



Diary of William J Marmion from the USS Gregory

Jan. 22nd

I have been going to start this journal for quite sometime, and as this is the first entry, perhaps it would be a good idea to list a record of my reasons for doing so.

Today marks the beginning of the most exciting and dangerous adventure of my life. Today we are leaving the Hawaiian area on our way to the battle zone. We are convoying a task group of 78 LCI's, LST's and LSM's assisted by 1 DE, 3 PC boats, and PTCS boats. Our final destination is Iwo Jima and we are going to have to stop at Eniwetok and Saipan. Iwo Jima is 700 miles from Japan. We have a captain and his staff aboard because we are the flag ship of all the LCI's, etc. It makes living conditions aboard ship terribly crowded as we are over-complimented as it was and there are not enough sacks, forcing some men to sling hammocks as sleep in cots.

I hope to be able to put in this book things I cannot put in letters, because I hope my boys will be able to read this later on and learn thru my eyes and experiences the ugliness and horror of war. I pray to God they will be spared such experience when they reach manhood.

In facing what the future may hold, I do not find myself afraid of death personally. But I do fear what my death will mean to Sue and the boys. The thought of Sue having to go thru hardships to raise the boys without my help makes me cry silently. I can't stand the thought of my family being ever in want and I'm afraid that is what my death might mean. At times when such thoughts plague me, I regret being instrumental in bringing Bill and Joe into the world. Sue deserves a much better break than what I have given her. She has had all the hardship and sacrifice of our marriage. I have had all the easy going and the pleasure.

Jan 23rd

This is going to be a bad trip. We have been underway for 24 hours and are 135 miles from Oahu. Reason – top speed of LCI's etc is 7 knots. The slow speed we are going at makes every little wave seem like a breaker. As a result, the ship is pitching and rolling so we can hardly stay in our bunks at night. I hope calmer seas lie ahead.

Mr. Frielayson, our Watch Officer, told us today that we might partake in the Task Force assault on Tokyo. Plans indicated a 5000 carrier based plane attack on Tokyo in an attempt to neutralize 250 air fields there. I'm not sure whether this is simultaneous with the Iwo Jima push or follows it.

I have seen ships come into Pearl Harbor that have been hit by suicide planes of Japan. They are just skeletons of what they once were. I dread the thought that they may be what is in store for us. Makes it difficult to plan on a return to my family.



Jan 24th

Have the 8-12 watch this week so I got screwed last night. Entered a new time zone at 2200 putting the clocks back ½ hour. So I had to stand ½ hour extra watch.

At noon today, we're only 400 miles from Oahu and about 330 miles from Johnston Island. As we're the flagship, spent the morning and afternoon delivering guard mail to screen and convoy. This system of sub alerts is going to get us all down. We have G.Q. beginning 1 hour before and lasting until sunrise and beginning at sunset until 1 hour after sunset. Sunrise today was 0735 and sunset is 1840.

Got to write some letters --- most important one of all will be to Sue.

Jan 25th

Lost another hour today and my luck was as usual. It fell on my watch so I had to stand 5 hours instead of 4.

We are still about 170 miles from Johnson Island. Expect to raise it sometime tomorrow.

The Radar gear on a YMS crapped out today so they come alongside and Mr. Esterbrook and Roy Neilson, Technician, went aboard to fix it. It was a neat bit of seamanship by both skippers. Both ships came up side by side and all the two men had to do was to step across. Remarkable considering the rough sea and the speed of 10 KTS. Never even bumped each other.

Weather is becoming exceedingly hot. Believe I'll have to start sleeping topside. Too hot, stuffy and smelly in the compartment.

We are now at about Lat. 19 and Long 168.

Jan 27th

Didn't write any entry yesterday because I was too darn sick. I was too sick to die. I had upset stomach, diarrhea, assorted aches and pains including head and tummy. I could not finish my watch. Had to come down and crawl in my sack about 2200. Better today – I firmly believe I had a touch of food poisoning. Several others had the same thing.

Had a sub contact yesterday. Picked up by YMS in the screen. We went to assist, but after the YMS dropped a couple of depth charges, contact disappeared from gear. Searched for ourselves – finally gave up and returned to flotilla leaving YMS to continue search and to warn convoy 20 miles behind us.

Time changed again today. Goes back 1 hour at 1400. First time change I have gone thru since Seattle that it didn't occur on my watch. We cross the 180 Meridian pretty soon. That means we lose a whole day.



Right now we are going back to assist a PC boat in the rear screen. It had a fire and is dead in the water. We will give them a tow until damage is repaired and will probably also pass them food and water and fuel.

Jan 28th and 29th

Today at 0615 we crossed the International Date Line---so while I got up at 4am on Sunday, I will go to bed at 8pm on Monday. I might say it has been the fastest day of my life so far.

Jan 28th (Sunday)

Yesterday (Saturday) we tied on to the PC boat in attempt to tow it. Our cable broke 3 times losing us precious time and then we could only go 12 knots for fear of snapping it again. We fell some 40 miles behind our group. In as much as we are the flag and carry the commander aboard, it was necessary that we catch up. So, they ordered the DE Hallaran to come back and relieve us which they did. We proceeded at 27 knots catching our group 5 hours after we had cast off from the PC.

To list some ideas of the magnitude and troubles of this undertaking: there are 3 tractor Groups of approximately 50 – 70 ships each. Following each other and separated by about 20 miles. Following that is the heavier ships – AP, APA, AKA freighters, etc. Last night in one hour a group Commander had the following troubles reported in his group: a broken screw, an engine breakdown, a fire, a broken rudder and 2 disabled screws.

Feb 1st

We are definitely in enemy territory at 0700 today were at 168/31 long and 13/21 lat. We are about 90 miles from Toangi, a Jap held island about 160 miles from Rongelap, another Jap held island and 390 miles form Eniwetok, an American base. Tonagi bears 35 degree, Rangelap bears 210 degrees and Eniwetok bears 255 degrees. We should arrive in Eniwetok on Feb 3rd about sunrise.

Tried to sleep on ready boxes last night in aft 20MM shield, but although the night was beautiful and fresh air swell, the ready boxes were too narrow and short for my lean lank frame. I could not get comfortable. After trying for an hour or so I gave up and hit my sack in the hot, smelly compartment.

A man fell overboard to day. He was in the chow line waiting and he sat on the rail. The ship lurched and over he went. The Officer of the Deck took immediate steps as soon as the cry sounded “Man Overboard” and 10 minutes later he was back aboard safe and sound. He is an electrician 3NC by the name of Petersen. He was damn lucky he was not sucked under and cut to pieces by the screws. We were going 25 knots on our way back to deliver a message to following convoy and at such speed the screws generate terrific suction. If it had happened at night, he would have been lost.



Feb 4th

We arrived off Eniwetok yesterday morning before dawn. Then laid off outside the entrance until all the LCI's, LST's, and LCM's had entered before we proceeded to anchorage and dropped hook. The rest of the day was spent carrying on ships work and taking stores.

The break of the day came when they allowed all hands to go swimming over the starboard side. It was a break because the oppressive heat had just about gotten us all down. It was really refreshing. The water was nice and warm. After a few plunges, I noticed debris floating in the water from the outlet from the ships head (toilet). It completely dampened my enthusiasm for swimming so I showered, changed clothes and went to the movie. Saw "The Great Man's Lady" with Barbara Stanwyck, Joel Mc Crea and Brian Danlevy. It was damn good.

Today spent all morning cleaning up the CIC shack. Most of the fellows were busy storing stores and they managed to steal a crate of oranges and a crate of apples for CIC. Should go good on **condition** watches.

This afternoon I am going to spend taking a sunbath and a swim if its allowed. Hope I don't catch a t__d when I dive.

Lest I forget, before we could swim, the following precautions were taken. The Whaleboat patrolled the swimming area with an expert rifleman armed with a 903 Springfield to drive off any sharks or barracuda that might put in an appearance. Also an expert on board ship armed with a .30 caliber machine gun for the same reason.

Feb 6th

Well, we are well on our way to Saipan from Eniwetok. We left yesterday morning and are due to arrive in Saipan Saturday morning. After 3 days of practice maneuvers there, we head for the big show which is to being on the morning of the 19th.

Eniwetok is an atoll that is a huge coral reef surrounding a deep body of water. The water inside the atoll is 22 – 100 fathoms deep and is about 22 miles long and 12 miles wide. The 3 principle islands are Parry, Eniwetok, and Engebi. Eniwetok is the largest about 2 miles long and ½ mile wide. Engegi and Eniwetok have air fields and is used as a staging base by the fleet.

Feb 8th

Not much to write about. We just passed the LST "aircraft carrier." It carries about 6 Piper Cubs. Didn't hear reveille this morning or GQ either. The boys claim they woke me alltho I don't remember it. First thing I remember was someone slapping me on the ass and pulling me out of my bunk with remark "get the hell out of there, you lazy b\$#@. GQ sounded 10 minutes ago." I arrived at the shack 10 minutes late and am now very much on Lt. (J.G.) O'Lexy's shit list.



McNamara borrowed a rate badge from McCord to sew on his jumper. He hasn't been near a store since he was rated. Poor Mac. He is in for a lot of razzing.

Got paid today. \$35. Had \$39 on the books but I believe they made a mistake cause I'm only supposed to draw \$29. It took all I could in hopes they wouldn't discover the mistake.

Feb 9th

I plumb forgot to mention that on the 7th we had a genuine air raid alert. We were informed by intelligence that Japanese planes were taking off from Truk about 400 miles away. One hour later we picked up on unidentified air contact at 112 miles and heading our way. We immediately went to GQ and Westerholtz and I plotted the planes approach. It passed us about 30 miles away finally disappearing from the screen at 60 miles astern. Outside of sweating a little heavier than usual, I acted no differently than if I had been going thru a routine drill. Hope I act the same way under actual fire.

Due in tomorrow. Hope our journey continues to be safe. One of the troopships under the Calhouns protection caught a torpedo. No further information. I don't know whether the ship sank or whether they caught the sub. I doubt the later very, very much.

Feb 11th

We arrived off Saipan yesterday dropping anchor at 0719. It was a very uneventful trip. We passed thru the passage between Tinian and Saipan which is about 3 miles wide at its widest point. We anchored off shore from the town of Garapan where some of the heaviest fighting took place when this island was captured. Even now you can still see the ravages of war in the burned houses and shattered buildings. This is a bad anchorage – the water is shallow about 3 ft deep for a mile out from shore and only about 20 ft where we are and the ground swells are heavy. The catch the ship broadside and make her roll about 20 degrees. Difficult to walk, eat and sleep – almost impossible to stay in your bunk without falling out.

We were given a thrill yesterday by seeing the huge B-29's taking off and grouping and heading off in the direction of Tokyo. Last night we saw one lone B-29 come in on 3 motors and with a huge hole in the starboard wing. Flack or a "banzai" boy evidently. At night they light off a huge searchlight and direct its beam straight over head and wag it slowly back and forth like a huge finger stretching thousands of feet into the air guiding and beckoning the boys to home and safety. Surprising how safe one feels in the shadow of these air giant's wings.

Today we go out with our LSTs etc to practice landing maneuvers on Saipan in a final rehearsal for Iwo Jima.

We are now 5500 miles from Frisco and 1500 miles from Tokyo.

Saipan reminds me of Oahu, only not so many hills. High point is only 1500 feet. Lots of vegetation and trees.



Feb 12th

Very happy and relieved about the whole thing today. The heavier units of the fleet have begun to join up with us. Funny what a safe feeling you get with flights of fighters overhead and in the shadow of the 16" guns of the battle wagons. We have one major carrier and 4 CUEs and the battle wagons Arkansas, Maryland and the CL Indianapolis.

A fellow came walking out on the boat deck last night from the radio shack and couldn't see in the dark and walked right off the ladder falling 12' to the main deck. He broke his leg and knee cap. He was one of the staff and not ships company.

Feb 15th

For the past 3 days we have been patrolling a sector between Saipan and Tinian, acting as a screen for the ships that were practicing landings on Saipan in rehearsal for the invasion of Iwo Jima. We are to be relieved today and will probably go into port, I hope.

Last night we had an air raid about 10:30pm. We went to GQ but as long as I had the watch at that time we did not lose any sleep. Slats was on the SC and picked up the bogey about 65 miles. I took over and tracked it from about 40 miles right to 18 miles which is about as close as it ever came to us. It seemed to be 2 flights of 3 planes each. No bombs were dropped anywhere and no planes shot down. All ships in the area were alerted and all ships in the harbor laid smoke screens to protect the transports, merships and landing craft. As a result of the intense smoke a destroyer rammed a mership at anchor seriously damaging both. As a result, neither ship will take part in the operation.

Tokyo Rose promised "a warm reception for the Americans in the volcanoes on the 18th" – that's the 3rd day in a row she has broadcast this message. So, the Japs know we are on the way.

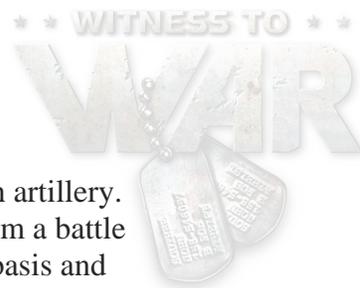
Feb 17th

Probably my last chance to write before the big show. It's scheduled for 0730 Monday morning. Spent yesterday drawing copies of various maps, screens, etc. Yesterday we could hear the carriers etc. operating off Iwo Jima giving orders to each other via voice radio. Last night we heard a civilian radio program from Haushu. It was really corny. Such music! Sounded like a bunch of cats in a fight. Wonder how Tokyo likes the pounding Task Force 58 is giving Tokyo. Of course, Tokyo Rose claims they have sunk 13 ODs and 1 Battle Wagon. Again?

We have had reports of several Jap Task Forces pulling North from the Philippines. Wonder if their fleet will come out at Iwo or if it is just for protection of Haushu itself. Next invasions for March promises to be a tough one. Hope my luck holds.

Sunday February 18th

This may be my last writing. Who knows. Right now it is 1230 and we are about 140 miles from Iwo Jima. We have had reports from other ships that are participating in the



shore bombardment that we have control of the air but the Island is “thick” with artillery. Out of 21 gunboats (converted LCIs) the Japs sunk 19 via mortar fire. Japs claim a battle wagon, 3 cruisers, 4 destroyers and 50 landing craft. Their claims are without basis and as far as I know no LCIs have attempted to land. D-Day is 530 in the morning (tomorrow).

I saw photo, charts and maps of the Island yesterday with quite detailed plans of Jap’s defenses, gun positions, trenches etc. Iwo Jima is a pork chop shaped island looking like a small edition of South America in outline. It is about 4 miles long by about 2 miles wide at its widest point. It narrows down to 800 yards. It has a volcano crater at its Southern end and is extremely flat rising to its Northern end where it is rocky. It has two air strips in use and a third under construction. It has 1091 civilians and is defended by about 15 – 20,000 Japs of their First Infantry. It promises to be bloody because we intend to land about 30,000 Marines of the 3rd, 4th and 5th Divisions. It is heavily defended by CD, mortars and machine guns.

The fleet has been hampered by cloudy, rainy weather in their attempts to knock out the artillery positions by bombardment. So, unless they get a break in the weather today and were able to get something accomplished we may be in for a hot time tomorrow.

March 13th

It has been quite some time since I have written because I hesitated to start and not be able to finish. However, I have kept notes from day to day and will attempt to backtrack and bring this log up to date by recapping these notes.

On Feb 19th -- about 2am the Japs sent snoopers plans down – no damage. None shot down. Went to GQ again at 4:30am and stayed the entire day with ½ hour off for breakfast and ½ hour for lunch. Secured about 3:35pm. Spent day patrolling a picket station. Went back to GQ at 1830 and stayed until 2030. Japs sent several snoopers down --- which we tracked from about 20 miles away. One closed us until at 14000 yds before turning away. We didn’t hit him and he dropped no bombs. However, our gunners really put out a lot of lead. We fired 79 rounds of 5” shells in 4 minutes. Plane went over and strafed the Abele, a DD after turning away from us. The rest of the night was quiet.

The Marines went ashore at 10:30am and were putting tanks ashore by 1300. No further results.

On Feb 20th -- our patrol station yesterday and last night was Radar picket #3, located about 15 miles NE of Hot Rocks. My watch was 0400 – 0800. After watch, I hit my sack until noon. At 1430, we were relieved from picket duty and went in to fire support, our first shore bombardment. We were assigned a sector about ½ way on Northwest side of Island 2700 yds from the beach. While waiting for target, we noticed an open mouth cave so we fired 16 rounds at it and scored 2 direct hits. No immediate assignment so we moved out to 5000 yds where we lay to and prepared to fire star shells to furnish illumination for Marines the balance of the night. Behind us the battlewagon



Washington, Texas and Arkansas and the Cruiser Indianapolis are firing their main batteries at targets. These shells really scream as they go overhead. Hope to hell they don't have any misfires or short shots.

At 0800 the Marines started to attack. We laid down preliminary barrage and continued assault with air bursts when Marines moved up. We're 2000 yds from the beach and could see the tanks moving up and our shells moving with them about 400 yds ahead. Marines gained and held about 500 yds with this push. Stayed in close to fire at designated targets picked out by spotter flying Piper Cubs. Japanese mortar battery took us under fire and we immediately fired on them. Duel lasted about 5 minutes before we silenced them. They never came closer than 15 yds to us though.

While waiting for new targets we spotted a heavy gun battery dug in on Hot Rocks that had our LSTs etc under damaging fire. We wanted to open fire on it but could not get permission because it was too close to our front lines. Capt really pissed off.

Japs came down again last night. Task Force 58 took on a bunch of 50 Jap planes about 65 miles NW of here. None got through from that bunch. However one banzai boy (suicide plane) came in on us very low to the water. He was about 10 ft off the water and coming like hell. He came in our port side (parallel) and just as he was beginning to swing over for a dive into our bridge, we nailed him. He was about 400 yds away. Our first Jap plane.

Another raid of 12-20 planes came down but veered off 12 miles from us. So we didn't shoot. However, I was on deck at the time and could trace their progress visually by the tracer fire from ships on the horizon. They really put up the fireworks. I saw 4 planes burst into flames in the air and fall like huge balls of fire into the sea. Saw one huge explosion that sent flames several hundred feet high. It was the CUE Bismarck Sea getting hit by a banzai boy. Japs retired very shortly.

We continued to fire illumination. It's really beautiful to watch those shells burst and float slowly down like a huge electric lights. They light up everything for hundreds of yards around. On the beach when a shell lights off everything is quiet but as soon as it burns out they cut loose with rifles, machine guns, mortars, bazookas. They must try to spot each other when its light and shoot the hell out of each other when it is dark. Marines are now fighting on #1 airfield. Beachheads are secure.

On Feb 22nd -- back on patrol again. We picked up a boat adrift with 5 men in it. They had been searching for survivors of Bismarck Sea and had run out of fuel. They had been adrift for 24 hours in a damn rough sea when we found them. In attempting to tow the boat, CBM Starue ran out too much cable and slack caught in our screws completely fouling them and leaving us dead in the water. It was 5 hours before we got the cable loose.

Japs sent snoopers and Banzai Boys down again tonight. One Banzai Boy came in low and passed directly overhead. Lookouts were confused and didn't positively identify it



until it was out of range. All we fired was 20 bursts of 40mm. That was too close for comfort!

On Feb 24 -- Japs sent down some high altitude bombers over last night. Did no damage. Scored a couple of near misses on El Dorado. Have been up all night at GQ. In fact, I have been up since 0400 on the 23rd. That is over 30 hours ago.

Now we are moving into close range to fire support area. We got communication from the shore fire control party on our shooting. We destroyed 3 large guns, several machine guns and mortars, a tank, 2 trucks, one pill box and one building. Control party said our shooting helped the Marines considerably in gains made. During the time we furnished fire support and were moving out to fire illuminations, the SFC party asked if we could give them any news as they hadn't heard any since they went ashore. The Captain obliged by reading our daily Newspaper to them. Then we rigged up our phonograph and played some of our best records by B. Goodman, Kay Kyser, Woody Herman, etc. to them. All night we fired illuminations (1 every 2 min) and harassing fire as needed.

On Feb 25 -- I got in my sack around 0200 this morning after 46 hours no sleep. Up again at 0600 through. My ass is slightly dragging. Oh for a full nights sleep where I can undress too!!

Went into fire support area and had to move into 1500 yds from beach. We really had a rugged target. The smokestack at the sugar refinery. The Japs had an artillery spotter up there and were really pinning down our troops. The damn thing was shielded from us by a high rocky ridge about 300 ft high. When we used air bursts, we couldn't get deflection enough and we used AA comm, they would hit the ridge. We never did knock it out.

Had a birds eye view of the fighting today. I was on the flying bridge with the field glasses when Marines began their advance into Northern rocky area to drive Japs out of pill boxes, tunnels, etc. surrounding #2 air field. Really something to see. Saw a battle between 2 PC boats and the Japs that was a humdinger. The Japs had taken 4 broken down tanks and made a machine gun nest out of them and were pounding the hell out of the Marines. They sent 2 PC boats in to clean them out. The PCs used 1.1" and 40mm guns and the Japs turned mortars, machine guns, everything they had. Those PC boats steamed into about 200 yds from the beach and after about 30 minutes succeeded in blowing up the tanks and setting fire to them. The greatest exhibition of guts I have seen yet. It was really something to see. We were 1500 yds out and so close I thought I could spit on the beach. And those PC boys were a lot closer than I was. We were receiving mortar fire again but the Japs were lousy. Never came closer than 200 yds. However, the ricocheting shells and mortars were screaming too close for comfort. So, I headed back into the CIC.

On Feb 26 -- we finally secured from GQ about 2200 last night and I had the mid-watch from 2400 to 0400. We had a routine GQ this am from 0600-0700 then ate chow and finally wrote a letter to Sue. I no sooner crawled in my sack then I heard the PA blare "Now hear this. This the Captain. We are on our way to Chi-Chi Jima to rescue 3 fliers



who are in the water on a life raft 3000 yards from the beach. It is my intention to pick them up and then leave our calling card by doing a little bombarding of the strategic targets on our way back.”

About 0930 somebody picked up a unidentified plane so we went to GQ. Passed Ha-Ha Jima about 1115am and were off Chi Chi about 1230. Steamed North around area where fliers supposed to be and then headed in for the beach. We were about 5000 yds out when the Japs opened up with everything they had. They had our range and had evidently been waiting for use since we passed Ha Ha. They dropped 12”, 6” and mortar fire all around us. Before they could get off another salvo we turned hard rudder and got the hell out of there protecting ourselves by laying smoke. We stayed out of range of the beach and after searching an hour or so we spotted the raft at 1400 and by 1430 we had the fliers safe aboard. Grant, Wynn and I helped haul the life raft aboard and carried it aft where we deflated it. We looked for souvenirs but the officers had pretty well stripped it when it came aboard.

The fliers were from the Enterprise and had been in the water since 0700. They were shot down during an air strike on Chi Chi. 3 of the officers were okay but the radioman had a fractured chest bone and cracked ribs. He was trapped when the plane hit the water and almost sank with it, but one of the officers pulled him free. We came back and transferred them to a hospital ship.

On our way past Hot Rocks, Japes entrenched there opened up on us with rockets and 5” guns. But missed us quite always.

We got a commendation for the exploit. We have the honor of being the first ship to penetrate Jap territory so deep alone. It was a ride I’ll never forget though. The sea was rough and we hit 37 knots just about all the way up. It was a gray overcast day and raining. We were low on ammunition...damn low. If we had been attacked, we would have been in a bad fix. Imagine we will carry ammo tomorrow.

On Feb 28th – Had a sub contact about 0230. Didn’t go to GQ. Just dropped 11 depth charges. Scared the hell out of everyone who was sleeping in their sacks. No definite results on sub though.

Went into beach for mail about 1900. The Marines had lots a campfires going and we were about 500 yds from shore anchored when Japs on cliff cut loose with a rocket barrage in area. Those camp fires went out in a hell of a hurry.

On March 1st – Air raid last night lasted about 2 hours. Saw lots of explosions on beach but we were out 15 miles and none came close to us.

The Bennett was on patrol station 4 miles off beach at noon today when the Japs on beach hit it with a high caliber shell. The men were in chow line and that’s when shell hit. Lots of damage done to ship and a lot of men killed and wounded.



Twigg also got hit while she was in shore bombardment. Calhoun got it also. She is sister ship of Gregory. Results – 1 killed, 7 wounded from hit by mortar shell.

On March 4th – Went nite fire support from patrol station C-10. Have been out there since March 2nd. Went to GQ at 1000 until 2300. Under mortar fire but not hit. Moved out to 6000 yds and fired night illumination until 0630 on the 5th.

On March 5th – Shore bombardment until 1530. Fueled. Unloaded brass then joined night **retirement** group until 0630 of March 6th.

On March 6th – assigned to RP#7. 50 miles NE of Hot Rocks.

On March 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th – Still at RP#7. Getting low on food. Starting to eat emergency rations. When these are gone will have nothing left but bread.

On March 9th at 0400 Japs came down in force about 6 flights. Came in high about 17000 ft. Missed us quite ways but didn't hear what happened at the island. About 2200, saw about 300 B-29's on their way to Tokyo.

On March 10th – we fueled, picked up mail and 8 ton of stores. Got a letter from Sue dated 2/21/45 and a Xmas card from Bill Cannon dated 11/15/44.

Heard that the B-29s hit Tokyo with an incendiary raid last night. Lots of damage.

On March 11th – Army planes are using airfield on Iwo. Most of the ships have withdrawn from this area but we are to move 50 miles closer to Ha Ha where we will patrol and be a rescue ship in case any planes are shot down over Chi Chi. Staging the first fighter strike on Chi Chi from Iwo today.

On March 12th, 13th, 14th -- Still in RP#7 and moved up to life saver station during the day. No planes have been shoot down as yet. Getting low on food again.

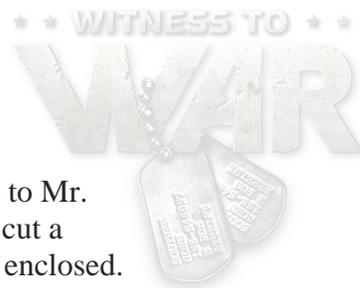
We were supposed to have been relieved off here on March 3rd. I think they have forgotten us. Island just about secured now.

March 15th

Orders came thru today to return to Saipan. Went to Iwo Jima about 0800 and waited around all day for 2-APA's to finish loading Marines and go back with us. While waiting got a good look at the beach and the cemetery the Marines have established. It is just a little way down from the Northern end where the cliffs start.

On our way at 1700.

March 16th



Due to arrive at Saipan this afternoon. Got a haircut. While waiting, got called to Mr. Mackins room and got a lecture on what is permissible to put in letters. Had to cut a paragraph out of letter written to Sue on March 12. Paragraph he objected to is enclosed.

(“Reminds me of my US History – the period of about 1850-60 – the way the so called Southern aristocracy acted toward Negroes and “po white trash.” I’m afraid that after the war, there will be some changes made. The Navy has grown too big and has given to many future civilians an insight into its life. I’m afraid that future public opinion will jar its smug complacency and that future requisites for officers will be that they be men instead of gentlemen.”)

March 18th

In port and lots of letters --- rec’d 32, I guess.

March 21st

We are moving in along side the Humel, a tender, today. Also are getting ready to paint the ship dark blue all over. We have a blue hull and gray superstructure now. Dark blue is the NorthWest Pacific colors. Rykyas here we come!

March 22nd

Went ashore this PM to drink beer and play ball. The entire second section. Didn’t play ball but did drink ½ dozen bottles of beer. Several of the fellows got drunk and we had a pretty rough time with some of them. Saw a lot of our wrecked tanks and amphib tanks along the beach as a result of the invasion as well as Jap pill boxes, mortars, howitzers, etc.

March 23rd

Went on a working party today. 5 radarmen from the second section – McHamel, McCord, Kerschieteo, Carsie, and myself along with Marciniah. Stole a case of tomato juice and sour cherries from a warehouse. Should be good on a future watch. Saw lots of the island, Jap prisoners at work, etc. Saw a statue of some famous Jap in a sort of park. There is a big wire fence around it now – I guess too many boys were pissing on it. Saw some Jap women prisoners. The truck driver told us that they have quite a time with them. They are goosey as hell (he says) and when they put them back in the stockade at night the guards have to search them. I guess that there is a really a lot of jumping and dancing around. He also said lotsa of the GIs are sticking the women. If they get caught at it, they pay a \$35 fine and 2 weeks restriction. None of the bags I saw would be worth \$35 to me to stick.

Jap snipers still roam the hills here. They shot 2 CB workmen last night over by the ammo dump.

March 25th

We leave the tender and anchor in the **outer stream**. Near as I can figure out our next operation is going to be a pretty tough one. My own personal guess is that we will hit the Island of Okinawa Jima in the Rykyus Islands. It has a large city on it and several air



fields. Understand that D-Day is April 1st. We aren't taking LTSs so we must be going to take transports. That is good. They go like a bat out of hell...compared to LSTs anyway.

March 26th

Pretty quiet today. All stars are aboard. The ship is completely repainted. Guess we leave tomorrow for Okinawa. Hate like hell to have to face the Japs again because I think they will be tough – we'll be only 300 miles from Honsho and 600 miles from Tokyo. Some smaller islands are being invaded today and ours will take place on April 1 – Easter Sunday!

Getting off a letter to Mom and Sue today. This will probably be the last they will get for several weeks. Its going to be tough out there.

March 28th

We are now on our way to Okinawa. The weather is hot and sultry and sleeping is difficult partly because of the heat and partly because the water is so rough that you have a hard time staying in your sack.

Official dispatches indicate that landing in the Keramu Rhetto group are going forward as scheduled. Last islands are to be secured by Loue-2 day, which is Friday of this week. Also understand that Japs are relying more and more on suicide planes to stop our fleet. During recent attack on Jap fleet by TF 58, they made 128 attempts against 1 carrier alone. She was badly damaged. Understand that on Loue+120 when Okinawa is to be secured, we will take Daito Shumia. Looks like busy summer lies ahead.

April 1st Easter Sunday

Went to GQ at 0400 to make ready for our part in the invasion. At 0530 we were under attack by low flying suicide boys that came in almost on the water. One hit an LST which later sank and another hit the APQ Hinesdale causing a fire in her firecourse that spread to her boat deck. They abandoned ship when the ammo began to explode. But after the troops were in the water her crew brought the fire under control and saved the ship.

Our outfit went in on the SE side of the island to make a demonstration landing and attempt to draw the Jap defense to our side of the island away from the Western side where the actual landing were to be made. We drew no fire although we were patrolling only 4000 yds from the beach. We retired at 1100.

Was able to see a Jap village from the beach. A primitive thing, no side walls, roads, etc. Just a bunch of mud houses with thatched roofs.

Heard that troops went ashore on Western side and captured 2 airfields and advanced to a distance of 5500 – 6000 yds inland.

Spent the night as a screen for the transports.



April 2nd

Went to GQ at 0400. We were under air raid but no damage. At 0830 again made demonstration landing. This time the Japs fired back. Several high powered shells straddled us landing 50-75 yds away. A "Val" Jap dive bomber passed over the entire convoy and I think every ship fired on her but none touched her.

Our first casualty occurred today when the hot shell man in **Maiut** #3 got his head in the way of a hot shell and fractured his skull and Nunno got his eyes flash burned. Nunno was strapped to his 20mm aft and #5 gun fired directly astern and right over his head. Pretty serious condition.

We retired with transports at 1100 again and have been ordered to go to fire support all for shore bombardment tonight. We're due to report there at 1700 and are on our way now.

April 3rd

We were on a screen station 30 miles from Okinawa. Japs sent 15 raids over the island during the night.

April 4th and 5th

Very uneventful war for us so far. No planes have come into our vicinity altho air raid have been heavy around the island. We have been on a screen station 7 miles away during the day and at night have been patrolling as a screen for the Arkansas and the GCIA (Estes).

First instance of Japanese women fighting was officially disclosed when the Marines shot 18 Japanese soldiers in a trench and 12 were women in uniform. Also discovered a Jap **initiation** of the robot bomb on island. It is rocket propelled and has stubby wings (2 ft) has a man for a pilot and carries a 1000lb bomb in its nose. Supposedly used in suicide attacks. Flies at 220 mph.

Troops seem to be meeting no resistance and today, April 5th, they are 15 days ahead of schedule.

Intelligence reports indicate a heavy Japanese air attack will be launched during the day.

We had a scare GQ. Somebody spotted Jap planes in our vicinity. I was in my sack when the alarm rang and upon getting out I found someone had hidden my shoes. I had to go in my bare feet and to say I was pissed off is putting it mildly. The deck was cold and dirty.

April 6th

The day began in a hectic way. Shortly after going on watch at 4am we picked up an enemy plane that seemed to be on a recon flight. Went to GQ at 0445 until 0700. Got some sleep from 8-11 then went to GQ at 1100 until 1200 when enemy plane came into



vicinity. No shots by us. At 1315, back to GQ and guns were firing before all men were at battle stations. A Betty passed 12000 yds down our st'bd. We did not hit it but was shot down by a CAP. Secured at 2:15. At 3:15 back to GQ but no shots fired. Secured at 3:50. At 4:15 back to GQ. As I was going by the deck, I saw planes dropping bombs on an APD about 10000 yds on our st'bd. Guns began firing. We knocked down 1 Val. 48 planes attacked the APD but did no damage. They got one, damaged 2. We got 1. Two damaged planes attacked the Whittier and dove into her. She was seriously damaged. The tug Hari Kari and us went to her assistance and began escorting her to Keramui Rhetto. After we left, the DD Morris that took our place was hit by suicide plane and began burning.

The Japs really came down in force. They threw everything but the kitchen sink.

We went to the South of Okinawa and all we got were stragglers. The ships to the North of the island were under attack constantly, sometimes 12 planes attacking 1 ship. Prize target was Task Force 58. We kept an unofficial account and in our area, ships shot down 38 planes and planes got 14. God only knows how many Task Force 58 and the boys to the North got. Our sister ship the Calhoun, on which I have a lot of friends, was up there about 60 miles. They got hit by a suicide plane and later had to be sunk by torpedoes. Don't know about casualties and survivors but we have heard only 1 report of a ship picking any up and she took 80. 3 ships are parked about 20 miles apart had a bad time. Besides the Calhoun, the Bush was hit and had to be sunk by torpedoes. The Bennett shot up all their ammo and her CAP had all been shot down.

The following ships I know for sure were damaged: Calhoun, Morris, Melassi, Feberling (all DDs), Whittier (DE), Recruit (AM) Byboniles, Bennet, Bush (DDs).

We have been exceptionally lucky so far. The war and Japs seem to be getting closer to us all the time. To say that I am scared is putting it mildly.

On our way to Keramu Rhetto we passed a tanker and an ammo ship burning fiercely and exploding wildly. A Jap had dropped a bomb on the tanker and flew into the ammo ship. The fires could be seen for 30 miles.

April 7th

Off to a flying start today. GQ at 0300. No shots. Enemy planes flying around. The boys up North are still catching hell. Burnett hit by a suicide plane and it is only 10am.

1130 am – we are on our way to take over by the Burnett. Up North!

YMS Defense just hit by 2 suicide. Shot down a 3rd. Not much damage. Taking the Langley in tow. Burnett has 2 dead, 17 severely burned. Engine room and forward fire room a total loss. Only 1 screw working and its shaft is out of line.

On our way to station we picked up enemy planes. Went to GQ. They passed quite a ways away from us. At 1230, 2 Marine flyers crashed in mid-air. One descended



immediately crashing into the ocean about 2 miles dead ahead of us. When we arrived at the spot just a little wreck remained. While we were investigating another plane crashed about 5 miles away. We proceeded there and I found the pilot floating. We took him aboard. At 1430 we relieved the Cassin Young on station and transferred the pilot to her. At 1700, picked up Jap Val proceeding in our direction. Visibility was very poor and clouds were low. We picked him up at 23 miles. Poor visibility make positive identification impossible so didn't open fire on him until he was 2700 yds away and heading right for us. We evidently hit the pilot and threw him off us a little because he missed our bridge by 15 feet and crashed about 25 yds on our port side. The concussion tossed the ship about so that we thought we were hit. Best news I have ever heard was when the Exec said "he missed us!"

At 1830 we heard that the 200 planes we sent to intercept the Jap Task Force had blasted the hell out of them. Sunk 1 BB and 1 BB dead in the water and burning; 4 cruisers sunk or damaged, 6 DDs sunk. ½ hour later we heard every thing sunk but 2 destroyers and nobody knew what was keeping them afloat.

Newly organized TF 59 is on its way to intercept other Jap TF supposed to arrive our vicinity tomorrow morning. We are sending 10 BBs, 6 cruisers and 12 DDs in TF59.

At 2200 Jap bogey sounded GQ until 2300.

At 2400 on watch until 0400 on the 8th.

April 8th

0200 Jap surface craft reported in our vicinity. No contact.

0400 off watch

0500 GQ Jap bogey passed clear of us. 1030 secured GQ.

Where we are is located 65 miles NE of Okinawa. We are first line of defense for anything from Japan. So far, no ship has come off this duty unharmed. Will we?

April 11th

Now that a few days have passed and I have recovered somewhat from nerves perhaps I can write about what has gone before.

On April 8th we were on patrol duty on RP3 and all day long we had a protective cover of planes. About 1755, just about dusk, the planes were sent back to their carrier.

Approximately 10 minutes later, we discovered about 7 Jap planes coming our way about 25 miles away. We couldn't contact our planes and get them to return.

2 Japs passed about 12 miles West of us and continued South towards Okinawa. The other 5 closed us and prepared to attack. From here on things happened so swiftly that it is difficult to remember them in their proper sequence.



We took the planes under fire, but they were sent down to knock us out, not to just bomb us. The first one began his dive about 5000 yds away and although he was hit by our shells, we couldn't stop him. He was losing pieces of his plane about 2000 yds out but kept coming right on in. At 500 yds his bomb fell off (he either dropped it or our shells broke his bomb rack). He came in on an angle from our port bow, aiming for our bridge. He finally crashed into us on our port side, tearing up our gig and hitting us on our forward fire room. The impact was so heavy it knocked me down and knocked out our main generator plunging the ship into darkness and leaving us dead in the water.

At the same time, 2 more planes began their run which we took under fire via local control. One came from Starboard and one from port. We hit them consistently but couldn't stop them either. One came from forward on the St'bd, one came from port aft. God was with us because they crossed and hit the water about 25 feet on either side. The fourth one we knocked out about 4 miles away. The fifth one beat it.

All this took place in about 10 minutes.

We put on our emergency generator and we got power and under way. We were damaged heavily. 3 40mm's knocked out. Taking water in both the forward fire and engine rooms. We asked for assistance and headed for the nearest friendly ship, about 20 miles away.

A Jap sub that had been laying off waiting for this to happen evidently cut loose with 2 torpedoes. Our lookout spotted the wakes and we successfully dodged them.

In the meantime, we did not know whether we would stay on boat or not. The repair parties were working frantically to save the ship. A small fire started and was immediately put out. We put on our life jackets and got ready in case we had to go over the side. Darkness had just about fallen and it was getting foggy for which we were thankful because it would hide us from the Jap planes. They got pumps going and we found we could stay afloat. A mighty happy feeling.

The plane that hit us exploded violently and shrapnel and pieces of Jap were all over. Fellows topside were spattered with guts, blood, etc. One fellow, Slings, has a Jap thumb in a bottle of formaldehyde for a souvenir. The other two planes that hit close also exploded showering the ship with shrapnel like pieces. One evidently saw he was going to miss the ship so he dropped his bomb. Fortunately it hit a 20mm gun shield and caromed off into the water without exploding.

(NOTE: Bill Marmion kept a piece of the Japanese plane the struck the Gregory and made a bracelet for Sue, his wife)

Our casualties were extremely light – 11 altogether – 2 most serious were what happened when a Jap bullet hit a 40mm gun barrel and exploded it. They were Baldwin, a Negro, and Daily, a radio man. There were 8 shrapnel cases where it just broke the skin. Two fellows were overcome with powder gas. The smoke ejectors in the gun mounts didn't



work when we were hit and they had to continue to fire and the fumes backed into the gun mounts.

I spent the rest of the night topside – as did most everyone else. I wasn't going to be caught below decks in case we went down.

A final estimate of the damage reveals a gaping hole in the port side. Several seams sprung and the main supporting girders attached to the keel bent. One feed box which holds part of our water supply beyond repair. The other two damaged but repairable. Forward generator lost. Main fuel pump forward lost. Evaporators all knocked out but able to repair temporarily.

It will take 30 – 60 days to put us back in first class condition. However, the Japs have taken such a toll of our DDs that we are just undergoing emergency repairs and expect to be back on duty within 10 days or by the 18th.

They are rigging up the evaporators to the aft engine rooms which will give us 2 boilers. The forward fire room will be out of use. We will use our emergency generator and temporarily shore up the bulkheads which are stoved in 5ft to 8ft and run the pumps continuously to keep the forward engine and fire rooms dry.

It means that we are expendable and going out to fight under such conditions will be suicide. If we have to fire the guns, the jar will spring the seams more. A near miss will sink us. Our chance of surviving an attack are about 20-80.

We are in Keranu Rhetto tied alongside an oilier from which we are getting our water. We have also posted a security guard composed of armed sentries every 15 feet around the clock to guard against Jap suicide motor boats attack and suicide swimmers, who swim out and try to shove a mine against the ship or throw hand grenades. There have been 4 ships damaged from such tactics while at anchor here.

No wonder my nerves are shot to hell..and I'm not so bad as some.

April 12th

Damn busy night. Japs must have sent down 25-30 raids. Good stuff too. Not old washed up planes as suicide but high altitude – high speed bombers. We didn't have any come close to us.

Understand we may go back to rear area now for repairs – Guam or Pearl. Boy, I'm praying for the States.

Tokyo Rose said for us to clear Keranu Rhetto within 5 days or they will be coming down and throw us out. She did not say how though.



We lost our whaleboat yesterday. Somebody didn't tie it tight enough. That left us with no small boat to get on the beach with. A PC found it adrift and returned it – for which we gave them 10 gal of ice cream.

We have taken on water and will get underway in 40 minutes – wonder where to – we can't go very far.

April 12th

Japs came after us but hard today. They sent down about 175 planes of which the ships shot down 60 and planes of TF58 got 51.

We moved up and tied up to an ARB for repairs at 1200 and at 1330 the Japs came down. We were at GQ until 1615. We didn't get any shooing. Most of the action was up North and at the anchorage at Okinawa. As usual they got several of the picket stations up North. They damaged 8 ships and sunk one, the Abele. Damaged were Cassin Young, Zellers, Lindsay, Jeffers, Purdy, Whitehurst, Manlow, Miles, Riddle, Morrison and Butler.

They began arriving Keranu Rhetto about 1800 and how some of them made it is beyond me. The Lindsay has her bow completely shot off from the #2 mount forward. Young has top part of mast gone and bulge in her side. The Zellers is completely gutted throughout the bridge. The Morrison has #5 shot off. The Jefferson has a hole in her **fockle** big enough to drive a truck thru – a torpedo went in one side and out the other.

I met a kid by the name of Young who is assigned to the ARB-2. He is from Earlville.

Guess our damage is worse than we thought --- several structural girders are broken. Will be here about 14 days before we are seaworthy and then we may to to the States. Hot dog!!

April 13th

Pretty quiet so I will jot down the facts about the Rodman, a DMS tied up to the other side of the ARB. She was on patrol work on April 6th when some Jap planes snuck in on her. One crashed dived into her bow from Port putting a huge hole in it. Seconds later a second one hit her in the identical same place only on St'bd. They weren't at GQ when they were hit. So, some of the fellows didn't know what hit them. After the second one hit, they abandoned ship. After the men were in the water, another plane hit her bridge starting a fire...then a torpedo hit amid ship...then a 4th plane hit her amidship St'bd. Still the ship didn't sink although her bridge was burning fiercely. So after a while the men went back aboard her put out the fire and brought her into port. She had 16 dead, several wounded and 1 missing. Just yesterday they opened up a hatch into the ice box and found a fellow floating there. The Jap whose plane crashed the bridge wasn't killed and they got him when they re-boarded. He was swathed in bandages from wounds received in a previous raid. He won't smash any more planes.



How they managed to bring her into port is certainly a mystery! Her bow from her #1 gun forward is all but shot away. Her bridge is completely gutted. She has huge gaping hole in her bridge St'bd and a huge hole in her midships St'bd. All lower fire rooms and compartments flooded.

April 15th

Got to Church today aboard the ARB-2, the Aceanus. First time since Xmas. Fellow came up to me and said "don't I know you?" It was Frank Wiejek. After Mass we got together and really chewed the fat. He has been out some 22 months.

April 16th

Spent practically all day (PM) shooting the breeze with Frankie.

The Japs came down in force this am getting 12 ships. Sunk the Abele, Bryant and an LCI. One LCI got hit by 4 suicide planes, shot down 3 more and made port by herself.

They are transferring our FD team to the Wadsworth. Maybe I'll get to see Louis Elsesser if he is still aboard her. I told Frank. We are both going to try to see Lou when they come along side. Lot of scuttlebutt that we are going back to either the States or Pearl Harbor. Don't believe it though.

April 17th

Transferred Streeter, Rice, Holtz, Carsidamery, Gallaher, Liulayson, Garrettson, Effioss, Quinn, and Daiuell to the Wadsworth. They are going to RP#3. Poor bastards. Every one of them are really worried and scared. We saw Louis Elsesser. Spent about 3 hours together. Really felt good to see some guys from Mendota.

We pulled away from the ARB-2 about 1400. Now tied up to a tanker. Must be fueling. We are going somewhere, but where? Lt. Davis bet \$500 we are going to the States. No evaporator, so wherever we go, it will have to be with someone who can give us some water. All they did was shore up our side plates. Our structurals are fouled up in my opinion. I myself estimate 40 -60 days in dry dock somewhere. Boy, how I could go or a leave right now!

April 19th

On our way to Ulithi in escort with about 15 tankers and 4 Escort ships. Guess they will try to fix us up there. Sure as hell hope they can't.

We are on strict water rations. No drinking water except for 1200 – 1300. We have 250 gallon drums of fresh water to use for washing our hands and face. We are due to arrive there about 1400 on 4/23.



Have word that there is a storm with a wind of 40 knots dead ahead. Hope we miss it. Our plates couldn't stand much of a blow.

April 23rd

Arrive Ulithi today. Off entrance about 0900 but it was 1300 before we could enter and 1400 before we dropped hook. Our trip was very uneventful. We sprung a couple of new leaks in the port side but nothing serious.

The harbor man came aboard to inspect our damage and soon we should know what will happen to us. We are to go along side a tender tomorrow and will probably be here until the 30th. Then we will either go on to a Navy yard or back to convoy duty. About all they can do is jack up our evaporators and patch up our holes and leaks.

April 26th

Went ashore on Fietehuel Island yesterday for a beer party. Terrifically hot – the cold beer and hot sun made some guys pretty stiff and gave us all head aches. Searched for shells on the reef but didn't find any good ones. Vernon Booker went swimming and the reaction of salt water and alcohol made him go blind. Estimate it will last for 72 hours.

Fietehuel is a small atoll of coral, palms and no inhabitants but flies.

May 4th

Off today for Pearl escorting the Intrepid ACU. Due in Pearl on May 11th.

May 7th

Fueled and received candy bars from Intrepid today. Ens Liery wanted Skipper to ask for fresh eggs for officers and Chiefs instead of candy for crew but Captain refused.

May 8th

Crossed International Date line today so we will celebrate 2 May 8ths instead of one.

May 11th

Arrived in Pearl this PM about 3. Got a huge congratulatory message on our work. Guess they regard us as heroes. Invited all members of crew out for beer party. Better still orders are waiting that sends us off to San Pedro tomorrow and leave home!!

May 12th

Off for home at 1300. Happy days are here again.

May 13th

Mr. O'Lexy mentioned something about transfer today. Asked if I wanted one. I didn't know. Due in Pedro on May 18th. So, I asked for 1st leave party. May be home for my birthday. Russ Blackley and I are going together in our attempt to surprise our folks. I can just see Sue now – Golly!!!

May 14th



Mr. O'Leary offered a transfer to new construction to some of us: that is, Wynn, Grant, Henderson, Kinchise and myself. It meant no leave unless we could get one out of our future ship. I was interested then decided against it. So, Bob Wynn took it. Maybe I made a mistake. I put in for Radio Material School but am afraid Mr. Machin, our Division Officer is against it. Golly how I would go for it though. Also am supposed to take a test day after tomorrow for RDM 2/c. I wonder about that.

Got the devil scared out of us last night. Had just hit the sack when all of a sudden we went dead in the water...the lights went out. Couldn't imagine what had happened. Then the auxiliary generator started and lights came on and we found out that we lost suction in the fuel line. 5 minutes more and it was fixed and we were on our way.

May 15th

Last night our orders were changed and now we are to report to San Diego instead of Pedro. Damnation! Also put in for a hut @\$1 per diem because Sue wants to come back with me. Still estimate we will arrive on the 18th. I should be home for my birthday.

May 16th

Signed my leave papers today and am getting paid. I have \$106 earning of which I owe \$13. Should be able to get home.

Got my bunk and locker changed yesterday from aft to 303 just forward of the mess hall. Very pissed off about the whole deal but can't do a thing about it.

