

Series B (Part III)

"Mac Arthur Here - Mac Arthur There"
(continued)

General Douglas Mac Arthur had kept his promise to return to the Philippines.

Outsmarting the Japs, he landed where they did not expect him. The Japs thought he would surely try to come to Mindanao. But, with Admiral Nimitz, the General made it at Leyte instead.

No matter how people may criticize Mac Arthur, one fact remains: he is always interested in trying to save as many American lives as possible. The General has faults. But even those who criticize him, readily admit that

has been a genius at meticulous
planning. He was always planning
in such a way to save lives of
Americans. A back up MacArthur
100%. Into American homes on
R-Day (Reunion Day) will walk
thousands of sons and husbands
and brothers that may never have
lived, were it not for MacArthur's
brilliant planning. His New
Guinea campaign, even though
tough, was well carried out.
Many died there, but many more
might have.

With light casualties, he took
the shores of Leyte and marched
through to Tacloban, Dulag, and
Samar. He was not in command
at Palau when the marines took

heavy casualties.

When the word came through that a bombardment was expected by the Japanese navy, this is what the Japs had done:

Unless you have a big map of the Philippines, my following words and time will be completely wasted. You must have a map!!

The "Battle of Leyte Gulf" or "The Second Battle of the Philippines" went like this -

After the Japs took it on the chin by our fleet in June, they retreated and got prepared to fight it out with us if we attacked the Philippine Islands.

When the Japs found out that

we landed on the shores of Leyte,
their fleet went into action. Their
objective was to get into Leyte
Gulf and wipe out the ships in
the Gulf at night. To do this,
they had a great scheme. If it
had worked, they would have
wiped out the entire invasion
fleet.

Up from bases in Borneo
steamed very powerful Japanese
Battleships, Heavy Cruisers, Light
Cruisers, and Destroyers. This
was indeed a huge task force
they had assembled.

From the North - that is, from
their bases in Formosa and Japan,
another huge Japanese task force

headed south. Both Jap task forces were to converge at Leyte Gulf and wreck the invasion ships.

The huge task force from Borneo was sighted by an American submarine in the South China Sea off the Coast of the Philippine Island of Palawan. The sub sent warning to the ships at Leyte Gulf. When that Jap task force got to the northern part of Palawan, they split up. One group went between Mindoro and Panay and were to proceed to San Bernardino Strait, which is off the northern tip of Samar. They were to get through San Bernardino Strait and move down the coast of Samar and

get into Leyte Gulf.

The other group that had split with them at Palawan, had the following plan: go Southeast past ~~passed~~ Panay and Negros and then go ~~passed~~ ^{past} Cebu and Bohol. Those Islands lie North of Mindanao.

They were to go through Surigao Strait, which is the thin body of water between Leyte and Mindanao. After they get through Surigao Strait, they would then get into Leyte Gulf.

The bunch coming down from Formosa would have this as their object: make the American Battleships and Carriers come after them. Draw the American

Battleships away from Leyte Gulf
so that the Japs could get through
San Bernardino Strait and Surigao
Strait.

Meantime, Admiral Spruance
had his Seventh Fleet off the
East Coast of Leyte near Surigao
Strait. Off the Coast of Samar
was Halsey's Third Fleet. Off
the North Coast of Luzon was
Task Force 58.

What happened?

When the sub tipped us off
about the approaching Jap fleet
near Palawan, Admiral Spruance
told Admiral Oldendorf to take
his battleships and block the
entrance to Surigao Strait.

Just about the time that message
addressed to us to be on the alert
for a Jap bombardment ^{arrived,} the Japs
were near Surigo Strait.

When the Battle started at
Surigo Strait, it was a beautiful
sight to see. Our fog oil had
lifted enough for us to see our
Battleships and Destroyers murder
the Japs as they tried to get
through. It was a terrible defeat
for the Japs. I could see tracers
shoot across the sky - they
were 14 and 16 inch shells
from our Battleships. This was
all taking place at night.

The Japs did get through
San Bernardino Strait, but were

The Japs that came down
from Formosa and Japan were driven
off.

In conjunction with the Jap Navy,
their land based air force was to
bomb the ships in Leyte Gulf in
the morning.

At 8 A.M. in the morning,
50 Jap bombers and fighters came
in from all directions. This was
a heavy attack. They did some
great damage. This kept up until
noon. The noise was intense.

We shot down one plane. At
1 P.M., three "Jedys" came out
of the sun, made a faint at
our ship, and then blew up a
transport 200 yards from us.
It happened so quickly that

hardly a shot was fired at those planes by any ship.

An hour later, a "Zero" was sighted very high up in the sky. He was sky-writing. To me he looked like he was writing a pepsi-cola ~~ad~~ advertisement up in the sky. He was doing tricks and stunts. Naturally, he was trying to draw attention. His trick failed, because when 10 "Springs" tried to bomb the ships, several were shot down.

On the evening of the 26th of October, our engines developed serious trouble. However, when orders came for us to get underway, we managed to do so.

As we left the harbor, the convoy was again attacked by planes. All night long, as we sailed, we were attacked time and time again.

at 2 A.M. in the morning, 3 torpedo planes came in. They were seen by only one man. I told him to "commence firing" and he himself shot down ^{one} ~~the~~ plane.

By now, the "558" had three planes to her credit. This was official credit by Admiral Barbey himself.

For some reason, the men on the ship nick-named me "The Killer". This name stuck and to all LST's out here, I am still called "The Killer." Men who have gone back to "the States" will

open write their buddies who are ⁴¹²
still here. Usually they end up
saying " ... regards to the Killer "

This grew from the fact that I
insist on strict discipline when
in action. I do not allow any
man to have a gun unless he
knows every single Jap and American
plane and can identify it in a
split second. This takes endless

hours of classes in aircraft
recognition. I can not afford to
allow any man to fire at a friendly
plane that he thought was an
enemy. He's got to know. There
are no two ways about it !!

It has also grown from the
fact that I have been quite

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successful in defending the ship
due to an intricate, yet very
simple plan that I learned when
I was on the Moffett.

also, I guess they all get a
big kick out of watching me take
my daily exercises.

To get back to the story -
We returned to New Guinea,
loaded, and made another trip
back to Leyte Gulf.

We were then sent to Halma-
hara, Morotai, to get ready for
the next big invasion.

Bunny.