

William Claire Meyer, Capt USN wrote the following memories down before he died in 2002:

**AUG '44 - JUNE '46 — Commanding Officer USS Ringness (APD 100)**

**BETHLEHEM STEEL SHIPBUILDING CO., HINGHAM, MA. - PCO and COMMANDING OFFICER - USS RINGNESS (APD 100).**

Commissioned USS Ringness on 25 October 1944 - - ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC DUTY.

Ringness was the first of her class of APD - High Speed Destroyer Transport. Our ship specifications were the same as Destroyer Escorts with respect to the hull. But our armament and top side configuration was considerably different. We had a 5" -38 gun, to give us better fire power to cover landing operations, 4 landing craft, an after hold to carry cargo, and troop quarters for 150 officers and men - UDT, or Raider Groups. In looking back over our operations, even though we did train on a couple of occasions with UDT's, we never conducted an assault landing operation with UDT's, but were used as an escort, radar picket or patrol duty ship.

Shakedown cruise was from 15 Nov. to 6 Dec. — Boston to Bermuda to Norfolk, VA. This was the second ship that I commanded that had shakedown training in the Bermuda Area. On both occasions, the training sked was so intense, with critiques following daily training operations, that I never even got ashore. During the transit from Bermuda to Norfolk, we hit a typical Atlantic Nor'east'r storm which caused heavy rolling. There has always been considerable argument among the shipmates, at reunions, as to just how deep a roll we experienced. The general consensus is that we took a 52 degree roll, with many in the 35 to 40 range. It was ROUGH ! ! ! During the two weeks in Norfolk we underwent post-shakedown availability to correct minor construction problems including dry docking.

Then off to the Pacific. Departed Norfolk, VA on 22 Dec. en route to Panama Canal, escorting 3 APA's (Navy Attack Transports). We had 3 escort ships - APD 100 - Escort Commander, APD 87 and AG-68. Transited the Canal during the night of 26 December. After a day of logistics we headed for San Diego in company with the APD 87. We arrived in San Diego on 4 January 1945, for a 5 day logistical stop. Then on 9 January, in company with APD 79, APD 51 and APD 87 headed to Pearl where we arrived on 15 Jan.

At Pearl Harbor we were assigned to the training of and with Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT), then one of the Navy's silent and secret amphibious organizations. Censorship was immediately tightened and the ship plunged into the mystery of underwater demolition. However, our future duty was never to include U.D.T.work.

Orders were received to proceed to Guadalcanal and on 3 March underway. On 7 March, the "Jolly Roger" flag of King Neptune was raised to the foremast, as King Neptune and his Court came aboard to initiate 179 officers and men, who were polliwogs, into the Royal Realm. We only had 15 shell backs on board, as our total complement of officers and men, at that time, was 194. We had a refueling stop at Funa-Futi, in the Ellice Islands on 9 March, and proceeded the same day to Guadalcanal and anchored at Port Purvis, Florida Island, B.S.I. on 13 March. On 14 March we departed the Solomons in company with USS Massey (DD778) and the USS Drexler (DD 741), escorting the USS Suwanee (CVE 27) and USS Chenango (CVE 28), en route to Ulithi, Caroline Islands. The Ringness was in the "big league, big time", joining Destroyers escorting Carriers, and headed for a major invasion - Okinawa. On the 22nd of March we arrived in Ulithi, and witnessed the greatest collection of Naval vessels ever seen in one anchorage. On the night of 24 March, orders were unexpectedly received to proceed to Saipan. Leaving early the 25th, we proceeded at 20 knots, arriving on the 26th and were assigned as part of escort group, TU 51.2.8, to escort TG 51.2 composed of 23 Attack transports and cargo ships, departing 27 March for Okinawa Jima. The greatest invasion force in the history of Pacific amphibious warfare was standing out to sea in an attack which was to break the back of the Japanese inner defense circle. This was no cross channel dash, but a 5 day journey as part of an invasion fleet which covered a far greater area than the island which was to be stormed. Our Task Group was only one small part of the total invasion fleet. D Day was 1 April, and we made our "assault" on the Southeast coast of

Okinawa as a diversionary attack to draw the Japanese off the main invasion, which was on the West side of the Island - Hagushi Beach. The assault took place on Easter Sunday, 1 April. The expected enemy air assault was not as great as anticipated, which left many of us wondering --Why? The Japanese strategy unfolded later. Following the diversionary amphibious assault, Ringness was assigned to anti-suicide boat patrol along the Southeast coast of Okinawa, where intelligence reports had located Japanese small boat nests. The night of April 2 found us conducting an attack on an enemy midget submarine with undetermined results. A few miles outboard of our patrol area, which was one to two miles offshore, U.S. cruisers, another 2 to 4 miles to seaward, engaged in shore bombardment during night hours. That is a very eerie sensation to hear 8" shells whistling overhead. On Tuesday, 3 April, Ringness and 2 other APD's were directed to proceed to Ulithi where we arrived on 6 April. Conducted necessary logistics and on 7 April were part of TG 53.8 as escorts to follow on assault forces, composed of 19 transports and cargo ships, with 6 escorts bound for Okinawa. On arrival, 12 April, Ringness was assigned to anti-submarine and anti-aircraft patrol, undergoing numerous air attacks as the enemy had unleashed her air power.

. One Kamikaze passed close over our bow en route to crashing close to the USS St.Louis (CL 49). Did any of our 40mm shells help down him close to the Cruiser? Who knows.

We continued these patrols for the next four days, and were then detached to join 7 escorts to return to Saipan with 15 empty transports and cargo ships, departing Okinawa on 16 April, arriving Saipan 20 April. We got a few days rest and a chance for logistic resupply of our ship. On the 23rd of April, we departed Saipan with convoy SON2, consisting of 13 LST's and 6 LSM's with 4 escorts, en route Okinawa. This was a slow convoy with speed of advance being about 9 knots.

It was about 0823 on 27 April, a beautiful morning, calm sea, patrolling our sector on the starboard bow of the convoy, I was chatting with one of the sailors on the foc's'le. The General Alarm sounded. I instantly looked around, and on our port side was a torpedo wake headed straight for our ship, and just beyond, between Ringness and the convoy, was a periscope. I took about two jumps to the vertical ladder leading up to the hedgehog deck, and another two jumps to the vertical ladder leading to the flying bridge. Lt. R. C. Wells was OOD and had already started the turn toward the periscope, which had now disappeared. In the meantime, even before I made the first ladder, the torpedo had passed directly under the foc's'le. It must have been set too deep for our draft. On arrival on the flying bridge, I was informed that a second torpedo had been seen by the ready gun crew on the 40 mm aft gun and that it had passed astern of the ship. The ready gun crew began shooting at the periscope, which quickly disappeared. I assumed the conn and headed for a spot ahead of where the periscope was last seen. No sonar contact was made. We made a depth charge attack using a spot of estimated interception with the periscope. We opened out and turned to make a second run, searching with our sonar with no success. At 0845, 22 minutes after the first torpedo was sighted, a large explosion occurred in the general vicinity of where we had dropped our depth charges.

The plume of water and debris rose between 150 and 200 feet in the air. We stopped and put a boat in the water to pick up some of the debris. (See pages 20a, 20b and 20c for official narrative of attack and pictures of debris) In the February 1961 issue of the Naval Institute Proceedings, the following article appeared:

***"Japanese submarine tactics" by Kennosuke Torisu, assisted by Masataka Chihaya, Managing Editor of "Shipping & Trade News" and "Japan Shipping & Shipbuilding".***

***"While submerged at dawn on 27 April, I-36 discovered on the brightening horizon far to the south a group of ships which soon turned out to be over 30 vessels apparently heading for Okinawa.***

***"Immediately, orders for preparing a kaiten attack were given. Out of 6 human torpedoes, 2 were found to be of no use.***

***"When the submarine had closed to a point some 7,000 meters forward of the beam of the convoy, 4 kaiten were released. There was no indication that I-36 had been detected. 10 minutes after launching time, 4 big***

***explosions were heard. The submarine was not subjected to counter-attack by the enemy, but she failed to confirm the results of her kaiten attack. How much damage this first kaiten attack on ships at sea inflicted is still unknown to us."***

Personal note: The "four explosions" reported by the I-36 had to be the 4 depth charges we dropped on the first attack after sighting the two torpedoes, or were they two of the kaitens? It is interesting to note that no mention is made about recovering any of the 4 kaitens that the I-36 launched. It has to be assumed that these kaitens were on a suicide mission and all were lost. We know that there was no damage done to any of our convoy ships or the escorts. How we escaped the one that passed under our bow is a miracle. I have often wondered if the large explosion was due to two of the kaitens colliding and blowing each other up.

We arrived back in Okinawa on 30 April, for the third time since the initial invasion. We spent the entire month of May in the combat area, a period marked by the continued attempt of the Jap air fleet to break the ring of U.S. ships protecting the invaded island. Ringness maintained her various anti-submarine and anti-aircraft screen stations. All hands will remember May 1945. A few highlights. General Quarters, for all practical purposes, replaced normal war cruising as a condition of readiness. Japanese Kamikaze tactics demanded constant alertness, with the radar picket and screen vessels bearing the brunt of the Japanese air effort.

On 4 May, the USS Sangamon (CVE 26), was operating in our area, when a Kamikaze hit the flight deck, turning the ship into a roaring inferno. Ringness quickly went to the Sangamon's aid, rescuing personnel forced over the side by the flames and explosions. We also rendered emergency medical treatment to injured and burned men, by our excellent medical team, led by Doctor Lowry. The Sangamon was towed to Kerama Retto, a small group of islands SW of Okinawa, which had an excellent anchorage, and was a base set up by the US Forces, to receive casualties and damaged ships. We transferred the rescued personnel to facilities at the Base.

11 May, while patrolling our Radar Picket Station due west of Okinawa, we received orders to proceed at best speed to Radar Picket Station 15 (Roger Peter 15) about 40 miles to the north. This Station was the so-called "hot corner", as it was on the most direct line of attack from Japan to Okinawa. It is believed that a speed mark was set for APD vessels, in excess of twenty-five knots, during our dash to assist. Two DD's were usually assigned to this station. On this day the USS Hugh W. Hadley (DD774) and the USS Evans (DD 552) were on station and came under the heaviest air attack of the Okinawa campaign. The Evans was battered by four successive Kamikaze smashes. The Hugh W. Hadley was wrecked by a bomb hit, a "Baka", and two suicide crashes. Both destroyers wrote an epic in destroyer history, smashing a relentless assault by an entire Jap air armada. The smoke of battle had scarcely cleared when the grim task of rescue and salvage work began. Yes, a price was paid in the gallant defense. Ringness played a small part in the rescue operations.

16 May, at 2318, while we were back again on radar picket station, combat reported a "bogey" headed our way coming from the northwest. We were on a westerly leg of our patrol. We had been at GQ and went to flank speed. We held our fire, since it was a dark night, considering it to our advantage not to give the enemy a point of aim from gun flashes.

When combat reported range 4 miles and steady course for crash, the enemy coming almost head on, we gave hard left rudder. With our speed now up to better than 20 knots, and with our twin rudders giving us great maneuvering capability, we made a hard turn to port. Seconds later - 20, 40, 50, a minute ?? a twin engine Betty flashed over our fantail and crashed 100 to 150 yards from Ringness in a huge ball of fire. The 40mm gun crew aft said they could almost have touched the Betty's wheels. The destroyer on the next station to the north, called on the radio, asking if we had been hit and if we needed assistance. No, we did not shoot the enemy down, but we thought we just out maneuvered him. To say the least, we all heaved a sigh of relief. Credit must be given to our engineering team for rapid response to our signal - Flank Speed - when we

realized that we were under attack.

Ringness continued Anti-Submarine and Radar Picket Patrols in the Okinawa area for the balance of May. Air attacks in the area were routine, but toward the end of the month they began to taper off some. On 31 May we were at anchor in the Hagushi Beach area, with troop and supply ships off loading to Okinawa.

Early the morning of 1 June, we were under air attack and assisted in covering the ships with a smoke screen from our smoke generator on the fantail. We had received orders the night before to depart Okinawa that morning and join a convoy of merchant ships, as a unit of the escort force, en route Ulithi. We had just hauled in the anchor, and started to move out of the anchorage when a Kamikaze went into a dive and crashed in the exact spot that we had been anchored. We believed that he had initially aimed at our mast which extended above the low lying smoke screen. The fact that we were underway threw his aim off. To say the least, this was a fitting climax to our months stay at Okinawa, and an ironic send-off.

Off Okinawa we made our rendezvous with a large group of merchant ships, OKU-6, en route Ulithi. We arrived on 6 June and departed on 7 June for Leyte Gulf, Philippines, escorting another convoy. Arrived Leyte on 11 June and went into an availability period for maintenance, including dry docking in USS ARD-16.

On 29 June departed Leyte, with escort unit, escorting LSTs to Okinawa. Arrived Hagushi Beach on 4 July.

Ringness was immediately assigned to Radar Picket duty until 6 July, when we were assigned to escort merchant ships to Ulithi, with arrival on 12 July. Departed Ulithi on 13 July with USS Register (APD 92) and USS Burke (APD 65), en route to Leyte Gulf.

In most of these escort assignments, with various types of escort ships, Ringness was escort commander due to my seniority. As Escort Commander, additional responsibility was placed on me since the Escort Commander is responsible for the operational control of all escorts and protection of the convoyed ships.

Arrived in Leyte on 16 July. On 17 July Ringness was assigned to an escort group for training exercises of Battleships, Heavy Cruisers, Light Cruisers and Jeep Carriers in the Leyte-Samar area. These training exercises were the beginning training for the landing operations tentatively scheduled for 15 November with landings on Kyushu, Japan. This training period ended for Ringness on 27 July 1945.

15 July 1945 - Promoted to Commander

The following section covers the period of 29 July to 6 August which was of special importance and requires being treated separately.

**USS INDIANAPOLIS (CA 35) RESCUE  
OPERATION  
USS RINGNESS (APD 100) PARTICIPATION  
2 - 6 AUGUST 1945**

To get the full picture of the tragedy of the USS Indianapolis sinking, one should read the following books on the subject:

**ABANDON SHIP by Richard F. Newcomb 1958**  
**ALL THE DROWNED SAILORS by Raymond B. Lech**  
**1982**  
**FATAL VOYAGE by Dan Kurzman 1990**

As Commanding Officer of the USS RINGNESS, I was quoted, with respect to discussion with Captain McVay, the CO of INDIANAPOLIS, even though no author ever contacted me to get my remembrances of

the rescue. “Poetic License”, I assume.

My comments, and remembrances, are, to the best of my memory, correct, as I recall them, even after 53 years. It was an operation that imprints on ones’ memory the facts, and keeps the memory almost as clear as the day it happened.

On 29 July 1945, we left Leyte Gulf with the USS REGISTER (APD 92), escorting the USS CHENANGO (CVE 28) and USS GILBERT ISLAND (CVE 107) , en route to Ulithi in the Western Caroline Islands. RINGNESS was escort commander.

We arrived off Ulithi early the morning of 1 August. When the two “Jeep Carriers” were safely inside the lagoon, we were detached and immediately reversed course for return to Leyte without refueling. That “tactical decision”, not to refuel, on my part, was poor judgment, as I realized later.

On Thursday, 2 August, late in the afternoon, we were requested by a message drop from patrol planes operating in the area we were transiting, to participate in a possible enemy submarine search in the area.

This search proved negative. Around 2000 that evening, after we had resumed our transit to Leyte, we received an URGENT message from CINCPAC directing the two APD’s to proceed at best speed on a rescue mission some 250 miles NE of our position, “survivors in the water”. No other information. We steamed at 20 knots all night, arriving in the general rescue area about 0900 the morning of 3 August.

We spotted the first survivor, a single sailor in a raft, about 0915, directly ahead of the REGISTER and directed them to pick up. RINGNESS continued on to the NE where search planes were circling overhead. We picked up our first survivors about 1000, 3 rafts lashed together.

Although the “story” is told in the books that we made contact by radar on a 40mm ammunition box, none of our officers or men, ever recalled such. It was the circling of search aircraft that we set our course for. And this proved the right move.

All hands, not required in the engine-fire room, CIC, radio were on deck and stationed as high as possible to visibly search for survivors. We made the decision to use the ship, which was highly maneuverable, in lieu of our 4 landing craft, LCVP’s, to pick survivors up. Boat crews had limited horizontal visibility, compared to lookouts on the ship. And if picked up by a boat in the water, there would have to be the eventual transfer to the ship, a second handling of the survivors.

Furthermore, the configuration of the LCVP is such that getting the personnel from the water into the LCVP is not easy.

As we pulled alongside the first group, standing, frantically waving his arms, as though we didn’t see them, and were going to run them down, was an officer in khakis. This proved, when he was brought aboard, to be Captain Charles B. McVay, III, Commanding Officer, USS INDIANAPOLIS. There were 8 or 9 men in the rafts and all of them were able to climb the cargo nets, or rope ladders, with minimum assistance from RINGNESS crew members. Al Havins, Y3c, a survivor, confirmed this, because of our fast approach. But - that was RINGNESS. All ahead flank, all back full !!!

REGISTER was directed to cover a search area to the north of RINGNESS. We were the only two ships in the area, with the other rescue ships over the horizon to the East.

We continued to pick up individual survivors in life jackets, from life rafts, and the most memorable pick up was of two sailors, sitting on top of a rolled up “floater net”. A floater net is a manila line net with cork interlaced on the net, causing it to float, which is carried on board the ship in baskets. When opened out it is

about 8 feet by 8 feet. If a ship sinks, the net floats away. They are not secured in the basket, but did have light lashing to keep them rolled up. These two sailors kept the net rolled up, and had sat there for 4-1/2 days — a marvel in itself. The other amazing thing was that as we pulled alongside, we watched 4 or 5 large sharks slowly swimming around, and around, and around the net, waiting for the sailors to fall off. The fact that the ship came right alongside the net to pick up the survivors did not, in the least, deter the sharks. But RINGNESS fooled them - we pulled the sailors aboard.

As survivors were brought aboard, they were assisted by our personnel to remove their oil-soaked life jackets and clothing. They were escorted to sick bay where our medical team took over, cleaned them of oil and each was given a physical examination.

Dungarees and uniform (for Captain McVay), donated by RINGNESS crew members, were given out, and Initially limited food and water was administered. All were berthed in troop quarters. Captain McVay was berthed in the CO's cabin.

Some years later, John Jarman, one of our shipmates, related a story to me with respect to Captain McVay.

John helped the Captain aboard and helped him out of his life jacket and took him to sickbay. John saw on his life jacket the flare gun he used to light the last cigarette in the raft the last night they were in the water - virtually ready to give up any hope of rescue.

After the Captain was safely in sickbay, John went back to the pile of life jackets, took the flare gun off the jacket and stowed it in his locker. Only a few years ago (1995) did he have the flare gun delivered to me. In 1996, at the general meeting of the Indianapolis Survivors Association Reunion in Indianapolis, did I have the opportunity to give this memento to the Association as a small part of the USS INDIANAPOLIS that survived the sinking 51 years earlier.

The majority of the pick-ups were completed by 1300, the 3rd of August, and only then did I feel I could leave the bridge, and go to my cabin to meet Captain McVay. He was resting comfortably in the bunk, and assured me that he was able and willing to talk, and contribute to a message that I was preparing to send to CINCPAC re results of our rescue efforts.

I had made a rough draft of the message and read it to him, requesting his comments and input. He discussed the basic info as to conditions on the 29th of July and what he remembered. He was very emphatic, initially, not to include the fact that they were NOT zig-zagging. It was evident that this fact was bothering him.

Understandably, he was still very traumatized. At the same time, I felt strongly that the true facts had to be revealed now, since the truth would come out in any Board of Investigation that certainly would be held. He finally agreed, after much discussion, and concurred in the final draft of the message.

***“ Have 37 survivors aboard including Captain Charles B. McVay, 3rd, Commanding Officer. Captain McVay picked up at Lat. 11-35 Long 133-21, with nine other rafts within radius of four miles and states he believes ship hit 0015 sunk 0030, 30 July position on track exactly as routed by Guam speed 17 knots not zigzagging. Hit forward by what is believed to be two torpedoes or magnetic mine followed by magazine explosion.”***

When this message was sent, we had only 37 survivors. Later that afternoon we picked up the additional two. We continued to search the area and sometime late in the afternoon, a search plane dropped a smoke flare some distance to the north of our position. We headed at top speed and found a single raft with the last two survivors picked up — Bob Brundige, S1c and Giles McCoy, Pfc, USMC. At subsequent reunions these two great guys would still argue which one came aboard last. McCoy, a typical Marine, wanted no help in getting

aboard. Once on deck, though, he fell flat on his face, but was soon revived in sickbay.

Late that afternoon, we ceased our search, and with REGISTER, proceeded to Peleliu in the Palau Islands for transfer to a shore-based hospital. We had picked up 38 enlisted and Captain McVay. As we reflected on the tragedy, we were all amazed at the resilience of our men. 4-1/2 days in the water, soaked in oil (good, in some respects to protect some from sunburn), lack of water or food, threatened by sharks and exhaustion. And yet the next day, when delivered to Peleliu, most of the survivors walked on their own power.

One thing I have often regretted, is not having a transcript of Captain McVay's comments prior to leaving the ship at Peleliu. As we were approaching Peleliu, Captain McVay came to the bridge requesting permission to speak to the crew of Ringness. "Granted". His heartfelt remarks of thanks and appreciation on behalf of the Indy personnel, really showed the top-notch quality of Captain McVay. An officer and a gentleman, with deep-seated human qualities of humbleness and compassion, and in belief of the existence of a Higher Being.

After transferring the survivors ashore, we went alongside a tanker to refuel. It was then that I realized my poor judgment in not refueling 6 days earlier. Our Engineering Officer reported to me: "Captain, we have about 2 hours steaming left in the bunkers". Never again did I make such a mistake. "Keep topped off at every opportunity."

After refueling the two APD's, we headed back to the search area and joined an armada of DD's, DE's and APD's late the afternoon of 5 August 1945 with negative results. At 0600 on 6 August the search team was dissolved and RINGNESS with REGISTER resumed their movement to Leyte, arriving 7 August.

The following is a list of survivors picked up by RINGNESS:

MC VAY, III, Charles Butler Captain,  
USN

ALLARD, Vincent Jerome QM 3c, USN    KREIS, Clifford Eddy S1c. USNR

BELCHER, James Robert S1c, USNR    KRUEGER, Norman F. S2c, USNR

BITONTI, Louis Peter S1c, USNR    KURLICK, George Robert FC3c, USNR

BRUNDIGE, Robert Henry S1c, USNR    LANTER, Genley M. S1c, USNR

GALANTE, Angelo (n) S2c, USNR    MAXWELL, Farrell Jacob S1c, USNR

GETTLEMAN, Robert Alfred S2c, USNR    MC COY, Giles Gilbert Pfc, USMC

GLENN, Jay Rollin AMM3c, USNR    MILBRODT, Glen LaVerne S2c, USNR

GRAY, Willis Leroy S1c, USNR    MORAN, Joseph John RM1c USN

HART, Fred J.. RT2c, USNR    MORGAN, Glenn Grover  
BgMstr3c,USNR

HAVINS, Otha Alton Y3c, USNR    MULDOON, John James MM1c, USNR

HELLER, John (c) S2c, USNR    OUTLAND, Felton James S1c, USNR

HODGE, Howard Henry RM2c, USNR	PALMITER, Adeline A. S2c, USNR
HOSKINS, William Orson Y3c, USNR	PAYNE, Edward Glenjoy S2c, USNR
JENSEN, Eugene W. S2c, USNR	REHNER, Herbert Adrian S1c, USN
JUICKIEWICZ, Raymond S. S1c, USNR	SEABERT, Charles Wilson S2c, USNR
KLAPPA, Ralph Donald S2c, USNR	SPINELLI, John Anthony SC2c USNR
KEMP, David Poole, Jr. SC3c, USNR	SHEARER, Harold J. S2c USNR
KLAUS, Joseph Frank S1c USNR	STURTEVANT, Elwyn Lee RM2c, USN
KOZIARA, George (n) S2c USNR	TURNER, Charles Morris S2c, USNR

A point of interest. In all of our area of search and pick-up, on the 3rd, and again on the 5th of August, did we ever see a single body. I have read accounts, and heard statements made, about picking up bodies. Not by RINGNESS.

Also, my memory fails me in trying to recollect what we did with respect to destroying the life rafts and the floater net.

Once we got survivors aboard from a raft or rafts, my attention was focused on the next pick-up. But I do not remember seeing anything floating after we had completed the pick-up. It is possible that some of our crew, as soon as the raft or net was empty, grappled it aboard and destroyed it. We had an alert, innovative crew.

From 7 August to 20 August we were at anchor in San Pedro Bay, Leyte Gulf, or off Guian, Samar. It was in this location on 10 August that we received the word of Japan's peace offer. There was much jubilation, with firing of guns in the air, multi-colored flares, and sounding of ships' whistles. Some of us, remembering Japanese treachery in the past, prayed that they were not diabolically planning a last ditch stab in the back. Fears were allayed, however, on 14 August with the President's official announcement of the Japanese surrender, while the Ringness lay quietly at anchor, peace came to the world.

But for the Ringness, as for many other ships, the job was far from being completed. There were countries to be occupied, and people to be liberated. It became the Navy's duty to continue its role in the occupation to come, so on 20 August we set out on the first step in a series of operations designed to help clean up the mess Japan had made of Asia. On 20 August, Ringness became one of 9 escort vessels, escorting Battleships and Cruisers to Okinawa, where we arrived on the 23rd in Buckner Bay on the east side of Okinawa. We commenced loading troops and cargo preparatory to our first post war operation—the occupation of Korea. On 4 September we moved to Hagushi Beach Anchorage on the West side of Okinawa, and on the 5th, departed as part of the escort screen of 17 APD's and 3 DE's, escorting 24 Navy ships to Jinsen, Korea, where we arrived on 8 September. This movement of Navy ships into strange waters was faced with the immediate danger of floating mines. The initial occupation force arrived safely and though the force was battle-ready, the landings went off without incident.

On 9 September Ringness was assigned as flagship for the Force Beachmaster and Seventh Amphibious Force Representative for the Jinsen area - Captain Gray. This necessitated our staying in the Jinsen area until the 26th of September.

This anchorage - Higashi/Suido - experiences 30+ foot tides, with currents during ebb and flood, being very



high. Constant alert was necessary to ensure not dragging anchor. We were the first Navy ship to enter the inner harbor for off loading, passing through the locks at high tide. The only time a ship could enter, or leave, was at high tide. One of the responsibilities of the Force Beach Master was to get the port facilities operational and to see that utilities for the area were operating. An item of interest: Utilities were coal-fired and the South part of Korea had no coal mines. They were all in the North, above the 38th parallel, the DMZ. Therefore it was necessary to get coal from North Korea — occupied by the Communist. So, coal trains, with empty coal cars were dispatched to North Korea to obtain coal. That was the last anyone saw of the trains. It then became necessary to arrange shipping to bring coal from Japan. Nice allies.

Our duties, as Flagship, were finished on 26 September. Ringness with USS Balduck (APD 132) departed Jinsen escorting the USS Pondera (APA 191) to Hagushi Beach, Okinawa with arrival on 28 September.

29 September found Ringness, as only escort for TU78.1.94, composed of 3 APA's, 3 AKA's and 1 LSV en route for occupation duty in Tientsin, China. We still had the 7th Amphibious Force Beachmaster and Staff on board. At 0723 on 2 October our lookout spotted a 4-horned Japanese floating mine directly in our path. Proceeded to detonate with 40mm gunfire. A piece of the mine, flying though the air cut a signal halyard and landed at my feet. I retained this piece of mine but lost it in the fire storm of 1991 that destroyed our Oakland CA home. There is a picture of this piece of mine, with a piece of wood from the Japanese Kaiten attack of 27 April, mentioned earlier, in my collection. We arrived at Taku Bar, Tientsin, China late in the day, 2 October.

We remained at anchor in Taku Bar until orders were received to take the Force Beachmaster to Tsingtao, China where we arrived on 9 October 1945, tying up at a pier in downtown Tsingtao.

We continued to serve as Flagship for the Force Beachmaster while they reopened the port. Their work was completed on the 12th of October and they departed Ringness. I was assigned collateral duty as Port Director and Senior Pilot, Tsingtao, and shortly thereafter, additional duty as President, U.S. Armed Forces Officers Club.

The assignment of collateral duty as "Port Director", without any previous experience or information as to what my duties entailed, caused me some concern. So I arranged with the Marines to get a flight down to Shanghai to meet with the Shanghai Port Director and glean as much info as possible. The Port Director was gone when I arrived, but the Assistant PD, a Mr. Ronnie Elias, took charge and gave me an excellent briefing. We became very close friends and saw each other on numerous trips to Hong Kong, where he moved in 1948 when the Chinese Commies were taking over the mainland. His wife Yvonne was a delightful person.

When we arrived in Tsingtao, there was considerable tension and concern about hostilities from the Chinese Communist elements not too far outside the city limits, verse the remaining Japanese Forces still awaiting repatriation. This was greatly relieved by the arrival of the U.S. Marine occupational troops on 11 October, and the final surrender of the remaining Japanese occupation troops. ( See pictures of surrender ceremony) . I was given one of the Army officers' swords and later gave it to Bill Jr.

We continued to serve as Flagship for the 7th Amphibious Force Representative in the Tsingtao Area, and on 15 December, Commander LST Flotilla 22 shifted his flag to the Ringness. These duties as "Flagship" consisted primarily of being the communication center for the commands. ComLSTFlot 22 was responsible for the repatriation of all Japanese civilian and military forces in the Tsingtao Area, back to Japan, on US LSTs. In addition we served as a communication channel for the Marine Division based at the old racetrack in Tsingtao.

During the 3-4 months that we were in Tsingtao, we got underway only once to fuel ship from a Navy tanker in the outer harbor, and then to proceed for a one day trip with all of the city officials of Tsingtao to visit an area of special interest to the Chinese at the end of the Shantung Peninsula. We had to use our landing craft

to land our guests on the beach, and then hike about a mile to reach the area. I do not recall the significance of the visit, but I do recall armed troops all around the area.

Being Commanding Officer of the Ringness, Port Director, Pilot and President of the Officers Club, permitted me to meet many of the top Chinese families in Tsingtao. I was invited into many of their homes, which was a great experience. I, and some of my officers and men, were invited to one family's wedding of their son with the celebration dinner after the wedding. In return, I would entertain them on board ship for dinner, and a first-run movie, which we were receiving regularly from the States. Also, we had an ice cream maker on board, and they loved freshly made ice cream, especially the children.

I maintained contact with some of these wonderful families, through the mail, until the area was overrun by the Chinese Communist in 1949. In the years intervening, I have lost all names and addresses.

Finally, on 22 January 1946, the Ringness was relieved of all duties in Tsingtao, and granted availability for engineering repairs. After reporting ready for sea, the news all hands had long awaited for came at last — Orders Home ! !

At 1000, 29 January 1946, with her Red, White and Blue Homeward Bound Pennant streaming proudly from the fore truck, RINGNESS sailed out of Tsingtao Harbor and began the long, but happy, voyage home.

It was an uneventful trip, with logistic stops at Guam, Pearl Harbor and Long Beach, California, before proceeding south to the Panama Canal, en route to Norfolk, Virginia, with arrival on 14 March 1946 for pre-inactivation logistics and overhaul.

While in Long Beach, I made a trip to the Headquarters of Southern California Edison in Los Angeles to see what their plans would be if I were to return to civilian life with SCE. It would be starting all over again, giving little or no credit for my 5-1/2 years of military service. I then finalized my plans to apply for transfer to the Regular Navy.

On 3 April, USS Ringness (APD 100) commenced her last voyage as a unit of the United States Navy, departing Norfolk for Green Cove Springs, Florida, near Jacksonville, Florida, for final inactivation and decommissioning on 5 June 1946, and final mooring in the “mothball fleet”. The Ringness was moved around a couple of times, but ultimately was scrapped at Orange, Texas in 1968. A good ship. An excellent crew. A team, that survived months of combat in World War II.

B R A V O Z U L U