

Series C (Part VI)

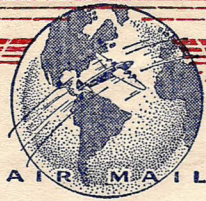
"Me and Tons"
(continued)

The LST 558 spent 16 days at Okinawa. This is considered a long time for any LST because usually, after its cargo and men are unloaded, there is no further use for that ship.

The day we left Okinawa, the island of Ie Shima was invaded. This island lies just about 20 miles northwest of Okinawa. It had excellent air fields.

I am almost certain that Stanley's ship made that trip. This is where Ernie Pyle died.

When we got to Utschi, we saw dozens of ships that had been hit by suicide planes. I saw one destroyer that



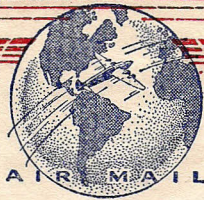
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had its entire superstructure knocked off. Many officers and men had been killed when that plane hit.

A destroyer without its superstructure, or any ship for that matter, looks very peculiar. The men on that destroyer knew that their ship looked funny. So finally they hung out a huge sign so that everyone could see it:

"DON'T LAUGH - IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU"

Ulithi was a wonderful and rather picturesque spot. Close-by, was the tiny island of "Mog-Mog." This island was turned in to a recreation island. Beer parties were held. Baseball games were



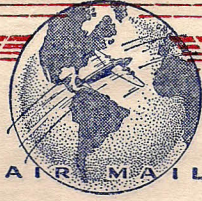
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organized. Outdoor hamburger roasts were held. A big jazz band played 'neath the shade of the palm trees. At was a time for relaxation.

Out in the harbor, gigantic air-craft carriers, battleships, cruisers, LST's, destroyers, battle cruisers, LCI's - almost the entire fleet it seemed - were anchored.

The repair ships were working overtime - frantically, desperately, - to get as many ships repaired as possible. Every day, ships limped in to Ulithi from Okinawa.

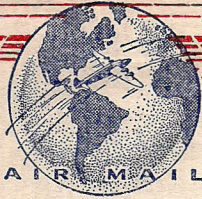
Hundreds were killed when the



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Carriers Triondroga, Benjamin Franklin,
and Saratoga were hit. Destroyers
were badly mauled.

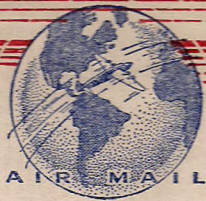
We stayed at Uthi until June and
then went to Manus (Admiralty Islands),
north of New Guinea. Later, we went to
New Guinea. At Hollandia we saw
"This Is the Army" - the show that
played to great crowds in "the States".
We went to a rest camp at Lake Sentani
and took things easy. We absorbed the
beauty of New Guinea. Few boys have
very good to say of New Guinea. They
have not seen the interior. I want to
say right here that New Guinea possesses



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the most beautiful scenery I have ever seen. It has huge picturesque mountains. As for waterfalls - you could put Niagra Falls into one of New Guinea's waterfalls three times, and still have room to spare.

The American boy has only one thought in mind - he wants to go home. To him, no place can be more beautiful than home. He thus "takes it out" on a foreign country and will often write home that such and such a place is lousy. This is definitely giving people at home the wrong impression. I, personally, can show you scenery in New Guinea



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and in the Philippines that defy description. Not even the United States could compare with it. You have to see it to believe it.

But, to get back to where we were -

From New Guinea we went to Leyte, Philippine Islands. It is there that I almost saw Stanley early in July. I missed him by a few hours.

Not long after arriving at Leyte, we were sent to Subic Bay. This meant going through Surigao Strait again.

Subic Bay is a little bit North of Manila.

We arrived late in July, and we were anxious to find out what our next assignment was.

Benny.