

Bangor Sailor Describes "Nevada's" Part In Invasion

1944

Word of what happened aboard the battleship U. S. S. Nevada was recounted this week in a letter to Mrs. Clarence G. Roberts of Market Street, Bangor from her son, Ph. m. 1-c Clarence G. Roberts Jr., who is the only Bangorian serving aboard that vessel.

In fact two letters were received, one written in June 23 in which Ph.M. Roberts indicated that "Hollywood could not reproduce in full the things that ship underwent on Invasion Day."

He stated: "When we were several hours before 'h-hour', the sky was lighted by planes dropping star shells and many tense minutes were passed. Our minds were torn from the dangers that lay on either side of the narrow mine swept roads as we waited to learn who had lighted the skies—friend or foe. Then came the drone of hundreds of bombers and eight miles of exploding bombs on the Normandy peninsula made our ship vibrate. Our Air Force was at work in spite of the ack-ack tracers that made beautiful patterns against the sky. Soon after dawn a Messerschmidt could be seen coming out of a white cloud bank to meet the tracer fire of a P-47. As the American plane passed a British

Spitfire drove its fiery tongue at the crippled German plane and sent it down in flames. We could see mines bursting and geysers around the ships told us the shore batteries of the enemy were firing on the invasion fleet. A message from a fire control agent to the Nevada stated, "Your fire is removing the turrets from their tanks and the enemy has not been seen since your last salvo".

As we moved in for the close action, the shore batteries continued to pour shells over us. Yet we fired salvo after salvo into the enemy."

The Nevada had been handing it out with a vengeance and yet we had been taking it also. Hour after hour passed but our 32,000 tons were being shaken as if we were a tin boat in the bath tub. We had been at our battle stations for the past 74 hours and we are anything but clean. I slept for an hour or two during all this most of that in 15 minute intervals, yet we might be called again at any time. They say aboard here that we have come back from Pearl Harbor, and I guess we have."

"Well I haven't much more to say other than we all feel that we are doing the job we were sent out and expected to do."

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