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for Chief **ORIGINAL**
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USS HOOPER ISLAND (ARG17)
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From: Commanding Officer, USS HOOPER ISLAND (ARG17)
To: Commander Task Group 7.3
Subj: Report of Operational Phase of Operation Hardtack
Ref: (a) CTG 7.3 INST 03401.1A

1. Reference (a) directs a report on participation in the Operational Phase of Operation Hardtack. The required report, paragraphs numbered as in the enclosure to reference (a), follows:

- 1. Planning. Previously submitted.
- 2. Training. RadSafe schools ashore for key personnel, and shipboard classes, demonstrations, and drills for all hands.
- 3. Movement to Forward Area. No problems. Chopped to CTG 7.3 at 132040Z April.

4. Operations

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a. Navigation

- 1. Eniwetok charts adequate but outdated. In view number of ships in area, issuance of new large-scale chart by H.O. justified.
- 2. Mooring buoys inadequate and unsafe. This ship moored to assigned buoy, took four ships alongside in nest, then found by diving that two legs of buoy were disconnected and remaining third leg consisted of a 1 1/8 inch wire wrapped around a coral head. All buoys used by ships should be lifted, overhauled, and relocated inshore, where there is ample water and room to take advantage of the lee and reduce time required for rough, wet, and unsafe boating.

b. through e. Not applicable.

f. Radiological Safety

- 1. Washdown system activated only one day when actual fallout reached 7 mr/hr. About 90% effective. Minor difficulties in control of run-off and decontamination of deck drains.

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2. Performance of radiac instruments excellent. Fresh batteries installed prior arrival, and no replacements required. Proper instruments not on board to monitor fresh water. Contrary to OpOrder 1-58, appendix 1 to annex G, para 18e, radio chemical laboratory, Elmer, stated that samples would be called for when required. None were ever taken.
3. Intensive training program, utilizing both shore based schools and shipboard training. General shipboard knowledge adequate. Lectures given by CTG 7.3 were good, but only two were given after five had been scheduled for the crew.
4. Greatest lack was in information. Daily background counts and acceptable limits put out by competent authority would have been helpful, as well as anticipated yields and types of detonations, both to plan and prepare ship for fallout and to give damage control crews invaluable training. Lack of information sometimes led to confusion. Example: Target ships alongside, after UMBRELLA, were not allowed to have crews aboard. Yet civilian technicians, clad only in shorts and Japanese go-aheads, worked on them all day. The all-time record was established when decontamination crews, wearing full rubber suits, masks, hoods and boots, were observed inspecting a gun mount on top of which a man was sunbathing--stark naked.

5. Logistics

- a. Provision replenishment intervals well spaced and adequate. For this type ship, commissary personnel should be over allowance because of the crews from other vessels and transients who had to be messed. Quality and quantity of this ship's general mess could not have been maintained under these conditions without the 25% over-issue authorized. Over-issue should also apply to commuted rations for stewards.
- b. This ship mostly self-sufficient in stores and spares. Replenishment from Pearl, when required, excellent.
- c. Some modifications to ship (such as removal stowage over engine room fidley) accomplished for relief of crew from extreme heat.
- d. Previous report, on Redwing, commented on inadequacy of recreation facilities at JAPTAN. No change apparent. TV programs had fair acceptance, enhanced because of inferior quality of movie films available.
- e. Ship's store stocked 100% over normal by permission NBSO. Virtually all this stock sold to ship's company, crews of small ships, shore-based personnel, and transients. Excess Special Order (Oriental) merchandise expected for ship's store sale not of sufficient quality to merit handling.
- f. Special space allocated and arranged for hobby shop. Model, leather, paint, etc., kits stocked. About \$1,000 worth adequate.

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- g. This ship fueled and watered array and other ships, tugs, and 7.3 boats. Transferred 166,255 gals. diesel.
- h. No maintenance problems this ship.

6. Administration and Personnel

- a. No losses due stabilization. Three for emergency leave, two for hospitalization. Personnel screened through 15 July for separation. With one month's early release authorized, should have been screened through August.
- b. Personnel allowance - adequate except as noted paras 5.a. and 9.
- c. Discipline. No AOLs; therefore decrease in courts-martial and non-judicial punishments. No courts. Two mastings in three months for non-AOL cases, which is about average for this ship. No confinements except for personnel from other ships. Although this ship has no legal officer, smaller ships have been assisted as much as possible with legal problems.
- d. Mail. Slow. No schedules published for either outgoing or incoming.
- e. Berthing and messing. No civilians, except assigned technicians, berthed. Crews of target ships berthed to capacity. Some civilians could not be messed with crew because of appearance and state of cleanliness.
- f. Little information received re orders for personnel on return to CONUS. Such information would allow preparation of records for transfers prior arrival, and allow dependents to make necessary plans for moving.

7. Communications

- a. Evaluation of traffic: from 20 April through 8 June, 1,372 messages handled. Unclassified 1,324; classified 48. No difficulties in handling. More use of CW circuits would have been helpful and good for training. No CW drill circuits available.
- b. Facilities: one AN/SRC 15 installed on quarterdeck for channel 25. No space problems. Signal tower on ELMER would have been helpful. Some system for distribution of general messages, perhaps weekly mailing by NavCommSta Pearl, would have helped.
- c. Personnel. Adequate and able.

- 8. Security. Indoctrination program adequate. Badge requirements not clearly stated, and additional ones required after arrival.
- 9. Medical. Use of FRED facilities by ships off ELMER was theoretically feasible but, because of boating, actually impractical. Therefore,

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SOPA set up a medical guardship. If the situation and patient load had been anticipated, this ship would have obtained a laboratory technician and an X-ray technician before sailing. Extra dental equipment was installed, but the additional dental officer expected on TAD from the staff never reported.

10. Miscellaneous

- a. Virtually no official general information was disseminated. Any information regarding general aspects of the tests, made available for distribution to ship's crews, would result in better morale, as well as providing invaluable training obtainable in no other way. Often news reports from Stateside papers received in the area contained more information than was available in the EPG, except by rumor, which was plentiful. Briefings for both officers and crew were requested, but did not materialize. A situation where military personnel cleared for Top Secret, and graduates of SWUPAC courses, did not have access to information about yields, design, purpose, or results of tests so seldom possible to witness, for their practical military education and training, was not understood.
- b. Difficulty of scheduling work in this type operation, involving so many different projects, is apparent. Much time and energy wasted because of conflicting requirements and last minute urgent jobs. Whether project requirements could be more closely coordinated under the circumstances is not known.

11. Summary of Recommendations

- a. H.O. issue new large-scale Eniwetok chart.
- b. Lift and overhaul all ship mooring buoys. Relocate inshore to eliminate time-wasting and unsafe boating.
- c. Coordinate and disseminate official RadSafe information.
- d. Ships required to support outside personnel augment commissary rates.
- e. Apply 25% over-issue allowance to steward's committed rations.
- f. Provide adequate athletic facilities at JAPTAN. Allow ship's crews to use athletic facilities, including swimming, at ELMER. If security requires, fence off such areas. Use FRED facilities to maximum. Improve athletic facilities and emphasize athletics in every way possible. Athletics were the best single preventive against staleness for crews of ships remaining at anchor for two consecutive months. Drinking in this climate was a poor second. Obtain good quality movies.
- g. Obtain special order (Oriental) merchandise for distribution to ship's stores.

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- h. Publish mail schedule.
- i. Give more advance notice of orders to personnel on return CONUS.
- j. Obtain CW drill circuits.
- k. Use visual signal tower on ELMER. Establish system for distributing general messages.
- l. Name one large ship as medical facilities ship, and increase allowance, if required, for laboratory and X-ray technicians. Continue medical guardship.
- m. Disseminate all information possible to military personnel regarding purposes, methods, techniques, problems, and results of tests in order to take all possible advantage of the opportunity to further their MILITARY education and training.


S. G. RUBINOW, Jr.

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