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Authority: E.O. 13526

By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

ACTION REPORT



LIBERATION^{A_ND} EVACUATION^{O_F} ALLIED PRISONERS^{O_F} OF WAR ON FORMOSA

U.S.S. BLOCK ISLAND CVE 106

29 AUGUST 9 SEPTEMBER 1945 .

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By: NDC NARA Date: Dec 31, 2012

CVE-106/A16-3
Serial: 097

U.S.S. BLOCK ISLAND (CVE-106)
Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, California

A16-3

15-43

9 September 1945.

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

From: The Commanding Officer.
To : Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.
Via : (1) Commander Carrier Division TWENTY-SEVEN (CTG 77.1).
(2) Commander Seventh Fleet (CTF 70).
(3) Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Action Report - Evacuation of Prisoners of War from Formosa,
29 August through 9 September 1945.

Reference: (a) PacFlt. Confidential Ltr. 1 CL-45.

Enclosure: (A) Subject Action Report.

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (A), is submitted
herewith.

Wallace M. Beakley
WALLACE M. BEAKLEY.

Advance copies to:

- Cominch (Readiness Div.) (1)
- Cincpac (3)
- ComAirPac (1)

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U. S. S. BLOCK ISLAND

C O N F I D E N T I A L

PART I

NARRATIVE

GENERAL SUMMARY

1. Carrier Division 27, of which the U.S.S. BLOCK ISLAND (CVE-106) is flagship, on 5 September established contact with 1273 United Nations prisoners of war in Northern Formosa and by evening of 6 September had completed evacuation of all movable personnel (1152). This ship provided aerial reconnaissance, show of force, and cover for the entry of the escort vessels to Kiirun Harbor, landed the first plane on the island, and transported by air provisions and medical supplies for early relief of the prisoner-of-war camps. Of the personnel 474 were evacuated to Manila on BLOCK ISLAND.

2. This report covers the period from sortie from Leyte Gulf on 29 August 1945 until anchoring at Manila 9 September 1945.

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U.S.S. BLOCK ISLAND

PART II

COMPOSITION

A. Composition of Operating Force

Task Group 77.1

77.1.1 Carriers.

BLOCK ISLAND (CVE-106), Rear Admiral Dixwell KETCHAM (CTG 77.1)
SANTEE (CVE-29).

77.1.2 Logistics.

CHEPACHET (AO-78)
(Joined up at 010900 1 September. Departed for Okinawa 0715
3 September).

77.1.3 Escorts.

GARY (DE-326) (ComCortDiv. 57)
BRISTER (DE-327)
FINCH (DE-328)
KRETCHMER (DE-329)

Air Group Embarked on BLOCK ISLAND: MCVG-1

B. Preliminaries.

Original mission was to support mine sweepers clearing mines in Yellow Sea off West Coast Korea, under CTG 77.1 Op Plan 2-45 of 29 August 1945. Because of delay in avoiding typhoon, as well as changes in tactical situation at higher echelons, the TG's task was changed to liberate POW's from Northern Formosa, accordance Com 7th Fleet 010140 September and CTG 77.1 Op Plan 3-45 (promulgated by dispatch).

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PART III

(Chronological Account)

(See Track Chart, Annex II.)

29 August - 3 September

Sortied with Task Group from Leyte Gulf, P.I., proceeding northward toward Nansei Shoto for proposed entry into East China Sea. With approach of Typhoon from south, maneuvered 31 August 3 September to north and west to avoid typhoon and to support Minesweeping Group (TG 71.2) while typhoon conditions prevailed.

3 - 4 September

Steaming from area about 200 miles southeast of Okinawa toward Northern Formosa. At 1530 4 September one squad of Marines, under command Col. A. D. COOLEY, USMC, ComMarCASD-1, was disembarked to go aboard U.S.S. GARY (DE-326) for night. At 1800 made first radar contact with Formosa bearing 291 about 158 miles. Steamed northward approximately 50 miles offshore during night.

5 September

Operated with 77.1 about 50 miles east of Pt. Bito Kaku.
0300 - DEs GARY (326) and KRETCHMER (329) were detached to proceed in to Kiirun Harbor.

0615 - Launched 8 VF for reconnaissance of Kiirun Harbor, Matsuyana Airfield, and site of POW camps, and to provide show of force. One fighter section to make message drops in key points, with instructions from CTG to Japanese commander for providing safe entry of escorts into harbor, and insuring safety of prisoners of war. Also launched 4 VF for LCAP.

0730 - Launched 2 VF(P) and 1 VT(P) for photographic mission over objective points.

0915 - Launched 2 VT for TASP and 4 VF for TCAP over escort vessels entering Kiirun Harbor. Launched 1 VT which landed at Matsuyana Airfield, near Taihoku. Representative of CTG conferred with Japanese, visited POW camp No. 4 near city, and by radio requested immediate delivery by plane of food and medical supplies.

1215 - Launched 4 VF with food supplies stowed in droppable gas tanks to land on Matsuyana Airfield.

1350 - Launched 6 VT with food and medical supplies in bomb bay and in radio compartment, to land at Matsuyana Airfield.

1530 - Launched 4 VT and 4 VF for supply run to Matsuyana with special emergency medical needs and rations. VF took off from airfield immediately after delivery and provided TCAP for sortie of destroyer escorts from Kiirun Harbor.

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PART III

2043 - Lying to, about 25 miles off northeast coast of Formosa, commenced taking aboard liberated prisoners-of-war from GARY (DE-326), transfer being effected by motor whaleboat.

2335 - Completed taking aboard 157 United Nations liberated prisoners-of-war, being principally British survivors of siege of Singapore, with some American survivors, battles of Bataan and Corregidor.

6 September

Remained off northeast coast of Formosa during night.

0550 - ConCortDiv 57 in charge of three escort vessels was detached from formation to proceed in to Kiirun to effect evacuation of remainder of prisoners-of-war.

0700 - Launched 4 VF for supply flight and TCAP over escorts.

0953 - After recovery of TCAP aboard this ship, remaining escort vessel was detached to proceed Kiirun.

1021 - Rendezvoused with British force, TG 111.3, HMS ARGONAUT (CL-161), Rear Admiral SERVAIS R.N., BERMUDA (CL-163), and QUIBERON (DD-D20), which was en-route to Kiirun Harbor to assist in evacuation of POW. These vessels proceeded on to harbor.

1740 - Lying to, brought GARY and KRETCHMER on port quarter for transfer of liberated prisoners of war. Landing party, with Cd. A. D. COOLEY, USMC, returned aboard.

2345 - Completed transfer of personnel, having received aboard 326 liberated prisoners of war for a total of 474.

The Task Group set course to proceed to Manila.

7 - 9 September

En route to Manila. In accordance with CinCPac directive, commenced cruising at night with running lights and truck lights showing, and under modified darken ship condition. Entered Manila Harbor and anchored Borth 128 for discharge of passenger personnel at 0800 9 September.

U.S.S. BLOCK ISLAND

CONFIDENTIALPART IV (Not applicable)PART V (Not applicable)PART VISPECIAL COMMENTS AND INFORMATION

A. (Not applicable)

B. Air Operations.

1. Table of Sorties by Days. (See Annex I).
2. Tables of bombs, rockets, etc. (Not applicable).
3. Own losses and rescue operations. - None
4. Damage to enemy. (Not applicable).
5. Night operations. - None
6. Searches flown. - Routine
7. Photographic Sorties.

On morning of 5 September, as the Task Group approached Northern Fornosa, three photo planes (2 VF(P) and 1 VT(P) were launched by BLOCK ISLAND to secure photographic coverage of the harbor of Kiirun, of Matsuyama Airfield, and of the sites of POW camps, for early reconnaissance purpose. Missions completed successfully.

8. Except for routine Combat Air Patrol and Anti-Sub Patrol under modified wartime conditions, the principal air operations were in transporting provisions to the prisoners-of-war. In preparation for possible free drops and parachute drops, several thousand pounds of dry rations had been stowed in droppable gasoline tanks and in tarpaulin bundles arranged for attaching to bomb bay shackles. When arrangements were made for supply planes to land, the same stowage of provisions was used, making it possible to transport from sea to land with 10 VT and 8 VF 6,300 pounds of provisions on short notice.

If any future supply operations are contemplated which will require catapulting, it is recommended that prior arrangements be made for a container which will make full use of the Avenger bomb bay. A canvas sack with rings to fit the bomb bay should be devised, strong enough to withstand a catapult shot. Without using the bomb bay, only about 25 per cent of the plane's carrying capacity is employed. Properly designed rig for the bomb bay would utilize at least 75 per cent of the carrying capacity.

Other flight operations were routine.

In securing for anticipated typhoon conditions, tie-down procedure is recommended by ConAirPac and carriers which have gone through recent typhoons was used. The ship evaded the actual storm, encountering only moderately heavy seas; thus no thorough test was made of the security measures; however those taken were adequate for condition encountered.

C. Amphibious Action. (Not applicable)

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PART VI

D. Special Comment.

- 1. Combat Information Center. - Routine
- 2. Communications. - Routine
- 3. Use of Smoke, etc. (Not applicable)
- 4. Navigation. - Routine
- 5. Engineering. - Routine
- 6. Supply.

Called upon to provide emergency rations, which could be transported by air and delivered by free drops if necessary, the ship devised the following food list:

"K" Rations - - - - -	179 cases
Ground Coffee - - - - -	800 lbs.
Sugar - - - - -	1100 lbs.
Navy beans - - - - -	700 lbs.
Salt - - - - -	100 lbs.
Tea - - - - -	40 lbs.
Powdered Milk - - - - -	300 lbs.
Grapefruit juice, canned - - - - -	7 gals.
Tomato juice, canned - - - - -	7 gals.
Smoked bacon - - - - -	462 lbs.
Carrots, canned - - - - -	120 lbs.
Peas, canned - - - - -	120 lbs.
Butter - - - - -	60 lbs.
Boiling beef - - - - -	50 lbs.
Eggs (Added after landing of - planes was arranged)	120 doz.
Bread - - - - -	80 loaves
Cigarettes - - - - -	7500 Pkgs.
Candy - - - - -	4608 bars.
Matches - - - - -	7 Cases.

These rations were delivered successfully and met appropriately the needs of the starved prisoners-of-war during their remaining few meals on the island.

The demands of 474 liberated prisoners-of-war, almost totally devoid of personal effects or usable clothes when they were brought aboard, were met adequately from the ship's GSK and ship's stores. Each man was outfitted with underwear, socks, dungaree shirt and trouser, and shoes. Supplies of tennis shoes, Marine issue shoes, and flight deck issue shoes were drawn upon). As long as the kits on hand lasted, the Red Cross Seaman's survivor outfit were issued to provide personal effects and toilet articles. These gave out, however, and emergency kits were made up from the ship's store, with razors contributed by the ship's company. It was observed that tennis shoes in the Red Cross Kits would be more usable than the cloth slippers now provided.

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U.S.S. BLOCK ISLAND

C O N F I D E N T I A L

PART VI

As a result of this experience, the ship is requesting 1000 of the Red Cross Survivor Kits. Otherwise, maintenance of full allowance lists in clothing and small stores will meet the needs of any number of repatriates that the ship might practicably embark.

The feeding of almost 50 percent additional personnel above regular complement, for several days, provoked no great hardship, in view of the fact that replenishment could be expected at once.

7. Medical

a. Condition of Prisoners-of-War.

The senior medical officer of the ship, who was the first free Allied doctor to visit the prisoner-of-war establishments in Northern Formosa, reports that on the basis of condition of patients found in these camps, it is considered urgent that all evacuated prisoners of war have a thorough medical examination as soon as possible. One hundred percent of the evacuees in this operation are in need of medical treatment.

The principal clinical conditions found were malnutrition, often with extreme edema, beri beri, anemia, diarrhea, chronic ulcers, malaria, and intestinal parasites. If ordinary care is exercised in selection of movable patients from the non-transferables, no trouble should be anticipated en route. Practically all these repatriates improved physically during the cruise into Manila.

b. Medical supplies for POW Camps

A list of medical supplies which were flown in by BLOCK ISLAND to the POW camps just prior to their evacuation is here presented. In addition, the medical officer advises that whole blood if available should be flown into the POW camps as soon as medical staff for its utilization is at hand. To effect this, CVEs should maintain a stock of whole blood during the re-deployment period, when available and if the operation area can be reached prior to expiration date of the blood.

List of Medical Supplies flown to POW camps by Medical Department,
U.S.S. BLOCK ISLAND.

Plasma 75 Units.
Dextrose & Saline Solution - 2 cases - 6 bottles to a case.
Sodium Sulfadiazine tablets - 1000 in bottle - 8 bottles.
Sulfaquanandine - 1000 in bottle - 1 bottle.
Morphine Syrettes - 5 in box - 36 boxes.
Merthielate - 1 quart bottles - 5 bottles.
Sulfathiazole Powder - 6 bottles.
Iodine - 1 box.
Calcium Gluconate - 6 boxes.
Distilled Water - ampuls - 10 boxes.
Nicotinic Acid - 2 boxes.

U.S.S. BLOCK ISLAND

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Ascorbic Acid - 2 boxes.
Thermometers - 2
DDT Emulsion - 1 bottle.
20cc Luer Syringe -4
10 cc Luer Syringe - 2
#18 I.V. Needles - 2 boxes.
#22 I.V. Needles - 1 box.
Morphine Syrettes - 13 boxes - 5 in box.
Morphine Syrettes - 7 boxes - 6 in a box.
Sodium Sulfadiazine, Amp. - I.V - 2 boxes.
Medium Battle Dressings - 3 boxes.
Cotton - 1 roll
 $\frac{1}{2}$ Dozen rolls adhesive tape.
1 Rehfus Tube.

C. Reports.

It is suggested that ships with POWs coming into debarkation ports should be advised in advance by radio as to records that will be required upon arrival in port.

E. Unusual Features of OperationBilleting of Liberated Prisoner of War on Hangar Deck.
(See cover illustration)

Hangar deck was completely cleared of planes, resulting in immobilizing of flight deck except for catapult launching, to accommodate the 474 repatriates brought aboard from Formosa. Every one of these men were defined by the medical officer as a medical case, either hospital litter patient or hospital ambulant. Thus the deck was operated as a large hospital ward, with duty force provided by the Air Department, master-at-arms, force, and other departments as required.

With the exception of about 80 hospital litter cases, who were cared for by the medical department, the passengers attended to their personal needs, while the ship's force provided the house-keeping.

Modification of the darken ship regulations on the first night of cruising, allowing the hangar deck ports to be open, solved ventilation problems that would have been severe in the tropics under rigid wartime conditions.

A complement of folding wooden cots, brought aboard earlier for transporting passenger personnel, was nearly sufficient to bed all the ex-prisoners-of-war. Mattresses were requisitioned from the crew to make pallets on the deck for the remainder. An increased number of cots on the regular allowance list of all ships during the redeployment period is recommended.

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PART VII

PERSONNEL PERFORMANCE AND CASUALTIES

The all-out response of all hands in caring for and making comfortable so many incapacitated men were very gratifying and made a very good impression upon a group of people who were having their first contact in a long time with normal civilized life.

There were no serious personnel casualties in the ship's company during this operational period.

END OF PART VII

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

PART VIII

LESSONS LEARNED, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lessons learned in this operation, which posed novel situations for a combatant warship, are reflected in the sections of comment in PART VI.

END OF PART VII

12

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ANNEX ITABLE OF SORTIES

TOTAL NUMBER OF SORTIES: 57

DAILY TOTAL OF SORTIES

Total No. VF Sorties: 38

Total No. VT Sorties: 19

Date	Availability				AT TARGET								SHIPS				
	VF	VF(N)	VF(P)	VT	CAP	Recco	Supply	Photo	ASP	CAP	ASP	Pass	VF	VT			
30 Aug	9	8	2	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	4	0	0
5 Sept	9	7	2	11	8	8	4*	10	2	1	0	2	4	0	0	0	1
6 Sept	8	7	2	11	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8 Sep	7	8	2	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

*Note: In addition, on 5 September 4 of the 8 TARGET CAPs dropped supplies and then flew their C.P mission

Aircraft Complement:

9 VF
 8 VF(N)
 2 VF(P)
 12 VT

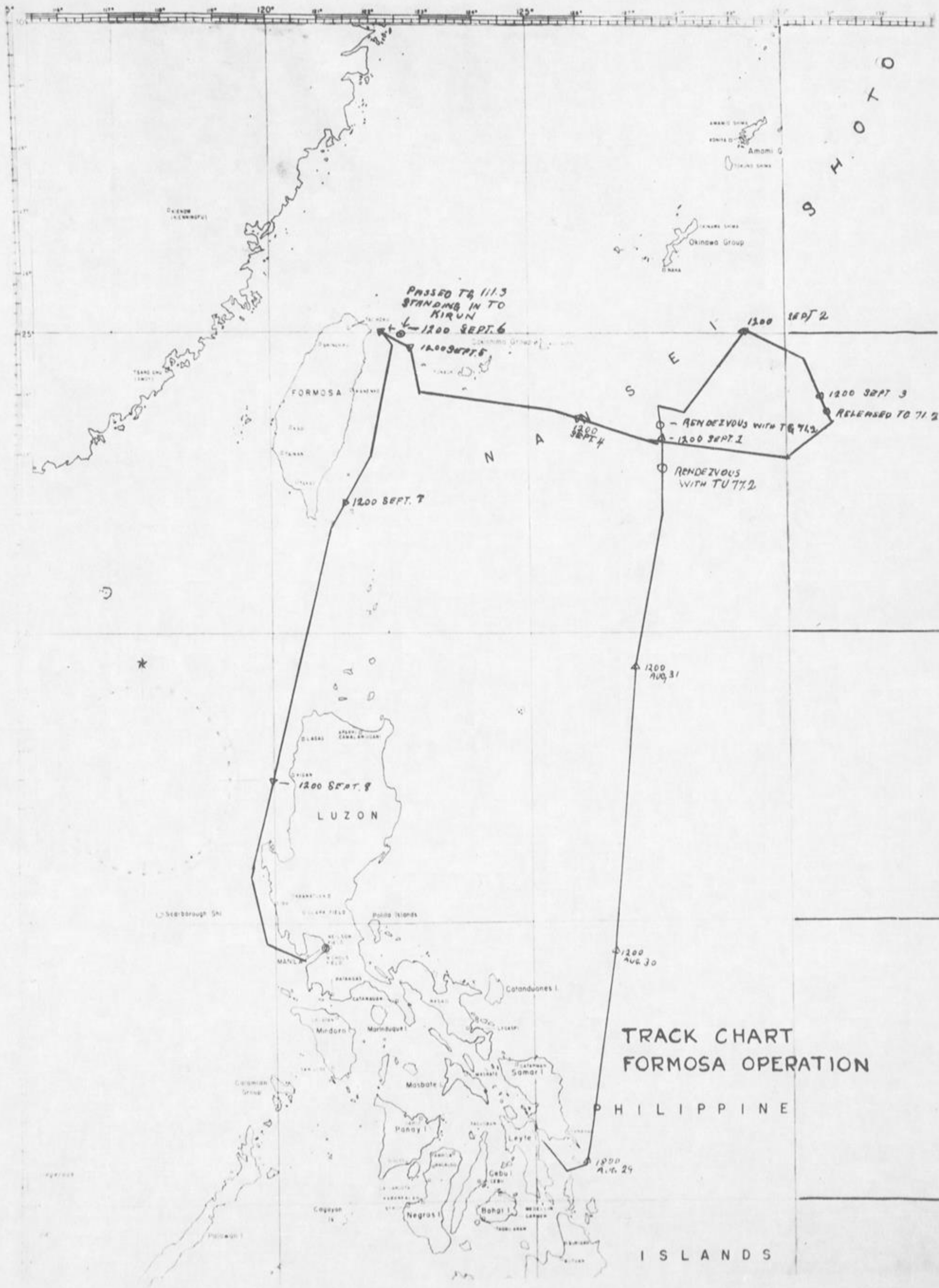
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FB2-27/A16-3
SERIAL: (046)

UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AIR FORCE, PACIFIC FLEET
CARRIER DIVISION TWENTY-SEVEN

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10 September 1945.

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on
CO, USS BLOCK ISLAND
Conf. ltr. CVE-106/A16-3
Serial 097 of 9 Sept. 1945.

From: Commander Carrier Division TWENTY-SEVEN (CTG 77.1).
To : Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Via : (1) Commander SEVENTH Fleet (CTF 70).
(2) Commander in Chief, United States Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Action Report - Evacuation of Prisoners of War from
Formosa, 29 August through 9 September 1945.

1. Forwarded.
2. The performance of duty of the U.S.S. BLOCK ISLAND was outstanding. The Commanding Officer of the U.S.S. BLOCK ISLAND has been especially commended in separate correspondence.


D. KETCHAM.

Copy to:
CO, USS BLOCK ISLAND.

11 0287

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UNITED STATES FLEET
COMMANDER SEVENTH FLEET

A16-3(F-3-2/Sw)

Serial: 0394

18 OCT 1945



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SECOND ENDORSEMENT to:
CO, USS BLOCK ISLAND
Conf. ltr., serial 097
dated 9 September 1945.

From: Commander Seventh Fleet.
To : Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.
Via : Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet.

Subject: Action Report - USS BLOCK ISLAND - Evacuation of
Prisoners of War from Formosa, 29 August through
9 September 1945.

1. Forwarded.
2. The prisoners of war were evacuated from Formosa with outstanding efficiency and promptness. This performance, under the difficult and hazardous conditions which prevailed, reflects great credit on the BLOCK ISLAND.

T. C. Kinkaid

T. C. KINKAID

3 NOV 1945

3RD Endorsement.

RECEIVED S-C FILES

From: CinCPac
To: CNO

03 (Rev 3604)
6 NOV 1945
File No. A16-3(8)/CVE106
Doc. No. 190214
Copy No. 1 of 1
2079

Forwarded.

2. If comment is considered appropriate, it will be included in CinCPac's Monthly Report of Operations in the Pacific Ocean Areas for the month concerned.

Copy to: ComCarDiv 27
USS BLOCK ISLAND

R. C. Parker

R. C. PARKER,
By direction

035374/16