

Series B (Part I)

"Mac Arthur Here - Mac Arthur There"

That Douglas Mac Arthur and Admiral Nimitz met at Hawaii with President Roosevelt to discuss military studies was a certainty.

There was no question that the acquisition of Suva, Saipan, and Tinian was going to speed up the war in the Pacific. Already, Admiral Marc Mitscher, of Task Force 58, was roaming the waters around Formosa and northern Luzon. The Japs were plastered by the naval air force in June and hence they were drawn back to lick their wounds and build up for future battles.

When we left Pearl Harbor and

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moved Westward, the "558" knew
that they were going to play a vital
part in winning the war. But
little did the officers and men know
that the excitement that lay ahead
was to be terrific. We left on August 8.

We steamed Southwest passed
Johnston Island. Then down between the
Marshall and Gilbert Islands. We
were headed for the Solomon Islands
to load with troops and supplies
and make an invasion.

On August 16 we crossed the
International Date line and it
automatically made it a day ahead -
August 17. On August 23 we
crossed the Equator. Amritations
were held but I had my certificate
to prove that I had crossed the

Equator long before that. In fact, 13
I have crossed and recrossed the
equator so often that I honestly have
lost track of the number of times.

We arrived off Guadalcanal
on August 25 - a 17 day trip.
It was a big convoy. We anchored
in "Iron Bottom Bay." This is
so called because of the many
U.S. and Jap ships that have
been sunk there many months
before. "Iron Bottom Bay" lies be-
tween Savo Island, Tulagi, and
Guadalcanal.

Loaded with the 726 Amphib-
ious Tractor Unit and units of the
81st Infantry, we left Guadal-
canal 10 days later to make our
very first invasion.

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This was the invasion of the Palau Islands which is West of Truk. Palau Islands is in the Western Caroline Islands about 150 miles South of Yap. The two objectives were to be the capture of Angaur and Pelileu. On September 15th, the news was broadcast to the world. I heard it on the radio myself. At 8:30 A.M. Pelileu was invaded by American forces. For days, the Islands had been shelled and bombed by planes and ships.

And while Palau Islands was being invaded, another operation far to the Southwest was taking place. The invasion of Halmahera which is West of New Guinea was

taking place.

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This was a great day.

However, the Marines were taking a fightful beating where we were. I had a ringside seat just off shore. I watched "Hellcats", "Wildcats", "Helldivers", and "Avengers" and "Corsairs" bomb and strafe the Japs hour after hour. I saw the Battleships Pennsylvania, Mississippi, and Tennessee, together with heavy Cruisers and Destroyers, and rocket shooting LCI's fire again and again at the Jap positions. Yet, the Japs dug in and killed at night. Nine miles away the battle at Angaur was going well. Finally, we had

10 ~~Take~~ some troops off of Angau and re-enforce Pelilieu. The battle at "Bloody-Nose Ridge" was taking a heavy toll of Americans. Indeed, Pelilieu was the worst battle in the Pacific until Awojima. L6

On September 18, the Japs launched a vicious counter-attack at night on Pelilieu. The Japs killed and killed.

The next day the U.S.S. Cleveland and U.S.S. Pennsylvania cut loose with a bombardment that was terrific. I will never see another like it. For hours, the Pennsylvania fired salvo after salvo.

Then the Cleveland made a lucky hit on the big Jap ammunition dump. Boy did that thing go up! I still think that that

turned the tide of battle. 17

Two days later we left and went to Hollandia, New Guinea. We got mail and waited for further orders.

As this what was here was like? Nobody bothered our ship. The Navy got off easy at the Palau Islands. The Army and Marines took it on the chin there.

It did not seem likely that things would continue to be so easy.

MacArthur still must have something of great importance. What was it?

On October 8th we sailed for the Admiralty Islands (north of New Guinea) to get ready for another invasion.
Brenny.