

U.S.S. OLMSTED (APA-188)

on

" MAGIC CARPET "

DUTY

HOMEWARD BOUND

FROM

BIAK - HOLLANDIA to LOS ANGELES
(the jungle) (civilization)

November 27 - December 15, 1945

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To the Army officers and men embarked in the OLMSTED:

You are the second group of men to be returned to the U.S. in the OLMSTED.

Due to the distance, 7200 Miles in this case, you can see that each vessel can transport about 1800 in a 6 weeks period. We of the Navy are glad to do the transporting. Most of us will be on this job for some time but finally our chance will come to go home to stay as you are doing now.

Before you step ashore at Los Angeles we want you to know a little more about the Navy and in particular about the OLMSTED which will have been your home for these 18 days. We want you to feel that you can refer to the OLMSTED as "your ship".

Chas E Spiegel
CHAS. E. A. SPIEGEL,
Captain, U.S.N.R.,
Commanding Officer.

The USS OLMSTED, on which you are making your homeward voyage, is a veteran assault transport, having been present at the Lingayen Gulf and Okinawa landings. Considerable action and many thousand miles of steaming, much of it in forward areas, have been crowded into these past fifteen months since the ship was placed in commission.

The OLMSTED was built in the Kaiser Shipyards at Vancouver, Wash. She is one of a group of 113 ships of this design.

The keel was laid on April 11, 1944.

She was launched on July 4th 1944; being christened by Mrs. Duncan Gregg of Vancouver, and commissioned on September 5th of that year.

After outfitting and a short

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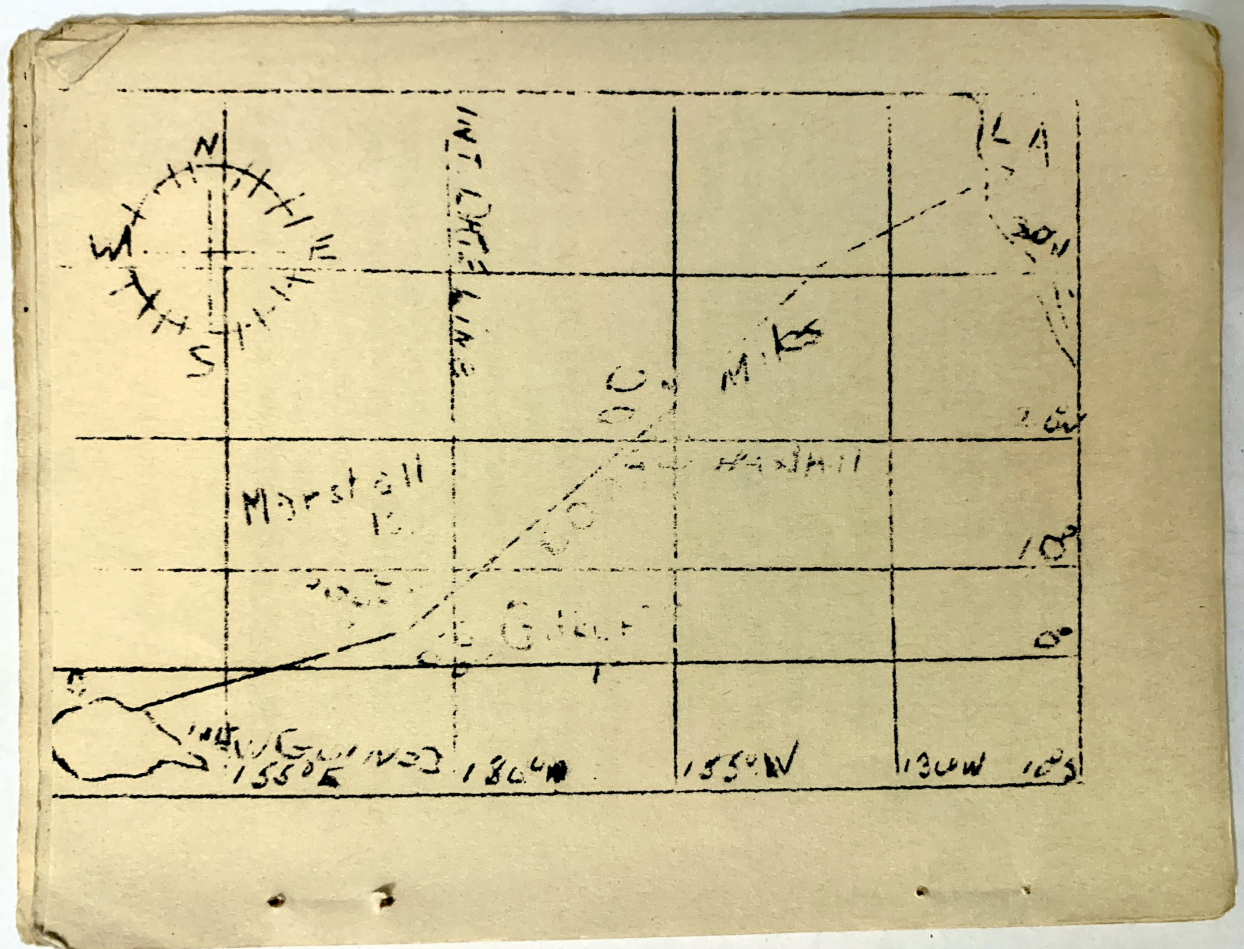
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shakedown period, the OLMSTED shoved off for Hollandia on October 22, 1944, reporting to Commander Amphibious Force Pacific for duty upon arrival there. The ship's Boat Division adopted the spread wings with an "O" in the center, as the boat bow insignia. This combined with the fact that the OLMSTED has been constantly on the go ever since, prompts the nickname of the "Flying "O".

The First mission involved landing Headquarters Troops at Lingayen Gulf, Luzon Island, on January 11, 1945, which was D plus 2 day. These men had been embarked at Oro Bay and Lae, New Guinea.

Again loading at Wadke Island on January 27-28, we made a second trip to Lingayen Gulf with a reinforced battalion of the 123rd Infantry, landing them on February 10th this year. Returning to Leyte Gulf on February 15th, the present Commanding Officer relieved Captain C.L.C. Atkeson, U.S. Navy, of Alabama, and almost immediately began preparations to carry the Amphibious War to the first of

SUCCESSFUL LIVE CASES, 1944-1945

the Jap home islands, Okinawa.

Having embarked the 1st Battalion reinforced of the 382nd Infantry, 96 Division and some 500 tons of their gear (equipment, ammunition and supplies to you) a full week of rehearsal landings and approach exercises were held in Leyte Gulf. (The 96th Division had been in the assault landings at Leyte and had carried their advance against the Japs some 40 miles into the interior) Finally, the Northern Central and Southern Attack forces were ready for Okinawa and each steamed out of Leyte on March 27th, in the order named, and with about six hours between groups. The LST's left 36 hours earlier.

The OLLSTED was flagship of Transport Division 41, part of Squadron 14 and assigned to the Southern Attack Force. As you face the Western shore of Okinawa, our beach was to the right, closest to the city of Naha. During the

succeeding five days, April 1 to 5, we

succeeding five days, April 1 to 5, we participated in fighting off two air attacks during which several of the transports received damage, but none were sunk. Having successfully landed our 1500 men and 500 tons of gear (cargo) we retired from Okinawa, headed for Guam for an overnight stop, and later sailed for Pearl Harbor and San Francisco.

To give you an idea of the size of the Naval Force which was committed at the place of assault, a few figures might not be too dry. Not including the fast battleships, carriers, cruisers and destroyers of the 5th Fleet, there were, off the beaches a Gun Fire Support Force of 11 older Battleships, 16 Cruisers, 89 Destroyers, 36 Destroyer Escort Vessels, and several divisions of LCI gunboats and LSM rocket boats. The transport force consisted of 189 APA's and AKA's and four squadrons of LST's. Within the period of six hours after arrival the Amphibious Vessels had landed approximately 185,000 troops and several thousands of tons of vehicles, artillery, ammunition, rations and water. There was also present a big Navy

earth at the equator), representing 5200 steaming hours. Now she is "lucky" to have the privilege of taking you home aboard and we might add brother you're lucky to be aboard. This is one ride you are getting that is really in the right direction.

The ship has an overall length of 455 feet and a beam of 62 feet. When combat loaded, she draws about 24 feet 6 inches of water. Her displacement tonnage is about 10,000 tons. The full war strength complement of the ship is 57 officers and 501 enlisted personnel. Fuel oil tanks hold 335,000 gallons of oil and in addition we carry 40,000 gallons of Diesel Oil for the boats and the galley ranges. Of course you know that we distill all of the fresh water used for cooking, washing, drinking and to supply the boilers and laundry. The maximum capacity of the evaporators is 40,000 gallons daily. To give you an idea of the amount and kinds of provisions and stores carried on the CLUSTED here are a few figures; the total capacity of the ship's storage space for provisions is 180 tons of fresh frozen and dry food. This is

enough to feed 2300 men for a period of 40 days. 9000 dozen of eggs are a part of this food cargo. And it is a small wonder that so much is needed when you stop to consider that during the course of an average day 2300 pounds of potatoes are peeled and cooked in the galley and the same amount of meat. Breakfast alone, the cooks must prepare 4500 hotcakes, 500 pounds of bacon, and bread, 380 dozen eggs. The bakery produces 1640 pounds of bread daily.

On board you will find a library, barber shop, a tailor shop, a laundry, a post office, an ice cream plant, a machine shop and a shop for the plumbers (shipfitters) in this floating community. Our hospital is equipped for major and minor operations and has 26 beds. The ship has dispensed 23000 APC tablets, 28000 aspirins (some headache), and 250 pounds of epsom salts

It is a constant source of surprise to our passengers, that the crew of this ship is as large as five hundred men. It requires 80 men to man the boats alone. Then consider the seldom mentioned cooks, bakers, butchers, electricians, firemen, barbers, signalmen, radiomen, shipfitters, boatswains mates, the crews for the guns, radar-men and technicians including a weatherman and a postmaster and you can see "how come". Most of these operate on a 24 hour basis. In a word, the work-day never comes to an end.

The full complement of boats consists of 24 thirty-six footers weighing 9 tons each and having 225 horsepower diesel engines and two 56 foot LCM's, sometimes called tank lighters. These weigh 56,000 pounds each and are equipped with two hundred and twenty-five horsepower diesel engines.

The primary purpose of vessels of this class is to land assault troops on a defended beach at "H" hour on "D" day. However, in preparing these attack transports for duty in enemy territory the question of defending ourselves has not been forgotten. The armament is principally anti-air-craft consisting of one 40MM quad, four 40MM twins, eight 20MM and on the stern a dual purpose 5"38 caliber gun. The 40MM mounts are equipped with directors and full power automatic control.

So there you have a thumb-nail sketch of the OLMSTED - The "Flying O".

This memento of your trip bears with it the best wishes of the OLMSTED's officers and crew. The painful duty of carrying men into hostile shores accomplished, we gladly convert to the pleasant task of ferrying you home.

In similar cruises of the future we may forget the specific incidents of this trip. We hope, however, that you will think of us often and generously, especially those who enjoyed our better bunks, four tiers from the deck.

May your return bring to you and
your families all the pleasures and
enjoyments anticipated these many
months. And may we wish you a Merry
Christmas such as you never have had
before.

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