

United States Ship
U.S.S. FANSHAW BAY (CVE-70)

Fanshaw Bay (CVE-70) was launched 1 November 1943 by Kaiser Shipbuilding Co. Vancouver, Wash. and commissioned 9 December 1943, Captain P.L. Johnson in command.

Fanshaw Bay sailed from San Diego 6 April 1944 and reached Majuro 20 April, she returned to Pearl Harbor. She sailed 29 May for Eniwetok and final preparations for the assault on Saipan, for which she sailed 11 June. Operating about 30 miles east of Saipan. During an attack by five enemy aircraft on that day, Fanshaw Bay saved herself from a torpedo by prompt maneuvering, but 2 days later in a melee of raids from all sides which included about 70 Japanese planes. Fanshaw Bay was struck by a bomb, after her anti-aircraft guns and fighter planes had splashed many of the attackers. The bomb penetrated the after elevator and exploded in midair above the hangar deck, killing 14 and wounding 23. She transferred Rear Admiral Bogan to a destroyer, and sailed for Pearl Harbor and battle damage repairs. Fanshaw Bay arrived at Manus 18 August 1944. The escort carrier replenished at Manus from 7 October to 12 October, then put out for the invasion of Leyte on 20 October. Through the first 4 days of the invasion, Fanshaw Bay operated off Samar, launching combat air patrol, antisubmarine patrols, observation flights.

Warned on 24 October that Japanese surface ships were on the move, she flew off early the next morning all her aircraft to attack the enemy while the escort carriers retired from the threat of the Japanese surface ships, far faster, and with far greater fire power. Just 6 minutes after her planes were ordered away she came under fire from the Japanese cruisers, and although a heavy rain squall shielded the escort carriers briefly, she soon began receiving hits. By 0855, when she took the third hit, she was under fire from two cruisers and two destroyers, later joined by a third destroyer whose torpedo attack she avoided. All through this battle, the American destroyers fought gallantly to protect their vulnerable charges and at 0924 the Japanese battle line at last broke formation to avoid an air attack. In the Japanese destroyers' last attack, Saint Lo (CVE-63) was torpedoed, and within the next hour, enemy suicide planes appeared overhead, one of which crashed Saint Lo sending her to the bottom. Fanshaw Bay fired effectively in this attack, splashing among others a plane just about to crash Kitkun Bay (CVE-71). With her screen detached to rescue Saint Lo's survivors. In this battle off Samar phase of the epic Battle for Leyte Gulf, Fanshaw Bay lost four men, killed and four wounded.

Fanshaw Bay replenished at Manus 1 November 1944 to 7 November, then returned by way of Pearl Harbor to San Diego for battle damage repairs. Fanshaw Bay arrived at Ulithi 14 March 1945 to reembark Admiral Sprague, now Commander Carrier Division 26. She sortied for the invasion of Okinawa 21 March, and 4 days later her planes began preinvasion attacks on the island. After calling at Guam and Eniwetok to load aircraft and replenish, Fanshaw Bay sailed to Adak from there took part in the occupation of northern Japan until returning to Pearl Harbor 24 September 1945. She arrived on the west coast with Marine Corps passengers 3 November, and after a voyage to Tokyo Bay to return men of all military services to San Diego, was placed out of commission in reserve at Tacoma, Wash. 14 August 1946. She was sold 26 September 1959.

In addition to the Presidential Unit Citation, Fanshaw Bay received five battle stars for World War II service, and scrapped in Portland, Oregon.

RECIPIENT OF 2 PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATIONS. ONLY 5 NAVAL VESSELS WAS AWARDED 2 IN W.W.II
3 SUBS AND 1 RESCUE SUB.



Fannie Bee's "Main Battery," the Fantail 5-Inch.

STRADDLED . . . by E. G. Hines, U. S. N. R.

THE TRANSITION of the Aircraft Carrier, Escort (CVE) from its original designation as Aircraft Transport (APV) suggests a versatility uncommon in modern, highly specialized naval craft. The history of the U.S.S. FANSHAW BAY (CVE 70) is one of the most remarkable records of CVE accomplishments in the Pacific. From commissioning to inactivation the "Fannie Bee" performed the many and varied duties assigned in a manner which earned for her the Presidential Unit Citation and recommendation for the Navy Unit Commendation. Recommendation for a second Presidential Unit Citation has been forwarded to the Secretary of the Navy by Admirals A. E. Montgomery and J. H. Towers. The proposed citation is forwarded with the following endorsement by Admiral Montgomery:

"An exhaustive comparative study of all CVE type war records convincingly establishes the outstanding performances of the U.S.S. FANSHAW BAY. Through the extraordinary heroism, gallantry and determination of her officers and crew she achieved a conspicuous record in combat. In view of the above and the ship's contribution to the defeat of Japan, Commander Air Force, Pacific Fleet, considers that the U.S.S. FANSHAW BAY thoroughly merits a second award of the Presidential Unit Citation."

The first assignment for the Fannie Bee presaged an unusual future. On January 16, 1944, she departed from San Francisco with a full cargo of Army P-38's destined for Townsville, Australia. Following her



DE's lay protective smoke screen for CVE's off Samar.

shakedown trip to Australia the Fannie Bee headed for Majuro, in the Marshall Islands. A brief submarine hunt proved fruitless and the Fannie Bee carried Rear Admiral Bogan and his staff back to Pearl Harbor for a rehearsal on the coming Saipan landings.

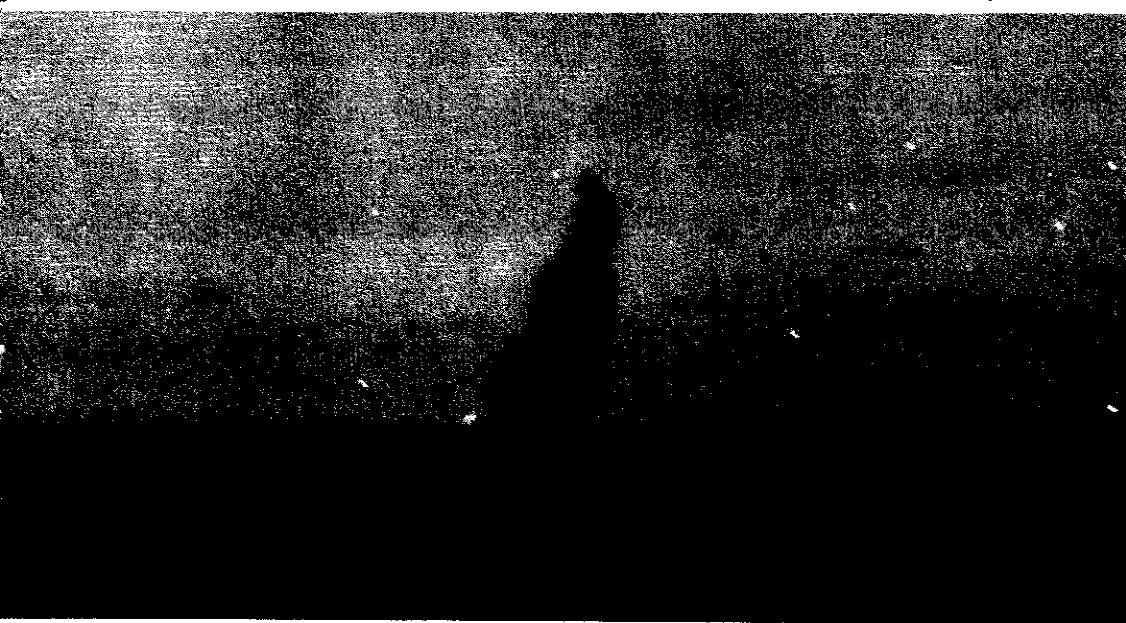
Composite Squadron Sixty-Eight became the first Air Group to see action from the decks of the Fannie Bee as she joined the CVE's of the Fifth Fleet on D-1 Day. In the earlier Marshalls campaign the CVE's were used for the first time in direct ground support but in the absence of enemy air opposition. In the Marianas the CVE's were given the full duties of ground support, combat air patrol and anti-submarine patrol. In a few short weeks the importance of the CVE role had broadened to that of a regular fleet carrier. This utility enabled the fast fleet carriers to increase their scope of activity to provide for possibility of enemy fleet attack.

The enemy was not unaware of this new threat and at 1715 on D-Day five enemy planes were reported 71 miles to the Southeast, closing in at high speed. The four-plane CAP (Combat Air Patrol) of the U.S.S. *White Plains* was vectored in for interception. The CAP intercepted at 36 miles and shot down three planes in the first encounter, another being shot down within visual range of the ship. At 1812 the last enemy plane penetrated the fighter screen and launched a torpedo at the Fannie Bee. The Fannie Bee heeled to port as Captain Johnson ordered "full right rudder" and the torpedo passed harmlessly by. At 1815 the remaining enemy plane was shot down by Lieutenant Sanders, leader of the CAP launched from the Fannie Bee at 1809.

June 17 is a dark day in the Fannie Bee's history. The first aircraft launched crashed on take-off killing pilot and crew. Depth charges in the plane were

Destroyer screen draws fire from Jap cruisers.





Near miss by enemy bomber, June 17, 1944.

detonated as it plunged beneath the waters of the Pacific. In the late afternoon the CIC (Combat Information Center) reported unidentified aircraft to the Southeast, distance 40 miles. General Quarters sounded as pilots and crews manned their planes on the double.


In a few minutes 14 planes were in the air to join 32 planes from other carriers. An estimated 70 planes attacked the carriers from all sides as the 40 millimeters and 20 millimeters salvos joined in the roar of planes. The shipboard AA batteries claimed three shot down, one probable and one damage. Meanwhile one enemy plane was shot down by fighter planes, scrambled by this ship. At 1852 an enemy plane released a bomb at approximately 1,500 feet after making a run on the Fannie Bee. The bomb hit a corner of the after elevator, crashing through the thin decks, showering fragments into shattered compartments as fires broke out from severed electrical cables.

The Air Group was forced to seek out another ship as fires raged aboard the Fannie Bee. Two planes were lost after forced water landings but watchful destroyers picked the pilots off their rafts. The ship took on a severe port list while all hands turned to, forming a long bucket brigade, waist deep in water, as the men fought through the night to save their ship. The Fannie Bee lived to fight again but at 1130 on the following morning 14 bodies were committed to the sea, victims of the enemy bomb. The Fannie Bee returned to Pearl Harbor for repairs and a well-earned rest for the crew.

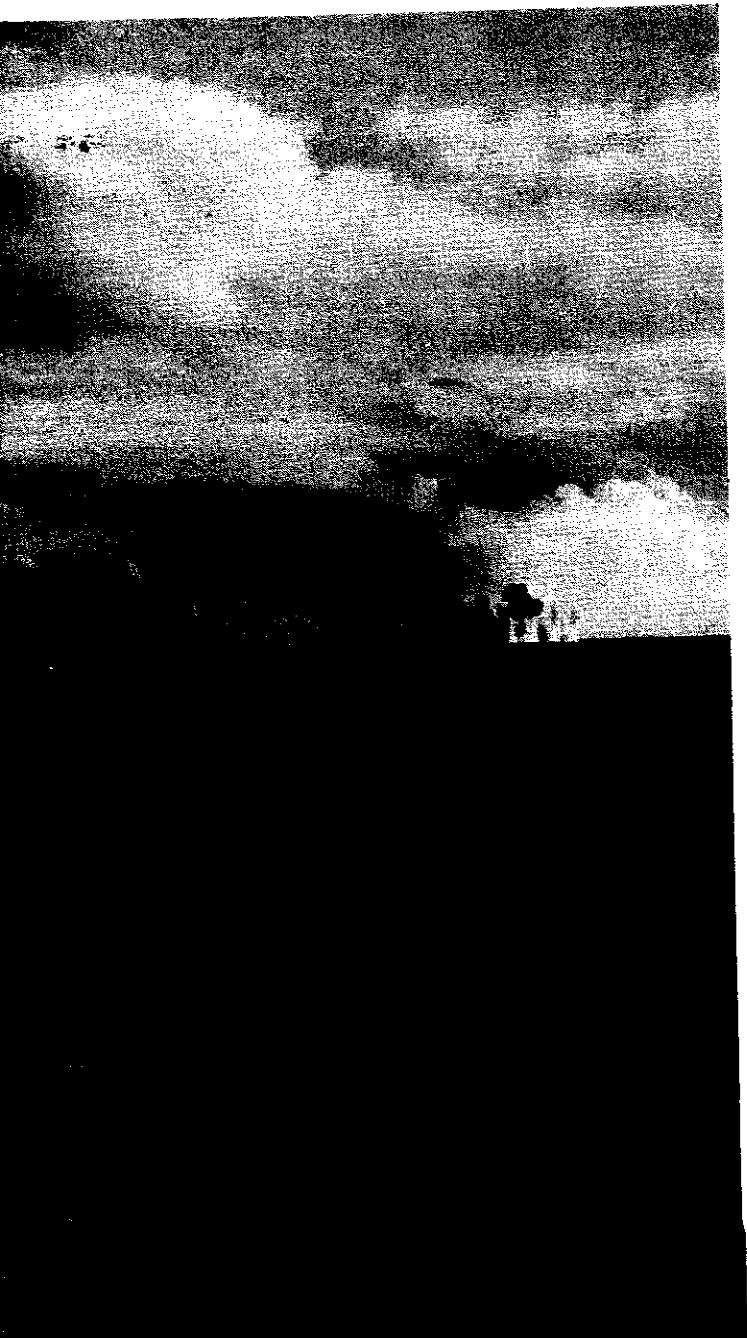
The month of August found the ship underway again, Rear Admiral C. A. F. Sprague hoisting his ComCarDiv 25 Sopus at Manus in the Admiralty Islands.

Jap salvos land on CVE.





*Jap Tone class cruiser
(visible just to right
of splashes) leads
CVE with salvo.*



Early in September the Fanshaw Bay headed for Morotai and commenced patrol of area south of Samar Island to lend support to landings at Tacloban. On the 18th and 19th of October planes from the CVE units destroyed 36 planes and damaged 28 others in the air and on the ground in attacks on Cebu, Panay and Negros. As planes from the CVE's pounded shore installations along Panay and Mindanao in close support of the ground troops, the tension grew daily. Rumors (scuttlebutt in Navy lingo) as to the whereabouts of the Japanese fleet raced through the ships. Enemy strikes grew in intensity with a particularly heavy attack on the 24th of October by enemy bombers and fighters. A four-plane CAP shot down five out of eight enemy fighters that came out of the sun over Leyte. In all some 66 planes were shot down by air groups from the CVE's. A general fleet action appeared imminent.

About 0100 on October 25 a force of battleships, cruisers and destroyers under Vice Admiral J. B. Oldendorf waylaid a strong Japanese force attempting to transit Suriago Strait under cover of darkness. The attempted attack on our unloading area ended in virtual annihilation for the enemy force as PT boats and destroyers unleashed a spread of torpedoes through a hail of surface fire. Guns from the U. S. battleships and cruisers found the range quickly, routing the enemy force in a mass of confusion and smoking, sinking hulks.

Attacks on the crippled remnant of the Southern Japanese force were resumed at dawn by air groups from the CVE's when the Fannie Bee's CIC reported

CVE survives close one.



*Near miss as cruisers
commence to straddle.*

Jap voice radio transmissions, indicating strong Japanese forces in close proximity. At 0640 anti-aircraft fire was sighted to the Northwest as a patrol plane radioed warning of a Japanese force approaching from San Bernardino Strait, distance fifteen miles. The force appeared to consist of four enemy battleships, eight heavy and light cruisers and eight or more destroyers.

There was only one course for Admiral Sprague's outgunned force: a hasty retreat. The escort carriers commenced retirement at maximum speed as all available planes were ordered airborne. At 0656 the valiant destroyer screen of three destroyers and four DE's dropped astern to lay a smoke screen. Thus began one of the most incredible battles in the history of the U. S. Navy.

At 0658 the leading enemy cruisers opened fire at a range of 29,200 yards; at the same time the

fleeing Fannie Bee launched her 12 remaining planes. Enemy salvos commenced to creep up on the stern as Captain Johnson started evasive action. Laying down a heavy smoke screen the CVE's dodged and turned while shell splashes crashed close at hand, the range dropping to 26,000 yards as the fast enemy fleet raced after the vulnerable escort carriers. The enemy force separated at 0703 in a flanking movement designed to bring the CVE's under fire from three separate directions. As the enemy continued to close the range a providential rain squall reduced visibility to a half-mile or less. Running out of the squall in all too short a time the destroyer screen was ordered to make a torpedo attack on the enemy battle line. By 0759 the cruisers on the starboard had commenced to straddle the Fannie Bee with their salvos, one 6-inch shell passing through the thin plating without exploding. About this



Enemy torpedo planes under fire June 18.

same time a little cheer was heard as one of our planes landed a 500-pound bomb on the stern of a Kongo class battleship. The damage control party of the Fannie Bee was struggling to control fires as shells crashed through the ship.

Meanwhile, the destroyers completed their heroic attack on the enemy battle line. The U.S.S. Johnston was last seen making a torpedo run between two

cruisers while a plane reported the sinking of the U.S.S. Samuel S. Roberts. The U.S.S. Hoel reported a six-foot hole forward, above and below the water line. The U.S.S. Gambier Bay dropped back from formation as water poured into the forward engine room. Planes continued their attacks on the enemy as the range closed to 11,000 yards. Fortunately the battleship fire was inaccurate and spasmodic but the cruisers again scored with a hit on the flight deck as two

Splash one Bogey!



cruisers and destroyers concentrated their fire on the smoking Fannie Bee.

About 0900 the U.S.S. Gambier Bay capsized and sank after a terrific pounding from enemy heavy cruisers at close range. After two and one-half hours of sustained battle the Japanese fleet chose this time for a final destroyer torpedo attack and commenced retirement to the North, an unexplained but welcome sight to the battered Task Group. Every ship in the Unit had sustained hits while the Gambier Bay, Hoel, Roberts and Johnston had gallantly gone to a watery grave. The destroyers Heerman and Denni suffered major damage while the Butler and Raymond were little better off.

Scarcely were the Japanese ships over the horizon when a new battle commenced for the war-weary CVE's. Jap suicide planes arrived to polish off the crippled carriers and succeeded in landing one Kamakaze on the St. Lo flight deck. The resulting explosions were too much for the battered St. Lo and at 1105 all hands abandoned ship as she slid to the depths of Leyte Gulf. The four remaining CVE's limped southward to Manus for temporary repairs before heading back to the United States.

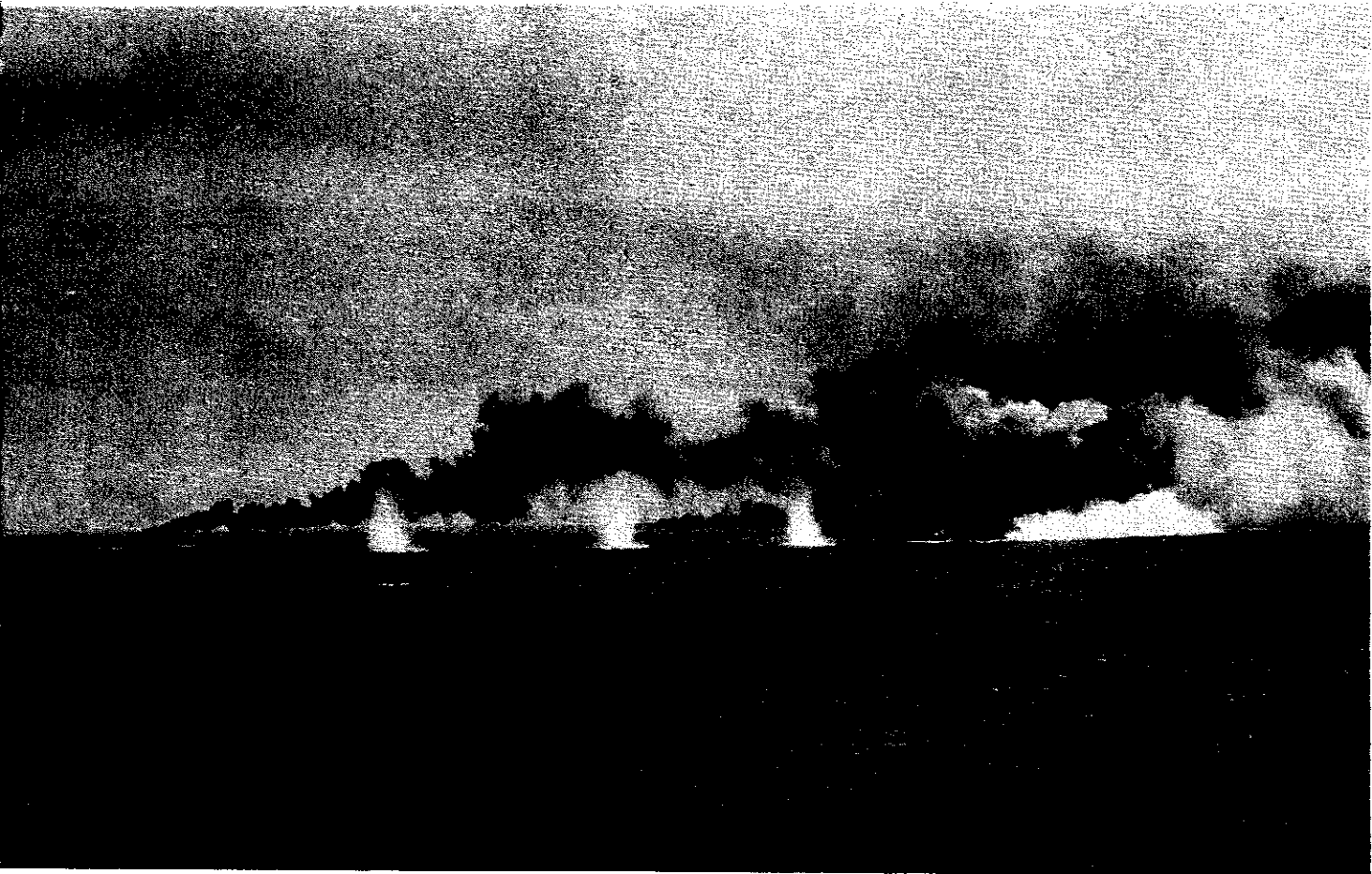
Captain Arnold assumed command on January 10, 1945, and in February, 1945, the Fannie Bee headed

back to the Realm of the Golden Dragon. Admiral C. A. F. Sprague rejoined the ship in Ulithi in March, hoisting his flag as ComCarDiv 26. From Ulithi the Fannie Bee headed north for the Okinawa campaign. Again the Fannie Bee assumed the work of the "big boys," providing ground support, blasting tanks, trucks, troops and being in turn subjected to every retaliatory trick the enemy had in his bag. The Fannie Bee was subjected to Kamakaze raids, suicide boats, submarines, mines and even suicide swimmers but her luck held, she remained unscathed.

For 69 days during the occupation and neutralization of Okinawa the Fannie Bee operated continuously, with Composite Squadron TWO flying a total of 2,089 sorties. During this period fliers averaged 91 hours of combat flying per month! Pilots from this squadron literally pulverized all opposition, both on the ground and in the air. The havoc created among enemy troops contributed to a greatly reduced casualty rate in our own ground forces as the relentless air pounding blasted tanks, trucks, gun emplacements and equipment into uselessness. In addition to lending ground support, fliers of VOC2 also shot down five enemy planes during this same period.

July found the Fannie Bee penetrating far into the East China Sea in a highly secret minswEEPing expedi-

Heroic Destroyers and DE's lay smoke screen to hide beleaguered CVE's.





Salvos blanket CVE's.

tian chain the Northern spearhead into the Kurile Islands promised a welcome relief from Kamakaize attacks, swimmers burdened with underwater bombs, not to mention the hot tropic climate.

Enroute to Adak in early August stops were made at Guam and Eniwetok for foul weather gear and provisions for the coming invasion of the "homeland." As the ship threaded its way out of the coral-reefed Eniwetok harbor news of the Japanese surrender arrived to make the journey to Adak an anti-climax. Arriving in Kuluk Bay on the Bering side of Adak Island the Fannie Bee joined the assembled Ninth Fleet anchored in the shadow of snow-capped peaks surmounting the treeless green tundra. From the lush, dank foliage of the tropics to the Aleutian wastes the Fannie Bee paused before the final journey as an aircraft carrier of the Pacific Fleet.

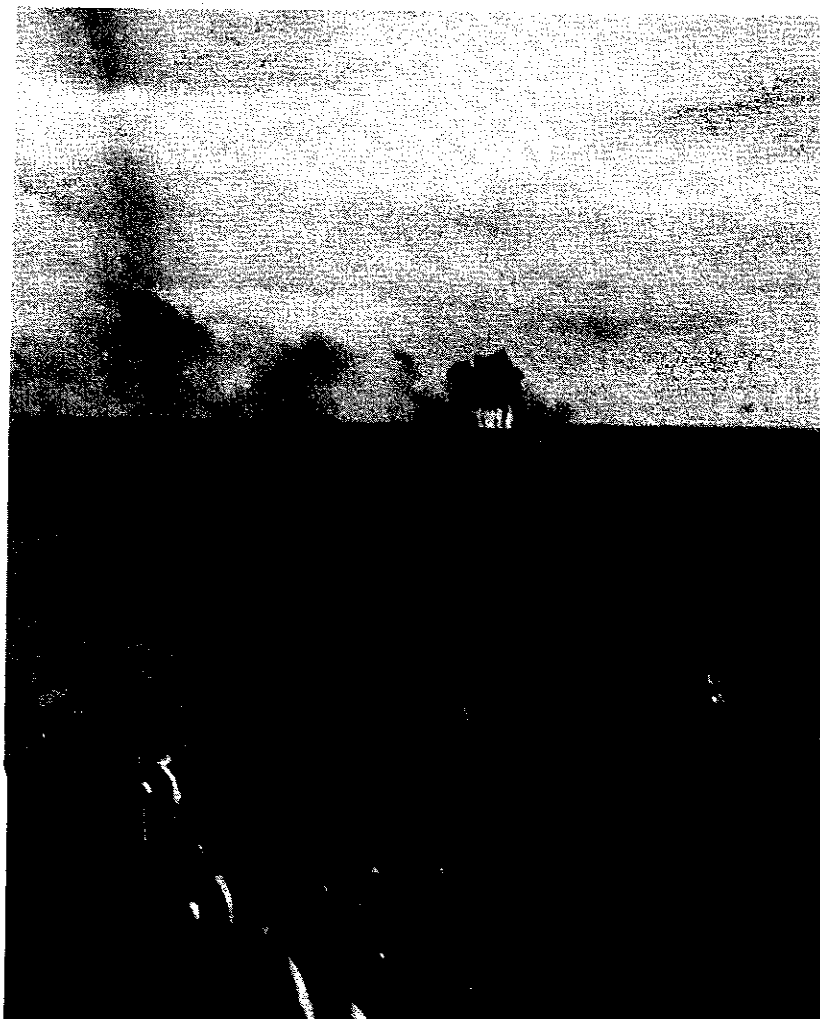
On September 7, 1945 the Fanshaw

tion along the China Coast. Steaming within radar range of Shanghai itself the assembled carriers, cruisers, battleships and destroyers fought off enemy planes and submarines in support of fast minesweeps. In this mission, destined to be the last combat assignment for the Fannie Bee, is the proof of acceptance of CVE's for regular fleet assignments.

Returning to Buckner Bay the force was attacked by submarines and Kamakaizes as the desperate Japanese attempted to ward off the assembling of the invasion fleet. All vessels escaped damage despite the fierce attacks pressed home to the very mouth of Buckner Bay.

From the Philippines the Fannie Bee prepared to add another to the long list of Pacific conquests with orders to join Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher's Ninth Fleet at Adak, Alaska. From the Aleu-

"Airdales" take off to harass enemy.

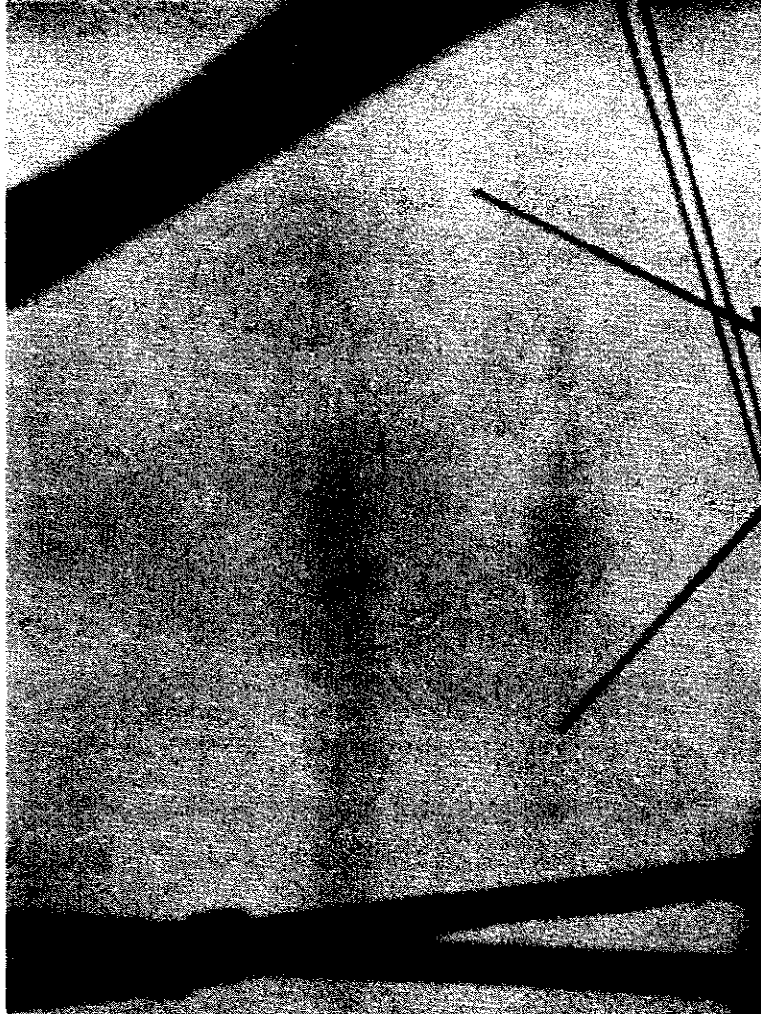


Suicide plane coming in high.

Bay led the aircraft carriers through narrow Taugaru Strait to the surrender and occupation of Japan at Ominato, on the tip of Northern Honshu. On September 9, 1946 the actual signing of the surrender took place aboard Admiral Fletcher's flagship anchored in Mutsu Kaiwan.

Following the surrender most of the crew of the Fannie Bee settled down to figuring up points for discharge but, except for the "airdales," the crew had not reckoned with a new element in the Navy's plans. As more ALNAVS came through each day a new organization sprung up in the Navy, the "Magic Carpet." All available ships, including carriers, cruisers, battleships, and destroyers were ordered into service to return American Service men to the United States in the quickest time possible.

The Fannie Bee turned to this task

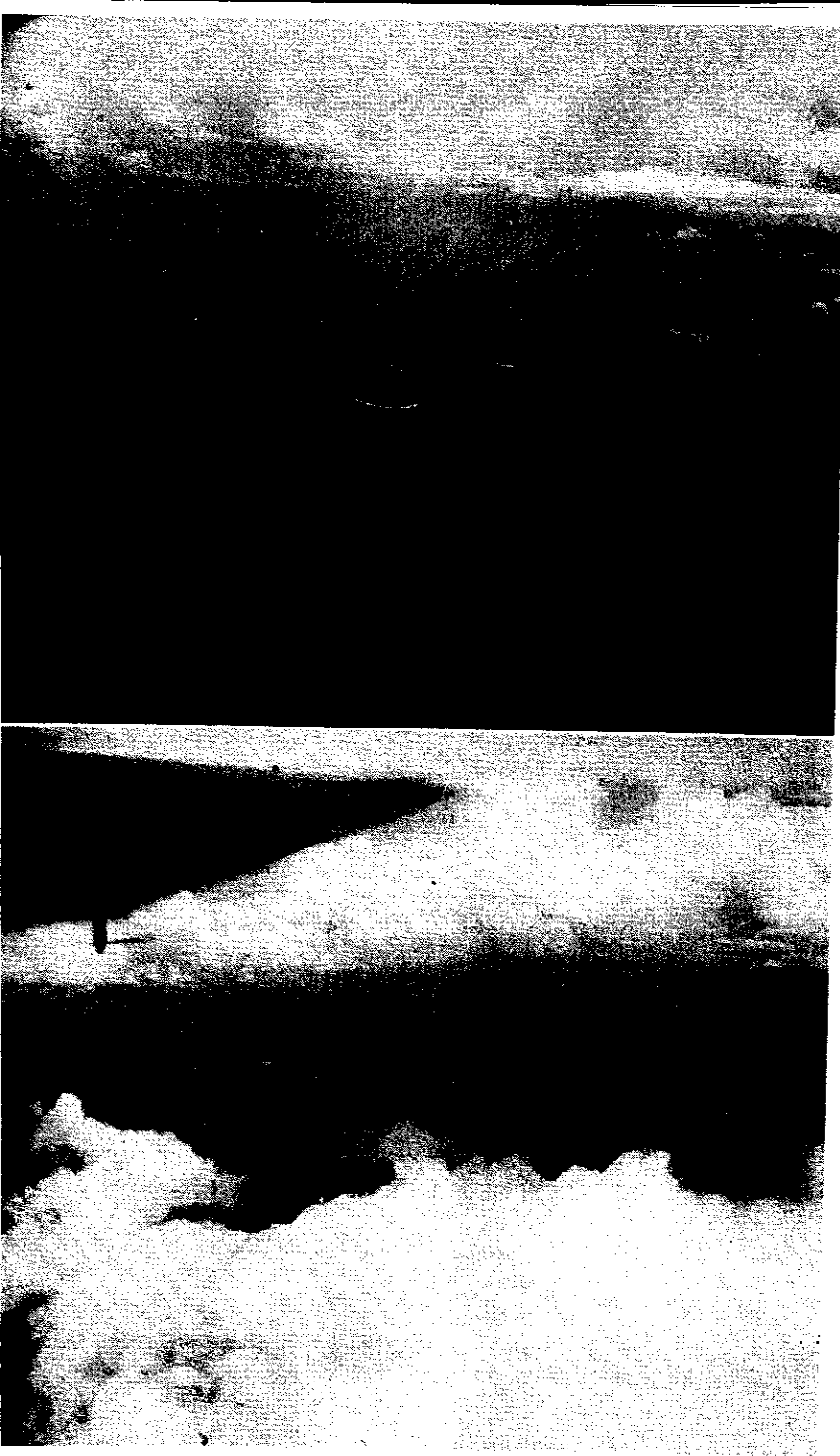


with characteristic vigor and in the following months steamed over 23,500 miles with an average of 1,400 passengers each trip. This job was accomplished in spite of the cut in its own complement by discharges and frequent mechanical failures. In the final trip from Japan to United States three of the four boilers broken down en route. On January 29, 1946, the last underway watch on the U.S.S. Fanshaw Bay ended at 1155 as the Fannie Bee moored in Tacoma, Washington, for a lengthy overhaul and inactivation.

Today the Fannie Bee rests in a new and gleaming aluminum coat designed to protect her worn and battered skin from the elements until the day when once again she may be called upon to answer the call to quarters in defense of her country.

To the men who have sailed with her

*Near miss from enemy torpedo plane—
June 18.*



Japanese fleet in Suriago Strait.

she will remain the Fannie Bee but in the records of the U. S. Navy she is the U.S.S. Fanshaw Bay CVE 7, proud possessor of a Presidential Unit Citation and a combat record second to none of her class.

Days in action	124
Aircraft destroyed, air	16
Aircraft destroyed, ground	42
Ships sunk, over 1,000 tons	5
Ships sunk, under 1,000 tons	51
Ships damaged, over 1,000 tons	23
Ships damaged, under 1,000 tons	66
Land target strikes	229
Miles steamed	over 150,000
Equator crossings	10
International Date Line	14



USS FANSHAW BAY CVE-70



SEFIC CONFIDENTIAL
 SUICIDE ZEKE JUST BEFORE MISSING
 THE FANTAIL OF A U.S. CVE BY 15 FEET
 OFF SAMAR ISLAND, P.I. C.V.E. 70 25 OCT 44

USS FANSHAW BAY
 CVE 70



The FIGHTING FANNIE BEE



**U.S.S. FANSHAW BAY
CVE 70**