

A detailed black and white illustration of the USS Eldorado (AGC-11) from a front-quarter perspective. The ship features two main masts with various antennas and a central radar scanner. The hull is dark with two small, light-colored emblems on the bow. The ship is set against a background of a world map with green and yellow horizontal stripes.

AGC-11

Flagship

USS ELDORADO
1945

Foreword

THE INSISTENCE OF MAN TO HAVE SOMEONE OR SOMETHING TO SUBSTANTIATE HIS TALES COULD WELL BE THE REASON WHY THIS BOOK HAS BEEN ASSEMBLED. HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT INTENDED TO BE A COMPLETE GRAPHIC REVIEW OF EVENTS WHICH HAVE TRANSPIRED SINCE COMMISSIONING, BUT RATHER MEMORY REMINDERS OF THE MORE PLEASANT OCCURANCES ABOARD SHIP DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF HER LIFE.

ITS PAGES CONTAIN ARTICLES AND PICTURES WHICH WILL RECALL TO YOUR MIND THE LIGHTER SIDE OF SHIPBOARD LIFE, YOUR SHIPMATES, AND THE PART YOUR SHIP PLAYED IN DEFEATING A FANATICAL ENEMY.

IF WE REMIND YOU OF GENERAL QUARTERS, MAKING SMOKE, WORKING PARTIES, LONG HOURS OF WAITING, THE SQUEAL OF A BO'SUN PIPE, OR ANY OTHER DISAGREEABLE ITEM....PARDON US. IF WHILE YOU READ AN ARTICLE OR LOOK AT A PICTURE, YOU SMILE AND A BRIGHT TWINKLE FILLS YOUR EYES, BECAUSE YOU RECALL CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS AND STAUNCH BUDDIES, WE WILL FEEL THIS BOOK HAS SERVED ITS PURPOSE.



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COVER BY D. E. GALLOCK

Acknowledgment is given for the use of all Official U.S. Navy Photographs where used in this publication.



To my flagship, the U.S.S. Eldorado,
With thanks and appreciation for your
being a grand flagship.
Sincerely, R. K. Turner, Admiral, USN



*Our
Captains*

J. R. Wallace
25 Aug., '44 to 27 July, '45



M. J. Tichenor
27 July, '45 to ———





R. F. ATKINSON, COMDR. USNR
EXECUTIVE OFFICER



W. F. ANDERSON, LT. COMDR., USNR
NAVIGATOR



W. EGAN, LT. COMDR., USNR
ENGINEER



J. E. HUGHES, LT. COMDR., USNR
SENIOR MEDICAL OFFICER

J. J. O'HARA
LIEUT. USNR
GUNNERY OFFICER
(NO PICTURE)



W. K. CHILDS, LT. COMDR. USNR
COMMUNICATION OFFICER



O. L. NYE, LT., USNR
SUPPLY OFFICER

H. S. LITTLEFAIR
LIEUT. USNR
1ST LIEUT.
(NO PICTURE)

FLAG Personnel ★★★★★



ADMIRAL PRIDE
AIR SUPPORT

COMMODORE THEISS
CHIEF OF STAFF

GENERAL DAUGHERTY
ASS'T CHIEF OF STAFF



COMBINED OPERATIONS



INTELLIGENCE SECTION



COMMUNICATIONS



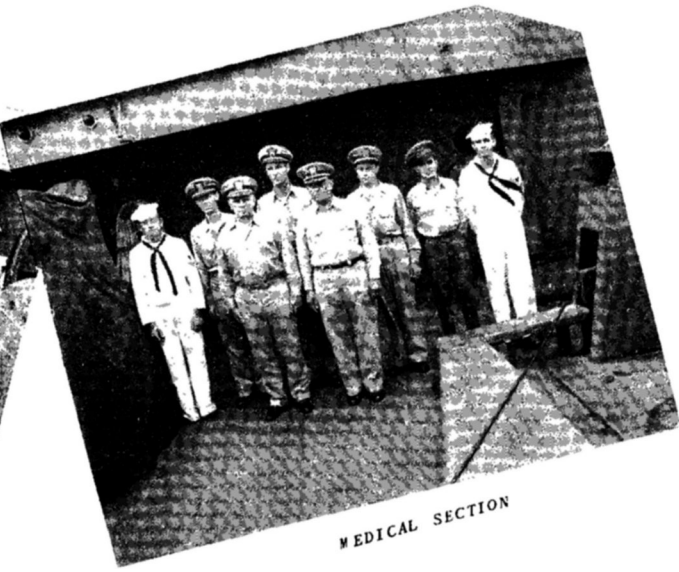
CIVIL ENGINEER SECTION



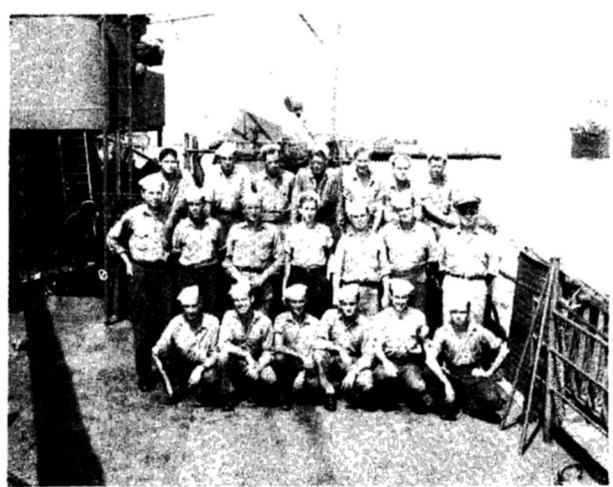
GUNNERY SECTION



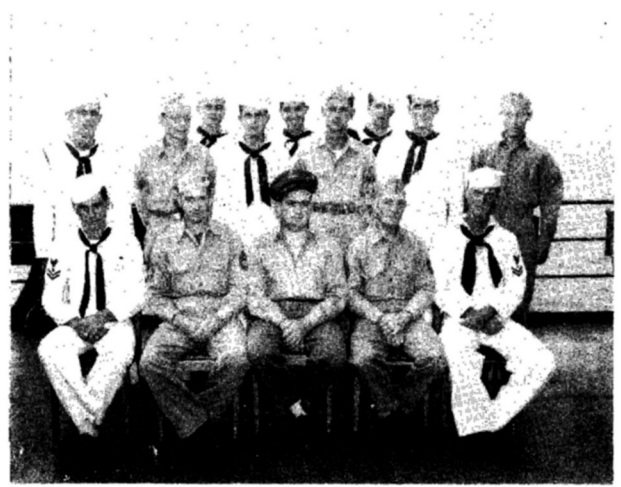
FLAG OFFICE



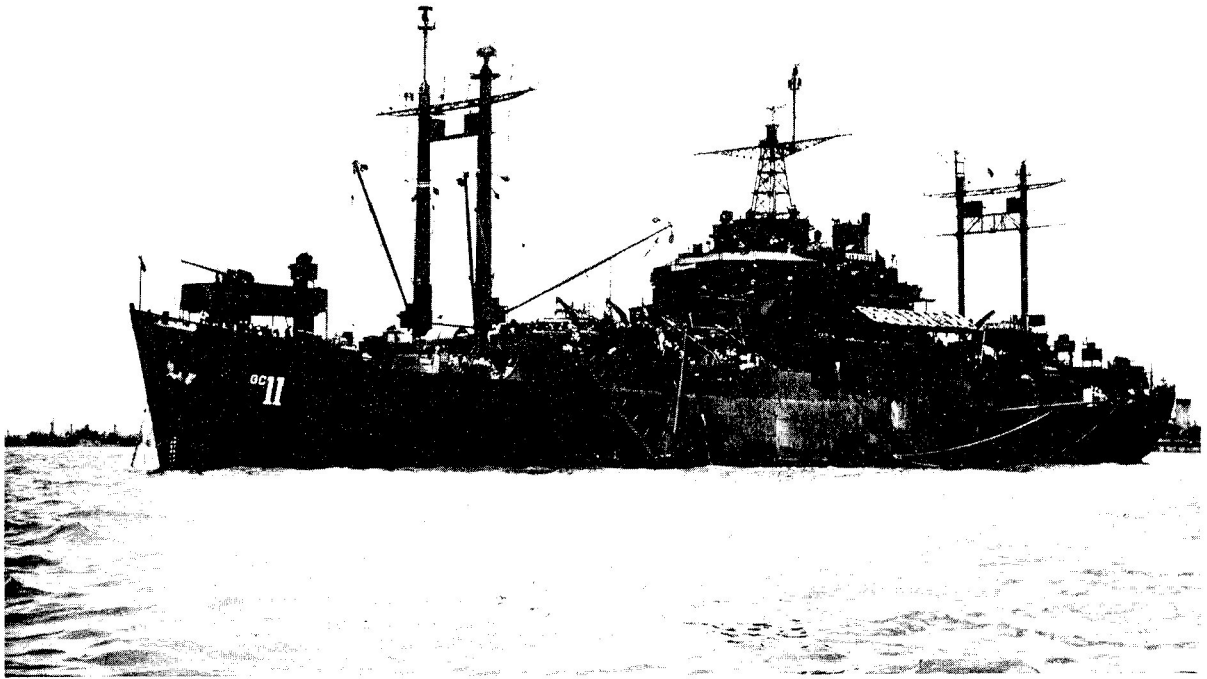
MEDICAL SECTION



INTELLIGENCE SECTION



COMBINED OPERATIONS



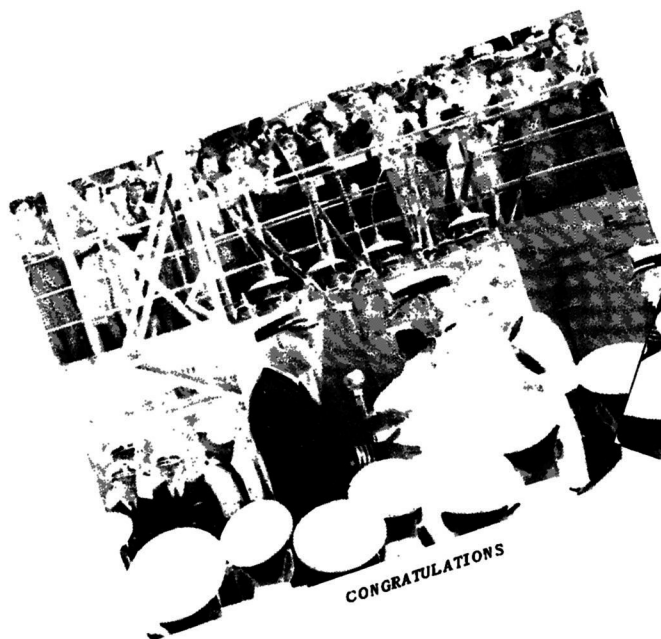
U.S.S. ELDORADO

Commissioning

In the presence of the families and friends of her new crew, the U. S. S. ELDORADO was placed in commission at Bethlehem Steel Yard, 56th Street Pier, Brooklyn, New York. A large part of the ship's complement were "green hands", still fresh from boot camp and navy trade schools; the others, old timers who had seen duty on other navy vessels and who would form the experienced nucleus aboard this new one.

Most of these men had been assembled for a brief period of training at the Newport, R. I. Training Station. It was a short processing they received there, but they were already beginning to work together as a crew when they left Newport on August 23, 1944.

Two days later, on August 25th, they arrived aboard the ELDORADO, and it was then that Captain J. R. Wallace, reading the orders he had received from the Navy Department and greeting the officers and men who would serve under him, officially assumed command.



CONGRATULATIONS



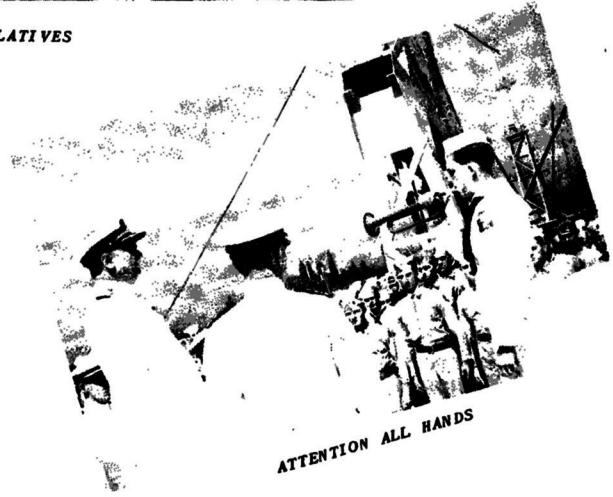
ORDERS FOR THE DAY



VISITING RELATIVES



RECEIVING COMMAND



ATTENTION ALL HANDS

Ships

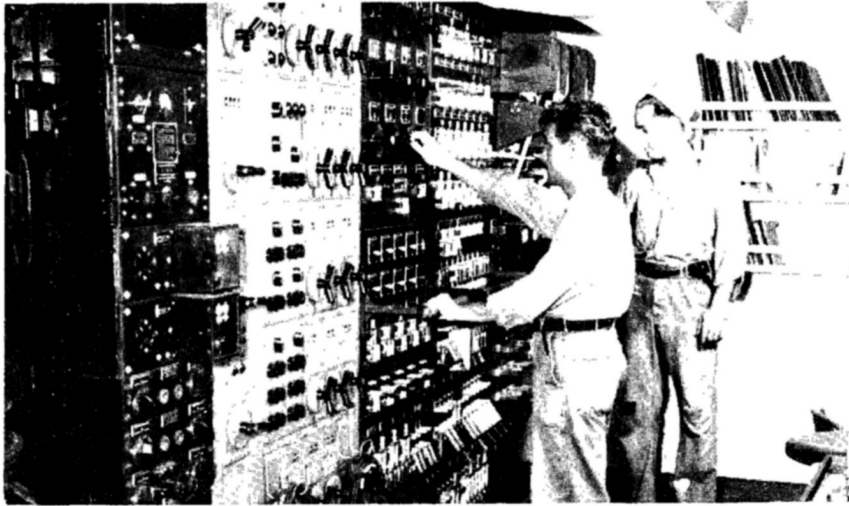
COMPANY



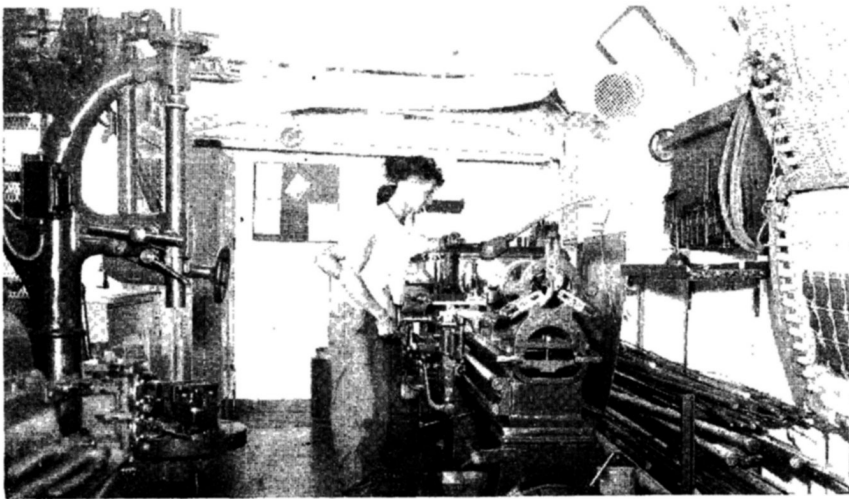
WE GET KICKED
AROUND LIKE
SAILORS!



DIVISIONS



I. C. ROOM



MACHINE SHOP



DECK HANDS

More than a thousand men, grouped into fifteen divisions, are necessary for the successful operation of a ship of this type. To these divisions goes the bulk of the credit for the efficiency with which the Eldorado has discharged her duties. The work of each division, though distinctly outlined and different from that of the other divisions, is in close harmony and relationship with that of the others. This 'inter-dependency' makes it impossible to say that one division is of more importance than any other....although the 'Black Gang' (composed of 'A', 'E', 'B', and 'M' Divisions) make a strong bid for first place.

The men of the black gang work below decks in the fierce temperatures and bewilderingly complex mechanical arrangements of the engine room. That engine room, to a casual visitor, seems like the bowels of an unusually vast and intricate pinball machine, complicated with bright lights and deafening noise. In it are most of the many engines, motors, generators and pumps maintained and operated by the black gang, though there is a large amount of other gear scattered throughout the ship that falls under their supervision.

The superiority of the black gang has always been challenged by those divisions that work topside....the deck force, comprised of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd divisions. The men of these divisions, known to the engineer department as 'deck apes', do the work and stand the watches necessary above decks, from the humble paint chipping to the responsibility-bearing and dangerous jobs of look-out and gun watches. A great amount of skill and knowledge is necessary to perform the duties required of these men. They must moor and anchor the ship, assist the officer of the deck in his watches, raise and lower boats, load and unload cargo, operate the booms and winches, and be ready at all times to man the guns for action against the enemy. So proficient in airplane identification are these divisions aboard our ship that not once during the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa did they open fire on a friendly plane!

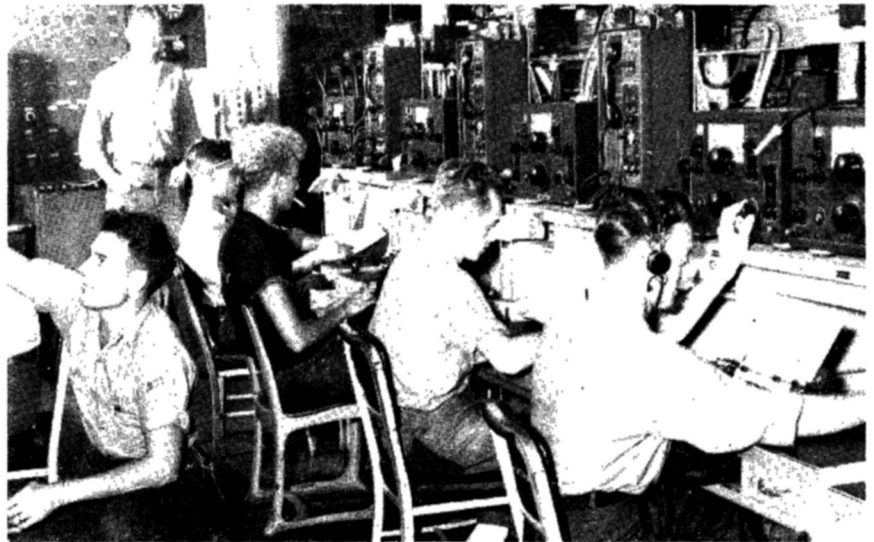
"R" Division, composed of ship-fitters and carpenters, are the craftsmen of the ship. They handle all woodwork and welding and are responsible for the maintenance of the ship's boats. Their emergency duties are as important as any on the ship....that of damage control. Fortunately, the ELDORADO has sustained no damage of an emergency nature, but through their routine duties, "R" Division has proved its ability to deal competently with any that may arise.

'C' Division, handling all communications, perhaps has a right to feel slightly superior aboard this, a communication vessel. This group of signalmen, radiomen, radio technicians, and yeomen are responsible for the maintenance and operation of all equipment used in communications, and almost all 'paper work' done aboard ship. Although they man no guns, they have slaughtered their percentage of the enemy with typewriters, signal flags and paper clips. The efficiency with which they discharge their duties is shown by their records during the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, during which the Eldorado's Communication gang broke all existing records for the handling of messages for any ship at any time! More than a thousand were handled in a single day!



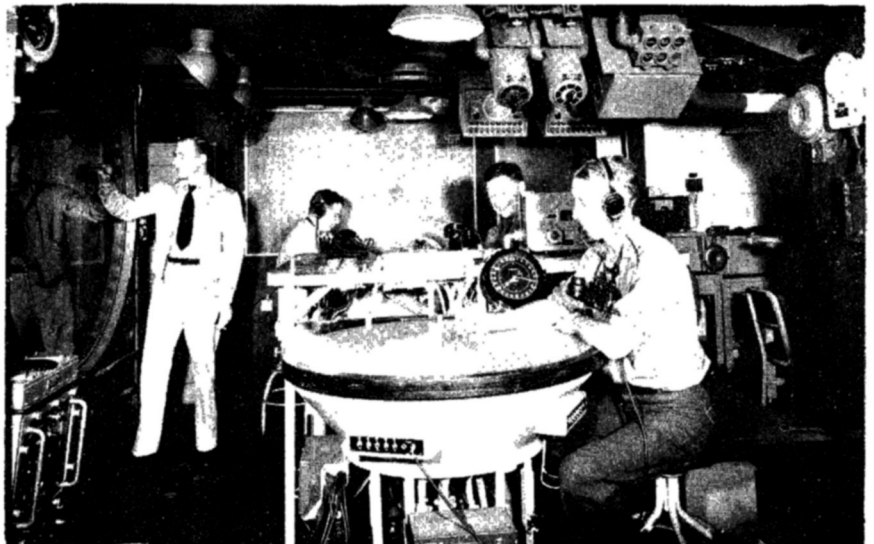
YEOMEN

'D' Division is the Marine detachment aboard....a wing, so to speak, of the 'C' Division. They are almost all high-speed code men, many of them are equally proficient as radio and radio teletype materiel men, and any one of them will admit that 'D' Division has the best radiomen...and the best of anything, for that matter, on the ship, and possibly in the entire Pacific Fleet. These men, however short they may be on modesty, are long on ability; they are a group of highly skilled communication personnel with a unique ability of making good their boasts.



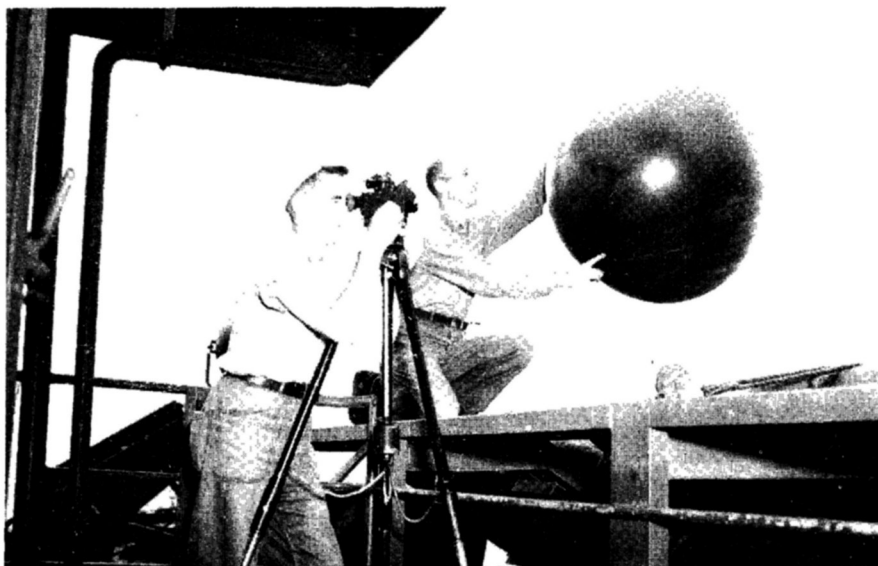
RADIO 1

Radar, that 'miracle invention' of this war that has done so much to win it for us, is maintained and operated by 'K' Division. The activities of this division were kept mysteriously secret until only recently, until the end of the war brought a release on some aspects of it. Most of us, however, after reading about it, are willing to let matters stand as they were; the technical complications of radar are sufficient to maintain its security. Radar and 'K' Division proved their value to us during the invasions by their amazing ability to detect the approaching enemy planes at great distances, thereby giving us time to prepare a suitable reception.

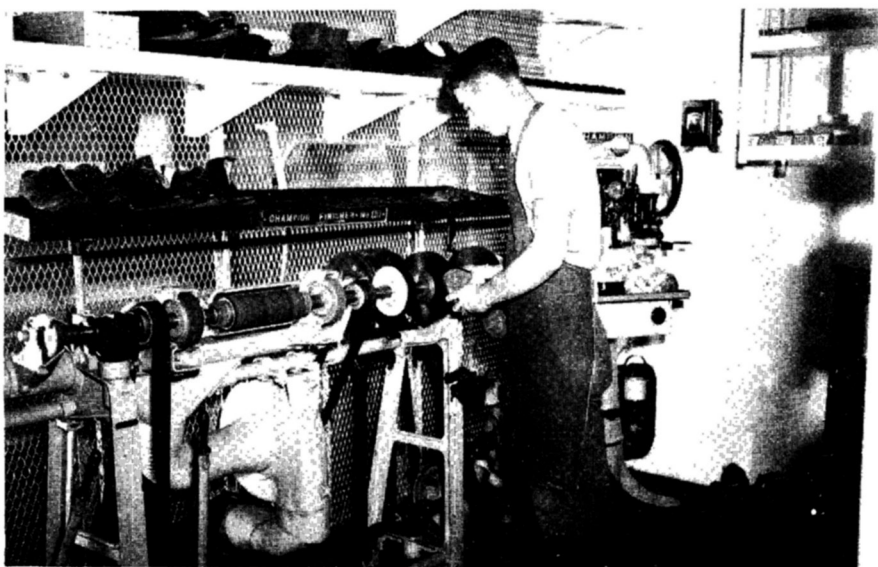


C. I. C. PLOT

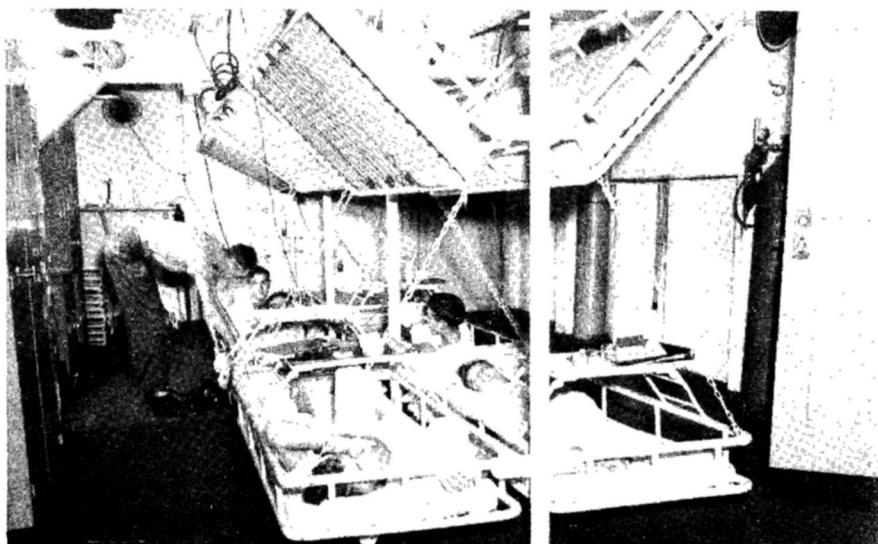
'N' Division is perhaps the most versatile aboard; it is composed of Quartermasters, Cartographers, Lithographers, Printers, Buglers and Aerologists. The Quartermasters primary duty is navigation and suffice to say they have done a first class job of sailing our ship some 23,000 miles without mishap. The Cartographic Section, which includes the Cartographers, Lithographers and Printers, has print-



AEROLOGISTS



COBBLER'S SHOP



SICK BAY

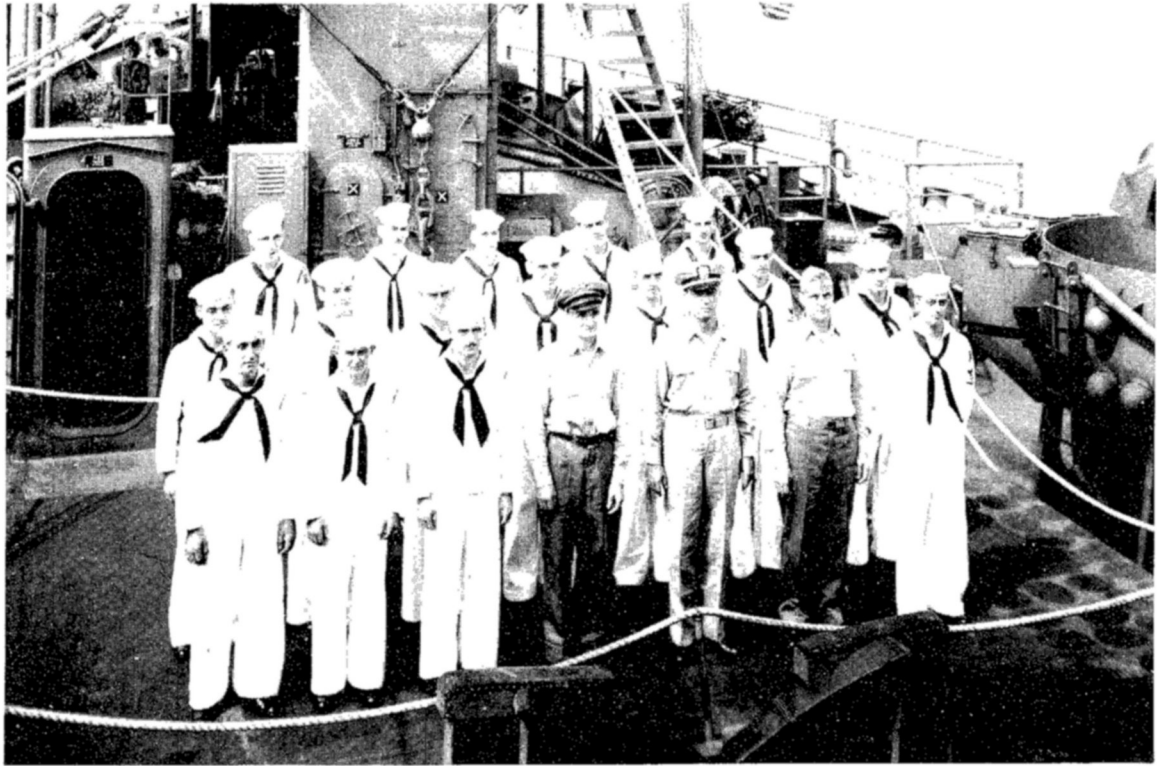
ed over 300,000 charts and maps and over 7,000,000 pieces of copy. This Year Book was printed by the Cartographic Section. The Photolab has contributed its share to the success of the operations; the lab has processed over 15,000 negatives and delivered over 130,000 prints, including stills, aeriels and sonnie rolls; their battle reconnaissance photos delivered by the Lab have saved many lives. The Buglers have blown reveille over 400 times (in which function they have yet to achieve perfection). The Aerologists release their balloons and track them, then with the use of their various gismos and gadgets plot weather charts and keep us posted on the coming weather.

'S' Division, also multi-rated, bears the main burden of maintaining the crew's morale. It is the division responsible for feeding the crew, supplying it with cigarettes...a vital factor in morale building...handling the ship's service, small stores, disbursing, tailoring, cobbling and laundering. Any one of these branches of 'S' Division, caring for 1200 men, have a difficult job; the most difficult of all, probably, is that of satisfying gastronomically the needs of these 1200 men, each of whom uses, as a basis for his judgement, the memory of food that 'mother used to make'. 'S' Division has done well; if they have consumed an inordinate amount of aspirin, they have had sufficient reason.

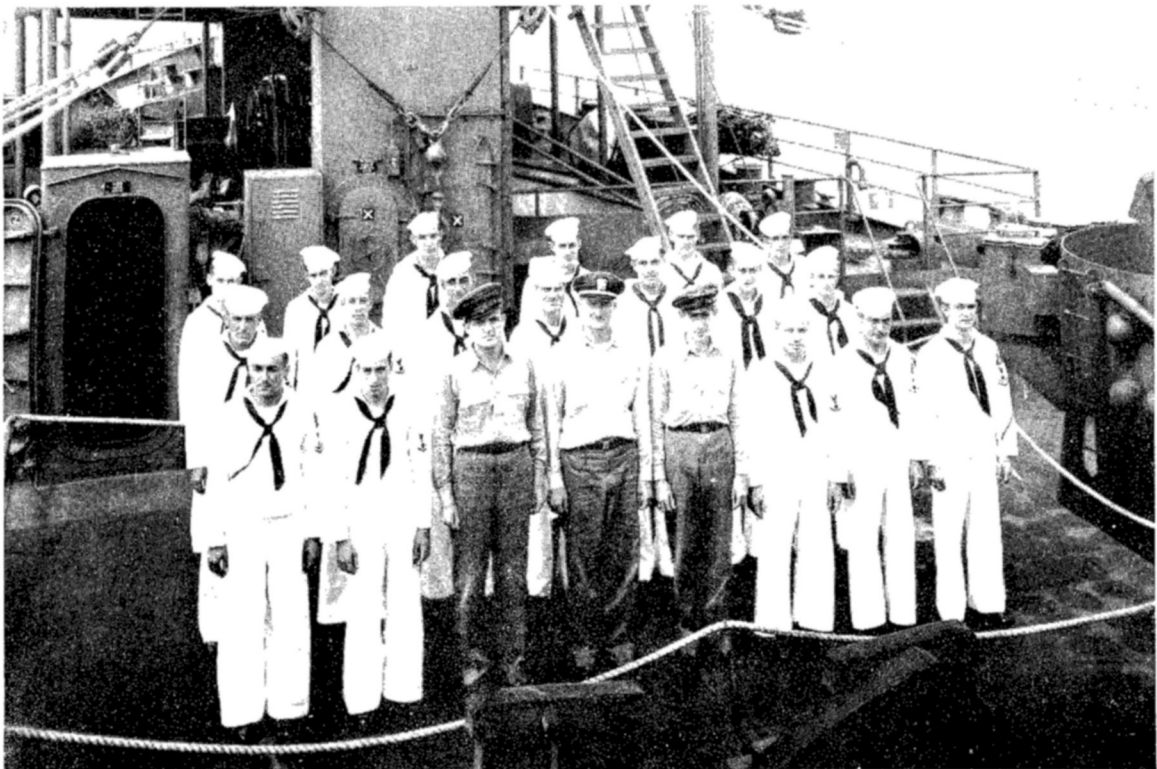
Our hospital facilities are adequately taken care of by 'H' Division; the men comprising that division are well-trained, hard working and considerate. A year of treating the Eldorado's sick, with a seasoning of wounded from the invasions, have made them calm and confident veterans. They operate the equipment in our dental office, pharmacy, sterilizing room, dressing station, isolation ward, x-ray room and diet kitchen. They are not 'castor oil and throat spray' specialists!

'L' Division, the Eldorado's boat crew, is one of the smallest and least known divisions of the ship. During the invasions they were often called upon to 'make smoke' during air-raids, and to make trips to and from the beaches under enemy fire. The competency of 'L' Division gives it a proportional equality with its bigger brothers.

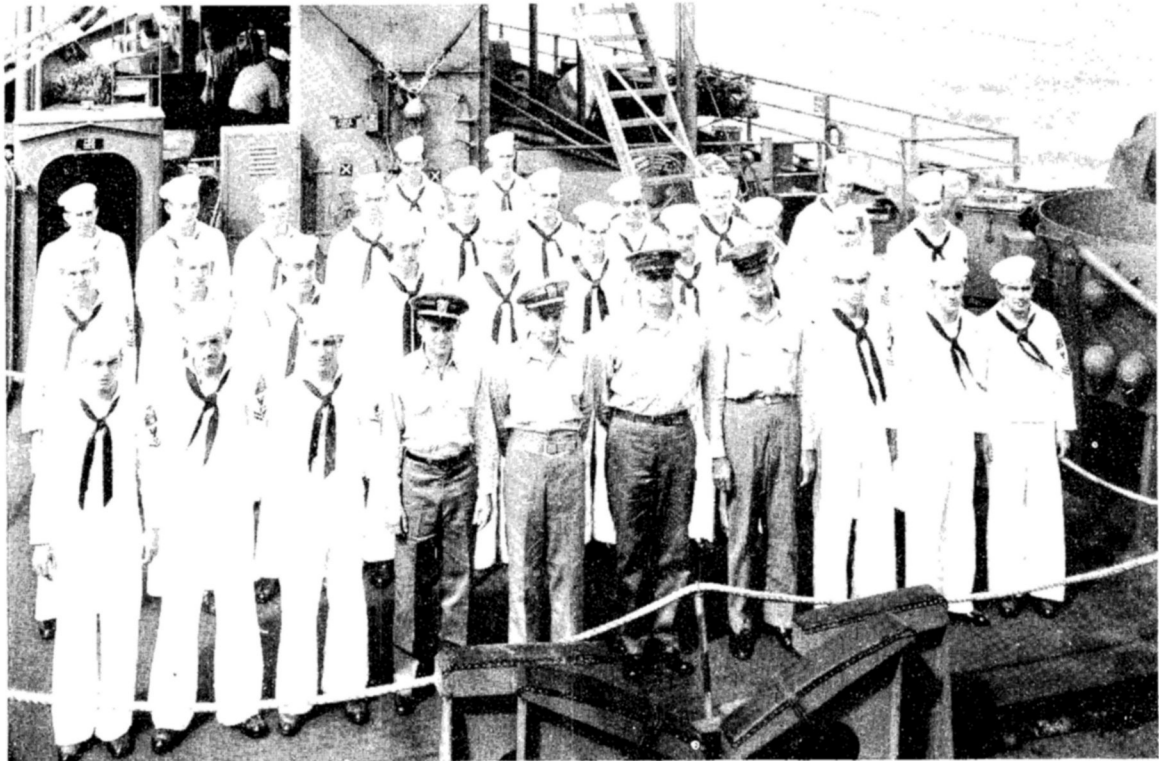
These are the fifteen divisions that have sailed the Eldorado from New York to Manila, through two invasions, through rough waters and high winds.



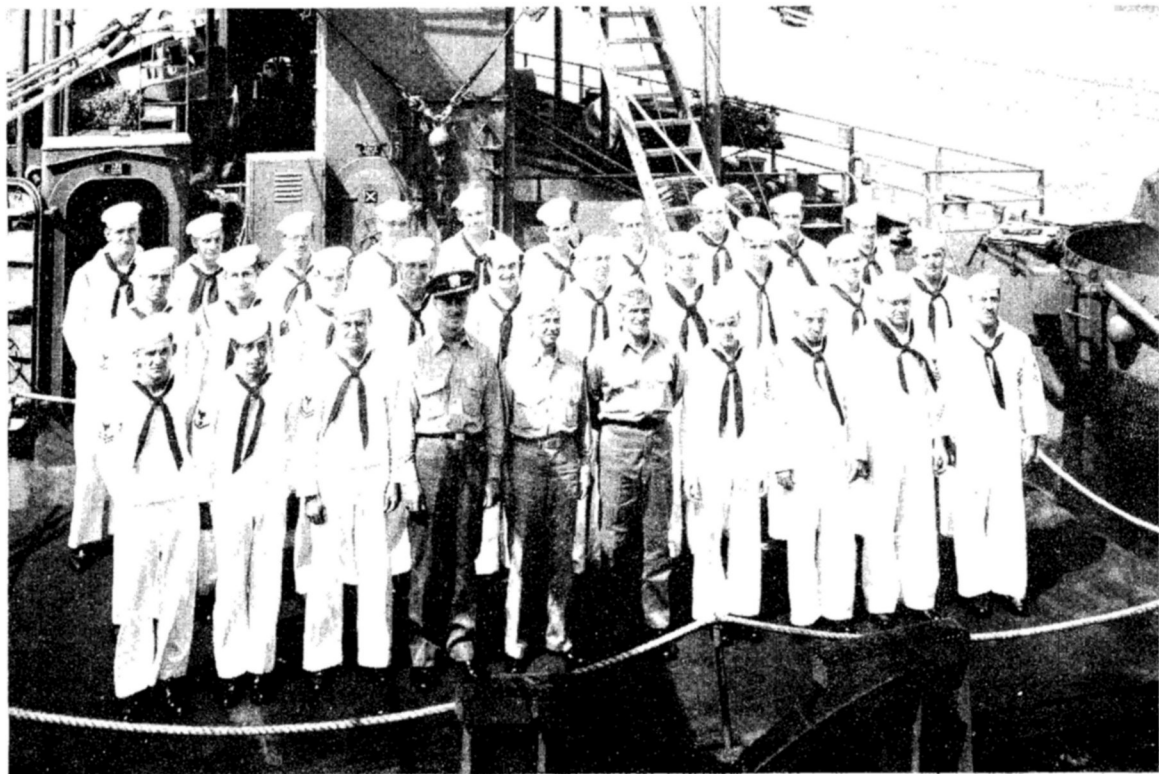
"A" DIVISION



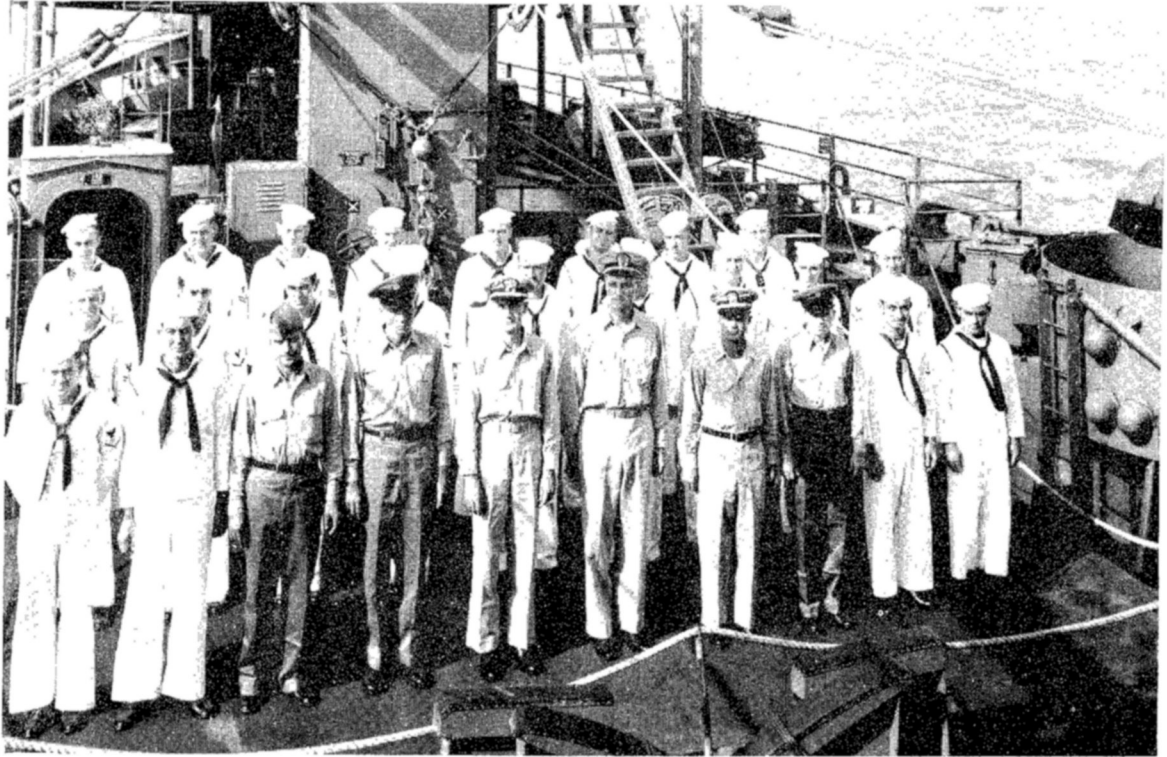
"E" DIVISION



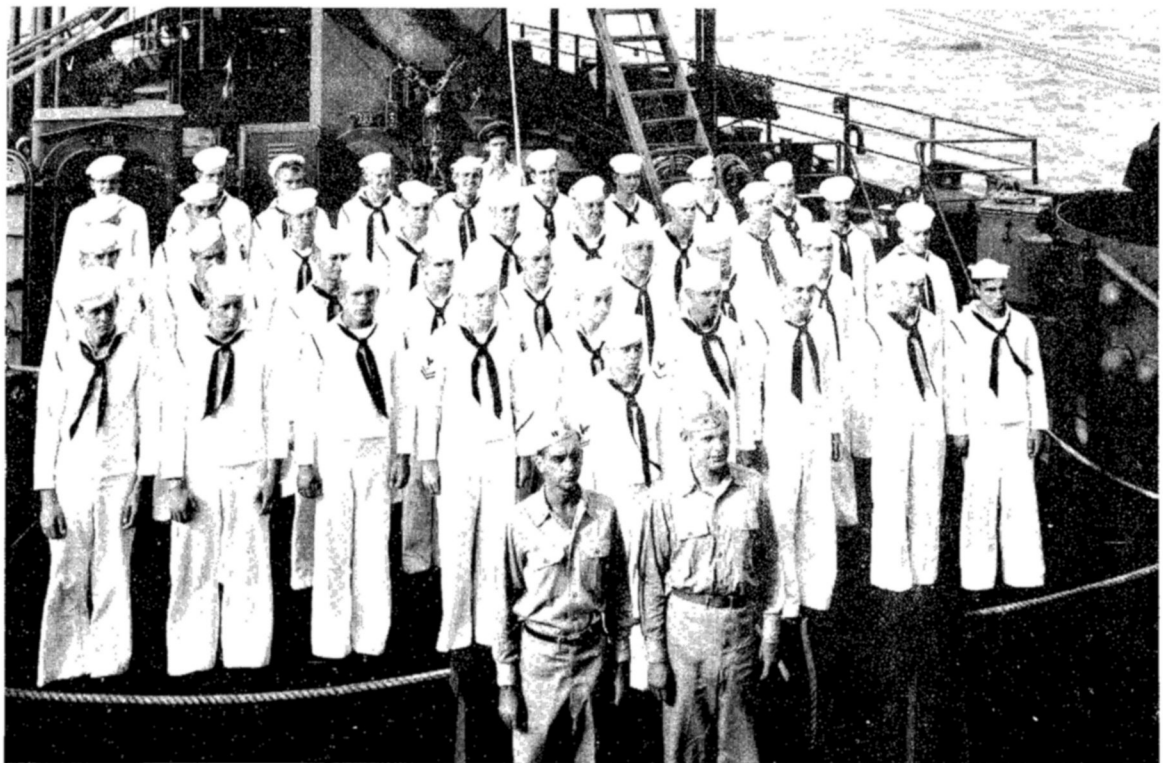
"B" AND "M" DIVISION



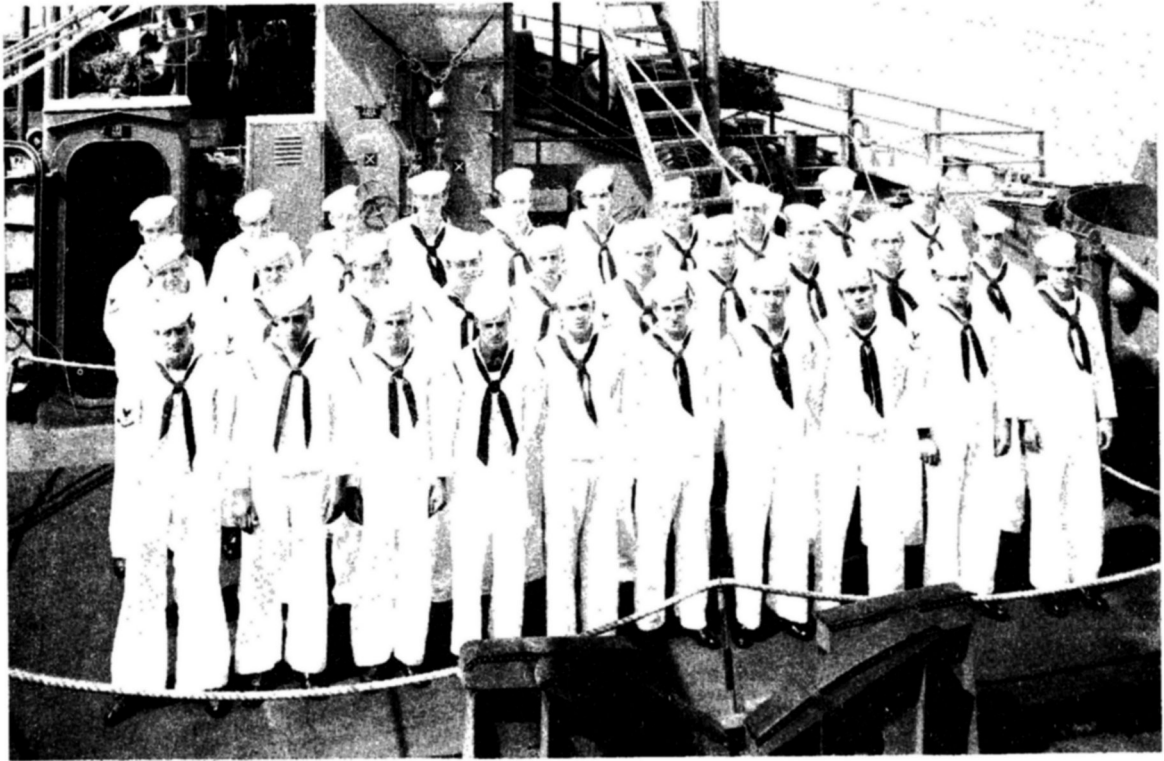
"N" DIVISION



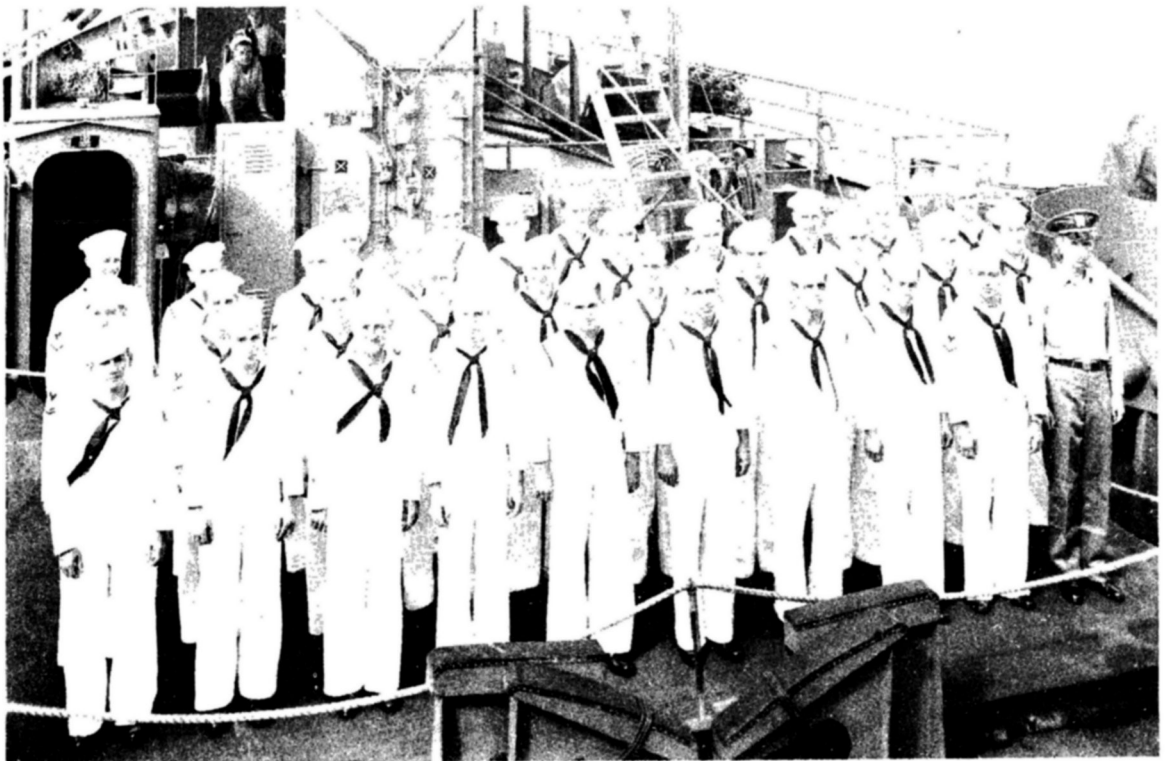
"R" DIVISION



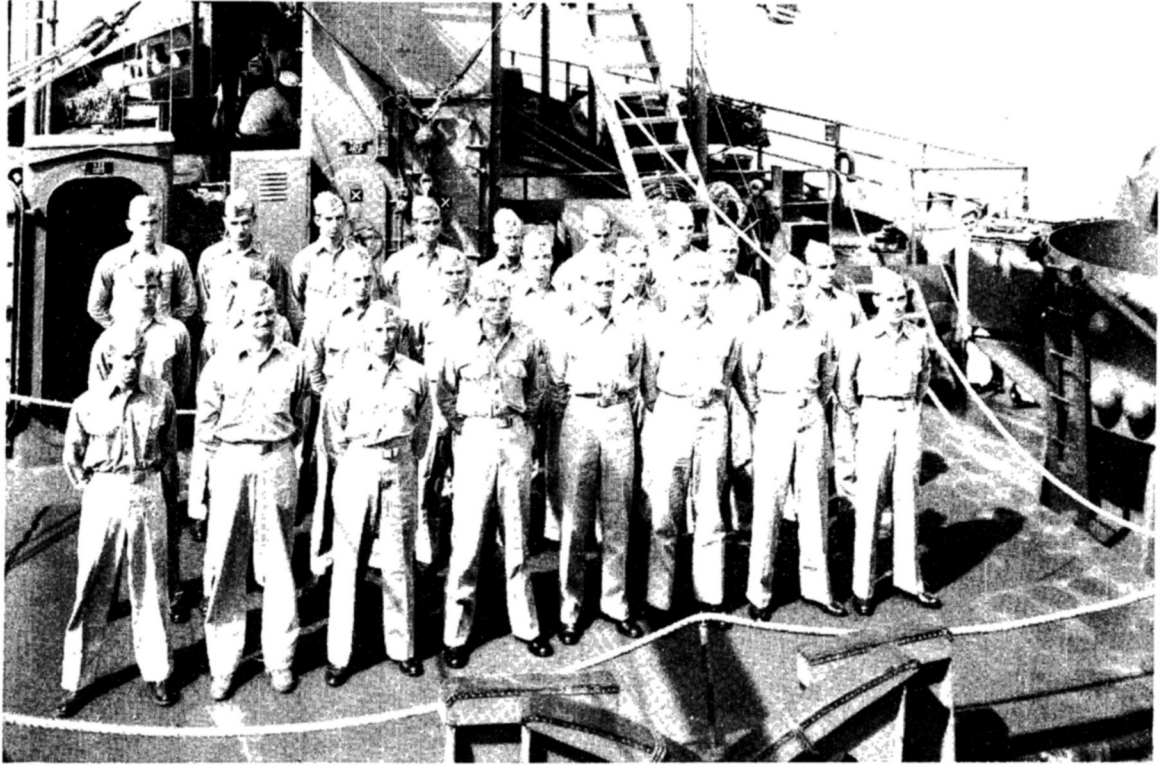
FIRST DIVISION



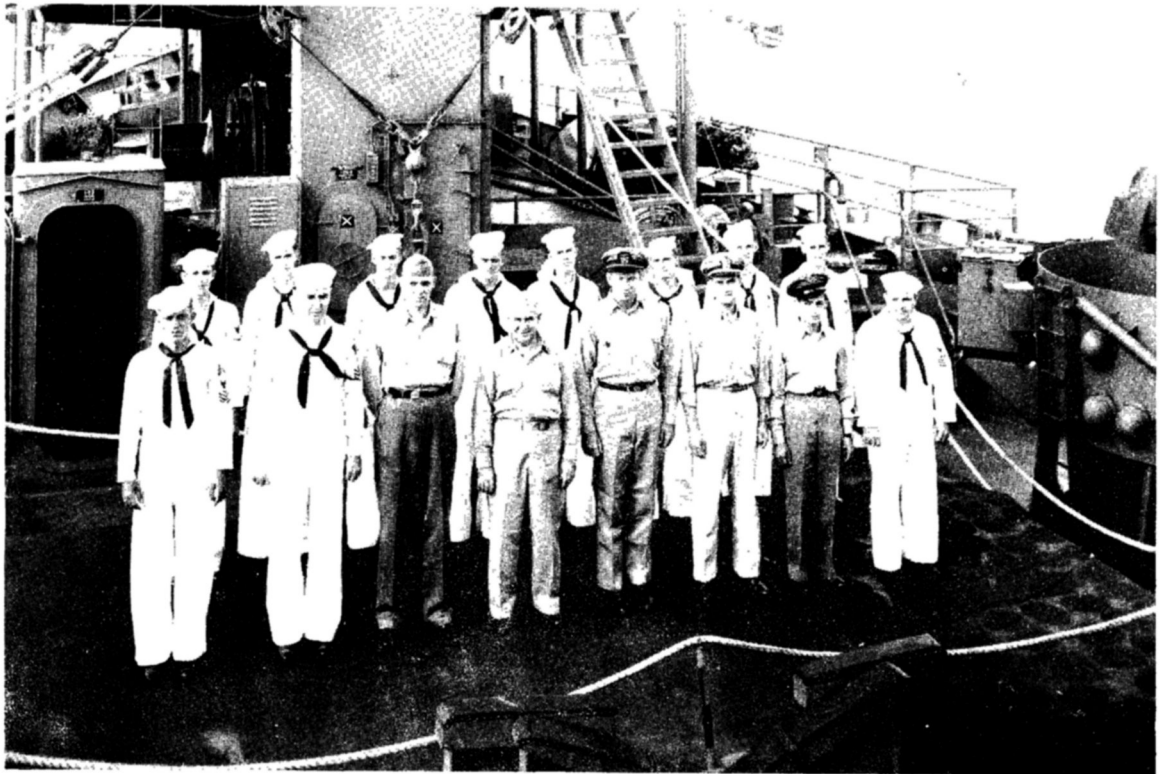
THIRD DIVISION



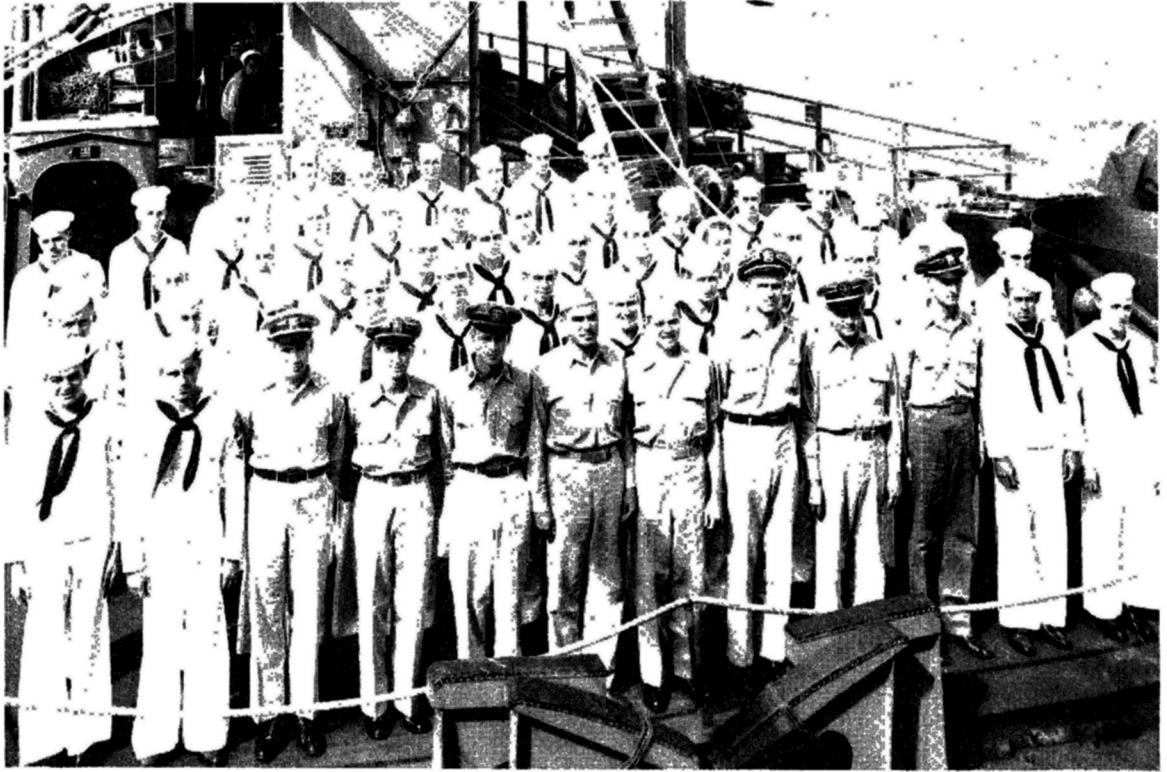
SECOND DIVISION



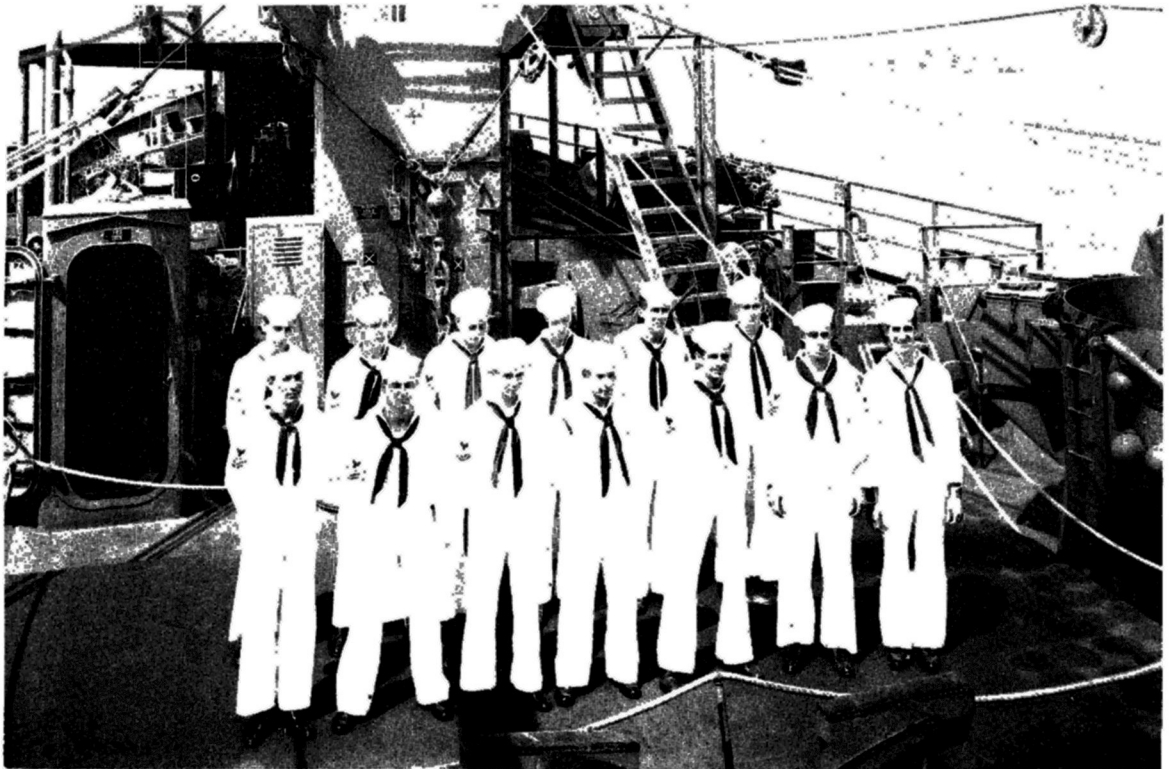
"D" DIVISION



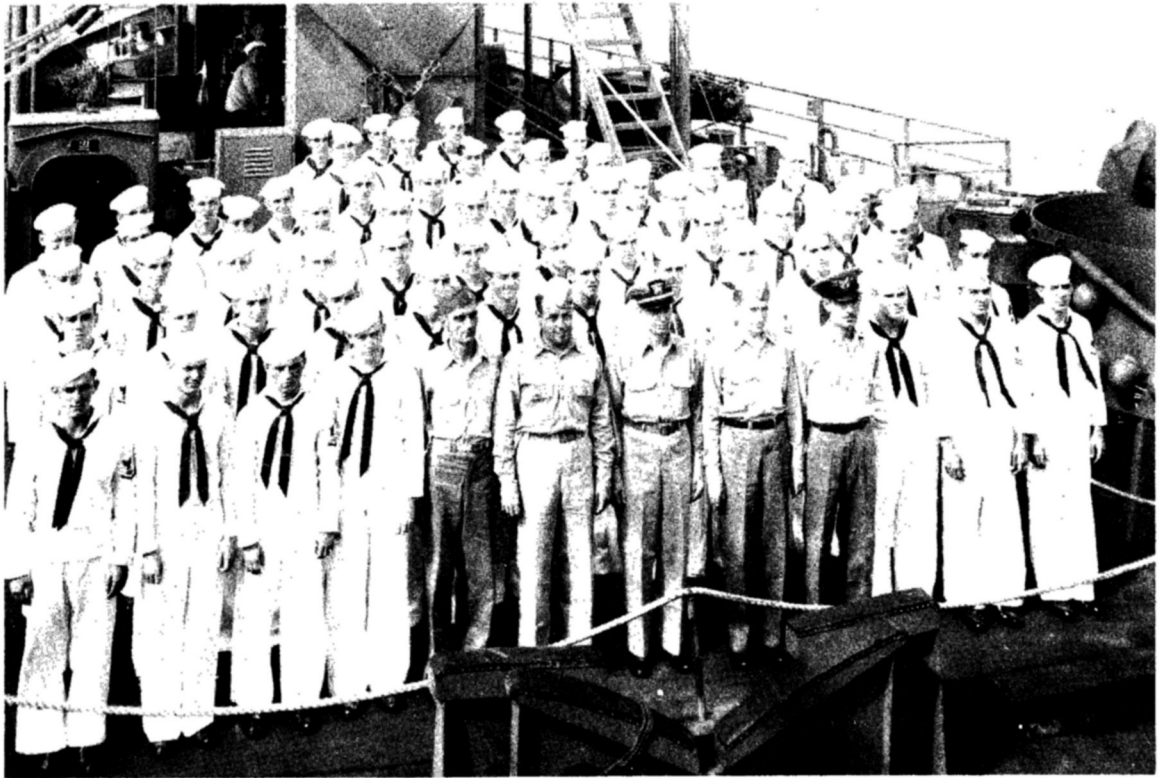
"H" DIVISION



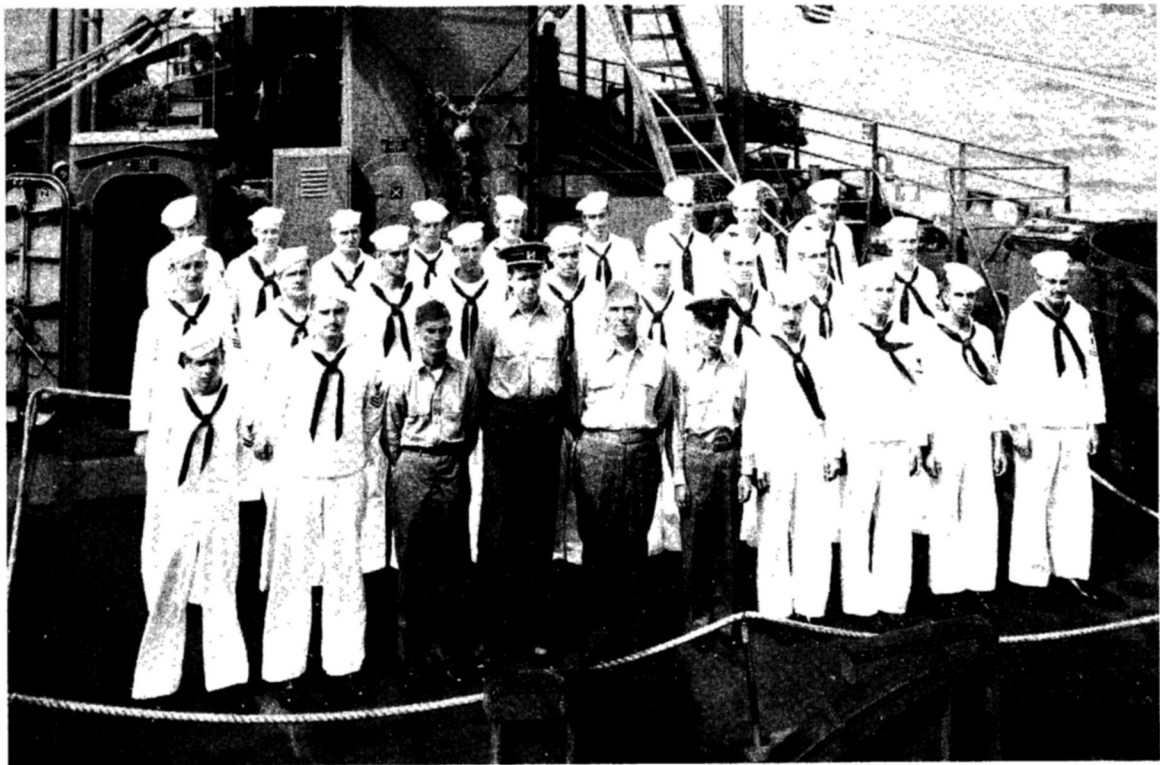
"K" DIVISION



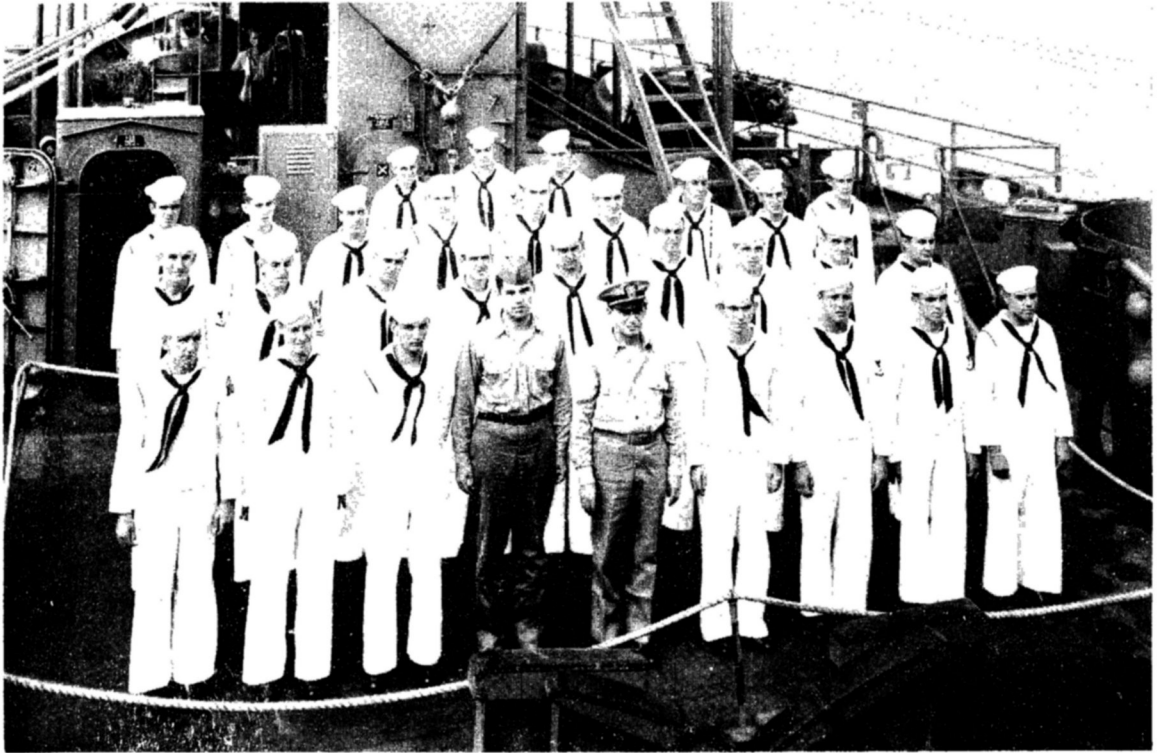
"C" DIVISION (Signalmen)



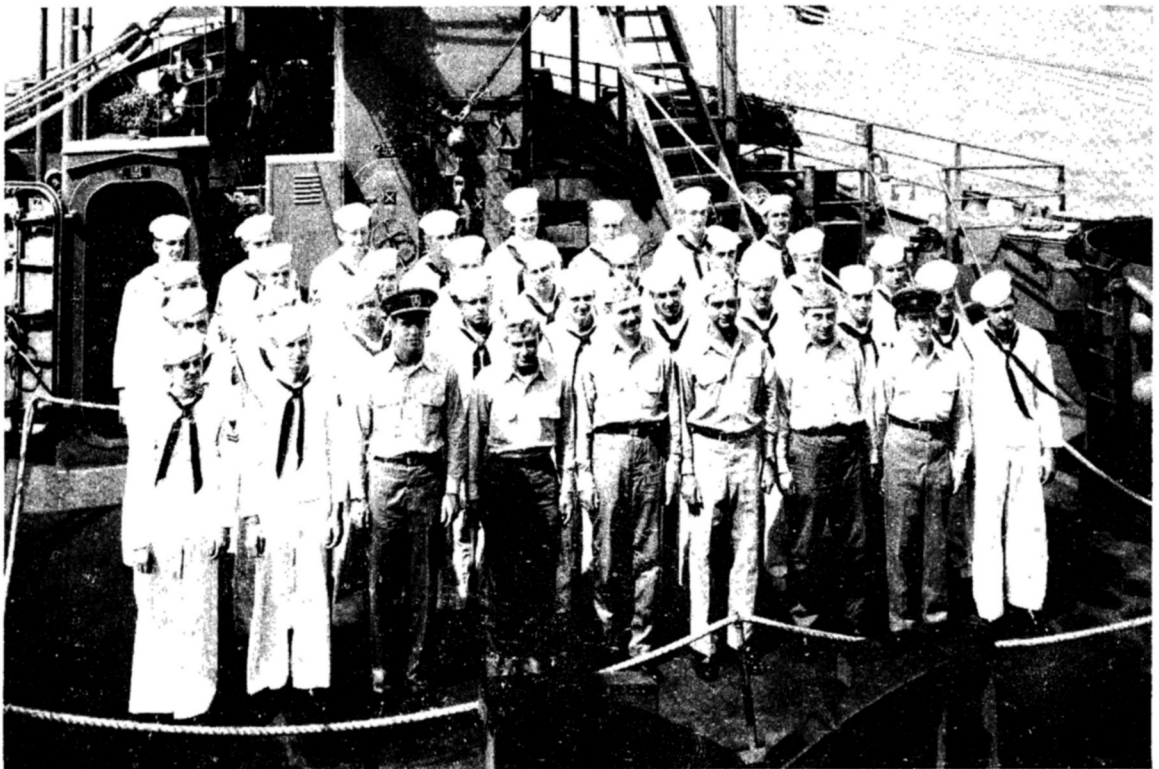
"C" DIVISION (Radiomen)



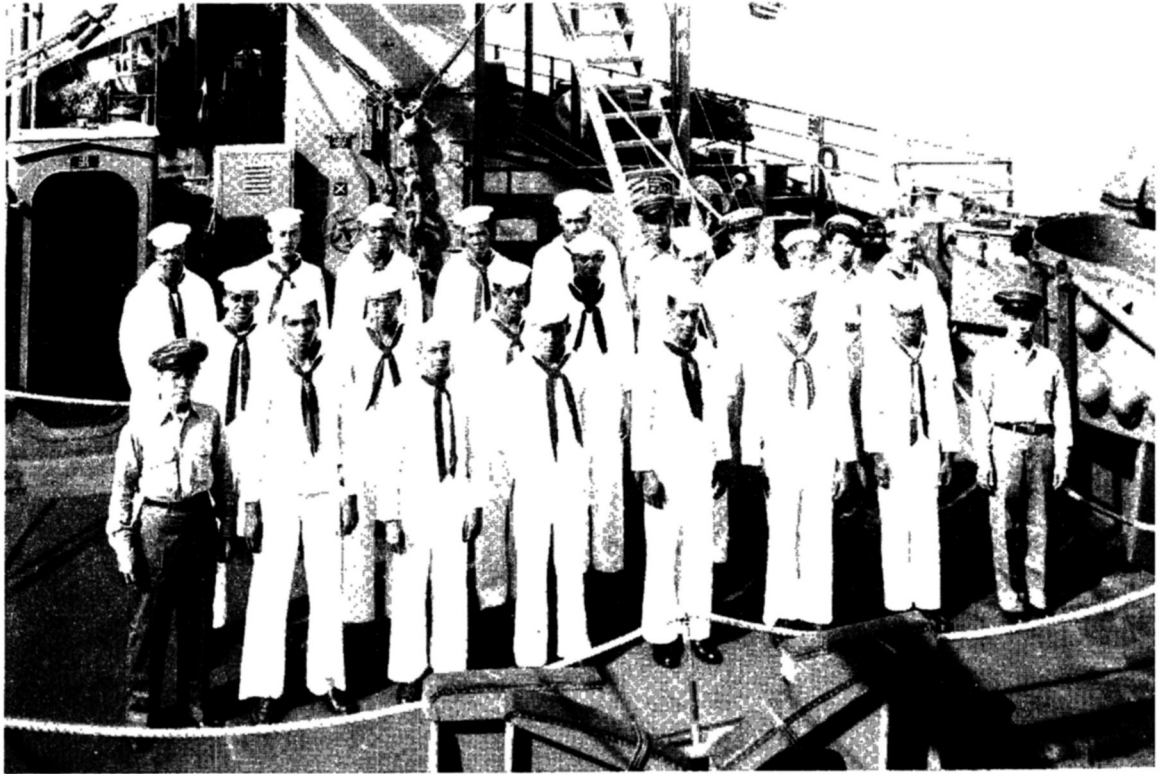
"C" DIVISION (Technicians)



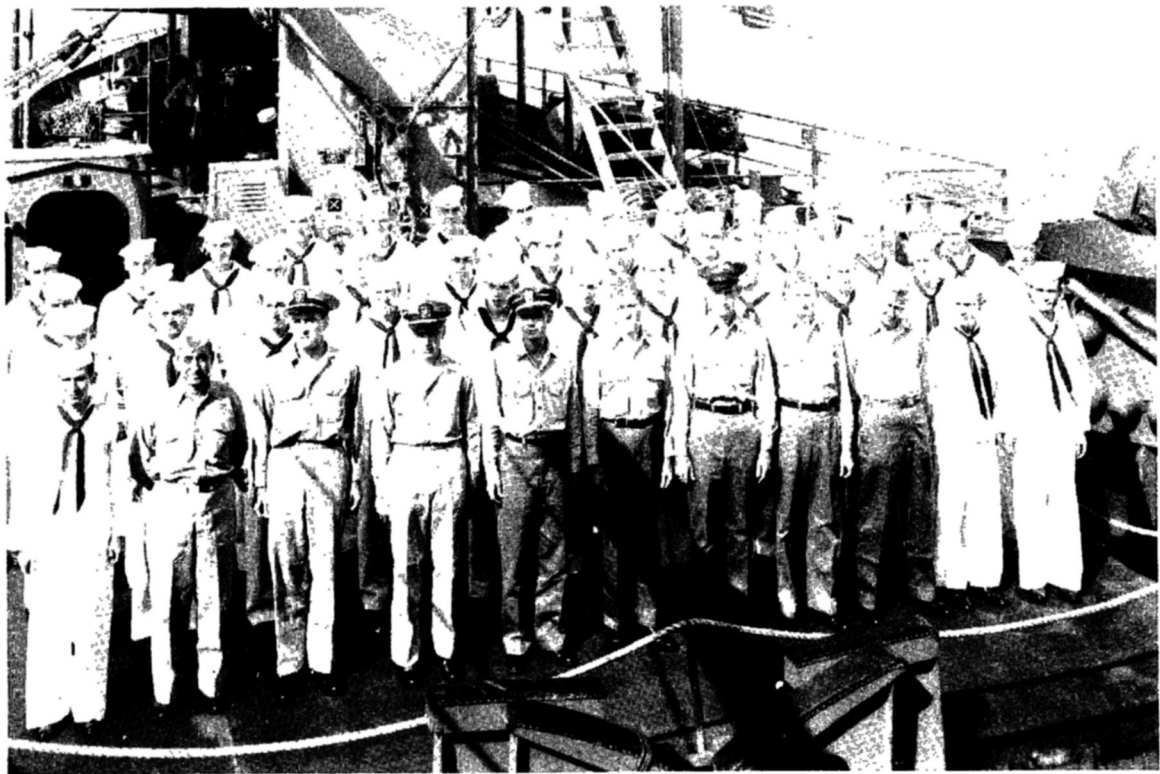
"C" DIVISION (Yeomen)



ORDNANCE CREW



"S" DIVISION



"S" DIVISION



MASTER-AT-ARMS FORCE



"L" DIVISION

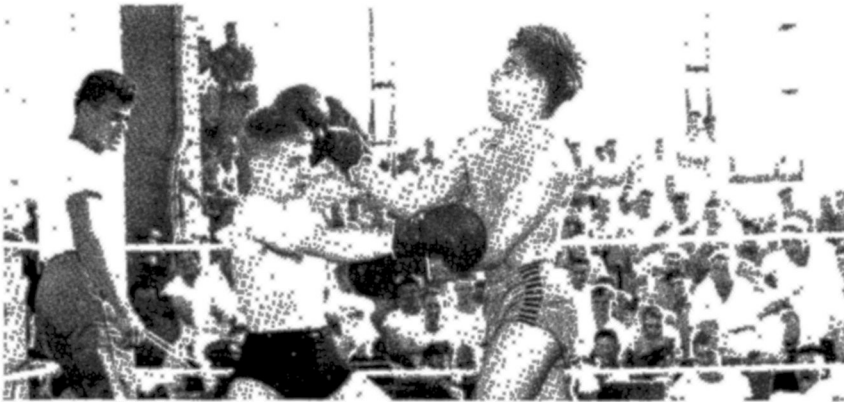
Activities



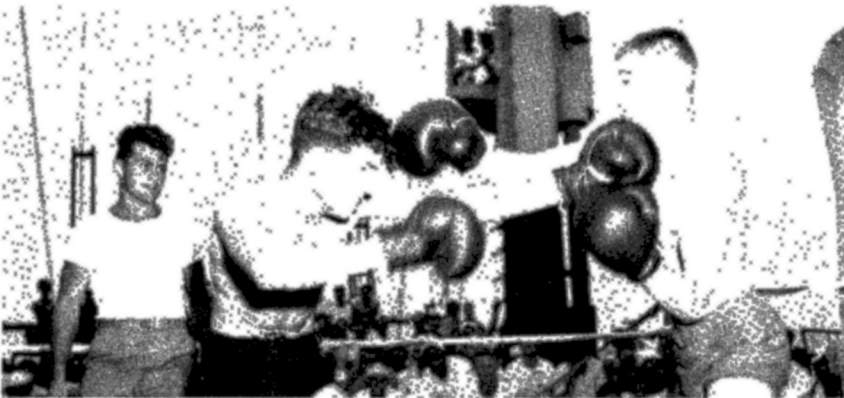
Sports



SOFTBALL TEAM - PEARL HARBOR



VIRGIL SMITH - vs - QUENTIN REAM



TRUJILLO - vs - ROSS



RICHARDSON FIELD - P.H.

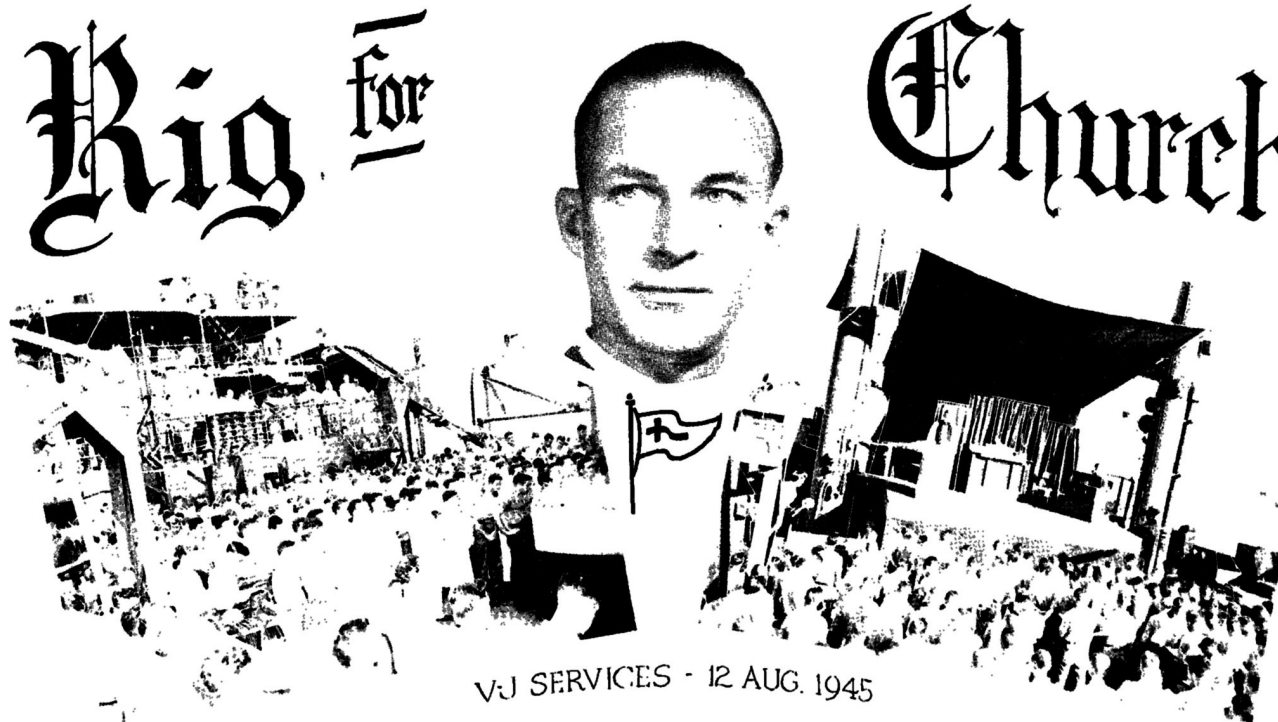
The forming of the crew which was to sail the ELDORADO took place at the Pre-Commissioning base at Newport, R. I. As the men finished their processing activities, and began settling into regular ELDORADO routine, it became evident that considerable athletic talent comprised the organization. Happy hour revealed some of the more proficient athletes, and it didn't take long to organize a top-notch softball team. While still at Newport, boxing bouts were arranged between different pre-commissioning ships and our boys gave a good account of themselves. Although many of the crew took part in varied sports activities, it was the softball team which made an impressive name for the ship. During our stateside tenure the team played and defeated fourteen different outfits, and were crowned the champions of that base.

After being moved to Brooklyn and aboard ship, the sports curriculum was curtailed because of space, but the softball coaches Ens. Bostrom and Lt. Purnell continued to plan for days when shore would beckon out in the Pacific area. Upon arriving in Pearl Harbor games were sought for this sharp outfit, and an additional five scalps were hung beside the fourteen previous ones. In addition, each division organized a team and a regular schedule was conducted on the grounds near our berth. While at Pearl Harbor, several boxing cards were held between the ELDORADO and the AUBURN, and great pleasure was enjoyed by all hands, as each contestant tried to connect with every blow known to the ring. In addition to these activities all the men had ample opportunity to visit Waikiki Beach and swim in the warm waters there. Our stay in Hawaii was splendid for the athletically inclined, and all of the fellows took advantage of the facilities at their disposal, and prepared themselves for a long bout with the enemy.

Guam produced the first defeat for the softball team, as the USS HUDSON pinned back their ears. However a record of 21 wins and 1 loss wasn't anything to take lightly, but tougher opposition was to be encountered in the Philippines. At the present writing the team has amassed 28 wins against five losses and a well done should be given to the members of this invincible aggregation. Brinn, Leoty, Ujobal, Turnbull, Mermilloid, Sopko, Merritt, Wilson, Winner, Pessetto, Thornton, Schretzman, Taylor, Silverstein, Smeeth, Cavendar, Westerdahl, Mitsch, Glenn, and Larkin are regular members, but additional support was supplied by many more of the crew, and they too deserve a lot of credit. These boys had a wealth of defensive strength, wonderful pitching and more than adequate hitting ability.

Rig for

Church



V-J SERVICES - 12 AUG. 1945

Chaplain C. W. V. Junker

The Church Pennant moves to the top of the halyard where for an hour it will fly above the national colors as men and officers pause to proclaim their supreme allegiance to their Creator and Prince of Peace.

The bugle sounds 'Church Call', the boatswain pipes attention and announces over the loud-speakers: 'Divine Service is now being held. Knock off all card games. Keep silence about the deck during services. The smoking lamp is out'.

Thus, Sunday after Sunday, in port or under way, men gathered on the boat or superstructure deck aft or, in bad weather, below decks in the crew's messing compartment. Shortly before, the Church Rigging Party transformed the spot into a very Churchly scene with the strikingly beautiful walnut altar framed from behind by deep red and blue dossal curtains. The organ or chimes helped set the background and the service began as the Chaplain vested and took his place. At first it was Chaplain Harvey C. Porter who guided us through pre-commissioning detail and served as ship's chaplain. Later as we prepared and moved out for Iwo Jima it was Chaplain Curt Junker who was to serve as our padre. From that time on, each service was to end with the singing of the traditional Navy hymn, 'Eternal Father Strong To Save', sung in a new version to include those on land, sea and in the air.... a Prayer Hymn for Our Amphibious Forces. Then, with the 'Blessing of God Almighty' the assembled worshippers depart to their duties or pastimes. 'Divine services are over. The smoking lamp is lighted' traditional Navy phrase. The Church pennant comes down and the national ensign takes its place at the top until the next service.

The visiting Roman Catholic Chaplains, from our sister ship, the Auburn, from the Hospital Ships off Iwo Jima and at Okinawa, Fr. Paul Redmond, the famous Marine Raider Chaplain, all had a close bond with our ship and men. While at sea there were always at least rosary or other devotional services led by men of the ship's company. Notable was the Pontifical Mass and service of Benediction on August 12th in Manila Bay. The celebrant was the Apostolic Delegate, the most Reverend

Archbishop Piani. The superstructure deck was jammed with men from all the ships in the harbor.

When the great Jewish holidays came, the men had special services. The Passover Seder service was held in the Chief's Mess and for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur the men joined with many others in services at Manila's Rizal Stadium.

Approaching Iwo Jima, our first real invasion, our regular Communion service had even more meaning than ordinarily. The sermon was: 'Courage is Fear which has said its Prayers'. Present were Secretary of Navy Forrestal and several Navy dignitaries from Washington. That night before the forthcoming attack as we all waited at our battle stations, the Chaplain came around and pressed into our hands a small blue card which included the three hundred year old prayer, 'Lord, I shall be verie busie this day: I may forget Thee, but doe Thou not forget me!' It helped!

The only Sunday without a service was L-Day at Okinawa but we had had our big Easter Communion service the evening before below decks. As the Commanding General of the 10th Army and his staff worshipped with us, even as they had done at the good Friday services the day before, we offered many an earnest prayer. All Associated Press papers carried accounts of this service and the Mutual network carried the Chaplain's Easter Message from Okinawa. When President Roosevelt died it was our Memorial Service (we had been at Battle Stations until eight minutes before) which was broadcast around the world and rebroadcast to the Fleet. The film 'The Fleet That Came To Stay' includes that service. Later on V-E Day a portion of our Mothers' Day service was broadcast by NBC.

While in Manila Bay a service of Confirmation was held the Sunday next to July 4th when the Rt. Rev. Norman Binsted, Episcopal Bishop of the Philippines was aboard. And then.... long to be remembered....the Service of Thanks, 'Vision after Victory', August 12th when it became apparent the Japanese were ready to quit. And then at last, our V-J Day Service.

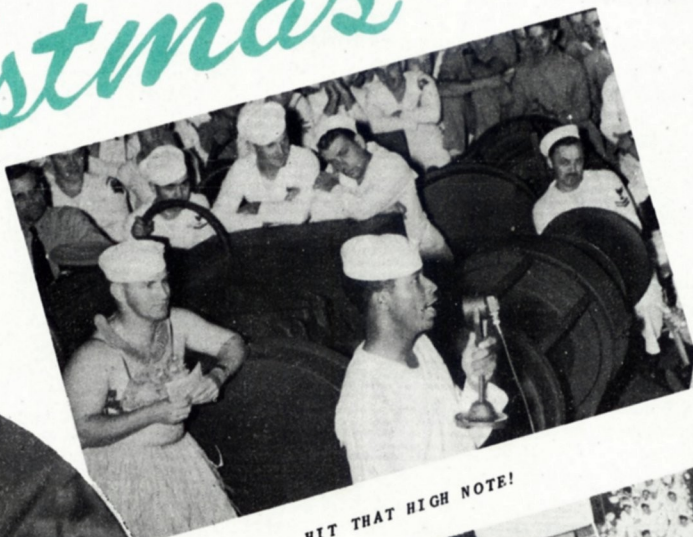


TRUMPET TONES

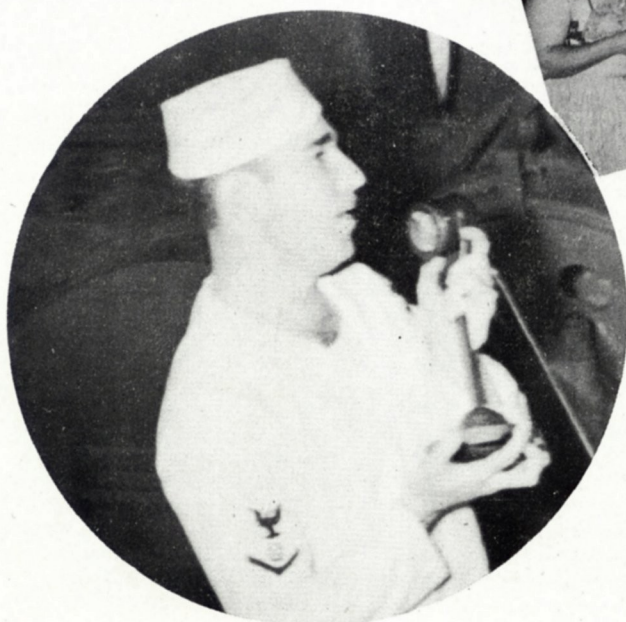


YULETIDE GREETINGS

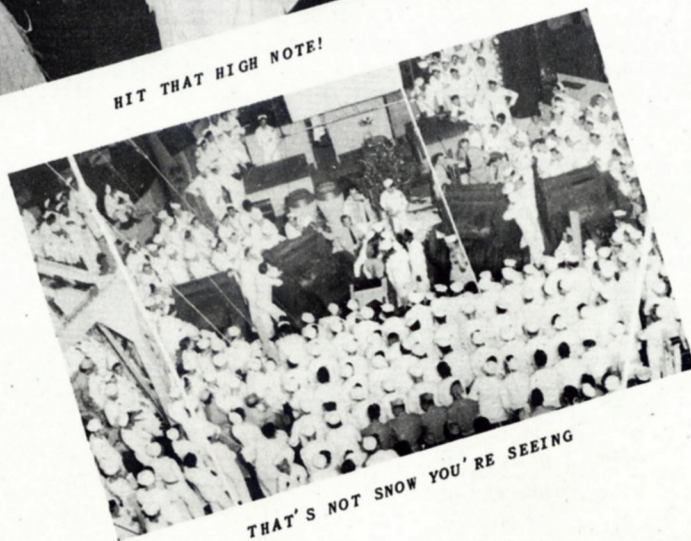
Christmas



HIT THAT HIGH NOTE!



THE CROONING COPPER



THAT'S NOT SNOW YOU'RE SEEING



TUNING UP



CHRISTMAS CAROLS



GUITAR MELODIES

PARTY



SANTA CLAUS COMES TO THE CREW



ICE CREAM, CAKE AND CIGARS



HIS MAJESTY IN ACTION



MOUNTAIN MUSIC



PICKING THE WINNER

MARDI



THAT FEMININE TOUCH



SHIPBOARD SWINGTIME

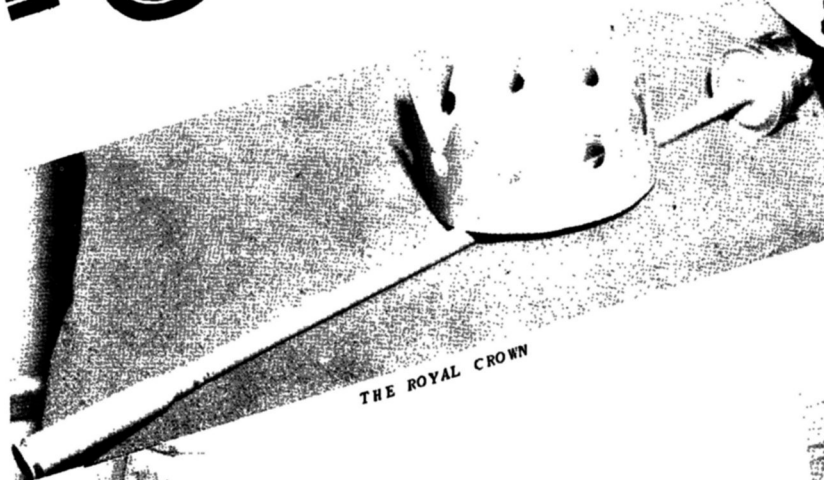


PRESTO THE PRESTI DIGITATOR

= GRAS



REFRESHMENTS FOR ALL



THE ROYAL CROWN

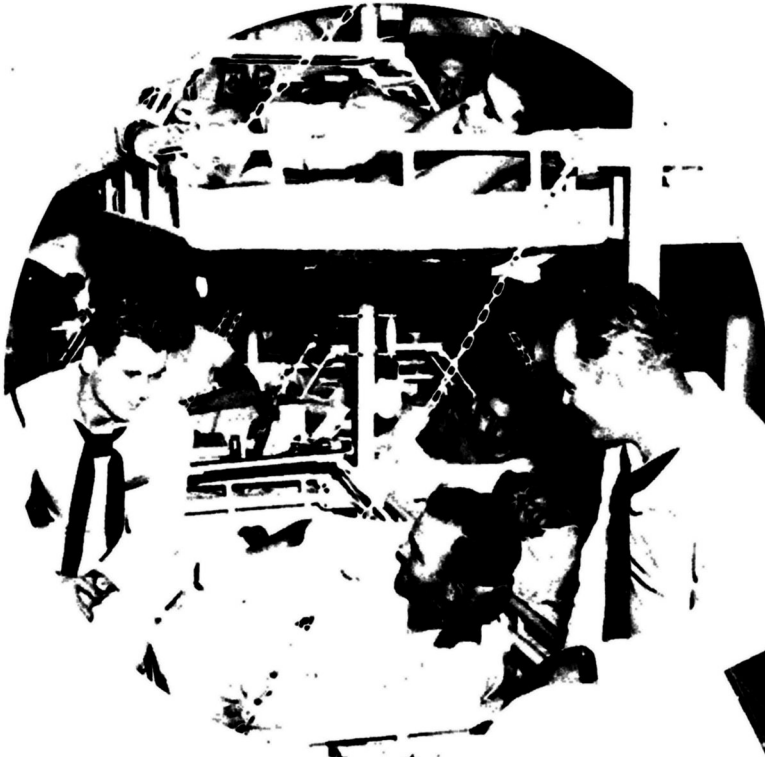


THE SWEET POTATO STOMP



HAIL! THE KING

Entertainment



JACKIE COOPER VISITING SICK BAY



GUAM GAB-GAB GALS



STATESIDE JAMBOREE



SHARON ROGERS GIRLS



GUAMIANS TROPICANA SHOW



JASEN - U.S.O. UNIT 710



JASEN - U.S.O. SHOW



RED CROSS SHOW



STATESIDE JAMBOREE



STATESIDE JAMBOREE



RED CROSS SHOW



GUAMANIANS TROPICANA SHOW



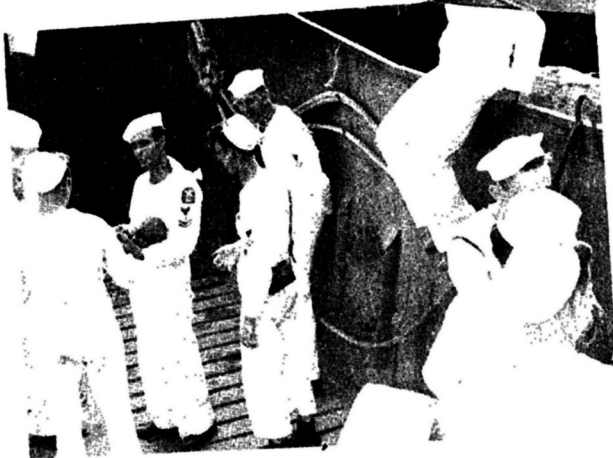
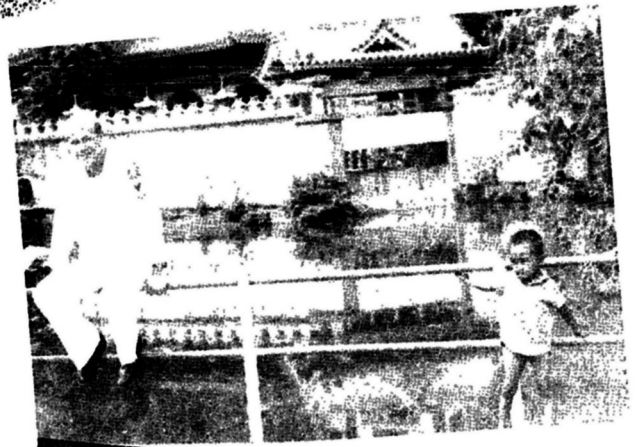
Ships **Dance**

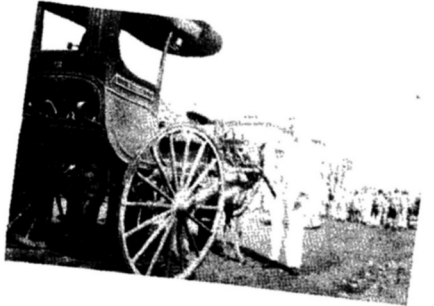
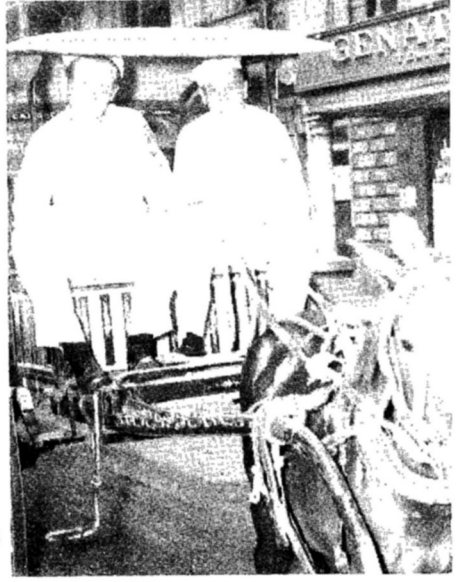






Liberty







GOOD LUCK

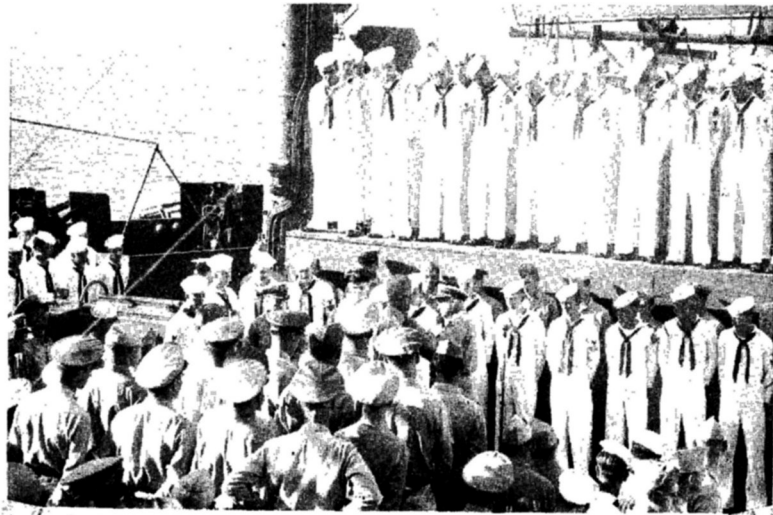


LEGION OF MERIT AWARD

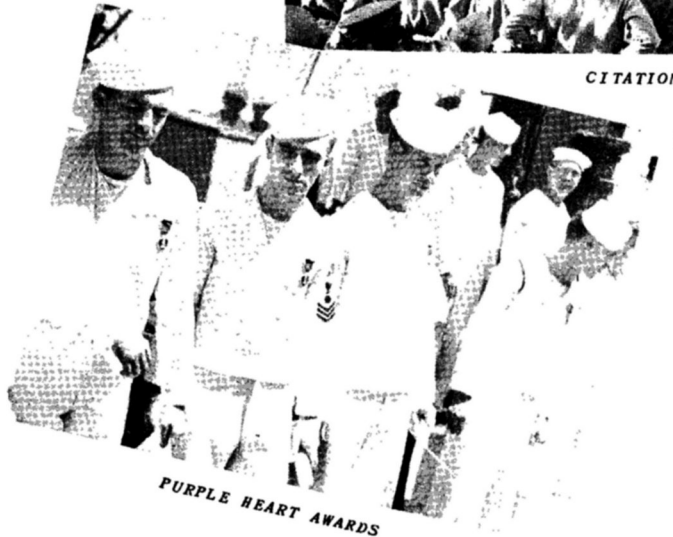


WELL DONE!

Commendations and Awards



CITATION AWARDS



PURPLE HEART AWARDS



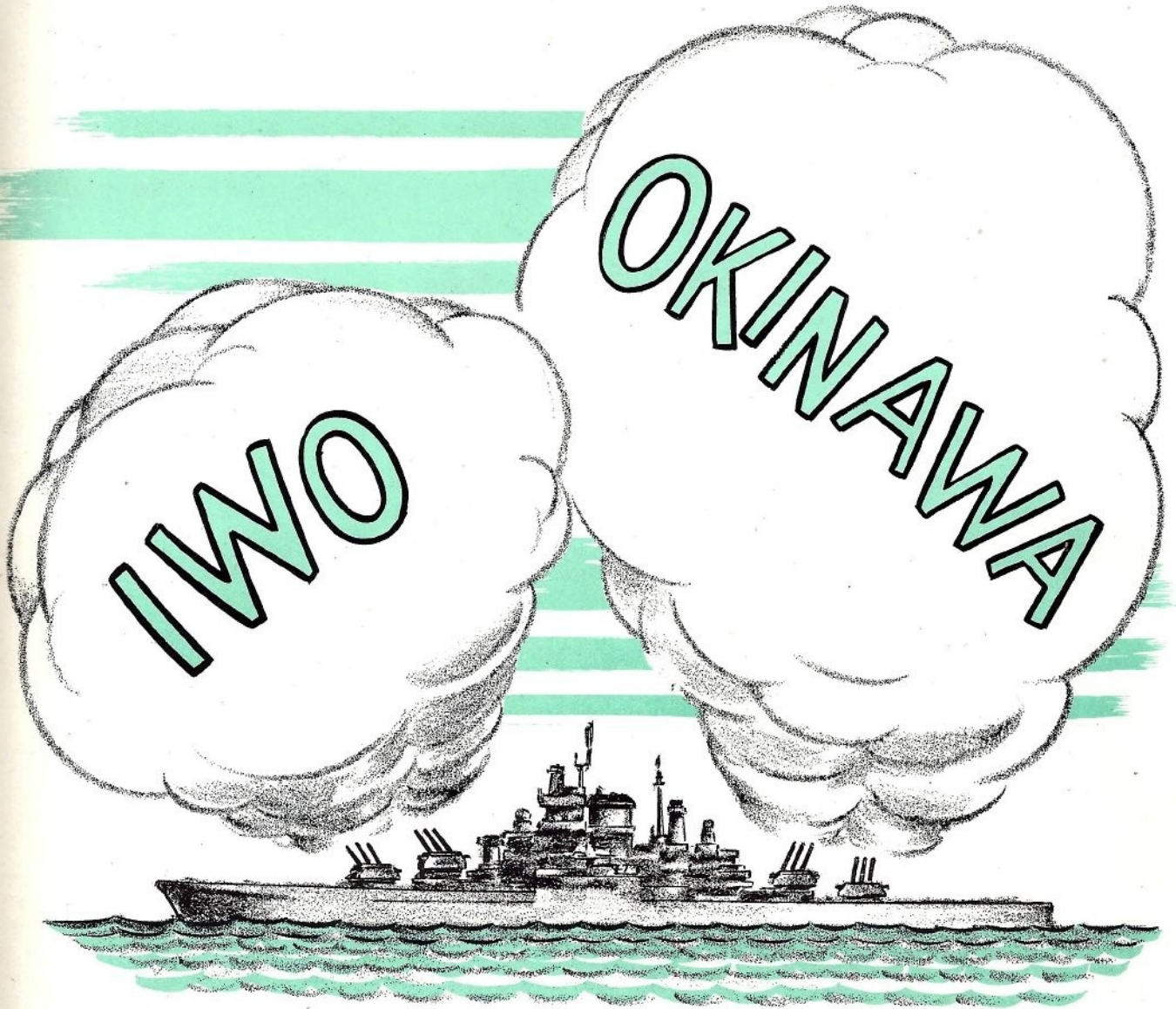
CONGRATULATIONS

Anniversary Party

PRESIDENT'S PALACE
MANILA



OPERATIONS



Iwo Jima

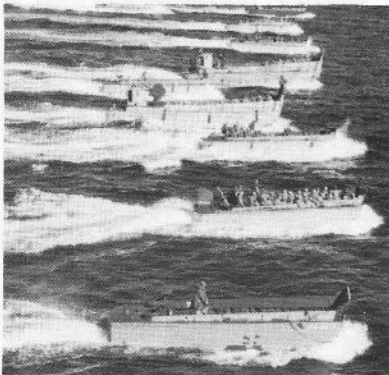
It was a wonderful morning in the early part of 1945, and as the rising sun pushed its way through billowy cloud formations to beam down on the beautiful Hawaiian Islands, the Eldorado was preparing to leave her berth and head for the vast expanses of the Western Pacific. All of her crew were excited and the conversation was confined to wild guesses as to her ultimate destination.

Within a short time we found ourselves leading a convoy of troop transports, and knew for a certainty that we would soon become involved in operation against the enemy. Our troops consisted of units of the Fourth and Fifth Marine Divisions, which had distinguished themselves in previous engagements with the Japs. For several days we headed west, and finally we arrived at Saipan, where a few days were spent in perfecting plans, logistics and final preparations for the early invasion of Iwo Jima.

The USS Eldorado was the latest type of command ship, and for that reason was destined to act as the "brain" of the entire operation. Our ship of the hundreds that engaged in the operation was the one best suited for the huge volumes of communication traffic that must necessarily flow between commanders and their various units. With us since our departure from P. H. were Vice Admiral R. K. Turner, U.S. Navy Commander of the Amphibious Forces in the Pacific and his staff; also Lt. Gen. H.M. Smith, U.S.M.C., Commander of Expeditionary



MT. SURABACHI, 'HOT ROCKS'



FIRST WAVE



'D' DAY, 'H' HOUR AT IWO

Troops of the U.S. Marine Corps, and his staff. At Saipan we were joined by Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable James V. Forrestal and his party, which included Rear Admiral L. E. Denfield, Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, and Rear Admiral E.W. Mills, Assistant Chief of the Naval Bureau of Ships.

Iwo Jima, a small pin-point of an island in the Volcanic chain, was to be the first actual Japanese territory to be invaded. For more than two months this tiny island was subjected to mass bombing raids by our Marianas based bombers and by carrier planes. The final pre-invasion softening-up process was three days of intense naval bombardment by the giants of our combined fleets. During the night of February 18th, which was the eve of D-Day, large fires and gun flashes were visible for many miles and the thunder of the big guns sounded like a constant rumbling of thunder as they kept up their ceaseless pounding.

February 19, at 0900, the Fifth Marines went ashore on the left flank, north of the volcanic Suribachi Yama; the Fourth Marines on the right, facing the southern airfield of Motoyama. The Nips had been preparing for this for a long time, and the landings were received with withering machine gun fire and a deadly barrage of accurate mortar shelling. Great losses were suffered in the initial encounter, but by nightfall of D-Day a beach of 2 1/2 miles had been established, extending from the East Boat Basin to the foot of Suribachi and across the narrow isthmus to the west coast. The following day the troops, supported by air, artillery



THE FIRST FOOHOLD

and naval gunfire, secured the air-strip and made further advances across the rugged terrain. Beaches were constantly under heavy mortar fire, and mechanized equipment was virtually useless. The Japs were well dug in and the whole island was a maze of concrete and steel dugouts and pillboxes. Flame throwers were brought into play on numerous occasions, and their importance cannot be over-estimated.

The next two days were devoted to eliminating all resistance on the mountain, for it was from there that the accurate mortars and snipers were keep our beaches in chaos and making every landing trip one of great dangers. The heroic efforts of the gallant marines was eventually rewarded when at 1038 on the morning of February 23rd, our lookouts spotted the eventful raising of old glory atop rugged Suribachi! It was a fitting tribute to the brave men who gave their lives to make the picture of this happening, one which will be forever remembered by a grateful nation.

Considerable fighting was still in progress on the island, and the Japanese air force was still harrassing our naval units constantly. For many of us it was the first time we had engaged the enemy, and volumes could be written on personal experiences. Our greatest danger was the nightly air-raids, but rough weather kept them to a minimum.

Our troops continued to meet with stiff resistance, but short gains were steadily putting pressure on the fanatic enemy. On March 7 the final drive gained momentum, all divisions making good progress. The Fifth fought down

ridges to the sea, and the Third Marines, who entered the fight on February 23, had taken over the center line of attack and carved out a five-hundred yard advance. On March 8th the enemy showed signs of cracking as the Fifth pushed to the water's edge, while the Third and Fourth began the slow job of cleaning out the caves of their Jap occupants.

The end was in sight, and since our ship had completed her part in this eventful struggle we prepared to turn over the amphibious command to another vessel, and return to the rear area. On March 9th, we departed from Iwo Jima, leaving behind not only a badly beaten enemy and a piece of land which will bear the visible marks of United States armed might, but a memorable imprint on the pages of history which will always stand as a shrine to ways of freedom and democracy.

IWO JIMA

(Sing to the tune of Marine's Hymn)
By M.A. Greitzer

We struck the foe a thunderous blow,
At Iwo Jima Isle;
We drove them back with our attack,
In the U.S. Marine style.
Our heroes' blood mixed with the mud,
On that hellish little strip;
And each foxhole brought us closer to,
The finish of the Nip!



OLD GLORY ATOP MT. SURIBACHI

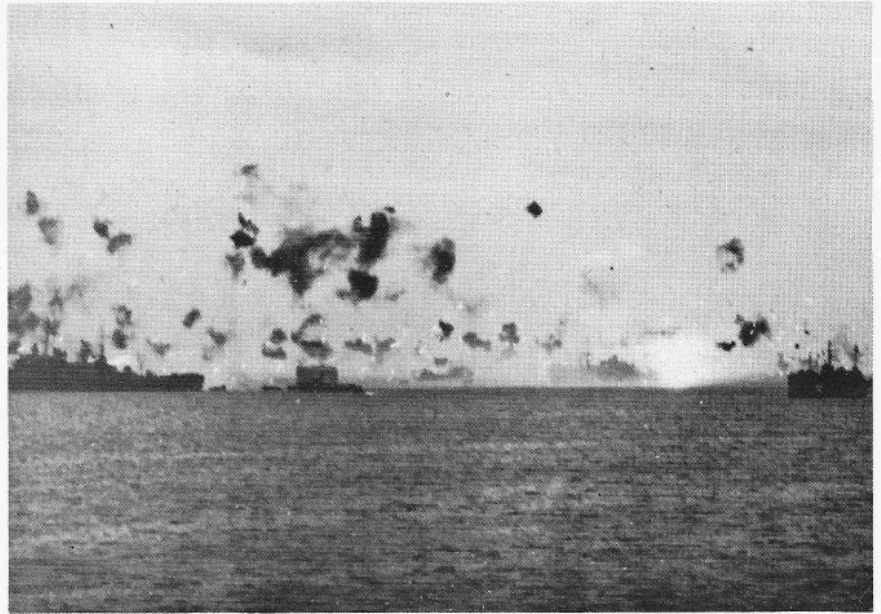


THE MARINES FOUGHT AND PAID FOR THIS BEACHHEAD

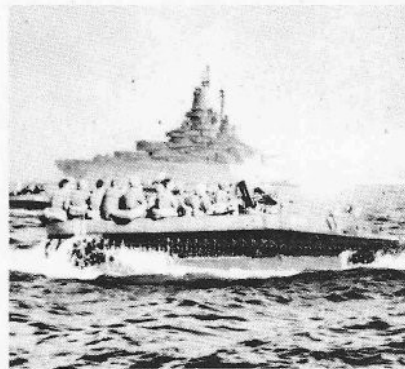
Okinawa

The ELDORADO, having completed her first invasion operation successfully at Iwo Jima, turned the command over to a sister ship and proceeded to Leyte Gulf in the Philippines. From March 9 to March 15, 1945 we engaged in dress rehearsals for the forthcoming amphibious operations against the Japanese owned island of Okinawa and surrounding territory. This operation, as were the other successful operations against the Nipponese, was under the able command of Richmond Kelly Turner, four star admiral in charge of all Pacific amphibious operations. This was to be the largest invasion yet attempted, and everyone knew the dangers involved in striking so close to the homeland of the enemy. Our rehearsals consisted of the proper deployment of ships, naval gunfire to be delivered in support of invading units, air support coverage, complete demagnitude of logistic problems and correct timing of every element concerned. Finally the time for departure arrived, and once again the ELDORADO headed a large convoy of troop laden transports and cargo carrying ships. "Love" day, the day chosen for attack, was to be Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945.

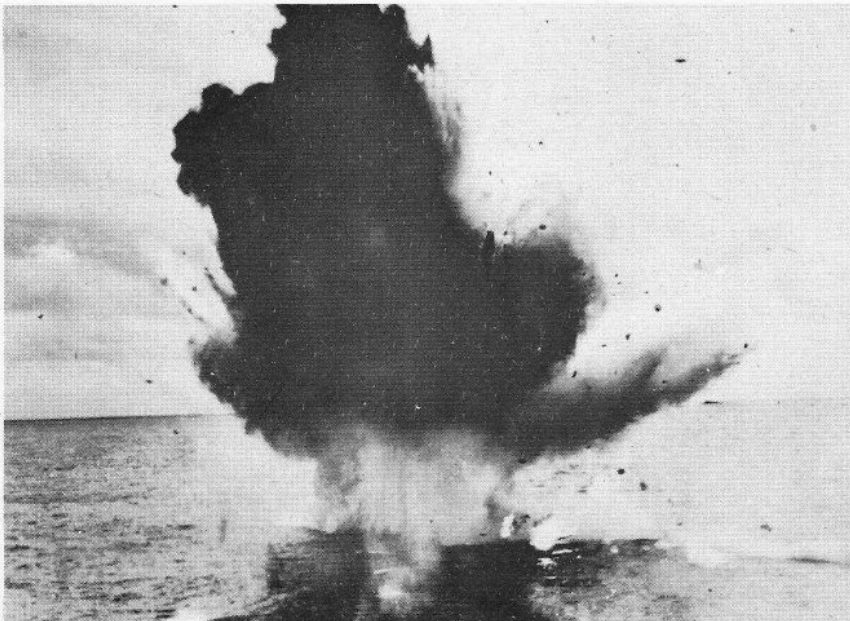
Five days prior to the landing on Okinawa, an expeditionary force of several thousand men and a few hundred combat ships, launched a surprise attack on a group of rugged islands south of the Okinawa mainland, known as Kerama Retto. As usual the big guns of the battleships and rocket-firing LSM's, paved the way for a rather easy seizure of these vital pieces of land. Everything



TRANSPORT AREA ACTION



ON THE WAY TO THE BEACH



KAMIKAZE KID MEETS HONORABLE ANCESTORS

was then in readiness for the huge armada of 1200 ships, of all varieties, to move in and take the strategically important island of Okinawa.

Early on the morning of Easter Sunday, the ELDORADO and her task group heard the pleasant booming of sixteen inch giants as they paved the way for the first wave of the Tenth Army Infantry and the elements of the Sixth Marines to land successfully. Love day schedule was met in every respect. There was a slight surface haze which reduced visibility to about 6000 yards in the early morning during the final approach to the transport area, but otherwise weather and hydrographic conditions were excellent. Enemy suicide boats were active more or less sporadically, but the conquest of Kerama Retto reduced this instrument considerably. Four hundred such boats were captured there and seventy-one more were destroyed on Love Day at Okinawa. Enemy submarines were not aggressive although numerous sound contacts and several visual sightings were made.

Our forces, after landing, proceeded inland at a rapid pace and by 1230 of the first day they had captured both Yontan and Kadena airfields with only slight losses to our men. Very little fire was received by our ships and the landing of material progressed at a terrific rate. It had been a master stroke of invasion genius, and the easy seizure of this large beach-head stood us in good stead in the campaign.

If we were harboring the thought that the enemy was going to succumb without first putting up a terrific fight, it was quickly dispelled, as it was during this

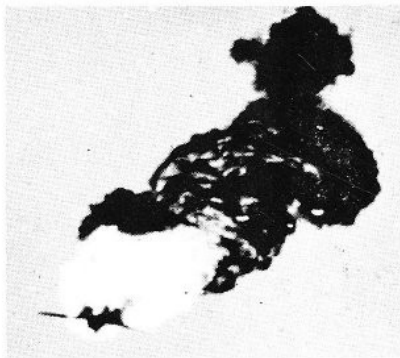


RETURNING TO THEIR HOMES

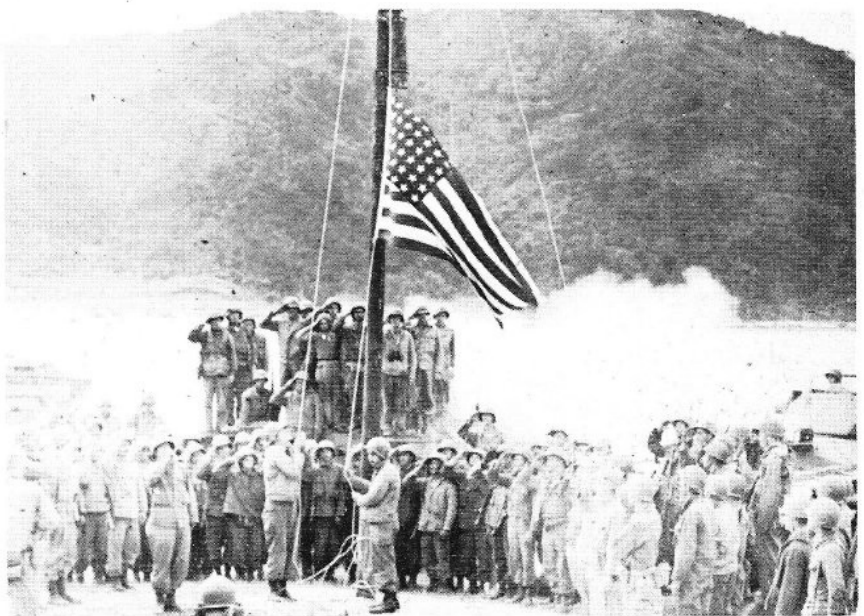
campaign that the Japs introduced large scale suicide tactics by their aircraft against our surface units. There were daily bombings, torpedo attacks and fanatical Kamikaze charges. The most dangerous air attack occurred on April 6th when 22 of our ships were hit by suicide planes alone. The total box score of the memorable day shows that they suffered 396 planes destroyed by our combat air patrol, AA fire, and by their own tactics.

The ELDORADO wasn't without her own perils from these forces and her guns were blazing almost nightly. Several near misses were registered and a few members of her gun crews were severely wounded although no fatalities resulted. Many conflicting stories will be told, but the seriousness of suicide attacks can never be exaggerated. The name Okinawa will always represent enormous losses for the Navy and the brave men who combated the Kamikaze 'kids' should forever be held in reverence. They did a wonderful job against the worst type of opposition and emerged victorious.

As the Army and Marine infantrymen moved further toward the capital city of Naha, the enemy had stiffened and were throwing everything they had into a desperate struggle for survival. Again the men were forced to dig them from holes like rats, but this was something they enjoyed doing and the Nips were paying with their blood. On the 16th of April, a landing on the island of Ie Shima was effected despite enemy interference. Two days later, the 18th of April, the noted war correspondent, Ernie Pyle was killed on the island by Jap sniper fire.



BANZAI!



THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

Many such small islands surrounding Okinawa were taken in much the same manner, and each of them were to play their part in the ultimate defeat of Japan. They were to be used as bases for our deadly bombers and aggressive fighter planes.

Fanatical aircraft suicide attacks were a daily occurrence and the destroyers assigned Radar picket duty suffered greatly in both ships and personnel. Several of our vessels wrote a glorious name for themselves in the annals of American Navy history. Among them, the U. S. S. LAFFEY who suffered six suicide hits yet remained afloat and reached the west coast of the United States under her own power. The U. S. S. HADLEY accounted for 23 enemy planes by her AA fire alone. To us, the men of the MIGHTY EL, it meant 268 hours at battle stations with 562 designated air raids! And ----- 90 hours of "make smoke!"

The duties of our flagship were completed on the 17th of May when Admiral Turner handed his command over to Admiral Hill and all hands of the U. S. S. ANCON. It was with great satisfaction that we left Okinawa, for we had played an important role in the conquest of enemy held territory so very close to their mainland.

As we left the Ryukus little did we think that the stubborn Jap would soon call it quits. The great day of rejoicing found us anchored in historic Manila Bay, and the welcome news gave us all cause for sincere thanksgiving. This was the end of the line for a great ship and a gallant crew.

Poet's Corner

THE BATTLE FOR IWO JIMA

By Guy Owensby

Doorstep to the House of Nippon
Garrison of ash and sand,
'Sulphur Island' some still call you
Others brand you 'No Man's Land'.

From the beachhead, onward, inward
Trudge our troops by inch--by yard,
Stumbling over those who faltered
Facing fire, dying hard.

Distant intermittent rumbles
Of the Jap artillery,
Proved their strong retaliation,
Rain was their auxiliary.

Broken bodies maimed with shrapnel
One more mortar casts its spell,
Twisted wreckage--scattered debris
Constitutes this living Hell.

Nightfall marks the first day's fighting
Overcast impairs the sight,
Danger lies in infiltration
Star-shells penetrate the night.

Tracers from destroyers off-shore
Dot the sky like liquid fire,
Aircraft bomb the gun-positions
Shadows lurk, grotesque and dire.

Dwelling side-by-side with Satan
Sand-fleas----Rations 'K' and 'C',
Eyes that burn from sand and ash dust
Bones that ache incessantly.

From the depths of cratered shell-holes
Reeks the stench of those long dead,
Friend or foe alike are coffined
Draped in khaki tinted red.

Surabachi, King Volcano
Scarred and burnt beyond rebirth,
Stars and stripes now crown your summit
Lessening a nations girth.

Motoyama, valued air-strip
Home of enemy birds of war,
Shattered runways, littered rubble
Mark your planes that are no more.

'Bloody Iwo', cry of havoc,
Hated for your endless strife,
Where man is but a tool to kill
The evils that have threatened life.

Blood and bane now stain your beaches,
Coral cliffs now harbor death,
Cave and pillbox now are silent
Tomb of those who draw no breath.

Hear Ye, Emperor of Nippon!
We have now unlocked the door,
Men have died upon your threshold,
Iwo's ours, Forevermore!!!!

UNDER FIRE

By Guy Owensby

Those were dark, depressing hours
For the 'Mighty El',
And for all other ship's who saw
That Okinawa hell.

Twilight brought familiar fear
To those out on that sea,
For twilight meant the dusk alert
And dusk meant mystery.

What would come this dismal night?
I shuddered at the thought
Will 'Kamikazi Visitors'
Death to us allot?

I thought no more and let it pass,
'No raids tonight', I said,
No sooner did I say it when
I heard 'FLASH RED! FLASH RED!'

The O-in-C was on the phones
When I had reached my post,
'Customers tonight', he joked
'Looks like we're the host.'

The radars turned in their reports,
'Three bogies, angels low--',
C.A.P. Reports a contact
One 'Val' --Tallyho!

Minutes passed, which seemed like hours,
Two 'vals' vectored in,
'I see them now!', port look-out cried
'And one is in a spin!'

'Aft 5-inch, confine your range!
Port 40's fire at will!
A puff of flak--a blinding flash,
A wing aflame--the kill!

'C.I.C. to fire--control--',
The phones then blurted forth
'Raids two and three at one-four-five
Closing to the north!'

The skipper ordered 'Smoke-Make smoke!'
Boats three and four drew near,
The oily fog soon sifted through
The cordite atmosphere.

The Eldorado did not stir,
Protected there, she lay
Beneath her veil, her guns ceased fire
Lest flash give her away.

Silence stalked the entire ship
Patience was the word,
Watching, wondering, 'Can they see us?'
Not a sound was heard.

News from other ships came in,
Casualties were high,
One destroyer took two zero's
Thank God, the 'El' got by!

'TO THE TROPICS'

I haven't traveled far,
But I've seen a doggone lot
Of the beauty of the tropics
And that stupid sort of rot.

Oh! The mountains and the valleys
And the coconut trees so tall;
The gentle balmy breezes
And the pretty ports of call.

The shy enchanting natives,
With their quaint peculiar ways.
And the luscious, lissome maidens,
Oh, happy carefree days.

But, now I've had enough of it,
My language is quite plain,
As far as little me's concerned,
It's just a goddam pain.

For I hate the dirty natives,
I loathe the ports of call,
With the blasted, blazing sunshine
And the coconut trees so tall.

And there's the luscious maidens
You ought to see the cows,
With skins of brass, skirts of grass
A dirty bunch of frows.

The islands are not pretty
They're just another drudge,
And if you don't believe me,
Come down and be the judge.

So if some stupid begger says,
'It's such a pretty place'
Just ignore the silly blighter,
Or kick him in the face.

You'll be doing me a favor,
And please yourself as well,
If you take your blasted islands
And go right straight to hell.

Author--unknown

Death was a reality
Of this there was no doubt,
Tho' dazed and weary--numb with fear
Our faith prevailed throughout.

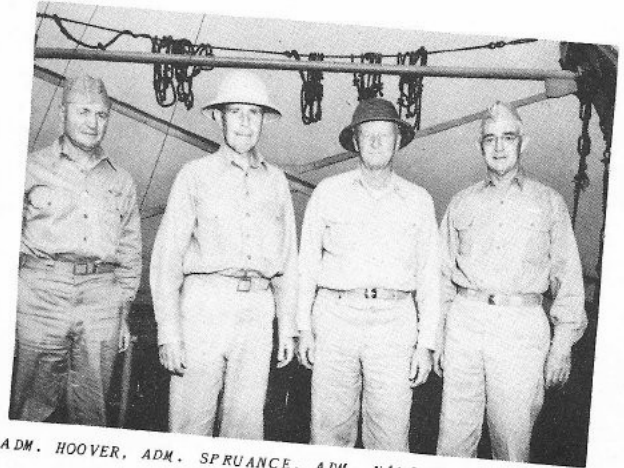
Many nights were thus repeated,
Loss of sleep began to show
Some lost more than sleep--from shrapnel,
How many--we'll not know.

Those were dark depressing hours
For the 'Mighty El',
And may God grant we'll never see
More Okinawa hell.

HONORED *Guests*



ADM. TURNER, SEC. FORRESTAL, GEN. SMITH, ADM. HILL



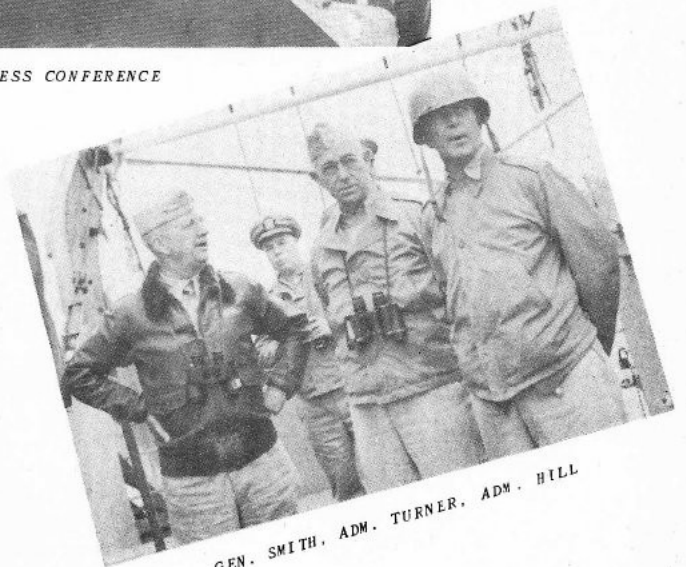
ADM. HOOVER, ADM. SPRUANCE, ADM. NIMITZ, ADM. TURNER



SEC. NAV. IN PRESS CONFERENCE



GEN. SMITH BRIEFING IWO JIMA INVASION



GEN. SMITH, ADM. TURNER, ADM. HILL

INSTRUMENT OF SURRENDER

We, acting by command of and in behalf of the Emperor of Japan, the Japanese Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters, hereby accept the provisions set forth in the declaration issued by the heads of the Governments of the United States, China and Great Britain on 26 July 1945, at Potsdam, and subsequently adhered to by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which four powers are hereafter referred to as the Allied Powers.

We hereby proclaim the unconditional surrender to the Allied Powers of the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters and of all Japanese armed forces and all armed forces under Japanese control wherever situated.

We hereby command all Japanese forces wherever situated and the Japanese people to cease hostilities forthwith, to preserve and save from damage all ships, aircraft, and military and civil property and to comply with all requirements which may be imposed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers or by agencies of the Japanese Government at his direction.

We hereby command the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters to issue at once orders to the Commanders of all Japanese forces and all forces under Japanese control wherever situated to surrender unconditionally themselves and all forces under their control.

We hereby command all civil, military and naval officials to obey and enforce all proclamations, orders and directives deemed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers to be proper to effectuate this surrender and issued by him or under his authority and we direct all such officials to remain at their posts and to continue to perform their non-combatant duties unless specifically relieved by him or under his authority.

We hereby undertake for the Emperor, the Japanese Government and their successors to carry out the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration in good faith, and to issue whatever orders and take whatever action may be required by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers or by any other designated representative of the Allied Powers for the purpose of giving effect to that Declaration.

We hereby command the Japanese Imperial Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters at once to liberate all allied prisoners of war and civilian internees now under Japanese control and to provide for their protection, care, maintenance and immediate transportation to places as directed.

The authority of the Emperor and the Japanese Government to rule the state shall be subject to the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers who will take such steps as he deems proper to effectuate these terms of surrender.

Signed at TOKYO BAY, JAPAN at 0904
on the SECOND day of SEPTEMBER, 1945.

MAMORU SHIGEMITSU

*By Command and in behalf of the Emperor of Japan
and the Japanese Government.*

YOSHIJIRO UMEZO

*By Command and in behalf of the Japanese
Imperial General Headquarters.*

Accepted at TOKYO BAY, JAPAN at 0908
on the SECOND day of SEPTEMBER, 1945,
for the United States, Republic of China, United Kingdom and the
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and in the interests of the other
United Nations at war with Japan.

DOUGLAS MACARTHUR

Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.

C. W. NIMITZ

United States Representative

HSU YUNG-CHANG

Republic of China Representative

BRUCE FRASER

United Kingdom Representative

LIEUTENANT GENERAL K. DEREVYANKO

*Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Representative*

T. A. BLAMEY

Commonwealth of Australia Representative

L. MOORE COSGRAVE

Commonwealth of Canada Representative

LECLERC

*Provisional Government of the French
Republic Representative*

G. E. L. HELFRICH

Kingdom of the Netherlands Representative

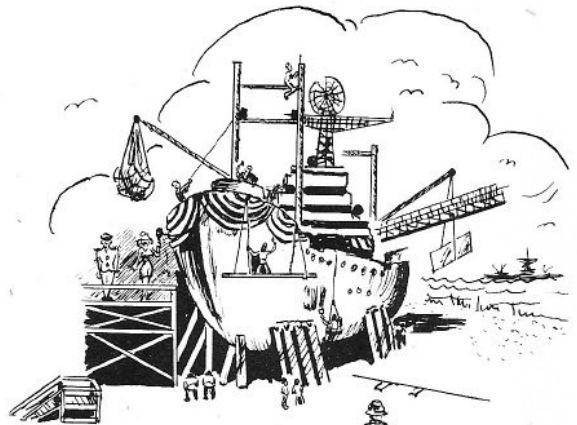
LEONARD M. ISITT

Commonwealth of New Zealand Representative

Ships Diary

Aug. 25, 1944

A brief ceremony marked the occasion of the ELDORADO's commissioning Captain Wallace accepted command of the ship, the first watches were set, and officially the Navy took over from Bethlehem Steel Corp. Actually the commissioning made no noticeable difference in life a-board the uncompleted ship. Work continued at a furious pace, workers swarmed over the hull with welding torches, pneumatic chisels, other scientific noise makers; ship's crew continued to work day and night to ready the ship for sea. On....



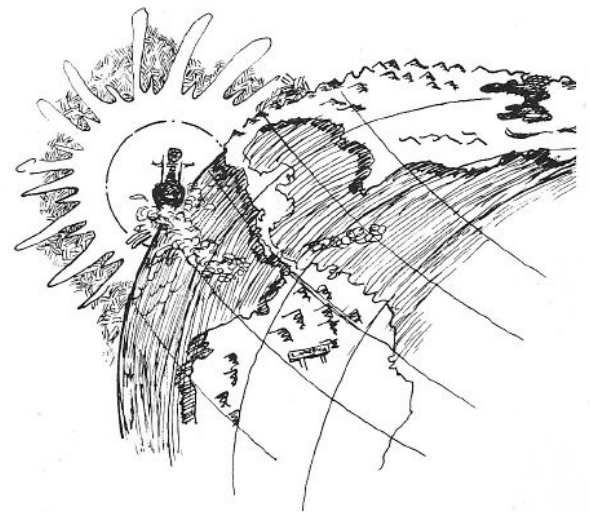
Sept. 6, 1944

The ELDORADO was ready, and cast off on her maiden voyage. For the majority of men aboard, this was their first ship and their first voyage, and they made the usual contribution to Neptune as the ship rode the rough water between New York and Norfolk. These nouveau-salts offered fervent thanks when the ship dropped anchor in Norfolk on



Sept. 7, 1944

Although they may have thought themselves dying of mal-de-mere enroute, these new-comers recuperated swiftly and discovered for themselves why Norfolk is the sailor's **FAVORITE LIBERTY PORT!** It was with mingled feelings that the ship's company readied the ship for another step toward her ultimate destination. By September 14th the ship was standing out to sea, when the reports of a great hurricane sweeping the East Coast began to come in. The ELDORADO wisely remained at the mouth of the harbor, until the next day. During that time she performed her first service by picking up a weak "SOS" signal on her radio equipment and by relaying it, she was directly responsible for the salvation of a vessel in distress. The hurricane abated sufficiently by



Sept. 15, 1944

So that the ELDORADO was able to continue her voyage. Smooth sailing from Norfolk to the mouth of the Panama Canal, and on September 21st the ELDORADO slipped through the Canal and emerged in the Pacific the next morning. No stop-overs in Panama.....time was too valuable to waste and the ELDORADO was a vital ship, so it was straight from Panama to San Diego, where she arrived on

Sept. 29, 1944

She stopped there long enough only to take on stores and ammunition, and to drop the weeping Marine Detachment, which, instead of enjoying liberties in San Francisco and Sacramento, would undergo a "toughening" process in San Diego. Sadly we said good-bye to the Marines, and left San Diego, to arrive next day.



Sept. 30, 1944

At Mare Island. There it was Bethlehem Steel Yard all over again, with shipyard workers crowding aboard and cutting viciously into the vessel. Apparently the entire ship had to be torn apart and reassembled on different lines. The job was miraculously completed in a few short weeks; stores were brought aboard, ammunition, all last minute bits of miscellaneous gear. Our Marines were returned to us, tanned and rugged, and still weeping. No liberty for them, for we shoved off.



Nov. 22, 1944

Our destination was one of those secrets known to everyone.... Pearl Harbor. En-route a plane crashed into the ocean near the ship and we stopped long enough to pick up the planes former occupants, who were damp, but unhurt.

Nov. 28, 1944

And the ELDORADO pulled into Pearl Harbor with the crew eagerly gazing over the side for a first glimpse of the Hawaiian Islands, Land of Paradise, hula girls, leis! No leis.....work! More last minute repairs, gear brought aboard, stores.... and the boys came back from liberty saying much the same thing about Pearl Harbor as they said about Norfolk. Almost a month there, but on

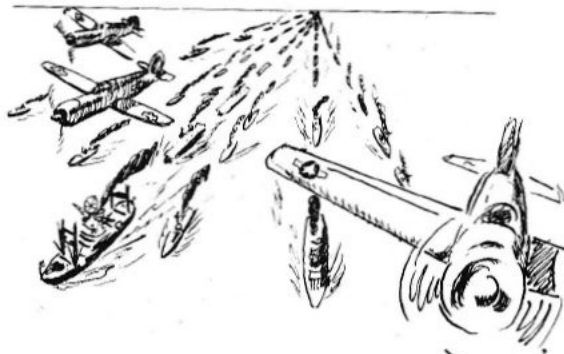


Jan. 27, 1945

We pulled out of Pearl Harbor, bound for the forward areas of the Pacific. We stopped for two days at Eniwetok.... not much to see on that atoll.. and hove to at Saipan on

Feb. 11, 1945

We took a long look at that island, taken only a short time before from the Japanese. It began to dawn upon us that war was something besides liberties and chow lines. The meaning of war became even clearer on

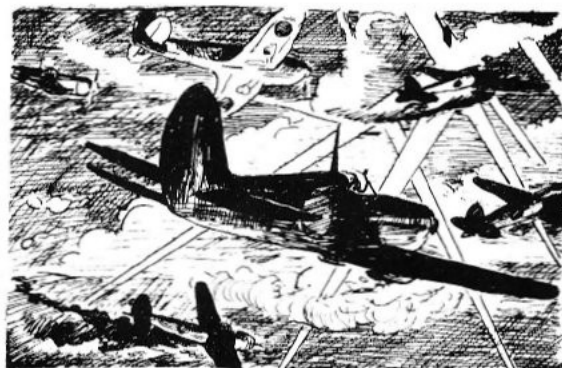


Feb. 12, 1945

When we left Saipan for a short rehearsal, off Tinian. A dress rehearsal, complete with planes, bombs, ships, marines. It proceeded, apparently, quite satisfactorily, and on February 16th we left Saipan in convoy, and arrived at Iwo Jima in time for the grand opening on

Feb. 19, 1945

Our first contact with those little yellow men we'd been hearing so much about! None of us were scared..... even on February 22, when the Japanese deluged us with 12 air-raids that one night.... but our sensations were rather peculiar! No one seemed to regret it when we left Iwo Jima on



March 9, 1945

Two days later we arrived in Guam, and two days after that, before we had a chance to tell the Guamanians that we were heroes, we left Guam. Leyte, of the Philippines, was our objective this time, and we arrived on

March 16, 1945

We successfully invaded the fleet recreational area, drank beer, traded with the natives (and many of us lost our shirts), and on



March 27, 1945

We left Leyte again in convoy, and on

April 1, 1945

We arrived for the opening of "Okinawa". To us, the battle-worn and bogie-wise veterans of one invasion, it was all routine...the "Flash Red, Control Green" that sounded night after night, the smoke that filled our compartments, the suicide bent Japanese airmen. It was more intensified at Okinawa; the raids came oftener, and the Japs dived more recklessly. There was the night of Hirohito's birthday, celebrated by the Jap airmen in an unprecedented mass raid on the Okinawa invasion fleet. On

May 18, 1945

We left Okinawa, and cheerfully! The Japanese suicide plane that swept close by us shortly before we left and, missing us, plunged into the New Mexico, did nothing to dampen that cheerfulness. We made Guam by

May 22, 1945

Where we breathed deeply once again and relaxed. Stores, painting, ship's work....everything possible was done to make the ship perfectly conditioned. On

June 9, 1945

We left Guam, bound for the Philippines, and on

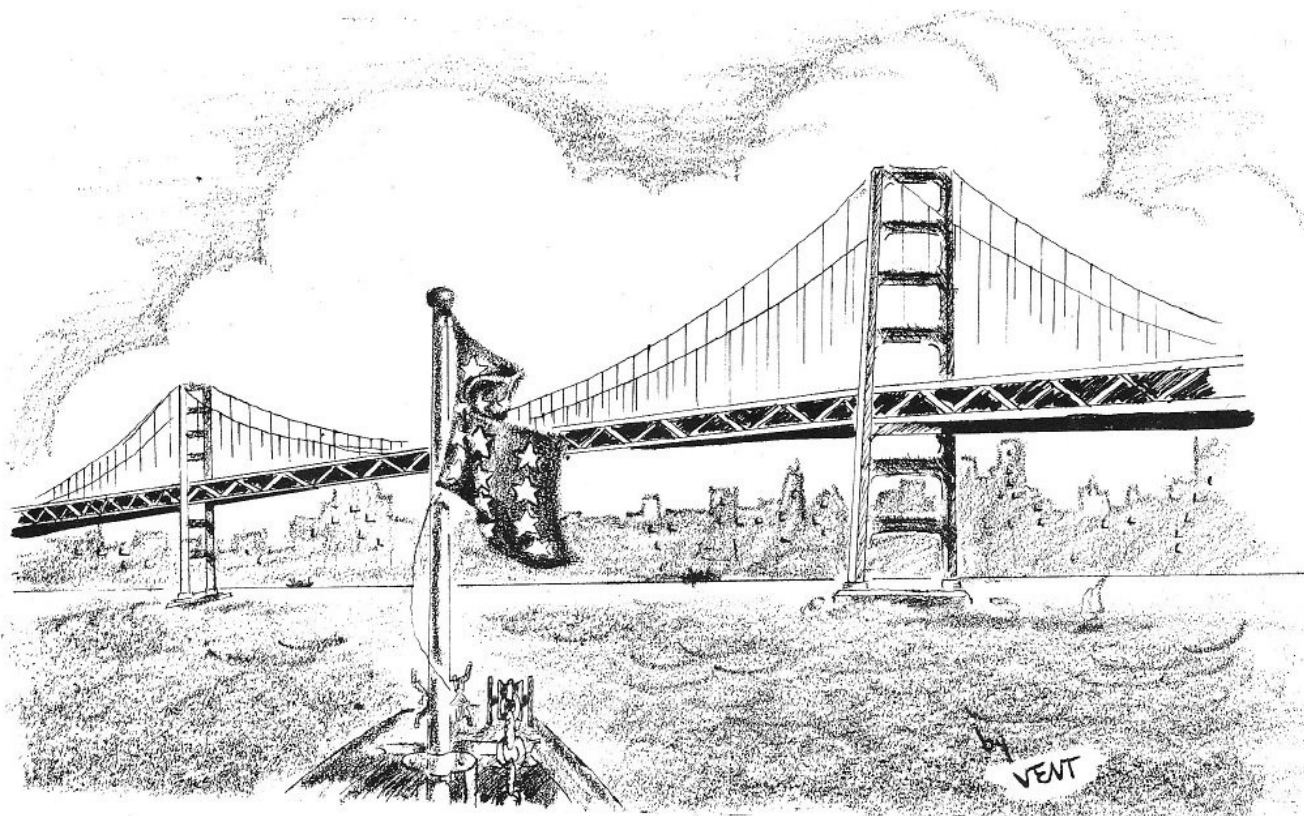
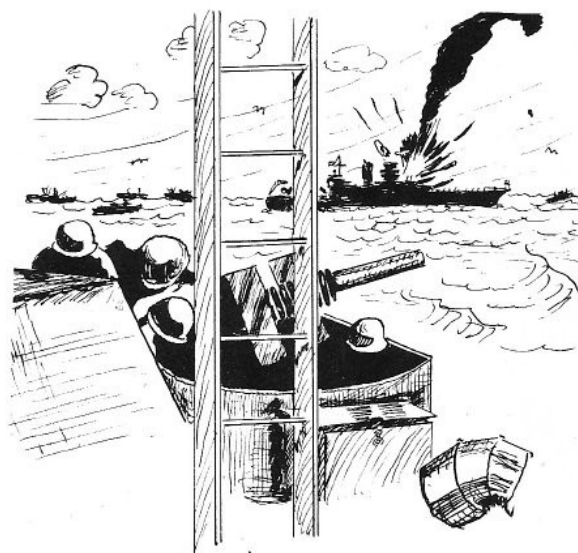
June 14, 1945

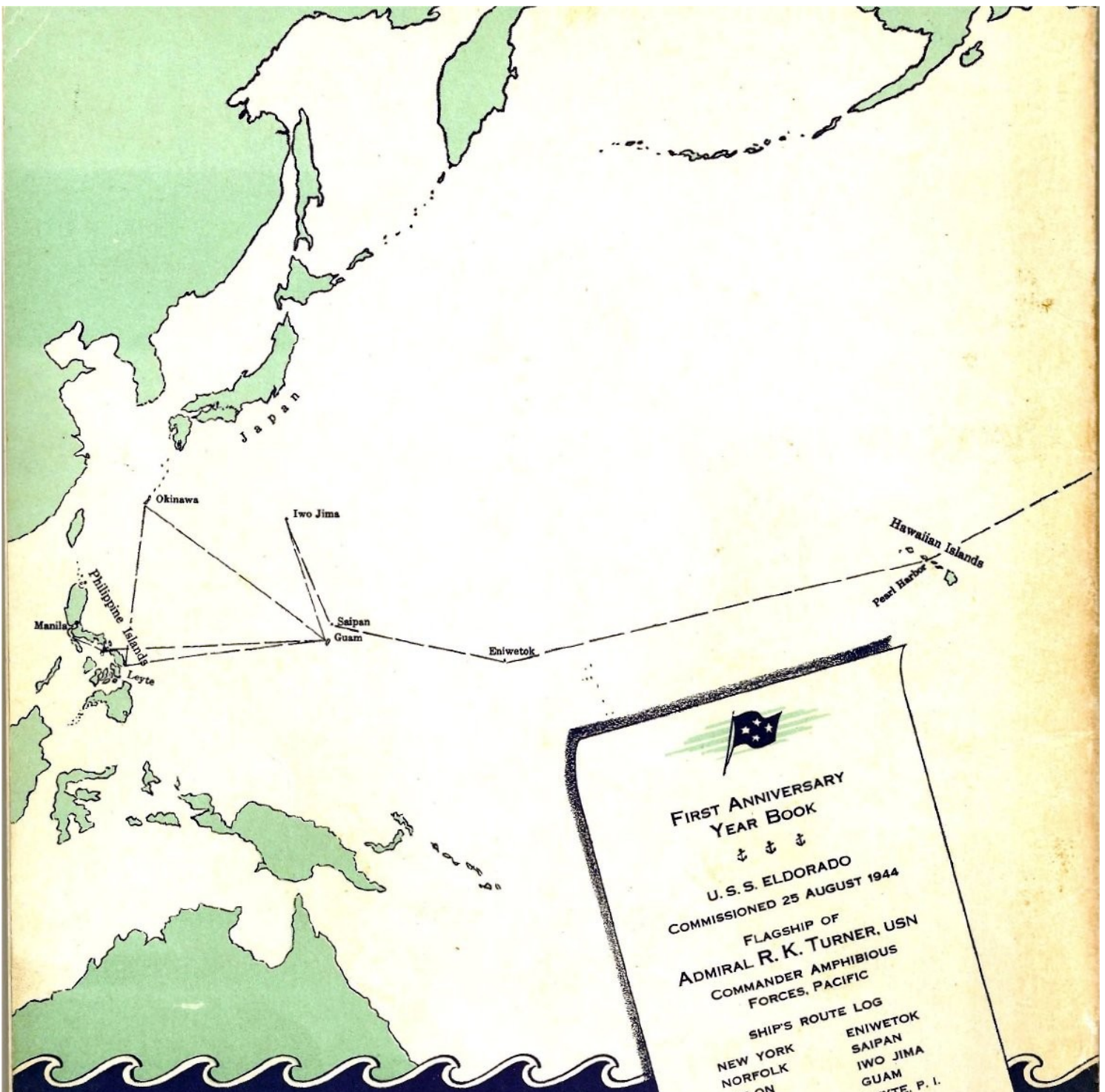
We dropped anchor in Manila Bay. Liberty ashore..... we gaped at the blasted city, explored the sights, sounds----and smells; aboard ship we were readying for the next operation, when on


August 9, 1945

The first atomic bomb was dropped! From then on smooth sailing! The ELDORADO had accomplished her mission, and was an honored survivor!

Frisco, here we come!!






**FIRST ANNIVERSARY
 YEAR BOOK**
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U. S. S. ELDORADO
 COMMISSIONED 25 AUGUST 1944
 FLAGSHIP OF
ADMIRAL R. K. TURNER, USN
 COMMANDER AMPHIBIOUS
 FORCES, PACIFIC
 SHIP'S ROUTE LOG
 NEW YORK ENIWETOK
 NORFOLK SAIPAN
 COLON IWO JIMA
 PANAMA GUAM
 BALBOA LEYTE, P. I.
 SAN DIEGO OKINAWA
 SAN FRANCISCO GUAM
 PEARL HARBOR MANILA

Skippers

Capt. J.R.WALLACE USN
Capt. M.J.TICHENOR USN