

## WORLD WAR II

Anita and I as well as many others worried as Hitler carried out his crimes against the Jews and then as the German armies marched into the Saar and Austria and launched their attacks against Poland, the Low Countries, France, Denmark, Norway, and Britain. We were in the car driving to our apartment the evening of June 22, 1941 when the news came over the radio of the German attack on Russia. Even after arriving outside our apartment we remained riveted to the car radio for some time before leaving the breaking news to go inside.

I remember the Sunday of December 7, 1941 when news came over the radio of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the feeling of impending events. In anticipation of soon being in uniform I went to my draft board for permission to leave the country for a vacation. That Jan./Feb. of 1942 (after the Christmas rush in the Postoffice) was the first of many delightful vacations Anita and I had in Mexico. Driving home we got all the way to Marshall, Minnesota where Nate lived, and about 150 miles from Minneapolis, with only 10 cents in our pockets.

Soon after returning from Mexico I applied for naval officer training to avoid being drafted as an army private. I would have applied for airforce pilot training but my eyes had tested 18-20 on a recent exam and the air force wanted 20-20. The navy found my eyes to be 20-20 and accepted me even tho I was a few pounds underweight by their standards. Subsequently orders came to report on Feb 1, 1943 to the U. of Notre Dame as a Midshipman for three months training to become an officer. I knew physical training would be included and I was out of condition tho I had been a half miler in high school. So a week before reporting I started running around the block two or three times each evening. That was a good thing because the second day at Notre Dame we were taken on a one mile run and many collapsed by the side of the road.

Anita got her MA in clinical psychology soon after I reported to Notre Dame, came to South Bend, and got a job as a sales clerk at Sears so we could be together occasionally.

On graduation, after 90 days of Midshipman school, we were offered some limited choices of duty and told we would probably not get our first choice. I selected destroyers which was the most attractive to me and left the second and third choices blank because they were things like serving on landing craft that I didn't want. My assignment was to destroyers--a lucky result as junior officers got a chance at a lot of responsibility on a warship of that size.

My orders were to San Diego for gunnery training at the destroyer base there. Anita soon joined me and we rented an apartment at Mission Bay, just across the highway from Mission

Beach and the Pacific Ocean, where we spent some sunny afternoons. We bought a 1931 Ford for me to go back and forth to the Destroyer Base on week days and for other travel on week-ends and generally enjoyed our six week stay in San Diego. A marine supply sargeant became a friend and fishing companion and unselfishly issued me marine boots which I cut down and wore aboard ship and for many years after, and a marine jacket which I still use when doing yard work in cool weather.

On completing gunnery school my orders were to report to the Destroyer USS MEADE undergoing overhaul in the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. There was time for a liesurely ride north in our 1931 Ford along the coastal highway and through the beautiful and peaceful redwood forests. I helped in the overhaul by doing the chores assigned to me by the more experienced officers who had been aboard while the ship participated in the battle for Guadalcanal in the South Pacific and then sailed all the way to Alaska to participate in driving the Japanese out of the Aleutians. As there already were two Annapolis graduate gunnery officers aboard, I was designated assistant communications officer.

With the ship overhaul complete our orders were to proceed to Wellington, New Zealand via Pearl Harbor. We exited Puget Sound through the Straits of Juan de Fuca to a choppy rough Pacific Ocean. I think I threw up once or twice that first evening tho I don't have a clear memory of that. We had much rougher seas on later occasions, including the edges of a typhoon and rolls of over 30 degrees, and although I would feel uneasy, seasickness was not a serious problem after that day.

(That conditioning came in handy 27 years later during a cruise in the Aegean Sea. The last afternoon and night of the cruise we ran into heavy seas and the few of us who made it to the Captain's dinner had a comradely time.)

Even in wartime, Navy tradition, at least on our ship, held that slimy polliwogs--those who had never crossed the equator--must appear before King Neptune's court to be initiated into the mysteries of the deep to become hardy shellbacks. The court was run by the crew and little mercy was shown the officers. In addition to having all hair clipped off our heads we were paddled and subjected to other tests of our merit. The paddling I got almost sent me over the side into the Pacific Ocean.

Enroute alone, one day toward dusk, our radar, high on the mast, detected a strange ship on the horizon. Dark fell as we moved within range of our guns. We flashed recognition signals but the wrong recognition signals were returned, even on a second try. The captain ordered our five inch guns loaded and they were trained on the target when it came up on voice radio and identified itself as a friendly ocean going tug. We were the ship with the wrong recognition signals.

Once the guns were loaded there were two ways to unload. You could push a ramrod down the barrel and pound on the nose of the shell to force it out of the breech, but that was dangerous. The shell might explode in the breech. Or, you could fire the guns. The captain ordered, "Train the guns 10 degrees off the target and unload through the barrel." I have always wondered what the men on that friendly ship thought on seeing the guns fire in their direction from a mixed up warship that had been giving the wrong recognition signals. After that it became my responsibility to make the scheduled changes in the recognition signals given to the signalmen and others.

At that time, defenses against enemy subs prevented ships from entering friendly harbors after dark. The captain had left orders that he was to be awakened when we sighted Palliser Light. The light would indicate a course change for the approach to the Wellington, New Zealand harbor. It was still night on the 4 a.m. watch when we saw the flashing pattern that identified Palliser Light. I went to the cabin at the rear of the bridge where the captain was sleeping and said, "Captain, Captain, there's a flashing light and the map says it is Palliser Light." There was a mumble and a grumble and the captain seemed deep in sleep. I raised my voice and repeated, "Captain, captain, there is a flashing light and according to the map it is Palliser Light." The captain rose from his cot with a roar, yelling, "God damn it, it's not a map, it's a chart." So that is one bit of naval terminology I remember.

Perhaps it was my teen years' reading of Galsworthy or some other English author, but when I got ashore in Wellington, whose architecture I guessed to be late Nineteenth Century British, I was determined to experience the English custom of "tea and crumpets". Such a let-down. The crumpets had practically no taste. I was impressed with the husky Maori women in military uniform walking the sidewalks in groups of two or three. I thought if I got in their way it would be like colliding with a tank.

We were ordered to Wellington to join other components of the task force for the attack on the Japanese strongpoint of Tarawa Atoll in the Central Pacific. I think that indirect route was because the assault troops for Tarawa were the marines who had been fighting in the South Pacific islands that had been occupied by the Japanese.

Our approach to Tarawa Atoll was in the dark early morning with a placid noiseless sea as the ships moved into position and the bombardment by the heavy guns began. The bombardment continued into daybreak with no return fire that I could see from my position on the bridge. The thick forest of palm trees was reduced to stumps. The bombardment stopped on schedule, but the landing craft were not ready on schedule and there was a hiatus of 15 to 20 minutes before the first wave of marines got near the beach, giving

the Japanese that much time to recover from the bombardment and set themselves to resist the landing that followed. I have always thought that some of the heavy U.S. losses at Tarawa was due to the failure to continue the shore bombardment for another twenty minutes. The ships had plenty of ammunition.

Some 50 years later I mentioned to a retired admiral that I had been present at Tarawa. He knew of the poor coordination of the bombing with the landing and became instantly angry and said the commanders of the operation should have been court martialed for not continuing the bombardment.

Another remembrance of that day: We were a close fire support ship and later that morning I could see a light marine tank proceeding along the shore to the right of the landing area, stopping periodically to blast away at what might be Japanese defense bunkers. About 10 to 15 feet in front of the tank walked a lone marine, checking I guessed for land mines. That seemed to me to be a good way to get killed.

Two days after the landing at Tarawa we were patrolling in company with another destroyer (the Frazier) and a cruiser. I was on the noon to 4 p.m. watch as Assistant Officer of the Deck when one of the soundmen reported an echo to his sound search of the sea around us. The required and immediate assumption was we had detected a Japanese submarine. It was my job to plot the successive locations and movement of the sub in relation to our ship as the soundmen called out the direction and distance of the sub indicated by the returning echos. We soon made our first depth charge run over the sub. Per standard tactics the Frazier was echoing from a point at right angles to our track and preparing to make the next depth charge attack from that direction. I told the captain that after our depth charge attack the sub had turned in a tight circle and was following in our wake. i.e. trying to hide from sonar signals in the turbulence created by our wake. The captain seemed skeptical and I was troubled by his skepticism and so willingly turned over the task to my relief when he appeared for his watch.

Depth charge attacks on a sub did not require all men to be at general battle stations, but of course everyone knew we were trying to sink a Japanese sub and there was high excitement. Soon after I left the bridge and was in the wardroom having coffee with a few other officers general quarters sounded. Cappanari insisted on taking a final swallow of coffee but the rest of us rushed to our battle stations. When I got to the bridge, there sitting on the ocean a few hundred yards away was a long submarine. As we watched, five or six Japanese climbed out of a hatch and ran to a six inch gun mounted on the sub. Our five inch guns and the Frazier's fired and the Japanese gun and men were blown into the water. The Frazier then rammed the sub and it sank.

Four or five Japanese remained on the surface treading water. Our ship and the Frazier lowered motor whale boats to pick up the Japanese sailors. One of the Japanese had a stick or wand and was waving the others away from the boats. A sailor in our whale boat fired a machine gun at the nearby Japanese and later claimed he thought the object the Japanese was waving was a gun. I have always suspected it was a conscious sadistic act. Our boat picked up one Japanese and the Frazier's picked up two.

A U.S. divebomber from a nearby carrier, informed that a Japanese sub was on the surface, mistook our boat for a sub's conning tower and dropped a bomb three feet from the boat. The boat was lifted out of the water and damaged. The crew, though shaken up were not injured.

All the men on the ship who were not below in the engineering spaces had seen the attack on the motor whaleboat and were furious and cursing the plane. I am not sure of my memory of machine gun fire fairly quickly from our ship at the plane, but I do know that when it had flown away about 10,000 yards we sent one or more five inch anti-aircraft shells which exploded in the plane's neighborhood. The official historian, Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison, wrote that we thought it was an enemy plane. I knew and I think everyone else on the ship knew it was a "friendly" plane. I guess the ship's log and the official record could not say we intentionally shot at a U.S. plane. Judging from my own feelings, the intent wasn't to down the plane, only to let the pilot know how we felt. The plane had some holes but got back to its carrier safely.

Our Japanese prisoner had many wounds. Doc Healey and Pharmacist Mate Kraft worked on him into the night to remove shrapnel and sew up the cuts. Sick bay was the officers' wardroom, standard on a destroyer. So, for most of a week there was a Japanese submariner, lying in a stretcher on the floor beside us as we ate meals and discussed the ship's business. A gunner's mate was always on duty as a guard though the prisoner was too injured to move much.

At that time, before we got our own ice cream maker, we seldom had ice cream while at sea--only when we went alongside a larger ship that had an ice cream machine and would spare some. Because of the dive bombing of our motor whale boat, the carrier on which the dive bomber was based came alongside our ship while we were steaming in formation so the pilot, and I think also the captain of the carrier could apologize. They asked, "Could they do anything for us?" and a supply of ice cream was arranged.

Each evening the officers' mess boys (blacks) saved enough ice cream from the officers' share so that the Japanese prisoner could have an extra serving. Also, after "lights out" when the officers not on watch were asleep and there were only dim lights in the wardroom, a sailor came into the wardroom to read to the prisoner

from the bible. As far as we knew, the prisoner understood no English.

After four or five days the prisoner was transferred to a hospital ship and subsequently to a hospital near Pearl Harbor. When our ship returned to Pearl Harbor after the Tarawa operation, Bob Myers, one of the officers, visited the Japanese sailor in the hospital and was given a painting he had done of Mt. Fujiyama.

After the sub sank and we secured from general quarters, the captain thanked me for my plot of the sub's track. That action was unusual for him but he was very happy at the success with the sub. The captain and our ship were also thanked by the captain of the cruiser which was most probably the target of the sub.

The sub was forced to the surface by the fifth depth charge attack, the third by our ship. The torpedomen, who operated the depth charge mechanism, let out the word that the sub was finally forced to the surface because the Chief Torpedoman had set the charges to detonate at a greater depth than ordered by the captain. Maybe. Though everyone else on the ship heard it, I am sure that word never got to the captain.

After the Tarawa action we returned to Pearl Harbor (12/07/43) for more training, replenishment, and repair. The pattern when in Pearl Harbor was liberty for half the crew every other day starting in the early afternoon. The officers sometimes went to the officers' club to drink and talk before returning to the ship for dinner, or we might go to a good restaurant in Honolulu. We also got acquainted with two civilians not much older than us and spent some evenings drinking and talking in their apartment not far from Waikiki. Nobody got sloppy drunk at these sessions.

One of the civilians subsequently married an attractive young girl and set up housekeeping in another apartment. A few of us were invited to dinner and a very pleasant evening. No one would have known that she was or had been a prostitute except that she had no hesitation in saying that she had been one of the most popular girls on River Street and describing the production line arrangements for the business. She had come to Honolulu as a typist but soon learned that there was a lot more money in sex. The girls were regulated as to hours and location and probably health matters, but otherwise were independent entrepreneurs, i.e. no pimps. There may have been some extortion by the police. Hours were limited to the morning and early afternoon to prevent involvement with men who had had time to get drunk.

When in port there was usually a movie out on the fo'c'sle. The captain loved movies--good or bad and the movie could not start until he was in his seat. One evening the captain and a few other officers came back from the club somewhat late. The movie screen was up and the movie watchers were waiting in their seats for the

captain so the movie could start. The mess boys brought his dinner to the captain's cabin but he took only a bite or two before hurrying to his seat. It was a poor movie and half the officers had left and were in the wardroom conversing when the movie ended and more officers came into the wardroom. We were in a relaxed mood. Suddenly the public address system came on at high volume with, "Now hear this! Now hear this! 'All officers report to the wardroom! All officers report to the wardroom!'" The captain came in quickly, red-faced, and pounding the table, declared, "There's going to be a court martial! There's going to be a court martial! Who ate my chow?"

One of the signalmen had been watching the movie while standing outside the captain's cabin. Through the open porthole he could see the captain's dinner and soon reached in to sample it. He must have been hungry because over the course of the movie he ate most of it. The captain never learned who ate his chow.

One day while we were in Pearl Harbor, I had to go ashore for a routine visit to the communications offices of CincPac (Commander in Chief Pacific) to pick up messages and official mail for the ship. I walked in, told the counterman I was from the USS MEADE, DD 602, but gave no other identification, not even my name. I was handed a stack of 9 X 12 inch sealed brown envelopes and signed for them. Included were the usual periodic changes in the cryptographic codes we would need in the month or two ahead to decipher radio messages of concern to us, and codes for communication with aircraft. Also in the stack was the operations plan for the assault about a month ahead on Kwajelin, another Japanese fortified atoll. The plan detailed the ships to participate, the time and place of rendezvous, when shore bombardment would begin, and the time for the first wave of landing craft loaded with marines to leave the transports. Later I marvelled at the casual security of the communications office.

Again, we were close fire support ship for the assault on Kwajelin. My general quarters station on the bridge as signal officer gave me one of the best vantage points to observe the action. This time the bombardment by ships and planes was well coordinated with the arrival of the landing craft at the beach. Colored shells exploded frequently to assure that the bombardment was walking up the beach onto the atoll just ahead of the landing craft and the wading marines.

That afternoon, while the ship was patrolling off the eastern part of the atoll, all of us on deck saw four or five Japanese run out of a bunker toward the fighting area. The officer in the gun director requested permission to fire, which the captain gave. The shell seemed to land among the running men and we saw no more activity in that area.

Another memory of Kwajelin was going ashore after the fighting was over, at least in the area of the dock, and seeing big fat sluggish flies that I guessed got that way gorging on blood.

My primary duties aboard ship were to stand watches twice a day. Initially these were in the gun director or on the bridge as Junior Officer of the Deck. The gun director was the highest part of the ship other than the mast and its radar antenna. It had optics for visual aiming and ranging but in battle was most often controlled by radar and the combat information center. Firing the guns from triggers in the director was more likely to occur if we were under close air attack because the director could slew the five inch guns around as though they were light rifles.

When underway, two enlisted men and an officer were always on watch in the director. We had earphones that connected us to the bridge and the Combat Information Center. The phone lines were slack enough so that in good weather we could climb out of the director and stand (sit) watch in the sunlight. At night, during calm weather, I would especially enjoy lying on my back on the steel top of the director enjoying the cool night breezes while watching the entire heaven of stars swing slowly around from east toward west.

My memories of duties as Junior Officer of the Deck are rather thin. We did communication by phone from the bridge to other parts of the ship and sometimes to other ships we were sailing with, acted as an additional lookout, occasionally acted as navigator especially when underway alone, and in case of emergency had added duties as plotter of sound tracks of any submarines that were contacted. I qualified as navigator able to take star sights and sun sights and use Loran, a radio signal system of navigation, but seldom had that responsibility. I think we Junior OOD's also had responsibility for timing and calling course changes when navigating a zig-zag course to confuse enemy submarines. This was especially touchy at night when traveling in close formation with other ships. All had to be changing course at the same time and traveling at the same speed to maintain position and avoid collision.

Eventually I became a fully qualified Officer of the Deck in charge of the ship underway.

When not on watch, I maintained the ciphers that were used to decode various types of messages of interest to our ship. I think we always had three radiomen on watch when underway. They would be copying (typing) radio messages received over three different frequencies usually sent in the dot/dash of Morse code. Except for a few plain English broadcasts the messages were further encoded. I spent some time decoding messages although all junior officers shared that duty. Messages addressed specifically to the ship were usually brought to me promptly for decoding. The few



messages sent from the ship were given to me for encoding. We had an electronic coding machine and other codes that used slower methods of encoding and decoding.

Theoretically I was in charge of the radiomen and the signalmen but they were under the supervision of very capable chief petty officers and anyhow knew their jobs far beyond my ability to interfere. They kept me informed of things I needed to know and we had a very good relationship. Steve Cappanari, a very bright anthropologist, was the senior communication officer. He was always fun to work with. Late in the war I succeeded as communication officer. *him*

What I studied and what I learned in the three months of Midshipman school at Notre Dame and the six weeks of gunnery school at San Diego is a confused blur. Probably the lectures and books provided a framework into which I later fit actual experience once I got aboard ship. Captains of destroyers were almost always Annapolis graduates with previous experience as executive officer aboard a destroyer and so knew the job of running a destroyer. They didn't necessarily know much about the boilers and mechanical equipment aboard a DD but the crew and engineering officers did. Other than the Skipper and the Exec, the officers ranked no higher than full lieutenant but the more experienced ones knew pretty well what was needed of them as situations arose. We usually had two or three recent Annapolis grads but they fit in with the 90 day Midshipman school grads largely on the basis of their time aboard ship or their time in rank. The engineering officers had engineering degrees and so usually started out with some technical proficiency. The rest of the officers--the deck officers--quickly learned how to run the ship from the bridge while operating independently or in formation with a fast attack group of carriers, battleships, cruisers and other destroyers. However, this consisted largely in giving the proper orders. The intelligent execution of the orders depended on the seamen aboard who were trained by and under the supervision of experienced chief petty officers. During general quarters Cappanari and I were always on the bridge along with the captain. The other deck officers were at gun stations, the combat information center, the gun director, or damage control stations. About 80 percent of the officers and crew came from civilian backgrounds, yet an effective organization was achieved.

I did attend one other school while in the navy. My day at firefighting school probably was at Pearl Harbor while the ship was under repair between voyages to the Central Pacific. One lesson involved working our way through a smoke filled building wearing gas masks. A second was set in simulated engine room flooded with fuel oil. The oil was set afire and flames spread across the surface of the oil in the steel-walled room about the size of our living room. I was picked to take the lead water hose on a walkway along one side of the room, and not much above the burning oil, to

drive the flames back. An enlisted man followed seven to ten feet behind with a hose to cover me with water spray so I wouldn't be burned. As my hose drove the flames back in one direction they advanced toward me from another and I had to sweep my hose back and forth across the width of the room to keep them back. The enlisted man became frightened and ran. Fortunately, by that time I was able to keep the flames away and soon had them driven to the far end of the compartment and the exercise was terminated.

For the most part, the officers were a congenial bunch. We enjoyed liberties ashore together and when in port often had evening poker games after the movie. However on one occasion the officer who was responsible for posting the watch schedule put me down for a second week in a row of midnight watches. That meant that I wouldn't get a full night's sleep for two weeks. I pointed this out to him and he replied, "RHIP", the navy acronym for "Rank Has Its Privileges." As a lieutenant junior grade he did rank me. I was a mere ensign. I had been aboard ship for some months then and this had not been the practice. What he had done seemed unfair and I told him I would refuse to go on watch, in effect, refusing an order by a superior officer. I think he went to the Exec to discuss the matter, tho I doubt the exec knew of it in advance. At any rate the watch list was changed to take me off the mid watch. My refusal to take the watch could have led to a court martial, but the other officer involved wouldn't have looked good in a court martial either. I don't know if his action was a bit of anti-semitism or ordinary stupid nastiness.

For some months after the invasions of Tarawa and Kwajelin we operated out of Majuro, an attractive large atoll in the Marshalls that had not been fortified by the Japanese. Part of our duty was to prevent submarine borne supplies from reaching the bypassed fortified atolls of Jaluit, Wotje, Maloelap, and Mili. At night we patrolled close to the Japanese bases. During the day we normally patrolled just over the horizon from the atoll we were guarding. One day, patrolling in company with another destroyer, the decision was made to practice shore bombardment and to use Mili as the target. We sailed toward the fortified part of Mili to begin bombardment from 10,000 yards--a bit more than five nautical miles. When we were within 14,000 yards Mili's defenders decided that was close enough and began firing their eight inch guns at us. They were good shots. Shells were splashing within ten or 20 yards of us. The captain ordered the helmsman to steer to the splashes, assuming the Japanese would adjust the range and bearing to our previous track. The other destroyer was under similar attack. We didn't wait to reach 10,000 yards to begin firing. Finally the commander of our little unit, who was on the other destroyer, had the sense to call off the exercise. We then laid down a smoke screen to hide in while we steamed back over the horizon. That was probably the closest the Meade came to being sunk or seriously damaged while I was aboard.

We also had pleasanter days while lazying over the horizon from the Japanese held atolls. One afternoon the captain issued swimming call. We jumped or dived off the after deck. A rifleman was stationed to watch for sharks. A rope ladder over the side permitted us to reboard. Though not a good swimmer I was pleased to be swimming in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Another afternoon the captain took the ship into the lagoon of an uninhabited atoll where the ship anchored while we swam. Twice was all. Perhaps the captain thought of the ship's vulnerability if noticed by a Japanese sub during the activity.

One day in Majuro I was aboard a submarine tender which was helping our ship with repairs, when a submarine, back from operation in Japanese waters, tied up alongside. The submariners were met at the gangway by a small band, open boxes of fruit, and salutes from the captain of the repair ship, who my memory says was a full captain and thus outranked the commander who was captain of the sub. The submariners handed their stack of repair orders to the repair ship officers and were promptly taken by boat to an island reserved for recreation. Only after the repairs had been completed some weeks later would the submariners come back to check out the work. The difficulty and danger of submarine warfare was being recognized and appreciated. Our ship could request parts and occasional assistance from the tender but of course submarines got preference--at least from a sub tender.

In March 1944 our ship became part of Task Force 58, a fast carrier outfit organized to carry out air strikes on the Caroline Islands. The Carolines had major Japanese naval and air bases for defense of the Japanese conquests in the Southwest Pacific and the Phillipines, and for protection of the sea lanes for needed supplies going to Japan. The task force was split into three task groups. Each task group sailed with three or four carriers, one or two battleships, a number of cruisers, and a screen of fifteen to twenty destroyers. The task groups operated just over the horizon from one another and were capable of taking on the Japanese fleet as well as attacking bases in waters where Japan had been dominant.

During the first operation, which was against Woleai, Yap, and the Paulau Islands, Japanese planes attacked our formation at dusk. One penetrated the formation and flew alongside our ship close enough that I could see the face and clenched jaw of the pilot lighted by the flames of his plane just before it crashed into the water. Few of the Japanese planes were able to penetrate the air and ship defenses and no ships were damaged by the Japanese planes on that occasion.

Returning from a second operation which included support for the landing at Hollandia and air attacks on Truk, a major Japanese base, one of the Meade's sailors fell overboard on a moonless night. Over voice radio the task force commander authorized our ship to break formation and circle to try to recover the man even

tho it was an almost hopeless effort. That action was a bit touchy as we were in the forward part of a tight formation proceeding at a good speed with lights out. Under those conditions, the Officer of the Deck keeps his head stuck to the tube that shields the radar screen watching the position of the bright blobs that show the relative position of the other ships in the formation. It eased our feelings that an attempt was made to save the man even if hopeless.

It was probably on the next trip from Majuro to Pearl harbor that we were the only screen for a carrier--it may have been the Cowpens. One night there was a message addressed to the ship, and I am sure, to the carrier also, saying that a friendly submarine would cross our path about six o'clock in the morning. The message was shown to the Exec who said, "Don't wake the captain now." that he would inform the captain in time. At 6 a.m., despite a gray sky and a choppy sea, an eagle eyed lookout on the starboard bow called out, "Periscope bearing 030." The OOD told a Yoeman to wake the captain with the information. The captain jumped out of bed and rushed to the bridge. He ordered general quarters and the depth charge racks manned and to tell the Cowpens that we had detected a submarine. All on the bridge realized that the captain was the only one who didn't know it was a friendly sub and no one wanted to be the one to tell him.

From Pearl Harbor we went on to San Francisco and the Mare Island Naval Shipyard for a six week overhaul, arriving on July 26, 1944. I was lucky to get first liberty and flew home to meet Anita at her parents' home in Superior, Wisc. After a few days visiting our parents in Duluth and Superior we decided to return to the ship by driving. There were few cars for sale as production of new ones had stopped. A used Plymouth was advertised for sale. The owner said he had recently overhauled the car but refused to say anything about mileage. That was a worry because of gas rationing. Once on the road, the car was getting 21 miles to the gallon--unusually good for cars in those days. The owner had refused to give the mileage because he thought people would be skeptical. As we were allowed ration coupons at a rate of 15 miles to the gallon for the trip to the West Coast, we were not restricted by gas rationing after we got there, travelling via Estes, Rocky Mountain, and Yosemite National Parks.

While at Mare Island our housing included a second bedroom and Claire came out to stay with us for a few days. Evenings were often at the officers' club drinking and talking with other officers from the ship. A few times we went into San Francisco and one evening had dinner and drinks at the "Top of the Mark."

At that time women were tabu on warships when underway. Tradition held that they were bad luck. But when the ship left drydock for a berth at Mare Island, Anita was on the bridge by invitation of Captain Munholland.

Sailing dates were secret and Anita understood that if I didn't show up some evening, the ship and I were gone and she had to sell the car and was on her own. That happened about September 15, 1944.

For two months after the overhaul we were a training ship for the Pacific Fleet Torpedo and Gunnery School at Pearl Harbor. During that time Commander Richard Colbert became captain of the ship. Next, we were the only screen for the battleship Wisconsin to Ulithi atoll in the far western Pacific. This was a relatively fast trip of about 4500 miles, probably at 21 to 24 knots per hour. We refueled from the Wisconsin while underway because our ship did not have the fuel capacity to go that far that fast on one fill up.

At that time Ulithi Atoll was the staging area for the Navy's attacks on the Japanese in and around the Phillipines. There were hundred of ships in the lagoon. Communication between the fighting ships and the repair, supply, and tanker ships was by voice radio, which was line of sight. A central station was established to sequence calls in the order in which requests were received. Unfortunately calls to the central station from one part of the lagoon could not be heard by ships in another part of the lagoon because they were over the horizon from one another. A ship, monitoring the repair frequency, if anchored near the center of the lagoon heard a babel of many voices interfering with each other. Messages to and from the central station could not get through. My memory is that we could hear this jumble of anxious voices from a loud speaker in our combat information center. Suddenly a voice greatly amplified broke through from the central station, "THIS IS ADMIRAL HALSEY, JESUS CHRIST, GET OFF THIS CIRCUIT!!!" There was an eerie silence for four seconds when a small voice came on, "This is Jesus, will comply, out." and immediately the babel resumed as fierce as before.

For several months in 1945 we had pleasant duty escorting ships among the Phillipine and nearby islands. We traveled to Tawi Tawi, Zamboanga, Cebu, Davao, Morotai, Jolo, Leyte Gulf, Manila, Subic Bay, and Lingayan Gulf. At Morotai, an Australian trawler, tied up nearby, invited some of our officers aboard for refreshments. It seems they could not open "The Kings Whiskey" carried aboard except to entertain His Majesty's allies. The three officers of the trawler had a wonderful repertoire of drinking songs, and we did our best to keep up.

At Jolo, I got ashore for a few hours and was able to talk to a few of the rugged looking Moros who had fought as guerillas against the Japanese. They carried long mean looking (bolo?) knives. Some of the knives were artistically engraved.

We were to escort a troopship which would transport an infantry division from Jolo to Mindoro for training prior to the battle for Okinawa. Men of the division had married native girls

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*When news came over the radio of President Roosevelt's death, the captain asked me to write the eulogy which he read to the assembled crew at a memorial service.*

after purchasing them from their fathers. Some of the wives were on the dock saying goodbye. A number of the wives had arranged to rent a large outrigger to follow their husbands to Mindoro. The wives who stayed behind became independent, no longer the property of their fathers. Some were weeping.

Once in Leyte gulf, I and a few men went ashore early in the morning. While we were walking down the street in the town of Tacloban before people were about, a girl of about 12, completely nude and perhaps still sleepy, came out of a house with a can of water which she began to pouring over her head to bathe. Suddenly aware of our group marching toward her, she startled and ran back into the house.

Another afternoon, while we were patrolling in Lingayan Gulf and I had the deck, the soundmen reported an underwater sound contact. I immediately ordered the standard anti-submarine tactics--steer toward the target, make 15 knots, alert the depth charge watch, and call the captain. With more echoing it seemed that the target was not moving. Charts were examined and it was determined that we were echoing off a sunken ship.

For a few nights the Japanese sent observation planes over our anchorage and the ship went to general quarters on successive nights. I was losing sleep and one night when the general quarters alarm went off I got out of my bunk still asleep and staggered around the stateroom I shared with Walt Pikofsky yelling, "Turn it off. Turn the god damn thing off" and tried to find a switch to turn off. That is the only time that I walked in my sleep.

Shortly after the war ended our ship was ordered to escort about a dozen small craft manned by army men, from the Phillipines to Okinawa. As we proceeded north along the western side of Luzon the seas were rough and getting rougher. Sometimes the small craft behind us were hidden in the troughs of the waves and the flying spray. The captain kept asking the radiomen for weather reports and knew that a typhoon would cross our track. As we got north of Luzon and no longer had the protection of the land mass we felt more of the fury of the storm. The captain had been expecting and hoping for a message from the Commander Phillipine Sea Frontier ordering us to turn back and finally had had enough. He ordered a message sent to ComPhil Sea Frontier saying, "Unless otherwise ordered, I will reverse course to put Luzon between our convoy and the storm."

I think he waited only for a "roger" indicating that the message had been received before he ordered a series of column right maneuvers to reverse course. This was during the noon to 4 p.m. watch when I had the deck. It was very touchy. Due to the waves and flying spray it was not easy to tell that the last ships in the convoy had executed each maneuver on time and correctly and so were not lost in the storm. There was a feeling of relief when

we were sure that all ships were roughly in the proper positions behind us and on the reverse course.

About an hour after we had reversed course, we met a mixed convoy that included small ships. That convoy continued on into the storm.

At one in the morning our convoy was entering the shelter of Lingayan Gulf when we received a message that our ship was to go to the assistance of the convoy that had continued into the storm. The ships had been scattered. Men had been injured and we were the closest ship with a doctor. We immediately reversed course again, making what speed we could in the rough seas, and reached the location of the battered convoy at 6 a.m. on a grey morning. Because of the rough seas it was too dangerous to go alongside or to transfer the man with the broken leg by motor whale boat. While a ship steamed ahead dumping barrels of oil to calm the sea, our ship and the oiler with the injured sailor followed on close and parallel courses. A line was shot across to the oiler and a heavier line followed and was secured high on each ship. Finally a stretcher breeches buoy was attached and the sailor with the broken leg was pulled across to our ship without dunking him in the water.

The message from the captain saying "Unless otherwise ordered....," he was going to change the order of his superior officer showed guts and what happened to the convoy that continued into the storm vindicated his judgement of the conditions. A few days later we led our convoy to an Okinawa harbor. (Years later Captain Colbert, then an admiral, became ~~Commander of NATO Naval Forces in the Mediterranean~~ *in chief of Allied forces in Southern Europe*.)

Once I went with a liberty party of the crew for an afternoon at a recreation area--possibly Grande Island in Manila Bay. The men were having a ration of beer, playing ball, pitching horse-shoes, talking etc, when an ammunition dump, abandoned by the Japanese, began exploding. The loud booms were coming from a small hill nearby but no explosions broke through the surface. Some of the men started walking to the area like moths to a flame and I had to yell to get them to come back and get into the boat to return to the ship.

Sometime in the summer of 1945 while we were in Leyte Gulf, the mail clerk came back from a trip ashore with a puzzling story. Air force men (was it the 8th Air Force?) were offering good odds that the war would be over in 30 or 60 days. Not long after, the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

There was one more adventure for our ship before leaving that part of the world. A small French military unit that had been operating in Indo China (now Viet Nam) had evaded the Japanese conquest of the country but were in urgent need of food and

15 medicine. They were in the area north of Haiphong near the border of China. Though the Japanese had surrendered, no one had taken the surrender of a Japanese army of 5,000 at nearby Port Wallut. We were to go to the aid of the French and made a high speed run from Subic Bay to Manila for instructions and supplies. There we loaded ~~3000~~ tons of food, medicine, and charts and also were supplied a high speed shallow draft boat to navigate the shallow waters where the French might be found.

We trailed a typhoon into the Gulf of Tonkin and dropped anchor a mile or more offshore. We could see people moving about on shore but the only ones to pay us attention were two men who paddled out in a small boat. There was no useful verbal communication as the two knew neither English nor French. Their clothes were in tatters and our crew started to donate clothes which the men grabbed eagerly. Some food was also given. The motor whaleboat was put in the water and sent to reconnoiter the area around Table Island but returned without information of the French.

The next day a small group of us set out in the motor whale boat and the skimmer for Quanlan Cove. There were four or five picturesque Chinese junks anchored in the cove and despite the language barrier we were invited aboard one. The junk had four rusty cannon of about three inch bore mounted two to a side. The men on the junk sensed our curiosity and thought we wanted a demonstration. They quickly put powder in and tamped it. They filled a section of bamboo with nuts and bolts and rusty nails and rammed it down the barrel. One man was coming from the cooking fire with a punk to light it, when we managed to dissuade them. Our motor whale boat was tied up just in front of the gun and may or may not have been low enough for the cannon fire to clear.

The town of Vanhai could be seen in the distance at the bottom of the cove. Because of shallow water the Exec borrowed a sampan from the junk to go with the skimmer to make inquiries. The rest of us remained aboard the junk. Living on the junk were three men, two boys and a woman who was spreading squid in the sun to dry. The oldest man, who appeared to be in charge, had a growth about 1.5 inches in diameter on the side of his neck. He recognized Healey as a doctor from his uniform and tried to get advice. Doc Healey did his best with sign language to say the man should go to a hospital for three days to have it cut out. Doc was next asked to examine a small boy. Soon an old gray haired woman smoking a long pipe appeared from below and then a teen age girl was brought out and Doc Healey was asked to examine her. The girl was both frightened and extremely shy and Doc did little more than look in her mouth and indicate she was O.K.

We decided to leave that junk and move closer to shore to meet the skimmer on its way back. Our course took us toward another junk. I could see cannon with a shiny two color paint job and as we got nearer men on the junk got behind the cannon to swivel them



so that they were aimed at us. I told the coxwain to steer away from the junk.

The men who had gone to the town on the skimmer and sampan joined us to say the town had been attacked by Chinese pirates a few weeks earlier. Information of the attack was gotten to the French military unit which had chased the pirate junks. The villagers reported that the French were at another location too distant to reach that day and we returned to the ship.

The next morning the men in the skimmer reached the French, who at first thought the high speed boat was a Japanese attack and jumped to their guns. In the late afternoon the French came alongside with a patrol boat and a junk. Supplies were transferred. The half dozen or so officers were French but the rest of the unit's personnel were Annamese.

The French stayed for dinner. Some of the officers spoke English and there was good conversation in the wardroom. They told of the pirate attack on the town of Vanhai. The French in their patrol boat had caught up with the pirates who had one large and two small junks. The pirates on the large junk had fired their cannon at the French but were no match for the three inch gun of the French. The pirate junk had been grappled and boarded and in close fighting the French had killed 52 Chinese.

The pirate pattern was to raid villages along the coast, robbing residents of livestock, crops, and furniture. The residents would not be pursued if they fled, but young women would be taken if they were caught. The French said the old woman with a long pipe we had seen might be the madam of the area and the young girl Doc Healey had examined might be a captive.

One reason the French were in need of food was that they no longer were welcome in the Chinese towns along the coast after killing so many citizens of the area. The French also were not welcome in nearby areas of Indo China. Soldiers of the French unit who had been injured in the fight with the pirates had been sent upriver to a city for treatment and were being held captive there by a Viet Nameese independence movement which called itself the Republic of Hongay.

We were back in Leyte Gulf in the Phillipines when the ship received orders to return to the U.S. The homeward bound pennant was streamed on November 2, 1945. I had been taking pictures and writing text for a book of pictures of the ship that if published would give the crew a remembrance of their time aboard. Some text was also written by Doc Healey. Winkowski, one of the radiomen had done drawings. When the ship reached Pearl Harbor, the captain sent me ashore with the layouts to try to convince CincPac public relations to authorize my travel to New York City to have the book published. I talked to two captains who thought it was not

possible. A third, Captain Lee, overheard the conversation and said he would authorize the orders. The first two asked who was he to authorize the orders. His reply was, "you know, Captain Lee--Nimitz, Halsey, and Lee," joining his name with the names of the two most famous admirals of the war.

It was late afternoon, but by the time I got back to the ship a short time later, orders had been received that I was to be detached for temporary additional duty with the commander of the naval district that included New York City to "carry out orders verbally given." As the ship was leaving in the morning for the Panama Canal and the East Coast, I had to pack and get off the ship that evening. My orders permitted me to hitch rides on military planes and I was in New York in a few days.

It was wonderful duty. Anita was already living there with Esther in an apartment on First Avenue at 52nd Street. I spent a few hours each day or night preparing things for, or talking to the printer and for the rest was free as a lark. When the book was finished we found a car to buy to drive to Charleston, S.C. where the ship was so I could get discharged. Some of the officers had rented a cottage on a beach and were sitting on the porch as we walked from the car. Each was loudly claiming that he had paid for this or that part of the car by his poker losses to me.

That was my war. I can't complain.