

Series C (Part I)

"Me and Tons"

Mac Arthur continued to make landings in all of the other islands of the Philippines, but the LST 558 did not make another invasion there again.

By now, the LST 558 was a veteran ship - toughened and wizened by every Jap trick. We knew the Jap, and his ways.

The Captain had delegated complete authority in me to fight the ship against aggressors.

To successfully carry this out, I gave frequent gun drills, casualty drills, aircraft recognition drills. Mistakes were smoothed out. The men had confidence in themselves.

12

If mail continued to pour in,
morale would stay high. Choke off
mail, and morale would drop. With
my bare hands, I could murder
every wife or sweetheart that failed
to write because "they were pretty
busy lately and just didn't get a
chance to write". No jury would
convict me.

We went into a floating dry
dock at Leyte for repairs. In general,
we were taking it a bit easy.

On March 12, I met Stanley at
Leyte.

According to him, the Navy got off
pretty easy at Suo Jima. Naturally,
the marines took it on the chin.

Seeing Stanley made me realize

13

that wherever and whenever the next invasion would take place - he would be in on it too.

One of my greatest hopes was to have the Japs beaten before he would have to get into the mess too. That hope was gone, but in to it's place came a stronger, more determined, must!! To gether, we would make certain that at least Mound would not have to go through with any of it. "That must not happen", we agreed.

Stanley left, and we both knew one thing: The Japs have got to be beaten - before another year!!

Mound might see military peace time training (that is O.K.), but

fighting - never!

14

Stanley and I were anxious to get started - to get it over with - we were now racing against time.

We were not disappointed, for rehearsals and practice landings were already in progress.

Late in March, we loaded with units of the 10th Army. With the most massive invasion fleet the world has ever known, we steamed up the East coast of the Philippine Islands.

On the morning of April 1, 1945 (Easter Sunday - Pacific War Time), the world gasped when they heard over their radios: "Units of the 10th Army and 3rd Amphibious Marines have landed on Nansei Shoto (Ryukyus Islands) at Okinawa - 350 miles from Japan." Bummy.