the rendezvous was made early well off the coast of Luzon, by late afternoon the distance to Luzon had been greatly decreased. News that all fueling had been

completed, and that the replacement group was to reverse its course was not received until almost 2100.

From that time until early on October 15, the NASSAU and other units of the replacement group stood by in the same general area, awaiting another rendezvous with Task Force 38 following its strikes on Formosa. On the latter date, contact was made again with Task Groups 38.2 and 38.3.

October 15 was the most hectic day of this entire period. To begin with, the launching of aircraft was begun late in the day, shortly before sunset, because of delays encountered in refueling. The NASSAU launched seventeen aircraft. Then, eleven "duds" (over-age aircraft) were landed aboard, six of them after dark. The last one was an SB2C. The Landing Signal Officer, Lieut. (jg.) James A. Brickett, Jr., USNR, of Newtonville, Massachusetts, had never before brought aboard a "Beast," as the Helldiver is sometimes called. Undaunted, he waved his paddles furiously and a successful landing was made. Later that night, three destroyers came alongside in rapid succession to receive the pilots of Task Force 38 who had flown the "duds" aboard. With only flashlights to aid in this maneuver, breeches buoys were rigged and the pilots were hauled over to the destroyers.

The next morning, two torpedo planes were launched to fly to Peleliu Island in the Palaus, in accordance with Admiral Halsey's orders. Piloted by two volunteers from among the NASSAU's replacement group, these planes' mission was to carry war Correspondent Bill Baldwin and photographic intelligence material

of Task Force 38 operation over Formosa and the Philippines. This material had been transferred by a destroyer to the NASSAU on the preceding night, when Correspondent Baldwin had also come aboard.

The NASSAU and others of her units again reached Manus on October 20. After discharging the over-age aircraft and loading new planes, the NASSAU's Task Unit 30.8.12 proceeded on its last replacement trip. This cruise was prosaic in comparison with the others. The unit proceeded to Ulithi Atoll, in the Caroline Islands, and there met Task Groups 38.1 and 38.3 on October 28. There, seventy aircraft and forty-three pilots were transferred from the NASSAU to Task Force 38 carriers.

On November 5, Task Unit 12.6.1, composed of the NASSAU, USS TENNESSEE (BB 43), USS STERMAN BAY, USS MULLANDY (DD 528), USS BIALE (DD 471) and USS BACHE (DD 470), sailed for Pearl Harbor. The unit arrived in Pearl Harbor on November 16, and two days later the NASSAU was dispatched to San Diego to return over-age aircraft for overhaul. Among her passengers were three hundred eighty-two survivors of the ill-fated light carrier PRINCETON.

Reaching San Diego on November 25, the NASSAU was moved the following day to the Naval Repair Base for twelve days' yard availability. Upon completion of this availability, she was loaded with ammunition, stores, seventy aircraft, and routed to Pearl Harbor on December 9. The NASSAU arrived in Pearl Harbor six days later. She was then given Air Group 17 as passengers, and on December 17 was again underway, this time headed for Guam,

in the Marianas.

Christmas morning, 1944, was far from "white" for the NASSAU crew and passengers. The best Christmas present they could ask for under these conditions was given them at eight in the morning: an escort. The USS MEADE (DD 602), which had come out from Eniwetok, in the western Marshalls, met the NASSAU and accompanied her to Guam and back as far as Eniwetok. Divine services were held on the NASSAU's forward elevator Christmas morning. That afternoon all hands were entertained with a program directed by Lieut. Charles Farrell, USNR, former motion picture star, then Personnel Officer for Air Group 17.

While the NASSAU was steaming uneventfully toward her destination, other ships of the fleet were not quite so fortunate. Some of the CVE's which had relieved the NASSAU's replenishment team in the task of ferrying planes to the Third Fleet were caught in a typhoon which resulted in the loss of vital aircraft.

On December 27 a request was received from Commander Naval Air Bases, Guam, asking that their planes be depreserved and made ready for flight before the NASSAU's arrival in Guam. Only twenty-four hours were available for this task.

Starting on what seemed to be an impossible job, the small air maintenance crew, aided by volunteers from among the passengers, went to work. By continuing their efforts throughout the night and the next morning, they were successful in meeting

practically all of the unprecedented requirements. Soon after these planes were unloaded, they were flown to the combatant carriers. For this feat, the NASSAU received a letter of thanks from CNAB Guam.

The NASSAU anchored in Apra Harbor, Guam, on the morning of December 28. The following afternoon, having unloaded all passengers and aircraft and having taken aboard passengers and cargo for Pearl Harbor, she put out to sea.

When the year of 1944 went out and the New Year of 1945 was ushered in, the NASSAU was approaching Eniwetok from the west. Undoubtedly sleepy, probably well bored with comparing this New Year's morning with others he had known, the Officer of the Deck made the following entry in the ship's log as record of his midwatch:

One-one-two's the course we make
(If the helmsman's still awake);
"Snipes" claim seventeen's our speed.
Escort is USS MEADE,
MEADE is DD six-oh-two --
Stationed out front, last we knew.
Using boilers one and two:
Have no more, so these must do.
Ship is darkened. Military
State of readiness is very
Apt to be Condition Two --
That, of course, is nothing new.

Condition Baker's set below;
It's hotter, but it's safer so.
Zigzags of Plan Six we make:
Keep annoyed J.O. awake.
On-one-one-six: plane is found
In course of radar's sweeping 'round --
One-five-oh, the bearing here:
Sixty-five miles, or pretty near.
Sleepy O.D., far from blithe,
Thus greets nineteen forty-five.

On January 7, 1945, the NASSAU reached Pearl Harbor. Three days later she was again on her way to Guam, with another load of aircraft and passengers. When she reached the vicinity of Eniwetok, she was joined by the USS CLOVES (DE 265), which was to be her escort. Upon arriving at Guam, the NASSAU was given the assignment of carrying out refresher training for Carrier Air Group 17, which she had taken to Guam on her previous trip.

Operating southwest of Guam January 22 through 25, the NASSAU accumulated a total of 300 landings with no serious accidents. Three planes were damaged in landing, but there were no personnel injuries involved. Having completed the training on the afternoon of January 25, the NASSAU set her course for Pearl Harbor. Three days later in the vicinity of Eniwetok the USS CLOVES was released from her duty as escort. The NASSAU docked in Pearl Harbor on February 3.

Then followed another trip to San Diego, to ferry passengers

and "dud" aircraft. The NASSAU departed Pearl Harbor on February 5, reached San Diego on the eleventh. Sailing once more on the fifteenth, she was back in Pearl Harbor on February 21. The following day, the NASSAU was at sea, Guam-bound. At Eniwetok she received another escort, this time the USS WINTLE (DE 25). This unit reached Guam on March 4, departed on March 6. On this trip the NASSAU carried over one hundred patients evacuated from the battlefields of Iwo Jima. They were among the first to be returned to the States. The WINTLE was released at Eniwetok and the NASSAU continued alone to Pearl Harbor, arriving there on March 15.

Before the ship sailed from Pearl Harbor on March 17, Commander (now Captain) Frank Turner, USN, of Savannah, Georgia, reported aboard for duty, to assume command when the ship reached San Francisco on March 23. Shortly after the NASSAU docked at the Alameda Naval Air Station, Commander Turner officially took over the command from Captain Ellis, at ceremonies held on the ship's hanger deck.

On March 24 the NASSAU began a ten-day availability in the shipyards at Alameda. Upon completion of this overhaul period, she was loaded at the Alameda Naval Air Station and sent back to Pearl Harbor on April 5. At Pearl Harbor passengers and over-age aircraft were embarked on the NASSAU, and she was directed to return to San Francisco on the thirteenth. She reached San Francisco on April 19, left again for Pearl Harbor on April 24 and arrived there on the last day of the month.

On May 3 the NASSAU steamed out of Pearl Harbor on an extensive ferry run that was to break all her former records for expeditious loading and unloading. Largely responsible for this was the man who was then Air Officer, Lieut. Comdr. (now Commander) Joseph J. Richardson, USNR, of Balboa, California.

After going into Guam on May 13 and leaving on May 14, the NASSAU steamed toward Seeadler Harbor, at Manus Island. Early on May 17, the date of the ship's arrival, Comdr. Richardson was catapulted in an F6F airplane and flew to the beach. By the time the ship was in the harbor at Manus, he had completed all arrangements for handling cargo and passengers and saved much time. The following day the NASSAU left Manus on her way to Samar, in the Philippines. Comdr. Richardson repeated his tactics on May 22, the day the NASSAU anchored. On May 23, she was underway for Manus. Comdr. Richardson made his last flight of the trip on May 27, flying to Manus ahead of the ship and again saved much time by early exchange of information between ship and shore. The next day the NASSAU was again at sea, bound for Pearl Harbor having spent only twenty-four hours at each of her four ports of call. On this trip to Pearl Harbor 543 passengers 207 of whom were hospital patients, were carried as well as a full load of planes, 61 SB2C's and one F6F.

On June 6, the NASSAU reached Pearl Harbor, and was routed two days later to San Diego. Taking still more passengers and "dud" aircraft back to the States, she arrived on June 14. There, another load of passengers and combatant aircraft was given her

for transporting to Pearl Harbor. At sea on June 18, the NASSAU was back in Pearl Harbor six days later. In Pearl Harbor, she was given orders to proceed the next day for Saipan, in the Marianas.

The NASSAU's stay in Saipan was short. She anchored in Saipan Harbor at noon on July 5, and was on her way to Samar, in the Philippines, six hours later. Arriving in Samar on July 9, the NASSAU learned that she was to sail the following day directly to San Francisco, to meet an availability date. With the exception of her cruise to Brisbane, Australia, this voyage was the longest of her history, requiring eighteen steaming days.

Captain Turner decided to send the ship's First Lieutenant, Lieut. Comdr. Frederick B. Quirk, USNR, of Benseo, New York, ashore by airplane a day prior to the ship's arrival in San Francisco. This would enable the latter to confer with shipyard officials on the ship's impending availability. Lieut. (jg) James A. Brickett, Jr., was chosen to fly the TBM which carried Comdr. Quirk. As the plane was placed on the catapult, preparatory to being launched, Comdr. Quirk observed,

"You know, Jim, this is the first time I've been catapulted." Lieut. Brickett's cheery reply was a bit unnerving. "You've got nothing on me pal, we'll start together!"

Docked at the Alameda Naval Air Station on July 27, the

NASSAU began a ten-day availability the following day.

THE END OF THE WAR

Even before the NASSAU left Alameda on August 9, headed for Pearl Harbor, rumors concerning the end of the war with Japan were rampant. Much had happened on the international scene since her arrival in the States on July 27. The Atomic bomb, the Russian entry into the war, increased American bombing raids on Japan were all occasioning considerable discussion. Until Japan officially surrendered, however, the war had to be carried on unrelentingly. During the cruise to Pearl Harbor all hands listened to news broadcasts at every available opportunity. When it became officially known that Japan had accepted the Allied Surrender terms, the NASSAU had almost completed her journey. She docked at the Pearl Harbor Naval Air Station on August 15.

After a delay of six days, the NASSAU was sent back to San Francisco, arriving there on August 27. When she sailed for Pearl Harbor four days later, among the passengers were Justice Matthew T. McGuire and aide, Lt. Comdr. Myles J. Lane, USNR, traveling aboard under special orders for the Secretary of the Navy. She found herself again between San Francisco and Pearl Harbor on the official V-J Day, September 2. Four days after this historic occasion, she steamed into Pearl Harbor.

Looking back on their ship's record, the officers and men of the NASSAU felt justified in believing that she had contributed

at least in small measure to the defeat of Japan. During the last eighteen months of the war she had rendered valuable aid to the fleet as an aircraft transport. Earlier she had filled a vital gap in the fleet's carrier strength.

And best of all, she had been quite fortunate in never having sustained any damage by enemy action.

NASSAU departed Alameda, California on May 13, 1946 for Tacoma, Washington where on October 28, 1946 she was decommissioned and entered the Pacific Reserve Fleet. Designated for modification for aircraft transportation purposes her classification was changed to CVHE-16 on June 12, 1955. Shortly thereafter she was transferred to the Bremerton Reserve Group and was struck from the Navy Register on March 1, 1959. In June 1961 she was towed to Japan for scrapping. What the Imperial Japanese Navy could not do in three years of war, the cutting torch brought an end to the USS NASSAU CVE-16.