

FORWARD

Due to circumstances understood by all members of the crew, and over which I had no control, I can accept no thanks or reward for authoring this document. The many weeks spent aboard this ship with no strenuous duties or visages ashore to lure me away, made it only fitting and proper that I should spend my time composing this history. It is therefore requested that no floral wreaths or loving cups be passed thru the mail as a token of appreciation for this narrative which will enlighten strangers to the wonderfully "happy" cruise we had together and remind us that in spite of our differences of opinion, quaint quibbles, shower hours, chain of command, and few other items too unimportant to mention, we really spent a year and a fraction together that will always be remembered for one reason or another.



Signed:
D. O. Cederquist
Officer in Charge of Restrictions

Approved:
W. D. Fitzgerald, Jr.

A NOTE FROM THE DEFIANCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:-

In October 1944, the Chamber of Commerce, under the direction of the president, Mr. Guy O. Murphy, sponsored a campaign to form a special fund for the purpose of providing the LST 946 with athletic equipment and recreational supplies. Donations were made by the various manufacturers, businessmen, and individuals of the city.

The committee for the campaign included Ed. F. Wanley, Chairman, Harry R. Morse, Dr. E. S. May and Guy O. Murphy. This committee contacted prospective donors and handled the details of the Defiance sponsorship.

The Chamber of Commerce had accepted the invitation of Ensign Schlarbaum to sponsor the LST 946 which was to be known as the U. S. S. Fort Defiance. Ensign Schlarbaum, who was to take charge of the boat as soon as it was commissioned on October 12, 1944, promised to mount the name "Fort Defiance" in the ship's ward room in return for this city's sponsoring the vessel and providing the needed equipment for the crew.

Defiance's opportunity to sponsor this ship was in recognition of the 150th anniversary of Fort Defiance.

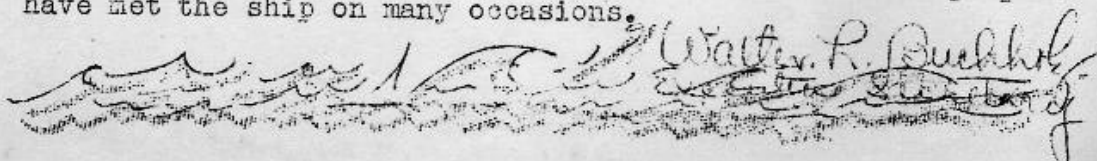
Ensign Schlarbaum was promoted to rank of Lieut. and became the Commanding Officer of the ship. Schlarbaum is a native of Custer, Mont. and had served the Navy since 1936. He met Mrs. Schlarbaum, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harry M. Myers of Highland township, while he was on shore leave and she was visiting on the west coast.

A LST is twice as large as a destroyer and built to carry tanks, and other mechanized weapons, and invasion troops. Its business is only to attack. Being flat bottomed it is able to ride right up on to enemy beaches, where under cover of its own gunfire it is able to unload its troops and tanks.

Capt. Fred Trorger, Lieut. (JG) Kirk Krutsch, and Mrs. Harry M. Myers represented the city of Defiance at the commissioning exercises in Boston on October 12, 1946.

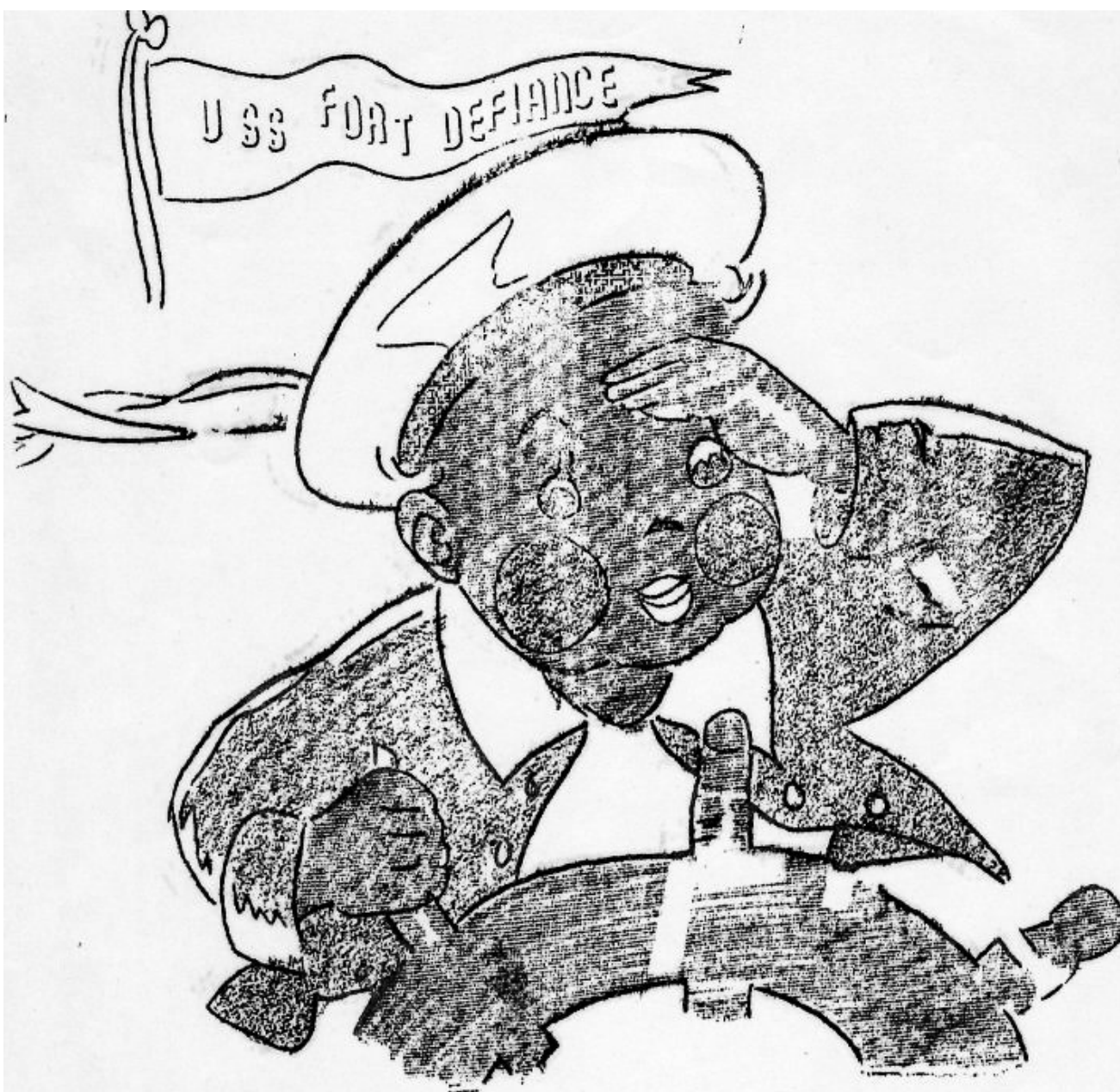
Equipment furnished with the funds raised by the Defiance citizens included badminton sets, volley ball outfit, baseballs, footballs, basketballs, books, phonograph records, electric coffee pot for the night-watch, chess, checkers and other games, subscriptions to magazines, musical instruments, and the ship's mascot.

The local Chamber continued to contact the ship with gifts throughout its career, and many of Defiance's service people have met the ship on many occasions.

Walter R. Durbholz
Secretary

The similarity between persons living or dead, and any characters in this narrative, is purely coincidental and done with malice of forethought.

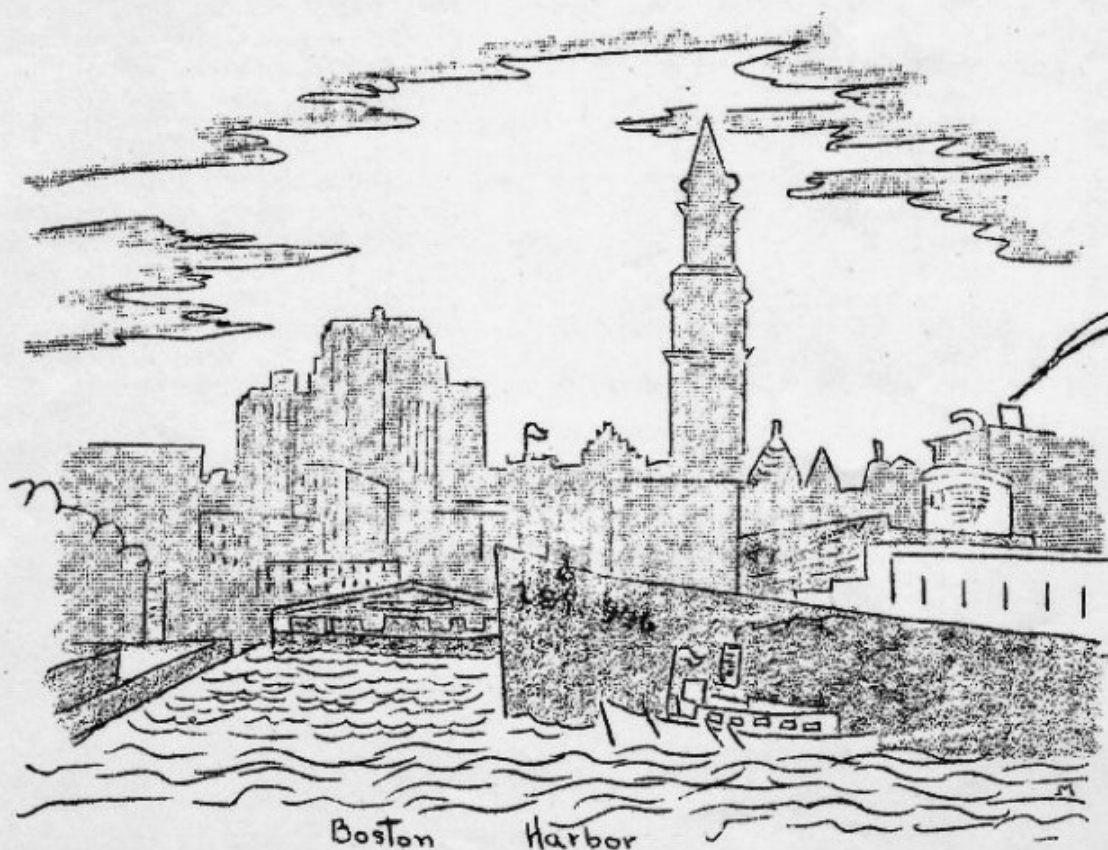




DEDICATED TO
THE OFFICERS AND THE CREW
OF THE
LST 948

The History of the LST 946 - USS Fort Defiance 1.

In August of 1944 one hundred odd men were being formed into a group at the Amphibious Training Base, Camp Bradford, Virginia. They were to eventually make up the crew of one of the LST's the United States Navy was putting into action against the Axis Powers. Men recently back from duty in the war zones, kids joining up after high school graduation, men drafted out of peace time jobs, freshly polished officers from recent midshipmen commencement exercises, were being thrown into this heterogeneous assemblage. Approximately ten percent had never had previous duty at sea, most had never been on a ship before, and several were looking at the ocean for the first time in their lives; but in spite of the seeming confusion, walls became bulkheads, floors became decks, the MA was not received with Boot Camp punctuality but cutting remarks and slowly but surely LST preoccupied their minds. The training at Bradford was terminated after weeks of school, physical training, and practice cruises on training ships in the Chesapeake Bay, and all hands were transported to the Naval Receiving Station in Boston, Massachusetts; under their prospective commanding officer, Ens. Schlarbaum, to await construction of LST 946.



Enroute to Massachusetts, Mr. Fitzgerald, Callahan, and Fourden made several remarks acclaiming the Garden City we were about to enter, and Cranshaw joined in the chorus with a solo encore describing the virtues of his home state Rhode Island, while he bemoaned the fact that we should be so near yet so far. These pep talks grew into dissertations as Boston came nearer, but from the day we arrived until the day we left, the hometown boys were scarcely heard of. We only saw them occasionally as they passed by in their families' automobiles. Nevertheless, without their aid as guides, but spurred by their lectures, the entire crew found Boston more than hospitable. T. D. Johnson wooed and won his wife while there, and when the ship was commissioned, our mascot, a black and white dog was named after Gladys, a most hospitable Bostonian. After a month of riotous living and precommissioning details all attended to in Boston or nearby Hingham, the ship was commissioned on 12 Oct. 1944. A committee came to Boston from Defiance, Ohio to represent their city at the ceremonies. Defiance was our sponsor and the ship became the Fort Defiance as well as LST 946. We were presented with a check by the committee and the money went the purchase of athletic gear and other items collected for the mutual welfare of all.

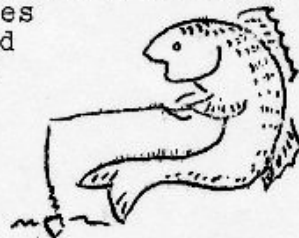


The next day all lines were cast off and we got underway from the berth at the Bethlehem Hingham Hingham Ship Yards. The first stop took us to the Charleston Deepwater Pier and later on the same day, 13 Oct., we moored to the fueling pier at Charleston. On 14 Oct. we pulled into Commonwealth pier, Boston, to take on provisions, ammunition, and seeing the compasses - odd jobs that had to be attended to before putting to sea. It was here that Mr. McMahan and Chute exercised at their first workout while providing and supplying us with the several necessities of life and luxury. (This is simply an incidental statement but, "all hands lay topside to..." was from that occasion on, a sure sign that the following morning we would have eggs for breakfast. Small Reward!) We might mention that while the Fort Defiance went up and down with the tide the bos'n mate of the watch went up and down the deck making notes, erasing, shaking fists, and getting dandruff under his fingernails, no one, not even our Gulf of Salt Mexico, long experiences, fist Lt. Shafroth, could figure how one Post, BM 2/c USN secured BOTH ends of number one line to the pier and fished-eight the middle of the line around the bit aboard ship. It is interesting to note that the performance was never repeated. After those four days of preparations including fond farewells to friends and acquaintances of fifth days standing in Boston, the 946 set sail on 18 Oct. and started for the Chesapeake Bay and her shakedown cruise.



3.
For most of the men and officers this was a maiden voyage. A grand total of about 15 men out of the 115 on board, had ever been to sea, but by the time a month had passed all hands felt as if they had been at sea all their lives. In the near future the life of a sailor was to be taken in a matter of fact way, but as we made our way along the coast of Long Island, the novelty and experience was new. During this trip "Pop" Whaley demonstrated consummate skill and dexterity as he steered us thru the Cape Cod canal, while Jones, Nall, and Silcock demonstrated the exception to Newton's law of Gravitation - that is to say, "all that goes down must come up." Seasickness was not experienced solely by the three mentioned--we picked the worse cases. In spite of being green and not quite at ease we were justly proud of the ship, and content with ourselves and the Navy.

Thursday, 19 Oct. 1944 one hundred miles south of New York City, a message from the Commander Amphibious Forces in the Atlantic, ordered the Fort Defiance into New York Harbor to ride out the oncoming hurricane. The following night Van Dyke, Kircher, Wyatt, Rogalski, and other whose homes were in the near vicinity, were on leave, and a few other got ashore to do the town. Inventory in the crew's quarters the following morning indicated that the personnel of one Coast Guard Station located within reaching distance of the small boat landing, were standing watches in unpressed uniforms and without the hot stimulating coffee to which they may have been accustomed. Cady and his cohorts, however, returned the perculator, the flat iron, saw, and other incidentals and inter-service relations were restored to normalcy. Later that day, amid rough seas and hangovers, we got underway for the Chesapeake Bay. Guida made the voyage rather interesting when he sent various men looking for Charles Nobel and mail boys and in spite of Schupp's large fish tales (mostly canned salmon) we were more than glad to listen, for they gave us confidence with which to face the shakedown parties. The following Sunday, 22 Oct. the 946 reached Little Creek, Virginia. The first of the "Dive Bombers" came on board the following day and gave us orders to report to Cornfield Harbor for the shake down cruise. Early the same evening we arrived in full glory, ready to deeply impress the inspection parties there. The first impression was, we might note, very deeply made by an order being misunderstood thereby dropping the anchor too early, retrieving it, and then missing the berth by several yards. The entire stay was not quite so unsatisfactory however, and on the 5th of November as we left for Little Creek, we had a high average for the entire cruise and proceeded on our way a bit relieved to know that the endless inspections and constant drills had finally come to a halt. The captain added another stripe to his uniform and made his advancements in the Navy run from A.S. to full Lt. His career had been, and was continuing, a success.



Monday, 6 Nov. 1944 the 946 left Little Creek for Portsmouth Navy Yard where job orders and requisitions brought about alterations, repairs, and replenished her supplies. A cause- was put around conn, portholes were installed in officers' country, gear was moved and secured, and few of the men were sent ashore with leave papers. Tinelli, Vitalec, Buchanan, Danials, Thomason, and Melton all went ashore together for a few days; they reported back to the ship, however, at various times and dates. After a five day stay at Portsmouth we proceeded down the bay to NOB at Norfolk, Virginia, where we received a cargo of trucks to be delivered to Pearl Harbor. On the 13th we saw the last of the Chesapeake Bay and headed north, back to New York City. When we arrived five thirds of LCT section were loaded on the main deck; the entire 1214, and section of the 1213 and 1215. Ens. Heaps came aboard in command of the LCT crews that were loaded. Our men went ashore for the same purpose - some getting special liberty to visit home for a few days. Several men delighted the crew by bringing their wives and sweethearts aboard to see the ship and of course, to be seen by the ship. On the 22nd of the month, as all hands were beginning to enjoy the hospitality of New York to the utmost, because were beginning to realize that our days in the States were numbered and the weeks' visit gave vent to any inhibitions we may have had concerning Blue Laws, we put to sea with two merchantmen and headed for Cuba. The Defiance was OTC of the convoy. On 23 Nov. a third merchantman joined the convoy off the coast of Virginia. Thanksgiving Day found about 300 miles off the coast of of Florida, looking over the menu put out by Mr. McMahan's boys, and delighting in the turkey dinner prepared by Devenny and Gollhausen. We arrived in Guantanamo, Cuba on the 28th of Nov. 1944. A.D.



Cuba; our first foreign port, our first foreign liberty, and for most of us our first sight of the tropics. It was an exciting visit we paid Cuba and not forgotten for a long time. The natural beauty of the bay, the Marine PX where several crew members bought perfume, stockings, and several unmentionables for the folks back home, the

beer party given by newly initiated Chiefs Ramey and Schupp, where several hands involuntarily went swimming while waiting for the small boat, the baseball game between the officers and men which left the former on the short end of the score, the fruit boat that supplied us with bananas and limes etc., and our short but effective acquaintance with Hatuey Cerveza aroused our sympathies for the island base. Walsh and Chute

will tell you this very day that they beat Mr. Cederquist and Mr. Shafroth at the base golf course; we the latter, deny any such statement!!

The visit, however was cut short and on the 30th of Nov. we pulled out of Guantanamo with anew convoy staff aboard and made our way across the Caribbean Sea to Coco Solo Naval Base, at Cologne in the Canal Zone. On Dec. 3, 1944 we came up to the pier and remained in the seclusion of this Central American base for six more days while repairs were effected and crew members acquainted themselves with Cologne and vicinity. During our stay the LCT crew members brought a monkey aboard, and the capt. not to be outdone, returned from nine holes of golf, with a parrot and a 112. (The latter we were to have long since forgotten!) The Ft. Davis Golf Course saw several of our men there everyday. Mr. Cederquist, Mr. Fitzgerald, Walsh, Chute Arnold, and Bingham were the regulars and Mr. Wilson, the Captain, Mr. Heaps, Mr. Fuchs, and Sinatra frequented the course as much as possible. Several officers and men visited the swimming pool daily. Mr. Shafroth, Zehner, and Rulfs took the shallow water diving equipment there one afternoon and spent several hours searching in vain for the captain's ring. Our softball team momentarily took over the harbor championship when Silcock pitched a game which defeated the ex-champs.



Our life in Coco Solo, however, was not entirely restricted to athletics and midafternoon activities. Of an evening, several, or rather all of the men made a pilgramage to Cologne and thru such places as the Florida Club and the Copacabana, we became acquainted with such interesting items as Blue Mooners and Cash Street. The officers and men from the ship who happened to draw S.P. duty in Cologne, were generally stationed where they could keep in contact with the men from the ship who happened to draw liberty in Cologne. Our first two foreign ports found us in a situation closely resembling the proverbial "Happy Family."

On Dec. 9th we left "Utopia" and started thru the Canal. We entered the Pacific Ocean, changed our address from F.P.O. New York to San Francisco, and made our way along the coast of Central America and Mexico., to San Diego, California.

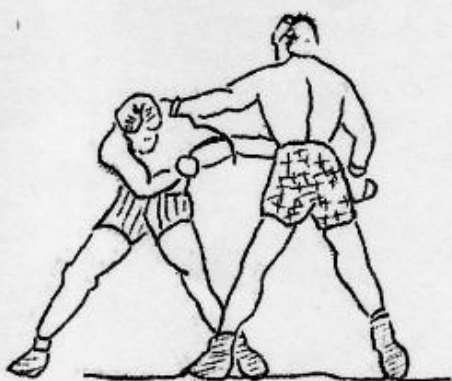
The trip us the coast was rather peaceful without an interruption which occurred during 14 Dec. as we passed thru Tehautepec Bay. A fifty knot gale hit "The Fort" head on and for twenty-four hours she shook and quivered so much that it was believed by an ardent landlubber that if she had a piece of chalk on her fantail she could have written the "Mississippi" all over the ocean. When she finally emerged without cracking or breaking we all had much more faith in the women welders we had seen at work back in Hingham. During the trip Deacon Jones took over the crew as M.C. during our Christmas party.

McNealson and Thomason accompanied the group singing and came forth with several renditions of their own. It can be honestly said that the guitars of Eddie and Tex saw duty every evening they were aboard ship and occasionally, when they gathered dust for more than 24 hours steady, one of the men was on liberty or else we were at G.Q. If there was ever an evening when anyone felt as if he would like to have some swing, classical, or hill-billy music, he had but to walk to the electrician's shop; the boys were at it. During our trip to San Diego, Deason Jones, Wade, Gillum, and Thomason formed a quartet. Their debut over the P. A. system was interfered with by local static and faulty wiring, but those of us who ventured back

gun 40-6 on a cool tropical evening could hear an excellent arrangement of "Tumbleweed" or "Way Down". The boys with music contributed much towards keeping up the morale of the crew. We will miss them and long remember them after the 946 has faded into a "war story."

On the 22nd of Dec. the trip ended and we put into San Diego at the destroyer base. Christmas in California, aboard ship, was not the best in the world, but we were in the states and the cooks put out a fine turkey dinner that made up for quantity, if not the quality, that mother was serving back home. It was here in San Diego that Mr. Dick our executive officer was transferred to await new orders. The evening he left the ship's officers gave a party for him and several members of the crew started out to give him a fond farewell, but due to the nomadic instincts of the officers they were unable to locate him. When Mr. Dick left us we said Good-bye to the best officer on the ship. He was well liked and respected by one and all. Mr. Lorenzini came aboard as his relief and another experienced hand joined the crew of comparatively green sailors. Our stop in Dago found Mr. Wilson leaving for home every other minute. He lies in Dago. After a week's stay in Dago we left the Christmas cheer behind us and on 29 Dec. the 946 pulled out to sea. She spent New Year's eve underway and had a smaker on New Year's Day. The main events were boxing matches between Lingoes and Speizizeti, lightweights - Kircher and Foley, middleweights - Picket and Bonislowski light heavyweights, - and Proctor and Tesh, heavyweights. Rogaliski and "George Easy" Smith put on a bout to prove they could stand up for 3 minutes and Wyatt and Williams changed their routine from jitterbugging to fistcuffs.





The Captain and Mr. Heaps slugged it out, and Leach and Whyers offered a little variety by doing some grappling. We came thru with few bruises and entered Pearl Harbor on 8 Jan. 1945 without any celebration; our real celebration was saved until solid terra firma was underfoot.

The first night at Pearl was spent unloading the trucks from the tank deck of the ship. The nextday, 9 Jan. the LCT sections were unloaded from topside and the next ten days spent in West Loche taking on supplies and ammunitions. During the stay

Mr. Fuchs, our Recreation Officer, arranged for a beer party at the Richardson Recreation Center. Need more be said?

On the 19th we pulled out of Pearl and rounded Oahu to Koeohe Bay to fuel and water ships that were headed out. That evening the cool clear water, the tropical sun, the sand beaches, and the erruptions of our acquatic instincts, brought a swim over the side. Fulmer demonstrated the finer points of diving as he let loose from the boat deck while the rest of us were satisfied with the 15 foot drop off the main deck. It was here in Kenohe Bay that one of our officers went AWOL. The juring waters got the better of him and he made his way across the harbor in his own inimitable dog paddle fashion while the rest of the ship was executing "turn To". His identity is being withheld from the public for obvious reasons. The crime was dasdardly to say the least!

On the 21 Jan we returned to Pearl after completing the Good Will mission, and moored in West Loche again. While we were moored Oaks, Allen, Wandell, and Nonemaker came aboard and Chute and Silcock left. The supply department's work from then on was turned over to Webster and the pitching arm of our softball team was open for a new arrival.

On Jan 23rd the "Fort" proceeded to Berth B-12 and commenced loading LCT 746 on the main deck and on the 25th she arrived in Kowalo Basin to take on the supplies for the army which was to come aboard. Two days later, loaded topside with Navy equipment, we pulled in next to Diamand Head and took on the LVT's of the 77th div. Later that day the Old Fort (as she was affectionately mispronounced by some of the members of the crew) joined her taskunit and put out to the war zone on the other side of the Pacific.

En route to the Marshall Island she was intiated into task-unit station keeping, zig zagging, course changes and other necessities that go hand in hand with a large convoy. On 9 Feb. 1945 the taskunit pulled into Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshall Islands just one year late for the first wave, and took on some more provisions. On the 10th of Feb. the Captain and Lt. Krauss of the Army, took a liberty party ashore with them for a couple of beers. The beauty and interest of the Marshalls was, however, confined to looking at the coral

under the water and we were not disappointed in the least when the next day we put to sea again and proceeded to make a show shortly thereafter, by finding trouble with one of the main engines. The following day, 15 Feb. LSM 79 took us in tow and our two ships proceeded independently toward Guam with one escort. Saturday, on the 17th we arrived in Port Apra Harbor, Guam to effect repairs on the engine. While we were there another party went ashore. Keating took a walk into the jungle and found remains of the battle 9 months old. Several of the crew say the main beachheads of the invasion with U.S. amph. tanks des troyed in the shallow water. The shore was lined with caves still holding Jap guns and a nearby town was scarred with shell holes. Slowly we were arriving to the conclusion that there was a war on, and we were at the same time, arriving right in the middle of it. Two days later on the 19th we put to sea again and made our way towards Ulithi in hopes of catching up with the rest of the taskunit. On the 20th we passed Ulithi on the fly, picked up a new escort, and changed course to enter Palsu. Feb. 22 we entered Koreol Pauagi, Palau, and dropped the hook long enough to make contact with the commander of the taskunit. After a few hours, after having repaired her engines and traveled some five hundred miles out of the way, the Fort proceeded out of the anchorage in her place in the convoy; the chase had ended.

On Sunday Feb. 25th she entered San Pedro Bay off Leyte Gulf in the Philippines where the Army personnel was put ashore at Dulog Beach. From then until the fifth of March when the staff of LST 47 came aboard with Commander Drexler in charge, the 946 spent her time making preparations for the oncoming invasion. March 6th we returned to Dulog Beach to take on Amphibious tractors of the 77th divisions and the infantry of the 77th division, we were to carry to the operation. On 13 March a taskunit formed and got underway to go out on the dry run. Early on 14 March the mock invasion commenced and in spite of choppy water the LVT's were launched. Several capsized, one amph tank caught the stern anchor cable on our ship and went down. F. T. Starr, S 1/c, USNR of Hillsboro, Ill. dove over the side to rescue a soldier from the stricken tank and was later award the Soldiers Metal for doing so, by the United States Army. On 16 March the taskunit left Hinunagan Bay and returned to San Pedro--a little worse for wear, but by 19 March 1945 we set out for the invasion of Korama Retto.

The trip to the invasion and the thought of what could be waiting for us at the other end of the line, brought about co-operation that was never before matched. We had been informed that our run, which took us into the invasion six days before the main beach heads of Okinawa were made, was to be a difficult assignment, where enemy action would make it dangerous. We made the seven day trip to the area with a feeling that is hard to explain, but On March 26, 1945 as our four LST's left the main groups and proceeded to Zamami Jima, the only enemy act-



tion we saw was one Jap plane flying over the mountains. In a matter of seconds the destroyer screen around us was laying out a barrage of AA fire which the plane managed to keep just a short distance behind him by turning tail and making a hasty exit from the scene.



The noise from that AA fire and from the battleships and cruisers shelling the islands were the only sounds in the morning twilight as we came into position near Zamami. As daylight broke and objects became visible, U.S. Navy planes began circulating through the sky dive-bombing the Jap held positions, and after the troops were launched from the LST's and the small boats and LVT's brought them to the beach, the explosions of rockets, mortars, machine guns, and later the crack of rifles, sounded across the 2000 yards of water between the 946 and the beach. For the rest of the day we stood at our gun stations and watched and listened to others fight the war. A few remarks were made to the effect that Boy Scouts had a rugged life, but I believed we were more relieved than disappointed with the absence of enemy action.

Both of our small boats were to carry Wave Guide Officers into the beach with the first waves of troops. Just after lowering boats however, #1 broke down and the officer in that boat was transferred to the other. Taylor coxswained the boat to the beach, "Trigger" Joe Bianchi acquired his nickname that morning when the Japs opened fire on the waves as they came in. It seems that Trigger let go some 500 rounds and even though his hat never got off his face long enough for him to see what he was shooting at, his enlightening reconstruction of the battle leads us to believe that immediately after opening fire he cleared every cave in range. It was too bad he did not know how to reload when the belt ran out otherwise there would have been no reason to invade the island at all. Picket and Bitner were in the boat at the time and will vouch for Trigger's story.

Later that day the other boat was repaired and Brack, Silverthorne, Hughes and Bourden took a load of gasoline to the shore to refuel the amph tanks. Their arrival was not greeted with enemy small arms fires but a beach in the Pacific two hours after the first wave goes in, is anything but comforting. Both boat crews deserve a lot of credit for making the trips.

The next few days were spent in Kerama Retto and the nights out at sea away from suicide planes, boats, and swimmers. Sta. 21 March we pulled in close to the beach to take aboard the infantry and LVT's. The next 3 days were spent in Kerama Retto standing by as reserves for the beach heads being made on Okinawa. On 3 April the 946 set out to sea and until 14 Apr.



so maneuvered about 100 miles southeast of Okinawa and stood by as floating reserve, fairly well out of danger, yet close enough to be near at hand if needed. Later she anchored off Hugesashi Beach to make preparations for the landing on Le Shima.

Up to the time we returned to Okinawa, we had seen but a few Japanese planes, all of which had been shot down by the escort vessels around us; but from our first night off Hugesashi Beach until we finally vacated the area, we were to live in a perpetual state of interruptions caused by the famous Kamikaze pilots. Our initiation came the first night when "Flash Red" sounded over the harbor circuit. We had had plenty of experience in arriving at our G. Q. stations in short order, so it was a matter of approximately one minute before all guns were ready and all stations armed. It was a matter of hours, however, before we had finally had our first shot at a Jap, watched distant and nearby AA fire light up the sky like mid-day, and heard "Flash White" announced which allowed us to return to our sacks. That routine continued every night and every day for every ship and AA station in the area. Smoke screens were generally used to cover the ships thereby making it impossible for a plane to spot one particular target. We remained at G.Q. even while the smoke screens were out, fearing to shoot and lead a suicide plane to us and fearing to leave the lines in case and increase in the wind removed the screen. There was no way out of it.

16 April 1945 we proceeded the 30 off miles to the second invasion. The resistance was more stiff, several Jap planes were downed, Jap small arms fire hit the main-deck, and mortar shells exploded within a few hundred feet of the ship, but the landings went off well and none of the crew were injured. Both small boats with the same crew went in on this landing with the first wave, but Trigger did not get a shot in. The landing was being administered a thick coating of lead by the Jap shore troops but evidently the boys could not locate them to return it. During this second assault we had a fair view of the land operations that were going on, and after things quieted down that afternoon we could watch the 77th inf. advance along the island. When evening came we would retire to Okinawa along Hugesashi Beach or else to Nago Wan, a small bay a little closer to Le Shima. One evening a midget submarine passed within a hundred yards of the ship and disappeared without attacking anyone. Every night there was a complete gun crew in 40-1 and 40-6, and 30 cal machine gun was manned under 40-6, two .50 cal machine guns were manned amidship on either side, a Thompson submarine gun was carried by a man in 40-1 and 40-6 the count talker and the signalman were armed with carbines, the gangway watch patrolled the ship with .30 cal rifle, the OD carried a .45 - all this to ward off the suicide swimmers and boats that had been reported as operating in the area, although to the best of our knowledge we never hit either. Every box or piece of refuse that came in range,



however, was either blown to pieces or scared to death as every gun that could reach it opened fire. One morning when Brack's crew was going into the beach at Ie they towed in a raft that an LSM had captured the night before. There were several dead Japs tied up to it, all armed with several grenades apiece. Their intention had been anything but hospitable but the small arms watch had interrupted their activities. From that evening our watches trifled with nothing.

Our stay in the Okinawa Area lasted for 40 days; 40 days of G. Q., smoke screens, transferring army and marine personnel, and machine gun watches; made for 40 busy days and sleepless nights. When we finally left for Ulithi on May 7, we were more than glad to get away.

On the 13 May we arrived in Ulithi and remained there for 2 weeks taking on supplies enjoying a few liberties parties, and painting the ship. When we left on the 2nd of June our stay had been a success in two ways. The ships looked better for the paint and the men felt better from sleep, mail, and basketball games that took place on the empty tank deck.

Pop Picket and G. E. Smith organized and coached our team. Kircher, J. L. Johnson, Rogers, GM Johnson, Tesh, Arnold, Cummings, Wallace, Crickman, Blanchard, Wade, Proctor, Spez, and Whaley made up the team and reserves that handled the hottest ball in Ulithi; and later on in Leyte, Manila, and Wakayama harbors. Their winning streak was broken once when the carrier Block Island beat them by 5 points, and on occasion by one of two other ships. Generally speaking, however, the team managed every opponent that came up against them including 2 victories over the battleship Texas, and the St. George, and several destroyers, various larger ships, and all LST's. The boys kept up a good record for the ship until discharge started breaking them up some four months later.



The next stop was at Manus Island in the Admiralties, on 6 June where we picked up a load of cement and beer to carry to New Guinea. Our luck held out and we were able to pick up motion picture projector which helped tremendously in passing the evenings, especially for Ingersoll who operated it.



We put to sea on 14 June and arrived in Hollandia, New Guinea on the 16th. A few men made a 4 day visit to the rest camp and all of us laid eyes on the first white women we had seen for six months; thereby clearing any misconceptions we may have had concerning a race we were beginning to consider was extinct. The 946 loaded a hospital unit and left on 21 June.

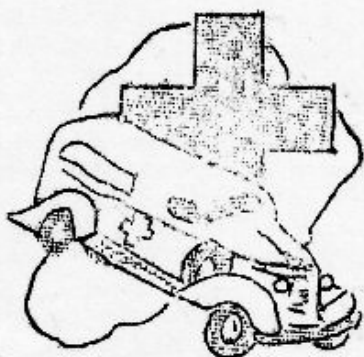


The next stop was back in Leyte where we beached and let off the hospital unit. We laid at anchor in San Pedro Bay from 27 June until 24 July, chalking up no defeats and several victories for the basketball team, taking on more supplies and finally loading an aviation augmentation unit for transportation to Okinawa. The change that had taken place in the last three months was astonishing. Roads, camps, navigational aids, and air strips had been installed or improved and from the latter we could watch the bombers take off for their raids on Japan, and at the same time we watched more Kamikaze Bombers come to see us. We had seen them before but they still made the hair on the back of our necks stand up and put circular feelings in our stomachs as they circled high out of AA range and finally nosed over to plunge through the red balls of 40 and 20 MM shells to explode on or close to some nearby unfortunate. On the 8th of August we left Okinawa once more

and proceeded back to the Philippines with a group of army medical personnel. On 13 Aug. we stopped at Manila. The next day we pulled out and proceeded down the coast to San Jose, Mindoro where we discharged the Army. San Jose will be remembered by us for various reasons, only one of which is printable. It was 1530, August 15, 1945 while we were on the beach unloading troops that official word came over the radio that the war was over and all hostilities would cease. It came just about soon enough to abate

our anxious reflections on what we would get during the on coming invasion of Japan and it brought hopes that soon we could be on our way home to spend our time with the ones we loved. We were thankful that we were sure now of returning.

On the 16th we left Mindoro and on the 17th we arrived in Subic Bay Luzon. We left for Leyte on the 19th, arrived on the 23rd, left on the 28th, arrived in Manila again on the 31st. Slowly but surely we were getting to be rather familiar with the Philippines.



On the 10th of Sept., with the expedite written on our orders we took aboard some military government troops and part of the 28th Replacement Batt. and set out for the occupation of Japan. About the 15th of Sept. we passed Okinawa and proceeded in the East China Sea. On the 17th of Sept. 1945 a 70 knot typhoon sneaked up our starboard side, curved around, and finally started smacking the bow. We once more gave thanks to Hingham's women's welders, we blessed "Knight's Modern Seamanship", and lighted a candle for Bowdich, as the port engine and a hard rudder kept us heading fairly well into the storm. The captain brought all ten years of his sea duty to the fore and did an admirable job of ship handling as he remained in the wheelhouse for some 20 hours. His work during the storm was an admirable example of seamanship.

Two days later, after the bulkheads had resumed a more or less perpendicular position and footprints had been washed off the lockers, we invaded Japan. Just before entering Nagasaki Harbor we rang General Quarters, so with helmets and life jackets eight 40 MM guns and twelve 20 mm guns, we captured the third greatest sea power in the world. The harbor, filled with destroyers, cruisers, and other United States ships including several LST's, must have been sincerely pleased to see us come in with such a display of power. The Defiance had landed and the situation was well in hand.

It soon became apparent that the Fleet Post Office was as confused as we were concerning our location for during our one month's stay at Wakayama we received a grand total of no letters. Our four weeks visit, however, gave us all a full opportunity to explore the hidden recesses of Wakanoura which was a small town on the water's edge. During the first few days ashore, we carried cigarettes, candy, and soap to make "Change for change" with the Japs who had moved house and home out to the front stoop with obvious intentions of trading. Later, however, the ranking officer of the harbor forbid such bartering in order to keep a black market from getting a foot hold and we were forced to purchase souvenirs with yen.



Of course the order telling us that no cigarettes would be carried shoreward merely started a game of wits between the inquisitive shore patrol and the men.. A scotch tape bound the priceless packages to various unsearchable parts of the body and hats and large coats concealed more packages. It is with deep humiliation that we are forced to admit that



there is no such thing as an "unsearchable" part of the body when the Shore Patrol is concerned and hats and large coats were simply invitations to a more thorough patting of the hands by the unthoughtful and misunderstanding personnel attached to the customs divisions at the small boat landing. The game finally boiled down to an application and slight of hand. Whyers was one of our unfortunates who wasn't quite so slight enough. The biggest thrill of going ashore came when one of us could walk past the guards without our contraband being discovered.

During our month at Wakayama we put on a more or less "burlesque show" for each other when the plan of the day read, "INSPECTION OF ALL PERSONNEL IN DRESS BLUES." Bianchi and a few others appeared in skin tight uniforms, shoes were polished for the first time within a year, the lucky bag was ramsacked for neckerchiefs, and the officers donned unfaded coats that gave the effects of a two tone, misfitted zuit suit. Commands such as "Dress right" and "Parade rest" struck a familiar chord in most of us and were carried out in accordian like fashion.

On 27 Oct. 1945 we finally left Japan and headed for Manila with a NCB aboard. Our arrival in the Philippines on 3 Nov. brought about an end to our nine weeks mail void as 42 sacks came aboard. Four days later we left Manila and on 8 Nov. we arrived in Subic bay where the C. B.'s unloaded their equipment. On the following day we proceeded to Lingayen Gulf where we picked up more troops to be carried to Wakayama. We left Lingayen Gulf where we picked up more troops to be carried to Wakayama. We left Lingayen Gulf on the 11th and arrived in Japan on the 18th. Our stay this time was not so prolonged and five days later we set sail for Saipan.

On the 13th of Dec. we left torrid Saipan and started our trip to Palau where we picked up 850 Jap soldiers for transportation to Yokahama. The long and odorous voyage with the tank deck loaded with incenced Nippons, was one of the longest we ever had. The six day run had brought us to the Marrianas on 29 Nov.. We lived in a state of expectancy throughout our stay as hope grew and vanished, schuttlebutt flourished and more high point men were discharged, and finally with strangers composing about half the crew we received the final order--our ship was to remain in the Pacific and not return to the States.

The perpetual rain and wind finally let up and a little sun came out to help spread as much cheer as possible for Christmas. Once again the cooks put out an excellant meal and our new chefs, Crouse Odette, and Callahan did an admirable job on the turkeys etc. On 27 Dec. we pulled into Unga, just outside Tokyo Bay, and let the fragrant ones ashore. The last scent of a June Rose is most poetic, but as the ocean breezes cleared across the main deck and carried the remains of the "cargo" with them, we used anything but Longfellow to ex-



press the seeming freedom of our sensitive nasal passages. Our trip was not so repulsive as pictured - the Japanese were very well managed and our relations with them were not strained in the least.

The next day we edged our 327.5 feet of loose joints into Yakahoma Harbor and resided there for a week while ushering in 1946. Prospects for the New Year seemed rather good. Already over half the crew had been sent Stateside for a discharge, several LST's were being decommissioned, the Shottin' War was over, and the 946 was quickly becoming one of the "long continuous duty" ships of the Pacific. At the break of a fresh year we had hopes of closing the Naval chapter of our biographies and starting in on the unfinished business of civilian life, but as the tide ebbed and '46 slipped in on us, our celebration was carried out true to Naval Traditions and Mr. Francis' Scott Key's "Rocket Red Glare" as the entire harbor lighted up with exploding pyrotechnics. Next year it would be Aulde Lang Syne!



Before we left the harbor the officers and men were ashore long enough to visit Yokahama, Yokasouko, and Tokyo. We beheld Mr. Fujiyama, the Palace Ground, and several buildings and places of interest that we could later nod over while reading National Geographic. On 5 Jan. 1946 we pulled out of Uraga Ko and nosed our ways towards the Marianas. The six day trip was uneventful after a 15 foot split in the main dock was repaired; the ocean and sky had hardly changed since we last notice them.

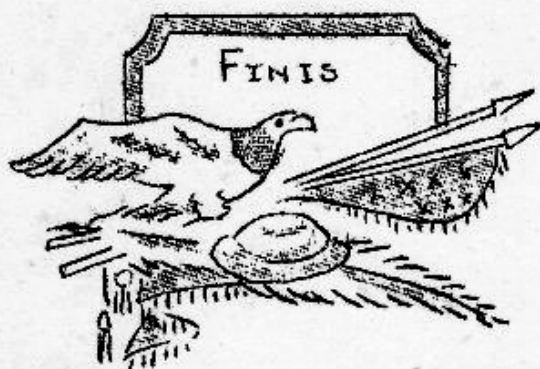
Our arrival in Guam on 11 Jan was hail and farewell for half of the officers. Mr. McMahan and Mr. Fushs made off for the States while Mr. Shafroth made off as C.O. of LSM 320; Mr. Bussabarger, erstwhile Silent Sam, put ba g, baggage, and transfer papers aboard LST 970 and set out for China as an executive officer; Mr. Babb, replacing Mr. McMahan as representative of Florshiem's nightmare- Arkansas- came aboard as executive officer; and we, the weary plowmen of 50,000 miles of the romantic Pacific's furrows, and trod out our obedient path northward.

Cooks! We pray that we may never see
 Another gook in front of we
 A gook who's awful manners boast
 Halucinations of Emily Post.
 A gook who smells like fish all day
 Between his toes is green decay,
 Upon his back a baby rests
 His hair resembles a Robin's nest
 We pray that we may never see
 Another GOOK on this LST - also the sea.

But we did! After leaving Fuam on 23 Jan we picked up 600 of them at Rota and Pagan, two smaller island in the Marianas, and proceeded to taxi them to their homeland in Okinawa.

That's where we are today. The Okinawans were put ashore the 1st of February when we arrived and we have just finished a week on the beach loading equipment of the second Marine Air Wing. Now we're waiting with bated breath to find out how many of us will be untouched by Guam's Patent Screening Process and finally reach the shores of America.

It took the Santa Marie three months to travel 3,000 miles--but we have a gyro--ought to make it in two!



U.S.S. LST 946
Fleet Post Office
New York City, NY
19 June 1946

From: The Officers and Men of LST 946
To: The Chamber of Commerce, Defiance, Ohio
Subject: Final Report of LST 946 - Alias the
U.S. S. Fort Defiance.

1. Enclosed is a conglomeration of misspelled words, poor grammar, and a sorry excuse for Gregg's Typing Lessons, but we consider it as the Hiatory of our ship. It is being forwarded to you so that you might get a better idea of what, where, and when your sponsored ship did and did not accomplish during our nations second attempt to end all wars.

2. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the courtesies you extended during the period our ship was in commission. Knowing that someone, other than the Navy, was taking an interest in us, was one of the biggest morale builders we had.

3. In the way of making an interesting story we might add that for 20 months and 7 days Defiance, Ohio represented part of the Navy that covered some 60,000 miles of the Pacific Ocean. Approximately 200 men and 15 officers of the Navy lived aboard her at one time or other. 350 infantry men, 50 Amph Tank men, 17 LVT's and 75 tons of ammunition were carried to the Okinawan Invasion. Over 2,000 other Army personnel were transported by the Fort Defiance. She rode out one typhoon underway, 5 more in port. Dropped her anchor 1,000 times and picked it up 999 times. Was hated, and loved, damned and praised, beautiful and ugly, built and torn apart by the same crew. DEFIANCE, spelled across the front of our connin g tower, should have introduced your fair city to representatives of all the states in the union as well as some 20 foreign ports. We commissioned her, sailed her, and decommissioned her - we feel that our job is complete.

4. Once more, thank you for doing such a praiseworthy job as sponsor.

D.O. Cederquist
Welfare Officer

COPY