



COMBAT CAMERAMEN capture shell bursts on film. Right: Photographers on 'firing ship' get set to film action.

They Check the Accuracy of Your Gunnery

THE LONG LINE of destroyers followed the lead of the cruiser, each opening fire in turn. Near the target five men worked feverishly as splashes marked near misses. Those five men were members of a small group who call themselves the most shot at men in today's Navy. They were members of a Fleet Camera Party.

Week in and week out, photographers from both the Atlantic and Pacific Fleet Camera Parties lug their cameras from ship to ship, setting them up on the fantail of whichever ship is towing a target, and photograph the shell bursts of the rest of the Fleet.

The pictures they take are printed and studied. Then a report is made to the command doing the firing. As a result, a graphic record of the ship's gunnery skill, which leaves no room for doubt, is available. The entire procedure is technically known as "phototriangulation" and gives the most accurate recording of a ship's effectiveness during gunnery exercises.

Backbone of the camera parties are the enlisted photographers who lead a sea-gypsy life, jumping from ship to ship. Working in teams of nine, they answer every call for coverage of gunnery exercises. The nine-man team departs the home port with thousands of pounds of special equipment and scatters through the different ships of the Fleet.

During the exercises the team divides into three groups—two on the firing ship, two on the reference ship and five on the tow ship. This

gives three points of view of each shot and provides the triangle needed to give accurate proof of range and detail used in "phototriangulation."

When the firing ship shoots its first salvo at a target, the photographers on all three ships simultaneously record the shell's burst with their special cameras. Each succeeding salvo gets the same treatment.

When that ship has finished firing, the photographers may then jump to another ship via high-line or helicopter, and they are on the go again.

But that isn't the end of the story. The photographs they have taken are rushed back to the home photo lab, where they are immediately logged and processed. The prints are then turned over to a group of plotting officers, who determine the effectiveness of the ship's firepower from them. Their highly classified

reports are sent to interested commands for evaluation and comment.

In addition to the surface firing the camera parties also provide the same service for antiaircraft target practice. These pictures and reports have helped the big guns of the fleet win important battles.

Headquarters for the two camera parties are located at Norfolk, Va., and San Diego, Calif. The Atlantic group is further divided into detachments at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; and Newport, R. I. The Pacific group has detachments at Pearl Harbor, T. H., and Yokosuka, Japan.

Combined officer and enlisted strength runs about 200 and it would be a rare day when all were ashore at the same time. Normally the majority of the photographers are traveling around the two Fleets, their cameras and sea bags on their backs, ready, willing and able to provide fast and expert work.

Photographing shell bursts isn't their only job, although it is their most important. In their spare time the photographers take I.D. photos for the smaller ships, photograph public relations and news events and run photostat machines.

News pictures taken by the cameramen of the two camera parties have appeared in many publications, both large and small. Their newsreel coverage has been picked up by most of the television stations and newsreel companies.

Regardless of what comes up in the way of photography they can handle it, and their job is very important to the men manning the guns on the Fleet's battlegroups.



WAITING for firing to begin, Navy cameraman stands by his equipment aboard vessel towing the target.