

The following biographies are part of the original Natoma Bay Logbook Project created in the 1970s and 1980s by John J. Sassano, historian and Bob Wall, editor. The current document attempts to recreate, in electronic form, that original LOGBOOK of the Natoma Bay Association.

The entire Natoma Bay Online Logbook Project can be found at:
<http://natomabaycve62.org/logbook/LBindex.html>

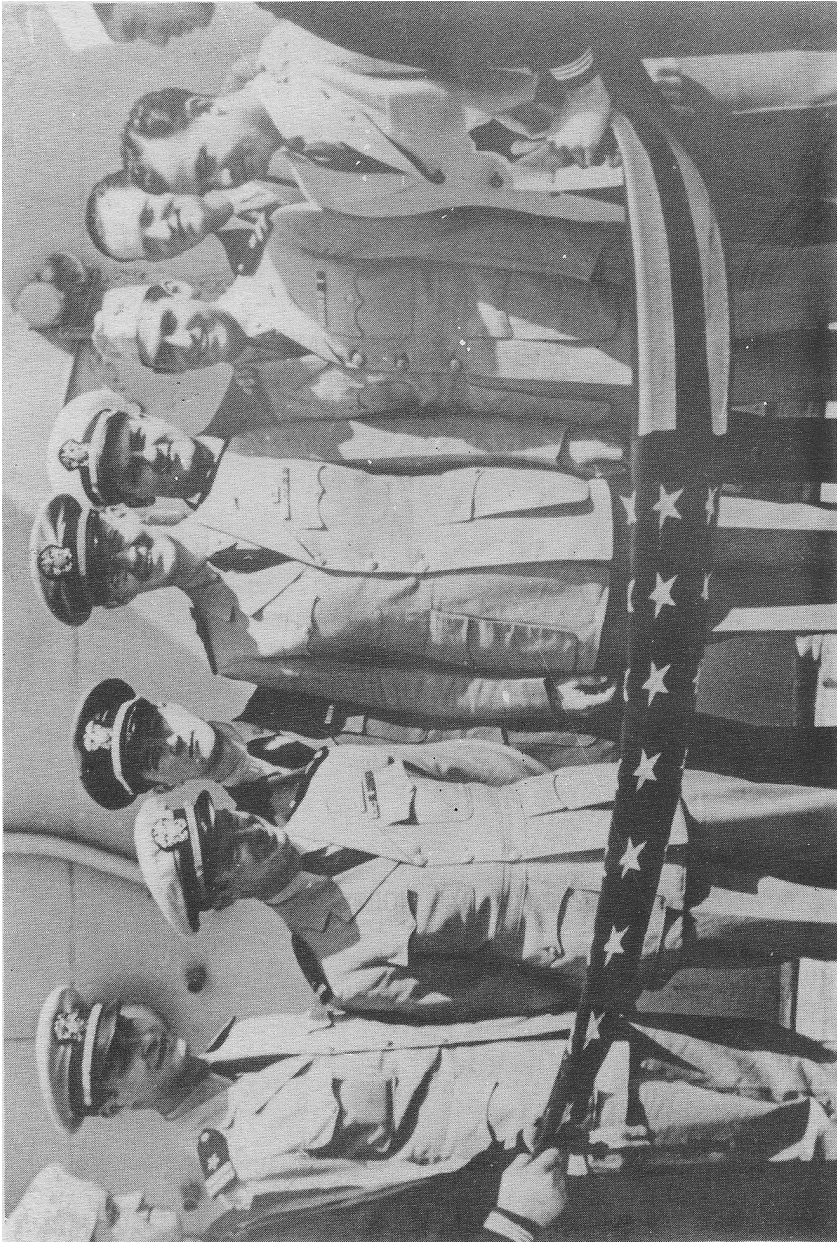
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June 2009
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U.S.S. NATOMA BAY
DECOMMISSIONING

MAY 20, 1946 NORFOLK, VA.



U.S.S. NATOMA BAY DECOMMISSIONED

May 20, 1946 Norfolk, VA.

After rolling up a record equalled by no other ship of her class, the U.S.S. Natoma Bay (CVE-62) was decommissioned this date.

The Natoma Bay commissioned on October 14, 1943, under the command of Capt. Harold L. Meadow USN, sortied on her first combat mission with her sister ship, the U.S.S. Manila Bay, on January 23, 1944. She supported the Marshall Island landings on Majuro, becoming the first CVE to enter Jap-mandated waters. She was the first escort carrier to "splash" a "Tony". She supported the bombardment of Kavieng and furnished air cover at Emirau. Other campaigns in which the little ship participated included Aitape, Hollandia, Saipan, Leyte (sinking a heavy cruiser). Mindoro, Lingayen Gulf, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. At Saskashima Gunto on June 7, she was hit by a suicide plane which crashed on the flight deck near the island, plunging into the forecastle. Less than four hours later, however her crew had so patched the flight deck the next strike of planes scheduled was able to take off. When the war ended she served as part of the "Magic Carpet."

Comdr. J.M. Elliott, USN, of Grand Rapids, Mich, commanding officer of the Natoma Bay turned her over to Captain Murphy in ceremonies held on the flight deck at 10 A.M. Eight "plank owners." men who served on the ship when she was commissioned and who have since been transferred or separated. These plank owners in the accompanying picture are:

Lieut. Comdr. Hamilton Lokey, Atlanta,GA: Lieut Minton Braddy, Atlanta, GA.: Lieut. Comdr. I.A. McCune, Medical Corps, Warren, PA.: Lieut. Harris P. Jones, now navigator of the Presidential yacht Williamburg: H.V. Burr, Ann Arbor, Mich.: Lieut. Allen Von Hoffman, St. Louis,MO.: James Owen, Baton Rouge, LA,: and Chief Machinist Perkins.

Commander Lokey, speaking for the "Plankowners" said that the ship was "great in everything but speed, comfort and publicity, but she had a great ship's company," and made an enviable record in spite of her physical shortcomings.

Commander Elliott in turning the ship over to Captain Murphy, reviewed her history briefly and thanked the crew for "their loyal and painstaking work during the preservation period," when leave and liberty were curtailed, no medals were awarded, and shipboard life difficult. "In spite of all these things you have stuck to the job as you stuck to your guns during the war," he said.

Captain Murphy told the officers and crew that the NATOMA BAY is the "sixth ship of the group to complete her de-activation" ... and the only ship so far turned over to him without "deficiencies."

Reprinted from "The Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch."
May 20, 1946.

WAR GLORY A MEMORY

NAVY CARRIERS START TOW TO JAPAN FOR SCRAPPING

A flotilla of five American aircraft carriers, laden with battle honors in World War II, began clearing East Coast ports yesterday for a final voyage to Japan. The ships are destined to become the first Navy fleet units since the war to be broken up for scrap to feed the furnaces of the Japanese steel industry. For three of the "baby flat-tops," the hammers and torches of the Japanese shipbreakers will accomplish in peacetime what the might of the Imperial Japanese Navy was unable to do in war. These are the NATOMA BAY, MANILA BAY and WHITE PLAINS, which served with distinction in Pacific engagements from the Bismarck Archipelago to Okinawa. The other two "jeep carriers" the GUADALCANAL and MISSION BAY fought Nazi U-boats in the Atlantic, where the GUADALCANAL became the first ship of her type to win a Presidential Unit Citation. All five of the ships were members of the fifty-ship Casablanca class of 10,400-ton escort carriers, built by the Kaiser shipyard at Vancouver, Wash. Early today, in Boston harbor, the tug Clyde, will put lines aboard the NATOMA BAY and MISSION BAY and start for Japan. Next Saturday the rear guard of the flotilla will be made up in Boston when the tug Oostzee takes the WHITE PLAINS in tow and join with the GUADALCANAL and the MISSION BAY. All will have their weapons removed and without commission pennants aboard their stripped dead hulks will be towed out past Ambrose lightship, there after several hours of maneuvering, the huge Dutch ocean tug Elbe had them both at the ends of a long line to begin the ninety-day voyage to Japan.

The tow units will travel separately at six or seven knots, at least until they reach the Panama Canal. There the tows will be disassembled for transit and made up again on the Pacific side for

History

the long ocean haul. Before the ships reach the canal and as the forward elements of the little fleet move through the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti, a final salute will be paid to the GUADALCANAL. For a last look around, Rear Admiral Danel V. Gallery, Commandant of the Tenth Naval District at San Jua, P.R. plans to land a helicopter on a white spot just painted on the carrier's weathered postage stamp flight deck. It was on June 4, 1944, with the then Captain Gallery in command, that GUADALCANAL captured the German Sub-U-505 off the Azores. This first capture of an enemy warship on the high seas by the Navy since 1815 brought the Presidential decoration. It appeared unlikely yesterday that any special ceremonies would mark the passing of the other ships, despite their own glory filled records. In the Battle of Leyte Gulf, for instance, the little NATOMA BAY- which like her sisters has only a 500 by 80 foot airstrip atop of what is little more than a freighter hull-dealt heavy losses to the Japanese battle fleet. Her planes sank a heavy cruiser and a destroyer, and severely damaged a battleship, two heavy cruisers and three light cruisers. A part of the NATOMA BAY'S official Navy history discloses: "she carried four Admirals through five major Pacific combat operations and participated in ten separate actions for which eight battle stars have been authorized. Her planes dropped a total of 995 tons of bombs on the enemy, sent six torpedoes effectively into the Japanese fleet at Leyte, fired 4,175 rockets into Japanese installation, shot down twenty-four enemy planes, with two more shot down by the ship's guns, and assisted in several other "kills". The ships cost seven (7) to eight (8) million each in 1943 and brought about \$140,000 each when sold at auction to scrap dealers earlier this year. However when about 200 miles off the coast of Japan, the cable broke and before it could be replaced the NATOMA BAY turned on its side and sank. [Ed. NOTE: this last sentence may not be correct. In some versions of the logbook it has been crossed out and labeled "UNTRUE".]