

Series A

"From Pat O'Brien's to Waikiki"

"... if you know Bob, my Father used to say something to me that went something like this: Bunny, whatever you do, you always overdo it. You're the type of guy that nobody can persuade you to go to a party. But, once you get there, you never want to leave."

As I sat in the wardroom with Bob Thuber (of Evanston, Illinois), the above conversation was typical.

It was June 1944. The allies still had a few days before D-day in Normandy. Bob and I were on the ship at Penderton Slipyard, New Orleans.

I met Bob when he was an Ensign ^{L2}
at Camp Bradford, Virginia.

"What are you talking about?", he
asked.

"Well," I said, "a few days ago
you told me you hated New Orleans.
Now, when the time is coming for
us to leave soon, you suddenly like
it, and want to stay."

Yes, it looked as though what my
Father said, applied to Thumber too.
And it applied to me - even more.

For New Orleans, to my estimation,
is the greatest liberty town of all.
I rate it better than New York,
Philly, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

The chow can never be matched.
Places like La Louisianne are not

even compared with other restaurants. ²³

The French Quarters have a fascination of their own. The Hotels have fine floor shows. Entertainment is everywhere.

And then there is Pat O'Brien's.

Pat O'Brien's is the most unusual place I have ever been to. It is in the French Quarters. It's a combination bar-room dive, patio, and tavern. The doors are open from 7 P.M. in the evening 'til 5 A.M. the next morning. All night long, two women play the two piano-organs that sets up on a small stage. They play music like it has never been played before. The place is really packed and everyone is always laughing. In the tavern where the music is playing, you meet just

about everyone you ever knew. at least⁴
that is the saying.

Bob and I always ended up at
good old Pat O'Brien's every evening.

Whenever you meet anyone who has
been to New Orleans, the first thing
they ask is "Ever been to Pat O'Brien's?"

We pulled out of Pindilton shipyard
and went to the ammunition supply
depot.

Around June 8, we left New Orleans
for good, and headed for Guantanamo
Bay, Cuba. Stayed there for a few
days and then went to Coco Solo.
Coco Solo is the entrance to Panama
Canal.

As we were going through Panama
Canal, we met a Cruiser going in
the opposite direction. As they slowly
went by us, one of the sailors on

the Cruiser shouted over -

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"Hey! How is it back in the States?"

The Cruiser was returning to an East Coast port and had been in the Pacific for many months.

One of our sailors shouted back -
"you'll see!"

Then another one of our sailors shouted over to the Cruiser -

"How is it out there in the Pacific?"

The answer -

"you'll see !!!"

We reached Balboa and next day sailed for San Diego, California.

Had a good time in San Diego and in Los Angeles. We stayed about 6 days.

When we left California, our next ¹⁶
stop was Pearl Harbor.

Pearl Harbor! What a thrill it
seemed to us at that time - to say
we were at Pearl Harbor! "This is
where the Japs attacked", we said
to ourselves. "No, we were not
there when they struck - but it is
still something to say we were there."

True, we weren't there when
Japanese planes came over.

We would see that later - some
place else.

It was great to be in Pearl. What
a wonderful sight to see Diamond Head
mountain and Cocoa Point mountain.

What beautiful hotels - the Manāo
Hotel and Royal Hawaiian Hotel. This
was Waikiki Beach.

Waikiki in July and August is

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quite a sight.

Even more so was the sight that hit my eyes when I walked into the Royal Hawaiian Hotel one day and met Bob Hope. He gave a performance that was unbeatable.

Hawaii certainly was brimming over with excitement back in those days: Bob Hope was there. The Americans landed at Suva. And also - Mac Arthur, Roosevelt, and Nimitz met in Hawaii.

I saw the President at the Manāo Hotel. He was wearing a white suit and looked fine.

Overhead planes dived. Out in the harbor the Cruiser class Columbia was anchored. It had brought the President to Hawaii.

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The moment I saw Mac Arthur, I
said to Bob -

"I wonder what Mac Arthur's
business with Roosevelt and
Admiral Kimmity is?"

The next day, our Captain called
us in to his cabin and said -

"We are leaving in the morning."

Just what did Mac Arthur have
up his sleeve?

We would soon find out.

Benny.