

J. S. NAVAL ADMINISTRATION UNIT
SAIPAN DISTRICT
SAIPAN, MARIANAS ISLANDS

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From: Naval Administrator, U. S. Naval Administration Unit,
Saipan District, Saipan, Marianas Islands
To: Commander Naval Forces Marianas
Subj: Damage resulting from Typhoon LORNA; report of

Ref: (a) FLE-TACEN Disp 130622Z Sep
(b) MCB NINE DET ABLE ltr MCB9DET"1"/01/1bk A25 ser 193
of 18 Sep 1954
(c) NAVAD SAIPAN Disp 140115Z Sep
(d) NAVAD SAIPAN Disp 150157Z Sep
(e) NAVAD SAIPAN Disp 160003Z Sep
(f) NAVAD SAIPAN Disp 060720Z Oct
(g) CNO Disp 072100Z Oct

Encl: (1) Photographs of Storm Damage

1. This letter consists of a general report of the chronology of the effects and damage caused to U. S. Naval Administration Unit facilities during the recent typhoon LORNA. Report of damage caused to facilities presently being rehabilitated by MCB NINE DET ABLE is contained in reference (b). Report of damage caused to U. S. Naval Technical Training Unit facilities is not within the purview of this report. Photographs showing damage during various phases of the storm are forwarded as enclosure (1).

2. As a result of reference (a), orders were issued at approximately 1800, 13 September 1954 to commence securing berthing, messing and family quarters against possible wind and rain damage. It should be noted that all these structures have considerable open areas on the seaward side, since the normal direction of the prevailing winds and attendant rain are from the land. During typhoons, however, the wind and rain are usually directly off the ocean, almost 180 degrees from their normal direction. All military personnel, supplemented by indigenous civilian employees and contract laborers as available, completed the majority of the work required to secure these structures about 2300 on the night of the 13th. Plywood, masonite and corrugated steel sheeting were used to board up the greatest exposed areas, it being fully realized that additional work would be required after daylight. It was subsequently found necessary to keep crews continually checking all areas for the purpose of securing exposures of those houses which began to receive large amounts of water as the wind shifted.

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3. On Tuesday, 14 September, the damage reported in reference (c) occurred. A temporary pipe and board bulkhead, (repaired after being damaged during the typhoon of December 1953) had for at least a week prior to 13 September been undermined and weakened by wave action and high water, even though there was little wind. An attempt to strengthen the bulkhead with old anti-submarine net, hardened cement and coral fill had not progressed to the point where the wave action of typhoon LORNA was appreciably lessened. During the morning of the 14th, evacuation of the barracks and MEMQs was ordered when it was seen that the high water was commencing to wash out the sand under the floor slabs. Wave action had by this time battered the "sea wall" bulkhead to the point where it was useless. During the remainder of the day relentless wave action undermined the concrete floor slab foundations and caused collapse of the structures at the seaward end of the Quonsets. All military personnel were evacuated to the hospital area with the exception of some key personnel who stood by in their respective duty stations such as the Power Plant and shops. Dependent families were evacuated and lodged in vacant family quarters. This, however, necessitated cancellation of travel authorizations which had previously been issued to four dependent families until such time as other quarters could be made available for these families. Refrigerated stores were moved to other refrigerators having spare capacity in the Hospital and Navy Hill areas. Navy Exchange-Commissary stores were moved from the collapsing structures during the day. Certain of the heavier pieces of equipment were of necessity left in some of the structures however, since it was not possible to operate weight-lifting equipment at this stage of the typhoon. As structures collapsed, it became necessary to cut some of the secondary wiring and eventually to completely disconnect the primary. Considerable power problems were caused in the general area of the barracks, since other undamaged sectors also were supplied from a bank of transformers feeding that area. Eventually, the secondary to the barracks was cut and power restored to unaffected areas. The same general procedure and arrangement of water lines was also applied.

4. With regard to the remainder of the facilities, a great number of the below standard secondary electrical installations in the village were blown down. Considerable numbers of limbs, some fairly large, were blown down in the Hospital-Administration area, and some trees in the same area were uprooted. No injuries to personnel resulted, nor were any of the structures in this area seriously damaged. During this same day the fender system at "CHARLIE" Dock was destroyed and the M/V VIGILANTIBUS broke its moorings and went aground north of the dock. Eventually, however, it managed to work its way free and moor in the harbor. The M/V MISS GARAPAN rode out the storm at the dock, although it took a considerable pounding. The M/V FOUR WINDS departed Saipan at approximately 1800 on the night of the 13th for Guam, although it was later learned that it never reached there but rode out the storm at sea.

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5. References (d) and (e) reported conditions on the 15th and 16th of September. By this time the wind and seas had begun to abate and the work of clean-up and complete restoration of services started. Temporary secondary electrical wiring was run to serve the Navy Exchange-Commissary Store, and three walk-in type refrigerators (located in the former reefer farm) were reactivated to serve the store, which is remaining in its present location until completion of a new store on Navy Hill. Messing and berthing of military personnel was set up in the hospital area until 1 October and then shifted to Navy Hill in its permanent location. The mess was merged with the MCB NINE DET ABLE mess.

6. Clearance of debris and removal of unsupported fender piles at "CHARLIE" Dock was started immediately in order to prevent possible damage to small vessels using that dock. Pilings at berth Five, normally used by the M/V FOUR WINDS, were not removed. Old telephone poles have been installed as temporary camels to keep vessels away from the face of the dock. The beach road was cleared of sand and debris by MCB NINE DET ABLE. Inspection of underwater face of the wharf and estimate of repair costs are being arranged with Area Public Works Office, Marianas.

7. The drainage ditch adjacent to the power plant held fast despite the deluge of water which ran off the hill side during the typhoon and no damage was incurred inside the plant, although a portion of sheet tin over the old generator pits was blown off. Repairs to the roof are contemplated.

8. Reference (f) requested an increase in the M&O allotment in the amount of \$9,300.00 to compensate for lost material and unanticipated overtime as a result of the typhoon. This increase was granted by reference (g). The major portion of the lost material consisted of plywood, masonite and other lumber products.

9. The mess hall and those barracks along the beach front have now been torn down and all useable material salvaged. However, this material has not yet been stored because of the necessity for furnishing labor assistance to MCB NINE DET ABLE for clean-up work in the Navy Hill area pending the move of additional facilities to that area. Completion of salvage in the former barracks area will be prosecuted as availability of manpower permits. The plant account value of the facilities destroyed totals \$50,200.00 and consists of the following structures: 8 family quarters, 5 barracks, galley, messhall, boiler house, reefer farm, galley storage, Navy Exchange storage, MAA office and storage.

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Rehabilitation of these structures is not required, since all facilities were initially scheduled for relocation to Navy Hill. At the present time only the Chief Petty Officers' quarters and the Navy Exchange-Commissary store remain in this area, since the new facilities to which they will be relocated on Navy Hill are not completed. Stores requiring refrigeration, except as noted above, are being placed in the new reefer farm at Navy Hill.

R. D. LAW, JR.

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