

To Sam Gevirtz

presented by

Frances Thompson

as a token of appreciation

for your service to our country

MY LIFE
IN THE
SERVICE

THE DIARY OF

Sam Gevirtz,

San Francisco

IDENTIFICATION

Name: Samuel Gevirtz

Rank: Private First Class Serial Number XXXXX9

Unit: Marine Detachment

Stationed at: U.S.S. Bunker Hill

Religion:

Date of Birth: Oct. 6, 1924 Weight: 165

Color: White Color of Hair: dk. brn.

Height: 5' - 11 1/2" Color of Eyes: brown

Birthmarks or Other Distinguishing Features:

NEAREST RELATIVE OR FRIEND:

Name: Mrs. Rose Gevirtz (mother)

Address:

City: San Francisco State: California

SERVICE RECORD

TRANSFERS AND CHANGES IN RANK

Enlisted in USMCR in San Francisco on 23 February, 1943.
Entered Boot camp in MCB, San Diego on 1 March, 1943.
Completed recruit training and transferred to Headquarters Company, Base Headquarters Battalion on 24 April, 1943.
Promoted 1 May, 1943 to Private First Class. Passed exam to Corporal on 23 June, 1943. Eligible for promotion. Worked in office of Base Sergeant-Major, Administration Building,
Transferred to Sea School, 21 Nov. 1943, for 5 weeks.
Graduated & transferred to Treasure Island for 2 weeks.
Transferred 27 Jan. 1944 to the USS "Juniper" for transport to Pearl Harbor. Pulled out of San Francisco Bay at exactly 10 minutes past one on Friday 28 Jan. 1944. Arriving Port Hueneme, near LA. On 29 Jan, 1944 for loading for a few days.
Then to Pearl Harbor F.F.T. Arrived Tuesday, Feb. 8, 1944. Left Fri., March 10, 1944 and transferred to duty in the Marine Detachment aboard the U.S.S. Bunker Hill.

(In a section marked, MY BUDDIES in the service, he does not list any buddies. He starts his Diary.)

I have just completed my first tour of duty in the Pacific after ten months spent in action against the Japanese. The Bunker Hill has been in action a little over a year. In that time, her planes and ship's guns have shot out of the air 263 enemy aircraft, and accounted for over 600,000 tons of enemy shipping ranging from aircraft carriers to cargo ships. This total is almost one-third of that claimed by our Third Fleet. It's too bad that those pilots, and enlisted men of the Air Groups and crew who gave their lives for a couple more planes, a few extra ships, or a couple extra dead Japs can't be here to appreciate the remarkable record they helped in a large way to create.

The Bunker Hill is a wonderful fighting ship. We are all proud of her. Her record was built from Blood and courage. We can't forget those men who died so we could be proud of her.

Follows the story of my stay aboard a ship in the U.S. Navy as a gunner. My part was small. I am only one of many. The facts which follow are all true. I have made particular pains to keep them true, and to keep scuttlebutt, and rumors out of it, but if they unknowingly crept in, they were later corrected. Many events were left out, because of the dullness of repetition.

It is impossible to write down emotional feelings that I have experienced under fire. My nerves have been keyed up for the entire 10 months to the highest possible pitch and it is a difficult task to relax completely, even now when I know I am comparatively safe. We all know we are on a lucky ship. The question we keep to ourselves is: How long can we stretch our luck??

I am now on my way home for a 3 week rest, before returning to finish the job.

Read now, of the story of the U.S.S. Bunker Hill in its battle against the Japs between March and November 1944.

OFFICERS

I HAVE MET

Name and Address * His Rank * Home

Address * His Picture if Possible*

What I and Others Liked and Disliked

About Him

First Lieutenant Ford E. Wilkins, Assistant Base Adjutant, Marine Corps Base, San Diego. Lt. Wilkins is one of the best officers and men I hope to meet while in the service. He hardly knows me but has done me invaluable favors. Came up through the ranks.

Major Thomas J. Kilcourse, Base Adjutant, Marine Corps Base, San Diego. Good Joe & old salt.

1st Lt. La Bonte at Sea School. Too damn strict about G.I.

1st Lt. Gordon A. Stallings, second in command of Marine Detachment, U.S.S. Bunker Hill, killed in action June 19th, 1944. He was only 23 years old, good-looking. There were times when he wasn't very popular with the men. But we gave him credit for standing up with the rest of us, taking the same chances we were. We were sorry to lose him.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN THE

DIARY OF MY LIFE IN THE SERVICE

This simple record of my daily experiences and thoughts has given me pleasure in the writing of it. If for any reason it leaves my possession, I would like to have it forwarded to:

Name: Mrs. Rose Gevirtz

Address:

City: San Francisco State: Calif.

I shall begin the story of my life in the service 11 months and 6 days after it should have been, since the fore-mentioned 11 months and 6 days were merely preparatory to this big adventure.

At this minute, 1200 on 29 January, 1944, I am sitting on my cot aboard the USS "Juniper," the ship that is transporting me and my 17 comrades to Pearl Harbor, where we shall be assigned to duty aboard fighting ships of the U.S. Navy. Yes, we are sea-going Marines. Gunners, all, and damn good, too. Woe to the Japs. Gevirtz & the boys are on the way! The trip is more or less uneventful. The fellows are all either playing cards, sleeping, or are topside watching the waves & getting seasick. So far, I'm OK, but my fingers are crossed.

We left Hueneme, our last American soil, at 12 minutes past 3p.m. in the afternoon of February 2, 1944. Our second day out was probably one of the most miserable of my life. Never again will I laugh at those poor seasick swabbies hanging over the rail. Yesterday the 3rd, we had G.Q. drill at 0900. Same today, the 4th. We received news today of the successes of the 4th Marine Division at the Marshall Islands. We all expect to get in the battle for Truk. I hope so. I've read stories about the blue Pacific. It's really hard to describe. It's beautiful! The sea is a dark rich blue and when a wave breaks, the crest of it looks a sort of turquoise [sic] blue, a light pale blue. The sun is shining. The weather is warm. Just a little breezy. I'm probably more impressed since this is my first cruise, but I like this life a good deal. But I must admit that I miss Frances very much. The thought that every minute I'm getting further away doesn't make me any happier. Needless to say, I love her very much.

At this minute, 1117 on Feb. 4th, a bunch of the fellows and I are enjoying the cruise sitting aboard a lifeboat with life preservers all around us. Who said we didn't have confidence in the USS Jupiter? The Jupiter is a cargo ship transferred to the Navy since it was faster than other freighters. It's about 8000 tons, jammed full & a high deck cargo. I guess we're going about 15-17 knots right now. We should arrive in Pearl Harbor next Tuesday, the 8th of February. A 6 day trip from the States. We arrived Tuesday afternoon, Feb. 8, 1944, and assigned duty at Company B, Marine Barracks, Navy Yard Navy No. 128, Pearl Harbor. Our duty is guard duty of vital installations, or prisoners of war. Pretty soft since we only put in about 4 hours out of 16 or 20. The rest of the time we sun bathe, swim, play ball or just "crap out," the favorite pastime of this Marine. The weather really is swell. The fellows expect to stay here for about a month or until the fleet returns from the Marshalls or Paramushine [sic s/b Paramushir]. It can't be too soon for me. The sooner I get out, the sooner I get back to Frances. Damn it, miss her more now.

There's a distant dream I have of getting in the battle for Wake Island. I'd relish that opportunity to get back at the Nips. For that matter, I guess every Marine is. I will continue this when we leave Pearl Harbor. Ah, hula girls, lovely palm trees, etc., etc., ---boloney!!! Just a modern city in warm climate. Too crowded to be good to the serviceman. Personally, I don't care. Nothing like home, I guess.

February 23, 1944. Many things have happened since landing here almost a month ago, but for obvious reasons I can't tell about all of them. Got a beauty of a shiner when Jess Carlos accidentally hit me in the eye with a ball bat. There are a huge number of Sea School fellows here. Almost as if all the Sea School just moved over. Guard duty hasn't been too bad. Some posts are rugged, other are comparatively easy, but confidentially I don't like any of it.

About 2 weeks ago I met Frances' father and her brother, Frankie. Here's how I met Mr. Thompson: I knew he was here, but the question was how to get in touch with him. I was in a tower in the upper tank farm on post 53, when sudden inspiration struck me. There was a telephone there, used to report in to the Cpl. of the Guard. I picked up the receiver, called the operator and asked for Information. Gave the Information operator the dope and she got me Mr. T's number. Then I called him up and spoke to him. Made a date for that night at 5p.m. at the Main Gate. I met him there. He's a pretty nice guy. We got along very well. Two days later I met Frankie at the same place. He's a swell guy, but I'm afraid too religious for me. I find it difficult to get any closer as a friend, or brother-in-law for that matter, because of this. We can't speak on equal levels for that reason. Neither he nor his dad have spoken to me regarding my possibly marrying Frances. Today is my first anniversary in the Marine Corps. Also today I received mail from home for the first time since being overseas. It came in the form of 3 letters from Frances and one from her sister, Harriet. Gosh, was I glad to receive them! I was so nervous & excited when I first saw them. I guess I acted sort of childish, but what the hell did you expect??

February 24th, 1944.

I still haven't received any mail from home. Can't understand why. I've started taking daily workouts in our ball field. Anything to keep that bulge which is starting around the waist. I'm working out with Jim Popoff, a good friend from St. Louis, Mo. He made All-District tackle two season in a row. Also Tom Hand, former All-American center from Iowa State. Easy to see these boys keep me moving.

On Feb. 25, 1944, Johnny Hagman and I visited a carrier that was here. The U.S.S. Intrepid of the Essex class, I believe. We went aboard, looked around, went down to the Marine's compartment and batted the breeze with some of the fellows there. I wouldn't mind landing a flat-top. Rough duty, but interesting.

For the last few weeks nothing particularly interesting has happened. I've had many important, some interesting sentry posts. Once had an ammunition train with Tom Hand, and L. A. Johnson. We had a pretty good time together. On duty on the 12-4, this a.m., something happened which shocked the entire organization. Joe V. Cavanaugh, a young boy of about 18 years, was caught asleep on post 68. Today's date: March 4. Joe was very well-liked by everyone. Was one of the big moments everywhere, always joking and generally happy. He came from a well-known family and had a very nice girl-friend back at his home town who he intended marrying when he returned. Now Joe has a general court-martial coming up which may land him several years at Mare Island Naval Prison. The facts look pretty much against him. He was asleep with his rifle laying nearby. The O. D. came up to him, disarmed him by taking his rifle. Thus, he couldn't deny the charges. Everybody feels really in the dumps about him. We're sorry to lose him.

Letters have been coming more or less regularly from Frances. A swell morale-booster. A bunch of fellows from the platoon before ours are leaving tomorrow. Which means we'll be leaving soon also.

March 7.

Jim Popoff was the first to leave. The lucky guy got the USS Bunker Hill. I expect to leave any day now.

Today we were having a lecture on the roof regarding gas masks when Corporal B. A. Brown who was in charge, made some slurring remarks regarding the Jewish race. Not content with this, he had to follow it up with swearing & cussing the Jewish out in general. I was pretty mad but thought it wise, since Brown had two stripes and I had only one, to keep quiet. However another Jewish boy, Edward Cole, refused to accept any more such cracks & jumped to his feet & told Brown off. Of course Brown acted the perfect Jackass and had to back down or no doubt Cole would have mashed his pretty face in. I felt very ashamed that I should have kept quiet through it all. Generally, I don't.

Roy Gallatin went to the hospital yesterday to have his tonsils removed. I hope we don't lose him, but I fear we may. (Later found out he got U.S.S. Princeton, sunk Oct. 23.)

My mistake. Jim Popoff got the USS Abbott (Cabot), not the Bunker Hill. The transfer order came through for me today, March 9. I leave tomorrow, the 10th. I'll find out the ship when I get aboard. I'm going with 9 comrades. Freddie Hertzberg is going aboard some cruiser by himself. I think the USS San Francisco. I guess we lose Roy Gallatin. Well, anyway, from now on, things start moving. The transfer orders for our platoon came in today, Friday, March 10.

Fred Hertzberg got the USS New Orleans, D. C. Johnson, L. A. Johnson, L. D. Jones, & R. B. Wallace got the U.S.S. Hornet & Biddle, Bonwell, Carlos, Evans, Hagman, Eaton, Hand, Cole, and I got the USS Bunker Hill. We reported aboard and were immediately pleased with our new "home." The Bunker Hill is a new carrier, only commissioned in May 1943, first entered combat in October 1943 and already holds the record in the Pacific for her time out: 98 planes & 41 ships!! Of course, this was before we came aboard. Now with us at the 20m.m.'s, the record will grow – but fast. Our first evening aboard was spent loading bombs (for the planes). The second day, 11th, I was already well acquainted with the First Sergeant, as proven by my assignment to duty as bow sentry. Parade – rest for 4 hours. Talk about sore feet!! The 3rd day, 12th, we had liberty & ate at some Chinese place. Had a steak, very nice - & very expensive. Saw my old D.I. from boot camp who is a 2nd lieutenant, no less! Was called out this morning the 13th for a working party, loading 5" shells. "Praise the Lord & Pass the Ammo."

The Bunker Hill is a sister-ship of the Essex, tonnage replacement of about 27,000 tons. The ship has been through quite a bit since last October. Has bombarded Rabaul, where the gunners aboard bagged 10 Jap planes, went north & the planes took care of the Gilberts & the Marshalls, went northwest & the planes bombed Truk in the famous first raid on that enemy base. The planes aboard at first were Corsairs, but because it landed at a speed too high for safety, they were replaced by Hellcats. For dive-bombers, they use Helldivers. And they also have TBF's (torpedoe [sic] bombers). The fellows aboard so far have been very nice & I think they're a bunch of good Joes. I'm very satisfied. The stateside port is Bremerton, Wash. Why couldn't it be either San Diego or San Francisco? Such is life!!

We pulled out of Pearl Harbor at the center of a task force on the morning of March 15th. In checking, we are traveling southwest at a speed of approximately 20 knots. Since I suddenly realize that we are rapidly approaching our "front lines," so to speak, it causes my heart to beat a little faster. We were only out from P.H. about 2 hours when 2 A-20's started pulling target sleeves for target practice. The 5 inchers & 40's

aboard this ship are really good! Not to mention the 20's. We knocked down several sleeves.

After target practice, we stood by for about an hour and then our planes started to land. This is the first time I've ever really witnessed landing aboard a carrier and I got quite a thrill out of it. First came the torpedo [sic] planes. Incidentally this is the first time our planes have been equipped with rockets. There are four under each wing. One shell carries the force of a 5 inch projectile. Some punch! When the Japs prepare for torpedo [sic] defense, and the TBF's suddenly start peppering away with rocket shells – what a surprise!! It's quite an honor for the Bunker Hill to be the ship to experiment with rockets. After the TBF's, came the Helldivers. And after these came the Hellcats, our fighters.

Today, the 16th, I was only 20 feet away when I saw my first planes catapulted off a ship. Four Helldivers went off. It was a thrill to watch the pilot brace himself against the back-rest and the radioman – gunner lean far forward, all tensed and waiting for the shock of being thrown through the air at about 80 miles per hour. After that, their own motors, which were racing picked up and they went smoothly away. I rummaged around on the hanger deck in a Hellcat and a Helldiver. Found it very interesting. Our reveille every morning is about a half hour before dawn and it comes in the form of General Quarters. However, from now on, they aren't drills. This is the real thing!! I was assigned to Battery IV, Gun 20 as loader. Also attached to Watch Section 2. The longer I'm aboard, the better I like the duty here. We're not as cramped as they are aboard other ships. Our ship is the flag ship of the task force with an Admiral aboard. Some cargo!

March 17th

Rain squalls all day.

March 18th

Saw my first plane crash today. A Helldiver, SB2C, overshot the arresting cables and crashed into the crash barriers. It stood first on its nose & then crashed downward. Fortunately the pilot & gunner were not injured – just scared & there were damages to prop, engine, fuselage and landing gear.

March 19th

Gunnery practice today. While we were firing the 40 millimeters on the island were firing across the flight deck and over our heads. Suddenly Sgt. Dewey Speagle, redheaded boy from the southeast, clutched his side & collapsed. He was wounded by shrapnel from the 40's. He was in terrible pain.

Corpsmen rushed over, administered morphine & put him in a stretcher and had him carried to sick bay. Speagle's face was red with pain & his fists were clenched hard as rock. We found out later that the shrapnel had pierced his lung. Today, the 20th, we pulled into and anchored at Majuro, Marshall Islands. Nets were hung down from Elevator No. 2 and whoever wanted to, went swimming. The water was blue, very nice & clear. Guards were placed about with rifles on the lookout for sharks. Mail was taken ashore to be taken back to the states. Have received no mail from home since leaving Pearl Harbor. Hope I get some soon. It feels funny to realize I'm in the Marshall Islands. One month ago, all that I look upon now, the dozens of tiny islands with palm trees, grass, a few small shacks, and this priceless anchorage, all belonged to Japan. I'm practically in the front lines now.

Pulled out of the Marshalls on the 22nd and joined in a huge task force and journeyed west by southwest. Speed 18 knots. Received first mail from Frances today since being aboard. Hot dog!!

Today, the 23rd, the word has gone around that we pass the equator tomorrow, so we are preparing for initiation from a "slimy pollywog" to a shellback. The aviators were catching heck tonight & it was funny to watch. But why should I laugh? Tomorrow is my turn!! Lucky I'm on watch now, or they'd have me this minute. As it is, they've got Carlos, Biddle, and Cole. At intervals, a voice looms out over the loudspeaker, "Pollywogs Beware!! Tomorrow is the day! Ha ha ha!!!" Tonight we cross the International Date Line, so tomorrow's date is the 25th. I guess I'll never see March 24, 1944.

March 25th, 1944.

Well, at last I'm a full-fledged shellback. But quite a time I had to make it. At one o'clock this afternoon, all of us lowly pollywogs gathered on the hanger deck next to number two elevator. About two hundred in all, I should say. Then his royal majesty, King Neptune Rex came down with his royal police, and other figures, all in costumes as pirates. He was accompanied by the royal harem, fellows in wigs, brassieres, etc., who almost looked more like girls than girls do (make-up and all). They called down for certain pilot officers to go topside to start the initiation. But word was quickly spread that we all go together. There were about five royal policemen on the elevator and immediately they were attacked. A riot ensued in which everybody piled the royal cops, took their stuffed beating sticks & tossed them overboard and then starting stripping the cops of their clothes. The horn signalling [sic] the elevator was rising brought the fight, or whatever you want to call it, to a stop.

Everybody rushed off the elevator, leaving it to rise with the near nude bodies of the cops aboard. The only way they could restore order was to send down the Executive Officer, who requested law and order be maintained. So the initiation continued. First, all the aviators were taken. I never saw a more rugged bunch. They really took a beating. First you ran the length of a long line, on both sides of which were grinning faces, all who possessed a "sheleilah [sic - sheleighleigh or shillalah or shillelagh]" and waving it around their heads or pound it on the decks to frighten you. The victim first runs this gauntlet, at the end of which he produces his summons to a mock court, on the bench of which, the king sits. The victim falls to his knees, while his sentence is read off. He hopes for mercy, but no dice. All the while he's on his knees, he is prodded in the behind by a "devil" with a long fork which is charged with electricity. He then gets up, runs a smaller gauntlet, is met by a stream of water of a big hose. He then gets on his hands and knees and crawls through a target sleeve, where a hose is turned on at the beginning, in the middle, and a you emerge. All the time, you are being pounded by these swatting sticks as you crawl through. Just before this however, some of the select few are given a special treatment, which I'll speak of later, since I'm speaking with authority, my being one of these select few. At the end of the sleeve, is another hose and another gauntlet and that is the end of your initiation. As I was going past the first hose, I shut my eyes and tried to run on, but I suddenly realized a bruiser of the 200 lb. class had his shoulder in my stomach and forcing me back. I tried to wiggle free, but I no sooner started when two strong arms grabbed me and carried me bodily to what was called the "royal coffin" which is a body-sized box full of salt water. Into this I was lifted, lay flat and finally pulled forth, to continue my initiation. Some stuff, believe me. Those swabbies were certainly laying for us Marines. We were soaked, me particularly, but happy and a little proud. Now, we were no longer "slimy pollywogs", but salty shellbacks!!

Preparations are going full blast and it is evident we are making a large raid. All together, in this huge fleet, there are ninety warships, the largest fleet of warships ever assembled. Ninety ships pack a heck of a wallop. And when you figure, the fleet is carrying over a thousand planes!! Our course south by southeast, speed 18 knots. Scuttlebutt has it that we're headed for the island of Palu [sic s/b Palau], a few hundred miles from the Philippines. Right in Tojo's back yard. Early in the morning (about 1a.m.) of the 26th, we picked up a sub contact. Our destroyers immediately started dropping ash cans and from the jar our ship felt, they were rather close. I was just awake for the 12-4 watch down in the brig (of all places to be in case of a real sub attack). The weather is hot (sticky). Our chow isn't so good.

Must add that during the initiation everybody, including me, had their hair cut in crazy forms, the only way to fix it is to have it all cut off, which I did. Now I have less hair than in boot camp - if that's possible.

March 26.

We are now 200 miles from New Ireland, which is Jap territory, Have had several alarms of Japs being in the area.

March 28.

Have passed the Admiralty Is., where Yanks & Japs are still fighting. Are just a slight distance northwest of them. We are just beginning to head towards our target. Will probably start our run to Palu [sic s/b Palau] tomorrow. Sighted a B-24 today. Found out the Japs are aware of our fleet for the last 3 days.

Course north by northwest - speed about 20 knots.

March 29.

Lost two Helldivers over the side in landing. Both crews were picked up by destroyers. Tonight had a visit by Jap bombers. Knocked down 3 by gun fire.

March 30.

At dawn our planes took off for the raid on Palu [sic s/b Palau]. Every hour another wave would take off just before the preceding raid returned. Did a lot of damage to Jap ships & installations. There were 209 sorties, 203 landings. Lost 6 planes from our ship, but they got a good number of Jap planes. Tonight were raided again by 5 groups of Jap planes. Our planes (nightfighters) [sic] got one. All our planes returned. The Japs returned late at night but our gunfire drove them away.

I'm getting darned tired of staying in the battery so long. Have been on Condition One - easy since the night before the attack. The chow keeps getting worse.

March 31.

Our fighters took off on a sweep at 7:30 this a.m. & met Jap fighters. Knocked down quite a few. No losses to us. While they were gone, Jap Betty's tried to sneak up on us. Our fighters knocked three down, one in flames. They fled. Our planes returned from Palu [sic s/b Palau] today with quite a number of holes. Saw a few crash landings on the water. We've been getting reports over the loud-speaker system of the battle. I hope we move out of this place to some other Jap base. Firing at night at Japs is terrifying in one aspect, since you can't see what you're shooting at. But it's also a very picturesque sight. And it's a thrill

to see a plane hit, crash to the water & blaze brightly for a long time. Just when the plane is hit & starts to descend in flames, a big cheer goes up from everyone. Just like a touchdown was scored at a football game. We've had magazines in our guns for several days, expecting trouble. Expect more plane raids tonight from the Japs. They usually come out at night - like the rest of the rodents. No ships of the entire task force has been hit as yet. We should be moving from here tonight to another target. We've been losing more divebomber [sic]s [sic] than anything else. All our pilots have been recused but one. He was seen in his rubber raft about 5 miles from the target. He'll probably be picked up by the Japs - or shot right where he is. C'est la guerre! Our speed - about 25 knots. Course - in circles about 50 miles in diameter about 80 miles from Palu [sic s/b Palau] Island.

April 1st.

We traveled all night at about 30 knots northeast and today our planes take off to attack the small Jap islands in the Woleai group, about 400 miles from Palu [sic s/b Palau] on a straight line between Palau and Truk. They caught the Japs with their planes down (joke), did a lot of damage to their air strip. No damage to our planes but a few small holes. We didn't sight any planes near our task force.

April 2nd.

Refueled [sic] at sea. Beautiful day. Scuttlebutt says we're going back to Majuro Marshall Is. To reprovision, get more ammo & fuel. I hope so. We haven't gotten any mail for a long time & we should get some there.

April 3rd.

In our aircraft recognition class this morning, took an exam and got a good grade & was awarded a certificate which I'm sending home. The weather is terrible. Rain squall all day. Very windy. Helldiver cracked up a wing in landing. Course - due east - speed about 13 knots. Rain & storms continuing. While on a scouting mission, two Helldivers failed to return.

April 5th.

Rains & storms still here. The sea is very rough.

April 6th.

Weather clearing. Arrived in Majuro, Marshall Islands. Both Wed. & Thurs. were April 5th. Crossed International Date Line. Have been working day & night on working parties. The harbor is crowded with flat-tops & different types of warships. Looks like an invasion. There are some transports. Had my first

fruit today, the 9th, since leaving Pearl Harbor. Received mail on the 7th, first in 3 weeks. In 3 mail calls got 8 letters & 2 Easter cards from Frances. No mail from home, just one letter from Sel. Total letters received - Frances: 21, Sel 1, Frieda 1, Ed Greenwood 1, Jack Holland 1, Pop 1, Mirium 3.

Pulled out of Majuro on April 13th. Part of huge task force. Scuttlebutt says we're invading Hollanda [sic, Hollandia] Bay on New Guinea on about the 21st. Passed the International Date Line & lost Saturday, April 15th, 1944.

April 17th.

The weather is perfect. Sea very smooth. Had school on the M1 rifle. (Fired M-1 carbine, BAR.) Firing off fan-tail. Course is west-southwest.

April 18th.

Bogies on the screen. The Japs have been shadowing our tankers at the rendezvous. Had practice firing. Stopped in the middle because bogies closing in. After a while they disappeared.

April 19th.

Wake up by G.Q. at about 0405. Bogies closing in. Gunfire off starboard beam about 10 miles. Worked like heck getting out night magazines. 10 miles is only about 30 seconds flying time. They didn't come to us. In the afternoon bogie reported 23 miles. Our fighters tally-ho'd it & radioed "Scratch one Betty." We were told to expect resistance.

April 21st.

At dawn today, our planes attacked Wadke, about 110 miles from Hollandia. No air resistance. No A.A. fire. Invasion should be at Hollandia April 22nd. Our planes shifted their target to Hollandia. Blasted Hollandia all day. Next day, the 22nd, at dawn, Army Troops invaded Northwest New Guinea. Feeble land resistance. No air resistance. Have been on Condition One-Easy since attack began. On landing one of our fighters had his entire tail section torn off. The tail lay back, its hook still holding the cable. The forward part of the ship crashed into the crash barriers & nosed into the deck. The pilot got up & crawled out, unhurt & grinning. Plenty lucky. After landing from one raid, something happened to the bomb release of a Helldiver. The bomb was loosened but was not dropped. The jolt of the landing tore the bomb loose & it flew to the deck, where it skidded & turned end over end & finally came to rest. A plane spotter ran up to it & disarmed the fuse. I almost aged 10 years watching that bomb bounce!!

The entire attack is going forward O.K. Sighted New Guinea several times April 22nd & 23rd. Pretty quiet out here. Has been raining for several days, but pretty nice weather now. Night of 23rd, the Japs came out for a quick visit. They dropped flares in a nice pattern. Our night fighters drove them off before they could do any damage.

April 24th.

Retired for refeuling [sic].

April 25th.

Learned today the Japs may have large surface units in the vicinity. We're looking for them. We are about 350 miles N.N.E. of Hollandia Bay, New Guinea.

April 26.

Bogies reported pretty thick in the area. Planes from the Princeton, Lexington, and Yorktown knocked down four Jap betty's. The destroyer **Cantley (page 33 L)** accounted for one more with AA fire.

Tonight went to sleep a little on edge. About 1A.M. torpedoe [sic] defense sounded. Bogies reported only 12 miles and closing. Everybody swore plenty when we found out "bogies" were only our own destroyers.

April 27th.

I was talking to a dive-bomber pilot and he told me we were attacking Truk on the 30th, at about 6:A.M. At last I can be part of the outfit hitting Truk.

Have been looking for Jap ships for the last few days, but none sighted. Have had no mail for several weeks. Hope we get some soon. Rec'd mail from a can.

April 28.

Class on the M-1 carbine today. Fired the .45 pistol on No. 2 elevator.

April 29th.

Crossed the International Date Line & repeated Saturday, April 29th. On the second Saturday, April 29th, our planes launched a heavy attack on the Japanese naval base at Truk. They took off shortly after dawn. About 45 minutes after they left, a group of 25 Jap planes, consisting of about 15 zeros and 10 Kates (single engine torpedoe [sic] plane) made a torpedoe [sic] attack on our task group. The ASP (Air Security Patrol) attacked them and downed most of them but several

Kates got through and attacked the USS Monterey, a converted carrier right off our starboard bow. The shot several down and all torpedoes missed. One Kate, after passing the Monterey approached us. Our 5 inchers started peppering away. The quads opened up. But still the Kate came on. I watched it and couldn't move. It seemed to be headed directly for me and I expected it to explode any second. Battery One opened up also. The Kate passed our starboard side & was only between 500 & 800 yards off our bow & about 75 feet off the water. Then Battery Two opened up, the Battery Four, then Battery Six forward. We threw everything at the Kate but the damn thing kept going. We couldn't open up with the quads on 5 inchers off the port side because the New Jersey was several thousand yards off that side. That Kate must have been punched full of holes. Kantz and Evans claim the plane carries a torpedoe [sic] while making its run & didn't have it while we fired at it. It flew through the entire task force and every ship fired at it. But it kept going. Finally, one of our fighters made a dive on it and with a short burst knocked it down. There were many planes burning on the water all around us - Jap's planes. There were several zeros left and we witnessed a short exciting dog-fight about 15,000 feet up off our port bow. How that Kate went through as much as it did will be the topic of conversation for many days to come.

Our planes made many flights over the target during the day. From my dive-bomber pilot friend I got a little dope about their trip. He said the Japs had a heck of a lot of AA fire. I could see that from the condition our planes returned. There were many hits. One gunner in a SB2C and a TBF were brought back dead. There were many crash landings on the deck and in the water. But I know the Japs suffered far worse. We were running low on the regular type bomb & were "forced" to use 1600 lb. bombs in dive-bombers & 2,000 lb. bombs in the TFB's. I heard they were also using depth bombs with short fuses. Our losses were light. No ships were hit, but I can imagine what the Japs will claim. They had fighters up in the morning, but none later on.

April 30th.

The record day of our visit to Truk opened up with G.Q. at 12:10A.M. Bogies closing in. Night magazines were passed out & we waited for them. The bogie was a slow torpedoe [sic] plane. At least it was flying low. It came to within 5 1/2 miles, turned around & beat it. We joked & said he went to get his brothers. Five minutes later two more bogies appeared, but after a while they vanished off the Radar screen.

After reveille this morning, before the second attack began, had a warning a group of bogies turned off after a while

and disappeared. Had several scares this morning about bogies. At 7:25 a.m., received a sub contact and our destroyers jockeyed for position for the attack. We felt the jars of the ash cans which were dropped about 10 miles away. We watched the destroyers maneuver. Just had a report that a sub was either sunk or severely damaged as their ash cans brought up a large oil slick, wooden plankings [sic], clothes, & Jap books, and a pocket book. Our planes were emptying the ships of explosives, - the fighters were carrying depth charges & tossing them on the island. Our cruisers left today to shell Ponape, a Jap naval and air base some distance away.

May 1st.

We are now returning from the raid on Truk. However, we still had to deliver the kiss-off, so our battleships shelled Ponape all day. Found out that we were only 62 miles from that island at one time.

Johnny Hagman became skipper's orderly today. Scuttlebutt says we're heading back to Majuro. Our ship is almost empty of explosives and provisions, which means lots of working parties.

We arrived at Majuro May 4th, and immediately our working parties began. Bombs, shells, food, etc., etc. Work - work - work. The second day here volunteers were requested for another working party. I had a hunch the working party was going to the beach, so I, Lewis, Frampton, and Havranek said we'd go. We went ashore in a landing barge. It took us about 40 minutes just to go in. Passed lots of ships. Never knew we had so many. Upon arriving at the pier, all 4 of us wanted to be the first to step ashore, so we decided to have all of us take the initial step together. So we all took our first steps on soil for the first time in 2 months. Boy, it certainly felt good! It was at Rita Beach. We worked for a while when we met Joe Giglin, who had been shanghaied [sic] ashore the last time we were here. We told him we'd see him later at his tent. About an hour later we "sauntered" off and looked him up. Only 20 yards away was the beach, so he suggested going swimming. There being no females on the island, we merely stripped off all our clothes and stepped out into the water. It was swell. Smooth, warm & clean. You could see clear down to the bottom at any depth. We had a swell time, playing around on the raft and diving board. Finally we got dressed and went back to our working party. We arrived just in time for chow. We worked the rest of the day & knocked off to eat some coconuts. We returned in the evening in time for colors. Slept about 2 hours & was on another working party midnight to 4A.M. loading bombs. We've got more bombs aboard this time than ever before. Looks like big doings this time for a longtime.

Working parties day & night. I'm so tired, I'm walking around in a daze.

May 7.

Working parties.

May 8.

A.M. working party. At about 0930, they formed a recreation party to go ashore. My name was on the list. About 250 of the crew left aboard a large barge and we went to the isle of Neli, one of the islands of the atoll. We went ashore and started looking around. Several other ship's crews were there. There was a baseball game going on. The pitcher of the team from the U.S.S. Alabama was Bob Feller, first string pitcher of the Cleveland Indians. We watched him a while, then organized a football game. We played for about an hour, then had chow. Salami sandwiches. Every other ship's crew had beer. We had lemonade. In the afternoon we went swimming. As soon as I arrived back aboard, Corp. Phillips, our detachment clerk was waiting for me & told me to report to a working party. Some life! I noticed the U.S.S. Essex returned from the States, and the U.S.S. Wasp is in the Pacific for the first time. Looks like big doing. About 2 days ago my name appeared on a new battle muster sheet as Admiral's orderly. My duty should begin next week some time.

The Essex & Wasp are anchored right close by.

May 13.

We moved about a mile northwest and had target practice. We did unusually well. Knocked down 4 sleeves in the morning alone.

May 14.

Today Bonwell; Hagman and I secured permission to go over to the Hornet & visit our old buddies. We had a good time swapping experiences since we parted.

Since inactivity produces restlessness, they started an athletic program with contests between ships. I'm on the volley ball team. Yesterday we played the Cabot and won one and lost one game.

May 15.

We went over to the Lexington and won 3 out of 4 games. Two days ago the Wasp and Essex pulled out in a comparatively small task force to raid Wake and Marcus. When

they return, we are all supposed to raid Sapan [sic, Saipan], Tinian, and Guam - all hot places.

May 20.

Went ashore for a "recreation - working party." All was uneventful until our return to the ship. The rudder to our Higgins boat went out of commission and we started drifting out. One of the sailors aboard semaphore - signaled our ship as we passed and they sent a boat out after us.

We pulled out of Majuro the morning of May 21 for two days of intense gunnery practice and simulated air attack on our ship. About 4 o'clock in the morning of the 22nd, they were launching our 4 night fighters. On the last plane, the catapult cable broke and the plane just crept to the edge and fell in the black water below. The Air Dept. doped off and didn't have flares at hand to drop overboard so we went over a thousand yards before flares were dropped. The plane soon disappeared & you could hear the pilot yelling for help. He was never picked up though destroyers hunted for him. We dragged a target about 500 yards behind our ship and the planes bombed it, strafed it, and shot rockets at it. Our air crews are far better than average as their records indicate. Tonight, returning to Majuro, the flight deck was pitch black and a sailor walked over the side and was lost. We heard him yelling as we passed him.

On May 25th, our ship had it's first birthday. We had one swell time. Turkey dinner. Show in the evening with refreshments following. It was really a swell holiday.

May 27.

We moved over about a mile and spent another day at gunnery practice. We tore the sleeve to shreds. We fired along with the Hornet and shot down 6 sleeves to their none. Our gunners are really getting good. We've been in Majuro almost a month. Apparently we're getting prepared for the invasion of the Marianas.

As the time of the invasion comes closer, more details are becoming available to us. There will be approximately 23 carriers of all sizes, including one or two British. Of course they help, but we can't help feeling they're muscling in on our show. About 12 battleships, many cruisers and almost unconceivable - but about 190 destroyers. We're landing about 80,000 troops altogether - 3 Marine divisions and 2 Army divisions. We're expecting the long delayed battle with the Jap fleet. They have many planes on the islands, plus carrier planes, plus bombers that can bomb us from bases in Japan. We're a perfect target - but we'll hit back, so we're not too worried.

May 31.

Well, they caught up with me at last. I'm starting as messman June 1st, tomorrow, for one month. Going with Bonwell, Evans, & Stevenson.

June 4.

Had a party on the forecastle today. It was very nice. The only ship in the fleet to have one. Each man got two bottles of beer & a snack, a pack of cigarettes and listened to the orchestra play.

June 5th.

The ship is bristling with preparations for getting underway tomorrow. Painting, cleaning, holding field day, checking guns, etc. At 12:30 we had a practice action problem and later we checked on helmets, lifebelts and followed procedures for abandoning ship. More ships have been arriving every day. Saw a bunch of mail sacks on the hanger deck being guarded by a Marine, sentry, Cicero. Upon investigation with him found out they contained propaganda leaflets for dropping on the Phillipines [sic, s/b Philippines]. This starts scuttlebutt that we will visit those islands also in this next trip. (Those were later dropped on Guam.)

June 6th.

The orderlies are giving me whatever information is available and I find that our first scuttlebutt rumors on the size of the task force has been somewhat exaggerated. However, the total ships employed in the operation will be 200 men-of-war - the greatest assemblage of warships ever seen. Right now we are underway with our task group consisting of 3 other carriers and many destroyers. We haven't rendezvoused [sic] as yet with our cruisers and battleships.

We received news late tonight of the invasion of France. It made us all very excited and we stayed up till late talking about it.

June 7th.

Discovered today our subs spotted about 8 Jap carriers pulling out of the Phillipines [sic, s/b Philippines], heading for the Marianas. Also the Japs on the island have been reinforced till they have 150,000 troops - twice what we have and they also have reinforced their air force. Our task force has been split up into 4 separate task groups - all approaching the target from different angles.

Our particular task group is to be the decoy. Our job is to be spotted by Jap scout planes. No doubt a ticklish job. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that we will be under a concentrated attack by Jap planes. This is no joke and no one is laughing. Our ship is terribly underarmed considering what we are up against. But I have confidence in our Gunnery Department. Most of our hope of course lies in our fighter planes. But regardless of how hard they fight, at least one quarter of the Japs would get through. Our lives are at stake and we all know it. If you think of it too much, it will drive you nuts. A man loves life too much.

June 8th.

A cruiser lost a man overboard last night. We lost a bomber in landing but the pilot and gunner were saved. Had a simulated air attack on our ship for more gunnery practice. Just had a report the gunner of the bomber lost was picked up unconscious and the pilot died. The pilot was little "Blackie," the coach of the Marine basketball team of which I'm a member. His wife just had a baby. It was a blow to all of us. Here I sit writing all about it. Why do I take so much trouble and bother to keep this record? How do I know it will ever be read by anyone? Perhaps it will be destroyed before I can get it back. I wish I knew.

Had a good time in the mess hall today when we sprinkled some sugar on a piece of G.I. soap and gave it to some swabbies for candy.

June 10th.

Found out we were circling for 2 days within 300 of the target. No bogies yet.

June 11th.

Our fighters took off this afternoon on a sweep totalling [sic] 200 fighters hoping to catch them unawares. We're about 250 miles from our target - pretty far trip for our fighters. Our planes shot down a Tony and a Jill while patrolling near our ship. Our fighters just returned pretty shot up. Don't know the results of the raid yet. Tomorrow our bombers take off.

Our fighters met plenty of Japs and did very well. However their real nemesis is the AA fire, the thickest they've ever been up against.

Woke up at 2:a.m. this morning of the 12th to serve chow for the Air Dept. At about 3:a.m. torpedoe [sic] defense sounded. Dropped everything, grabbed my helmet and dashed topside to the battery. Reported bogies pretty close and closing. Suddenly tracers tore through the black sky. Then there was firing going

on all around. An explosion followed, a huge fire sprang up and a Jap plane was destroyed right off our starboard quarter. No more reports of bogies tonight.

Have been working terribly long hours in the mess hall, and I'm very tired. Secured about 6 p.m. and asleep at 8:30 p.m. Up again at 2:a.m. and starting all over. Decided to get some air so I went up on deck. In the distance noticed many lights. Found out we are now in Saipan Channel, between Tinian and Saipan. We are but 8 miles from Tinian and 13 from Saipan. Their planes are probably looking for us about 300 miles from here, and here we are, right in their back yard.

Many exciting things have been happening all day. There have been some pretty bad crackups on the flightdeck [sic], but no one hurt. One fighter high up, stalled and the pilot bailed out. He landed not too far away.

We received news that the U.S.S. Essex had spotted a Jap convoy of good size and was proceeding to tear it apart. In one morning , they sank 16 Jap ships, a darn good job. It's too bad we couldn't have come upon the convoy. We passed considerable wreckage right alongside our ship and as we drew closer, saw about 6 Jap survivors of said sinkings. Immediately everyone nearby ran to the port side where they were only about 50 yards away. The Japs waved, and the Americans threw every imaginable curse word at them. Two sailors jumped into Battery Two and attempted to man a machine gun but they were held back. The Marines requested permission to open fire, but permission was refused. We thumbed our noses, cursed some more and kept going. The famous destroyer "The Sullivans" picked them up.

The Islands of Saipan and Tinian are in very plain view and today we witnessed while our battleships opened fire with 16 inch guns.

June 14th.

Up at 2:a.m. reveille & worked straight through till about an hour after lights out. We've been raiding all day.

June 15th.

Saipan invaded. Our radios are tuned to the same wave length as the communications ashore and the planes so we are getting a minute to minute word account of all obstacles our troops ashore are meeting. And the Japs are giving them a hard time. Our planes are covering the invasion. At about dusk this evening we had torpedoe [sic] defense. A very large group of enemy planes closing. Pretty soon firing broke out off our port beam. Later off our starboard bow. Our AA fire was intense. We

launched our 4 night fighters who knocked one enemy plane down. About 10 enemy planes went down altogether throughout the area.

June 16.

Refeuled [sic] at sea. Expectation is high to meet Jap fleet tomorrow. I hope so. Our morale is good.

June 17.

Many bogies in the area. Several shot down while scouting our force. Had torpedoe [sic] defense tonight. We were searching for the Jap fleet several hundred miles southwest of the Marianas when we discovered a large group over Saipan. We were suckered out looking for them and they landed planes to reinforce their ground troops. Planes were sent out later and many Zekes, and Nells were shot down. We secured about 9 p.m. from torpedoe [sic] defense and I went below and went to sleep. About 9:30 p.m. torpedoe [sic] defense sounded again. Cussing, went up on deck. Only one bogie which closed to about 15 miles, then turned around and left. At last was able to get some sleep.

June 18.

Still many bogies in the area. Several shot down. Saw one hit the water and explode about 8 miles off starboard beam.

A Jap sub surfaced a good distance away and had a gun battle with 2 of our destroyers. It submerged and many depth charges were dropped. It is believed to have escaped.

A plane's wing knocked a sailor overboard. He was picked up by a destroyer in a short time with minor internal injuries.

One bomber came in, made a crash landing. It's wing hit a 5 inch gun turret and the jar set off the 20 millimeter gun in the wing. A shell hit a bulkhead and exploded. The shrapnel wounded 3 men.

An SBD landed today. It's pilot was wounded. It crashed in landing and was such a wreck the plane was pushed overboard. It was from the Lexington.

June 19th.

About 1030 a.m. we had torpedoe [sic] defense. A very large group of bogies closing on our force. We had many fighters, bombers, and torpedoe [sic] planes on our flight deck loaded with explosives and it was thought advisable to get the planes off our ship and high in the air out of the way. During the

takeoff one divebomber [sic] was too close to the island. The pilot tried to get away but couldn't. His right wing hit No. 2 5-inch turret, whipped the plane around, it skidded, then plunged overboard. The pilot and gunner were lost. All our planes flew very high, then decided to go to Guam and unload their bombs on the Jap airfield. Earlier in the morning a fighter sweep went over Guam and our 12 fighters who participated got 13 Jap planes. One fighter was knocked down but the pilot recovered. Eddie, a fighter pilot who was a good friend of all the Marines was hit over the target. In returning, he tried to make the Cabot for a landing. He made a crash landing and went over the side. He drowned. Several fighters landed all shot up with large holes. We were standing around waiting for the Japs to come when a shout went up and we looked over at the Wasp. A Jap dive-bomber snuck in under a low cloud cover and made a leisurely gliding dive on her. Not a shot was fired during his entire run. The bomb hit close by, fortunately, and caused some minor damage and a very few casualties. They didn't open fire until the Jap was about 1000 feet away. Realizing there might be others around, we looked upward. There were 2 Jap dive-bombers diving on us. We immediately trained our guns and cut loose. The 5 inchers missed, the 40m.m.'s missed. The 20m.m.'s peppered away and the first plane broke into flames. The flame went out for a second, then started again. It crashed in the water. We shifted targets and held the triggers down. The second plane suddenly broke in two and the forward section just missed our starboard bow by about 50 feet. We were cheering wildly. We looked around for casualties. Corporal Littlewood was dragging himself to the clipping room trying to get out of the way. He was hit by shrapnel in his left side under the lung. When he was hit he was standing about 6 feet from me. In back of us, by the 40m.m. director, First Lieutenant Gordon A. Stallings, second in command of the Marine detachment was lying in a mess of blood. He had a huge hole in his groin. He dies about 15 minutes later. Killed in action. There was a good sized hole in his splinter shield. A bomb had been dropped and the concussion and shrapnel tore many holes in our hull. There were many holes on no. 2 elevator. The bomb landed so close to the ship that the splash completely soaked all the Marines in Battery Six. Shrapnel tore through the hanger deck. Altogether, there were two men dead, and about 65 wounded. Many compartments on our port side are flooded. Repair men worked all day, all night, and half the next day making temporary repairs.

About 3:30 p.m., torpedoe [sic] defense again. Out of a stack of dive-bombers, very few got through. One made a very high dive on us over our island from the starboard quarter. We fired all our guns at him. I saw him get hit several times and he smoked for a few seconds, but he kept going and I think he got

away. (Can shot it down.) We were all under a terrible strain and Corporal Bob Brown's nerves shattered. He was taken to sick bay and given some pills. This last plane dropped its bomb and it ricocheted off our starboard hull and exploded in the water. More damage.

About dusk, torpedoed [sic] defense again. Large group planes attacking low on the water. Our planes tally ho'd them, knocked several down and dispersed the rest.

We had a full day. June 19th, will go down as the United States' greatest victory over Japanese air power. The Japs lost in one day over three hundred planes knocked down, not counting probables or destroyed on the ground at Guam.

June 20th.

Late last night one of our subs sent three torpedoes into a large Jap carrier. It was heavily damaged. One hundred and thirteen depth charges were dropped, but the sub got away with minor damages. We are now about 250 miles from Yap, looking for remnants of the Jap fleet. Several Jap planes were shot down this morning by planes of our task group. In yesterday's battle, we lost eight airmen and about 7 planes from our ship.

This morning at 10:00 a.m., witnessed the burial ceremony of Lieutenant Stallings and a sailor. Their bodies were slid overboard. We all felt terrible.

Total damage sustained of the fleet is one direct hit on a ship (the name or type of ship not revealed, but it was not a carrier) (U.S.S. South Dakota), and damaging near misses were made on the Lexington, Wasp, and Bunker Hill. We had most damage and most casualties but it can still be considered light. Just now, at 1545 p.m., the word has just come over the loudspeaker. One of our search divebomber [sic]s has discovered the Jap fleet at Yap, 230 miles away. This is the chance every one of us has waited for since the battle of Coral Sea. Every carrier in the fleet is now launching planes for the greatest attack on Jap vessels of the war. After the raid was over, our planes had to land in the blackness of a moonless night – a most hazardous operation. The first 7 fighters landed without mishap. The next plane was a bomber. It crashed up and came to rest on its nose. This delayed landing operations for some time and the pilots still circling were getting desperately low on fuel. Several made forced landings in the water. Our planes starting landing on other carriers. Finally, one TBF from the Hornet decided to attempt a landing. He levelled [sic] off and came in. He was signalled [sic] not to land and red Very flares were fired signalling [sic] no landing under any circumstances. He swerved to port, then suddenly to starboard. He crashed into the divebomber [sic]

which cracked up previously, then smashed into the island structure. The TBF then burst in flames. Both gunners got out, one wounded. The pilot was killed. One figure was seen in flames. He was lain down and rolled over and the fire extinguished, then rushed to sick bay (died). Several men on the flight deck were mangled, losing arms and legs. One of our most able officers directing landing operations, Commander Smith, was killed. It was all a messy, bloody, confused nightmare. The plane was pushed overboard, with at least one man still meshed in the wing. The fire was put out and emergency repairs made to attempt landing more planes. There were several more landings in the water. One fighter saw a red light, and thinking it was another plane, decided to fly with it. It turned out to be a truck light on the mast of a destroyer. It crashed and burst in flames. All ships at first had these red lights on to give their positions as warnings to the planes. After this accident, all ships put white lights, which can be seen for many miles. Many planes were lost, so we turned on a huge spotlight and turned it to the sky. This was revealing our positions to anyone who cared to know about it. Our planes saw it and commenced to approach. Our radar picked up one bogie mixed in the group. We started landing whatever planes were in the air. There were several minor crackups, but none serious. One plane was blinking its red tail light and the word came over the phones that the plane was Japanese. Immediately all lights in the task force were out and the Jap figured it was time to stop playing and head for home, which he did. We then landed our night fighters who are practiced in night landings. They came in O.K.

We were all under a constant nervous strain for over 2 to 3 hours which was how long it all took and I was exhausted when the word came to secure. I went below and hit the sack. An hour later had torpedoe [sic] defense. Came up on deck and after about half an hour the radar screen was reported clear and I was at last able to get to sleep.

June 21st.

At dawn, the flight-deck plane handling crews washed and scrubbed away blood, loose arms and legs and a general mess. All carriers traded back original planes. We are missing quite a few. Reports are not definite as to effects of last night's raid, but it is generally believed we did very well. This morning another attack was launched, but the Jap fleet was too far away and we were unable to hit it. Our planes returned. Our converted carriers and many destroyers turned around and appear to be returning to the Marshalls. Scuttlebutt says all ships are returning except the Wasp and Bunker Hill who will accompany the battleships in chase of the Japs. Our destroyers are badly in need of fuel and they are refeuling [sic] from us today. Burial services

were held in the afternoon for men killed last night and a prayer was read for those went overboard in pieces.

Our present position is given as the farthest west that any carrier has been in this war.

After progressing a distance after the Japs, it was thought adviseable [sic] to go no further to the Phillipines [sic, Phillipines] and expose ourselves to land-based bombers, so we headed east.

Our ship lost 20 planes in the operation, about 16 of which went down because of no fuel.

June 22nd.

Destroyers have been picking up many airmen and we have had the majority of ours rescued. We passed an empty life raft today about 800 yards off port beam.

June 23rd.

Many airmen came aboard from destroyers. Air Department is preparing for raid tomorrow on Pagan Island.

June 24th.

In a dawn strike this morning, all our planes aboard that are in flying condition took off in one flight. A few were hit by AA fire, but I believe all returned. Our course is southeast, headed for Eniwetok, about 300 miles from Majuro.

June 26th.

Arrived Eniwetok at 0700. First thing that struck us was the desolate ruin of nature's handiwork all over the islands. Few trees are left standing. Those that are, don't have a twig or leaf on them. Just bare fingers stretching into the sky on a flat stretch of sand. The bombardment last February must have been terrific.

The harbor is crowded with all types of ships. Hundreds of all types are lined up for miles both inside and outside the lagoon.

Working parties are full-time night and day. Many replacements of personnel injured reported aboard.

We were supposed to receive a new model of the Helldiver (SB2C-3) aboard, but for some reason, replacements are not on the island.

June 30th.

We pulled out this afternoon, went outside the lagoon, launched all our divebomber [sic]s which are being transferred to the Yorktown. Looks like we're one of the very few ships to have the new bomber. The U.S.S. Franklin came out from the States with them. It's her first action.

Off of mess duty at last. Assigned Watch 2, Battery Six Forward, Gun 32 as loader or elevator.

Today is July 7th. During the last week nothing much unusual has happened. A large group of men were transferred back to the West Coast and an equally large group came aboard replacing them and our casualties.

We pulled out of Eniwetok early this morning. About an hour later we started to land planes from the Lexington. These are new planes and new pilots. I saw the worst exhibition of flying I have yet witnessed. Many crackups on the deck and one in the water merely because this pilot lost flying speed. The pilots took off and landed several times for practice. We had gunnery practice all morning. Didn't do very well. Pulling back in the harbor again this evening. Scheduled to leave on next operation in a few days. All of these planes went back to the Lex.

July 12th.

Went out this a.m. and picked up replacement dive-bombers; then returned to our berth at anchor. We had a chance to examine our new planes, and found them to be wrecks; "duds" rejected by other carriers. Our mechanics have been working continuously on the planes to get them in working order. Everyone says that we're going to Guam unload our bombs, then leave our bombers on the Saipan airfield for use as land-based planes.

A Jeep carrier pulled in about a thousand yards off our starboard beam and on her flight deck were about a dozen Jap Zero's, captured presumeably [sic] at Saipan.

July 14th.

A Jeep carrier anchored nearby had a bunch of Army P-47's. If we leave our planes at Saipan, there is a very good possibility we will go to Pearl Harbor for a new Air Group and even, though admittedly a very faint possibility, a trip to the States.

We're pulling out this afternoon finally, generally believed out target is Guam.

July 15th.

Our planes staged a simulated attack on our task group, giving us tracking drills. I can't over-estimate or give too much credit to our Naval aviators. They have skill, courage, nerve, the equal of which I have never seen. Thank God they're on our side. We were at our torpedo [sic] stations all morning and afternoon.

July 16th.

Repeated simulated attacks all morning. Afternoon attacks called off because of recurrent storms and rain squalls.

July 17th.

Refueled [sic] destroyers in preparation of D-day tomorrow.

July 18th.

Started pounding Guam this morning. Continued bombardment all day. The airmen report no air opposition and no AA fire. Our guess is the Japs intend to remain hidden and the position of their guns secret until the invasion, which is expected any day.

All our bomber and other planes landed safely except one water landing we witnessed. The pilot and gunner of this bomber were rescued by a destroyer.

July 19th.

Our pounding and softening up of Guam continues. We had one bomber get smashed up in a crack-up landing. Otherwise all running smoothly. We joined forces with a battleship task force. Our task force now has more firepower than any I've been in.

Had a lecture on Thompson Submachine Gun.

July 20th.

Was watching landings today. One dive-bomber in landing had its hook grasp the retaining cable. The shock tore loose a thousand pound General Purpose bomb which crashed through the bomb bay doors and skidded down the flight deck. The propeller [propeller more commonly used] of the plane chewed up the tail fins of the bomb. I saw sparks fly and waited to see no more. I dove head first down through a hatch while a plane spotter raced up to the bomb and disarmed its fuse. That was very close and I must admit I was nervous for an hour afterwards. Our planes reported spotty A.A. fire.

July 21st.

One TBF took off from the Lexington close off our port quarter. As it left the Lex's deck, it caught fire. It lost altitude rapidly and crashed into the water. A large explosion followed. The invasion of Guam started this morning. We listened to the reports of the communications ashore to our planes. Jap voices tried to cut in several times.

We had a report that between ten and thirty Jap bombers left Truk headed our way.

Received mail from a destroyer today.

July 22nd.

Refueling [sic] at sea today.

July 23rd.

We've been travelling south all day, speed running up to about 25 knots.

July 24th.

Supposed to have a strike at Woleai this morning but for some reason, the strike was postponed. Had a bogie picked up on our Radar screen this morning. This means we've been spotted and the enemy knows we're in the area.

July 25th.

Travelling west this a.m. Discovered we are now about 250 miles from Palau Is, and about 100 miles from Yap. Our target this afternoon supposedly is Palau. The weather is sunny, but very windy and the waves are very high. I can see a destroyer about 3000 yards from our port side, with waves continuously breaking high over her forecastle.

Our planes attacked Palau this afternoon. There was very intense A.A. fire and only one fighter rose to meet our planes. This was promptly shot down. Many other planes on the runways were destroyed. We pounded Palau all day.

July 26.

Resumed pounding Palau at dawn. Our fighters are also carrying bombs. Discovered a Jap cruiser cleverly disguised close to the beach and proceeded to give it hell. Believed to have sunk. Also sank some freighters. One fighter was knocked down by AA fire, but the pilot was rescued by one of our submarines in the vicinity. One of our TBF's was carrying a load of incendiary bombs and was hit in her bomb bay. It was seen to go down in flames. Our three airmen aboard were killed. While landing bombers this afternoon, we suddenly got the signal "red

flag" and our ship started making emergency turns. Visual sub contact reported. About fifteen minutes later investigation reported negative & we continued landing operations.

There was very little wind during the day and in order to maintain sufficient wind velocity for landing and launching our planes, we had to have speeds of between 30 and 35 knots for periods of one to two hours at a time. This was too much for our battleship escort and they were forced to form a task group by themselves and follow us far out of sight.

Bogies have been reported during the day but no enemy planes sighted.

July 27.

Continued bombardment. At 3:45 a.m. while on watch, Air Defense aft reported that one of the ships around us reported a sub contact. We increased speed, zig-zagged [sic]. Later reported all clear.

Have been bombing all day. Many planes returning with large holes, but no additional losses. Had a few crackups on the flight deck during landing operations. No one hurt although there were some close calls. One fighter's tail skidded around and ended up in the gallery walkway. Fortunately no one was there. Many subs in the area. Our destroyers picked up a contact in the afternoon. One went out, maneuvered, and dropped several depth charges. No results.

July 28th.

Re fueled [sic] destroyers all morning. Getting low on provisions also. Our ship is practically empty of all bombs. Our chow is terrible, but endurable. We are travelling away from the target and travelling north at a leisurely speed. Our battleships have rejoined the formation.

July 29th.

We took aboard several aircraft replacements from the Yorktown. Looks like she's headed for the States. Our turn is next. We all hope it's very soon. Average guess is in about 4 or 5 more months. There have been three separate task groups operating in the Western Pacific. All ships of all task groups are now gathering to form on gigantic task force. It's a thrilling sight that I look upon now, one that would make any American proud. The best and mightiest ships of the best Navy in the world are now before my eyes.

Supposedly we are arriving tomorrow at the new American - held island of Saipan for reloading of bombs and

provisions. Our forces have worked fast making it ready as a front-line supply base.

July 30th.

We've been milling around in circles near Saipan all day.

July 31st.

Still outside Saipan. Refueled [sic] from tankers all morning. Entering Saipan this afternoon. On our way in, had a report several bogies approaching. These were intercepted and shot down by land-based fighters.

We anchored in Saipan harbor about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. We had a good chance to look over Saipan; which has been ours only for the last few weeks and Tinian where Marines and Japs are still battling. We are only about 5 miles from both islands, so through field glasses everything is quite clear. Destroyers are shelling Tinian in the narrow channel separating the two islands. All the large guns on Tinian have been knocked out so there are no answering shots from Japanese positions. On Saipan we can hear sporadic firing and intermittent explosions, leading us to believe there are still some Japs fighting up in the hills. As night fell, large caliber guns on the beaches of Saipan turned their muzzles toward Tinian and threw volley after volley into the Jap's defenses. We would see many flashes and seconds later the sounds of the guns firing would reach us. Our planes would fly over the Japs and drop flares and we could also see the Jap's tracers as they tried to shoot down the Yank airmen. The failed. We would also see an occasional flare dropped over the jungles of Saipan and see tracers fired there also.

Working parties started almost as soon as we anchored and loading bombs was all we did. No food and no mail. Those of us who could sleep, dozed off to the lullaby of large American guns.

As dawn broke on August 1st, destroyers continued shelling, but as soon as it became light, the heavy guns ceased firing.

Fish infest the waters around us, so many fellows dropped over fishing lines and some were lucky enough to catch a few. The waters around here are particularly rough. The barge loaded with bombs was rolling and pitching so much, that several men in the working party aboard it, including Haig Manoogain and Chris Zieger became seasick and threw up.

In the afternoon we hauled in anchor and pulled out of the harbor. It was very windy and the waves were the highest

I've ever seen. During the night the wind tore across the flight deck at 70 – knots. We were on the tip of a typhoon.

August 2.

The waves are still high and the seas terribly rough but the winds have subsided. We are travelling in a large circle waiting for a task group now in Saipan harbor getting loaded. Saipan and Tinian are again in plain view. We are refueling [sic] from tanker in the afternoon. Everyone says our next target is the Bonin Islands. Last week, the U.S.S. Hornet and Wasp made a raid there and were met by overwhelming forces of Jap planes. They were forced to flee. This should be one of our roughest raids.

August 3.

Proceeding north at slow speed. Weather is very rough and windy. Towards evening increased speed to 30 knots and raced toward our target all night. No bogies.

August 4.

A fighter sweep took off at 0900 a.m. in a driving rain storm making it very dangerous and difficult for plane pushers and plane handlers to perform their jobs. Surprisingly there are still no bogies. There were only 2 planes in the air which were quickly shot down. About thirty were destroyed on the ground. A convoy of shipping was discovered nearby and a harbor full of ships. On our second hop, almost all of the bombs dropped missed their targets. The pilots claim adverse winds and heavy, accurate AA fire. Several of our bombers and fighters returned shot up.

On our third and last raid of the day, they were more successful and managed to sink and damage several ships. One bomber cracked up in landing but the pilot and gunner were O.K. One fighter plane was lost over the target.

Aug. 5.

Our present position is the farthest north we've ever been. We are 600 miles from Tokyo. We are only 400 miles from Japan, and 600 miles from the Jap capitol. Our position is between the Bonin's and the homeland of Japan. The Bunker Hill is the closest to Japan that any carrier has been in the war – including the old Hornet raid on Tokyo in 1942. Our patrol planes penetrated as close as 200 miles from Japan but there were no enemy planes to meet them. We had sub contacts twice this morning and several depth charges were dropped. Several bogies appeared but later fled. One was identified as an Emily. Several of our planes returned from today's raids shot up with a

few water landings. One cracked up on the flight deck. We cannot explain the lack of enemy opposition in these waters.

Aug. 6.

We retired from our assault on the Bonin and Volcano Islands today. Refeuled [sic] this morning. Course southeast. Apparently [sic] we are headed for our forward operational base at Eniwetok.

Aug. 7.

Course is the same. All hands received typhoid booster shots this afternoon.

Aug. 8.

Arriving at Eniwetok tomorrow. Gunnery practice this morning. Did fair. The weather is much warmer and the sea calmer than around the Bonins.

Aug. 9.

Arrived in Eniwetok today.

Aug. 21st.

In the past two weeks, I've been extremely busy, explaining my failure to write reports up to date. Working parties have been slaving at 24 hours a day, every night and day, loading bombs and supplies. We now have 50 tons more bombs than we have room for, and we're storing bombs in the torpedoe [sic] loft. We are all sure of "visiting" at least the Phillipines [sic, Philippines] on our next cruise.

About a week ago, Rear Admiral A. E. Montgomery and his entire staff including 12 Marine orderlies were transferred back to the States. Many close friends were among them. Two days later, a new Flag Dept. arrived aboard, but had no Marine orderlies. I discovered I had become orderly to Rear Admiral G. F. Bogan. It's a soft job, fairly interesting, but a bit out of my line. We are expecting six Marine replacements from Pearl Harbor and I'm going to try to get off orderly duty.

I went on a recreation party one day to Runit Island, in the Eniwetok atoll and was fortunate enough to meet many friends from other ships who I had gone through Sea School with. Conversing with several of them, I received the disheartening news that 3 of my old buddies: John Eber, Cliff Sailors, and Dick Hunter were killed in action when Jap shore batteries opened up on their battleship, the U.S.S. Colorado. Another close friend, P.F.C. Glass was seriously wounded, losing an arm. Those of our original Sea School platoon who are

aboard with me received this news gloomily. We had many good times together back at Sea School.

While at the island, “Tiny,” a brute of a sailor and I rowed out to a Jap ammunition ship which was sunk in shallow water about 300 yards from the beach. It was blasted apart and her own cargo had exploded. Many shells were lying around the deck and in the sand around the ship, about 20 feet under water. Several field pieces were still intact on the main deck, but were rusted beyond use. Made a hasty investigation and we shoved off. I noticed the Jap vessel was entirely bolted and riveted, whereas our ships are almost entirely welded.

We are hoisting anchor this afternoon and moving to another berth several miles away, near Eniwetok Island.

Next day, our skipper, Captain T. R. Jeeter was transferred and in his stead we received a Captain Greer as our commanding officer.

Aug. 25.

We pulled outside the harbor and had gunnery practice. Fired at a drone (remote controlled plane). Results fair.

Aug. 26.

Our planes staged a simulated attack on our task group. Gunners aboard had tracking drills. Our fighters heavily strafed a target sled we were towing and our TBF's shot rockets at it. Something happened to one of the TBF's as it fired and its wing flew to bits. The pilot pulled back on the stick and for a second, the nose came up. One figure was seen to climb out and jump. Only one parachute floated downward. Two men aboard the plane were killed. The plane crashed about 1500 yards off our starboard quarter. We pulled back into the lagoon in the early evening. We received our Marine replacements, but I discovered I wasn't to get off orderly duty as yet.

Aug. 29.

The entire task force, which was redesignated [sic] from TF58 to TF38 pulled out of Eniwetok, headed for our next “rendezvous” with the enemy. We received a surprise this morning when Captain Greer announced that we would receive a general overhaul soon in a good port. This can mean only one thing. After this next operation which will last about one or two months, we are returning to the United States. This is our first official information on the subject and our morale is sky-high. Everyone laughing, joking, singing & talking about what we'd do on our first stateside liberty. I hope – hope – hope no carrier gets hit this trip. If one should, their damage would necessitate a

trip to the U.S. for repair & of course in that case, we couldn't be spared. Our gunners will have to be extra sharp also in the event of an attack, which we greatly fear, for to have death cheat any of us from going home when that is almost in sight, would be a crime.

Our course 145. Speed 16 knots.

August 30.

Rain all day. Course 225, speed 18 knots.

August 31.

Fired at a sleeve in the morning. Did pretty good. Again had simulated air attack.

September 1st.

This morning, when the Intrepid was landing planes, one bomber bounced over the first crash barrier & cracked up about 30 feet further up. One man was knocked overboard. Living up to her reputation as a jinx ship, the Intrepid failed to throw a smoke bomb overboard as a marker. By the time we were notified and a destroyer dispatched, we had travelled over two miles. The CAP of four fighters also were told to search for the man. Captain Pirie, Chief of Staff on Admiral Bogan's staff was outraged at the Intrepid's negligence. The entire task group at his command made a 180 degree turn and we all searched the area. After about an hour, we gave up and continued on our way. The man was considered lost. About two hours later, the Intrepid had a similar occurrence; another man was knocked overboard; again signal smoke bombs failed to be dropped; again we searched, and another man was considered lost.

This afternoon we had a preliminary celebration for our equator-crossing ceremony for all new "pollywogs." We had a hilarious time, especially with a signalman impersonating a girl, complete with lipstick, brassiere, and panties, whom we nicknamed "Mabel." The new Marine pollywogs were duly initiated this evening in our compartment. Their hair was cut in various patterns, and I the pleasure of wielding the scissors on several occasions.

September 2nd.

This morning we had the official crossing-the-line ceremony, with "King Neptune" presiding in his royal court. We all had an uproarious time.

Refeuled [sic] at sea this afternoon. A rain storm came up and stayed for some time. We've been travelling along almost exactly on the equator for many hours and it has been

surprisingly cool, as compared with the sweltering heat in our last trip across about six months ago. We are expecting three dignitaries aboard this afternoon to witness the coming operations. The men arrived as expected. One was Under-Secretary of Naval Aviation Gates, and his aide Capt. Wright. A commander leaves tomorrow to join Vice-Admiral Mitcher's staff.

Sept. 3rd.

The destroyer "Sullivan's" tonight in an excited voice over the T.B.S. radio (talk between ships) told us she spotted a surfaced sub and was proceeding to bear down on it and ram. Rear Admiral Bogan sent back a terse "Good luck." The men on the destroyer got all keyed up and stood by for the shock after the ram. Imagine their chagrin when the "sub" turned out to be several logs and garbage. Their face must still be red!

Sept. 4th.

One destroyer lost a man overboard last night. Several light surface contacts by radar.

Sept. 6th.

This afternoon our fighters took off on a sweep at 1300 over the Jap-held island of Palau. Tomorrow we hit them with everything we've got, according to the word of our new skipper, and then we head west for "meatier" targets. Quite a few bogies for the last two days.

My duty up here in Flag Plot, which is the operations headquarters for our task group, is quite interesting and I get a first-hand look into the methods and planning done by the Admiral's staff. But I repeat: orderly duty is not to my liking.

Sept. 7.

Bombed Palau all day. No air opposition. Meager to intense inaccurate AA fire. Our planes attacked gun positions, and installations and claim that today's bombing was the most accurate they had ever done. Several sub contacts during the day. We had a large group of bogies tonight and for a while it looked like we would be under air attack. The bogies closed to about 15 miles and all gun stations were put on "Alert One." One destroyer over the T.B.S. radio said she was going to open fire. At about this time we discovered the "large bogie" was a formation of B-24's on a raid themselves. They never knew what a close call they had.

Sept. 8th.

Because of a lack of targets on Palau, we cut in half the raids scheduled to take off. In our last attack, our plots discovered 3 AK's and one destroyer heavily camouflaged with foliage close in to shore and attacked them. But due to thick low clouds were unable to observe results. Several planes returned shot up. One fighter was able to let down only one of his landing gear. Through brilliant flying, the pilot managed to make a good landing, only slightly damaging one wing tip and propellor. This completes our raid for the time being on the Palau Islands. We found out that yesterday our planes set a record for weight of bombs dropped on the target: 113 tons for one day. This is the first operation so far in which we (our ship) had no plane losses and no personnel losses. Only one fighter pilot had superficial wounds. We witnessed a few water landings, but these planes were from other carriers. Our destroyers, cruisers, and converted carriers refeuled [sic] today. Our battleships are not with us yet. Our course now is 290 and speed 25 knots. We shall maintain this speed and direction all night, and sneak up and attack Davao, on the island of Mindinao [sic s/b Mindanao] in the Philippines. As our chaplain jokingly put it: "We took care of 'Palau Pauline,' now we'll make it hot for 'Davao Daisy'." This will be the first carrier raid on Philippine territory of the war, and the farthest westerly penetration of surface craft to date.

Sept. 9th.

Our fighters took off before dawn this morning on a sweep over Davao. Bombers and TBF's followed shortly. There was surprisingly no air opposition over the target. Only one plane rose to meet them, and there was a mad scramble after which the Jap plane, (a Judy), exploded. All day long we bombarded the target areas mercilessly. Our pilots said the Filipino civilians stood in the streets and waved to them as they passed. A fleet of 40 sampans was spotted and within several hours this was annihilated. The AA fire was intense and accurate and many planes were damaged. One bomber was shot down over the target area. One fighter, piloted by the famous red-head from Oklahoma, "Character," had the largest hole I've ever seen in his port wing, close to the fuselage. He was very lucky to make it back. A Life magazine correspondent took his picture, just as he landed nonchalantly sucking an unlit stogie.

One bomber went in the drink on a take-off, but the pilot and gunner saved by a destroyer.

Sept. 10th.

Our planes again took off but the good targets have greatly dwindled and only two strikes were made. It rained all day.

Sept. 11th.

Travelling southeast. Refueling [sic] today and received replacement planes from a jeep. Our new fighters are the new model Hellcat F6F-5, now common aboard carriers, but these delivered to us are equipped to carry 3 rockets under each wing, in addition to regular armament.

Tomorrow we again attack targets in the Philippines. During our raid yesterday, the Bunker Hill was closer to the Philippines than any carrier has ever been – at one time we were but 34 miles from land and a mountain peak was visible. We were the first carrier in the task force, the rest following us and a bit east of our position.

Sept. 12th.

Admiral Halsey, commander of the Third Fleet, seeing that good targets were about exhausted in Mindinao [sic s/b Mindanao] sent out orders to change target to the north consisting of the islands of Samar, Leyte, Negros, and several airfields on the southern tip of Luzon, and the island of Cebu. Today a few planes were sighted by our planes and chased. Independence fighters shot down two Jap planes. Several ships were sunk by our planes. We had torpedoe [sic] defense at 10:00 p.m. with several bogies closing to 11 miles, then opened and left. We stood in the rain at our guns all the time. "Alert One" was sounded several times during the day indicating there are many Jap planes in the area. There were several surface contacts by Radar during the night.

Some time this afternoon, one of our destroyers came upon a motor launch containing 40 Japanese survivors of a cruiser sinking (Natori) which occurred about 22 days ago. These Nips had been adrift for all that time with very little food and water. The Japs were transferred to our ship. Armed Marines waited for them on the hanger deck as they came aboard. They were all extremely thin, and weak. Another two days and at least 1/3 of them would have perished. The fleshiest part of their legs was about as thick as my fore-arm. The arms measured no more than 3 inches across. They were on the average about 4 feet 11 inches tall, and the heaviest weighed no more than about 95 lbs. They absolutely stunk. They could hardly walk. They were led to the compartment set aside for them which adjoined the Marines Compt. They were astounded at the good treatment they received when they received a medical examination, shower, and food & clothing. Their food is exactly the same as we eat. They gorged themselves so much they had cramps all night and were painfully constipated.

We taught them Arabic numerals & their pronunciation in English and in this way we named them from One to Forty. One wrote his name on a bar of soap as "Sinata." Of course he was immediately nicknamed "Snotty." He liked it & grinned. I snuck in to their compartment & tried to converse with them, first in German, French, Jewish, even a few Japanese words I picked up, but we only all became more confused, so I shoved off.

Sept. 13th.

As our planes took off this morning, we had torpedoe [sic] defense. There was firing off our starboard beam. Later found out another task group was attacked and two enemy planes were shot down. Our planes met heavy fighter opposition over the target and knocked down a few. Two of our fighters were shot down, but later rescued. We sank many more Jap ships, destroyed warehouses, material & supply concentrations [sic]. Today we shot down 13 Jap planes. Several "alerts" this morning.

The Jap prisoners are gaining in strength very rapidly and get around easily enough. They were taken to the forecastle for air and gaped in astonishment at the array of carriers & battleships they had "sunk" so long before. When they were told in Pidgin English and sign language that they were aboard the Bunker Hill, they refused to believe it. "Bunk Hill sunk!", they said. The Japs are beginning to take advantage of the good treatment by playing on our sympathy, even refusing to drink water unless it was ice water. At times our tempers were getting thin.

Sept. 14th.

We retired from the Central Philippines, travelling south-southwest, after just dropping a few light strike-loads of bombs.

Sept. 15.

Palau invaded. Our Jap p.o.w.'s were transferred to a destroyer. As they left, they waved a "s'ank you" to us.

Sept. 16th.

Refueled at sea. Received mail from tanker. Our planes have been in flight, mostly combat, for more than a year and are the oldest planes on any carrier out here. It's jokingly conceded that the pilots are taking a chance in merely taking off and landing the bombers. Finally, in disgust, our Air Officer ordered all duds which are absolutely unflyable, tossed over the side. This afternoon, over the side went six dive-bombers, two

torpedoe [sic] planes, and one fighter (old type F6F-3). In their stead we received 11 new F6F-5 Hellcat fighters and two torpedoe [sic] planes.

I saw the plans for our attack on Manilla [sic s/b Manila] for Sept. 21st, and 22nd. There are supposed to be many planes and warships there. I was changed from Admiral's Orderly to Executive Officer's orderly of Commander Andy Mechling. (The Admiral & flag are expected to transfer soon).

Sept. 17.

Our planes are in light strikes today assisting the invading Marines at Palau. One fighter plane from the Cabot came in with no hook, and crashed into the crash barrier. The tail went high in the air & crashed downward. The pilot struck his head against the hood & was obviously in pain, but conscious. He was taken to sick-bay.

Sept. 19th.

Refeuled [sic] at sea.

Sept. 21st.

All morning we were in the midst of a driving thunder-storm which rose almost to gale proportions. A very heavy strike was launched to attack Clark Field and Manilla [sic s/b Manila]. A second strike followed shortly after the first. At first reports, there were no Jap fleet units, but at least 25 cargo ships. At first there was no air opposition, but the second strike reported heavy air opposition. It still is pouring and we were soaked watching the planes take off and land, but we hardly noticed. The flight deck crews deserve a lot of credit. The slip stream of propellers force them to skid & slide around, and only their skill and alertness keeps them from going into twirling propellers.

Results of the 4 strikes today have been tallied. Our planes sank at least two ships, damaged many more. Against the air-borne opposition, our fighters destroyed 22 airplanes without the loss of a single plane or man. A record in itself! One of our dive-bombers was shot down in flames by AA fire. No survivors.

Sept. 22nd.

On bogie appeared during G.Q. this morning and closed to within 4 miles of our ship. Ships around opened fire. The bogie escaped, circled around our force and approached another task group where it was shot down. We are on the verge of a typhoon with surface wind of 35 knots & up. Waves very high, rain strong. Launched heavy strike at about 0615. Sighted Luzon in the distance. At 0730 we had torpedoe [sic] defense. One Jap

plane approached our group. Our screen of destroyers opened fire. It was pouring and we stood at our guns watching. The Jap turned around and left. Visibility very limited. Due to hazardous weather, the remainder of today's strikes were cancelled and we steamed away from Luzon.

Sept. 23rd.

Refeuled today about 200 miles east of Luzon. Three more of our dive-bombers went over the side. We received 5 new Helldivers this evening, Model SB2C-3, from a jeep carrier. The sun was shining brightly all day, the seas calm, and at night the moon and stars were out, all as if to apologize for the weather of the past week. Received mail from tanker.

Sept. 24th.

Our planes took off this morning on an attack against the Central Philippines. Several Jap ships sunk. End of operation. Short breathing spell.

Sept. 25th.

We had a few losses yesterday one fighter pilot bailed out almost overhead and was injured in jumping. Morale sky-high for going home.

Sept. 26th.

Weather beautiful: sunny, warm, clear. Proceeding to Saipan.

Sept. 28.

Arrived in Saipan at dawn today. No sooner had we arrived than barges and lighters pulled alongside and 5 minutes after anchoring, bombs were loaded aboard. Everyone turned to and worked unceasingly all day and night.

Sept. 29.

Continued loading bombs. At 4 p.m., we pulled out of Saipan with 400 tons aboard. Course southwest, speed 16 knots. Goal- Uluthi [sic s/b Ulithi] Islands, taken over by the Army about one week ago without enemy resistance. It's about 100 miles from Yap.

Sept. 30th.

Had several simulated attacks today. Weather rainy, seas rough and high. Arriving at Uluthi [sic s/b Ulithi] tomorrow. The Flag Dept. (Admiral Bogan & staff) is leaving at that time.

Oct. 1st.

Arrived at Uluthi [sic s/b Ulithi] Islands this morning. The weather is lovely, the sun blazing hot. Off orderly duty, assigned to Batter I, gun 9, watch 3. Sunbathed & played ball all day.

Oct. 2nd.

Several details of sailors went to various provision ships on working parties. There are very few ships here and no warships other than our task group. The remainder of the task force retired to Manus Island, near the Admiralty Is. It began raining pretty hard near dusk.

October 3rd.

We were surprised this morning when we had an extra-early reveille before dawn and were told we were getting underway immediately. The rain of last night had risen to a full-fledged typhoon. There was the possibility of snapping our anchor chain and drifting up against an island. We got underway in total darkness, seemingly groping our way through various channels till we reached open sea. All ships of our force formed a hap-hazard formation and we're taking our chances in riding out the storm. The waves are the largest I've ever seen. The ship rocks & rolls crazily. We are only making about 14 knots. The Cabot had one plane washed overboard and they held a muster to see if anyone was knocked overboard. (2 men drowned). This is the worst weather I have ever witnessed or ever expect to. We shall stay underway until the weather subsides. Several men were lost from the Cabot. Our provisions enroute [sic] to our ship aboard LCT's were all swamped and sunk. At least one man was drowned. Waves are breaking over our flight deck. I saw one sailor thrown out of his bunk.

October 4th.

Reentered harbor in afternoon. Still raining, but weather is breaking.

October 5th.

We went out of the harbor this morning. All aircraft duds were placed on the flight deck. All were dive-bombers. Fourteen were pushed over the side and sunk. One got out of hand and rolled into Battery 5, destroying one Mark 14 sight & damaging a gun and mount. Almost a million dollars was shoved off our fan-tail today. A lot of war bonds! We then landed 17 new model Helldivers. With new planes, bombs aboard, our chances of going home now are nil.

October 6th.

As yet we have loaded no food. The skipper remarked, joking to his orderly "Guess we won't eat next month." We received orders to pull out at sunset tonight, and to proceed north and strike at the islands between Formosa and Japan. The task group pulled out and we made preparations for getting underway. We were about to hoist anchor, when the loud speaker blared to drop the gangways & set out the motor whale boat. We stood and asked ourselves what the delay meant. Some ventured we were about to go home. At that time the loud speaker said (I'll never forget) "Attention, all hands. This is the Captain speaking. The delay in getting underway is not for the reason you think. We have located provisions and we will spend all night loading. However, when you stay out here for over a year, and the Air Group over six months, you begin to wonder if you'll ever go home. I know you have waited a long time, but with a little definite information, you can wait a while longer. I do have some definite information. Some time near the end of this month, we will be heading home. Everyone went wild, cheering, yelling, laughing. I must admit that this announcement is the best birthday gift I could possibly receive.

October 7th.

The Captain this morning, in a ceremony at sea (we got underway early this morning) gave out some medals to a few pilots. At the end, he made a short speech. He said we were very fortunate to be able to go on the next operation. Our attacking target has been changed. It is no Formosa. It is the MAINLAND OF JAPAN.

October 8th.

Proceeding north at a pretty fast clip. Met the rest of our task group this morning. Refueled [sic] today. Weather getting cold.

October 9th.

Reported a bogie today. Later found out a B-24 shot down one Betty in the area. Due to the threat of the Jap fleet coming out and flanking us between Japan & Formosa, the target again was changed, much to our disappointment. The island chain between Formosa & Japan, called Ryukyu, is the target, only 200 miles from Japan, within easy fighter plane range of the mainland. One man was washed overboard from a battleship today. The waves are very high. The Hancock, another Essex-class carrier has reported out for her first operation against the Japs. We witnessed several water crack-ups of her green pilots. Most of the airmen were rescued.

October 10th.

A strong fighter sweep took off at 0600 this morning. A short time later one of the CAP shot down a Betty about 25 miles from us. About to go to breakfast, torpedo defense sounded. One bogie, which was later chased away. Over the target area, our planes met no air borne opposition, but heavy, accurate AA fire. Several cargo ships were sunk. Several subs were sighted moored alongside a dock. Two were sunk & two damaged. We had several alerts. Many bogies in the area. One of our TBF's cracked-up in the water while launching, but the 3 man crew were rescued by a destroyer. Our ship had no personnel losses in today's strike. At midnight tonight, general quarters was sounded. Several Jap planes in our vicinity. The Hornet launched night fighters, but interception was not made. We stood by our guns in the rain, more concerned about getting some sleep, than about the Jap prowlers. About 2 hours later several other enemy planes closed to about 23 miles, then left.

October 11th.

Refueled [sic] today. Our target tomorrow is the first carrier attack on Formosa.

During the night, had G.Q. at midnight. Bogies closed to within 7 miles, but all ships held their fire. They left. Had another alert about 2 a.m. Little or no sleep tonight.

October 12th.

Fighter sweep of 15 planes and a heavy strike took off at dawn. We waited for an expected attack by the enemy. Our planes landed about 9 a.m. from the sweep. One fighter in landing, bounced hard, went over the crash barrier & his momentum carried him up the deck. I was standing on the flight deck watching & when I saw this, I dove into the gun battery, yelling "look out!!" I landed on about 3 marines. The fighter crashed into the first 5 inch turret and there was a desperate scramble by the flight deck crews to get out of the way. One seaman was hit & hit hard. Oil spurted from the engine all over the turret & I ran to get a look at the injured man. It was gory; a sickening sight. I knew him. His left arm was broken in about 3 places with the bone (arm amp.)(later died) sticking through. The flesh was ripped & bleeding. The left leg was also badly broken, just like a broken match stick & was hanging by a mass of bloody flesh. He was conscious but badly shocked. The plane came to rest about 10 feet from all the incendiary bombs & 1000 lb. bombs which were waiting to be loaded for the next strike. The score of our fighter sweep was tallied – the pilots kept saying "there's more damn planes there than I've ever seen!" Our fighters shot down 32 enemy planes without a single loss! Almost unbelievable. The next strike was not launched as scheduled. Instead, the fighters were respotted [sic], reloaded, &

regassed [sic] & with the skipper yelling over the loud speaker "Go get 'em, boys there's plenty more!", they streaked for the target area. The planes destroyed were, for a good part, just taking off to bomb our force. Fighter Skipper Collins alone accounted for five. The ships ace, Lt. Cmdr. McCusky got 3 more. Today is going to be one busy day. Results of today's strikes have been tallied. Our losses: 3 dive bombers (2 crews saved), one torpedoe [sic] plane (crew saved). One fighter plane (pilot picked up by American sub). One big loss to us was the fighter pilot, "Character," previously mentioned. He was the most popular, best liked pilot in the Air Group. He was shot down by an enemy fighter; and parachuted to land about a mile from the west coast of Formosa. On the credit side, our planes shot down 52 enemy planes, probably shot down 5, & damaged 20. Several ships were sunk. Another fighter plane cracked up on the flight deck when the right brake stuck & the nose crashed into the island. Luckily no one was in the way. The skipper, Captain Greer, paid us many compliments this evening, and became a deeply loved & respected leader, after he said "You hit the Japs damn hard and from what I've seen of your operating efficiency, I'm proud to be your captain."

Several bogies in the evening. Attack to be resumed tomorrow. This evening, at 7 p.m., had torpedoe [sic] defense followed shortly by G.Q. Two groups of bogies, about 40 planes in one and twenty in the other closing. It grew darker. The Jap aircraft pressed home the attack on the task force. For eight solid hours, from 7 p.m. to 3 a.m., we watched ships open fire in the distance on the horizon and at close range. None of our ships were hit, although the Intrepid reported a torpedoe [sic] wake just off her fantail, and I saw 7 or 8 planes shot down in flames, three of which in our immediate vicinity, one about 500 yards off our fantail. Since it was so dark, the enemy planes were practically invisible and we couldn't be sure of shooting in the direction of our own ships. About midnight, the battleship on our starboard side opened up with 20 and 40m.m. guns right over our ship. Hundreds of shells & tracers cascaded in a shower over our heads. We dove for shelter in the clipping room. About 20 seconds later we came out, just in time to see a Jap plane fly over our flight deck about 100 feet high. We weren't close enough to our guns to get a bead on him & we cursed our luck at missing such a good shot (shot down). One of our quads opened up & the 20m.m. Marine batteries on the port side also. Probably this is the only way the enemy aviators knew of our presence below. The rear gunner strafed, but no one was hit. Many flares were dropped, but we had one experience that tops our night combat scares. About seven flares were loosed directly over us & the wind drove them at our ship. We were lit up as bright as Broadway and we waited for the attack on us we felt was certain

was coming. One flare was blown across the deck, about 50 feet up and the sparks, resembling welder's slag, showered our deck and the planes on it. We can't figure out why the planes didn't catch fire, the result of which would have been tragic. Marines on Battery Six first ran for shelter from the thermite, then grabbed a long hose to battle the fire. Luckily the fire did not start. Then I witnessed something almost unbelievable. Several flares had burnt themselves out. There were two left, bearing down on the ship as the first one had. Marines in Battery Four requested permission to open fire on the flares. They could use no sights, since these are effective only in daylight, and they used night ammunition (which is no tracers), plus the fact that the flares were drifting with the wind. They had every disadvantage, but they opened fire. After about a 4 second burst, both flares were shot out. This saved us from whatever further danger there was for the time being. For this incident, the Marines were commended by Admiral Halsey. It was the finest sharpshooting I had ever seen. The chiefs in the engine room told our gunnery sergeant, that they felt at least 4 distinct underwater explosions, so it was very possible Jap planes made runs on us in the blackness & we never knew it. We opened fire (5 inchers) several times later on, but didn't hit anything. Forty m.m. shells exploded over us again, and once more we dove for shelter from the shrapnel. What a night – no sleep at all. (After mid-night, date is Friday, 13th.)

October 13th.

Sweep took off at dawn, followed later by a strike. Results of today's attack: very heavy damage to airport facilities and installations. Three enemy planes shot down. One of our dive-bombers shot down by AA. During supper this evening, at 5 p.m. had torpedoe [sic] defense. Enemy planes closing. We launched a number of fighters since there was still daylight. No interception made. About an hour later, gun fire broke out on port side. We sighted a twin-engine bomber flying low on the starboard side about 3 miles away. Destroyers nearby did not see it & to put them wise, the U.S.S. Iowa opened up, shooting over them. Shrapnel (we later found out) killed several men on the can. Then we opened up. Came very close, but missed. The Jap fled. Heavy firing later directly over-head by 5 inchers. Firing later on the fantail. Reported torpedoe [sic] wake just missed our stern. Much firing, but I saw no enemy planes shot down. The seas very rough. Occasional rain & strong winds. One night fighter from the Independence forced down for water landing. Probably not rescued due to weather. The Japs stuck one torpedoe [sic] in the belly of the new cruiser, U.S.S. Canberra. Dead in the water & later towed at 5 knots by Wichita. The entire fleet is circling the stricken ship all night. A sea-going tug

sent for from Saipan. Wasp shot one Frances down & it crashed into her bow, but only slight damage.

October 14th.

We were supposed to withdraw from Formosa today, but we are sticking around to continue pounding targets & cover retreat of hit CA. A heavy force of B-29's & B-24's bombed Formosa today. Our fighters covered them. Had several alerts this morning. Refueling [sic] destroyers today. Early this morning, had G.Q. and was under attack several times during the day. Sighted many enemy aircraft. Saw our fighters shoot several down. Fired many times at Kates & Judies. Struck in helmet by piece of own shrapnel. Two Judies made steep dives on the Hancock & they didn't even open fire. Luckily only near misses, we shot one down. Hid in rain squalls several times. Got all wet & guns got rusted. Didn't get chow till late at night. Once we were told to stand by to repel strafing attack. We had a hell of a busy day. At our guns continuously. During the night had 2 G.Q.'s, one torpedoe [sic] defense & one alert. Up all night. Everyone's exhausted. Running battle for 3 nights & 3 days with no sleep. U.S.S. Oakland (AA cruiser) opened up & shot down one of our own dive-bombers in flames. Pilot & gunner rescued. U.S.S. Reno (AA cruiser) had Jap plane dive into her fantail. Little damage. Night fighters shot several down during the night. Retired finally from Formosa. Some cans out of 5" ammo.

October 15th. Refueled [sic] from tanker.

October 16th.

Supposed to hit Luzon today, but during a.m. G.Q. Skipper says we are about 500 miles north of where we are supposed to be. We suspect Jap fleet of coming out. They think most of our ships sunk or damaged, so they are coming out to "mop up."

We are near the Bonins, circling around to come in their rear & cut them off from retreat. One task group went down to bombard Luzon, so with them coming north to close the trap, we'll have them perfectly. Search bombers with extra wing tanks & belly tanks sent out. Report so far negative. Had torpedoe [sic] defense about 10:30 a.m. Single Jap plane made a run on another task group & they opened intense AA fire. We were too far away to be sure, but believe they shot it down. Several enemy planes shot down by CAP during the day. Our planes shot down 9 Jap planes. One search bomber came back, in evening, reported sighting Jap force of 2 battlewagons, 1 cruiser, 7 cans about 280 miles from us. Too far to launch an attack today. One of our fighters had engine trouble & made water landing too far from us & too close to the Japs to make rescue (later resc.by sub.). The

enemy launched a heavy attack of 60 planes on the torpedoed cruiser and its escort of two converted carriers, cruiser, & cans. During the battle 50 shot down by planes, 9 by AA. One got through, put a torpedoe [sic] into cruiser, U.S.S. Houston (Houston rec'd total of 3 torpedoes).

October 17th.

Launched another search hop looking for Jap units. Results of search negative. Task group at Luzon reports heavy opposition. This afternoon turned south. Attacking north tip of Luzon tomorrow morning.

October 18th.

Fighter sweep & attack took off at dawn. Reports no air opposition, so planes flew 34 miles north to an island. Met, sunk or heavily damaged 2 large transports, 2 large cargo ships. Later sunk several more ships.

October 19th.

Circling near Luzon.

October 20th.

Leyte, in Central Philippines invaded by Army troops.

October 21st.

Several strikes sent over Cebu in support of invasion. Refueled [sic] at sea.

October 22nd.

Standing by off Phillipines [sic s/b Philippines] in case our help needed.

October 23rd.

Refueled [sic]. Immediately after refueling [sic], we pulled out of the task group and proceeded for the first time with protection consisting of only, two destroyers southeastward.

October 24th.

On our own, we are racing toward the island of Manus, close to the Admiralty Islands, north of New Guinea. Our Air Group (Air Group 8) has received orders to return to the States for a very well-earned rest. They are presumeably [sic] disembarking at that island. A Navy patrol boat PBM (Mariner) circles us several times today.

Oct. 26.

Destroyer dropped depth charge only about 800 yards off starboard beam. We zig-zagged [sic] several minutes. Probable sub contact.

Oct. 27.

Arrived in Manus Harbor. Air Group 8 left us today. Very sentimental departure as band played "California Here I Come" & "Auld Lang Syne." We waved sad good-byes. These men saved our lives countless times. Our good wishes went with them. Working parties started. Most intense loading we've ever experienced. Working day & night – no rest.

Oct. 30.

Got recreation party, went to Pityiliu [sic s/b Pityilu] Is., next to Manus. Had good time. Loading continued. Main question: If we're going home, why load explosive & ammo? Main answer: Probably not going home. (Damn!)

Oct. 31st.

Destroyer came into harbor. Superstructure shot away in battle up north.

Nov. 1st.

Pulled out of Manus Harbor, travelling north. Had target practice from noon till 8 p.m. Excellent results.

Nov. 3rd.

Arrived Saipan. Air Group 4 came aboard, veteran of battle in the Atlantic. There was an air raid here two nights ago. This evening during chow, had G.Q. Medium group of bogies closing. Five minutes later there sounded gunfire from the island. Flashlight picked out bomber flying high. Light inaccurate gunfire went up, missed. Luckily – it was a B-24.

Nov. 4th.

Left Saipan after speech by skipper. Our home-going plans changed. Attacking Phillipines [sic s/b Philippines] or Formosa again.

One day from Phillipines [sic s/b Philippines], plans changed, turned around headed for Guam.

(Diary stopped on page 92 R)

(Diary cont'd on "Places I have been").

(Diary started again on page 95 R.)

DATES TO REMEMBER

BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS I
WANT TO REMEMBER BY SENDING A GREETING OR GIFT

Date: May 15, 1943
Name: Frances Thompson
Occasion: First Met

Date: October 20, 1925
Name: Frances Thompson
Occasion: birthday

Date: Dec. 25,?
Name: Mr. & Mrs. G.
Occasion: Anniversary

Date: January 1.
Name: Richard Thompson
Occasion: birthday

Date: Feb. 18.
Name: Mom.
Occasion: birthday

Date: April 1st.
Name: Aaron
Occasion: birthday

Date: April 26.
Name: Miriam
Occasion: birthday

Date: April 30
Name: Frieda
Occasion: birthday

Date: May 5
Name: Pop
Occasion: birthday

Date: May 8
Name: Frank Thompson
Occasion: birthday

Date: Aug. 3rd.
Name: Mrs. Thompson
Occasion: birthday

Date: May 23rd.
Name: Mr. Thompson
Occasion: birthday

Date: November 18th
Name: Harriet Thompson
Occasion: birthday

Date: November 21st.

Name: Ralph

Occasion: birthday

GIFTS

I HAVE RECEIVED

For Which I Want to
Express Appreciation

Gift: baseball cap & moccasins
When Received: July 6th, 1944.
From Whom: Mom.

Gift: pogie bait & brownies
When Received: Oct. 20th., 1944.
From Whom: Mom & Frieda

PLACES I HAVE BEEN

DATE, DESCRIPTION, AND MY IMPRESSIONS OF PLACES I WANT TO REMEMBER HAVING VISITED

Honolulu, T.H. arrived Feb. 2, 1944.

Visited Waikiki Beach and thought it was a great disappointment. Also, everything on the island is a disappointment. The Chamber of Commerce shall hear of this!!!

(Diary started again on page 95 R.)

Two days later, about 12 hours from Guam & 35 miles from tankers, turned around and raced at 26 knots back to Leyte.

November 11th.

Arrived in time catch Jap convoy landing troops. Our new air group attacked in 2 waves and scored hits & near misses on cargo ships & escorts. Enemy aircraft spotted but none shot down. Many of our planes shot up by AA Fire. All planes returned. Re fueled [sic] destroyers. Had torpedo [sic] defense twice with bogies in the area. One shot down about 4 miles off our bow. Torpedo [sic] defense about an hour later. One Jap dive-bomber shot down by one of our fighters in the midst of a dive on one of us.

November 12.

Re fueled [sic] by tankers.

November 13.

Went north & attacked Manila area. Several ships sunk in harbor, plus 4 torpedo [sic] hits on floating drydock, which sank. Four enemy planes shot down. Had torpedo [sic] defense about 4 times during the day & many alerts. Jap planes throughout area. In later strikes, 3 more enemy planes shot down and 2 large destroyers sunk. We lost 2 fighters, 3 bombers, one TBF. Had G.Q. at dusk. Bogies later left. Later had G.Q. again, Jap plane approached air group. Destroyer in screen opened up. Jap fled.

November 14th.

Strikes all morning in same area. We sank additional ships, lost 1 fighter, 1 dive-bomber. Had G.Q. in afternoon in midst of driving rain storm limiting visibility to about 300 yards. Bogies circled us & left. We left target area, travelling northeast.

November 15th.

Changed course, travelling south.

November 16.

Re fueled [sic] at sea. Received dispatch from Admiral Halsey to drop off planes to other ships who need them, proceed to Ulithi, unload & return to Bremerton, Wash., for overhaul. After so many disappointments, the excitement has been dulled, but we are deeply elated. To see our families again as well as babies & women after so many months of undecipherable [sic] loneliness is still difficult to believe. I have come through the

initial phase of my personal war with the Japs unharmed. I know I must return in a few months to continue the battle but I shall do my best and hope the day is near when I can return home & tell Mom that I needn't leave again. I pray that day come soon.

End.

AUTOGRAPHS

Have Each of Your Buddies Write a Verse,
Sentiment, or Characteristic Com-
ment... and Sign His Name

To Sam Gevirtz:

I haven't known you long - we will probably be together for many days to come - but my impression of you now and always will be that you are a good friend and a sincere friend - and if it means anything to you a good, a damn good Marine.

Johnny Hagman

Chicago

To Sam Gevirtz

I haven't been with you very long but I know you are a sincere & real friend. I hope I can be as good a friend to you as you have been to me. Remember this in time to come.

Roy R. Gallatin Pfc.

Carrollton, Ohio

To Sam Givertz [sic s/b Gevirtz]

A fellow I haven't known long but hope to enjoy the pleasure of his friendship for a long period of time.

Morris A. Evans P.F.C.

Glasgow, Ky.

To Sam:

Here's to Sam. May his friendship last till the ocean wears rubber pants to keep it's bottom dry.

Crayton S. Biddle P.F.C.

Sam -

A Marine with whom I would gladly not walk the boon-docks for a long time. Sincerely though, I hope our blossoming [sic] friendship lasts for many years to come-

Don Johnson P.V.T.

Chicago, Illinois

To Sam, A good kid that I still would like to be with when he comes back a man.

Fred R. Hirtzberg Jr. P.F.C.

Sam Givertz:

From the first moment I **call Page 99L** met you, the very attitude I had of you then and now hasn't altered. A fellow I'd want to know always.

Jim Popoff

St. Louis, M.O.

To Sam

My knowing you has been a pleasure, I know it will remain that way. The best of luck always.

Thomas J Hand

Emmetsburg, Iowa

Sam

The fellow who taught me how to dodge work, the swell guy that you really enjoy shipping with. Hope we can continue to be together the remainder of the war.

Miner w Bonwell Jr. (Bill)

Cameron, Texas

Bradenton, Flr.

Sam -

It seems that all that I could put down here wouldn't convey my wishes for a good future, and happiness. Any way the rest of the boys have done OK in writing in this book.

Royce B. Wallace, Jr.

Chicago

Sam -

A guy from the word go. Association with him is a pleasure. This Pacific would be all the more unbearable if it wasn't for fellows of his caliber.

Michael J. Quinn Jr. U.S.M.C.

Staten Island, 10 N.Y.

Sam; You are a fine example of what a person finds in a true, loyal friend. It is a pleasure to serve with you. May good luck, happiness and success be yours always. God bless you always Sam.

James V. Hawkins

Rock Hill, S.C.

Sam:

Words alone can't express my impressions of you, a true & loyal buddy & by all means sincere. May I be with for the duration are my wishes.

Jess J. Carlos

Pittsburg, Calif.

Jack Henricks

Kansas City, Mo.