

Drew, was promoted to rank of Captain, and departed ship breeches-bouy.

Comdr. E.E. Colestock, Air Officer, became the New Exec. and Comdr., C.D.

JUNE 21  
OF 1944

Hoover became the B's new Air Officer. Other personnel shifts were being made, and almost every time we refueled from tankers, a few officers and men departed ship.

As the Army and Marines continued blasting Okinawa, took the town of Naha, and shoved the Japs ever nearer to the southern cliffs, we began to look forward to another rest in some anchorage. But we had one more experience ahead of us - a session with a typhoon. For twenty four hours we had been cruising to avoid the storm, but at daybreak on 5 June it overtook us, the center of the disturbance passing in our immediate vicinity between 0200 and 0730. Winds at times reached 90 knots. Waves estimated at 40 to 50 feet from trough to crest battered our hull. Visibility was less than half a mile. Our forecastle deck was flooded and the passageways and living spaces a shamble. In the very height of the storm a cruiser, the Pittsburgh, on our beam, lost steerageway and wallowed helplessly for a time. The battering of the gigantic and powerful seas buckled a 25 foot section of our flight deck, put both catapults of ours out of commission, and caused numerous other damage. Not a casualty was sustained, however. Turns into the wind of about ten degrees had to be accomplished by using one engine back full, the other ahead full. From noon on the storm subsided, and it was possible to resume air operations on the following day. Great credit was due the fine work of our Damage Control Officer and the men of his outfit. Out of the storm, it was learned that the USS Hornet, our near neighbor, suffered almost identical storm damage to her flight deck.

We anchored in San Pedro Bay, Leyte Gulf, P.I., on June 11. We wore at anchor for 20 days off Tacloban, and the strip of beach where the first Phillippine landings had been made the previous October. Work commenced immediately on the collapsed flight deck and the other storm damage, and the job was masterfully done;