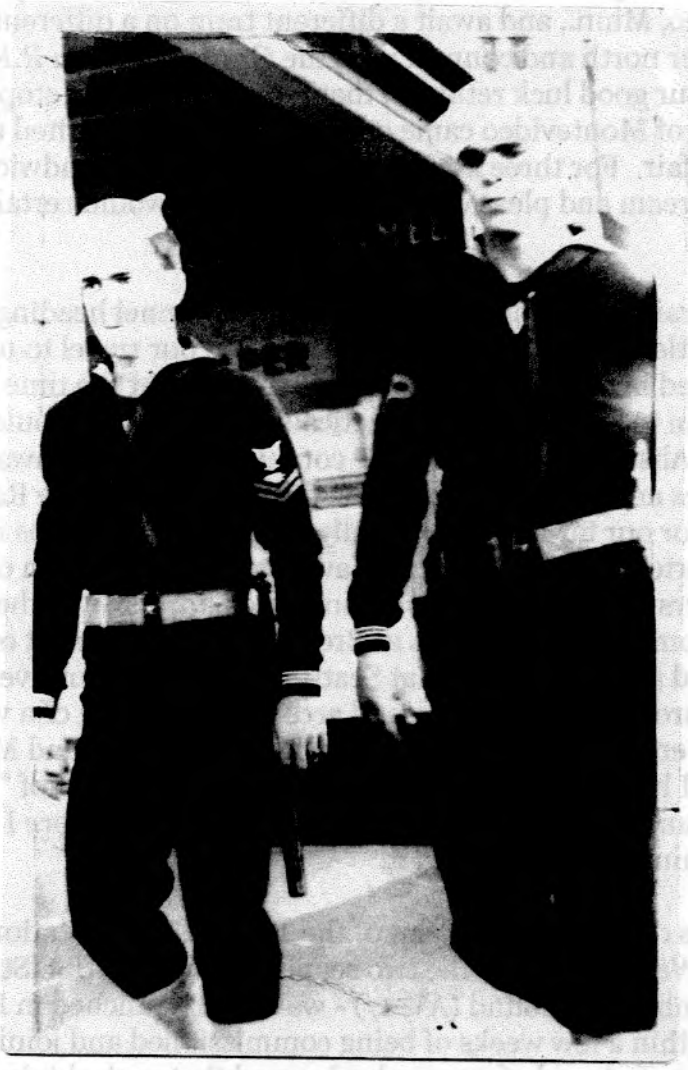
I took a cab and transferred to the *Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific R.R.* Although not very crowded, the cars must have been long retired and returned to service the "war effort," very warm, uncomfortable and *grimy*. Our ride was interrupted as we entered South Dakota; a train ahead had encountered some problem. The single tracks were blocked and we had *backtrack*, no pun intended, to Montevideo, Minn., and await a different train on a different line that would take us farther north and connect with the *Great Northern R.R.* through North Dakota. As our good luck returned that Sunday, our train stopped near a church and the folks of Montevideo came out to our train and invited us to join them at their church fair. For three hours we enjoyed iced tea, sandwiches, cake, home-cranked ice cream and pleasant conversation. We would certainly remember Montevideo.

Most of the train's passengers were military personnel heading for duty in the Tacoma-Seattle region. Most of us had planned our travel to use nearly all of the hours specified in our orders. I, for one, realized that the time lost transferring from one train to another would practically ensure that I would be at least 8 hours AOL - Absent Over Leave. The conductor was made aware of our circumstances and wrote a note on our ticket stubs that :the Rail Road was responsible for our tardiness." Actually, our arriving late was not an issue and we were transported to the Bremerton Naval Station where each of us would await ongoing orders to our next duty station, which, for me, was the Todd Pacific Ship Yards in Tacoma. In the few days at Bremerton, I spent most of the waiting time sitting around and taking a look at Seattle. There was, however, one memorable time going through the mess line and accepting a serving of a vegetable (?) I had never before encountered; it was not something my Dad and Mom had planted in our garden. I had to ask the sailor next to me to advise me of "it's" name, "artichoke!" and how do you eat it. It was many years before I *ran into* that vegetable again. I hadn't missed it.

The Navy bus delivered us in front of the Tacoma Naval Station adjacent to the ship yards. We learned that the two seaplane tenders - USS St. George (AV-16) and USS Cumberland Sound (AV-17) - were both launched in February 1944, and both were within a few weeks of being commissioned and joining the U.S. Navy. It didn't take very long before we also learned that each ship's crew was establishing it's *unique identity* - *The George* and *The Cucumber*. No time was wasted before my turn for Shore Patrol duty appeared on the bulletin board. My third evening in Tacoma walking the town-center streets keeping an eye open for any Navy or Army personnel in, or causing, trouble. As some sailors on the street or in the clubs spotted our "SP" brassard, we heard the now familiar greetings, "You'll be sorry, Cucumber!"

A week later, instead of patrolling the streets on foot, we were "on call" awaiting a possible disturbance. Around 2100 the call came in from a popular, for sailors, dance club - *"Happy Days."* Three of us, two MPs and one SP, arrived at the club in a Navy Jeep; the MP driving jumped the curb bringing us close to the entrance doors. As we jumped out and rushed inside, our *bombastic* arrival halted the

scuffling. We took a slow walk around the hall talking with sailors; as things calmed down, we discovered that some needling between AV-16 and AV-17, and alcohol was the origin of the melee.



The author and Art Dietz, ship mate on the Cumberland Sound
August 1944 - Tacoma, Washington

Davis had arrived a week before I did and had time to examine our new home and he took me on an orientation tour. Most ships this size, a C-2 hull measuring 492 feet, have two *radio rooms,* or *Shacks*. The *Shack* where radio operators, or RMs - Radiomen, send and receive *intelligence* - messages and data, was located on Deck 2 of the superstructure and *called* Radio I. Our *office,* Radio II, was on the Main Deck and was the location of the Radio Transmitters and the RTs - Radio Technicians. Our concern went beyond Radio II; we were responsible for the ship's Radar, the equipment in Radio I, and the Captain's ship-to-shore communication gear.

On one of our first liberty times, Bill and I discovered Point Defiance Park situated just

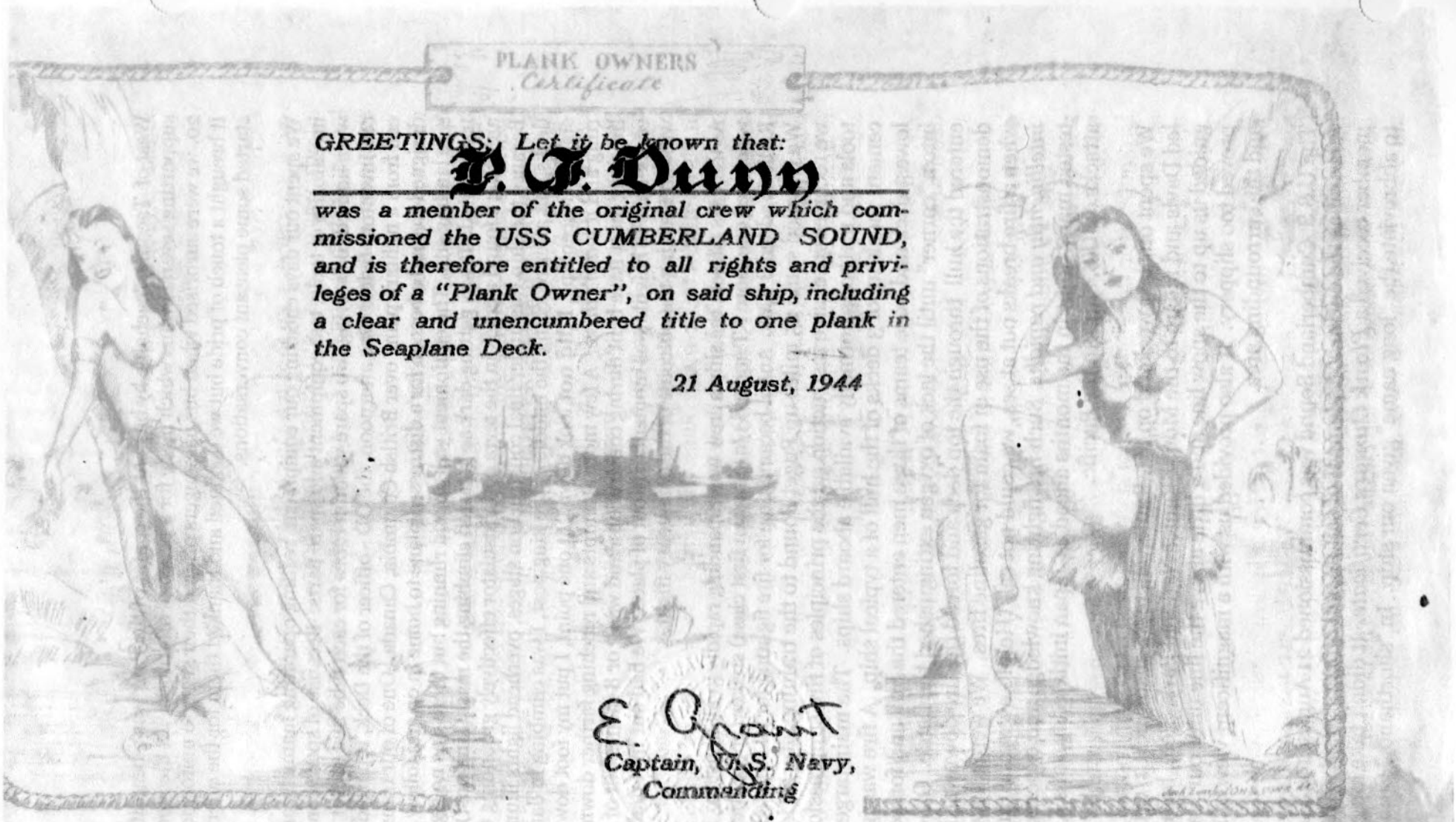
West of Tacoma, reachable by bus. At the center of the Park was a beautiful pond supporting several swans which made for a peaceful afternoon. At the *ripe old age* of 20, we were surprised when bus passengers offered their seats to uniformed personnel. It brought a touch of pride but we declined and thanked them for the offer; this often started some pleasant conversations.

We spent our days checking our equipment, reading operating manuals, and making inventories of tools, test equipment and spare parts. Because of space considerations we were limited to carrying two spare vacuum tubes for each tube in a socket; we went over our inventory twice. One afternoon, the OD - officer of the Deck, reported an emergency call from a military plane over British Columbia, Canada. One of our transmitters was designed to send a beacon for a distressed plane to home in on and follow the signal to a safe landing site. The equipment was up and running but there was no signal being transmitted. It was getting dark as I started climbing the mast (king post) to check the antenna; I found a crack in the terra cotta insulator effectively grounding the antenna. Because the ship was under final construction stages, overhead lights illuminated the decks, but after reaching the middle of the king post, I was climbing in darkness. As I started descending, I **did not** look down. At one point, I put my foot down for the next rung and *it wasn't there!* A few more attempts and reaching farther down, I found it; the rung must have bent during construction and was 7 or 8 inches out of place. My self-confidence in heights was momentarily out of place. We had our first maintenance job without learning the outcome of the emergency flight.

As the days passed, the ship's crew was expanding rapidly in all division. In Radio II, we welcomed one more RT and a S 1/c (Seaman first class) striker (apprentice technician); Radio II added 8 RMs. And it became time for fire fighting for all enlisted men. We traveled some 25 miles up Puget Sound to the training site, an island, where we received intensive instruction on the principles of fire suppression and the tools and methods normally available aboard ships. The main target was a cement mock-up of 3 decks of the hull of a typical ship. A fire was ignited on the lowest deck and hose teams of three men entered the hull and forced the flames into a "corner" until the lack of oxygen extinguished the flame. Other teams entered the hull through the top deck and forced the fire downward. There were demonstrations of the use of foam for gasoline fires. We were all aware that when a fire breaks out at sea, we could not call "Help!'- everyone must do his part *intelligently and rapidly*. Such fire fighting knowledge and experience would be tested many times in the months ahead as Japan initiated furious Kamikaze attacks on U.S. ships in the Pacific.

We spent our last weekend on Mt. Ranier. Pete Swanson, RM 1/c, from Tacoma, led Davis and me up to the Mount Ranier National Park. Pete, being a *native*, guided us up to the snow line and a little above the line until our Navy issue shoes proved too slippery. It also provided us with a magnificent view of Puget Sound and the surrounding area.

The U.S.S. Cumberland Sound was commissioned 21 August 1944 by a Rear Admiral as the entire complement of sailors and officers stood at attention. Each member received a ***Plank Owners*** *Certificate*. It didn't take long for the crew to abbreviate the "long name" given our ship. In "shorthand," Cumberland



PLANK OWNERS
Certificate

GREETINGS: Let it be known that:

P. T. Dunn

was a member of the original crew which commissioned the USS CUMBERLAND SOUND, and is therefore entitled to all rights and privileges of a "Plank Owner", on said ship, including a clear and unencumbered title to one plank in the Seaplane Deck.

21 August, 1944

E. Grant
Captain, U.S. Navy,
Commanding

Sound became ***Cuke***, which was short for cucumber.

Under Way

With our crew now numbering near 1000, we weighed anchor for the first time and made our way up through Puget Sound for an overnight stay in Seattle. Liberty was granted until 0800 the next morning, the hour for our final inspection before beginning our *shake down* run to test all of the ship's equipment and systems.

I well remember "tailor-made" uniforms which many of us had purchased in San Francisco. In order to maintain Navy issue blues, pants are folded inside-out to fit in the sea bag with all other personal items. The resulting crease produces a near-figure-eight flair resembling a bell bottom even though the pants are not belled. *Tailor-mades* produce a bell by narrowing the thighs (and sleeves.) It was common practice to wear Navy issue blues for inspection, then switch to the tailor-mades for Liberty. (They also had a pocket and a zipper in place of the 13-button flap.) In Seattle most of us were lined up in our Navy blues for the Admiral's inspection by 0730; all but one. Our Seaman striker, Ferguson of Bakersfield, CA. came running up the gangway with no time to spare, and still in his unofficial tailor-made blues. He joined us in line as the Admiral began the inspection. The Admiral walked slowly, looking left - and then right, with an occasional comment like, "Good looking crew," and a smile or two. Until he passed Ferguson when he stopped, moved closer to Fergy and, pointing to his blues, asked, "Are those official blues?" Fergy was red-faced by now and managed a "No Sir." The admiral smiled and said, "I like the material; maybe we should look into that."

We initiated the shake down by sailing nearly due west into the Pacific. At 400 nautical miles we tested both surface Radar - SG, and air search Radar - SK. The surface gear was perfect; the SK gave us a clear signal off Mt. Ranier. (We did not posses sub-detecting Sonar.) The shake down continued as we headed south east for Alameda, CA. Alameda was our designated *Home Port,* however that was the only time we would dock there. For us landlubbers, those who had never been to sea - we were in for a surprise. We did not get seasick (yet) but we developed a temporary set of *rubber legs* when we first set foot on solid ground. For the first half hour, even descending a set of stairs required us to grab the rail. At Alameda several new crew members joined us, including one more RT bringing our staff up to 5. The next morning found us well on the way to Long Beach, CA, and the successful conclusion of the shake down.

I remember my cousin Eliot Rowe, Richard's brother, who was on maneuvers with the Army in Arizona. We had been corresponding and he was aware that our ship would be in Long Beach for a brief period. He wrote me to meet him at the *Hollywood Guild Canteen* Friday evening, we could get together before we each headed into the Pacific Theater. The *Canteen* was like a large two story inn; the rooms were free and there were snacks, cold drinks, showers, etc.,

and the staff was made up of Hollywood stars and/or their wives/husbands.

I took the P.E., *Pacific Electric,* train into Los Angeles, located the Canteen, and checked in early Friday afternoon. There was no sign of Eliot; I left a message at the desk and took a walk around the quiet residential neighborhood. A man driving an old Ford convertible with the top down waved at me; I recognized him as Melvyn Douglas. Back at the Canteen at 1930 and no Eliot so I wandered into Hollywood for dinner. Walking back toward the Canteen after eating, there was a couple of men talking loudly and drawing an audience, like me. I recognized the two as John Garfield and Gene Kelly and they were obviously feeling no pain. They were playfully arguing and, at the same time, knew they were entertaining their audience. No message by Sunday morning and I returned to the ship. Several weeks later, Eliot wrote that his unit was called up and they left for overseas deployment with no way to contact me.

Our next, and last, U,S, stop was the San Diego Naval station. Our gunners spent the time at North Island putting in some important time on 5"/38 and 40 mm cannons, equal to our shipboard armament. We RTs visited a nearby supply depot where we picked up some extra transmitter tubes. In particular, we took back ten 861 high power tubes in their original crates. Each of our two high power transmitters (TBK) used one 861 apiece. The main part of the 861 is a glass globe the size of a basket ball and are frequently faulty when first receiving their operating voltage of 3500 volts. Technically, we should only be carrying four spares, but we convinced the Chief Storekeeper that at least one, or two, of our spares could be faulty; he approved the ten extras we brought back to the ship. Within our first four weeks at sea, two were faulty - it took three to replace one. During this time, six fighter planes were loaded onto our decks to be delivered to Ford Island, Hawaii - four F4F Grumman *Wildcats* and two F6F *Hell Cats.*

One of our final days, I dropped into a San Diego USO for coffee and a doughnut. A young (aren't they all?) sailor approached me asking, "Aren't you from Kingston?" It was a small world moment - during the summer of 1942, while waiting in Kingston for enlistments to open, I worked at Loughran Park as playground director; Thatcher Wood was one of the neighborhood boys hanging around the park. He was in Navy training at the nearby Training Station, awaiting duty assignment. We had an enjoyable chat over coffee.

Hawaii Bound

Two days out of California and we began feeling a different sea than what we had experienced along the Pacific Coast. Motion sickness was widespread the first few days at sea among the "rookies." I held out until the second night when I *hit the sack* with a bucket at hand; morning came and I had slept it off and felt normal again. But there was another personal change made due to the rolling motion of the ship. In the '30s most males learned to shave with a straight razor before safety razors were common. My Dad was a guard-instructor in the State

Prison at Wallkill, NY. Earlier he had owned his own barber shop before entering the Army in 1917, When he signed as a guard in 1933, the warden assigned him to the prison barber shop. When I started shaving, he furnished me with the tools of his trade - a straight razor, brush and cup soap for lather. But using a straight razor in a crowded space on a rolling ship made me a *safety razor* believer and I made the conversion.

Our first days at sea were pleasant and busy. Radio II was now the work station for 10 Technicians. Chief Radio Electrician (chief warrant officer) Martin assigned RT 1/c Goedinghaus the task of managing the crew work assignments in Radio II. Although there were two other first class Technicians, Carl had four months of service at sea on a previous detail and Martin felt Carl's experience at sea gave him the edge.

Four days at sea, en route to Hawaii, a radio operator (RM) in Radio I picked up some faint static-filled transmissions and concluded (guessed?) that 24 hours ahead of us, a ship was attacked by a submarine. The ship was going down and the message was alerting other ships in the area. Whether true or not the message went throughout the ship in minutes. We had surface Radar but no underwater Sonar. Enemy intelligence could be aware that, in addition to six fighter planes aboard, we were carrying several thousand gallons of aviation gasoline and two holds packed with 500 lb bombs, which created a prime target. The next night we passed over the supposed area of yesterday's *attack* and found no evidence of such attack, such as debris or oil slick, and we continued safely on to Pearl Harbor.

As a ship approaches Pearl, Navy Signalmen request the incoming ship to identify itself via semaphore flags. The Harbor flag men do this all day, every day, and with their expertise, signal rapidly, usually to fast for the less experienced signalmen aboard the incoming ship and, frequently the ship signals back, "*repeat!*" However, this day our signalman, Tex Burnet, responded with equal rapidity, "*Ship AV-17 - our berth assignment please?*" There were a few smiles as the Harbor signalman responded, "**repeat, repeat!**" We were berthed on Ford Island, astern the battleship *USS New Jersey BB-62*, where we off loaded the Wildcats and Hellcats. We had seen a number of other Navy first-line ships like destroyers, but the BB-62 was the first ship of such power for us and we viewed her with some awe. After all these years, I still remember the thrill of seeing such a masterpiece of naval architecture. In the months ahead we will see earlier model battleships like the *USS Texas* and understand the great advances in design made since World War I.

While on the subject of naval architecture, let me describe a vital part of the daily hygiene routine on board ship. While some refer to a *rest room,* or *comfort station,* or *water closet,* the naval equivalent is *the head.* The "swabby," sailor, responsible for maintaining the **head** is referred to as the *Captain of the Head,* and, as might be surmised, no one is seeking the honor. I'm sure there have been many changes and improvements over the facilities of the 1940s. The sinks were

standard as were the stall showers, but there were no familiar commodes. Instead, there was a long metal trough with two boards across the trough for each position; these were the *seats*. The trough was slanted slightly so a strong stream of water was constant beneath the *seats*. In those days, when nearly everyone carried a cigarette lighter, it was probably inevitable that some miscreant would light a wad of paper and send it down the trough, although the rogue never repeated it after receiving his rewards.

Nearly three years after the Pearl Harbor attack, security was tight. To go on liberty in Honolulu meant taking a boat from Ford Island to a controlled wharf in the submarine area. We then passed through security to leave the Naval Station and continue on to the city. In reverse, we passed through two tight personal inspections at the main gate and the submarine wharf, including a "pat down" of unusual uniform bulges.

Pete Swanson, P. Dunn, R. Drew Serafin
Honolulu - November 1944

And a final check at the ship's quarterdeck. I carried a *suspicious package* - I bought a pair of black loafers (shoes) to *break the monotony* of the ankle-high official issue shoes. The shoe box was carried openly, but received three thorough evaluations, including examining each shoe's interior. One sailor managed a hidden package (*in his blouse?)* all the way to the ship; it slipped and broke as he was saluting the quarter deck. The duty officer barked, with a smile, that he deserved a Captain's Mast for defeating three inspections and then dropping the prize so close to success.

We left Pearl and sailed south to the Big Island of Hawaii and berthed in Hilo. Our purpose there was to give our guns and *gunners* some live practice by firing at a moving target, sleeve, towed by a plane. Our forward 5 inch gun crew scored higher than the after crew and "won a future case of beer" from the Gunnery Officer. On a brief liberty, we hired a tour minibus to give us a close up view of the Mauna Kea volcano and a wonderful view of that mountainous island. After the tour we had an introduction to Polynesian food in the Hilo restaurants before we again headed west Dec. 1, 1944. However, this time we had an escort, *USS Suison AVP-53,* that was equipped with underwater detection gear, Sonar, to warn of objects like submarines.

Communications aboard ship in time of war is tightly circumscribed. Since a broadcast receiver was part of Radio II's equipment, it was often tuned to AFR, Armed Forces Radio, where there was little news but a lot of music. We could even send requests by mail for a particular number to be played "any afternoon between 1400 and 1600 Hawaii time." I made such a request for Charlie Barnet's rendition of *Cherokee,* a very popular jazz number at that time. One afternoon we heard, "Paul Dunn, we're sorry we can't locate *Cherokee,* but we hope you'll find Barnet's *Redskin Rhumba* an acceptable replacement." Winston "Rocky" Stone had suggested we make that request; true, it wasn't *Cherokee,* but we were happy because we could just imagine the number of requests AFR received every day.

I remember Carl Peter "Whitey" Inderkum, RT 3/c from Sacramento AND San Francisco, for his good nature if nothing else. Whitey started the work day with a smile, or a laugh, and lifted everyone's spirits. He was with Rocky and me when we listened to, and enjoyed, our AFR request. Noting that he was *from 2 cities* was the fact that he had two homes with two sets of parents. Following a divorce, his mother and father remarried and, although he went through high school in Sacramento, he studied at St, Mary's in San Francisco, and *was at home* in each case. One father had a dairy farm, the other, a soft drink bottling business. Whitey told the story of his father struggling in the late 1920s; competition was vicious in the soft drink market. Sodas were sold more by flavor than by brand. Popular drinks were root beer, orange, sarsaparilla, lemon-lime, ginger ale, etc. Putting their heads together, they tried to make their *lemon-lime* stand out from the competition. Someone said, ***"Seven-up!"*** and the rest is history. Although I worked and *lived* with Whitey over a year, I remember him as one of those few people I had known all my life..

I also remember "Hud" Lee Ballsun, S 1/c, from Los Angeles who used an expression so often, it was painted on his helmet - "How Can You Tell?" The helmets were kept in a row on a shelf in the radio shack where we regularly reported for duty. Fridays were called "field days" which meant a thorough cleaning and scrubbing of all duty stations, to be followed by a formal inspection. On one rare occasion, Commander Thorne, the Executive Officer, was the inspector for Radio II and noticed the inscription on Hud's helmet. We were at attention; he looked at us for a long moment; then he said, "The helmet belongs to whom?" Hud raised his hand and responded, "It's mine, sir." As he left he was muttering, "How can you tell?"

In addition to *How can you tell?* Hud frequently amused us with sheer nonsense. It was the end of a month and Hud opened with, "30 *days hath Septober and no wonder; how long would it take an elephant with a wooden leg to punch a hole in a dill pickle?"* Someone couldn't resist temptation and asked, "How long?" As he walked out the door, "Ten!" Another gem(?) - *If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, every one else would have peanut butter, except my brother, he rides a bicycle."*

One evening, to find some quiet and fresh air, I walked toward the starboard bow and, while leaning on the rail, watched the spray as the ship's bow cut through the sea. While enjoying some personal time, my thoughts were interrupted by a voice on my right, "Are you Catholic or broad minded?" As I turned to address the challenge from the *"Have you stopped beating your wife?"* school, I recognized a sailor named Kraft, an RT 2/c who had joined our crew in Hawaii. We had spoken a few times during our daily routine., but, obviously, he wanted a *one-on-one conversation.* I answered, "Yes!" and waited for his next "move." Assuming a more pleasant manner, he was curious about my pre-Navy background. I mentioned teacher's college and learned he had left Yale as a Sophomore. Our talk turned to our possible duty destination before we turned in for the night. As I look back all these years, I can't recall much about Kraft's presence as part of our crew.

There were no newspapers or magazines aboard ship; instead our print shop produced a daily *Press,* two mimeograph pages containing brief items from the U.S. press, such as yesterday's college basketball scores and U.S. progress in Europe. Mail from home was more frequent than you might guess; outgoing mail was postage free; also, it was censored. *Mail Call* was a popular occasion even when you received nothing, as your shipmates shared their joy with everyone. I was the center of mirth one day when I received a "care" package from my sister, Margaret. I would have gladly shared the home-made chocolate chip cookies but she had included a container of foot powder which broke and joined the cookies. Of course the fastest communication was the *grapevine;* "everyone" had the *latest news.* By the time we had passed Johnson Island, *reliable sources* told us our ultimate destination was Ulithi in the Caroline Islands.

However, we were having more immediate concerns with our Radar system. Carl

G. answered a call from the bridge that the SG surface search system was malfunctioning. He went forward to the Radar shack and confirmed that the system was neither transmitting nor receiving a signal. A quick check convinced Carl we had serious problems; he called me to join him in trouble-shooting the system; it was Sunday around 0700. Vacuum tubes used for DC power were often the first to go; a check eliminated them as a source of the problem. Joe Trimarchi joined us to give us another brain and pair of hands and we began testing possible circuits using a check list of our own. With short coffee breaks, we worked all day and night Sunday. The problem was finally located Monday evening around 2200 and we handed the operating system back to the bridge; Carl, Joe and I hit the sack having been awake over 36 hours. Somewhere around midnight, the bos'n's pipe whistled, followed by **"Now hear this! All hands - Man your battle stations!"** As this repeated for the third time, it was finally reaching my mind that we had to grab our clothes and head for Radio II. As soon as Joe and I arrived, we went behind the transmitters and fell asleep on the deck. After some time had passed, one of the RTs told us the alert had passed and we could return to our bunks.

As reveille sounded Tuesday morning, the three of us, Carl, Joe and I, turned over in our sacks and tried to ignore the call to assemble, hoping to get another two or three hours sleep but we soon received a message from Chief Martin to report on deck. The occasion for the *command* performance was that the Executive Officer was preparing a "yearbook" of sorts recognizing all hands of each and every division and we were to pose for the C-Division, Communications, photo at 0800. Needless to say, there were three members who would have preferred more sleep over photos; we did not feel like "smiling for the camera." In fact, I was a little rebellious - the *proper way* to wear a *white hat* is forward on your head. And I normally wore mine forward with a slight slant towards the right eye. The Exec wanted everyone to smile and wear the hat on the back of the head and look *happy*. After a few stern glances in my direction, I pushed my hat back but as I look at the photo today, there was no smile on my face.

By the time we had the photograph of all 57 members, I learned the reason we had been called to **General Quarters** during the night. When the SG radar went out, we had been tracking a huge convoy of ships, stretched out the size of a city, heading west. Monday evening, the USS Suison, our escort, located a target on sonar north of the convoy. It was traveling south beneath the convoy and seemed to be targeting our ship. Not only were we a large target, nearly 500 feet long, but there were those personal bombs and aviation gasoline below. Why else would an unidentified submarine ignore all those other ships and target us? When the unidentified sub approached within 500 yards, the call to General Quarters was sounded. Here the stories varied, but it was certain that the Suison fired a star shell which illuminated the area above the submerged target. One story said the submarine was surfacing and some men were preparing to fire their gun, but made an emergency dive as the star shell spotlighted them. A few other stories told how the sub and Suison exchanged fire and one **tale** credited the Suison with sinking the sub; if a sub had actually been "hit," there would have

been no *yearbook photo-op* the morning after. No matter the excitement, the entire C-Division was "indoors," and three of us were asleep.

When we left the United States, we were under "darken ship" orders. Our doors and hatches were painted flat black and, when closed, emitted no light. No one could "step outside" for a cigarette. That convoy was under the same orders and on a dark moonless night they would only be visible for a short distance. If someone opened a door the convoy would present a large number of silhouettes. However, when our ships were underway and under darken ship orders, I enjoyed standing near the bow of the ship, enjoy the sea breeze and watch the lights emitted by the fluorescent organisms as the bow pushed through the sea; good daydreaming time after a busy day.

When we reached the 180th Meridian, the International Date Line, *The Domain of the Golden Dragon,* 5 Dec. 1944, the minority of the crew that had been initiated when crossing the Line in previous journeys, became the "Rulers" and produced an obstacle course for the rest of us, officers included. We were drenched with water from the hoses, walked through a water hazard while being pushed from side to side by the Rulers. It lasted over two hours but, as might have been anticipated, a hand full of the initiates panicked. Two ran to the rail and were ready to jump overboard, but were "rescued" and placed in *sick bay* and provided medical attention until they recovered. What one person sees as fun can be terror to another.

Island Hopping

Shortly after *gaining a day* (by crossing the 180th meridian, we went from Dec. 5 to Dec. 6) we reached the Kwajalein Atoll which had recently come under the control of U.S. Forces. At the island of Roi we made an important contribution. Our evaporators produced an excellent quantity and quality of fresh water, enough that we could exceed our daily demand. At Roi we provided water to several small ships that did not produce their own; PT boats were included.

We continued on to the Eniwetok Atoll which was the final two weeks of training with our PBM squadron before arriving for our assigned duty in Ulithi Atoll. *Naturally,* a seaplane tender functions with seaplanes and our Eniwetok goal was to coordinate our activities with Squadron VP-22 of 18 PBM Martin Mariners. The Mariners with Cumberland Sound support were assigned two main functions. The major task was ASP, Anti-Sub Patrol - we were tasked to keep certain Pacific pathways clear of enemy activity in what was the main supply line between the U.S. and all military forces in the Central Pacific. We would share this task with other squadrons stationed elsewhere in the region. Our auxiliary function was Air-Sea-Rescue - answering calls from downed aircraft or ships within our assigned area.


Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Sea of Okhotsk
Sakhalin
0 100 200 300 400 500
Scale of Miles
Manchuria
Vladivostok
Hokkaido
Peking
China
Korea
Seoul
Sea of Japan
Yellow Sea
Honshu
Tokyo
Kobe
Kyoto
Nanking
Shikoku
Kyushu
East China Sea
Amoy
Okinawa
Formosa
South China Sea
Luzon
Manila
Philippine
Philippine Sea
Islands
Leyte
Mindanao
Saipan
Tinian
Guam
Ulithi

Two of the ship's divisions were directly dedicated to the squadron's 18 PBM-3D seaplanes. V-2 Division consisted mainly of the VP-22 flight crews - seven per plane, i. e, 2 Aviators (the term Pilot identifies fliers who are non-commissioned officers), and 5 technicians such as Aviation Mechanic - AM, Aviation Electrician - AE, and Aviation Gunners Mate - AGM. V-1 Division was the seagoing version of *ground crew* and referred to the crew that serviced the PBMs and flight crews, from communications, to fuel, to major repairs made by hoisting the 20 ton seaplanes onto the flight deck.

Christmas 1944 was indeed unusual. We went ashore to Perry Island, the largest island in the Eniwetok Atoll, where we celebrated Midnight Mass. There were very few trees or vegetation left after the battle in February, but the cool sand and night breezes were a welcome relief from the daytime heat on board the ship. We recognized New Years Day by weighing anchor and sailing on to Guam, where we brought on some needed spare parts. From Guam we took the final run to our new home - Ulithi Atoll. Ulithi is roughly 10 x 20 miles with a central lagoon capable of harboring over 600 ships. Atolls are common in the central Pacific. They have their birth in volcanoes emerging from the ocean floor many thousands of years ago. Over time coral reefs develop at the mountain's water line. Eventually, the volcanoes retreat back toward the sea floor leaving a ring of coral formations with lagoons where the volcanoes once stood.

We dropped anchor in the extreme northern part of the lagoon. The only access was located in the south east part of the atoll, meaning there would be a minimum of movement near the *Cuke* enabling us to establish a **seadrome** for VP-22's squadron. 18 buoys were spaced to provide anchor for each seaplane.

One of the major functions of a tender like the Cumberland Sound is supplying the squadron's PBMs with aviation gasoline - AvGas. A "bowser boat" (rhymes with trouser), a motor launch equipped with a large fuel tank, draws fuel from the ship and delivers it to the planes. During this process, the ship displays a red flag and the Duty Officer pipes, ***"Now hear this! The smoking lamp is out throughout the ship until further notice!"*** Ships no longer use a *Smoking Lamp,* but the red flag plus the symbolism is serious. There will be no flames or sparks or cigarette lighters allowed while there is a real danger of explosive fumes present. A ship uses flags to send a message or indicate a condition such as loading explosives or gasoline. A red flag is also the letter "B" in a phonetic alphabet, thus a ship is said to be "Flying Baker."

In the early days after our arrival, one member of a flight crew, an Aviation Mechanic, was looking for a quiet place to sit down and write letters home. We invited him into the Shack where he could *hide* behind the bank of transmitters and not be disturbed, while enjoying a mug of *radio shack coffee.* Later, we added another sailor looking for a little peace and privacy - he was the Captain's baker who joined our *den.* Neither of the two ship mates had a *quiet corner* within their work stations and we became their *home away from home.*

Sooner than expected, the AM "needed" a day off from the daily 8-hour patrol Flight. The crew Captain approved the day off, but wanted a "live body" as a replacement. The Captain was aware a patrol is monotonous and stressful at the same time. He was also familiar with a family problem the AM was struggling with and welcomed me aboard their PBM and outlined the duties I would be expected to fulfill in the mechanic's absence. A few small whale boats routinely ferry flight crews to and from their aircraft; I went on the boat out to the plane that morning and my *first ever* plane ride began with a noisy take off. Long before the 8-hour flight terminated I understood "how lonely" it could be even though I was part of a 7-man team. The pilot and co-pilot (Aviators) were occupied at the controls, as was the radar operator. The noise of the two engines was over powering and, obviously, never ending. I might shout to someone, a question or an observation, but there were no casual conversations because of the din from the engines.

I remember Joe Trimarchi, RT 1/c, from Harrison, NY, who spent a great deal of his time on the main deck. His prime concern was all electronics on the bridge deck, i.e. the radio receivers in Radio I, the Captain's ship-to-shore transceiver and navigation instruments. But Joe had a personal problem that made his duties much more difficult - Joe had chronic sea sickness. At the time there was no prescribed solution for the malady and the C-Division Officer, LT LaFrance, considered Joe's contributions "essential." Therefore, Joe would perform his duties, but alternately spend time *outside* on the open deck with dried bread and lemons.

One afternoon in early February, Joe was on deck and noticed "something" in the water between the Cuke and Mog Mog, the northern most island in the atoll. He reported the sighting to the O.D., Officer of the Deck, but by then the object was gone. Within minutes, a nearby ship reported a sighting of an unknown object. Some sightings were concluding the object was a periscope and the O.D. piped the call to General Quarters, followed by hundreds of such calls in the atoll. Intelligence gathered from several locations within the atoll pointed to a miniature Japanese submarine that was "probably" avoiding sonar detection by "hiding" under a major ship, such as one of the numerous aircraft carriers in the lagoon. The only immediate *casualty* was to a landing craft serving as an ammunition carrier; the Captain made an effort to remove his craft from the main ship channel and, in a rush for safety, ran aground, causing considerable structural damage, but avoiding any serious damage to the dangerous cargo.

A narrow opening between two isles in the Mugai Channel, to the East, provided a "gate" or "aisle" for ships to enter or leave the lagoon. A ship's passage through the "gate" was physically limited by lowering a steel net as the ship signaled its approach. In an attempt to foil the unidentified vessel's (*submarine?)* escape through the gate, a low flying plane was positioned above any **friendly** (as opposed to **foe)** ship exiting while the gate was open. (It must be remembered that there were no helicopters at this time.) It was planned that "if" the unidentified vessel was detected underneath the *decoy* ship, the decoy would go

to *full reverse* exposing the enemy to depth charges from the **friendly** overhead. In spite of such efforts, the unidentified visitor somehow made its escape.

Beside fuel, our ship and the PBMs needed a steady supply of motor oil that arrived in 55-gal. drums. After pumping the oil from the drums, a few axe blows punctured them so they would sink to the bottom of the lagoon. It must be noted that the drums were mostly copper, a strategic metal, especially in time of war. Tons of copper were needed for electrical and electronic switches, wiring, contacts, connectors, etc. At one point, huge solid copper bus bars in U.S. power plants, 2 feet thick and up to 40 feet in length were replaced with silver bars in order to make the copper available for such vital equipment as radar and sonar.

As part of our 24-hour duty, we rotated the schedule to provide coverage of Radio II at all hours. The "mid-watch" from midnight to 0600 was the loneliest, meaning you are alone and must remain awake without someone to talk to. To begin duty, you could stop at the galley, which was dimly lit at that hour, and enjoy a small bowl of chili, thanks to the one cook that had the mid-watch, also. While on watch, I usually found something to read, such as an old *Reader's Digest,* to avoid nodding off. After reading all the articles available the first month, I decided to learn how to type by copying the articles. A communications typewriter was designed for copying Morse code messages and omitted lower case letters; I didn't have to press *shift* because all letters were *Caps*. After hundreds of hours on mid-watch I became quite confident in my new skill. Occasionally, there was a pleasant surprise awaiting me at the end of my watch. Just before 0600 I would go below and wake the person who would relieve me after he had breakfast. When I returned to the shack, I was greeted by the delicious aroma of freshly baked pastry snails courtesy of the Captain's baker. It was his message of appreciation for providing him his corner to write letters.

IFF -*Identification: Friend or Foe.* The process of searching for any other craft "out there," an IFF transmitter sends a separate signal with the radar beam. All ***Friendly*** vessels are equipped with an IFF transponder which "answers" the incoming signal and "tells" the searching vessel that it is a **friend.** (The transponder will automatically do its part only when the human remembers to power [*turn "on"]* **the transponder.)**

About once a week, the Electricians would obtain a movie from one of the other ships in our vicinity; we would assemble on the seaplane deck at 2200, in folding chairs, to enjoy the film The movie was occasionally preceded by a 15-minute briefing buy an intelligence officer regarding current progress, or other, in battles like Saipan or the Philippines.

Visitors

Thursday, 1 February 1945, we sat down for a movie entitled "Something For the Boys!" We were interrupted around 10 minutes after the movie started by the call to **"Man Your Battle Stations!"** All hands rapidly dispersed and wondering,

PBM - Martin Mariner

USMC F4U Vought Corsair

"What now?" We sat in the Radio Shack with all external doors closed; we did have light and, as we waited for some word from the Captain, we had many questions and no answers. Around 2110, we were returned to duty with no explanation coming forth. The next day we learned that a "FOE" had orbited momentarily at 10,000 feet. Two U.S. Marine F4U fighters scrambled and attempted pursuit of the Japanese fighter plane; they could not overtake the faster, apparently lightly armored plane.

Although the sun always set before *movie time* each evening, it was still warm on the seaplane deck. In stead of viewing the film from the deck, Rodney Drew "Red" Serafin, RM 1/c, from Trinidad, CO, Pete Swanson, RM 1/c, from Tacoma, WA, and I found a higher seat with a slight breeze from which to view the movies. The ship's *smoke stack* projected well above the top deck. There were two high powered *search* lanterns on small platforms jutting out from the stack. Access to the light platforms was provided by steel ladders (stairs.)

15 February, two Thursdays after we had been visited by a Japanese plane, the Electricians managed to obtain the movie we missed - "Something For the Boys" and it was rescheduled for 2000. As was now our practice, Red, Pete and I made the climb up to the light platform on the port side of the stack. Besides the breeze another advantage was that we could talk and laugh without disturbing the other *moviegoers*. As if that movie, or Thursday evenings, were a jinx, the call to General Quarters was sounded around 10 minutes into the movie screening. We soon realized that there was a price to pay for our *Loge* seats. We first had to get down the ladder from the light platform to the 4th deck. Pete and Red went down one more ladder to their duty station, Radio I on the 3rd deck. But to get to the main deck, I still had two more ladders to handle. Of course, there was a little more tension that night because now we knew that we were not **out of range** of the FOE. As before, the F4U Vought corsairs took chase. And as before the FOE escaped. One assumption was that the flights were originating from a neighbor to the east - the island of Truk. There had been intelligence indicating the Japanese might be delivering parts by submarine that were then assembled into operating aircraft. A new concern arose following the second visit - the planes were certainly performing a photo-reconnaissance mission and we should expect a return visit.

In addition to providing us with movie presentations for the crew's entertainment, the Electricians operated a *Geedunk Stand* a few hours in the afternoon. *Geedunk* is any fountain concoction made with ice cream, like a soda or sundae. The stand also had a small selection of *Pogey Bait,* or candy bars. With the tropical heat, standard *Milky Way* or *Butterfinger* would melt completely long before they could be displayed, but there were some bars made of "tropical chocolate" which were like rock until we reached our "normal" temperatures in the Caroline Islands, where they were like a *stateside* Hershey Bar, delicious!

One afternoon, one of the EMs, Electrician Mates, mentioned that they had a boat

and were visiting a carrier nearby. They were going to swap some ice cream from the *Geedunk* stand for two movies. They knew I needed some spare transmitter parts and offered me a ride, which I readily accepted. A whale boat normally has a crew of three - the coxswain (pronounced cox-sen), who is the captain and "steers" from the helm, a MoM, Motor Machinist, and a line handler. The sea was a little choppy when we shoved off and the sky was dark, not an unusual condition. Within 20 minutes we were in a tropical shower and unable to see more than a few yards. The cox'n ordered the engine shut down and the six of us huddled underneath a canvas awaiting the storm's passage. Shortly the sea was calmer and the rain was no longer pounding us so we pulled the canvas back to find we were under the *shade* of the carrier deck; the shower was still present but our boat, plus two others, were in a calm so we continued our way to the gangway. After we each completed our business, the sun was full again, and we returned to our ship. Not surprisingly, the movie we returned with was "Something for the Boys." Having seen the first 10 or 15 minutes twice before had convinced us that we were not missing a great film, but it was the "only film in town" so we took our usual "balcony" seats and wondered if we might actually see the entire film this time. Earlier that afternoon the ship received some 30 new arrivals. We gained two new RT 2/c technicians. Fifteen of the new crew members were Seamen fresh from boot camp. The additions pushed our total manpower over 2800.

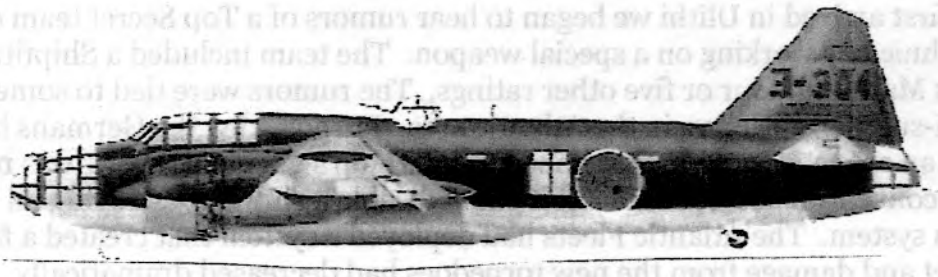
We've all heard, "This only happens in the movies" and ***"it did!"*** Within 10 minutes of the start of the *jinxed* film, *"Now Hear This! All hands man your battle stations!"!"*

Kamikaze

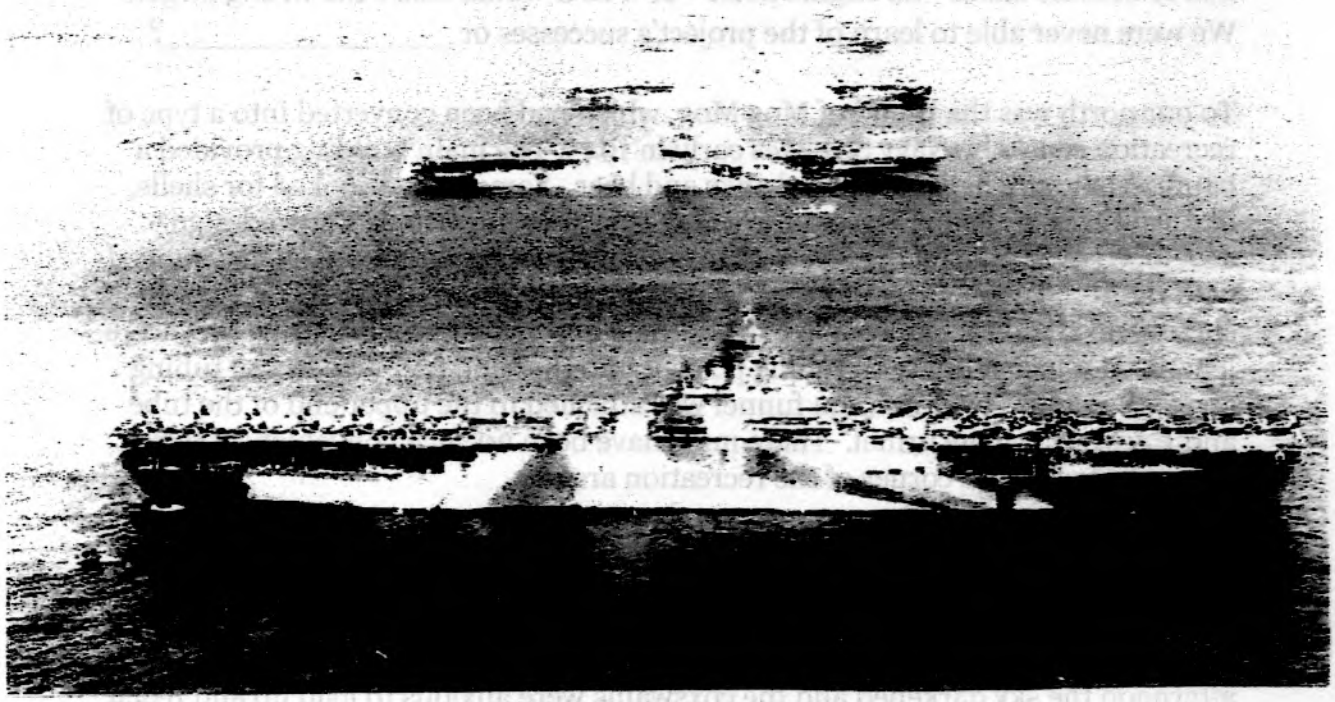
We did not panic, but we had the feeling that this could be an actual attack and we were moving faster than any previous scramble. We were still on the top deck when we heard a plane pass over us in a northerly direction followed by an enormous explosion. As I rushed down the ladders, the flames from a ship on my right were "sky high" and our starboard side was bathed in the bright red light. As I hit the main deck, the freshly arrived seamen, having not been assigned battle stations, were out of our path and standing facing the burning ship. The expressions on their faces was a picture I will never forget; words cannot describe it. I'm also confident that those young men still lose a heart beat when they hark back to their first day of duty on the Cumberland Sound fresh out of boot camp.

Once in the radio shack, the Duty Officer was on the sound system providing us with information on events as they occurred. One Kamikaze plane, a Japanese Mitsubishi G4M (Betty), a 2-engine bomber, had struck the flight deck of the aircraft carrier, USS Randolph CV-15, with an estimated 10 tons of explosive. A second Betty struck a paved road on the island of Falalop; the road could have looked like the deck of a carrier from a height of 10,000 feet. Purple uniform fragments were identified as pieces of a Kamikaze warrior. Post-war intelligence

report that the planes flew from Tokyo on a mission dubbed Operation Tan #2.. The Randolph suffered 29 dead and 109 wounded.



Mitsubishi G4M - (Betty) Bomber



US Navy carriers at anchor at Ulithi (from front to back): *Wasp*, *Yorktown*, *Hornet*, *Hancock* and *Ticonderoga*, December 8 1944

The electricians never gave up and when no other film was available, they finally screened "Something for the Boys" in its entirety and, at least for the three gobs up near the stack, it was not worth the effort of climbing up those ladders.

When we first arrived in Ulithi we began to hear rumors of a Top Secret team of several technicians working on a special weapon. The team included a Shipfitter, a Gunner's Mate, and four or five other ratings. The rumors were tied to some recent anti-submarine action in the Atlantic area. Purportedly, the Germans had developed an acoustic torpedo that honed in on a ship's engine noise. It was not the size of conventional torpedoes but it could disable a ship by destroying its propulsion system. The Atlantic Fleets had deployed a system that created a false noise target and damage from the new torpedoes had decreased dramatically.

The shipboard rumors kept increasing as the secret team began to put its project into action. Our Squadron occasionally cooperated with other vessels in pursuit of their missions: ASP (anti-sub patrol) and ASR (air sea rescue). At times a PBM Mariner would carry the weapon (acoustic torpedo, nicknamed FIDO) as part of a 3-vessel team: PBM, submarine, and a PC (patrol craft). If an enemy sub was suspected in a certain area, a FIDO would be launched, but the U.S. sub and PC had to become silent - no engine noise - or FIDO would chase the wrong target. We were never able to learn of the project's successes or _____?

To our north was the island of Mog Mog, which had been converted into a type of recreation center by Navy Sea Bees early in 1945. The main building provided a bamboo bar and dispensed soft drinks and beer. Some sailors looked for shells, like cat's eyes, or just wallow in the water. I'm sure the urinals were a design developed over time by the Sea Bees (CB - Construction Battalion) as they moved with the U.S. Forces from island to island. I had never seen anything resembling such devices before, and have yet to see them anywhere else. Basically, they were lengths of 2 inch aluminum tubing pushed into the sand with two feet of tubing above the sand. An aluminum funnel was attached to the upper end of the tube and ***Presto!*** a single urinal. There must have been 20 such conveniences fairly concentrated in one corner of the recreation area.

Several ships in that end of the lagoon used LCTs, Landing Craft Tank, or other small craft to transport sailors for a few *free* hours on land even if it's mostly sand. When *freedom rules*(?) many sailors wait to take the last boat "home." The tropical climate provides plenty of sun and a steady diet of random showers. One afternoon the sky darkened and the coxswains were anxious to load up and reach their ship before the obvious shower arrived. A result was a few launches were full as they headed out into the dark waters. The shower struck and two boats rolled to one side dumping as many as 50 sailors into the rough water. When the chaos ended and the passengers were back in the boats, 13 men were unaccounted for. Three days after the tragedy three of the bodies floated up to the surface. We had already posted two boats in the area for such an event; they brought the bodies to the ship that had lost the largest number for identification.

The remaining bodies surfaced over the next two days. They were subsequently identified and sent on their way to the National Cemetery in Hawaii.

As for the monkey, it was obviously frightened. It would snuggle up into our arm pits and rest there. It may have been given some beer and was sick for awhile, but after two or three days it was very friendly and *frisky*, playing around the signal bridge (top deck.) One morning, we, C-Division, were lined up on the bridge for inspection and a few announcements. One of the officers was known to have an alcohol problem; as he stepped out into the glaring sunlight, wearing his ubiquitous sunglasses, the monkey jumped down on top of the officer's cap. One can only imagine the agony that that man suffered dodging a frisky monkey.

In 1944, the only time most of us had felt the effects of air conditioning was in a movie theater. We were accustomed to summer heat and, on deck, a moist breeze was welcome relief. Below deck was another problem. Any item left in a locker for any period of time, like shoes, would begin to show signs of mold. In my case, sweating hands resulted in a skin condition we referred to as *Tulagi Rot,* named after the island in the South Pacific captured after fierce jungle fighting. I visited Sick Bay to get a professional opinion and, hopefully, some relief. The Pharmacist Mate recognized the problem; he had seen several similar cases in recent weeks. He provided me with a medicated powder but could not assure me of long-term relief.

The powder produced no change, so back to Sick Bay. My hands were worse than before and he prescribed a stronger vehicle: potassium permanganate. The purple crystals were stirred into water making a purple solution; I soaked my hands in the solution three times a day, My hands became dark purple, but it began to produce positive results; in spite of the progress I was uncomfortable displaying my stained hands, particularly in the cafeteria. After some six weeks, I had "new" skin and my hands were comfortable again.

Due to the absence of air conditioning and the never-ending heat, occasionally an effort was made to obtain temporary relief. The heat was certainly noticeable in the sleeping quarters. The bunks were made of canvas stretched inside a steel pipe frame. They were attached in pairs to steel posts, ours were stacked three pairs high; in several other sleeping quarters, bunks were stacked four and five high. During the day, the bunks were folded against the posts, like closing a sandwich, allowing more room for movement. I slept on the bottom bunk which was 8 or 9 inches from the deck, enough room to store my shoes overnight. Accidentally, I discovered that with my shoes in a certain position, forced air from the air duct would hit the deck and glance off the shoes and cool the head of my bunk. This added pleasure lasted for over a week until my neighbor realized why he was not benefiting from the blower and pushed my shoes back under my bunk. We frequently welcomed volumes of clean laundry. There were always one or two sailors who greeted the clean items and began sorting them by the names stenciled on each piece. At some point during the day, we would find our personal items stacked near our bunks and transfer them to our lockers. I was

always amazed that clothing for over 2000 sailors was usually returned to the rightful owner; I don't recall missing a single item.

One evening we noticed 3 sailors spreading canvas cots between the "life boats;" they knew a breeze there was better than the blower down below, three decks down for us. The next night three of us joined them and to our surprise, and joy, we actually needed a blanket. The second night we were reminded of the vagaries of the tropics; we were drenched by a brief shower. We curled up and tried to tough out, but within the hour a second shower forced us back to our *warm bunks.*

Besides the movies and enjoying an occasional gee dunk, there were plenty of other activities on seaboard life, some provided by the USO. CPO Claude Thornhill, popular Big Band leader, came aboard with his orchestra and provided us with an evening of musical entertainment. Thornhill and most of the musicians later visited the Officers in their quarters, but the drummer, former movie star and drummer, Jackie Cooper, decided to sit down with us enlisted personnel and join us for mess. During the Christmas season, 1944, we were entertained by our own shipboard talent in *"A Hollywood Revue."* A few sailors had recently been employed in Hollywood and they wrote the script, designed the costumes, wrote the music, held rehearsals, and put on a real professional show. The main act consisted of two *couples* jitterbugging to music, provided by records; the *female* dancers wore short skirts typical of the 1940s much to the enjoyment of the ship's company who applauded and shouted for "More!" and "More!"

I remember Billy Nathan White from Lubbock, Texas. Billy was a quiet, energetic Technician Striker, Seaman 1/c. As anywhere else where work is performed, there has to be a payday and that means personnel collect *money.* Most sailors sent money home or to a bank in the form of an allotment. Many sailors had no real need for a lot of cash and, in addition to an allotment, mailed additional money home via mail orders. And Billy was the master craftsman for sending money home. After the pay had been disbursed, Billy would return to the radio shack and sit quietly for an hour or so. He would then disappear below deck without any comment. Within the next 60 to 90 minutes, Billy would return with money which he soon converted into a mail order and sent home. What was surprising was the amount of money he had "collected" down below.

Billy earned it by being quiet, just like we knew him to be. Within minutes after "pay call," there would be more than one venue for crap games. With money having such little importance, the bets were often substantial. After an hour or so, *shooters* still in the game would feel that they were "on a streak" and the "watchers" felt the same way, and that was when Billy arrived. ***Never*** touching the dice, he would make a side bet **against** the "streak." Naturally, the odds were in his favor and his *gains* far exceeded his *losses.*

And one day Billy was my choice to assist me with mounting a back-up cable for

our emergency (SOS) frequency transmission. The cable had to be stretched from the top of the Radio Shack up to the catwalk supporting our air search radar antenna. Billy went ahead of me as we climbed up the port king post. When he reached the catwalk he turned to walk across the catwalk toward the radar antenna, but stopped. I came up behind him and could see he was somewhat dazed and starting to lean forward - I reached and grabbed him by the belt and pulled him to me while I still had the other hand on the ladder rung on the king post. I ordered him down the post and I followed closely. We went in to Sick Bay to talk with the Pharmacist. Answering questions, Billy said he had experienced such symptoms once before without any mishap. He admitted this incident frightened him after the fact. He was not a psychiatrist but the "Doc" thought it was a case of *vertigo* and advised Billy to avoid **any** heights, including climbing up masts. Billy was not the only one frightened; I knew how close he was to falling to his certain death.

A few months earlier, when we were in port, our other Seaman 2/c Ferguson, was the object of a different type of tension involving heights. *Fergy* had been on liberty and returned to the ship in a *good mood*, possibly the result of a few glasses of beer. Carl G. saw Fergy's smiles and decided to tease him, "Dunn just came down from the *after mast* and left a wrench hanging up there; go up and bring it down." I had just returned and I had not left any tools up there. As I walked into the Shack, Whitey informed me of Carl's *joke* and said Fergy had headed for the signal bridge "a few minutes ago!" We took off running; Whitey took one route; I, another. We arrived together at the mast just as Fergy was reaching for the first rung, 3 decks above the seaplane deck. We humored him and told him Carl was joking; I told him there were no tools "up there," and we returned to the Shack where Whitey, in no uncertain terms, told Carl G. no one enjoyed *his joke.*

It was late and we were beginning to think of some sleep when the Captain's baker, the *homeless one,* appeared and asked me to join him on deck. It was dark and he was carrying a cardboard carton. He led me forward to the 5 in. gun "tub." The tub was some 4 feet above the deck, leaving a small "hide-away" where we slid in with the carton and he revealed the *goodies* he had selected from the skipper's larder. He was happy showing me these items that had never been seen in the mess hall. I remember most the canned peach halves. *Yes - he had a can opener, spoons and cloth napkins.* The delicacies included canned oysters and clams, saltines, cheese and spreads, and ginger ale. I know he was happy to be able to *share* such "goodies" with a fellow shipmate. We had a delightful 45-minute party.

End Plays

I remember Tommy Cully from our home town: Kingston, NY. I first met Tommy shortly after we moved to Kingston from Walden following my Junior year. Tommy and I and Ralph Grothkop lived in the same neighborhood and

often met on our way to Kingston High, or at Loughran Park. Through them, I received an invitation to join the Hi-Y club, which was sponsored by the high school; I joined Tommy and Ralph in the club. I met Tommy's mother and father while spending evenings on the floor listening to his Dad tell us his experiences during the construction of the Panama Canal.

At the time, I was entering my Senior year at Kingston High School, someone commented that the KHS Principal, Clarence Dumm, had received mention in Robert Ripley's *Believe It or Not* syndicated column in the press. Mr. Dumm and family pronounced their name to rhyme with *doom*. The column commented about a school principal named Dumm, intimating it sounded like *dumb!*

For Easter Vacation, 1941, members of the Hi-Y club visited Washington, D.C. Tommy drove his car, a 5-year old Plymouth, and we told stories and jokes and laughed most of the way. In addition to touring the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, watching them make paper money - *real money*, we toured FBI headquarters, where we saw Dillinger's fake gun made out of a bar of soap; we also chased each other up the stairs in the Washington Monument. One night, we attended the Capitol Theater to see Tommy Dorsey and his orchestra. The orchestra featured a young drummer named Buddy Rich, the trumpet of Charley Shavers, the Pied Piper Quartet, and a singing duet of Connie Haynes and **Frank Sinatra.**

Back in Kingston, Tommy and I would occasionally cruise the streets in his car and sit on a park bench in Academy Green in front of the Governor Clinton Hotel and watch people and cars go by. Remember, this was years before AC in cars and TV. I don't remember why we participated in a scavenger hunt one evening with 35 or 40 other high school juniors and seniors. What I definitely remember was entering a soda fountain across the street from KHS and asked a stranger for his autograph. He cheerfully signed and we continued searching for other items on the list. Our team of three were not first, but were near the front and turned in our "treasures" for validation. One of the directors asked me if I knew the man who signed his name for me. He was laughing as he was reading the signature of "*Horace Schitt!*" Obviously, our team did not win any prizes.

We lost track of each other the next year, but met again during the summer of 1942, following the attack on Pearl Harbor. I was playground supervisor in Loughran Park where we again met. After that summer, we were both soon busy; he entered the Army Air Corps and I, the Navy. And Ralph went to work as a sales agent for Old Gold Cigarettes. I next heard from Tommy in September 1944. *Lt. Thomas J. Cully* was in training in Langley Field, VA. studying *Radar Bombing*. My dad and mother had visited Tommy's parents and provided them with my new address; thus, we were in touch again. We continued to exchange letters as we moved into the western Pacific. Tommy wrote describing the duties of a crew member of the giant B-29 Superfortress Bomber. They were taking off around-the-clock from the Marianas Islands, Guam and Tinian, to bomb Iwo Jima. Still later he discussed their first bombing run over

Yokohama and Tokyo, while we were listening to reports of mounting casualities in both Iwo Jima and Tokyo.

Three of the 1941 graduates from Kingston High School, Kingston, New York

I actually anticipated the news that Tommy's B-29 went down over Tokyo. I din't want to believe it - *Maybe he didn't fly that day!* My father sent a letter and enclosed two clippings from the *Kingston Daily Freeman* announcing he was "missing in action" and "killed in action." It was even more traumatic when, in late March 1945, I received Tommy's last letter to me. In the letter, he talked about what a "great guy" Ralph Grothkopp was. Because of his deformed legs, he had to stay behind and Tommy mentioned how much Ralph "missed us." Knowing how difficult it was for Ralph to learn of Tommy's death, I forwarded Tommy's last letter to him; it was first on our minds when Ralph and I got together in Kingston one year later. (An early letter from Tommy appears in Appendix III.)

Next?

In early March 1945, there was a lot of movement both within and outside the atoll. Ships were departing and we watched them as they crossed the northern horizon East to West. The first few days it was like watching a sea-going version of an never ending freight train, one after another, from dawn to dusk; these were the patrol craft and escort ships: the destroyers, destroyer escorts, destroyer mine sweepers. All night long, although they were traveling under "darken ship" orders, the train of silhouetted vessels continued. The escorts were followed by the *bigger guys:* cruisers, aircraft carriers, battleships, and tenders. We learned that this armada was headed for Okinawa to augment other ships already nearing the island, placing our forces closer to Japan proper than at any time doing the War. Our VP-22 squadron continued its patrol duties searching for any sightings that could negatively impact the very critical supply routes supporting our Forces.

As we anticipated, as the activity in the Central Pacific was greatly reduced, our orders changed. Our PBM squadron was transferred to Eniwetok for training while we headed nearly due North. Passing Guam and Tinian, we anchored in

Tanapag Harbor at Saipan. As were sailing to Saipan, we had listened to commercial radio broadcasts originating in San Francisco, reporting lone enemy aircraft strafing Allied ships in Tanapag Harbor. The only aircrafty we saw flying over Saipan at the time were the B-29 Superfortresses taking off from nearby Tinian. They were still low, having just lifted off, as they flew directly above our ship. The B-29 was so much larger than our "tiny" two-engine PBM bombers, we looked up in awe.

CAPTAIN E. GRANT, USN
Commanding Officer

Captain Ethridge Grant, USN, Alumnus of Annapolis (1926), is the USS Cumberland Sound's able and respected Skipper. No greater tribute can be paid him in this brief space than to say that only good things are said about him to his back. There is not a man aboard who does not have the deepest respect for his good judgement and humane enforcement of discipline.

On Saipan proper there was still occasional sniper fire from the mountainous center of the island. Two G.I.s were hit while waiting in line outside the mess hall; their wounds were minor. Ignoring the unofficial reports from the San Francisco radio broadcast, Captain Grant, learning that several ships, mostly landing craft, were in the harbor beneath us, sent divers down and *rescued* fifty 50-caliber machine guns which he wanted mounted around the main deck rails. In the early days of the Pacific War, when the Japanese were approaching Australian waters, then-LCDR Grant was skipper of a Navy ship anchored a few miles off shore. He became the only passenger in a 3-man whale boat. They were heading for a shore station from his ship when a Japanese fighter plane began a strafing run in their direction. Grant took a position behind the boat's only weapon - a 50-caliber machine gun and directed fire toward the approaching enemy fighter. The fighter changed direction and left the area. As a result of his experience, Grant has always favored 50-caliber guns mounted a ship's rail where any passing sailor can take action when needed.

At Saipan, CAPT Grant granted four hours of liberty for one fourth of the crew each afternoon. Some of us journeyed to the southern end of the island where we examined some Japanese artillery that had been used in the island's defense. There were also shells of both American and Japanese tanks and landing craft. But more important for us walking on an acre of green grass *in our bare feet!* in place of coral and sand, and accepting coffee and a doughnut from an American Red Cross unit. When we returned to the ship, I was told that I had had a visitor while ashore; Jack Murphy left a message that he would return to see me the next day.

I remember Jack Murphy from Oswego, NY. We were classmates in the college and we both tried to enter the Navy in 1942 when enlistments had been closed. After actually entering the Navy in February 1943, I lost track of Jack until that day in Saipan.

A considerable amount of the action against the island of Okinawa was originating from the Kerama Islands some 20 miles southwest of Okinawa. Jack was an AM, aviation mechanic, and had been part of a PBM crew. They had been patrolling for ASR, air-sea rescue, some 15 miles west of Okinawa, near Kerama Rhetto, a small island cluster. As their flight took them over one island, they were caught between a Japanese Zero and a U.S. fighter plane; they were struck by "friendly fire." Immediately, it was obvious that they were going to land in the Pacific. The skipper told them they could bail out, if they hurried, or, they could hang tight and join him in the rapidly approaching crash landing. In the water, they could float with their life-vests until a PBM, or some other patrol craft, could rescue them. The whole crew went down together. A PC, patrol craft, pulled them out of the ocean and they returned to their tender. They were flown to Saipan where their skipper was trying to locate a "used PBM" so they could return to their squadron.

The following day, Murph nonchalantly sauntered into the Radio Shack as if he

had just returned from the mess hall. I introduced him to the others present and we listened as he filled us in on his recent crash landing. Jack and I then took a few hours liberty on Saipan strolling around the south end of the island, sitting in the grass and bringing each other up to date on our experiences since we left Oswego, and drinking a cup of Red Cross coffee, two days in a row for me. Our next meeting would be at his Oswego home in 1946 when we would return to school.

The Bomb

Our VP-22 squadron was already at Eniwetok training with a few new personnel. Our orders were to also reach Eniwetok and join our squadron. Inasmuch as we would be heading East, away from most of the action, we felt like we were heading for some R. & R., Rest and Recreation. It was August 5 and we were in our second day en route to Eniwetok - we heard that a *special bomb* had been detonated over the city of Hiroshima, Japan. We were still sailing East three days later, 8 August - the second bomb obliterated Nagaski and we received orders to reverse and rendezvous with other elements of the Third Fleet in Okinawa. On 15 August, Emperor Hirohito delivered a recorded message to the Japanese people that the country was involved in talks with the Allied Forces regarding ceding Japan's sovereignty.

The morning of 17 August found the Cumberland Sound approaching the mine field protecting Okinawa's Buckner Bay. Around 0900, as we nervously inched our way toward the island in a light, sunless mist, there were <u>rumors</u> that Japan was preparing to surrender. Under our existing circumstances, we expressed little enthusiasm; there was little, if any, conversation. Although there was nothing to see, we couldn't avoid *looking into* the water. There was certainly no visible excitement over a possible cessation of the war; we would think of other items once we were clear of the mine field. That evening there was talk that some of the Marines on shore in Okinawa became a little exuberant at the surrender talk and fired shots into the air; there had been several "friendly fire" incidents, including at least one fatality.

Arriving safely in the harbor, we had no sooner finished our noon meal when we were heading back through the mine field and the Cumberland Sound under CAPT Ethridge Grant, who was now CTG, Command of Task Group, consisting of our AV-17 and 10 other ships. Before dusk, we worked our way back through the mine field and sailed in a northerly direction. Most of the ships in the region were assembling with the Third Fleet under Admiral "Bull" Halsey and preparing to advance on to the Japanese main land of Honshu.

Within hours, our progress was halted and we had to return to Buckner Bay before nightfall. Our arrival was followed by an unusual scene. CAPT Grant was not a tall man; he was less than average height. Back at anchor, an admiral's barge approached and received permission to board the Cumberland Sound.

After an extremely brief conference, Captain Grant and the ***tall*** admiral came out of the captain's cabin. There were some harsh words from both officers; CAPT Grant asked the Admiral to leave *his ship*.

The next morning, 18 August, we were underway again, for a rendezvous with the other ten ships in our Task Group and then pursue our position on the port (left) flank of the Third Fleet. By noon the following day we were part of the western flank of the armada as we viewed the hundreds of ships surrounding us heading towards Japan, some 200 miles ahead, half expecting some form of *last ditch* maneuver, such as a Kamikaze (*tender wind*) squadron. Whether it had been truth or propaganda, we still had little faith in any pronouncements emanating from Japan. Aside from a lot of ocean, there was one unusual feature, an oddity of rock growth dubbed "Lot's Wife," a proverbial *pillar of salt*. Far from any land mass, it is a tall pillar of rock appearing like a sentinel in the ocean.

Ever since departing Buckner Bay, the days had been cloudy and damp, which provided some cover, if you can imagine *hiding* thousands of ships. The weather also hampered our visual ability when our Radar located a "bogey," unidentified aircraft, moving north to south, closing in on our Fleet. IFF failed to identify the blip as *Friend*. The pilot had to be aware that he was visible on the Radar of "all those ships down below." But just as obvious, he was unaware that he had failed to activate his **IFF** transponder which would identify his flight as **Friend.** It was a U.S. Navy PB4Y-2 Privateer that was innocently flying over the largest fleet of ships ever assembled. We mused what his thoughts were when he discovered he had been flying without his I.D. - IFF.

As we approached Honshu, Japan's main island, on 27 August, our AV-17, along with many other ships of the fleet, entered Sagami Wan, or Outer Bay. The narrow water way between Sagami Wan and Tokyo Bay was referred to as the "Hole in the Wall" and had been mined by both Japanese and American Forces. Seven ships, including the Cumberland Sound, were ordered to proceed through the *Hole in the Wall* into the Inner Bay and Tokyo.

Were we getting closer to the end of the war? What type of reception would we find in Tokyo Bay? It was little comfort to realize the first four ships were slender DMS, destoyer mine sweepers. It was also no comfort to look at the *flotsam and jetsam*, debris at sea, floating around us. A year earlier in the Battle of Palau, some Japanese fighters swam out to PBMs moored in the lagoon with their heads and explosives hidden in floating crates, becoming suicide bombers. We were also quite aware that the beam width of the Cumberland Sound, 69 ft 6 in,, was far greater than the other ships within our smmall group. The last ship in our group was the AVP-53 USS Suison, small seaplane tender, the ship with sonar that had guided us from Hawaii as we began our mission in 1944. From our deck, we watched what might have been a fruit crate floating near us; we passed near the crate as it gently grazed our hull; as it continued to our rear toward the Suison, we all breathed normally again.

Ahead of us, in the Yokhama region of Tokyo Bay, the Japanese had brought a number of POWs down from their prison confinements and placed them in a few commercial waterfront buildings. Of course, as we entered the bay from the Hole in the Wall, our appearance created a lot of excitement with both friend and foe (former?) There were many small craft, fishermen, in the bay, but far from our flotilla. A few POWs were so anxious to join us they jumped from the buildings into the bay; in places the water was no more than 3 feet deep resulting in some broken bones. Rumors reported that Pappy Boyington, the Marine Corps ace credited with 28 enemy "kills," was one of the jumpers. 28 August 1945, the following day, we were joined in Tokyo Bay by a flotilla of ships, including the battleship Missoui, BB-63. On land, General MacArthur arrived with representative land and air forces from the U.S. and the other Allied nations . On 2 September, 1945, the formal surrender was signed on board the Missouri and accepted by General Douglas Mac Arthur.

Once again, a radio broadcast from the U.S. West Coast took some literary license in describing the scene as the documents were being signed. Tokyo Bay was overcast with light mist in some areas, but we were only a few hundred yards from the Missouri when the San Francisco broadcaster described the sun *breaking through the mist* as the principals signed. From our position no sunlight was visible, but it was an inspiring moment in our history and we were glad to be there.

Japan

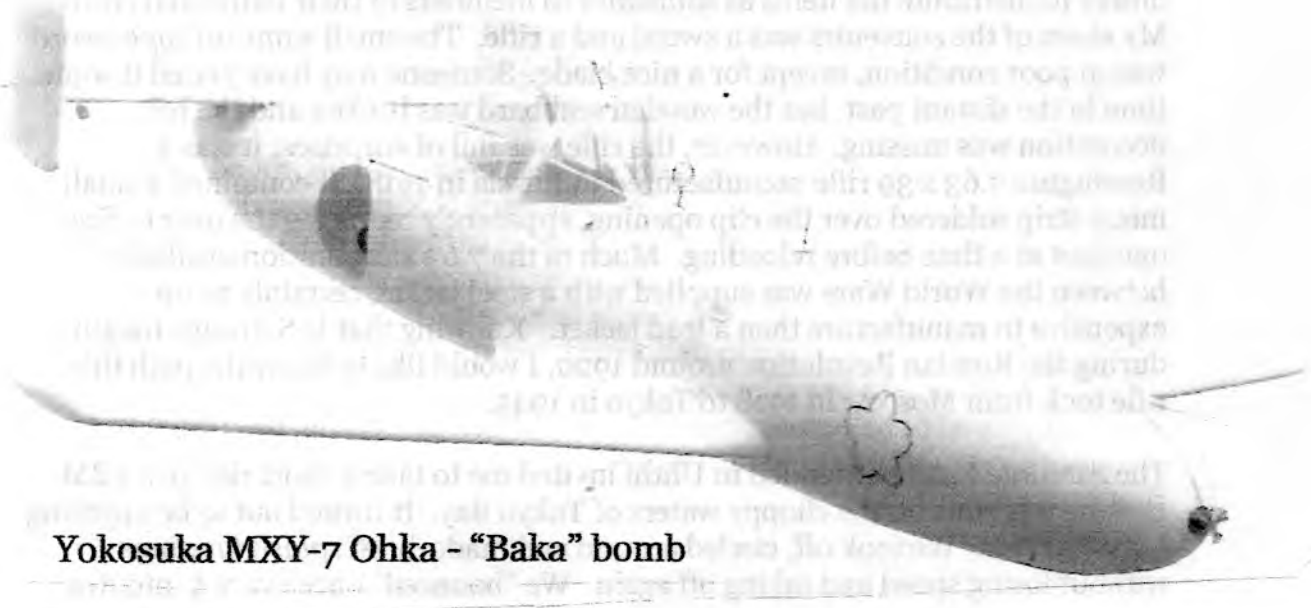
The Cumberland Sound docked off Yokohama and established a seadrome to provide space for our 18 seaplane squadron that arrived a week later. As we began to orient our thinking from hostility to peace; we had to look at Japan and its people in unfamiliar ways. A good way to begin looking at Japan is Mount Fiji, the near perfect snow capped cone that dominates the skyline over the Yokohama-Tokyo landscape. Besides being a magnificent sight, it is easy to understand the devotion it receives from the Japanese people. It was a sight we were going to have in our view as part of our "home" for the coming months.

Three of us spent our first liberty visiting a residential neighborhood not far from the Yokohama Naval Station. Realizing that some U.S. propaganda leaflets dropped on the island nation months before the surrender depicted U.S. Marines as fierce fughters, physically larger than most Japanese soldiers, who earned special honors by killing their own family members. We thought seriously of how ordinary civilians might react to uniformed, but unarmed U.S. sailors. For better or worse, we carried a few chocolate bars that might be welcomed by the children. And that proved to be correct; a number of youngsters became interested in our presence as we walked aimlessly through the streets. The chocolate became the first communication between us and the children. Although we both uttered words that neither could understand, the response was friendly smiles and, surprisingly, for oriental children, hand shakes.

Very soon, there were some adults joining the children with a few words and a few shy smiles and one elderly man who spoke a few words of English. At this meaningful contact, we began communicating with the man, and the gathering began talking aloud to the man and to us through him, our *emcee*. He did ask us some of the group's questions, but he was attempting to convince us that he was more than just Japanese; he displayed the label inside his tie, he was the only man with a shirt, coat and tie; the tie came from Sydney, Australia, where he had spent some time in the past; he was *more of a man-of-the-world* than his fellow villagers. We also noticed that a few in the gathering understood a little English because they seemed to disagree with some of his translations.

In a little more than an hour, we discovered many interesting details of their lives during the recent war effort. Generally speaking, they seemed to welcome our arrival, the U.S., and wanted to talk with us. One gentleman, who spoke no English, but seemed to understand our replies accompanied by many hand gestures, took us to his nearby home and explained how the government had been collecting the metal in their homes for years. At first it was kitchen ware, pots and pans, then door knobs, copper pipes and roof gutters. We noted that what few men were there were older men. Two men from their community were currently in the neighboring hills collecting edible plants and roots. After they returned with their meager harvest in a two wheeled cart, the *produce* would be distributed and two other nen would take their turn scrounging the hills for two or three days for the next "food supply."

At an airfield near the Naval Base, we came upon a type of Kamikaze aircraft that had been called a "Baka" (*stupid or idiot)* bomb (Yokosuka MXY-7 Ohka. It was a rocket powered jet resembling a bomb with stubby wings and a cockpit with controls; the difference was the nose cone carried a bomb. It was to be carried



Yokosuka MXY-7 Ohka - "Baka" bomb

towards a target, or targets, beneath a real bomber and released within 12 miles of the target and flown/glided into the target by the suicide pilot. The cockpit was quite small; too small for me or any of the other shipmates examining this most recent member of Japan's Kamikaze brigade.

Soon after our arrival, I was assigned Shore Patrol duty and made my first visit to Tokyo. The bus ride to Tokyo took us through the city of Yokohama; the results of the B-29 bombings were unbelievable. We learned that the raid of June 26 on both cities was the heaviest bombing of the War before the atom bombs in August. That raid included incendiary bombs causing wide spread fires. Little was left standing in many areas except for cylindrical objects such as round chimneys and vertical pipes. When discussing the the war, many referred to the June 26 "fire bombing" as the worst attack of the war. Of course, they lived in Tokyo and Yokohama, not Hiroshima or Nagasaki. Even so, *how did they survive?*

The SP assignment was in a dance hall in central Tokyo from 1200 to 1600. The people were predominantly U.S. and Britsh sailors, soldiers, airmen and marines, including a scattering of female service personnel such as Navy WAVES and Nurses. They arrived as singles or small groups and could order sandwiches, beer, wine and soft drinks. A sampling said they felt like tourists. It was an easy 4-hour duty.

One of the Cumberland Sound's motor launches stumbled on a large water-line cave not too far from our ship. Inside the cave, above the water line, there were pile after pile of old weapons: rifles, swords, shot guns, pistols, etc. The boat crew returned to the ship and reported their find to the Duty Officer; he took them topside to repeat their story in front of the Executive Officer. Two days later, the first boat was joined by another launch and a whale boat as they began collecting the munitions and other contents of the cave. The Exec ordered each division officer to distribute the items as *souvenirs* to members of their individual crews. My share of the souvenirs was a sword and a rifle. The small *samurai type* sword was in poor condition, except for a nice blade. Someone may have prized it some time in the distant past, but the wooden scabbard was broken and the hilt decoration was missing. However, the rifle was full of surprises: it was a Remington 7.63 x 39 rifle manufactured in Russia in 1918. It contained a small metal strip soldered over the clip opening, apparently requiring the user to fire one shot at a time before reloading. Much of the 7.63 ammunition available between the World Wars was supplied with a steel jacket, certainly more expensive to manufacture then a lead jacket. Knowing that U.S. troops fought during the Russian Revolution around 1920, I would like to know the path this rifle took from Moscow in 1918 to Tokyo in 1945.

The *Airedale* I had befriended in Ulithi invited me to take a short ride in a PBM making test runs on the choppy waters of Tokyo Bay. It turned out to be anything but a *joy ride*. We took off, circled around and made brief *splash landings* without losing speed and taking off again. We "bounced" once every 5 minutes

for 35 minutes and, as we made the final landing, it was fortunate for us that the waist hatches were open; we both threw up. (I wondered if the exhaust fumes entering the open hatch contributed to our temporary sickness,) The one plus was getting an aerial view of our surroundings from Tokyo to Yokosuka.

Once we arrived in Japan, 8 ships in our CTG Task Group were reassigned and the CTG consisted of the Cumberland Sound and two other ships. A supply ship arrived from Australia with food supplies for the original Group, including enough meat for eleven ships. For a few weeks, we had enough steak and beef stew, sometimes three meals a day, to last us a long time. At one meal, I had a drumstick over a foot long and learned it was from an Australian hare.

Being in Japanese waters brought us into the region known for its typhoons. And we didn't have to wait very long before one formed and Japan was predicted to be in its path. The first defense was to move our squadron to safer waters in southern Japan, near Kyushu. All lose objects on deck were moved below or secured. When the storm hit, one motor launch was returning to the ship, but after a few attempts to grapple with a boom, it was at risk of colliding with the ship, so it safely returned to a more-sheltered wharf. At the height of the storm, our heading was into the wind and we had posted four anchors but we were still slowly moving rearward. We stood on deck leaning some 30 degrees into the wind without falling. But after the storm passed, we were proud of the *Cuke's* ability to handle such a storm.

The Cumberland Sound was no longer involved in anti-submarine operations. Instead, we were operating special missions while also remaining on occupation duty. One of our worst accidents happened in Tokyo Bay involving one of the bowser boats that delivers AvGas to the squadron. The 3-man crew pulled up alongside the ship on the port side and shut their diesel down. Shortly after the ship lowered the hose and it was connected to the bowser boat tank, gasoline vapors broke into flames, completely enveloping the boat. The Motor Mechanic, who was between the ship and the flaming tank, climbed through the flames to get off the boat into the water. Somehow, all three, as badly burned as they were, managed to climb up the Jacob's ladder to the ship's boom where they were carried into sick bay. One of the three passed away overnight. After three days stabilizing the other two, they were transferred to a nearby military hospital for long term treatment.

Even before D-Day in Europe, a point system was established to determine eligibility for discharge for every serviceman. The vast majority of Cumberland Sound's crew were now eligible but there was also a priority list of critical positions in the area; those key positions would remain occupied until the person was replaced or the position abolished. In November, as the AV-17 prepared to return to the U.S., eleven senior members of C-Division received orders to transfer to positions on other ships remaining in the region; I was one of the *lucky eleven.*