


Serial 02070
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OCT 1 1944

From: Commander Service Force, Pacific Fleet,
(Fleet Maintenance Office).

To: The Chief of the Bureau of Ships.  VIA AIR MAIL

Subject: Ship Camouflage.

References: (a) Pacific Fleet Conf. Ltr. No. 26CL-43.
(b) ComServPac (FMO) ltr. FM/C-519/(70-8) Serial 02164
of 2 August 1944.

1. Developments in the Pacific in the past year have somewhat changed the requirements of ship camouflage. Recent observations have shown also that certain patterns within the measures directed by reference (a) are less effective and suitable than others.

2. No radical change in Pacific Fleet camouflage policy stated in reference (a) is contemplated until more recommendations have been received from Forces Afloat in response to reference (b). However, the desirability of modifying the existing camouflage on certain ships, without changing the present directive is clearly indicated.

3. Based on the above, the following recommendations are made:

(a) It is recommended that the use, on vertical surfaces, of White (5-U) and Pale Gray (5-P) be discontinued. In the case of ships on which these colors have already been applied, new patterns should be forwarded for application at the first opportunity. The CANBARRA (CA70) and other cruisers painted in measure 33 are examples of vessels requiring new patterns for early application. Until the policy regarding patterns has been determined, new specifications for battleships, cruisers, and carriers should be restricted to moderate contrast, using combinations of Haze Gray, Ocean Gray, and Navy Blue only. To simplify maintenance each individual component of the pattern should cover as great an area as is consistent with course and type deception. It is believed that this will have the further advantage of making these patterns effective for type and course deception at greater ranges than at present. New specifications for Destroyers and Destroyer Escorts should be restricted to moderate contrast, using combinations of Light Gray, Haze Gray, and Ocean Gray only.

(b) It is recommended that battleships which are scheduled in one color be painted Ocean Gray (5-O) instead of Navy Blue (5-N).

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(c) It is recommended that patterns, such as that on the IONA (EB61), which have been observed to be ineffective for course and type deception, be replaced by patterns of proven effectiveness at the first opportunity.


 H. T. SMITH,
 By direction.

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The recommendations to reduce the color contrast of patterns will satisfy some of the criticism which has been encountered but in specifying the color range, the restrictions on colors to be employed are drastic and it will not be easy to give some classes of vessels what they have asked for.

For example, Vice Admiral Lee has asked for type deception at 30,000 yds. This will be difficult if we can use no paint lighter than Haze Gray and none darker than Navy Blue. The colors are those of the old Measure 12 and we know from past observation of it that the vessels will tend at distant ranges to be dark silhouettes of rather high visibility when viewed from low angle against either sky or water.

These colors will be satisfactory to reduce the visibility of cruisers which are engaged in amphibious operations and which wish to be inconspicuous to submarines which may observe them against a shore background. Some cruisers have asked for just such camouflage. It should be pointed out that visibility to shore batteries will probably be rather high and only moderate deception possible - that at the closer ranges.

The very light colors prescribed for Destroyers are quite definitely not what they asked for. These paints take DD patterns out of the maximum deception category and put them in Measure 33 which is partially a reduced visibility measure. Yet Capt. Smoot (RepComDesPac) said "Concealment went out with the advent of radar"-- and Comdr. Chillingworth (ComDesRon 50) said "All we ask of camouflage is deception."

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