Unto us this day is born

Merry Christmas Shipmate

P.F.C. Don W. Dennis
U.S.M.C.
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE ARMED FORCES:

On behalf of a grateful nation I send to the men and women of our Armed Forces everywhere warm and confident good wishes ... you with pride and with humility, with anguish and with joy. We shall keep on remembering you all the days of our lives.

IT is therefore with solemn pride that I salute those who stand in the forefront of the struggle to bring back to a suffering world the way of life symbolized by the Spirit of Christmas.

From: TO
This fourth wartime Christmas finds the fighting men of the Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas far from homes and loved ones. But there will be no shortage of Christmas cheer to brighten the spirit of the men who will have a share. That is the priceless gift you are earning for your loved ones and all future generations.

Secretary of the Navy
CINCPAC, ALPOA
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
Commander-in-Chief.

Essex Claims Title Of Navy's Fightingest Ship-Aces Abound

By ROBERT TRUMBULL

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THE FISH THAT GOT AWAY
By R.G. Graves, AMMC.

I’ll never forget that thrill-packed day -
We’d made those darn Jap raiders pay
Through the nose for their ticket to hell
And we stood by our guns for a breathing spell.

The sky was festooned with the dull battle haze
And a Betty still rode on the surface, ablaze.
A cigaret, then was our utmost need -
But the crew was alert
As we dragged on the ‘weed’.

We never knew how that Betty got in -
But suddenly, there she was - Ugly as Sin -
She was coming in low
With a weave and a bob -
Low on the water - a twin-engine job.

(Six Nip patriots, coming to call,
Sleighriding to hell
Through the grey battle pall).

We opened up then and the tracers went wide
Then steadied and cut through her dung-colored hide.
They ripped her wide open, from end to end,
But still that twin-engine hellion came in.

She’s blazing too late for she’s got her wish!
She’s made her last run -
But she has dropped her tin fish!
Fascinated, we watched it leap in the foam
That doom-laden war-head
Was heading for home!

(Stand fast and take it, you can’t run away,
Here’s a good spot for a sailor to pray.)

We’d forgotten, I guess, that old man of steel
Our Skipper, who stood on the bridge near the wheel,
Unruffled, grim and biding his time,
He spun that ole flattop around on a dime!

Some say that torpedo skimmed by by a yard
Some argued a foot - the decision was hard
And they’ll argue and wrangle for many a day
‘Bout the size of our tin fish that got away.

Lest readers obtain the impression that once our ship is west of Pearl Harbor the only time her guns cease firing is to permit a quick change of gun barrels or a hurried snack for the crew, we print the following poem which was turned in during the one time we were “resting” by doing patrol duty.

PASSING OF THE ESSEX

Brave ESSEX was a fighting ship
With a roaring, rugged crew
She searched the seas for Japanese
From Wake to Espiritu.

O’er a hundred planes snarled off her decks
Each action-happy day
Thirsting for combat they climbed
Into skies blue or gray.

’Twas on nineteen June, ’neath a tropic noon
That the debris hit the fan.
Our boys knocked down so many planes,
It’s curtains for Japan.

Tho’ it may seem strange,
Then there came a change;
We no longer got the call.
Less famous ships go after Nips
While ESSEX does patrol.

It’s C.A.P. and four-plane strikes
And mail trips round the course;
Instead of a knockdown, drag-out group,
We’re errand boys for the force.

The ship glides on while the crew recalls
Mem’ries of days gone by
When instead of routine, service hops
We knocked Japs from the sky.

If you hear wan sighs ’neath Pacific skies,
Trade winds moaning in the mast,
And the mournful knell of a ghost ship’s bell,
It’s the ESSEX drifting past.