



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

USS TARAWA (LHA-1)

FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

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Ser C-5-79
14 MAY 1979

From: Commanding Officer, USS TARAWA (LHA-1)
To: Director of Naval History (OP-09B9)

Subj: Command History (OPNAV Report 5750-1) (U)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12B

- Annexes:
- (1) (U) USS TARAWA Officers Social Roster
 - (2) (U) USS TARAWA Officer Precedence List
 - (3) (U) USS TARAWA Routing Codes and Directory
 - (4) (U) Reenlistments by Rate during 1978
 - (5) (U) Four photographs of USS TARAWA activities and significant events.
 - (6) (U) USS TARAWA tour by California Governor Brown
 - (7) (U) USS TARAWA message 192354Z JUN 78

1. (C) The calendar year 1978 Command History for the USS TARAWA (LHA-1) is submitted in accordance with guidance contained in reference (a).

A. (C) Basic History

(1) (U) Command Organization

(a) (U) Commanding Officer:

1 Jan 78 - 31 Dec 78: George A. CHURCH,
Captain, U S Navy, [REDACTED] 1110, Lineal
#001198. DOR 1 May 71.

(b) (U) Mission and function of Command:

The Amphibious Task Force, which executes tasks in support of the Navy's force projection mission, can be composed of LCC, LPH, LPD, LSD, LKA, OR LST class ships. The USS TARAWA, the lead ship of the LHA class, combines the functional capabilities of the LPH, LPD/LSD, and LKA to deliver a balanced payload, by air and/or surface options, in an amphibious assault. Explicitly, the Chief of Naval Operations defined the LHA's mission: "To embark, deploy, and land elements of a Marine Landing Force in an assault by helicopters, landing craft, amphibian vehicles, and by combination of these methods."

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Declassify on 31 December 1985

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(c) (U) Composition of Command:

The Command is composed of the USS TARAWA (LHA-1) and organic assets which include one UH-1H HUEY HELICOPTER (BUNO 160830) and two LCM-6 and four LCPL assault boats. Ship's compliment includes 53 Commissioned Officers (including USMC Officers), three Warrant Officers and 822 enlisted.

(d) (C) The USS TARAWA was homeported in San Diego, CA, during the calendar year.

(2) (C) Summary of Operations

1 Jan - 31 Dec 78	Assigned to COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC for administrative and operation control. TARAWA also under COMTHIRDFLT operation control during the complete calendar year.
1 Jan - 23 Jul 78	Inport Long Beach at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard for overhaul. (PSA/RAV).
1 Jan - 23 Jul 78	TARAWA assigned CTU 31.4.7
3 - 5 Jan 78	Flagship for COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC
14 - 15 Apr 78	Safe-to-steam LOE (Light-off Examination) conducted on the After Engine Room (#1) and all generators.
20 Apr 78	Authorized to light off plant #1 by COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC.
24 - 25 May 78	Light-off Examination conducted on Forward Engine Room (#2) by the PACFLT PEB (Propulsion Examining Board).
26 May 78	TARAWA visited by California Governor Brown.
26 May 78	Authorized to light-off Plant #2 by COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC.
6 Jun 78	Flight Deck certified for day VFR helicopter operations.
12 - 13 June 78	FAST Trials.

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20 Jun 78 First message transmitted by TARAWA using satellite communications. This marks the first time that an LHA class ship used SATELLITE WSC-3 to transmit a Navy message. Message sent to NAVCOMMSTA Hawaii via GAPFILLER satellite.

15 Jul 78 Completed PSA/RAV at Long Beach Naval Shipyard and transited from Long Beach to San Diego, CA. A dependents cruise was authorized and conducted during this transit.

15 - 18 Jul 78 Inport NAS North Island, Coronado, CA.

17 Jul 78 TARAWA USMC NLFS (Nucleus Landing Force Staff) embarked at NAS North Island with complement of 1 Officer and 8 enlisted.

18 - 20 Jul 78 Underway for single ship operations and training in SOCAL waters.

20 - 25 Jul 78 Inport Naval Station, San Diego, CA.

24 Jul - 31 Dec 78 Assigned to Task Group 31.3

24 Jul - 31 Dec 78 TARAWA assigned CTU 31.3.3

25 - 28 Jul 78 Underway for single ship operations and training in SOCAL waters.

28 Jul - 2 Aug 78 Inport Naval Station, San Diego, CA.

2 - 4 Aug 78 Flight Deck certified for day VFR AV-8A operations.

4 - 31 Aug 78 Flagship for COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC

4 Aug - 5 Sep 78 Inport Naval Station, San Diego, CA.

16 Aug - 20 Sep 78 Flagship for COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC

18 Aug 78 TARAWA received one UH-1N, BUNO 160830, from Bell Helicopter as a replacement for CH-46D.

31 Aug 78 TARAWA transferred one CH-46D, buno 153344, to HC-3.

5 - 6 Sep Underway for single ship operations and training in SOCAL waters.

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6 - 7 Sep 78 Inport Naval Station, San Diego, CA.

7 - 8 Sep 78 Underway for transit from San Diego to San Francisco, CA.

7 Sep 78 Recovered first AV-8A onboard TARAWA in VTOL mode.

8 - 12 Sep 78 Port visit to San Francisco, CA. Over 25,000 people visited TARAWA during the San Francisco port visit.

12 - 15 Sep 78 Underway for transit from San Francisco to San Diego, CA.

12 Sep 78 Launched first AV-8A from TARAWA in VTOL mode.

15 - 18 Sep 78 Inport Naval Station, San Diego, CA.

18 - 22 Sep 78 Underway for refresher training in SOCAL waters.

22 - 27 Sep 78 Inport Naval Station, San Diego, CA.

27 - 29 Sep 78 Underway for refresher training in SOCAL waters.

29 Sep - 2 Oct 78 Inport Naval Station, San Diego, CA.

30 Sep - 7 Oct 78 Flagship for COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC

2 - 6 Oct 78 Underway for refresher training SOCAL waters.

6 - 16 Oct 78 Inport Naval Station, San Diego, CA.

9 - 16 Oct 78 Flagship for COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC

12 Oct - 11 Nov 78 Ships platoon from 1st Marine Brigade with compliment of one Officer and 84 Enlisted embarked for Amphibious Refresher Training (AMPHIBREFTRA).

16 Oct 78 Flight Deck certified for day and night helicopter operations.

16 Oct - 8 Nov 78 TARAWA conducted AMPHIBREFTRA in SOCAL waters.

16 - 20 Oct 78 Underway for AMPHIBREFTRA in SOCAL waters.

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20 - 23 Oct 78 Inport NAS North Island, Coronado, CA.

20 Oct - 8 Nov 78 Various units of the 1st Marine Division and 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing embarked for AMPHIBREFTRA.

23 Oct - 3 Nov 78 Underway for AMPHIBREFTRA in SOCAL waters.

27 Oct 78 TARAWA receives 400 pallets of LFORM (Landing Force Operational Ready Material) by VERTREP (vertical replenishment) from USS MAUNA KEA.

3 - 6 Nov 78 Inport NAS North Island, Coronado, CA.

3 - 6 Nov 78 Flagship for COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC

6 - 7 Nov 78 Flagship for COMPHIBRON SEVEN

6 - 8 Nov 78 Underway for AMPHIBREFTRA final battle problem in SOCAL waters.

7 - 14 Nov 78 Flagship for COMPHIBGRUEASTPAC

15 Nov 78 PACFLT PEB, headed by CAPT HAY, USN, onboard to conduct Operational Propulsion Examination.

18 Dec 78 Training Readiness Evaluation conducted onboard TARAWA by Pacific Fleet Training Command.

19 Dec 78 Underway for Engineering Plant testing in SOCAL waters.

19 - 31 Dec 78 Inport Naval Station, San Diego, CA.

(3) (C) Special Topics

Major accomplishments and significant events are summarized by department:

(a) (U) Executive

During 1978, a total of 248 instances of NJP, 15 summary Courts Martials and four Special Courts Martials were processed by TARAWA. During the AMPHIBREFTRA conducted from 20 October to 8 November 1978, a total of 48 vehicles of various sizes and 120 pallets of dummy supplies were embarked from the 1st Marine Division. This equipment was used to support cargo and vehicle exercises.

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(b) (U) Navigation

TARAWA traveled an estimated 8,700 NM in 1978.

(c) (C) Operations

During the PSA/RAV period at LBNSY several major electronic and equipment improvements were made in Operations Department areas:

1 (C) In the Data Processing Center, the RD-28/UYV Disk File was replaced with the first generation solid-state IBM Disk Drive AN/UHY-2. TARAWA is the first afloat unit to be equipped with the AN/UYH-2.

2 (U) Ship Alterations LHA-47 and LHA-100 were both worked on during PSA/RAV. LBNSY installed all the foundation and cabling necessary for the installation of the second ITAWDS AN/UYK-7. The computer delivery date was not established.

3 (C) TARAWA's communications capability was enhanced with the installation of the AN/WSC-3 SATCOM system. Using the satellite communications system, the ship is now capable of secure voice communications over long distances without resorting to HF equipment and associated interference.

4 (C) Small boat control was enhanced with the installation of the LN-66 radar. The installation includes True/Relative and Remote Display units.

5 (U) The ADP branch of Operations received a grade of OUTSTANDING on its supply support during the Annual Supply Inspection (ASI).

6 (C) The ships Intelligence Center received four new access doors during the RAV period in LBNSY. In February 1978, a color printing and processing capability was added to TARAWA's photo lab with the installation of a KREONITE color print processor and Chromega Super D4 color enlarger. A total of 17 RAINFORM reports were submitted by TARAWA in 1978. The first sighting of a USSR Naval AGI by TARAWA occurred on 29 September when the GAVRIL SARYCHEV past close aboard while operating in SOCAL waters. Excellent quality photography was obtained and an Intelligence Report was submitted on the SARYCHEV.

(d) (U) AIR

The Air Department received a grade of OUTSTANDING for their participation in AMPHIBREFTRA. During 1978, a total of 2209 landings were made on TARAWA.

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(e) (U) Deck

1 (U) The year 1978 has been devoted to rectifying construction errors and testing of new and existing equipment prior to the ships first deployment. After leaving the shipyard in mid July, TARAWA's Deck Department had the opportunity to test the ships armament, participate in several underway replenishments, and train extensively during an Amphibious Refresher Training period.

2 (U) Four days after leaving the yards, TARAWA completed an underway replenishment with the USS SACRAMENTO transferring 630,000 gallons of Navy Distillate aboard. On August 3, an additional 560,000 gallons of Navy Distillate were transferred aboard from the USS TALUGA. The last refueling that year was completed with the USS WITCHITA in which 610,000 gallons of Navy Distillate were transferred. Although TARAWA can also send fuel, this capacity was not demonstrated due to lack of opportunity. In a joint Conventional/Vertical Replenishment on 27 October, 518 pallets of Landing Force Operational Ready Material (LFORM) were transferred from the USS MAUNA KEA to TARAWA. LFORM is material in the way of "beans and bullets", necessary to keep a Marine Battalion Landing Team as a viable fighting force on the beach for a period of approximately thirty days. Although original planning set two days as the minimum for TARAWA's transfer of the LFORM, the actual replenishment was accomplished in a single day.

3 (U) From the weapons side, the shipyard period enabled TARAWA to reach baseline ORDALTs for her class. The 5"/54 MK 45 MOD 0 guns, with associated MK 86 MOD 4 Gunfire Control System, had only one opportunity to test fire, putting four rounds out each barrel. TARAWA participated in a Ship Qualification Trial (SQT) in which four missiles were expended by our MK 25 MOD 1 Guided Missile Landing System, with direction from the MK 115 MOD 0, Fire Control System. Grading for this missile shoot revealed one direct hit, two target triggered bursts and one miss by 17 feet.

4 (U) TARAWA was able to gain many hours of experience in handling boats in the well deck during amphibious Refresher Training. A total count of craft crossing our sill this year was 97 with all but a few occurring during this refresher training. The time spent in deck-related functions, such as anchoring details, lowering boats from davits and the well deck operations more than compensated for the non-availability of the B and A crane, and the cross training achieved during this hectic and trying period should stand the ship in good stead for the future.

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(f) (U) Engineering

Highlights in TARAWA's engineering spaces during 1978 are as follows:

1 (U) Boilers-Steaming Times

Boiler #1	Auxiliary Steaming	608.3 HRS
	Underway Steaming	525.9 HRS
Boiler #2	Auxiliary Steaming	581.6 HRS
	Underway Steaming	515.1 HRS

2 (U) Total use of DFM by TARAWA in 1978 was 2,218,360 gallons.

3 (U) Shaft revolutions for 1978 are:

Starboard Shaft	7,325,416	Revs
Port Shaft	7,294,024	Revs

4 (U) The ship ballasted and deballasted a total of 52 cycles during AMPHIBREFTRA.

The Engineering Department remains undermanned, however training programs in equipment operations and equipment repair during late 1978 is providing increased readiness and operational capability.

(g) (U) Supply

1 (U) The Supply Department on TARAWA continually provided quality services throughout 1978 despite impairments to facility capabilities caused by shipyard jobs in Supply Dept spaces, through frequent underway periods, each challenge was met with the same vigor and professional competence that earned the Tarawa Supply Dept the supply blue 'E' in 1977.

2 (U) During the post shakedown Availability/Restricted Availability at Long Beach Naval Shipyard the wardroom underwent a major modification, rearranging the galley and serving line to allow full cafeteria style service. The wardroom lounge was relocated to the port side of the mess, new vinyl-covered false overhead and a selfservice beverage bar were installed. Through close coordination with the shipyard and careful scheduling, the Food Service Division continued uninterrupted food service to the officers and crew of TARAWA.

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3 (U) The Sales and Services Division had two new Vic 22CO Dry Clean machines installed during the PSA/RAV, contracted with the Navy Exchange for Laundry Services during repairs to the ships Laundry, and had new barber chairs installed in the officer, crew, and troop Barber Shops.

4 (U) The Stores and Aviation Stores Division maintained continuous customer support throughout the PSA/RAV despite the absence of onboard computer support and shipyard work in voids and tanks located beneath numerous supply dept storerooms. Continuous access to these storerooms required by shipyard workers necessitated their being vacated and stores relocated to different storerooms. S-1 had its flammable storage area expanded in 2-9-1-A. S-6 had storerooms established for rotatable pool in 02-113-2-A, for maintenance support package cabinets in 01-121-1-A, for awaiting parts (AWP) in 1-117-2-Q.

5 (U) Subsequent to the PSA/RAV in Long Beach, the Supply Dept has taken to the task of restoring her 'Sea Legs', receiving valuable experience with major stores loadouts on Friday afternoons after a week at sea in preparation for getting underway again on the following Monday.

Data Summary

S-1

Financial Inventory Control Ledger 01 (fy78)
Opening \$1,508,974.17
Closing \$2,067,002.45

Financial Inventory Control Ledger 02 (fy78)
Opening \$1,262,183.32
Closing \$1,509,764.79

FY78 OPTAR grant (S&E) \$1,434,800.00
(\$780,000.00 NR Fund Code)
(\$654,000.00 NC Fund Code)

S-6

Financial Inventory Control Ledger 03 (fy78)
Opening \$119,644.88
Closing \$483,221.89

Financial Inventory Control Ledger 04 (fy78)
Opening \$346,042.00
Closing \$1,506,592.88

Financial Inventory Control Ledger 05 (fy78)
Opening \$.25
Closing \$134,547.62

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FY78 Aviation Fleet Maintenance
OPTAR Grant (OFC-50) \$65,000.00

FY78 AVCAL OPTAR Grant (OFC-08) \$538,000.00

FY78 Flight Ops OPTAR Grant (OFC-01) \$22,200.00

S-3

Combined Retail Outlet and Vending Machine Sales
Acct. Period Ending 31 Jan 78 \$72,221.67
Acct. Period Ending 31 May 78 \$97,982.64
Acct. Period Ending 30 Sep 78 \$73,645.96

Contributions to Welfare and Recreation Fund
Acct. Period Ending 31 Jan 78 \$8,887.97
Acct. Period Ending 31 May 78 \$9,416.47
Acct. Period Ending 30 Sep 78 \$9,956.66

S-4

Disbursed in Payroll and Public Vouchers
approximately \$3,000,000.00 (calendar year)
Pay Accounts maintained approximately 900

S-2

Meals Served
First Quarter Calendar Year 78 38,129
Second Quarter Calendar Year 78 37,454
Third Quarter Calendar Year 78 26,694
Fourth Quarter Calendar Year 78 42,082

1 (U) During 1978, the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department was involved in various maintenance projects, planned and designed new AIMD spaces onboard TARAWA, worked on machinery and equipment far from the normal duty spectrum, trained and organized for the upcoming deployment, installed and checked out new equipment, transferred the ships CH-46D helicopter and accepted a new UH-1N helicopter and supported 483.9 accident free flight hours and flew 620 sorties.

2 (U) In January the ship was at Long Beach Naval Shipyard and LHA SHIPALT 27 was in process of being installed. During this period all of the AIMD personnel with the exception of the flight crew and a detachment of GSE personnel were transferred to the Ships Maintenance Force Department. This department composed of Group IX personnel and the "A" Division of the Engineering Department were tasked with the major overhaul and corrosion control of the Ships Service NR 1 and 2 emergency diesel generators, three low pressure air compressors, two medium pressure air compressors, four LCPL and two LCM-6 boat engines and eleven assault system

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monorail cars. The Ships Maintenance Force was also responsible for the sewage plant, stern and deck edge elevators, stern gate and associated hydraulic/pneumatic systems.

3 (U) June brought changes to the Ships Maintenance Force Department. Maintenance in many areas neared completion and a phased withdrawal of Group IX personnel began. These personnel transferred to a new AIMD Division which formed the nucleus for the planning and organization which was to follow in the months ahead.

4 (U) In July of 1978, as the ship prepared to transit to San Diego, LHA SHIPALT 27 became a reality. Five new spaces became usable on the 02 level and the AIMD looked forward to having a Calibration Laboratory and Quality Assurance Division on the 02 level and Non-destructive Inspection and Naval Oil Analysis Laboratory equipment installed in redesigned spaces on the main deck.

5 (U) The ship received a new UH-1N helicopter on 18 August and at the end of August, the ships older CH-46D helicopter which had accumulated 204.8 flight hours during 113 flights in the year was transferred to HC-3 at NAS North Island.

6 (U) September was extremely busy for the AIMD as training, planning and organizing tempos increased for the upcoming deployment. The Quality Assurance Division was formed and progress within the department began to take shape.

7 (U) LBNSY personnel visited TARAWA during October and completed the wiring installation for the Calibration Laboratory. The Avionics Division was making rapid progress towards becoming operational as was the General Maintenance Division. Ground Support Equipment Division continued to progress and reached 95% operational capability this month.

8 (U) During November, the TARAWAs first individual material readiness list review was conducted onboard in preparation for the ships first deployment. The first LHA/FMF unit deployment Aviation Maintenance/Material Readiness Review was conducted at COMNAVAIRPAC.

9 (U) In December, each of the AIMD divisions were audited by the Quality Assurance Division. The audits proved to be extremely beneficial as all concerned began a new concentrated push to be as near operational ready as possible by the New Year. Individual component repair listing cards were received from ASO via CNAP and the department is in process

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of updating this original listing with our present capability. Naval Air Logistics Command DET West conducted a preliminary inspection on the Calibration Laboratory with very favorable results. As a result of the laboratories readiness posture, calibration standards have begun to be issued to this new facility. At the close of 1978, the UH-1N aircraft had flown 147 flights and 279.1 flight hours and the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department was rapidly developing into an organized activity capable of carrying out its assigned mission.

(1) (U) Dental/Medical

The year of 1978 was one of renovation in the Dental Department and one of training in the Medical Department. The year was divided between Long Beach Naval Shipyard, where necessary repair and replacement of equipment occurred and the Naval Station in San Diego, where routine patient care was administered and emergency treatment was simulated during Amphibious Refresher Training. The following is a discussion of the primary missions of both Departments, their capabilities, and events that transpired during 1978:

Dental Department

1 (U) The primary mission of the Dental Department aboard the USS TARAWA is to maintain the dental health of the ships company and embarked marines and to provide emergency treatment to those casualties suffering dental trauma. The total number of departmental personnel is four: one Dental Officer and three Dental Technicians. This is augmented by the addition of one Dental Officer and one Dental Technician when the marines are aboard.

2 (U) In January, the layout and equipment of the department was of the original design as specified for the LHA class ships. This included three dental operatories each with Weber P-64 dental units and Ritter H-1 chairs. Also present were an X-Ray room, a dark room with manual developing tanks, a preventive dentistry room, a laboratory facility, a record office, a patient waiting room, and a storage room.

3 (U) Much of the equipment and spaces were determined to be hazardous and unreliable. Therefore, while in an availability period in Long Beach Naval Shipyard, the Dental Department underwent several modifications during the months of February through mid-June. The improvements included: the creation of a limited prosthetic lab (located in the space previously utilized as a lavatory); the installation of three new dental units (Adec Minitrol 4000) and chairs (Dental-eze); the resurfacing of the deck with a seamless polyurethane material

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(PRC) to eliminate mercury contamination; the addition of an automatic X-ray developer; and the modification of part of the dark room into a supplemental storage room. For the remainder of the year, with the exception of three weeks of Amphibious Refresher Training in October and November, a normal dental routine was carried out. AMPHIBREFTRA required dental personnel to man their 1A stations much of the time. After the renovation there was an increase in the number of patients treated in the second half of the year; the period during which the equipment was replaced had significantly curtailed dental treatment. The total number of patients seen through the year was 2551.

4 (U) The new facilities in the Dental Department have proved to be reliable and functional, and they provide modern dental care to the crew.

Medical Department

5 (U) The mission of the Medical Department is to provide medical care for the ships personnel and for embarked marines. It is a major medical facility and also a primary casualty receiving unit. There are four operation rooms, a triage treatment area, a complete pharmacy, and private treatment rooms. The department has a sixty-nine bed capacity, seventeen of which are in the intensive care unit.

6 (U) The normal complement of personnel includes one Medical Officer and twelve Corpsmen. When the marines are aboard, one more Medical Officer and possibly a Flight Surgeon, along with several Corpmen, are added.

7 (U) The only major change in the physical plan of the department was in the operating rooms, in which the decks were replaced with seamless PRC deck to improve sterility.

8 (U) Throughout much of the year, stress was placed on training and sharpening skills. During the AMPHIBREFTRA, the Medical Department took part in exercises simulating mass casualty transport and handling. It was accomplished efficiently and competently, with the department receiving a final grade of excellent/outstanding.

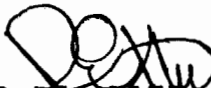
9 (U) On 5 December, a SURFPAC Medical Readiness Evaluation was conducted to determine the preparedness of the equipment and supplies. On a scale of C-1 to C-4 (C-4 being the lowest), a final grade of C-2 was awarded.

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10 (U) The in/out-patient care load for the department in 1978 was 4282 patients. These included a wide variety of ailments and fractures, many of which were treated aboard the ship, and a few others referred to the Naval Hospital. A surgical case involving the reduction of an amputated finger was performed while at sea.


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