

HISTORY OF  
THE  
U. S. S. ABBOT  
DD 629

## PREFACE

This story is a short history of the U.S.S. ABBOT (DD629) from her launching until her return to the Navy Yard for overhaul at the end of the war just prior to placing the ship in an inactive status. It covers the duties of the ship and life on board as seen through the eyes of certain members of her crew who served her well throughout the most active period of her history. Those of you who enjoy this book have E. S. Jenkins, CPhM; C. L. Woosley, SM1c; R. J. Gastineau, QM1c; V. J. Loranger, Y1c; R. L. Curran, Y1c; J. T. Crowe, SK1c, and D. A. Scott, RdM2c, to thank as it was their idea and their combined efforts that brought this book into being. Also to Lieutenant S. E. Magill, USNR; Lt. (jg) P. Ingalls, USNR, and Lt. (jg) F. W. Stevenson, USNR, who edited the various chapters and supplied from the ship's records some of the specific names contained in the text, must go some credit. For myself, I can claim credit only for censorship and the paper work necessary to get it printed.

F. W. INGLING,  
Commander, U. S. Navy,  
Commanding.

U.S.S. ABBOT (DD629),  
Puget Sound Navy Yard,  
Bremerton, Washington.  
18 October 1945.

## CHAPTER ONE

### LAUNCHING, COMMISSIONING AND SHAKEDOWN

Snow was drifting down and the cold Maine wind was chilling the hundreds of shivering spectators and yard workmen that lined the Bath Iron Works' ways or stood on the Kennebec River bridge to watch the launching of another destroyer for the mushrooming U. S. Fleet. A band played martial airs, speeches were shouted from a flag-bedecked platform and then Grace Abbot Fletcher stepped forward and slammed a ribbon-clad bottle against the knife-like bow of the ship that was named for her great grandfather, Commodore Joel Abbot, U. S. Navy. It was then that the sleek hull slipped onto the Kennebec River. The ABBOT had come to life. It was February 17, 1943.

Many were called to form the crew of the ABBOT, but few were chosen to start building her from the keel up. Those who were fortunate enough to go to Bath followed a routine that any sea-going gob would envy. Reveille was at 0600, chow at 0630 and call to duty at the yard coming somewhere between 0830 and 0930. Yes, life at this "one barracks" Receiving Station was pretty enjoyable.

The most unfortunate thing that could befall one at this little sailor's haven was a BIW watch which lasted from 1600 until 0800 the following morning. This watch was stood with loaded rifle and fixed bayonet, helmet and leggings, ready for any emergency that may arise. "Blackie's" and "Mary's Lunch" were a big help during those trying nights. A cup of "Jo" and a little talk with Shirley would make them pass much faster and much more pleasantly.

If one didn't have connections "on the outside," it was a sound practice to bring liberty blues to the outfitting office at noon-time so that it wouldn't be necessary to return to the Receiving Station and thereby miss the chance of getting in the line at the liquor store for your daily ration of spirits before the doors closed at 1700.

In the evening you'd take a little stroll to the USO for a few whirls and twirls with the city's leading jitterbugs and then a wink of the eye, an elbow hook sent you off for the "Lobster Grill," remembered by the Abboteers as the "Iron Fist (or Claw)" for a cup or two of "coffee" and a few cokes. Many a happy evening was begun in this way and the memory of this rendezvous will undoubtedly remain with the "Veterans of Bath" for a long time to come.

A ship's party on the 21st of April was a forecast to the hospitable populace of Bath of the ABBOT's departure and it was with a moist eye and dry throat that it watched the "629" round the bend of the Kennebec River on the morning of the 23rd and slip out of sight . . . maybe forever.

A little over two months after the ABBOT's hull was launched, ordnance and other equipment had been added and routine tests had pronounced her ready for commissioning in Boston. Of the fifteen officers and forty-two men that were aboard her the day she left Bath for Boston only a few are still aboard: Lieut. Melby, Lieut. (jg) Koster, Gunner Auten, CMM Booty, CMM Montijo, CQM Hould, CWT Eads, CRM Bates, CMM McDonald, Johnston,

EM1c; Loranger, Y1c; Kovach, MM1c; Nako, MM1c; Paulsen, MM1c; Wilson, MM2c; Nault, RdM3c; Walters, WT1c; Woosley, SM1c; Pradovich, GM3c; Eames, WT1c; Richard, EM2c; Lincoln, SM2c; Eldred, GM2c and Welton, MM2c.

On the 23rd of April at about ten o'clock in the morning the crew, which had been assembling for several weeks at the Fargo Building, was rushed in dress blues and with gear rolled in sea-going fashion to the Frazier Barracks in the Charlestown Navy Yard to wait three long hours for the ABBOT to make her appearance. Finally she was reported standing in. What a ship! No sooner had she tied up than all hands were over the gangway. Shortly afterward the "old salts" that had brought her down from Bath got the "boots" squared away.

In the early afternoon, Captain H. C. Grady, USN, acting for the Captain of the Navy Yard and with the authority of the Chief of Naval Operations, officially accepted the ABBOT for the U. S. Navy and the commission pennant was hoisted. After the Chaplain had delivered the invocation, Commander Chester E. (Blackie) Carroll, USN, read his orders and assumed command. Lieut. J. S. C. (Gabby) Gabbert, USN, the Executive Officer, was ordered to set the watch. Almost immediately a freight car was on the pier and word was passed that was heard all too frequently during the next week, "All hands not on watch lay up on the dock to handle stores (or ammunition)." The ship's ability to swallow so much was next to miraculous. The least salty sailor was sent to the Officer of the Deck on one occasion and asked permission to use the "bulkhead stretcher" in an effort to get another box or two into some storeroom.

During these days no one mustered at sick call for fear that "Doc" Kelly would find something wrong and send them to the hospital with "Cat Fever." No one knew what "Cat Fever" was and no one wanted to be accused of fooling around with cats, especially since there were some pretty "doggy" things running around "Beantown."

The ABBOT spent the days of May 10 and 11 on the high seas but made port each night for liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Scuttlebutt said that we would go to Bermuda for shakedown but a few days later found the ABBOT in Casco Bay, Maine and there we stayed for six weeks. Five days were spent drilling all hands and exercise firing at towed targets. One of these days the ABBOT and the KIDD steamed through the Cape Cod Canal and spent the day training with a tame sub from New London. That night the two ships dropped the hook off Port Jefferson, N. Y. where a "competitive liberty" was held. It was a tough fight, Ma, but . . . blood spattered blues characterized the next day's inspection. The days between May 21 and June 17 were spent in and out of Casco Bay. On June 18th, Commander Destroyers Atlantic Fleet came aboard with his staff and held an inspection of the ship, its crew and its ability to properly perform drills. He left with a "Well Done." The Boston gates, where we all wished to spend the evening, would close in less than three hours so it was full speed ahead. The ABBOT made the run in two and one-half hours.

All of the old haunts in Boston were visited again and some of the politicians were able to wrangle a forty-eight or a seventy-two out of the Exec before the third of July when the ABBOT once again stood out for Casco Bay. Hardly had the hook been dropped when the ship was ordered to escort the NEW YORK to Hampton Roads, Va. Shortly after the first line was over on the dock at Norfolk, the ABBOT got underway for New York City. She steamed north with the BLOCK ISLAND, later sunk by enemy action, as far as the entrance to New York Harbor where she was detached to proceed to Casco Bay. The men got a breather in Casco and a liberty or two in Portland, Maine. We steamed out again, this time in company with the TEXAS which also was left at New York harbor entrance. We went on to Hampton Roads and on June 17 struck out with the COWPENS, KIMBERLEY and the ERBEN for the blue Caribbean.

"Rum and Co-cacola" Trinidad in the British West Indies was the next stop. It was the first foreign port for many. That night offered authorized liberty in the Port of Spain but thereafter only unauthorized liberties could be made in the city and many took the chance. The Naval Base and camps offered plenty of beer and a good baseball diamond. The "BABBLERS" beat the theretofore unbeaten DAVIS' officer's, chief's and crew's softball teams.

For a week the ABBOT operated with the COWPENS and BUNKER HILL. On July 31 we were called to war. Our orders were to conduct a search for survivors of a German sub. Our search proved futile, however, and amounted to a mere chase that drew only a few menacing flares from a friendly patrol plane. Another week of carrier operations followed and on August 11 the ABBOT set out for Hampton Roads. Boston was next and there "Cap'n" Carroll relinquished his command to Commander Marshall E. (Skinny) Dornin, USN, and the first day under the new Skipper saw the ABBOT at sea again . . . this time to check the vibration of the ship at various speeds.

One day five unidentified aircraft approaching at fifty miles sent the ship to general quarters to interrupt the home port routine but before the guns began to bark, the planes were identified as friendly.

On August 16 the ship went into drydock again for new shafts. She was there until September 6. During this period the French Cruiser Le Malin was docked astern and the ABBOT crew did much to cement the solidarity of their ally, seeking any occasion which offered a visit to the "Frog's" ship, especially during the hours when the wine rations were being served. Some of the men were able to "cook up" sufficient emergency to get a short leave.

## CHAPTER TWO

### OUR FIRST TASTE OF THE PACIFIC

We remained in dry dock through September 5th. The last of the leave parties were staggering back to the ship while the remainder of the crew continued to take advantage of generous liberties. Then came a period of test runs and various operations in which the ship was made ready for sea.

Alas and alack! On September 8 we took departure from the fair city of Boston and set course for the "Rebel Country," namely Norfolk, Virginia. But any thoughts of imposing upon that SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY were soon dispelled when, with the BUNKER HILL, ERBEN, and the KIMBERLY, we were shortly en route to the Panama Canal Zone. The usual gunnery exercises were conducted and in typical fashion, the ABBOT knocked down her share (and more) of the target sleeves.

The Panama Canal is referred to by most sailors as the DITCH, and to most of us it was something we had studied about in school. Few had ever seen it except in pictures. When at 0920 on September 16th we commenced transit of the canal, all hands except those unfortunates on watch below deck, lined the rails to drink in the sights such as they were. A few soldiers (on duty) and one (homely) nurse were on hand to wish us God speed.

We entered the Gatun Locks at 0938, cleared at 1100. On the Pacific side, the Pedro Miguel Locks were cleared in 24 minutes, Miraflores Locks in 36 minutes. We learned that we were to put in at Balboa with good prospects of a liberty in that gay city of Panama. Many are the untold tales of our short stay with our southern neighbors; but CBM T. D. WESTBROOK can verify the fact that Boston is not the only city with a Coconut Grove. And through no fault of his own, Ray (Broadway) Raphael was found out of bounds with his fighting gear on. The S.P.'s were about to run him in when to the rescue comes our own Ens. W. J. Spikes. A substantial dent was made in the alcohol supply and the souvenir hounds did right well for themselves.

September 18, we took departure from Balboa and entered the Blue Pacific. Best scuttlebutt was that we would next put in at San Diego and the east-coast sailors (old salts and stuff) began anticipating a few short ones in the land of (liquid) sunshine.

En route and during flight operations, one of the BUNKER HILL'S Hellcats was seen to crash into the sea by our ever alert look-outs, namely Federow and Welch. According to a message received from the Commanding Officer of the BUNKER HILL, only the vigilance of our look-outs saved the life of the Pilot. It was our first rescue and we received the very familiar "WELL DONE!"

Finally, we tied up at Broadway Pier, San Diego, Calif., and in his haste to double up and secure, the Skipper had to back 'er down full to prevent carrying away half of the pier with the consequent parting of one manila line. Not mentioning any names but the Exec and Comm Officer were among those practically at the gangway in "liberty canvas" before the brow was on the dock. However, the first sight to meet the approval of all hands (except

Woosley, the congenial mail clerk) was the seventeen bags of mail awaiting us on the pier. What with a liberty or so, morale was 4.0 when two days later we again got underway with the BUNKER HILL, ERBEN and the KIMBERLY for Pearl Harbor and the war.

The BUNKER was loaded to the gunnels (figuratively speaking) with B-25's, and so a straight course, was set, speed 30 knots. The 2,400 mile trip proved uneventful and we arrived at Pearl Harbor, where the hull of the old UTAH and the OKLAHOMA and the guns of the ARIZONA could still be seen protruding above the surface of the water. Maybe for a moment all hands were aware of the fact that we were at war and our loss in lives and ships at this scene must be avenged. The Engineering Department had received a "Well Done" from the Bunker Hill, for the high speed run out from the coast, and we steamed into the Navy Yard with hardly more than sludge in our fuel tanks.

Ah, beautiful Hawaii, the land of scenic beauty, grass skirts, and tropical romance. But where and how? Liberty expired on the dock at 1830. The first grass skirts were seen in a curio shop marked \$4.75. The Hula girls were working for the Yankee-Dolla', posing with the Macs and G.I. Joes for snapshots. Service men? We thought Norfolk was infested with them. The over-all situation was a bit disappointing. But a sailor will ever make out in any port, and it didn't take long for the boys to become familiar with the HOT SPOTS around town. Some fun at Waikiki Beach, a souzing afternoon at the Breakers, and numerous other sources for new adventure. Too, there were new and different souvenirs for the Gal back home.

But all was not a life of gaiety. There followed a period of training—virtually another shake-down. On October 17th, the ABBOT got underway in company with a carrier group to conduct training operations. At 0210, on the morning of the 18th, the ABBOT was directed to leave screening station and take plane guard station for night flight operations. And at 0224, we collided with the COWPENS. Approximately thirty feet of our bow was twisted to a 70 degree right angle. Repair parties immediately went into action as well as all hands who could be of assistance.

Bukheads were shored to prevent further damage, water was pumped into the sea from the lower compartments, and through tireless effort, the forward part of the ship was secured to the maximum of watertight integrity.

Unfortunately, three of our shipmates were killed, others injured. The COWPENS suffered only minor injuries. Thankful that our casualties were not more and with heavy hearts, we commenced the slow journey back to Pearl. The COGHLAN circled us, screening against possible attack from subs. Our best speed under existing circumstances, was three to five knots until we reached calmer waters. The COWPENS made port under her own power.

Back in the Yard, all ammo, torpedoes, depth charges, and fuel oil were transferred from the ship. Shortly thereafter the ABBOT was towed into Number One dry-dock, and the yard workmen began dismantling her for alterations and repairs.

Those men who had been injured in the collision were transferred to the Aiea Naval Hospital for treatment. Other men were temporarily transferred to the various service schools. The remainder of the crew were moved to barracks in Aiea Heights. Each morning the duty section was hauled to the ship and returned to Aiea in the late afternoon.

Life was rather dull; softball, basketball, football, swimming, movies every night, and generous liberty. The mail was coming in every day; and being that time of the year, our Xmas packages were arriving in good shape. Yes, war is hell! (So we had heard it said). But the yard workmen did not do all of the work, and all hands put in some long hours turning to aboard the ship.

The Xmas season was at hand, and this was an excellent opportunity to buy presents for the folks back home. Honolulu merchants made a substantial profit from purchases of the ABBOT crew alone.

Arrangements were made whereby many of the crew enjoyed an overnight liberty at the famous Royal Hawaiian Hotel. In peace time only celebrities and the well-to-do could afford the \$25 to \$75 fee per day at the Royal Hawaiian, but the Navy took over and turned it into a recuperation center for service men—fee: just two-bits a day.

But all good things must end; and in due time, the ship was again seaworthy and the ammo, torpedoes, etc., were returned aboard. The crew settled down once more to the old grind as we began what we considered our fourth shakedown cruise. While operating with the transports near Maui Island, the ABBOT and HALE were suddenly ordered to return to Pearl. The next day, December 21, we got underway in company with the ERBEN, HALE, BULLARD, and the CHAUNCEY for Funafuti.

We set our course to the southwest and learned that soon we would be "crossing the line." Of the entire crew, only some 20-odd men were shellbacks and some of these had rather doubtful credentials.

Stern Neptune, mantled in a green wave  
Was talking to Mrs. Jones boy Dave.  
We're going to have trouble Dave, he said.  
The ABBOT approaches—she's now dead ahead.

They broke her out of her dry-dock bed.  
Advance reports from my messenger, Pisces,  
Point to a serious and shameful crisis  
Aside from the tadpoles and shellbacks trusty,  
There's a bastard breed not the least bit crusty.  
They're salty enough, I will allow  
But who the hell ain't—these days, anyhow.  
With two million men in the Navy now.  
It's a privilege high—no honor is greater,  
To honestly boast that you've crossed the equator.  
Its an honor, by God, to be reserved  
To my loyal subjects, justly deserved.

What's your advice on the matter, Dave?  
Saturn said—and his face was grave.  
Davey Jones pondered a little while—

Then there came to his face a malignant smile.  
To Neptune he said, let's do it this way:  
The bona-fide shellbacks should still have their way,  
But that bastard breed of which you spoke—  
Shackle the frauds to their own damned yoke.

Let us not, said Davey, be deferential  
To the psuedo-shellback without a credential.  
These phoneyes who claim to be crusty, and ain't,  
Are the boys whose fantails we ought to paint.  
Let the pollywogs check with the good ship's log,  
Determine who's crusty and who's pollywog.  
Let the shellbacks heckle each low pollywog.  
Let the pollywogs heckle this hermaphrodite frog.

So spake Davey Jones and closed his case.  
A broad smile came to King Neptunes face.  
So be it—said Neptune, I'll leave it to you.  
Pass the word on to the ABBOT's crew.  
And we might see approaching my throne,  
Other heads shorn than the pollywogs own.

One pollywog, Chrysler, FC2c, feeling a bit skeptical of the validity of the claims of some of the shellbacks to possession of that honorable title, composed the previous lyrical protest which admirably expressed his views and those of many another pollywog.

But these few shellbacks began making elaborate plans for the punishment of and final acceptance of the lowly pollywogs into the Royal Domain of His Royal Majesty King Neptune Rex. Stocks were made, and many unfortunate pollywogs were lead about the decks, helpless to defend themselves against the stinging blows of water-soaked, canvas shillalahs which were being delivered by fellow-pollywogs on orders from the honorable shellbacks. Crooners who were far from Crosby's or Sanatras were made to serenade their shipmates. Every conceivable act of embarrassment and mortification was forced upon the helpless pollywogs. The pollywog watch wore a combination of uniforms befitting the characters in Orson Wells' "Men from Mars." Though the day was rather warm the OOD wore a fur-lined coat. Dress blues, bathing trunks, John L. Sullivan, leggings, so'westers, neckerchiefs, jerseys, and other non-appropriate clothing were donned by the slimy pollywogs. And strange as it may seem, the Skipper, Commander Marshal E. Dornin, USN, was himself a lowly pollywog. His tall slender frame presented quite an unusual spectacle decked out in bathing trunks, so'wester, neckerchief, shoes without socks, and that famous Dornin stogie.

Well, we did cross the line and contrary to scuttlebutt, there was no bump. It was December 25. The Jolly Roger was broken at the truck and ceremonies were begun. Here follows the entry made in the log by W. R. Baranger, Lt., USNR, who was Officer of the Deck:

"0905, His Royal Majesty King Neptunus Rex, his long, white gown, flowing in the morning winds, with his blushing bride by his side, wearing a low-cut white, chiffon evening gown, and his Royal Party, consisting of the Royal Navigator, the Royal Chaplain, the Royal Barber, the Royal High Judge, the

Royal Doctor, the Royal Dentist, the Royal Baby, the Royal Undertaker, the Royal Jester and the ever faithful Davey Jones were welcomed on board amid the salaams of the huge cargo of filthy, slimy, lowly pollywogs by the Senior Shellback, Lieut. Comdr. J. S. C. Gabbert, U. S. Navy. The Royal King lost no time in acclaiming his displeasure, not only because of the huge cargo of the lowly pollywogs but also because his Royal Domain was disturbed on Christmas Day. Upon his arrival, he commenced immediately to dish out the royal works to the lowly offenders."

The following is part of the watch list and standing orders for all pollywog lookouts as printed in the Dabblers press as of 24 December 1943:

Pollywog Ensign Merryman will stand watches on the searchlight platform. The uniform prescribed is foul weather gear, binoculars and helmet. He will be guided by the following orders:

"Search the horizon from beam to beam,  
Keep the searchlight platform clean,  
Be respectful to Davey Jones,  
Or else you'll have broken bones.

"Pollywog Ensign Benoit will stand the Davey Jones fisherman watch at the starboard chains. The uniform will be dungaree trousers rolled above the knees, without shirt, so'wester, lantern and net. He will be guided by the following orders:

"With lighted lantern and baited net,  
Six flying fishes you will get,  
For Davey Jones' morning repast,  
Failing this, you'll breathe your last.

"The starboard bow lookout will be manned by Pollywog Ensign Magill. The uniform will be sweat shirt, bathing trunks and diving apparatus. You will be assisted by the port bow lookout who is also a lowly, slimy, filthy pollywog. The starboard bow lookout will be guided by the following orders:

"Pump hard and fast, little wog,  
Don't stop even though you may be fogged,  
And when you feel you no longer can bear,  
Well, when you stop pumping — no more air!"

It was the first Christmas away from home for many of the Abboteers, and it is certainly one never to be forgotten. Every sailor holds fond memories of his crossing of the line and knows there are those among us who carry a slight reminder in the form of a scar, for some of us really took a beating. But all hands survived, and all are now salty shellbacks just waiting for the chance to exact revenge on some less fortunate brother.

For the benefit of those who forgot or otherwise failed to save a copy of the Dabblers' "Crossing the Line" editions, a few excerpts from same follow:

The Royal Court consisted of:  
King Neptune.....Hyler, W. R. T., CWT, USN  
Davey Jones.....Westbrook, T. D., CBM, USN  
Queen Amphitrite...Egstad, N. H., CMM, USN  
Royal Baby.....Sutor, S. J., TM3c, USNR  
Chaplain.....Lt. (jg) H. B. Vincent  
Royal Judge.....Allensworth, J. F., WT1c, USNR

Navigator.....Boatswain Alexander, USN  
OOD.....Lt. W. R. Barranger, USNR  
Royal Doctor.....Lt. Chas. Mrazek (MC)  
Ass't Doctor.....Karlik, J., RM1c, USNR  
Royal Barber.....Auten, R., CFC, USN; Archy, F., EM2c, USN  
Royal Dentist.....Taylor, D., Ck3c, USN; Hould, J. A., QM1c, USN  
Attorney.....Beason, D., Ens., USN  
Jester.....Eames, F. E., WT2c, USNR  
Scribe.....Hoffman, A. V., Jr., CY, USN  
Assistant.....Wilson, H. C., S1c, USNR; McKenzie, R. J., RM3c.  
Undertaker.....Bodarky, S. N., MM1c, USNR  
Painter.....Johnson, R. E., CM1c, USNR  
Devil.....Johnston, E. W., EM1c, USN  
Chief of Police.....Zimmer, C. E., WT1c, USN  
Police.....Matenzio, D., MM1c, USN; McDonald, S. P., MM1c, USN  
Senior Bear.....Eads, W. A., B1c, USN  
Bears.....Joyce, EM1c; Butler, StM1c; Parish, S1c; Rock, BM2c;  
Eaton, SM2c; Lt. Miller, and Lt. Tremper.  
\* \* \*

**Price List — Repairs to Pollywogs — First Class Work Done  
Results Guaranteed**

**Come Early — Avoid the Rush — No Waiting**

1. One broken leg (bad) .....	\$20.00
2. One broken leg (not so bad) .....	15.45
Each additional leg .....	Refund
3. Bruises cooled and soothed on buttocks, each .....	.40
4. Elsewhere, each .....	.50
Nuts cracked (no extra charge to inspire good fellowship)	
5. Splinters removed from ischio-rectal region, each hand picked .....	.25
From beneath the fingers or toe nails .....	.41
Otherwise .....	.14
6. Circumstances, straightened, removal of salvage edge, guaranteed to leave nothing superfluous .....	2.00
7. Broken noses remodeled:	
Jack Benney Contur .....	2.00
Schnozzle Durante .....	2.00
W. C. Fields (if you furnish your own drinks) .....	2.00
Any style, our most exclusive .....	.90
8. Shellac removed from hair (Cannot be responsible for change of color) .....	2.25
9. Cuts, deep, each stitch .....	.12
Extra for each yell .....	.03
Scratches .....	.20
10. Rental of leeches on black eye, overnight .....	.55

**Patronize Us — Leap In, Limp Out — Kill 'em or Cure 'em**

Entry made in the ship's log by Lt. K. W. Miller, USN, on the 12-by, December 25, 1943:

"1225 His Royal Majesty King Neptunus Rex with his lovely bride, and his Royal Party shifted his flag to the U.S.S. BRINY DEEP, after having duly tried and sentenced 301 enlisted men and 14 officers."

The next day at 1000 we crossed the 180th meridian and again there was no bump, which made us members of the Order of the Golden Dragon. There were no ceremonies for this occasion and it is probably just as well, for the "old salts" were in no condition for a repetition of their Christmas ordeal.

At 1628 December 26, we entered Funafuti, Ellice Islands, a God forsaken atoll in the South Pacific. So this was the glorious South Sea Isles?

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE MARSHALLS CAMPAIGN

The New Year was welcomed in a fashion somewhat different from that to which most Aboteers were accustomed. The warm climate, some sore spots still noticeable from having gone through the ritual of becoming shell-backs, and most important of all, the very few hangovers to be noted made this particular New Year an outstanding one.

At Funafuti we got our first taste of "No Letter Today." From 21 December until 6 January, 16 long days, we went with nary a line from home. And did Woosley, SM1c, our genial mail clerk, take a beating! We had piles of rejects in our letter writing at this time, because this was our first introduction to strict security regulations.

We had all kinds of inspections, including the nod from Commodore Bottom, our squadron commander.

Everyone at this time was trying to find an excuse to go to the CASCADE, a destroyer tender, to get cokes and "pogey bait." We had movies nearly every night, plenty of swimming, first aid lectures, and drills of every description; all in preparation for the coming Marshall Islands campaign. One abandon-ship drill was made much more realistic by Paredes, RM3c, nearly drowning ten feet away from the ship. Firing exercises were a regular routine, and were quite different from those previously conducted at the "Anchor" or the "Rex." Mr. Miller, our First Lieutenant, supervised a tear gas drill in the after head during this period.

At 0630 on 23 January, we were off to war. No more USO liberties, no movies on the forecastle for a while, no extra sack time, no more always-looked-for mail. Eight battlewagons, the INDIANA, NEW JERSEY, MASSACHUSETTS, WASHINGTON, SOUTH DAKOTA, ALABAMA, IOWA and NORTH CAROLINA, three cruisers, two carriers and fifteen destroyers comprised the bombardment unit which left Funafuti. The CHESTER (CA27) was forced to return to port, and the "A" was assigned her first of many under-way duties involving great risk. We transferred the late Rear Admiral E. J. Small, USN, via the "coal bag" from the Chester to the Salt Lake City (CA25). Later, we joined other task units for our first big push.

Do you recall the word being passed about the full uniform of the day with life jackets on at all times? At this you became a little jittery, sleeping with all your clothes on plus the life jacket, and you wondered if that were not the safest way, usually spending more time worrying than you did sleeping.

On 27 January we were 120 miles from the Jap possessed Ocean Island, and very much on the alert. All hands became lookouts, for there was a fifty-dollar prize awaiting the person who spotted the first Jap craft. On the 28th, we dropped 33 depth charges (ash cans to the sailor), and what appeared to be a definite submarine contact. Everyone spotted debris—that is, a lot of TNT residue—but no definite claims were made. One of our search planes spotted an oil slick near the spot the next day, so we may have crippled him.

During predawn alert on 29 January, the BUNKER HILL was launching planes about two miles dead ahead of our formation. Two planes crashed in mid air during the exercises. Later word was revealed that Raymond Clapper, news commentator, had been killed in this crash. There were no survivors.

Ray Curran, Y2c, won the fifty bucks at 1128 on 29 January when he spotted on the horizon a Jap Betty, (a twin-engined bomber). We knew now that we were getting closer to the war, and everyone was as excited as a cat on a tin roof in distress. Noon chow was served at battle stations by the repair parties. We couldn't afford to take any chances. Wotje atoll was sighted at 1344 and the SALT LAKE CITY opened fire shortly afterward. One Jap plane tried to make off from the island runway but was shot down by our combat air patrol.

The "A" took her first shot at enemy held territory, Wotje Atoll, at 2115 on 29 January, firing from that time until 0315, lofting a total of over 500 rounds of 5 inch ammunition on the Nips. At 2230 during this bombardment, our radar picked up an unidentified surface target, and after four guns had expended 83 rounds of 5 inch shells in less than two minutes, the target was no more. We didn't stick around to observe results, but have our own ideas that we may have "nipped the Nips." Anyhow, we are certain that it was war bonds well spent.

On the night of 1 February we shelled Taroa Atoll in the Marshalls from 2250 until 0250, firing 262 rounds of 5 inch ammunition. During this bombardment, at 2120, flashes were observed from the beach. A few seconds later, large spouts of water were visible about 1000 yards off our starboard quarter. "They are firing back at us" sounded over all the ship's phone circuits. Seven splashes were certain, falling 1000 yards off our starboard side, but that was close enough. Captain Dornin ordered flank speed and we increased range to play safe, but continued on another firing run as if nothing had happened.

While we were not bombarding, our time was occupied in screening cruisers while they in turn shelled the beaches. No landings were made on either Wotje or Taroa and the Jap garrisons there were bypassed, to be harassed again and again by our bombers.

We entered Majuro lagoon in the Marshalls, on 4 February, a Yank possession of only a few days. We rated a star on that campaign bar! We were practically winning the war by ourselves! We had a movie on the forecastle that night with the Japs still on Jaluit Atoll, only 50 miles away.

After replenishment of all our "vitels," we were back at Wotje on 6 February and our contribution to the war effort between 6th and 12th of February lay in volleying a few more shells night and day on Wotje and Taroa, at one time getting so close that Captain Dornin asked for permission to strafe the beach with 40 mm. "Permission not granted" was the reply. Our Seabees, "Chips" Johnson, CM2c, Burton, SF1c, and Reimer, S1c, had ideas of forming a landing force on several occasions.

After taking on stores at Majuro, we returned to Wotje and Taroa, carrying our around-the-clock bombardments until the 19th, when we again returned to Majuro for repair and upkeep alongside the PRAIRIE (AD15), a tender.



We were treated to the facilities of the tender until the 26th, received some mail again, and saw some good movies, although the greater number were war bond sellers. We got underway for Kwajalein on the 26th with our squadron, arriving there on the 27th. During the period spent here, we alternated with other ships on patrol duty outside the lagoon entrance until 4 March, when we returned to Majuro, arriving on the fifth. Lieutenant Commander Gabbert, our well liked Executive Officer, received orders to command the BELL (DD587) to be effected 1 April. Egstad, CMM, was appointed to Warrant Machinist.

On the 6th a liberty party was granted, the first since we had left Pearl Harbor three months before. The men of the "A" still talk about chasing the wild chickens and hogs. This was a far different liberty from what a sailor is accustomed to, but there weren't any women to chase.

BECKHAM and HODGES, two of our starving seamen that never got enough to eat, considered themselves very fortunate when they discovered a nest of ten eggs on "liberty" island. This was their chance to eat fresh eggs, they thought; so when they returned to the ship, the eggs were carefully placed in Hodges' locker in anticipation of "sunnysides up." A few days later when the chow was off par, Hodges decided to get the needed vitamins, but upon opening his locker he found "chicken" instead. During the next week seven of the ten eggs hatched and the chicks became good sailors. After finishing their "boot training aboard" of a months' duration, they became quite a problem and were transferred to shore duty at Buna, New Guinea on April 5. With this incident the ABBOT became the first ship to transfer poultry from one Pacific Island to another.

Preparing for coming operations, we again had captain's inspection.

On 12 March we were underway for Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides, but on the 13th our orders were changed and we headed for Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, crossing the 180th meridian at 1900 on this date. It is still debated as to whether we gained or lost a day when the date was advanced to the 14th. We entered the historical Florida-Guadalcanal-Savo Island area, early on the 17th and anchored near Henderson Field, changing berths later in the day to Port Purvis, Florida Island.

On 20 March we were fortunate enough to get our first beer since leaving Pearl Harbor. This was getting to be the Navy that we had heard about! Four good cold beers! On the 22nd we presented a variety entertainment program while alongside the HALE (DD642), only to have the always welcome, cooling rain spoil our evening at the ABBOT "theatre." We were underway again on the 23rd, screening transports that were taking on men and supplies from Guadalcanal Island for future landings. We were steaming in "Iron Bottom Bay," so named because of the large number of ships, both theirs and ours, (mostly theirs), which were sunk in surrounding waters.

On the 26th we were underway for Bouganville, arriving at Cape Torokina on the 29th, having screened the loaded transports on the trip. We patrolled the entrance to the bay while the transports unloaded, and started for Port

Purvis again that evening. Our orders were changed, however, and we headed for Milne Bay, New Guinea, where we anchored on the 31st.

We remained in port long enough to resupply, getting underway for Buna, New Guinea, on 4 April, anchoring on the morning of the 5th in Cape Sudest Harbor. We had beach parties here, but everyone was satisfied to return to the "A," as the beach life was very disagreeable indeed. We had inspections again during this period in port.

We got underway again on 10 April for Port Purvis, arriving on the 12th. While underway, on the 11th, Pelletier, E. A., S1c, underwent an appendectomy in the wardroom, performed by our "always willing to please" Dr. Mrazek.

We left Port Purvis on the 14th, our assignment being to relieve destroyers of a task unit patrolling Jap supply lanes between Truk and Rabaul. We spent the next five days in this area, and then joined other task units to conduct air strikes preparatory to landings at Humboldt Bay, Hollandia, New Guinea. Air strikes began on the 22nd on Hollandia and Aitape. Our forces went ashore at Hollandia on the 23rd at 0642. They found the opposition light.

The 23rd was the first birthday of the "A" and the chow was extra special. We had movies underway for the first time during this operation. The mess hall was converted into the "theatre."

With the exception of one short trip to Manus Island, we remained in the Hollandia vicinity for continuation of air strikes until 4 May, at which time we returned to Seeadler Harbor, Manus Island, in the Admiralties.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC

The beginning of May found us still in the vicinity of Hollandia, in company with a task force consisting of the heavy units of the Seventh Fleet, and the Australian Cruisers HMAS SHROPSHIRE and AUSTRALIA. Our own group comprised of two divisions of CVE's screened by DesRon 48. This group rendered air support to the assault troops in the Hollandia area. The Japanese Air Force very conveniently ran out of gasoline two weeks previous to the landing on April 22, and their Navy was unable to penetrate the allied blockade imposed around Hollandia to re-supply them. This operation came off more smoothly than any previous one to date, causing General MacArthur to consider himself nothing short of a miracle maker. The carriers launched several strikes each day commencing with the dawn strike, and their planes were on call for photographic missions as well as bombing and strafing. During the support phase of this operation, we became more salty than ever by crossing the equator back and forth three times.

On the fourth of May we retired to Seeadler Harbor, Manus Island, for replenishment of logistics. The harbor formed by Manus and Negros Island was large enough to accommodate the entire Pacific Fleet, and reminded one somewhat of Majuro in the Marshalls. Indeed, some six months later, practically the entire fleet sortied from this same harbor for the Leyte Gulf operation.

On May 7, we made the usual destroyer sortie ahead of the heavy ships and departed from Seeadler Harbor for Segund Channel, Espiritu Santos Island, New Hebrides. This was a trip of 1800 miles, and consumed some five days. On Friday, May 12, we entered Pallikulo Bay, Espiritu Santos Island, fueled ship, and next day screened the SANTEE in operations off the island. The ABBOT returned to Segund Channel for dry docking, limited overhaul, and replenishment of logistics, giving all hands a chance to catch up on beer drinking. During this period the fleet was preparing for the Marianas Islands operations, and in the latter part of May we proceeded to the "Slot" for gunnery exercises and training for future operations. We returned to Espiritu on the 29th of May.

On May 29, amid the confetti, boos, and Bronx Cheers of the crew, "Broadway Ray" Paphael was welcomed aboard. He displayed his many usual and unusual "campaign" ribbons of Boston's "Shangra Lia," Honolulu's Fleet Radio School, the battle of the "Rex" and "New Bronx," the brawls of the "Royal Hawaiian" and "Breakers." His first two questions upon coming aboard were "Have you seen "Best Foot Forward, yet?" and "Who is this guy McKenzie?" But after he had displayed his newly acquired album to all unacquainted hands, he reclined to begin fighting his part of this war and desired to win his first star on the Asiatic-Pacific bar.

At 1300, June 2, we sortied from Espiritu Santos in company with Carrier Divisions 22 and 24, the oiler POCOMOKE, DesRon 48, plus DesDiv 22. North-east of Guadalcanal we rendezvoused with various transport divisions and

their support units, and proceeded in company with them to Kwajalein, conducting various drills en route.

On the 8th of June we anchored in Kwajalein Atoll. The next four days were spent in a last minute check-up on equipment, while the Supply Department attempted to get still more stores on our loaded decks. We were going off to war again. Little did we know!

At 0545 we passed thru the southwestern entrance to Kwajalein and proceeded to patrol station to cover the sortie of the carriers and transports, our destination being Guam, in the Marianas. The voyage proceeded without incident until the night of June 18 when we were due north of Truk Island, and several Jap planes, either on patrol out of Truk or procuring reinforcements for Truk, passed over the formation. Range never close enough to permit opening fire.

On the night of June 21, we were directed to proceed to Saipan Island in the Marianas and provide air-cover and support for the assault forces then engaged in securing the island. The sortie of the Japanese fleet from Tawi-Tawi in the southern Philippines, the air battle at Guam on the previous day, the tenacity and ferociousness with which the Japs were defending Saipan all had direct bearing on the postponement of the Guam landing.

Commencing with the night of June 21, we experienced nightly harrassing raids by Japs from Guam and Yap Island. Saipan was also under nightly attack and things were definitely looking upon the action side for the ABBOT. It seemed as if we went to General Quarters at least ten time a day, but in reality it was only two to four. During this period we retired every fourth day to fuel, returning to our designated operating area east of Saipan to continue air support for the troops.

On the night of June 26 and 27, our group was under attack by several Jap planes. On his initial run, one Jap threw a fish at the SANGAMON and then passed up her flight deck on a parallel course, much to the consternation of the Admiral. The "bogies" seemed to clutter the area at this time and the ABBOT fired on two going down the starboard side with unobserved results. At 2350, a bogie closed from the port side and was brought under fire by our port forty millimeters. The firing was seen to bracket the target which was later identified as a Betty. The U.S.S. HALE also opened fire on this bogie, and both ships received credit for an "assist" as the Nip joined his ancestors in a blaze of flame. This explosion caused much rejoicing on the ABBOT for she was no longer considered an untouched maiden.

The latter days of June were spent in the same area doing the same job, and on the 30th we departed for Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshalls, arriving there on the 7th of July. We got underway again on the 9th of July for Guam to provide air-support in the same manner as at Saipan. The Guam operation was not as difficult due to neutralization of Japanese air power in the Marianas area. Ground forces had very difficult going for the first few days, but resistance soon lightened and the island of Guam was secured on the 21st of August.

On the 26th of July we went into Saipan in company with the SANGAMON and the HULL, (later lost at sea in a typhoon). Highlight of the day was our evening sortie when we passed down Saipan channel to the accompaniment of the "long toms" of the Marines who were in the process of bombarding Tinian Island in preparation for its invasion. All hands were rather awed at the broadsides of the long toms when fully thirty of them were fired at one time directly over the ABBOT.

August was to be our lucky month again. In the early days of the month we started for Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshalls, arriving there on the evening of the fourth. On the morning of the fifth, we departed for Pearl Harbor in company with the CORREGIDOR and the STEMBLE. The trip was uneventful except that the Captain received his orders for transfer and word was received that his relief was in Pearl. During the evening of August 11th we arrived at Pearl Harbor and moored alongside the SIERRA for tender availability and for ten days of rest and recuperation. Inspection was held on the 14th of August and Commander Dornin was relieved by Lieutenant Commander F. W. Ingling, who we soon learned, was known to his intimate friends as "Waffles."

During the latter part of August we conducted training exercises for the Yap Island campaign which was to be part of the Palau operation. The dwindling of Japanese air power in the central Philippines caused the Yap operation to be cancelled, but little did we know of that in late August 1944. We were much too busy borrowing automobiles, staying at the Royal Hawaiian, getting new people aboard and transferring old, spending our days in what is laughingly called the "paradise of the Pacific"—Honolulu—beering at the Breakers, stuffing steaks at PY's, and all those other things we said we would do when we returned to the bulwark of island civilization.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FROM PEARL HARBOR TO THE PHILIPPINES

During the early part of September we made a few more liberties in Honolulu. All hands will without a doubt remember the DESPAC beer garden as a refuge and a quick last minute brew before returning to the ship. It was always a poor excuse that most men had to frequent the habitat around the hours of 1600 to 1800.

While returning from liberty on the afternoon of September 13, "Dinty" Moore, Cox., was confronted with a serious decision. He was offered a small dog that would have to be killed if he could not furnish a home for her. He was also aware that the Exec disapproved of pets and mascots and had voiced numerous warnings against having them aboard. Nevertheless, "Dinty", with the aid of "Gus" Gastineau, QM2c, managed to conceal her in the latter's pocket and brought her aboard. It was a week before the Exec became aware that she was aboard and then he didn't have the inhumaneness to throw her overboard. She was christened with the waters of the South Pacific and given the name of "Abigail." The deck force, however, in order to create a name symbolic with their work nicknamed her "Rusty." She became a good sailor and has the honor to be one of very few females aboard fighting ships. "Abbie" belongs to all of us and definitely is acquainted with every crew member. She knows on the spur of the moment when there are strangers aboard and wastes no time in making them aware of it. She lived and ate with each and every one of us and when the going was rough she would be a little seasick too. "Abbie" will always rate a nick in the memory of every ABBOT sailor.

On September 15 we were off to fight the war again, this time escorting a group of transports, cargo, and the various auxiliaries, comprising the Amphibious group. Rear Admiral R. L. Conolly, USN, in the APPALACHIAN was our group commander. All ships of our squadron were present except the BULLARD. Scuttlebutt had it that we were to make landings on the island of Yap in the Carolines. But we were veterans now and this would only mean another star on our Asiatic-Pacific ribbon, disregarding the more serious side. With a westward course we once again crossed the 180th meridian and gained a day in time—or lost it (Whichever you prefer.)

Our amphibious group was scheduled to enter Eniwetok in the Marshalls on 25 September but on the 24th the ABBOT was designated as passenger ship to transport two officers to Kwajalein. After refueling there we proceeded to Eniwetok.

While en route an albatross alighted atop our radar antenna. The sea bird seemed to enjoy its rotating motion as one might enjoy the ride on a merry-go-round at Coney Island. There is an old tradition that no harm will befall the ship upon which an albatross alights. The ABBOT bears out this tradition whether it be true or false.

We soon learned that the Yap operation had been cancelled and that Manus would be our next port. Since last crossing the equator we had received aboard a considerable number of pollywogs who were soon to experience a big

"treat." There were over 60 including six officers. By the time the ceremonies were to begin, all had been driven into a fearful frame of mind. Pictures taken during the crossing prove that they had reason to be frightened somewhat.

The following is part of the watch list and standing orders for all pollywog lookouts as printed in the Dabbler Press on 1 October 1944: "All pollywogs designated below will stand watches as directed. The senior pollywog will inspect the watch immediately after pre-dawn alert to ascertain that all watchstanders are in the complete uniform as prescribed below. The watch will be posted immediately after the inspection and will remain on watch until the Royal Party comes aboard.

"Pollywog Ensign Stevenson will stand the Fog Lookout and will take station on the flying bridge. His uniform will be oilskin, sou'wester and binoculars. He will be guided by the following orders:

"When fog sets in you'll sound your horn,  
With a moan that's most forlorn,  
So sound it loud and frequently,  
Or else the boom will fall on thee.

"Pollywog Foley, TM1c and his low scum brother Pollywog Miller, TM3c, will stand the messenger watch on either side of the bridge. The uniform will be dress blue jumper, neckerchief, flat hat, leggings and dress shoes. They will be guided by the following orders:

"You will search the seven seas,  
For if you don't with bended knees  
Punishment will be inflicted.  
For you're sure to be indicted.

"Pollywog Ensign Ingalls will take station as the stratosphere fishing watch on the flying bridge. The uniform will be bathing trunks, sou'wester, and bow hook. He will be guided by the following orders:

"A fishing in the stratosphere,  
With baited hook, you little dear,  
With shellbacks don't you get bold,  
For if you do you'll get told,  
Catch 13 sea gulls, not one less,  
For they're the ones that make a mess.

"The port bow lookout station will be manned by pollywog Ensign Callaway and will take station in the eyes of the ship ably assisted by the starboard lookout. The uniform will be sweatshirt, bathing trunks and as much of the diving apparatus as his lowly brother pollywog manning the starboard bow lookout station cannot operate or carry by himself. You will be guided by the following orders:

"We know you think you've sailed a lot,  
And you always thought you were kinda' hot,  
So how do you like your wrappings text,  
Look sharply about for Neptunus Rex.

"Flash!! Word was just received that the senior pollywog will take over the deck as soon as the pre-dawn alert has secured and the aforesaid pollywog, Ensign Schmidt, has had time to don his proper uniform, namely, dress blues with gloves, sidearm, sheepskin coat and overshoes. He will be relieved of his duties immediately upon the arrival of the Royal Party."

Excerpts from the Dabbler Press tell the story of how the slimy pollywogs became shellbacks on the fate-filled day.

(DP)—"His long white gown flowing in the morning winds and with his blushing wife by his side attired in a new chiffon evening gown, the Royal King Neptune and his party were greeted on board at approximately 0900 on October 1 by the Senior Shellback, Lieutenant Commander F. W. Ingling. The King lost no time in acclaiming his displeasure for the lowly pollywogs were disturbing his royal domain and announced that blood would be his atonement. Amid the salaams of pollywogs throughout the ship, the King and his party walked aft through the ranks of slimy pollywogs with the Royal Navigator, stopping occasionally to test the strength of a lowly pollywog. The Queen had brought for the occasion the beautiful heir to the throne, and he had at sometime between the royal domain and the Dabbler evidently found that he just "couldn't wait." The evidence was plainly clear to all and became much more so as time went by. Davy Jones, ever faithful to his Majesty, was on hand, as were high dignitaries of the King. Included were the Royal Chaplain, the Royal Barber, the Royal High Judge, the Royal Doctor and his Royal Assistant, the Royal Undertaker, and other high dignitaries of the King's Court. The Royal Jester was on hand to attempt to set the innocent free while the Royal Prosecutor was there to see that justice was done. The fine holiday clothing worn by the Royal Party was definitely obtained before rationing was put into effect as they put to shame the much lauded costumes worn at the Mardi Gras and other spectacles.

"Court was opened and before the eyes of the miserable, shivering pollywogs was brought Ensign Stevenson, first pollywog on the Dabbler to be initiated. Upon seeing this culprit the King became excited and it was only by swift sure talking of this lowly pollywog, who explained to the King that he was not really bad at heart and was quite necessary to the war effort. Otherwise he would have been thrown over the side to the fishes and other denizens of the the deep that followed the Dabbler throughout the ceremony in the hope of having a special dinner of pollywogs. The Royal works was the verdict of the court after it had heard the charges against and the pleas of the lowly pollywog. The Royal Doctor checked the health of the lowly pollywog and administered the proper sedatives. The Royal High Barbers shorned him free of his land brought hair in order that he might have a fresh start and then he was given to the Royal Bears for thorough purging. It required dunkings to purge this pollywog of his ways of error but finally he was pronounced fit for the deep and delivered over the side of the tank a full-fledged shellback.

"Other offending officer pollywogs were brought forward rapidly, paying the proper respects to the Royal Party and courteously kissing the Royal

Baby's somewhat bespattered behind before going before the Royal Judge for trial. It was noted with curiosity that when the Royal Devil was at their side it was as though the pollywogs became full of the devil. Bewitched, they jumped and jerked and twisted and made the judge quite angry at times. Many were held in contempt of court because of their jerky motions. Pleas of "Guilty" brought swift, just retribution. Pleas of "Not Guilty" also brought retribution but not nearly so quickly nor mercifully. Pollywogs wondered why they had offended the King, on this their first passage, and the Court informed them that it was not their right to question the "why" and bade them to take them away to die."

In a confused but normal manner the ceremony went on. "What is your charge?" "How do you plead?" "Take him away," spoke the Royal Judge. "Open your mouth, say ah," ordered the Royal Doctor. "How do you want it?" "Snip, snip," and the Royal Barbers were done. "Pollywog or shellback." asked the Royal Bears. And so it went.

The last phase of the initiation is one long to be remembered by shellback and pollywog alike. After being dunked in the tub the pollywogs were forced to crawl through a twenty-foot cylindrical canvas chute which had been partially filled with garbage. While they strived to get through, the shellbacks and newly initiated pollywogs beat their "rumps," which necessarily had to appear as they crawled through, with watersoaked canvas shillalahs. From the humane angle it was almost a pathetic sight, for the uninitiated really took a beating.

We entered Seeadler Harbor, Manus, Admiralty Islands, on 2 October. We here were subjected to routine checkups and training exercises. Those who cared to indulge, and very few ever declined, were favored with a few brews on one of the desolate islands on the exterior of the anchorage. What griped the crew the most was the lack of "sugar reports." A sailor can survive without wine and women the hard way, but a continued "no letter today" will test the morale of any mortal whether he be man or sailor.

But the war must go on! On the 14th we were again underway with the transport group, our destination, the Emperor's impregnable Philippines. While underway between the 14th to the 20th, our time was occupied with anti-aircraft firing, delivering mail, refueling at sea and the always dreaded picket duty. Soon "Doug" would be able to say "People of the Philippines, I have returned."

## CHAPTER SIX

### OUR STAY IN THE PHILIPPINES

Shortly after midnight on 20 October we took a "picket" station 10,000 yards ahead of the formation. "Picket duty" is for the purpose of establishing an "all is well" for the rest of the ships, and to intercept any enemy contact in the area. We returned to join the formation before daylight and accompanied the transports into San Pedro Bay.

We were all at our battle stations, expecting the worst, when shortly after dawn one "bogey" appeared high and fly-like in the still dim western sky. A beautiful dive was all that saved him. While everyone thought that he was going to hit the "drink," he pulled out and was gone, but not for long. We screened the bay throughout the day, while the smaller ships were unloading troops and supplies. Early in the evening we proceeded to the fire support area north of Surigao Strait through a smoke screen, as air raids were expected. And the expectation came true but the smoke was so thick that the planes were unable to see us and we were unable to see the planes. While necessarily, but cautiously, underway in the invisible undercast, we made a beautiful maneuver in coming alongside a transport. Everyone remembers the sarcastic, ironic remarks made between personnel of the two ships, but ABBOT men more clearly recall how rapidly they manned their, and in some cases, someone else's battle station when three twin-engined Nip bombers nearly took off our mast. With a fantail 20mm, Ritenour, S1c, ably coached by CTM Witt, was the only man that got a good shot at the planes. Throughout the entire night the moon shone brightly, and small barges kept smoke pots burning to hide the ships. Battlewagons and cruisers fired their salvos directly over us throughout the night, while other ships could be seen firing ack-ack at various intervals. Anything that looked like a "bogey" drew a stream of fire. We fired starshells into the Dulag area early in the evening. The remainder of the night we conducted harrassing shore bombardment on enemy lines at several different points, expending over 200 rounds of 5-inch ammo.

During the pre-dawn alert on the morning of the 21st there were several Jap planes in the vicinity, but due to the large number of ships present in the bay, firing was kept at a minimum. We did take a "Frances," (a twin-motored bomber) under fire on our port bow, opening fire at a range of about 5,000 yards. We threw everything at that plane but the "dehydrated spuds" but didn't bring him down. The Jap was after the "big stuff," however, and tossed his bomb at the bow of the U.S.S. CALIFORNIA in an unsuccessful attempt to damage her. The tables were turned and the "Prune Barge" scored a direct hit on the "Frances" as it passed over her bow and crashed on her starboard side. For the next few minutes there was shrapnel falling all around and the splashes in the water from other anti-aircraft shells didn't look like fish flopping. This incident will always be a "sea story" for ABBOT crewmen. Never will it be determined how that "Frances" got through our barrage.

We patrolled the bay for the remainder of the day. That night we retired with a transport group and headed for Hollandia to pick up more "dogies."

The ABBOT anchored in Humboldt Bay, Hollandia, New Guinea on 25 October with a pronounced sigh of relief that we had come through another "hot" engagement. After receiving a supply of ammo, provisions, other necessities, and of course, the always looked for but "hard-to-get-more-than-your-share" of beer, we proceeded to Aitape, about 110 miles "down" the coast of New Guinea. In our group was one transport which was to pick up a load of "dogies," who were indeed anxious to leave the area. Our sentiments were the same. It looked to be a desolate place, and the soldiers were willing to swap anything to get a carton of smokes or some candy. We got our first taste of army "clodhoppers" when we swapped them for some chow. The two Plouffe brothers met here after not having seen each other in over two years.

We returned to Hollandia on 1 November but were underway again on the 2nd, setting our course for Morotai Island to pick up troops and mechanized equipment. Arrived Morotai on the 5th where we were subjected to nine Jap air raids during the five nights we spent at the port, sometimes keeping us at our stations for three hours. But we persisted in our usual beer parties to help ease the bitterness that the Nips were causing.

All too jovial was the crew, when at reveille one morning, word had leaked out that we could expect to return to Pearl Harbor. In fact, the word was so "hush-hush" that our Comm. Officer, Lt. Magill closed the door of the coding shack and placed the cover on the "jeep" while breaking the message. But not long afterward another message was received that our squadron would return to Pearl Harbor but — and this is where it hurt — less the ABBOT and the STEMBEL, one of our sister ship in the squadron. All this seemed untrue and scuttlebutt really got hot until Lt. Baranger, our Exec, gave his well to be remembered "just one more operation" speech on the fantail. The basis for his statements being the fact that we had missed the Gilbert's operation, but ironically, the words became the theme for crew members as we began every new assignment thereafter — "just one more, boys, just one more." And there were quite a few more. While on exercises out of Morotai, lookouts spotted an outrigger canoe drifting in the water. Since the First Lieutenant was a hobbist of the first degree, he finally convinced the CBM to hoist it aboard, with much expended effort from many of the men. It was never learned what happened to the canoe since it disappeared from the fantail during the dark night hours. Someone may have pulled a "rubber life raft special" and swapped it for some urgently needed requirement which only a native's daughter can possess.

We were underway on November 10 for Leyte with various types of re-supply ships. On the 14th, a "Jill" (Jap torpedo bomber) made a run on the group, strafing a destroyer and tossing his fish at the CATSKILL (LSV-1). The CATSKILL, while turning a hard right rudder to avoid the "fish," shot down the plane which crashed about 1000 yards forward of us. There was much debris scattered about as we passed through the area and the Captain stood by with his trusty rifle, ready to engage any survivors who might bob up to the surface of the water. Meanwhile, the "fish" completely missed all possible targets and its wake was visible for a considerable distance.

The ABBOT arrived at Leyte on the fourteenth of November and it was not long before we were under attack by four enemy planes. Ack-ack from ships got one and P-38's polished off the other three. We remained at condition "one easy" all during the day and ate chow at battle stations late that afternoon. The ship got underway for Manus. While en route our orders were changed, however, and we joined another task group which was headed for Leyte. While transiting the entrance to Leyte Gulf during the night of the 22nd, we were under attack three times. There were several "bogies" in the area and one "Jill" dropped a "fish" about 500 yards off our port quarter. There are many stories as to how close both the plane and the fish came to the ship. It is a known fact, however, that the greater number of men having battle stations around the fantail hit the deck as the plane was coming in. And their judgment was sound as "things" could have happened.

The 23rd of November, Thanksgiving Day, was celebrated in Leyte Gulf; and did we eat chow! — "K" rations — although that wasn't the planned menu. But such is war. We were at battle stations all day. Our spirits were greatly bolstered by receipt of mail, however. While trying to absorb our "sugar reports" a squadron of P-38's shot down a "bogie" off our port bow and in desperation he tried to dive into a transport anchored nearby. The plane came about as close as was possible without hitting it, and we fired about 20 rounds of 5 inch at a "Judy" a short time later and sent it away smoking. In the afternoon another acrobatic "Judy" tested the skill of nearly all the ship's gunners in the gulf as he maneuvered along the horizon darting up and down and around the shell bursts, but he kept right on going until the deadly skill of a more maneuverable P-38 pilot sent him spinning and burning into the "drink." We also fired at "bogies" that night while proceeding to Hollandia with unobserved results.

Arriving at Hollandia on the 29th, we merely stood by while the remainder of our squadron displayed homeward bound pennants. These were trying days in our young lives. Our buddies were going home while we had "just one more operation" to do, and we began to wonder when that operation would commence.

For 23 long days the Navy seemed to forget us. The Mindoro operation was in the offing but the "A" was not included. Our "sugar reports" weren't coming through regularly; the only things we seemed to get plenty of was recreation and beer. Saw a few WACS with negative results.

We remained at Hollandia until 23 December when we got underway for Leyte with the ALFRED M. LUNT, a merchant ship. The trip proved dull and uneventful. Christmas Day services were held in the mess hall while underway with a very appropriate program planned and presented by both officers and men. We had good chow on Christmas Day but certainly suffered for it later. We entered San Pedro Bay on 27 December and moored alongside the S. S. CAPE ST. ELIAS for repairs.

The Japs were no longer a menace in that area, and air raids were few and far between.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE ABBOT AND THE PHILIPPINE NAVY

With the light-headed, bright-eyed appearance of the crew making it evident that the facilities were not available for an old-fashioned binge, most of us greeted the New Year's dawn, sober and more rested than any year since we were seven years old. Having offered itself as a theatre, trading post, tavern, repair ship, and as an outlet for the urge to visit, chew the rag, or just whip the dog, the CAPE ST. ELIAS took its place among the host of other ships that have mothered us from time to time.

On 2 January we steamed through Surigao Straits, scene of the overwhelming defeat of the Jap fleet a few months before, and started out on the Lingayen Campaign. Over the silt-covered, rusted hulks of the Emperor's once proud fleet units, slipped one of the mightiest fighting task forces to meet the Nips in that theatre. Composed of a majority of the heavy units salvaged from the Pearl Harbor stab in the back, these ships were soon to find revenge and prove they still had a Sunday punch left.

Knowing our movements in the confined waters were somewhat limited, the Japs took every opportunity to capitalize on it. Our task force was covered with an umbrella of the fly-fly boys from the baby flattops who splashed several of the enemy airborne planes and worked over nearby airfields and air installations.

With oriental stubbornness the "slant eyes" tried, and tried again. Using every play in the book, running around the ends and through the center, they found our pilots were up to all their tricks. On the 4th, toward sunset, one Kamikaze scored a hit on the OMMANEY BAY, crashing into her flight deck. In a short time, thick black smoke developed along with heavy explosions and crackle of small arms ammo. Despite all efforts to save her, fires got out of control and the stricken carrier had to be sunk. The destroyers assigned to the task turned-to with a will, braving the dangers, thinking only of helping to save as many lives as possible. The BELL, commanded by Commander Gabbert, our former Exec, was one of the destroyers which attempted to fight the fires and pick up survivors that had abandoned ship. Just at dusk the Task Group Commander ordered the BURNS to torpedo the OMMANEY BAY which by this time was a flaming wreckage, far beyond salvage.

The next day it was like Macy's basement, with our task group for the bargain. The Kamikaze boys dropped in all over the place, scoring some hits, but we plowed on knowing that our turn to dish it out would come soon.

"Time" made mention of a hundred-plane raid, but thanks to our CAP, we didn't see quite that many. Typical of the action were three callers who, after being guided by the Divine One himself, got within sighting distance of the formation. Being in the 2% by which Admiral Mitcher is annoyed, they hit the screen with the idea of paying their respects to the captain of a carrier. The MAURY, an old timer at this sort of gate crashing, punched two of their tickets before they got close, nipping the third one as he turned back on the

poor, almost defenseless "can" — to argue no doubt. This was the last real trouble our group was to run into with the Nips during this campaign.

The China Sea in itself is a miserable, rough, white-capped body of water but when mixed with the proper amount of beans, rice and tomatoes, it becomes a lasting, unpleasant memory. No one could do this period justice. "Meat" was plentiful, raisins never trusted, K rations a treat and the store-rooms were more nearly emptied than ever before. It affected each man in a different way although some little discomfort was experienced by everyone. It is safe to say that beans were never received as enthusiastically. Not having too much to do, the Supply Department fell out of its normal orderly routine and ended up with new duties. Mort, the Pirate, was assigned the difficult job of figuring out the number of combinations that could be made from types of food supplies on board — all three of them. Perrin's job was to transpose Mort's combinations into chow, and thence to the mess hall. Disposal of all but a small part of this "combination" was under the supervision of a mess cook and he worked like heck carrying it all back. "Dutch" lorded it over the can openers, accounting for every can, as one couldn't leave anything in the bottoms or on the sides, and their potential use as weapons against the "S" men was not overlooked. Two cooks were assigned temporary duty with the bakers to assist them in carrying down the rolls and buns. Floyd had meanwhile dislocated his shoulder taking a very small pan of fluffy, flavor-laden parker house rolls out of the oven. Bonnett, not to be trusted in the storerooms with the chow, was given the unpopular job of giving a nightly account of the wonderful chow that could be ours by passing through the hatch on the port side. With Mort so busy on food figures, Jim Crowe had to give his money away nightly in the mess hall so that the crew wouldn't holler on pay day — he did a commendable job of it too. The rest of that unmentionable group of bellyrobbers acted as bodyguards for the higher-ups, as checkers on break-outs and three men won their "E's" as exterminators! Gad, what a month!

In the meantime our forces were covering the landings at Lingayen Gulf at the same place the Nips got ashore in 1942 and also later landings at San Fernando and Nsugbu. With nothing handy enough to bring the groceries out, the Great White Fathers at Leyte were thoughtful enough to send us a little mail and it did help. This never-to-be-forgotten month came to a close with the O'BANNON, MOORE, GOSS and BELL chasing down a sub. Later it was learned that these ships inflicted probable damage to it.

That same night we stepped in with some fast company in the form of a cruiser group. We were to stay with them for some time, receive fine treatment, and feel a little reluctant to leave them. Among our publicized companions were the BOISE, of Guadalcanal fame, O'BANNON (Little Helena) NICHOLAS (a loose rail on the Tokyo Express), FLETCHER and RADFORD, of Kula Gulf fame, along with the JENKINS, LAVALLETTE and TAYLOR, all in and out of the slot so long that they felt like street car tokens. A fine group, all eager beavers and loaded for bear.

The first week of February found us at Mindoro, for a well-earned rest. Our ration books weren't good for a few more days and we struggled along

on what we could grab from other ships. The boys, with their visits to San Jose, undoubtedly carried away a lot of new souvenirs and the more fortunate ones witnessed their first cock fight. With no urging, the lads turned to on the chow when it did arrive. We were all shipshape on 9 February to shove off for Subic Bay.

We looked forward very keenly to arriving at Subic Bay. With Grande Island blocking the opening to the bulging land-locked bay, we were forced to slip in close to the shore in order to pass into the harbor. Quite a treat, being so close to such a fine piece of good earth as that particular spot — after all those odorless atolls — the grassy smell that wafed over us, made a lot of staunch reserves out of borderline cases.

This area had recently been overrun by troops of the 11th Airborne Division, and fighting was still going on back in the hills when we arrived. Because of this, liberty was curtailed and the men — interested in recreation at no matter what the trouble — readily agreed to the executive officer's suggestion that we take up "fishing." They were easily discouraged though, and frequent trips were made back to the ship — men mumbled to themselves about not catching anything and left the boat — their place to be taken by someone whose thirst for the sport had not yet been quenched.

The battle of "Zig-Zag Pass" was being fought in the hills just beyond the anchorage, and we could see the columns of smoke and dust rising from both sides of the valley. Gun flashes, fires, tracers and rumblings in the night provided openings for conversation while the daytime exhibitions in dive bombing and strafing afforded a welcome break in our usual in-port routine.

After combat troops had combed the island for possible snipers, we were allowed to visit Grande Island, at the mouth of the bay. American forces were forced to abandon this place in the Bataan retreat and had carefully put all the guns beyond immediate repair before they left. The Nips, confident that we would never return, had gone to no trouble to fix them, and for this reason our entry into the bay was uncontested.

The island, while small, had some interesting points. The arrangement of the guns, the machinery for handling the large calibre ammunition, the dark, damp ammunition storerooms under layers and layers of thick concrete, the system of observation towers, and the commanding view from the fort of both sides of the bay, were all interesting enough to merit an afternoon liberty.

With so much activity going on all about us, we were rather anxious to get in on the clean-up before Doug had all the Japs run out. Our forces that previously had landed at Lingayen had fought their way down the Luzon valley to the outskirts of Manila, and nightly we could see the glow in the sky, where the Nips were putting the torch to the "Pearl of the Orient."

With our wish seemingly their command, it was not long before our force of cruisers and destroyers pulled up in front of the Manila Bay entrance on February 13 and sent in some 5- and 6-inch calling cards. The Japs were given fair warning that the lease was up, and that we had intentions of evicting them. So began the initial phase of a pounding that was to last on and off

for the next four days. The Japs gave up responding a few days before that. It was hardly profitable for them. With every salvo from the islands or the Rock, the location of one of their batteries was given away and brought a smothering hail of fire from our ships that usually silenced it for good. Even Corregidor couldn't stand that very long—and the returning salvos became less frequent—soon to be stopped completely.

The entrance to Manila Bay, according to old-fashioned pre-war standards, was an ideal position for defense. Formed by the Bataan and the Cavite Peninsula, the opening to the bay was studded with Corregidor, Caballo Island, El Fraile Island and Carabao Island. Theoretically this was a well fortified area, but the Japs had again unsuspectingly slacked off and failed to rearm the damaged fortresses too well. The bombardment, well planned affair that it was, left the Cavite Peninsula alone—nothing there to bother with. The next link in the fortification was a fort located on Carabao Island which the ABBOT personally took under fire the first day, the 13th of February, and gave us no trouble from that day on. El Fraile, standing apart from the others, in the southern approach, was a more familiar landmark to some of us. Ripley had at one time or another given it a boost in his "Believe It or Not" column, as the concrete battleship, that never moves. The reason—Fort Drum, constructed there by the Americans, had two 14-inch guns in turret arrangement, and a 6-inch secondary battery casemated in the sides in keeping with pre-war capital ship practice. This island received only a few salvos, more to keep the sight-seers down, the guns having been effectively put out of commission by aircraft.

Caballo Island, the next nut to crack, standing side by side with the thin end of Corregidor with its seaward side protected by a huge towering white cliff, was an excellent spot for covering the opening to the bay, and the Americans also had a fort there prior to 1942. Opposition from the Nips there amounted to small calibre fire which came from the sheltered side of the island. Because of our location, counter battery firing was difficult.

A few days later, and prior to amphibious and paratroop landings, the Japs started to shoot at our mine sweepers engaged in clearing the area. But our CL's and DD's took those shore batteries under fire and silenced them. For sport, the 40mm's with uncanny precision pryed into all the possible caves on the cliff's face, making it rather tough for the Japs to use them as observation posts.

The last and most important part of the defense point was the turtle back, tadpole-shaped island of Corregidor. It was there so many real American heroes had died, and for this reason alone our presence there seemed quite important. This was definitely an honorable and important assignment, and our Task Group did itself justice. The initial bombardment with precision shooting in knocking out enemy guns and call-fire in support of the Army were sights at which to marvel.

On February 14th we repeated the performance of the day before, also a little notice to the other islands that we hadn't forgotten them, then standing by Corregidor the rest of the day, shooting at targets of opportunity. The mine-sweeps, doing a superb job for the previous two days, were going into Marvilles



Harbor, to clean it up for the invasion scheduled the next day. Standing by for counter-battery fire was the LAVALLETTE and the RADFORD. About 1700 the LAVALLETTE struck a mine. The 'Dabbler' was assigned to assist her, and we proceeded at once to approach the entrance to the bay. The RADFORD, going to aid the stricken ship was itself damaged by another mine. Upon our arrival at the scene, both ships were maneuvering under their own power, and were able to retire. Our medical party, Doc, Jenks, and Mack, were transferred to the RADFORD to help with the casualties, and we escorted her into Subic Bay.

On station on February 15th, we spent most of the day standing by for counter-battery fire on Corregidor, while the bulk of our formation laid down a curtain of fire for the successful assault landing at Bataan. The only ship damaged was an LSM which sunk after striking a mine before the landing.

The 16th will go down as another "never to be forgotten day" for all men with battle stations topside. We had seats on the 50-yard line for one of the greatest shows we ever had a chance to witness. Army and Navy took turns carrying the ball, both on the same side for this big event—the home team took an awful beating, retreating to the showers, or other spots deep in the earth, soon after the game started.

From the very crack of dawn the ships, high level bombers, fighters, and dive bombers kept a steady rain of shells and bombs falling on Corregidor. The entire island was lost in clouds of smoke and dust for minutes at a time. So close were we that the fall of all the bombs could be followed by eye, and our shirts were stuck against us from the concussions of the larger explosions. The Army Air Force made a review of it. Every type took their turns, high level heavies, parachute bombing by the mediums, dive bombers, fighters strafing—why even a cruiser observation plane requested permission to drop his two little bombs, and went in for a strafing run. Just before "H" hour, the inferno increased, the ships stepped up their fire, each with a certain area to rake over. The entire northern end of the island was covered with explosions, smoke, fire bombs sending their distinguishable black plumes of smoke up among the browner dust clouds. The entire sky to the eastward was filled with planes, transports carrying the men who were to make the assault landings. They came in very low, seeming to move unearthly slow when compared to the buzzing fighters that protected them. Appearing to just clear the "topside" of the Rock by a few hundred feet, the lead plane disgorged the first nine men of this great aerial invasion—the second such landing to be attempted in the Pacific area. Floating down on the Jap held positions, they seemed so all alone—so insignificant a threat to that huge rock, but seconds later the second nine and soon the third were in the air, a few more minutes found the entire sky filled with troopers on the way down, landing close together. Through the glasses we could see them forming up and commencing to advance on the shambles that were once barracks and a town. The later planes sent food, ammunition, medical supplies, guns and everything else to make this operation a success. Each type of material had an identifying color, and scuttlebutt has it that blue chutes were CB's being landed to build an officers' club. Gad, but there were lots of blue chutes!

Hour after hour this steady stream of planes approached the island, dropped their cargo and went their way. While the airborne troops were still landing, the minesweeps once more were on the spot. The waters east of Corregidor and Caballo were to be swept at this time, and with the first sweeps entering these waters the heretofore hidden Jap guns on Caballo Island started firing at the minesweepers. Several ships the 'Dabbler' covered the island with rapid fire—throwing up a blinding cloud of smoke and dust—and a killing hail of steel fragment. The minesweeping operations continued unhampered, as the enemy fire ceased in very short order.

At approximately 11:15 the amphibious landing was made at the narrow neck of Corregidor, near the base of Malinda Hill without casualty to any naval vessels. This force, comprised of soldiers who had the day before landed on the Battan Peninsula, joined with the paratroopers, and before the day was out had driven all the Japs deep into the caves on the northern end, and forced them down toward the tail-end of the island.

Having worked their way well into the inner reaches of the entrance, the sweeps were getting more mines cut than they could handle themselves. Because of danger to the heavier ships from floating mines, the ABBOT, SAUFLEY and HOPEWELL were assigned to aid the AM's. When the area assigned to us was cleared, we had accounted for six mines ourself, tagging them with 40mm. fire, and had a too close call with a mislaid bomb from one of our own dive bombers.

Standing-by, the night of the 16th, with the CLAXTON, as fire support ship, the "A" kept up illumination whenever called for by the paratroopers on the island. During the night, after an urgent call from the beach, we sent in a few vigorous salvos, later to find that we had broken up a Banzai attack. We took our congratulations from the beach like veterans.

February 17th found us with new duties—when after receiving word to investigate some objects in the water close to the island, we found the first one to be a Jap. Clinging to a board, with a water-logged boat nearby, he was attempting to shoot himself in the head with his pistol. A well directed shot from the captain's gun distracted him, and as we came alongside, he made one last attempt to drown himself. Now this is a very complicated process and most of the crew never having such a close-up view of such a procedure before we were all very interested in him. A strong line convinced him that life was still sweeter than the other extreme, and we heaved him aboard.

The second object was 100% more interesting, being two Japs, who waved at us, showing a great desire to come aboard and make friends. One was holding on to a long sword and warning was given the men on the lower deck to watch out for it. That was the only thing that prevented it from ending up on the wardroom bulkhead—the Jap could understand English. He immediately tossed it away to show his good intentions.

Having been educated in California this boy was on to the routine we have for prisoners—and convinced a few of his companions to take a chance with him. A member of the naval artillery unit on Corregidor, he had originally intended to swim to Bataan with his comrade, but after trying for two days

they had given up all hope of making it. When questioned by the Intelligence Officer of a larger ship, this prisoner gave a great deal of information on the conditions on the islands, the way he felt about the bombardment, the number of men on the harbor islands, and the surrounding peninsulas.

A few fire support missions from the waters north of Corregidor that had been rather hurriedly swept the previous afternoon to the tune of hidden Jap guns completed our work for this operation. The gunners did their usual superb job on these shoots.

Back to the almost pleasant Subic Bay for a little rest and recreation, movies on the forecastle, beer on the beach, and with a legit excuse, a trip to Olongapo. February 21st was Christmas on the ABBOT. All the Christmas cards, packages and "wish you were home" notes arrived in 65 separate gooey packages. When dumped on the fantail it made a great pastime. Digging out the smashed cartons and bundles—finding that Aunt Minnie did send you something—but it wasn't a tie this year—no tie ever smelt like that.

Left Subic Bay for Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, on the 24th of February, leaving the latter port on the 27th for the invasion of Puerto Princesa, Palawan Island. This is the long finger-like island on the southwestern side of the Philippines. There hadn't been too much Japanese activity there during the occupation, an occasional use of the one or two harbors for fueling stops on their long commercial routes to the rich Indies. As we expected—there wasn't much opposition to the landing at 0745 on the 28th, and not being in the bombardment group, but standing by for counter-battery fire, we didn't get to shoot at all. Afternoon brought promise of a little skirmish, with us being assigned to cover two landing craft investigating Turtle Bay—a short way down the coast. The landing craft cautiously approached the narrow opening to the bay—sounding as they went, but the search was carried out without incident. Returned to Puerto Princessa at 1530—in time to start for Mindoro with the cruiser group. This operation, quiet as it was, left Doug MacArthur entrenched in the entire length of the Western Philippines from Luzon to Palawan—leaving the remaining Japs on the island of Mindanao, last Jap-held large island in the group, to await its fate.

The return trip was routine except for a quick stop at Mangarin Bay, Mindoro. Proceeding ahead of the formation at 28 knots, we entered the anchorage, made a "four bells and a jingle landing" alongside the SOPA for some mail for the group and a passenger, rejoining as they came abreast the harbor entrance. We proceeded on to Subic Bay, arriving at 1800 on March 1st.

With our destination Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, as usual, we got underway on March 4th in company with three destroyers and the BOISE and PHOENIX. A short stay in Mangarin Bay, and on the 7th we left for our newest liberating operation. It appeared that if any destroyer had earned the Philippine Liberation Ribbon we would certainly be among those considered. The crew figured roughly that we liberated more Filipinos than any other two cans west of the Panama Canal.

The chosen spot was Zamboanga, third largest city in the islands and site of the former Army Southern Headquarters, located on Mindanao Island. This

was the last enemy stronghold in the Southern Philippines—mines were expected and there was a chance they might have some aircraft saved in the south for just such an occasion as this.

We entered Basilan Straits, between the Zamboanga Peninsula and Basilan Island, on the 8th. Breaking up into two bombardment groups, each with a cruiser and two destroyers, the ships went about their scheduled bombardment without further delay. The response from the beach was so negligible—the place had been terribly over-rated—we knocked off early in the afternoon and just sat around taking in the sights.

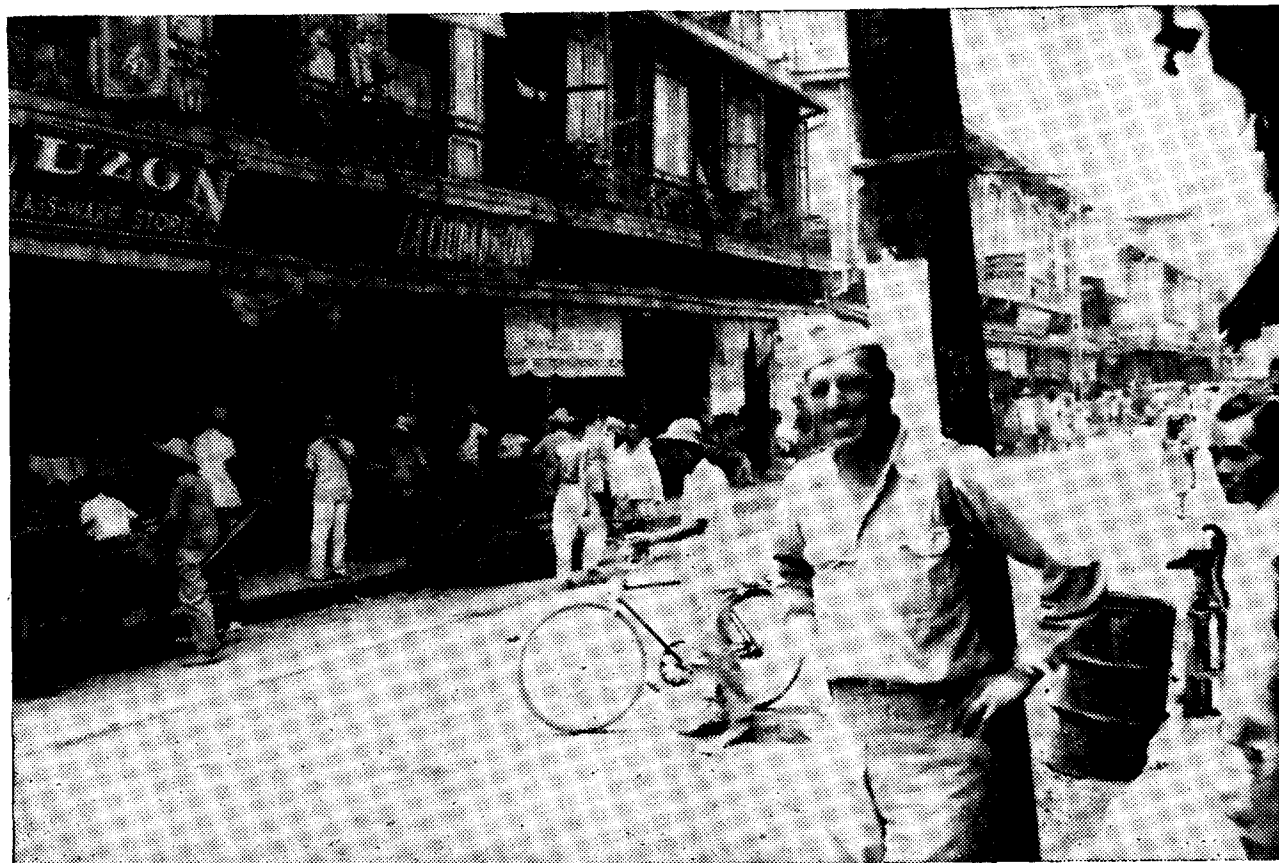
March 9th the ABBOT added some new experiences to her long list of oddities. We had to dispatch one of our boats to tow the BOISE's plane back to her ship—the pilot having embarrassingly run out of gas—his mission however was successfully completed. Our lookout spotted a plane hidden among the brush just off the airfield, and we had our first "sitting duck" to shoot at. At 1827 a pillbox on Galivan point opened up—and we took it under fire with 43 rounds of ammo, destroying the pillbox and leaving the area burning. We continued to bombard the landing beaches with 5-inch and 40mm fire in preparation for the scheduled landings on the 10th until time to retire for the night.

Units of the 41st Infantry Division made the assault landing at 0900, after the ships of our group and the supporting landing craft, rocket LCI's and planes had raked the beaches with fire since 0650. The soldiers proceeded to fan out swiftly along the beach, and we moved along with them as fire support ship to the outskirts of the town of Zamboanga. Destroyed several enemy field pieces under the direction of the shore fire control party, but had to retire for the night, before we could locate the position of an enemy mortar that was dropping them in our lines.

Had our own little day on the 11th, being assigned to take the town of Isabella, on Basilan Island, under fire. We loaded ammunition from an LST off Zamboanga and proceeded on the mission assigned. The enemy was suspected of hiding barges in the vicinity. With the aid of the BOISE'S spotting plane, we peppered all the likely coves and inlets—the pilot spotted us on several barges which were destroyed. With a few parting shots at the town to discourage the Nips from being too comfortable, we retired from the area, apparently chased away by a brave bum boat that had come the longest way out you ever saw.

The Army had the situation well under control on March 12th, and after standing by most of the day, we were off for Mindoro at 1600, making the usual short stop on the 13th of March, thence to Subic Bay, arriving on the 14th.

Subic Bay by now had grown from the beautiful blue bay we first knew, to a crowded bustling harbor full of ships of all sorts. Quite evident were the usual MTB (Mooring Torpedo Boats), coming alongside for water, to tell us sea stories, take a shower, and leave with half of our chow. We loved them all—and for once they came through with a suggestion that wouldn't cost us. Patrolling up and down the Bataan coast, they had a boat a day going into Manila and they offered to take seven of the boys along for the ride. What a



**DR. MRAZEK STRIKES A POSE IN MANILA, P.I.**



**LT. MAGILL DOES HIS BEST TO GET IN THIS PICTURE OF A STREET  
IN ILOILO, PANAY, P.I.**

scramble for that liberty. Of the lucky winners, "Dutch," the cook, didn't like the Manila chow; Lincoln got his signals mixed up and lost his way; Moore and Shaw became hopelessly confused with a truck, not arriving on station until the next day—but they all swear that they had a good time.

The HOBART, an Australian light cruiser taken out of the war with a torpedo in the early part of the Solomons campaign, had returned to the fight once more, joining our group at Subic. She was the new addition as we left for Cebu City on March 24th. The operating area being limited—a portion of our group was left at Mindoro, and we proceeded on with the PHOENIX and HOBART up through Bohol Strait—following the path that Magellan's adventurers had used a few hundred years before on their way to Mactan Island, a few miles beyond our present destination. While this operation was short, it proved to be the most concentrated bombardment that we had ever participated in. In less than an hour our blistered guns had sizzled 705 rounds of 5-inch ammunition into Talisay, scene of the landing of units of the America Division at 0828 on March 26th. The remainder of the day was spent in screening the heavy units standing by for fire support, but the land forces met no stiff resistance and they needed no additional help. Casualties were reported to be rather high, the landing beaches having been heavily mined by the Japs. A little excitement was in the offing in the other group, closer to Cebu City. A midget Jap submarine surfaced in the middle of a group of landing craft escorted by destroyers. The ships were in each others line of fire, but an LCI commander rammed the sub, and she sank out of sight.

We were detached the evening of the 26th, and proceeded to herd a group of LCI's and LSM's back to Leyte Gulf. Arrived at San Pedro Bay, on the morning of the 28th, delivered our little charges, and reported to Tolosa, to Commander Philippine Sea Frontier for duty. His magic touch—a few weeks duty with this outfit—and those orders for the states usually came through. The crew was in high hopes for a few hours—until we were sent to the tender for an overhaul period—the fixing up fixed us out here for a few more months.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### LEISURE TIME WELL SPENT

"April Fools' day found us at anchor in San Pedro Harbor, Leyte Gulf, waiting for orders and hoping they would be for onward routing to the "Promised Land." Once again we were disappointed as our next assignment was carrying mail, freight and passengers to various ports in the Philippines. We sailed 4 April on our first trip, making deliveries at Mindoro, Manila and Subic Bay and then returning to San Pedro. On our first trip into Manila Bay proper we were amazed, in spite of all of our past experience in this area, at the number of sunken ships and the damage to the waterfront. The large number of Jap ships sitting on the bottom was a wonderful tribute to the ability of our fast carrier pilots who worked over the bay. The mopping up of El Caballo and Fort Drum was still going on and we could see mortar fire at El Caballo as we passed. Completed our first trip on the 8th, and on the 10th, after a beach party at San Antone, (during which our friends the Filipinos learned that not even the water buffaloes were safe with ABBOTEERS around), we set forth on another trip, which was as were the third and fourth trip, repetitions of the first. In between, time was passed with stores working parties and beer parties. During our various calls at Manila we managed to acquire a large quantity of Jap invasion currency by bartering old clothes, cigarettes, etc., some of which was disposed of, at handsome profit, later to the members of other ships who were unable to visit the ports we had been in.

On our final trip, which was completed the 25th, much rejoicing was heard when we transferred part of our ammo to the U.S.S. JENKINS, but hopes were again dispelled when we returned to San Pedro and proceeded to reload. After replenishment was completed the 'Dabbler' proceeded to Cebu Harbor, arriving on the 27th, where we relieved the U.S.S. THATCHER (DD514) which was engaged in fire support duty with the American Division, then completing the mopping up of the northern part of the island. Although there was much bemoaning our fate at being cut off from the outside world in this forsaken anchorage, a short time later our attitude was changed when we realized how pleasant the duty we were engaged in was in comparison to the Okinawa push. Too, we learned that the THATCHER got in the way of a "Die for the Emperor" enthusiast shortly after her arrival on the scene of our latest thrust at the Japs. The next 11 days were spent in routine work aboard ship with daily swimming, movies, fishing parties (when the beach was restricted) and trips to Mactan Island, the burial place of Magellan, and Cebu City. For several days the beach was restricted to us due to the effect of the sudden influx of such a large number of liberty seeking sailors on the native economy and the plans of the Army for reconstruction. On the 3rd, and again the 6th, we proceeded to the northern part of the island where we bombarded reported concentrations of Nips in the vicinity of Toga, Tobogan village and Ilihan.

All good things must come to an end, thus on the 8th we departed, with many fine memories such as the special mass Father McCarthy celebrated for the ABBOT crew, the afternoon he and Father Dunford spent aboard ship;



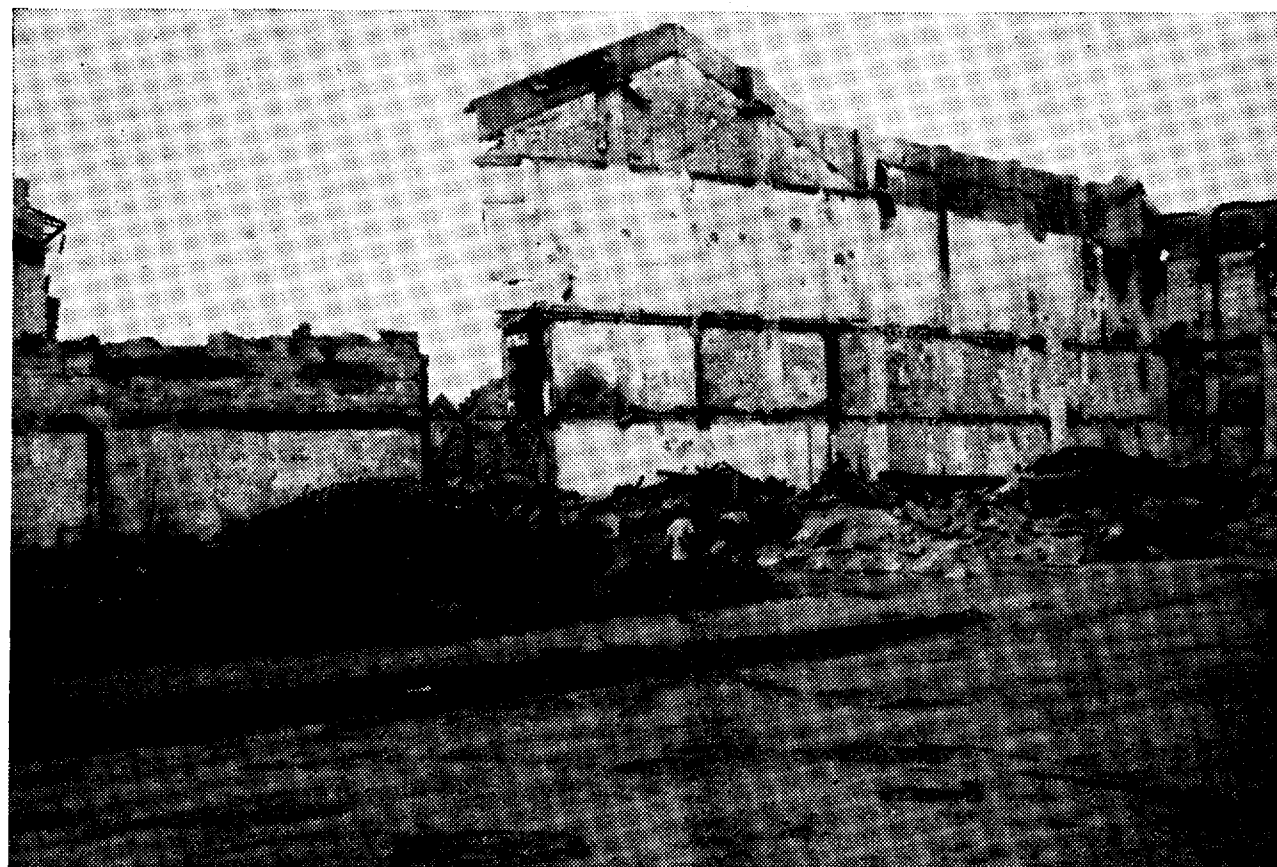
A PICTURESQUE VILLAGE WE VISITED ON SAMAR ISLAND



PHILIPPINE SMALL FRY DRESSED IN THE CURRENT FASHION

also others such as the bumboats, the hospitality of the inhabitants of Mactan (at \$8.00 per quart), Raphael's Romona, etc.

Our next stop was at Ormoc Bay, from which place we sortied on the 9th enroute to make the Macajaler Bay landing in northern Mindanao. On the 10th we bombarded the beach and adjacent hills in preparation for the landing. Initial opposition was light; the Japs retired into the hills. Due to the large entrance of the bay we spent the next five days on anti-sub patrol screening the landing craft and supply vessels. On the 15th we returned to Leyte to pick up fuel and supplies for the ships which were to remain at Macajaler. After discharging fuel, provisions and ammunition upon our return, we were returned to San Pedro Bay for further assignment. By this time the 'Dabbler' had navigated Surigad Straits so often that the wheel watch was secured when we approached the southern entrance and she proceeded along on her own initiative.

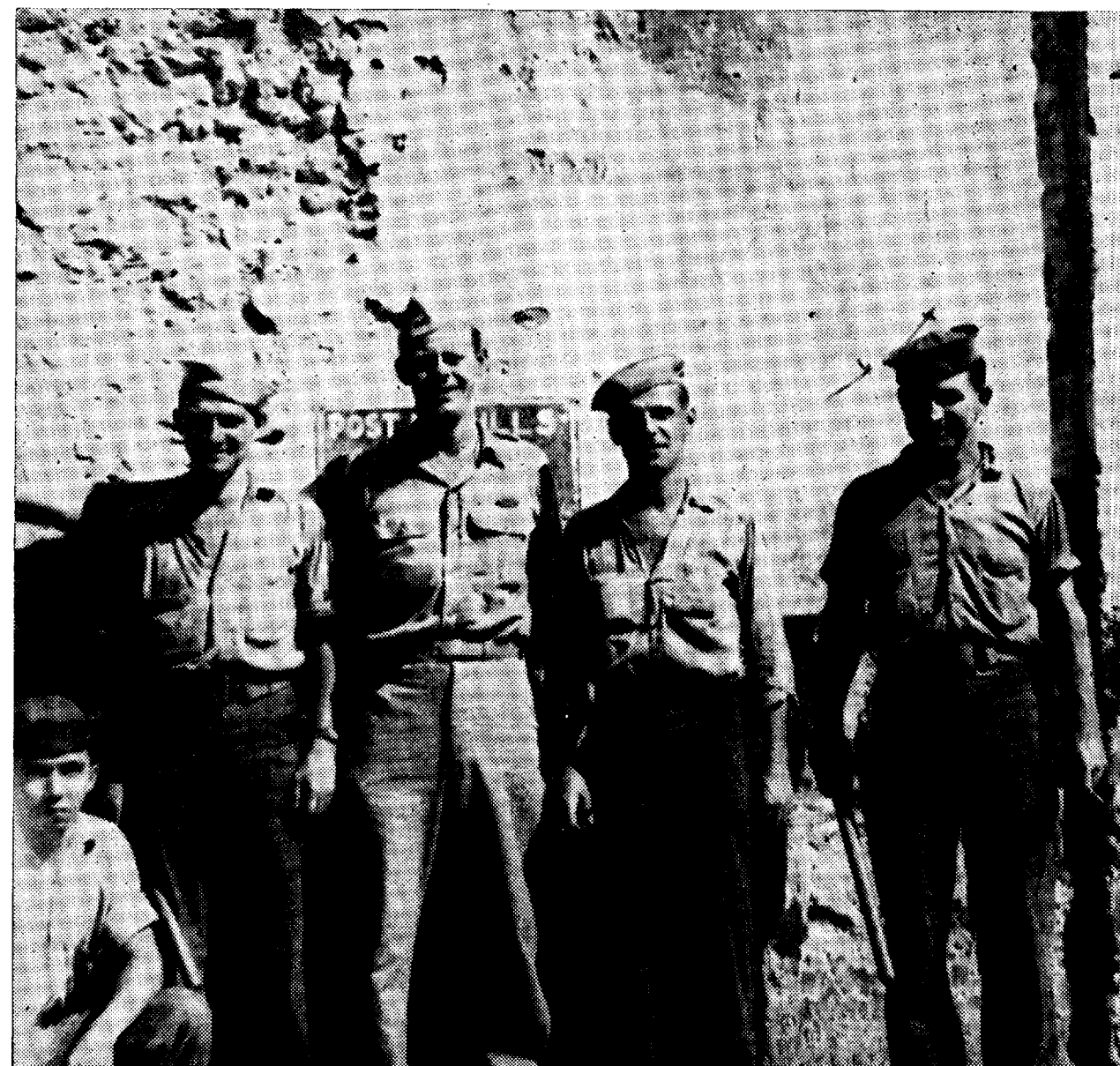


TYPICAL DESTRUCTION SEEN AT CEBU CITY

The 15th found us underway for Puerto Princessa, Palawan, assigned as A/S screen to a resupply convoy bound for Zamboanga and Parang anchorage on Southern Mindanao. After discharging supplies, fuel ammo and picking up stateside-bound passengers (among which were two recruits for Raphael's first post-war Broadway production), got underway arriving at San Pedro on the 29th. The odds were now 2 to 1 that we would receive stateside orders before the middle of June, with no takers. Someone missed an opportunity for a cleanup as the 31st brought orders to report to ComServRon 10 for duty. This meant farewell to MacArthur's Navy, and that we were joining the "big

boys," none other than Admiral Halsey's famed Third Fleet. The anticipation of new areas, and traveling with such an outfit offset the disappointment in being slated for "just one more operation, boys."

June 1st was ushered in with much speculation by the crew and every imaginable form of scuttlebutt making the rounds. Rumors were of everything from a strike against Singapore to a landing in the Kuriles. The latter having some foundation by reason of an order for all ships to replenish foul weather and winter gear. Some die-hards held out that maybe we were still going home, even in the face of the fact that we had 10 days availability with our old friend, the U.S.S. PIEDMONT. On the 7th we replaced all of our bombardment ammunition with anti-aircraft projectiles and moved alongside the PIEDMONT in company with the BULLARD, WALKER, STEMBEL and BLACK, the first time we had been in company with our old squadron mates



OLD SALTS AND A SCRIBE AT ILOILO, PANAY

Left to right, J. M. Richard, S. Schriebersdorf, O'Malley of the Associated Press, Joe Morton and Jim Crowe.

since the squadron abandoned the 'Dabbler' and STEMBEL in December and sailed off to sample the pleasures of Vallejo and points east. Many a tall tale was swapped and much ragging given back and forth. We learned how rugged the Okinawa push had been and passed on to the others how fortunate they were to have missed the Philippine campaign, particularly the mail trips. After four days alongside we anchored out with the CHAUNCEY and settled down to ten days of routine work, with movies, beach parties at Osmena Recreation Center, Samar Island, and occasional special liberties on Leyte. During this period Lt. (jg) Winkworth received orders and on the 11th departed, bound for home and a probable tour of stateside duty.

On the 18th we departed San Pedro Bay once more, bound for various ports, this time carrying passengers, Filipino naval personnel who had been given leave and transportation by Admiral Halsey to return to their homes for the first time since the war started. After short stops at Cebu City and Loay, Bohol, we arrived at Iloilo, Panay, on the 20th. Iloilo, the third largest city in the Philippines, though not damaged quite as much as Cebu City, was suffering the pangs of inflation and reconstruction. The people welcomed our liberty party with open arms, though the Army security force was not so cordial. The stories brought back by the members of the first real liberty since Pearl Harbor the previous year, whetted the appetites of everyone aboard. On our return to San Pedro Bay and reporting to Commander Task Force 38 for duty we learned that not only would we make the trip to pick up the men on leave, but would also have three war correspondents along, getting material for stories of destroyer life and the experiences of the people during the Jap occupation. The 22nd and 23rd were spent in training exercises with our new Task Group at sea and on the 24th after fueling ship and welcoming aboard George Jones, New York Times, Ernie Hoberecht, United Press, and Dick O'Malley, Associated Press, we departed from San Pedro Bay bound for Iloilo. The correspondents made an immediate hit with everyone aboard by their congeniality, as they had a stock of new (to us) stories and tales of other scenes of the war operation. We arrived at Iloilo the morning of the 21st and half of the crew was shoved off at 1300 for town with liberty to expire at 2200. The second half being scheduled for liberty the following day. Iloilo will long be remembered by every Abbotter, and probably the ABBOT will be remembered as long by the good people there as well as the Army personnel stationed there with the unpleasant duty of maintaining order. Statistics are not available as to the quantities of fried chicken, ham and eggs and the bottles "good stuff, Joe!," but few returned without full stomachs, empty pockets and unanimously agreeing we had had the best liberty since we left Boston in '43. Our guests were right along with us, stating how much the occasion had been enjoyed.

On our return trip we were tendered an invitation to come ashore for a dinner and dance by the inhabitants of Loay, Bohol, but duty calling and not having recovered from the effects of Iloilo, we regretfully declined and steamed back to San Pedro Bay. The 29th and 30th were spent by all hands in replenishment and preparation of the ship for the forthcoming operation.



**OUR CHIEFS IN HIGH SPIRITS ON SAMAR ISLAND**

Standing, left to right, E. S. Jenkins, CPhm; T. J. Perrin, CCS; C. R. Booty, CMM; S. P. McDonald, CMM; C. E. Zimmer, CWT; W. W. Bates, CRM; kneeling, left to right, R. F. Montijo, CMM; J. A. Hould, CQM; T. D. Westbrook, CBM; E. W. Johnston, CEM, and A. W. Eades, CWT.



**THE CAPTAIN CHATTING WITH WAR CORRESPONDENTS**

Left to right, Hoberecht, United Press; Captain Ingling; O'Malley, Associated Press, and Jones, N. Y. Times.

## CHAPTER NINE

### TOKYO BOUND

Despite the ever tiring task of replenishing ship, the crew found time to knock out those last minute letters and scoff a few more brews at the Osmena Recreation Center. Some of the fellows very profitably capitalized on the Jap invasion currency. Those "boots" on the flat tops and battle wagons had been too busy fighting the war to obtain any of the worthless Jap invasion money, so they were soft touches for our super-salesmen.

July 1 was a very significant day in the history of the Abbot in that it marked the end of our tour of duty in Philippine waters, and the beginning of a campaign that was to be the final one of the war. The coming operation, we hoped, would be the last of our "one more operation" sequence.

The previous evening the Captain's Gig and crew failed to return to the ship. We signaled every ship which might possibly help us to locate it. Still searching, we were steaming out of the bay when a merchant ship contacted us and informed us that the Dabblers boat crew had taken refuge alongside. The Skipper conned the ship out of column and practically alongside the merchantman, and lost very little time in hoisting the crippled Gig and smiling crew aboard. Regaining our station in column with DESRON 48 (plus the HEERMAN) we steamed out of San Pedro Bay in company with Cruiser Division 17. Rear Admiral J. C. Jones, USN, in the PASADENA was O.T.C.

Yes, we were Tokyo bound, and as a part of Admiral "Bull" Halsey's mighty Third Fleet. The force designation was TF 38 which comprised over one hundred combat vessels under the tactical command of the late Vice Admiral John S. McCain, USN. Needless to say, everyone was deeply impressed with the growth of our United States Navy; and it was quite in contrast with the Philippine Navy to which we had been forcefully attached for the past nine or more months. The complexity of organization and the speed at which maneuvers were conducted were a bit confusing at first, but in short order we had adapted ourselves to the situation and were performing our tasks like the old Pacific veterans that we are.

As we proceeded on the Road to Tokyo there was scarcely any opportunity for rest and relaxation because of the frequent drills which brought forth the familiar cry, "All hands man your battle stations." Anti-aircraft firing, surface firing, simulated air attacks, day and night torpedo runs, numerous battle practices, disposition changes, and other high speed maneuvers, all designed to whip the force into shape to meet any type of opposition the Japs might offer, took a heavy toll of "rack time" from all hands. Many times during that first week of the approach to battle we wished we were back in the easy-going Philippine Navy.

On the second day out from the Philippines we rescued one of the Monterey's fighter pilots who had been forced to set 'er down in the drink. He rode the 'Dabblers' for a few days, and I think he was glad to get back to base after rolling and pitching on a tin can. The Monterey did pass us the consolation prize of 20 gallons of ice cream for our rescue of her pilot.

Heavy seas were a constant reminder of our fight against such unpleasant elements off Lingayen Gulf. But the weather now as we proceeded north was rather cool, and the John L's were eagerly donned, especially by topside watchstanders. The swells were breaking over the bow with such force that often the director crews were drenched with icy spray. The sudden change from our tour of tropical duty resulted in a number of colds. But the APC boys kept the crew in fighting condition, and the growing tension as we drew nearer to Nippon Land, left us with little thought of minor discomforts.

On July third we made a rendezvous with the service group assigned to task force 38, and commenced the first of our many underway replenishment and refueling exercises. The 'Dabblers' was assigned the duty of passing mail, which by now was an old and monotonous routine job for us. But added to such duties was that of ferrying pilots between the carriers of not only our own group but those of groups one and four. During the course of such duty, we were honored in having Admiral Byrd, of the famous Byrd Expedition, as a passenger.

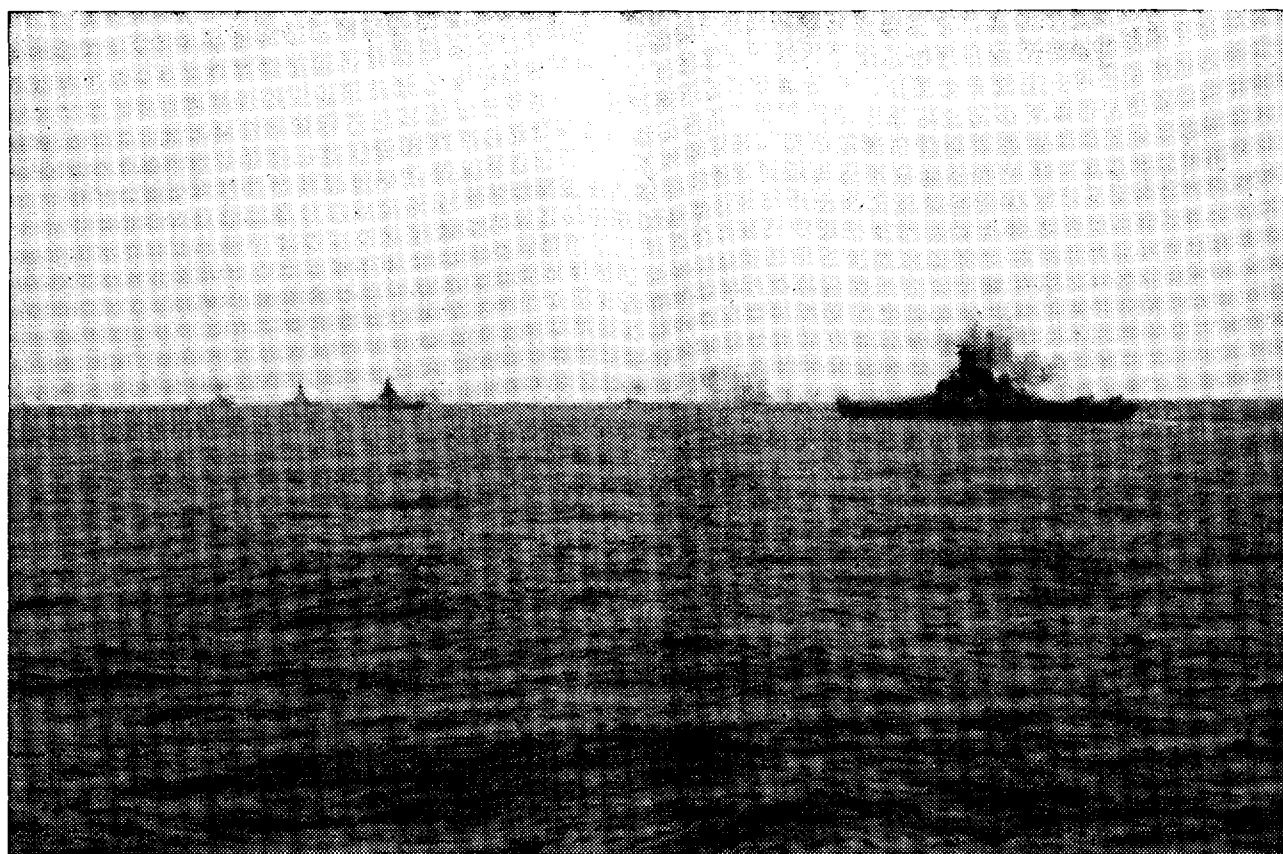
After completing fueling exercises, the force conducted AA firing practice at radio-controlled drones. Again the 'Dabblers' was assigned to special duty, this time retrieving downed drones. However, we did have the opportunity to fire a few rounds, and gun #2 knocked down one drone with as many rounds.

The next day, July 4th, we were assigned to picket duty, taking station some fifty miles from the group and in the direction of Tokyo. Some of our destroyers which were lost at Okinawa, were performing this same hazardous duty when a few of the Kamikazes took their last dive. Naturally, we were a bit on the nervous side when we found ourselves more or less alone. But the absence of enemy contact soon made us relax, and we experienced one more uneventful day. Frankly speaking, a few of the fellows were a bit disappointed.

Never-the-less, we knew that eventually the Slope Heads from the land of the rising sun would find us out and attempt to interrupt scheduled operations, and July 5th brought our first contact with enemy aircraft in the current operation. But for the effectiveness of our combat air patrol two of the Nips would have gotten in to our group (TG 38.3). Enough praise cannot be given the fighter director officers who most efficiently plotted all enemy contacts and kept all commands concerned alert to the immediate as well as distant dangers from the air. The close coordination of all four task groups and their air arms, without doubt, was responsible for keeping our losses to the very minimum of any operation or campaign thus far in our naval warfare.

Floating mines proved a constant menace to our forces, and the ABBOT, in sinking her share, fell into another old routine. Though an encounter with a contact mine (or any mine) can be very disastrous to a tin can, our good fortune in mine-infested waters at Corregidor left us rather cocky, nevertheless cautious, of such dangers.

Lack of further enemy contact put us much at ease, yet left us wondering about the Japs. We knew that they could hardly have more than the nucleus of a surface fleet. Too, we knew that their air power was dwindling, but the absence of air contacts led us to believe that Tojo might be saving his best for



**BATTLESHIPS IN BOMBARDMENT FORMATION FIRING ON KAMAISHI  
HONSHU, JAPAN, 14 JULY 1945**



**A VIEW TAKEN FROM THE ABBOT DURING A LULL IN BOMBARDMENT  
OF KAMAISHI, 14 JULY 1945**

an expected invasion of his homeland. So it was in this frame of mind on July 10 that we watched the break of dawn and the launching of the initial air strikes on the Japanese home island of Honshu. Because of the necessity of extreme caution and alertness on this occasion, the usual pre-dawn alert was extended throughout the greater part of the day. Consequently, chow amounted to tasty K rations, (our sympathies to the dogfaces and gyrenes), consumed at battle stations.

Contrary to expectations, there were very few air alerts that day, and none of the enemy aircraft got within visual distance of our group. All Nip Airdales who attempted to follow our pilots back to their carrier bases were either spotted by the pilots themselves or picked up by radar and consequently disposed of; or as was heard over the air frequencies, "splash one bogey."

Two days of air strikes failed to bring action from the enemy in any major sense, though our pilots and plane crews had numerous encounters over and near the targets. Actually, the Japs were caught with their pants down. Either that, or they were reluctant to oppose our forces in any great strength. Stories of our returning pilots would undoubtedly make very interesting reading, but we on the tin cans were denied much of these accounts, classified "military information." We got the latest dope from state-side news broadcasts as usual.

Following the initial air strikes, the force retired for replenishment of logistics, which event was scheduled to take place about every fourth day throughout the operation. The retirement this time was to the north in order to confuse the Japs as to our exact location. Admiral Halsey, our fleet commander, had openly defied the Japs to come out and fight, but evidently he did not consider it wise to give them a set up.

The weather was not entirely in our favor, though we continued to press home devastating strikes on the Jap home islands. Adverse weather is ever a hazard to carrier operations; and due to various conditions (not detailed herein) a number of our pilots hit the drink and the ever alert DDs proceeded to the rescue. Unfortunately, some of the men were never found.

If the Nips harbored any thought that we had already ventured as near to their back door as we dared, such absurd thinking was clarified when on July 14 Bombardment Group Able, consisting of the battleships South Dakota, Indiana, Massachusetts, the heavy cruisers Chicago and Quincy, Destroyer Squadron 48, less the Kidd, plus the Heerman, set out to shell the coast of northeastern Honshu. Our target was the steel mills at Kamaishi. As we drew near the shore at high speed, tension began to mount. Anything could happen now. Never had we dared risk our surface ships so close to Japanese home soil.

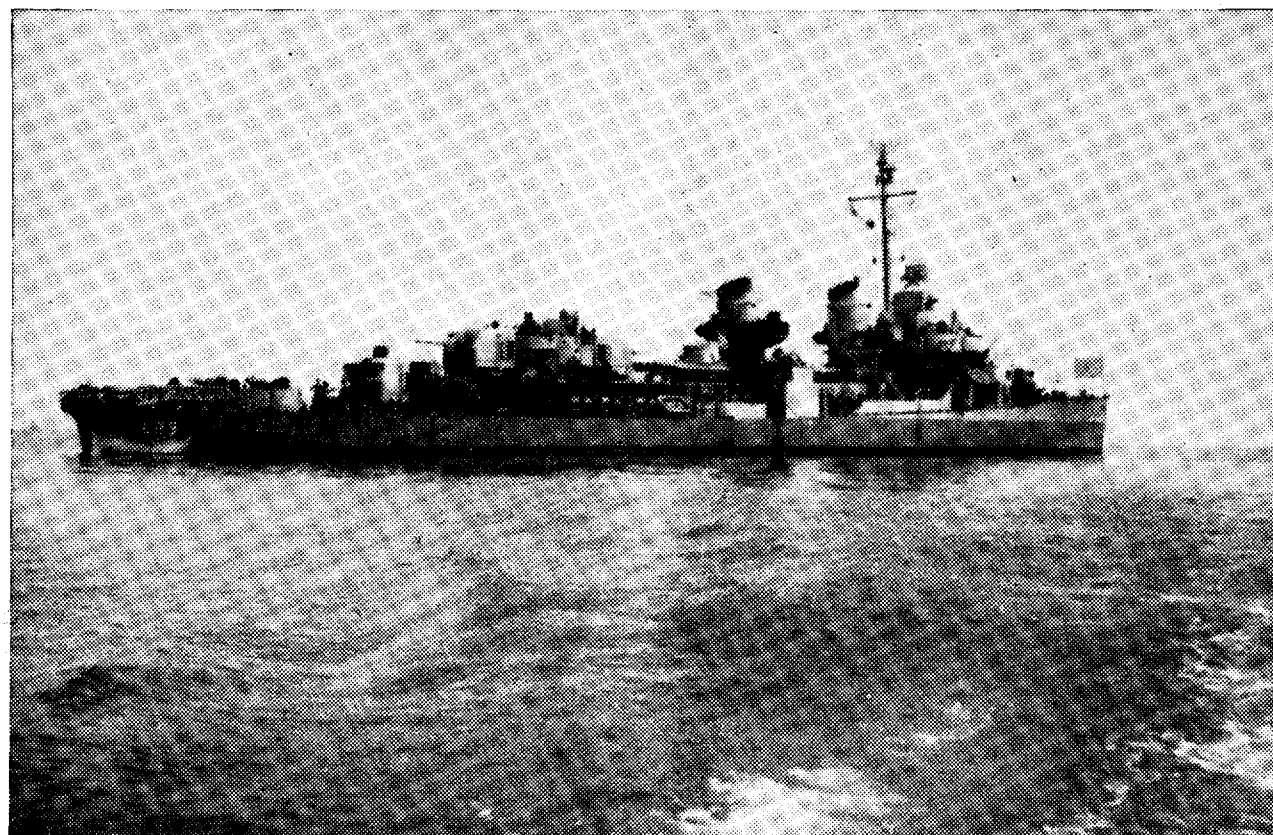
The Dabblers' position in formation for bombardment placed us broad on the bow of the heavy ship column and on the engaged side of the battle line. Approximately four miles separated us from the shores of Japan when the South Dakota fired the first salvo, giving her the honor of being the first major surface ship to fire on the Japanese home island. Broadside from the five heavy ships soon brought billows of smoke and flame from the mills,



bridges, harbor works and surrounding buildings. It was a very pleasing sight to see. Each reverse of course (always inboard) as we steamed back and forth, brought us nearer to the beach until the Dabblor was within 3000 yards of the shore on the last pass. Again there was very little opposition, though one of our spotter-fighters was shot down by enemy AA fire.

During the bombardment a surface contact was picked up by radar and DesDiv 96 was sent to investigate. The contact turned out to be a Jap tug and barge which were eliminated with no casualties to our boys.

Even before we had departed from a demolished Kamaishi, Admiral Halsey had announced to the press that U. S. surface units were shelling the Japanese home islands and he specifically named several ships. This was a departure from security procedure in the past, but it further defied the Japs to come out for a showdown fight.



THE ABBOT AT ANCHOR IN LEYTE GULF

We rejoined our respective carrier groups the following day and retired for replenishment exercises with one service force. Operations extended into the night and the typical American boldness was exercised when the ships were lighted to facilitate the handling of stores.

The week following was spent in striking the Jap home islands from Hokkaido to Kyushu, refueling, replenishing, retrieving downed pilots, sinking mines, passing mail, and numerous other routine operations.

On July 30 we were detached to carry out a bombardment mission on the city of Hamamatsu which is just south of Tokyo. This time our bombardment group had grown to include the heavy cruisers Boston and St. Paul and the



MOVING IN ON JAPAN, 14 JULY 1945

DD Southerland, plus the British battleship, King George V, the cruiser Maria and the destroyers Ulysses and Undino. Having had little opposition at Kamaishi, we approached the target with only the normal tensions of war. Approaching any target is always a bit trying on the nervous system, but we were confident of our ability to justly deal with any opposition we might encounter. Unlike Kamaishi, Hamamatsu was hit at night. The heavies were using sixteen inch tracers and to see them arching through the air and then exploded on the target reminded one of a colorful Fourth of July celebration at home.

On July 31 Lt. W. R. Baranger, our executive officer, was detached from the Abbot and transferred to a tanker for transportation and subsequent return to the U.S.A., via air. "Walt," as he was known in the wardroom (and no less among the crew), had served the Dabblers as executive officer since the early months of '44, when Lt. Comdr. J. S. C. Gabbert (then Exec) was detached to take command of the USS BELL. Though tentative plans were to return the Abbot (and others) to the States for yard overhaul on or about August 10, it was an envious crew that bade Lt. Baranger farewell and Bon Voyage. But an able officer, Lt. D. E. Lassell, had relieved Lt. Baranger, and the Dabblers was soon settled to the task at hand — hunting Japs.

The month of July had been a prosperous one for Task Force Thirty-Eight. What few ships had been left for the Japs to call a fleet were now resting on the bottom of Nippon harbors throughout the homeland. Airfields and factories had been gutted, other military targets demolished. Enemy air power was at the ebb. In short, the Japs were fast being brought to the realization that it was futile to continue to resist. How much longer would they continue to oppose such overwhelming force?

But the job was not yet complete, and the early days of August found TF38 moving in to tighten the noose around Hirohito's slender neck.

On the afternoon of August 7 a balloon was sighted low on the water and the Dabblers was sent to investigate same. After cautiously observing a half submerged undercarriage, the Skipper decided to play it safe, and gun #42 expended one round of 40mm ammo in destroying another of Nippon's weapons of war. Everyone had his own ideas about the balloon, but nothing definite was learned about the mysterious undercarriage. It could have been one intended for the U.S.A. Whatever its purpose, it will now harm no one.

The next morning at 0500, our squadron and cruiser division 17 were sent to investigate surface targets about 63 miles away. This we thought might be the Jap fleet. Three hours later and while reorienting at a speed of thirty-two knots, our starboard propeller dropped off. The ship shook violently and immediately swung to starboard as speed was suddenly reduced to fifteen knots. Some few men sleeping aft momentarily feared we had struck an underwater obstruction, possibly a mine. But the truth of the incident was soon ascertained and, upon orders, the Dabblers proceeded to rejoin the carrier group. The weather was quite foggy, and it was with some little difficulty that we limped back into formation with the carriers. The night hunt proved negative, much to the disappointment of all hands.

Unsatisfactory weather necessitated the cancelling of air strikes on August 8th. Destroyers low on fuel were refueled from the heavy ships and the force retired to the northeast.

The Dabblers being a cripple, did not participate in the bombardment on August 9th. With the weather improved, air strikes were launched on Northern Honshu on the 10th. The usual practice of Jap planes attempting to follow our planes back to base resulted in numerous air alerts for our forces. Our pilots shot down most of the intruders before they could make any runs on surface ships, but this day a few Kamikaze boys did penetrate uncomfortably close. The Wasp accounted for one within visual range of our group; another made an attempted run and was turned back by gun fire. Apparently he was not ready to die for the Emperor, though I dare say he never made it back to his own base.

Our destroyers on tomcat duty underwent several air attacks, and the BORIE was hit badly when one of the Emperor's best took his last dive. The Dabblers was ordered to join the Borie, and after receiving the Alabama's medical officer and three pharmacist's mates, we proceeded to assist the stricken ship. Plans were to transfer the serious casualties to the Abbot, but it was after dusk and the sea was a bit rough when we went alongside the Borie. Such a transfer would further endanger the lives of the wounded, so upon mutual agreement by the commanding officers the wounded were retained on the Borie, and the Alabama medical officer and assistants, plus our own Lt. Mrazek, Jenkins CPhm, and Van Hoy Phm2c, were transferred to that ship. Van Hoy had to be returned shortly for more blood plasma. Conditions were pretty bad and the Docs' really had a rugged time, but the lives of many were saved.

Later that evening we were ordered to rendezvous with the service group where the hospital ship RESCUE was believed to be. More medical supplies were transferred to the Borie and at noon on the 10th we joined the service group. But the RESCUE was not present. The Lardner was ordered to join our unit. (Abbot-Borie) and we immediately proceeded to the northwest where the Rescue was estimated to be. En route the Borie buried her dead and held services for those missing in action.

It was well into the night when the Rescue was sighted, but the Borie immediately went alongside and commenced transfer of her casualties. At the same time we recovered our capable medical staff. The past twenty-four hours same time we recovered our capable medical staff. The past twenty-four hours had been trying indeed for these men.

Shortly after midnight, the Borie having completed transfer of casualties, we set our course for Saipan Island, Marianas. The presence of a typhoon forming to the south resulted in our being ordered to rejoin the service group. We remained with this group until August 13 when we were ordered to again proceed to Saipan.

In the meantime the Atomic bomb had been loosed on Japan and there were rumors that the war was practically concluded. The Nips had had enough. The order to our forces to cease hostilities came on August 14th and in joyful reverence the Captain talked and prayed with the crew. Good fortune and Almighty God had been good to the U.S.S. ABBOT and her crew—and now

## MY SHIPMATES

we were going home.

WAIT! Read these last few words again. Yes, WE ARE GOING HOME! After two long years in the Pacific the Dabblor was being returned to the Promised Land — the good ole U. S. A. True, many of our fighting men had spent longer periods overseas, but we were well deserving of a rest.

We were a happy crew as we steamed into Saipan Harbor. An inspection of our damaged shaft necessitated our going into dry dock, but in the meantime we enjoyed a bit of recreation on the once bloody beaches of Saipan Island. The Chief Engineer, Lt. (jg) Koster, was temporarily detached and sent via air to Pearl Harbor, thence to the U. S. to get things squared away with the yard. Too, he was to arrange transportation for the first leave parties which our congenial Skipper planned to shove off as soon as possible after we arrived on the coast. The navy yard to which we were going was not yet known.

Our eagerness to be on our way made time drag, but on August 22 the Dabblor commenced the second leg of that long road back. The homeward bound pennant had long been eager to climb the mast and stream her colors from the truck; and a more eager crew was waiting for the Captain to give the order "run 'er up." That he did, and with pennant flying and spirits high, we set our course for Pearl Harbor, T. H.

All hands willingly turned to but only the necessary ship's work done in the process. The turning to was in breaking out those long idle dress blues and getting them in shape for those stateside liberties, which proved quite a task. Many men had outgrown their uniforms; some were too loose fitting; and numerous other problems confronted them. But through the efforts of C. L. Woosley, N. P. Ross and C. A. Richards, officiating as ship's tailors, the crew was fairly presentable when the Captain held personnel inspection en route to Pearl.

As we entered Pearl Harbor a message from Commander Destroyers Pacific Fleet was received inviting the Abbot's officers and crew to an open house in celebration of our return from the wars. Most naturally we accepted, though it was impossible for all hands to attend. There was not sufficient time for the Captain to grant liberty in Honolulu, but this time there were no gripes heard from any of the men.

We soon learned that the Abbot had been assigned to Puget Sound Navy Yard in Bremerton, Wash., and the day following our arrival at Pearl (Sept. 1) the Dabblor commenced the last leg of the homeward bound trip. With only one screw, speed was held to 16 knots which seemed, and was, very slow indeed. But the six days between Pearl and home gave all hands an opportunity to make the necessary last minute preparations for the coming tour of "stateside duty."

September 7 will be considered by many as the most significant day in the history of the Abbot, for on that day we entered Juan De Fuca Strait — home waters. Others will always remember September 8, for on that day two years ago the Abbot left Boston, Mass., for the great unknown. Whatever the remembrances of individuals, the author of these lines believes that all hands are united in saying, "thank God the war is over, and we are home."