

Series C (Part V)

"Me and Tons"  
(continued)

Tsukuba Shima was not over-run in 24 hours the way it had been planned. The U.S.S. Salt Lake City and the U.S.S. Portland had their hands full trying to pick out the many spots of resistance.

Casualties to the Army on Tsukuba Shima were higher than anticipated. However, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, the island was considered "secured" and we sailed once more for Hagushi Harbor, Okinawa. To the tune of "Oklahoma", these words were sung:

"O-ki-na-wa! where the flat flies high up in the sky!"



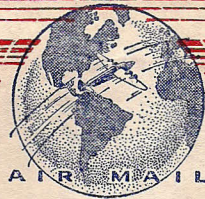
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Indeed, Okinawa was bombed almost every day and night, until the Japs surrendered four months later.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of April, as we steamed into Okinawa, a terrific "party" was in progress -

On our right, Battleships and Cruisers were still shelling Naha. To our left, Destroyers and LCI's were having it out with suicide planes. Ahead of us, transports, LST's, and Cruisers and Destroyers were trying to blow up Jap suicide planes before they could hit any ships.

Now the Japs came out with a new stunt - the "Baka" bomb. This is a



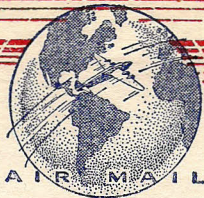
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bomb that is carried by a Jap bomber plane - the "Betty". When "Betty" got about 20 miles from Okinawa, the bomb was released, and a Jap flew in the bomb and flew it into a ship - preferably an ammunition ship or huge transport, carrying personnel.

These suicide tactics never stopped until the end of the war.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, Stanley's ship was sighted by our signalmen. He anchored about 2 miles away. He came aboard and stayed for about two hours. He no sooner returned to his ship, and another "alert" was on.

The night of the 15<sup>th</sup> turned out to be



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our last night at Okinawa. We were leaving in the morning for a rear area.

But the Japs were not going to let us get away without giving us a "fare-well party." That night, they came over with heavy bombers - in great force. Once again the harbor was lit up by tracer fire. The noise was deafening and the anti-aircraft fire heavier than ever before.

Early next morning I sent a message to Stanley, wishing him luck and bidding him good-bye.

The LST 558 joined a big convoy.

Everyone took one last look at Okinawa, turned their heads Southeast, and related. Our destination was Ulithi, an island in the western Carolines between Yap and Isum. Bunny.