

"THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS"



BEING THE STORY OF THE ADVENTURES  
OF  
MARVIN R. BEMIS, APPRENTICE SEAMAN,  
OF  
TROY TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN, U. S. A.

\*\*\*\*

A SAILOR IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY.



UNITED STATES NAVY

BY  
FRANK T. CARPENTER  
MCMXLIII



### "INTO A FAR COUNTRY."

On Saturday, October 9-1943, MARVIN R. BEMIS, an eighteen-years-old village boy of Michigan (who had never seen the ocean) left Detroit with a group of inductees on a long railroad journey to Farragut, Idaho, to take basic training to become Sailors in the great United States Navy;--the largest navy the world has ever known;--14,000 ships!

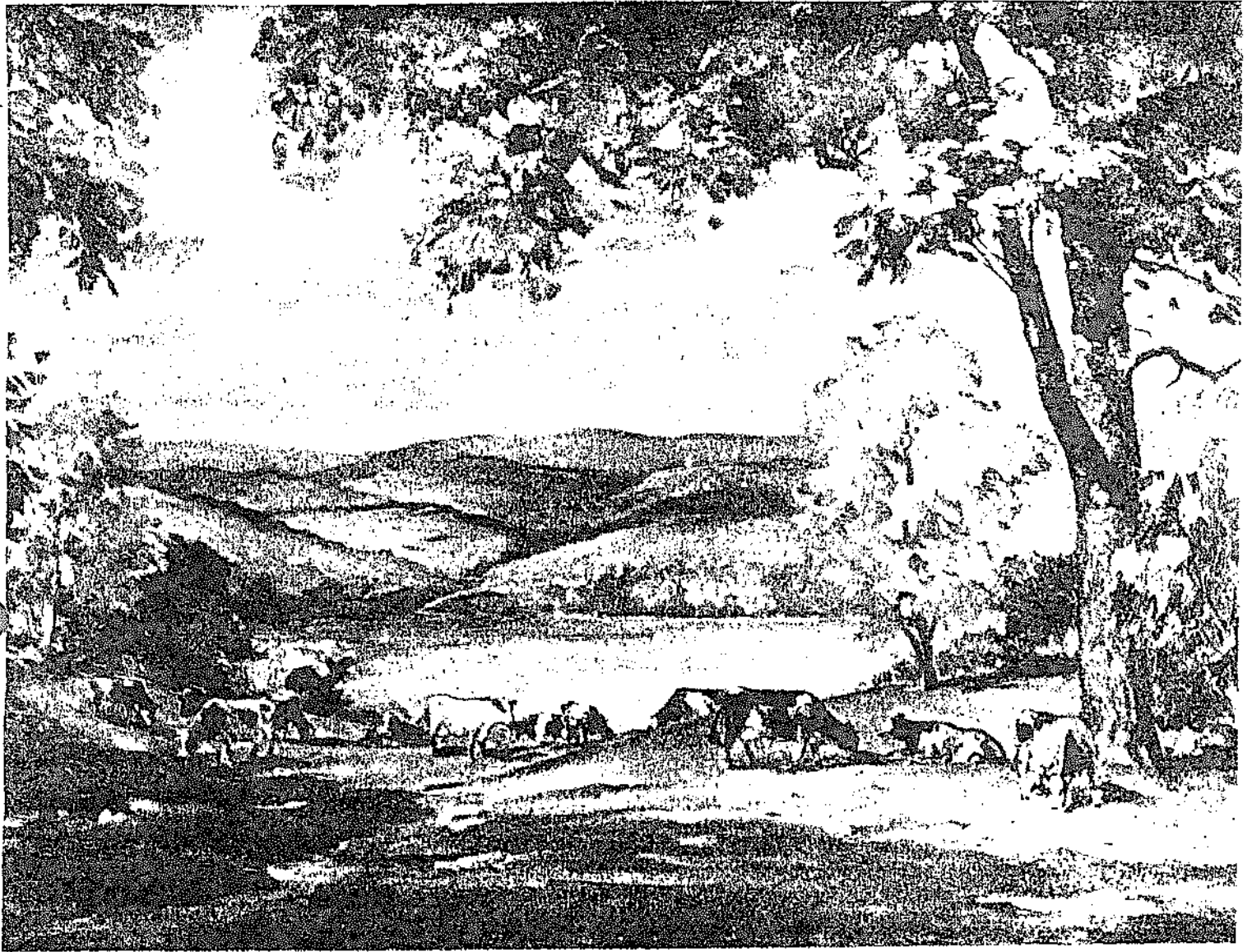
The first stop made by these traveling young Americans was at the great city of Chicago where they had two hours in which to see some of that famous, busy city. Marvin wrote from there:-

"We have just arrived in Chicago and everything is fine. Had a nice trip coming out here. There are 23 of us in the group and all of them are swell people."

Excited and happy over their first visit to a strange city, Marvin and his companions expectantly resumed their journey. Their train, its thundering power reverberating far and wide, plunged along through the great American scene,--cities and farms, many people, many rivers, far horizons, deep mountain passes, days of many unusual scenes, nights of adventurous darkness made musical by the engine's long whistles as stations and towns flash by and vanish;--across Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, into Idaho, (known to the Indians as "Light of the Mountains"). Beyond the Rocky Mountains, beyond the Bitter Root Mountains, into a beautiful valley deep in the heart of the Coeur D'Alene Mountains, the panting train came to a stop at half-past eight at night on Monday, October 12th, at the United States Naval Training Station known as Camp Ward.

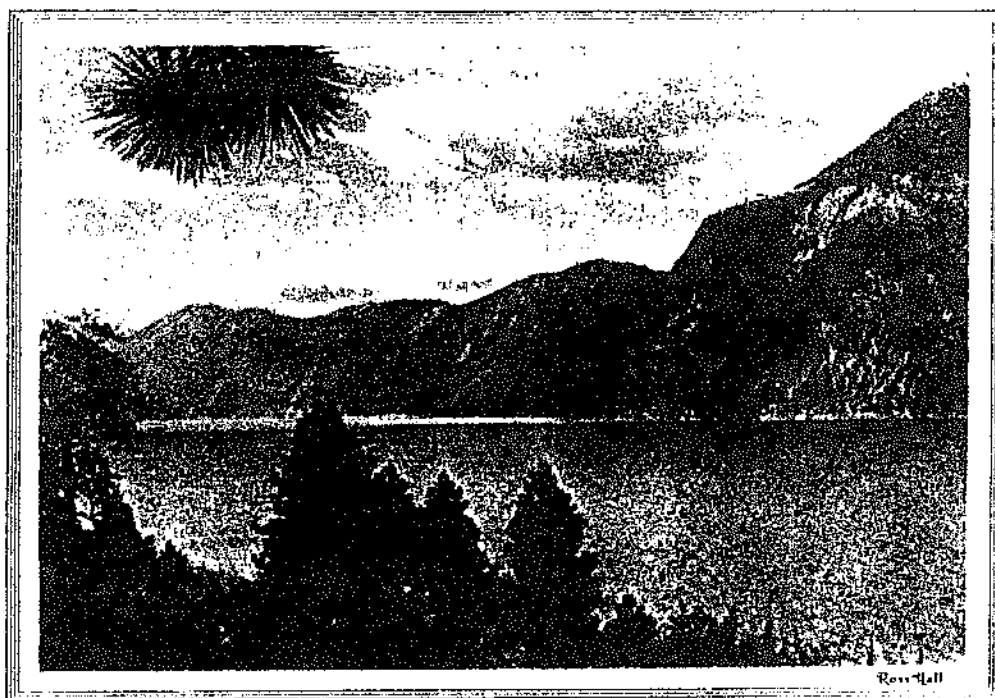
The valley where this camp is sheltered is completely surrounded by high, rugged mountains whose summits are white with snow. The nearest city of importance is Spokane, Washington, twenty miles away.

And so this young Apprentice Seaman settled down to the work of drilling and becoming physically fit for the important duties of an American Sailor in the great Global War.



*A Scene of Peace in Wisconsin's Dairyland*

Marvin's train passed through Wisconsin on his way to the mountains of Idaho.



GREETINGS FROM U. S. NAVAL TRAINING STATION - FARRAGUT, IDAHO

Two miles down the valley from Camp Ward, at the foot of the snowy peaks, there is a large lake known as LAKE PEND OREILLE; whose shores are adorned with pine and fir and spruce and whose waters are so marvelously clear that it is easy to see ten or fifteen feet below its surface. On the farther shore of this blue lake stands a great cliff, as rugged and mighty as the United States Navy itself. To this spot of grandeur, down a road through scenery of great beauty, these young sailors march through the crisp cold air to perfect their knowledge of rowing boats.



Every morning there is the impressive ceremony of "Standing Colors". That is,--raising the Flag; followed by doing the 16-count manual of arms; and then their physical exercise to band music. Finally comes marching with the exhilaration of the spirited music of the band, ending by passing in review before the "Gold Braids".

On Monday, November 8th, he went on 12 hours "Liberty" and took the opportunity to visit Spokane. Spokane is a handsome city situated in a beautiful natural park in a valley through which flows the Spokane River with a series of cascades in the heart of the city; and it is the center of great forests of white pine. The group of young sailors had a good time in the city and didn't get back to their camp until 2:00 A.M.



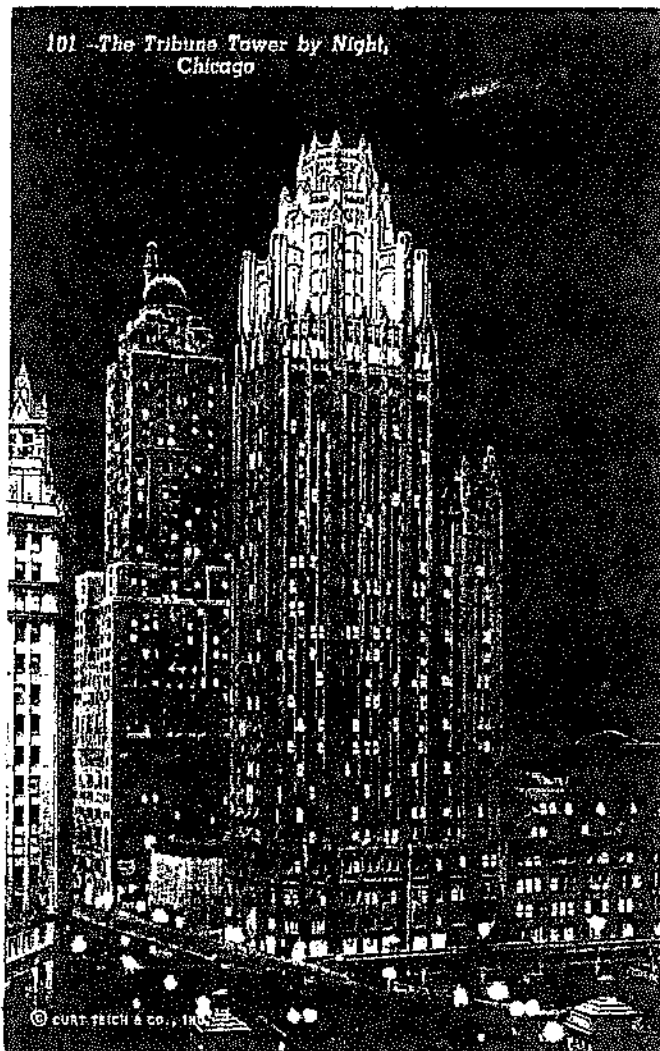
**CAPTAIN FRANK HARRISON KELLEY, USN**

Commandant of the U. S. Naval  
Training Station, Farragut, Idaho,

The training of these apprentice seamen turned out most successfully. Marvin's company, number 878, numbering 118 men, won the Camp Ward pennant for proficiency in military drill and climaxed their success the next day by winning the station pennant. Marching off the field in high animation and buoyancy, their captain, R. N. Murray, C.Sp., a chief petty officer of fine military bearing, proudly declared that they were the sharpest company he had ever seen come through Farragut.



On Tuesday, December 7th, in a company of seventy sailors, Marvin left Farragut with its six training camps and approximately 40,000 men, to journey back home on a furlough. Out of the Bitter Root Mountains rushed their train on the Northern Pacific Railroad, down into a valley in Montana where the Missoula River flows by the little lumber town of Missoula. A short stop there permitted the sending of telegrams. Then began the long railroad journey across Montana; through Butte in Silverbow County nearly 6,000 feet up on the west slope of a range of the Rocky Mountains; the center of great copper, gold and silver mines; through the city of Billings on the Yellowstone River and near the Beartooth National Forest; into "The Land of the Dakotas", through the capital city of Bismarck on the Missouri River across the million-and-a-half dollar bridge and out over the wide prairies towards Fargo, 200 miles away to the east on the Red River of the North. Only a pause in Fargo and then on to the twin cities of



"THE TALL TOWERS OF CHICAGO"

Minneapolis and Saint Paul, 240 miles away, and the homes of three quarters of a million people, on the great Mississippi River;--the Father of Waters. At Minneapolis are the famous Falls of Saint Anthony and nearby are the Minnehaha Falls, where Hiawatha

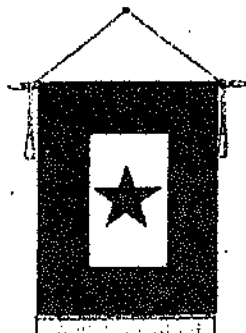
"Heard the Falls of Minnehaha  
Calling to him through the silence"

in their fifty foot drop in the Minnehaha River. Saint Paul, the capital of Minnesota, is a city founded on a solid rock.

And so traveled these American sailors through America. On and on, hour after hour, day and night, always feeling the throb of that heavy train, speeding ever towards home. As with Hiawatha so with Marvin:--

"At each stride a mile he measured;  
Yet the way seemed long before him,  
And his heart outran his footsteps."

But at length the tall towers of Chicago with its three and a half million people on the shore of Lake Michigan greeted them. Then came a taxi ride to the wrong station and another furious drive to the right station. They rushed pell mell through that great intricate railroad depot, along corridors, up stairs, down stairs,--finally just making their train on the Michigan Central Railroad. It was late afternoon, Thursday, December ninth, when their long train steamed haughtily into the great cathedral-like station at Detroit where Marvin's delighted family met him with the family car to take him back to HOME.



His furlough days were spent in visiting old friends and familiar places;--bowling in Birmingham, pictures in Pontiac, riding in Royal Oak, business in Big Beaver.

On December 27th, now as "Marvin Bemis, Seaman 2/c," he began the return trip to his camp. The first stop was Chicago. There he took the Burlington Route R.R. up through Dubuque, Iowa, on the Mississippi, and on into Wisconsin; passing through La Crosse, happily situated on her three rivers;--the Mississippi, the Koshong and the Black;--a city prospering in the center of a rich dairy country. The ride to Saint Paul was uneventful; and in that city he boarded the Northern Pacific train and settled down for the long ride through cities and sunshine, through mountains and through the night, to Spokane and his Naval Training Station in the Idaho valley.



"Through Mountains and Through the Night."





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Late in January, 1944, Marvin was transferred to the naval training station at Great Lakes, Illinois. They left camp in a long troop train which followed a different route in its trip eastward.

At Billings, Montana, the train turned to the southeast, crossing the Big Horn River flowing down from the Rocky Mountains;--a rugged, picturesque river with some of the most beautiful scenery in North America along its wild banks.

Cutting across Wyoming through Sheridan (once the scene of fierce Indian battles), they crossed the Powder River, passed through Gillette and entered the Black Hills;--a wild, forbidding mountain group extending to the north over 6,000 square miles with peaks 5,000 to 7,000 feet high. Once the Sioux Indians controlled the dark fastnesses of those mountains. Then came the white men and took \$100,000,000. in gold from their deep mines.

Cutting across South Dakota and the Cheyenne and White Rivers, their thundering, rumbling train, vibrant with the power of its locomotive, the shrill whistle shrieking defiance across those great plains, rolled on down into Nebraska. Broken Bow with its 4,700 people, the Platte River, Lincoln, the capital, Omaha, the big busy railroad city, with its homes back on the bluffs and its business houses down by the Missouri River, were all left behind.

Opposite Omaha, in Iowa, is Council Bluffs. Four miles from the Missouri rise the high Bluffs on whose crests the whites and Indians held Council. On, ever eastward, to Des Moines, on the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers, (a city of many bridges), they crossed the great Mississippi River and came to rest at Great Lakes, Ill., in the training station on the shore of Lake Michigan, 45 miles from Chicago. There Marvin is to take an eight weeks course in their basic Engineering School;--with frequent "Liberty" over week-ends to visit his home,



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Home on a week-end "Liberty" February 13th, Marvin reported rigorous winter weather at the Great Lakes Station. A fierce blizzard raging a whole day, with eight inches of snow and zero winds sweeping in with fury off of Lake Michigan. He traveled in a "Liberty" troop train of fifteen coaches. The train lost several hours time crossing Indiana and Ohio.

The training at his station is effective and thorough. Running lathes, milling machines and shapers, studying Diesel engines, mathematics, mechanical drawing and shop theory, a "physical hardness" set-up for an hour every night, and once a week a hike of about seven miles in North Chicago with one mile of double time.

\* \* \* \* \*

One windy night in November, 1942, with the mercury down to sixteen degrees, Marvin went to Square Lake on a straw ride and barn dance with a group of villagers from the Big Beaver area. And at that rural merrymaking he met

★ M A R T H A ; ★

a young, beautiful girl with a strange, compelling charm of manner;--low-voiced, calmly poised, sparkling eyes, glowing vitality, with depth of character well defined.

On that cold and windy, but gay and happy night, through the villages, through the woods, under the stars and the big barn roof, began a fifteen-month period of ever increasing friendship and mutual high regard which culminated on Saturday, March 4th, 1944, when Seaman Bemis (home on his short leave) and the lovely Martha Jean Kane were united in marriage by Rev. Frank L. Fitch at the hour of midnight in the parsonage of Saint Paul's Methodist Church in Monroe, Michigan. The same parsonage where Marvin's parents had, also, been married.

\* \* \* \* \*

"A sailor's lass a sailor's bride shall be."



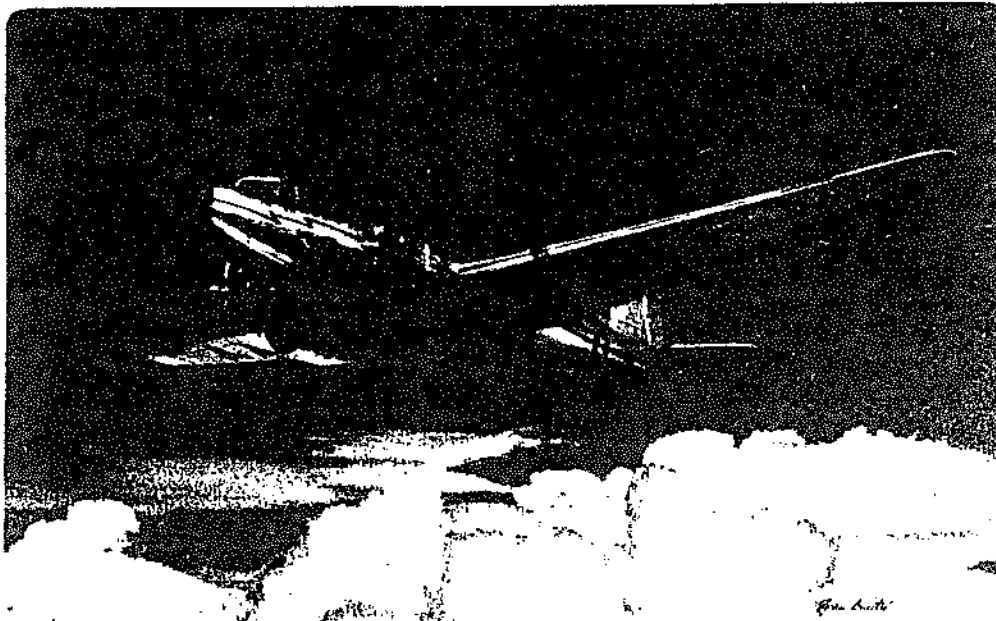
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March 10-1944

"Sonny-boy came in on a big bird."

So said Marvin's little sister, Barbara, (nearly three yrs old) in telling how her hero brother flew in from Chicago on his week-end 66 hours of "Liberty".

To him, "as an exalted spectator of the earth", it was a glory spot in his life. Ninety minutes bright with the exhilaration of the magic carpet of old. His first air plane flight.



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CAPT. H. R. HARRIS.



U. S. NAVY

NAVY DEPARTMENT, BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL  
SERVICE SCHOOLS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

This certifies that

Marvin Rohr BEMIS, 894 41 65, S2c, U. S. Naval Reserve, SV  
has satisfactorily completed the prescribed course of  
study at the Class "A" Service School, U. S. Naval  
Training Station, Great Lakes, Illinois, in Group III  
(Basic Engineering),  
this 20th day of March, 1944.

H. R. HARRIS

Captain, USNR

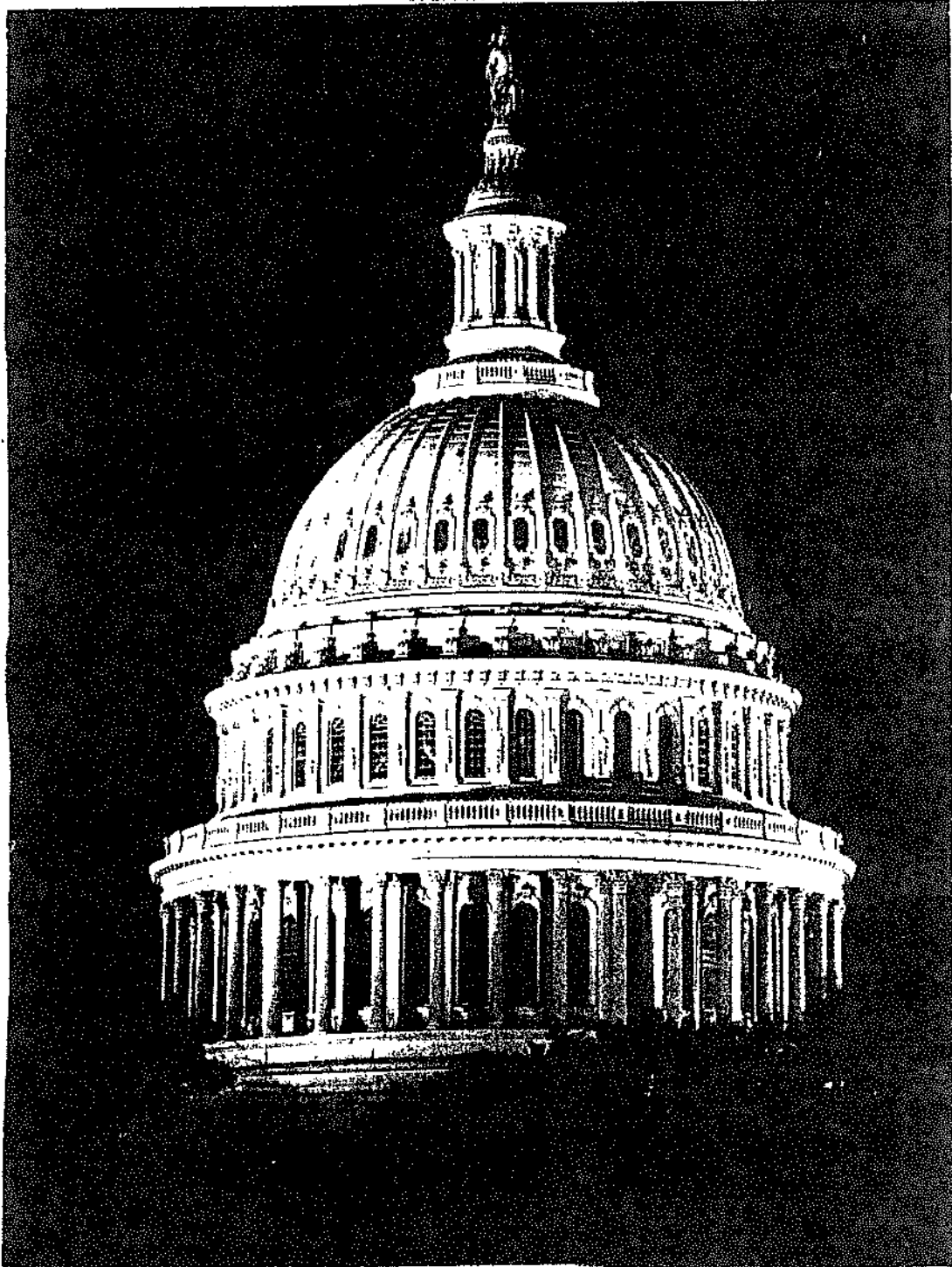
On March 21st "M. Bemis Fireman 1/c" arrived, with  
a class of naval students, at Richmond, Virginia.

From Great Lakes they had traveled in railroad  
coaches through Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West  
Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia and down  
into warm, hospitable Virginia to that old Confederate  
city resting on her seven hills. It was a most  
enjoyable journey. Passing through WASHINGTON, the  
great Capital City, these young seamen gazed with eager  
intensity through their car windows at the imperious  
Washington Monument and the glorious dome of the Capitol,  
---white and sacredly impressive in the warm sunlight,--  
incredibly beautiful--(over the dome the Nation's bright  
Colors float perpetually)--dominating the scene as the  
apotheosis of all their traveling, studying, drilling,  
saluting,--their uniforms, their brave, haughty music,  
their proud citizenship--There they stood, strong,  
self-sufficient, supreme above all the land--Their Land!  
The United States of America!





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SUPREME ABOVE ALL THE LAND.



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Marvin has added on this trip to his collection of American Rivers,--the Wabash,(and its storied banks, so fair in the moonlight), the Ohio, Monongahela, Shenandoah, Potomac, Rappahannock and the James. Also he has met the Alleghany Mountains, the Shenandoah Mountains and the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia.

For five weeks in Richmond he will take an intensive course in Diesel engines in his camp of 2,200 men, which is right in that old historic city on the James River. He says,--"The longer I am here the better I like it".

The Commanding Officer at this camp is Commander R. A. Rose, E-V(G)U.S.N.R.

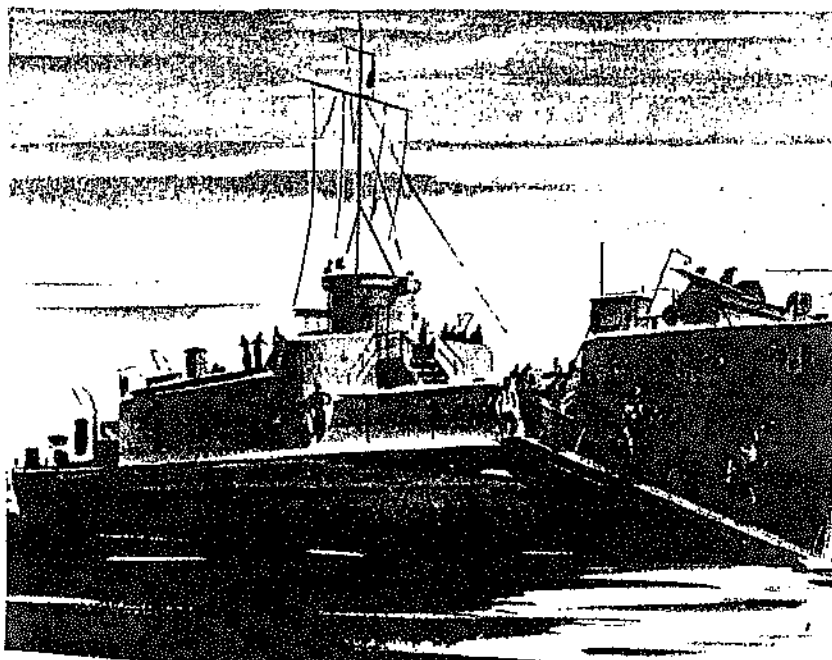
On April 29th, 1944, Marvin was transferred to Solomons Island for his final studies, culminating in a two-weeks cruise down Chesapeake Bay and far out into the Atlantic Ocean on his first ship.

His camp at Solomons, Maryland, was a beautiful place where the sun shone warm and bright all day long, glistening on the waters of historic Chesapeake Bay.

He was assigned temporarily to an L.C.I.(Landing Craft, Infantry) ship and the crew's first duty on shipboard was practicing beaching at nearby Cove Point. His enthusiasm ran high. He knew the engine! He knew how to run the ship! During the beaching practice they lost an anchor. After considerable effort it was recovered; but by that time the tide was out; so they spent the intervening hours in swimming and watching the majesty of the waves splashing high over the bow of the ship. Then came the ocean trip. Their ship, the "L.C.I.(L) 485 FLOTILLA NINE", carrying five 20 mm guns was under the command of a skipper and three ensigns. And that first short voyage was one of exhilaration and the joy of feeling like an "old salt". Two weeks afloat, and on his return to port he received 15 letters in the mail distribution. Then came a real assignment. His ship to carry a draft of 200 troops (a capacity load) down to Little Creek;--an all-day trip and a real duty as a sailor in the world's greatest Navy.



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LCI (Landing Craft Infantry) 157 ft.

On Memorial Day, 1944, Marvin's ship came in and was moored for a couple hours at Pier 10 at Solomons. Then away again for gun practice. A plane towed the target and all five guns fired at once; with a deafening report.

And the planes were practicing, too;--dropping a bomb onto an old barge and blowing it out of existence amid a thirty-foot geyser of white foaming water and a deep, far-rolling thunder.

And one day they almost ran into another ship;--but they didn't. No dull moments in the Navy.

Then for relaxation there was a six-hour "Liberty" one Sunday evening in the very pretty town of Cambridge, Maryland, on the Great Choptank River;--a mellow evening in late Spring in that genial Maryland climate; bright lights, crowds on the streets, generous libations if desired, an evening to linger pleasantly in this sailor's memory.





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The romance of new adventure of travel and ever-changing scene, as they ride through one great city after another, day and night, over America's mighty railroads to the far South-west, has again brought keen enjoyment to Marvin and his sailor buddies in a journey from Solomons to Orange on the Sabine River in Texas. From Chesapeake Bay to the Gulf of Mexico.

They left Solomons in a bus bound for Washington, but were so crowded that they commandeered an empty bus that was following them; so Marvin and about twenty more occupied that bus in comfort the rest of the way in to the Capital, which they reached at 8 P.M. Then their skipper gave them three hours to do as they pleased in the brightly-lighted, congested streets of that modern, sophisticated, over-crowded, intense city.---They spent a glorious three hours on its thronging avenues gay with flashing theatres, hotels and restaurants, mighty with stupendous architecture, with powerful rulers controlling the fate of many distant peoples. In high zest of life this group of Uncle Sam's Sailors of the Sea undismayed by the majesty of Greek or Roman columns, or by the exalted ranks of dignitaries high in the councils of war or diplomacy, laughing at the traffic congestion and the eager crowds of government clerks and executives out for the evening,-- spent their free time looking 'em over. But at eleven P.M. their long train pulled out of that great world Capital and the tired sailors were slowly falling asleep in their berths. What can equal the majesty of a great passenger train thundering through the night, the clicking of metal on rails, flashing headlights, the long, sweeping, enticing chime whistle--one sleeps with a feeling of security in the might of that rushing power. At 8:30 A.M., the next morning they were in the diner enjoying a breakfast of bacon and eggs, oat meal and very good coffee. And as they ate they could see the famed Blue Ridge Mountains bright in the early light of a new





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day in Virginia. For 400 miles they rode through Virginia--beautiful farms, fair cities, and always the blue mountains on the western horizon. Late in the day they entered Bristol, Virginia and Tennessee; with the state line running through the center of the main street. From the car window it looked like a nice little city with busy crowded streets.\*\*\*On through Tennessee with the scenery still beautiful,--Alabama--Mississippi--and New Orleans, Louisiana, where they had twelve hours to see the wonders of that old city. The Mississippi River is of great importance in that city and Marvin went down to its shore to see the developments there. He liked that city and had a good time there until midnight. Then once again away on the train and at nine A.M., June 5-1944, they were in orange.

Marvin likes his present officers better than any he has had yet; and he says,--"The crew I am in is sure made up with a swell bunch of guys".

On June 8th their fine new ship was commissioned and they went aboard. They spent several days of hard work getting her in shape for the "shake down" cruise down to Galveston, which was begun on June 18th. Then followed several weeks of long, interesting days of cruising in the Gulf, buffeted by the big waves of that sunlit, tropical sea, feeling the swell under his ship as he writes letters home, putting in at frequent intervals at Texas ports--Corpus Christi--Galveston;--a little fishing,--a little mal de mer;--a Sailor and his Ship preparing for great events.

In Galveston, protected by its great Sea Wall, to hold back the Gulf of Mexico when its waters are raging towards the city, Marvin's wife and mother took up temporary residence to be near him whenever he had a "Liberty".

Then there are those warm summer nights when the ship is anchored some distance out in the bay where the six-foot porpoises (bluish-black back, white beneath) are splashing. Across the water in one direction is Texas City; and on the opposite side Galveston glows with its many lights. And the stars are bright over Texas and the moonlight shines across the Gulf.



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"2017 Avenue K  
Galveston, Texas  
June 20-1944

-----  
"Galveston is a beautiful city. We are situated about four blocks from the Gulf where people beach nearly every day;--including the Bemis's! To me the Gulf is very fascinating;--breath-taking, in fact. The waves, when the tide comes in, seem angry at the many people enjoying the maddening beauty of it all. At times they are quiet, as if they were asleep, or perhaps grown very old and tired; again, they romp and play with the delight of a child over a new toy. Their toys, however, are different; for they play with the ships and lives of our men.

"Honest, it does do something to your soul---to walk along the shore at night with the salty breeze blowing your hair and carressing your skin; a moon and stars dilligently watching, you wonder if, when daylight comes, the big problem of war is not a nightmare; for there as you slowly stroll the beach you forget everything; everything but peace, contentment and those you hold most dear to your heart. You see, it casts a spell over you.

-----  
"For now, good bye and God bless you.

"Sincerely,

"Martha Bemis."



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## ANCHORS AWEIGH!

\* \* \* \* \*

The great Day of sailing, so long expected, came at last! One morning early in July, 1944, their ship, the

"U.S.S.L.C.L.(L) 1006",

of which they were so proud, a fine new unit in the amphibious force of the Navy, moved out of her harbor at Galveston and, manned by her crew of 25 happy, tense, excited young Americans, (Marvin and his Buddies) headed boldly out into the Gulf and, bidding farewell to the States, was off for the Caribbean Sea, the Panama Canal and the far Pacific Ocean.

The water was rough, but the mystery of the Unknown outweighed all other thoughts. And then there followed long days of calm seas, golden days of sunshine when the waves were full and even,---never-ceasing,---beautiful with the incredible blue of tropic waters. The great, spreading, magnificent Gulf of Mexico sparkled in the warm southern breeze and sunshine until it seemed to dazzle the brain as well as the eyes by its magic. They watched schools of flying fish and wondered about distant ships passing on the sunlit horizon. At night the brilliant phosphorescent glow in their wake was ever a source of admiration.

Steering a course south-east through the Strait of Yucatan they crossed the route followed by Cortez and his Conquistadors from Cuba to Mexico 400 years ago. (Far to starboard lay Yucatan, that ancient land, once the home of the mysterious Mayan Race.)

Entering the Caribbean Sea they set their course for Colon, passed slowly through the Panama Canal into the Gulf of Panama, putting in at Panama city, the capital of the South American country of Panama.

After a week at sea, out of sight of land, they had reached a foreign shore---Panama;---a land of palms,--(and bananas at seventy cents a bunch.) Marvin's shore leave included a bus ride, ice cream, bowling, moving pictures.



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On July 15th, 1944, they left the city of Panama. Their sturdy ship voyaging out into the Pacific on her way to Polynesia, Oceania, Asia, (where War is flashing and thundering), moved steadily forward in proud defiance.

Sometimes on those long, uneventful days afar on that great calm ocean (where they even forget the day of the week) his thoughts reverted to the happy little cottage in an oak grove on a hill near Cass Lake in Oakland County, Michigan, U.S.A.

And then, evenings at the close of those sunny days, the ocean was mantled with the overwhelming, colorful glory of the setting sun. A sea of glowing, burnished, crimson-gold enveloping his ship with mystical splendor.

A few days out they had a jolly interlude in the ship's routine.

They crossed the Equator!

Thereby invading the domain of Neptune, Rex, who came aboard and peremptorily commanded that all uninitiated Polywogs be forthwith brought before his august presence to learn the mysteries of his court and empire. The captain and his crew were charged with entering that sacred realm full speed ahead under cover of darkness, guns manned, the men on watch,--(for mermaids)! A most grievous offense! But His Majesty devised a series of fitting penalties for those amphibious Polywogs which, rather than be thrown to the sharks, they willingly, even joyously, accepted; emerging somewhat the worse for wear, but happy to be tough Shell Backs in King Neptune's ancient realm.

On August 3rd they reached their first port. After a couple days of heavy seas, when their ship was tossed about like a toy, they approached land; one of the Islands of the legendary, languorous South Seas, known as Borabora, or Bolabola. A most interesting island to those adventurous American sailors. Borabora is in the Leeward Group of the Society Islands; a group of volcanic islands with high mountains, and surrounded with coral reefs.

The dark-skinned natives put out to the ship in their canoes to sell, or trade for cigarettes, beads, grass skirts and bracelets. They were lean, tall men with very big feet. Their beads were made from sea shells.



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Since boyhood Marvin had wanted to visit a land where he could see bananas growing and could pick them from the trees himself. Now was his opportunity in this strange tropical isle. So one bright day he and two other sailors made their way far back into the dense, hot jungle. They climbed a hill so high and steep that it took two hours of hard work, sometimes on their hands and knees;--but at last they found some banana trees bearing big bunches of green bananas. Pleased with their success each sailor took a bunch and started on the return trip to their ship. On the way they also gathered a few cocoanuts. And so they returned, laden with the fruit of the tropics gathered by their own exertions; and at least one boyhood dream happily fulfilled.

"It certainly was a lot of fun."

After a stay of three days at Bolabola their ship again proceeded on her journey, steering a straight course for New Caledonia. Marvin was ever impressed with the beauty of the tropic nights. The constellation of the Southern Cross glittering high in the clear sky, and all too peaceful to believe that the world is at war.

New Caledonia is an island of Melanesia, washed by the Coral Sea, where coffee and gold, pineapples and silver, abound. The approach to Noumea, the capital, is interesting. A good harbor breaks the coast line and there, beyond the sun-soaked beach, is a city of 10,000 people, basking between sea and mountains, in the genial somnolence of the tropics.

Their ship made only a short call at Noumea. Marvin went ashore once, and then they got an outboard motor for their small boat and had a grand time dashing around the fine harbor under that power.

Noumea is a strange, interesting port to the eyes of Americans. The many shops offering beautiful native trinkets, ("cats' eye" necklaces and carved shell belts,) the red stone countryside houses on the steep mountain slopes, the big trees with their rich abundance of brilliant red blossoms, and many of the dark skinned natives with their hair dyed orange. "Butterfly rum" and native barefooted women contrast with jeeps and American soldiers in sun helmets and suntan uniforms.

Then away again goes Marvin's ship, leaving that colorful



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spot with its shops shimmering in that fierce beating sunlight, as it fades quickly into the horizon.

They voyaged north through the Coral Sea, with the weather growing warmer and warmer every day as they drew nearer to the equator; until one day, late in August, they dropped anchor in port at a large island where palm trees waved in the listless breeze as plentiful as the oak trees are back home.

One day when they were close to shore he saw a native boy walking on the beach and carrying a knife nearly two feet long. (He felt safer in his ship.)

The natives live in grass huts and the young women wear grass skirts---only! Quite appropriate to that hot climate.

But they were never long in one port. Their ship was ever off to some other unknown destination among those many islands, each one with its own strange touch of life.

There was one island blessed with the blue mystery of distant hills;--beautiful as the hills of Michigan. But when Marvin went ashore on the sun-hardened coral beach he could hear rattlesnakes giving their crafty, insidious, rattling warnings in that forbidding, tangled jungle; so those sailors never ventured far from the shore.

Always there was the intense heat and the natives in their grass skirts; but always there were more and more islands to visit and a fresh breeze blowing as soon as they got underway. They visited many a glistening green and white palm-fringed shore, drowsy in the heat of the tropics, but they always found excellent fishing, friendly, swarthy natives and American Soldiers! And so Marvin, his buddies and their staunch American ship proceeded on their duties over bright blue seas with the exciting feeling that something big was about to occur;--perhaps at the next port.



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One time when their ship stopped at some island, (officially nameless) to take on water, an other LCI boat had also put in there; and to Marvin's great delight he found among the crew one of his buddies who had gone through both service schools with him.

Again one night on one of those ever-enticing islands Marvin went down to the dock to help pull in their small boat. The night was black. They were moving cautiously about their task, when suddenly Marvin took a step aside and realized too late that he had stepped off into Nothingness! Down he plunged through the Stygian darkness of an Oriental night without a moon! D o w n-----, would some wierd, uncouth creature of that ever-present, eternal jungle rush out and get him at last? No! Glory be! With a great splash he fell into the warm kindly waters of the calm tropic sea; and Neptune, Rex, returned this tough Shell Back to the protecting circle of his laughing comrades.

And so they went a-voyaging, through sudden showers and bright sunshine, about their Country's business of winning the war against Japan.

Then there was that

#### Night of the Storm!

When the fierce fury, which sometimes whips up so suddenly in those seas, vented its rage on their faithful little ship. Violent tempests swept the roaring billows during that night of blackness. A fearful, turbulent sea seized upon their rugged LCI; but she outrode all of the mighty Ocean's challenge and vindictive tumult, and in triumph greeted the sudden glory of another tropic dawn. Some of the ships got lost from the squadron that black night, but regained their positions when daylight broke.





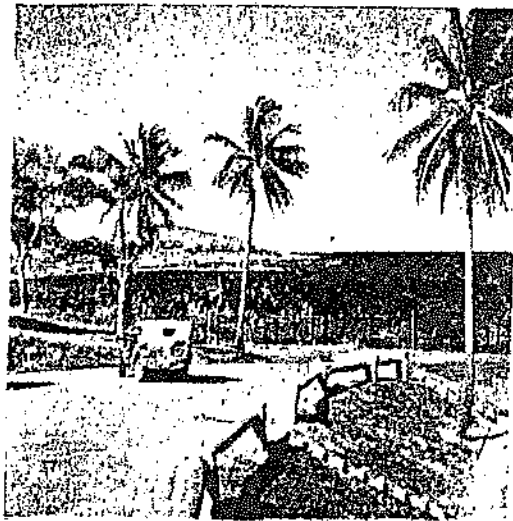
U. S. NAVY

During these months of interesting adventure among the South Sea Islands, Marvin's main base was in New Guinea;--a great mountainous island, the second largest in the world. Most of the island having been long under domination of the British Crown, the half-savage native warriors are fiercely loyal in the service of His Britannic Majesty, King George VI, and exceedingly bitter in their hatred of the Japanese invaders.

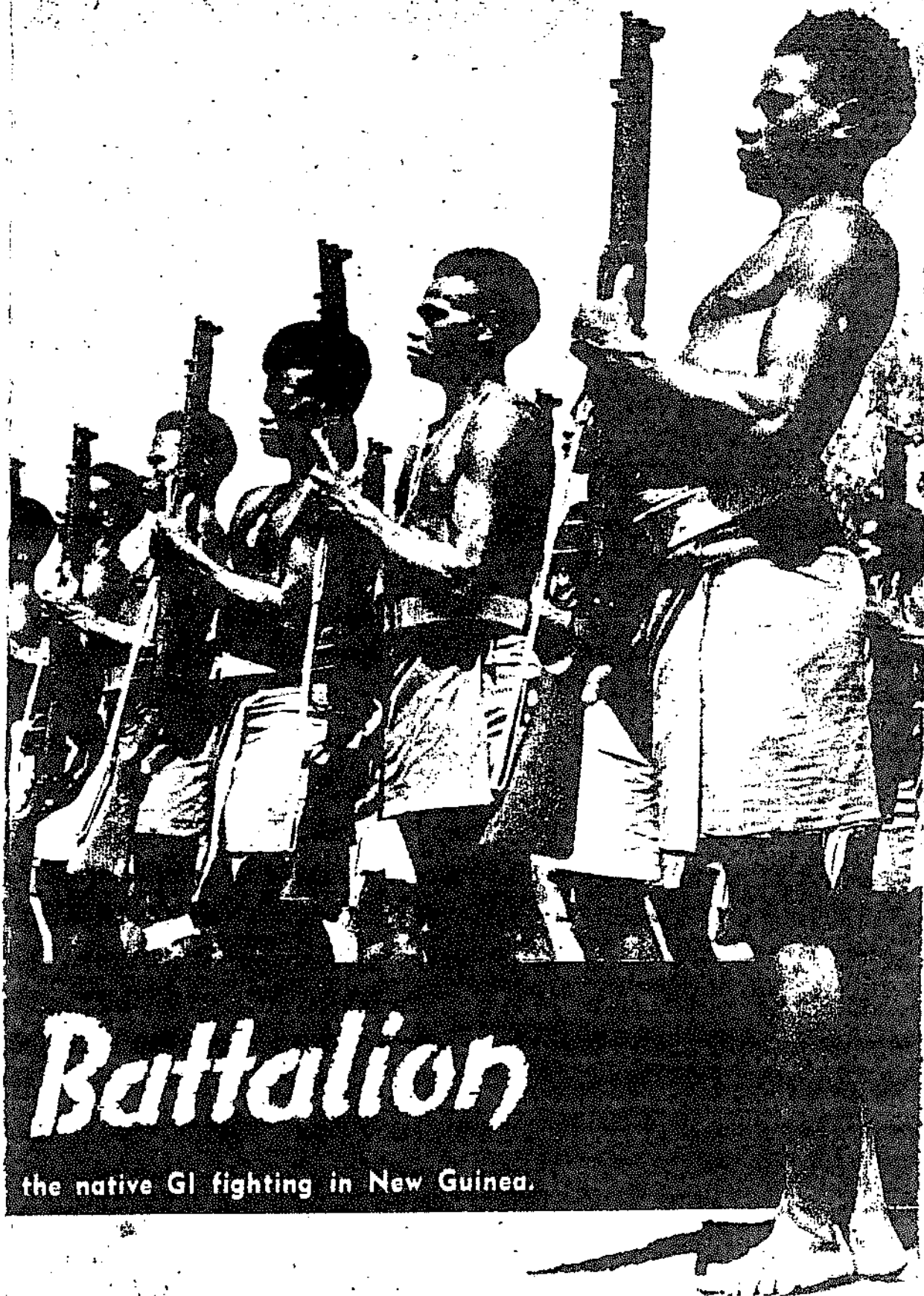
On the day after Christmas (1944) Marvin wrote from the Philippines; (on a long piece of captured Jap official paper.) They had enjoyed a good Christmas dinner and a radio program of Christmas music; but no Christmas mail had reached them;--neither letters, nor cards, nor packages. He found quite a difference between the Philippine natives and those whom he had seen on the other islands where his ship had put in. Strangely beautiful islands, some of them; weird and silent and full of hazards back in those precipitous mountains rising dark blue against a brilliant sky.

But with his advent into the Philippine archipelago his real service begins. Now he is playing with lightning! Days of intense tropic heat, nights of unparalleled starry grandeur, the magic of golden sunsets, still continue; but the "LCI(L) 1005" must land men for MacArthur. With all its speed his ship rushes through the pounding surf, hitting the shore like a maddened monster of the deep. The ramps are lowered and the Americans pour forth! Again and again and again does the "1005" respond to the urge of her engines, under Marvin's control.

Those sailors performed their duty with such a will and such adroitness, particularly in one instance, that their Commanding Officer gave each man a letter of high commendation to be placed with their records, telling of his great pleasure and satisfaction at the way in which that important job had been accomplished.



The quiet harbor in Port Moresby, New Guinea, was to have been the jump-off point for a Jap assault on Australia.

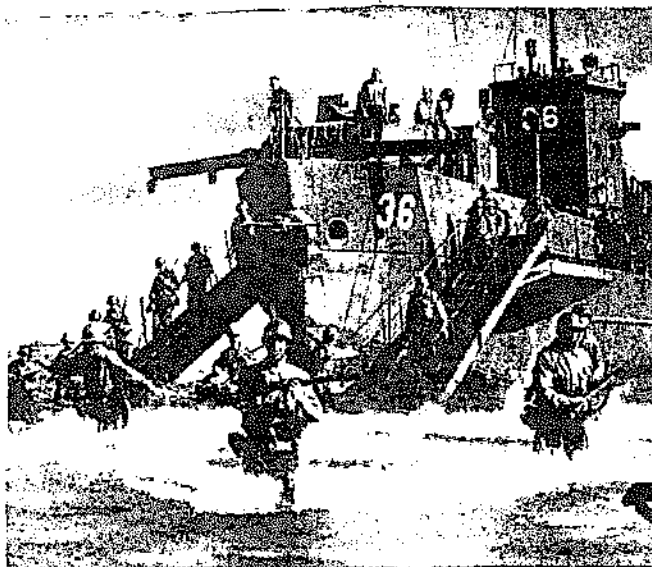


# *Battalion*

the native GI fighting in New Guinea.



U. S. NAVY



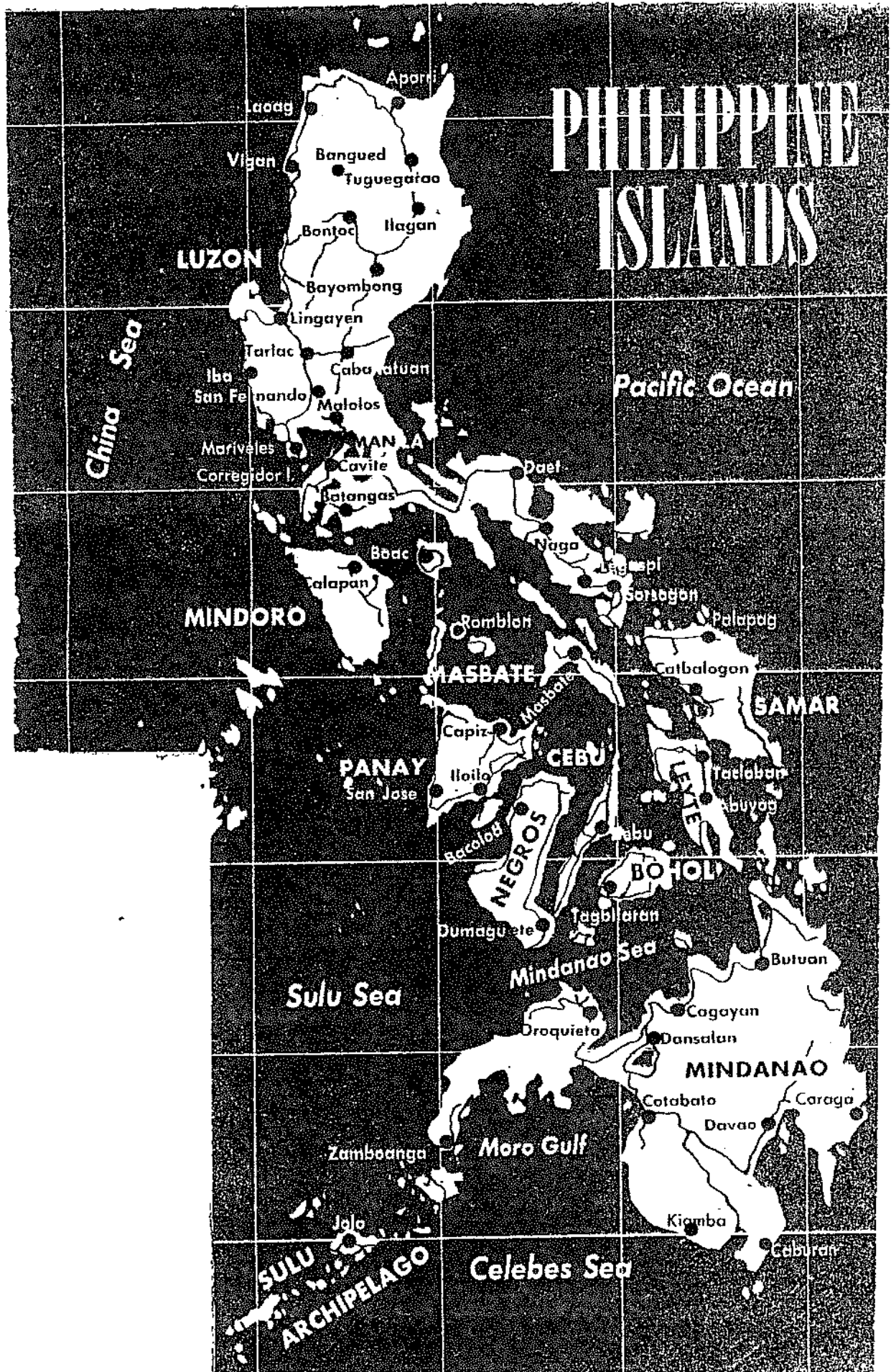
LCI IN ACTION. They rush into shallow water, the ramps are dropped and fighting men wade in to a beachhead.

They have been through several air attacks.

New Year's Eve, 1944-1945, was a most exciting night. Almost all of that night they stood General Quarters. Marvin says,--"Just at midnight the fireworks started to light up the sky. But they only lasted a few minutes at a time".

It was January 25th, 1945, before the Christmas mail caught up with the fleet. Marvin's share was 34 letters and four boxes. But this pleasant interlude was well earned. For a month they had been very active.; taking part in the operations around Mindora and Luzon of the 7,000 islands in the Philippines. The "1005" played well her part for the reconquest of the Philippine capital;--the ancient city of Manila;--known as the "Pearl of the Orient"; --a splendid city on Manila Bay with 300 years of Spanish culture. The famed golden sunsets of that historic Bay, with slowly floating clouds of purple and orange coming in from the China Sea, once more reflect their Oriental glory on American war ships as they did in the days of Dewey. Life for these sailors has become one long unbroken Adventure. Many of the natives of Luzon have joined Guerrilla organizations. They look savagely tough and they are as tough as they look. (As the Japs have found out.)

# PHILIPPINE ISLANDS





U. S. NAVY

They like to go aboard the Americans' ships and drink their surprisingly very cold water. They have "acquired" plenty of Japanese money which they give freely to the sailors.



After some weeks of intensive study while aboard ship Marvin passed the required tests and is now rated as,-- "Electrician's Mate, Third Class",--E.M.3/c.

Month after month "Landing Craft-1005" was held to her task of landing marines on hostile shores, as one island after another was invaded and, by conquest of arms, brought under American dominion. In the attack on the island of Iwo Jima in the Volcano Islands, there were 40,000 marines and 800 ships under Vice-Admiral Turner. Back and forth endlessly rushed the landing craft between the great fleet and that rugged island protected by reefs and cliffs and defended by thousands upon thousands of fanatical Japanese, who always fought to the death with no idea of surrendering.

There were occasional short lulls in these intense, herculean struggles when the crew of the "1005" could relax temporarily. Once they put in at Humboldt Bay on the northern coast of Papua, or Dutch New Guinea, where they had their pictures taken in Hollandia; a port tucked in between the towering Orange Mountains and the booming waves of the Pacific Ocean. And there was one carefree night when Marvin and some of his buddies caught a big

mess of fish and then stayed up far into the starry night cooking them. A feast to be remembered long afterwards.

The hot weather and frequent rains continued to prevail at the various ports and islands which they visited, or invaded. The swarthy, black-haired natives never get tired of bringing many things to trade for the sailors' clothes;--until the poor sailors, themselves, are approaching destitution. But the Philipinos are all very happy over the return of the Americans.

The "1005" put in at one port, once frequented by all the great ships of world commerce, and tied up at the big wharf;--now a lonely, deserted spot. The men were given "liberty" to visit the burned ruins of what had been a beautiful, prosperous city before the hated Japanese invaders ruined it;--banks, business blocks, homes;--all destroyed in one awful conflagration set by that ruthless, cruel race, as the returning victorious Americans drove them from the island.

Many of the Islands invaded are really beautiful to see. On the mountain sides are rows upon rows of cocoanut trees;--cocoanut groves set in rich patches of green grass, looking out over the shining sea where the war ships of the Americans gathered to bring vengeance on the destructive, rapacious invaders from the land of the Mikado.

The fleet is supplied abundantly with cocoanuts, pineapples and bananas, much to the sailors' enjoyment.

The tropical storms are always surprising. One night a heavy driving rain deluged them without warning and lasted two hours. Marvin had his washing hanging on the line; and before he could get it down he was soaking wet.

Two COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF  
of all  
the ARMED FORCES of the UNITED STATES.



FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Died, April 12-1946

"A man of immortal renown."

Churchill in House of

Commons, April 13-1945.

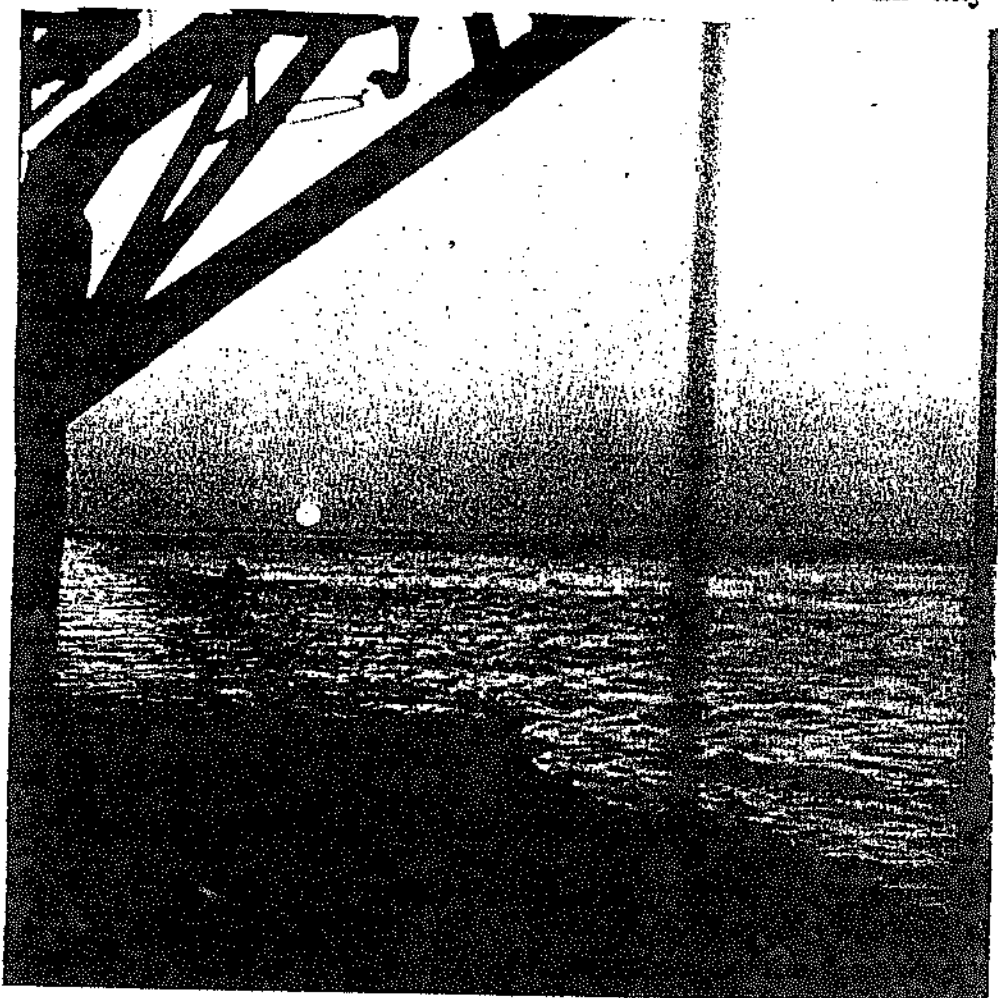
HARRY S. TRUMAN

Took oath of office as  
President, at 7:09 P.M.,  
April 12-1945.



On August 17-1946 Marvin (still in the Philippines) writes of the good news that Japan had surrendered on August 14th. However, although the fighting is over, his ship is still busily engaged in transporting troops from one island to another.

One trip was farther south, out of the Philippines, to tow another ship back up to their port. That was an unusually pleasant trip. Warm days of tropical sunshine with a cool, refreshing ocean breeze blowing all day



across the deck of "1006", with the sea as smooth as glass. Each day closed with the wonderful beauty of a vivid Pacific sunset;--a scene of glory as the sun descended in indescribable splendor on the ocean's far rim. Then came the night; cool and calm, and--a big bright moon rising to spread its silver light over those far-reaching waters. And he says,--"About that time I get homesick". But at the end of that voyage he found twenty-five pieces of mail awaiting him.

One of those letters revealed a strange incident. A month before that time his ship had been anchored in a harbor at the island of Leyte, southwest of Luzon, after having transported troops to northern Luzon, where the Japs were still fighting. Leyte is a large, beautiful island with thickly wooded mountains nearly 4,000 feet high and rich, fertile valleys. As he rested on deck he was watching the big war ships riding at anchor farther out to sea. Presently they steamed majestically away into the horizon. And one of those letters told him that his brother-in-law had been aboard one of those great ships which he had watched fade from his view.



Marvin, Weigle, Lehman, Serbach.  
Just before going on Liberty.

When Macaud, the Chief Bos'n and first class electrician, was sent back to the states early in August to be discharged, Marvin was assigned to his duties in charge of the electrical equipment. However, as they are short-handed in the crew, he still has to stand watches, besides his new duties.

September 9-1945

"Leyte

"We just got back from another trip. First place we went to was Iloilo, Panay. We unloaded the troops there and picked up a few more. The next stop was a small town on Negros Island. What do you think we picked up there? Much to all of our grief we took on two hundred Jap prisoners. Never saw a dirtier bunch of men. We were supposed to unload them at Cebu City, Cebu;--in fact we did. But a half hour after we got them off some one decided we had better take them to Leyte with us! So back on they came. We just got back this morning. Been washing most of the day cleaning up the mess they made. Tomorrow we are to load troops again and take them to Zamboanga, Mindanao." (This trip took him through the Mindanao Sea, the Sulu Sea and the Moro Gulf.) "Most of the troops we bring back to Leyte with us are headed for the States."

These islands that Marvin has been visiting are rich and romantic. Panay has tobacco and coffee and mountains five thousand feet high. Negros has sugar cane, great forests and a volcano. Cebu has wine and gold and silver, and the Cathedral San Nicolas. Zamboanga is surrounded by a plain covered with coconut groves and rice fields. It was settled three hundred and ten years ago as a defense against pirates and Moros.

The trip south out of the Philippines is revealed to have been to Tachan in the great jungle island of Borneo. It was there that they picked up the ship to be towed back to Leyte.

Borneo is a strange land of teak, ebony, sandal-wood, gold, platinum, diamonds, monkeys, tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, crocodiles, brilliant butterflies; and, being one of the romantic spice islands, there are pepper, cloves, nutmegs, cinnamon and ginger. But when Marvin visited it the place looked deserted. He could see where the oil wells used to be; and all of the storage tanks were wrecked.

During most of his stay in the Philippines Marvin has been based at Leyte. They go into dry dock there and load troops at White Beach.

On one of Marvin's trips to Iloilo, Panay, he was given "liberty" one evening from 1800 to 2300. So he and his buddies went ashore to enjoy the sights of one of the Philippines' leading commercial centers. It is pleasantly situated on a low sandy <sup>BEACH</sup> beside its excellent harbor. The Iloilo River also flows past the city to enter the sea after its long run from the Central Mountains. He found the city to be a pretty nice place. Most of the people are well educated. The five hours the sailors spent on the streets of that city of forty-four thousand intelligent, friendly people with gay shops and general air of business, afforded them a most pleasant relaxation. (Perhaps they remembered a similar three hours spent one evening on the crowded streets of Washington.)

"Surprise! I met Budd in Manila!"

(Referring to Budd Judd, his close friend back in Big Beaver, Michigan. Now stationed at Manila with the 3141st Ordnance.---T/4 E. W. Judd.)

"Sept. 22-1945  
At Sea."

"We got to Manila at eleven o'clock yesterday morning. We got liberty from 1200 until 1800. I decided to find out from one of the information offices in Manila if Budd's company was anywhere around. To my good fortune his company was located right out of town about four miles. The information office showed me on a map right where his ~~map~~ outfit was. Well, in about an hour I was at his camp. Budd wasn't there right then so I waited half an hour and he came back. It took Budd a full minute to recognize me. It was sure swell to see him. He got permission from his Captain to come down to my ship with me and to stay over night. We had a wonderful time. Last night we took a walk up town for a while. And what a night to go walking. It was raining 'cats and dogs'. We wore some rain coats, but they didn't do much good. By the time we got back to the ship we were both soaking wet. Neither of us cared very much, because we were both too happy to be with each other. I fixed up a bunk right next to mine.---MARVIN."

They had not seen each other since 1942. They had their pictures taken in the morning and then Budd went back to his camp and Marvin's ship steamed away to Legaspi.

33

Where, 300 years ago, Spanish officers in their gallant uniforms, proud of Spain's glory,--tall, handsome, commanding soldiers,--walked the streets of this old walled City of Manila, and where, three years ago, the little Japanese soldiers, with swaggering arrogance, were in temporary control, that night Marvin and his boyhood village friend met after three long years of war; and the American Sailor and American Soldier walked the streets of the ancient city (recovered by American arms) undisturbed by the heavy downpour of rain, as they compared notes and talked over the happy days of the past.

General of the Army MacArthur and General Wainwright met in conquered Tokyo and the world looked on admiringly at the reunion of those famous soldiers.

Then

E. M. 3/o Bemis and T/3 Judd met in the war-battered City of Manila and the rains poured down; but we who read this know that this reunion meant as much to the two young non-commissioned officers as did the brilliant one to the generals in the Land of the Rising Sun.



MARVIN AND BUDD ABOARD SHIP.

Marvin's ship left Leyte the latter part of September, (1945) for a month of cruising among various groups of islands, picking up Japanese prisoners of war and transporting them to Aparri, a port in Cagayan Province, in Northern Luzon. The islands visited were Calayan, Fuga and Kamiguin of the Babuyan group, Batan and Itybubit.

The trip to Aparri is always hazardous as it is in the zone of the typhoons and the sea is always rough and turbulent. Their ships (there were two on this trip) must swing safely past the Cape of Engano through the China Sea. The sea which can murmur and <sup>THE</sup> sea which can roar in violent commotion. It is a shallow harbor, but the only safe port on the northern coast. No ship larger than an L.C.I. can enter the Rio Grande de Cagayan River, on which the city of 20,000 people is built.

But eventually they had to go into dry dock in Subic Bay to repair damage done to the bow of their ship by the sharp coral rocks which surround most of the islands they visited.

After leaving the dry dock they resumed moving the Japs collected at Aparri down to the Port of San Fernando.

The entire flotilla of which Marvin's ship is a part is under the command of the Philippine Sea Frontier.

After spending six days at Manila early in November with liberty every afternoon and evening, Marvin's ship departed on a two-day voyage to Casiguran Island.

On several of those days in Manila he went out to see Budd. Then they would drive back to the city in the evening in Budd's jeep and visit the night clubs, where they would sit at a table and make plans for the future; or they would visit the Red Cross where a full course dinner was served for one peso (50cts). In contrast, at another place they paid one peso each for a "hot-dog" weiner roll. (And each of them ate three.) One of the night clubs was quite a pretentious place. It had been a private home before the war.



MANILA.

# THE WAY HOME!

On November nineteenth the "1006" arrived at Leyte and

the crew received the happy news that they were to leave for the U.S.A. the next day. So, on November 20th at noon in a fleet of twenty ships they left the Philippines bound for the Marshall Islands, 2300 hundred miles to the east, where they were to make their first stop at Eniwetok. Two days out of Leyte they were caught in the middle of a terrific storm. Old Neptune, Rex, giving his Shell Backs, now too tough to care, a final tempestuous send-off. It raged a whole day with a fury as great as they had ever seen. But they rode it out and the balance of the trip to Eniwetok was smooth sailing over sunlit waters. And the Thanksgiving feast aboard ship was abundant and satisfying. In ten days from the Marshall Islands they reached Pearl Harbor. (Where all of this awful war began.) After leaving Pearl Harbor their ship was disabled and they had to be towed 1200 miles into the beautiful bay at San Diego, California, U.S.A.

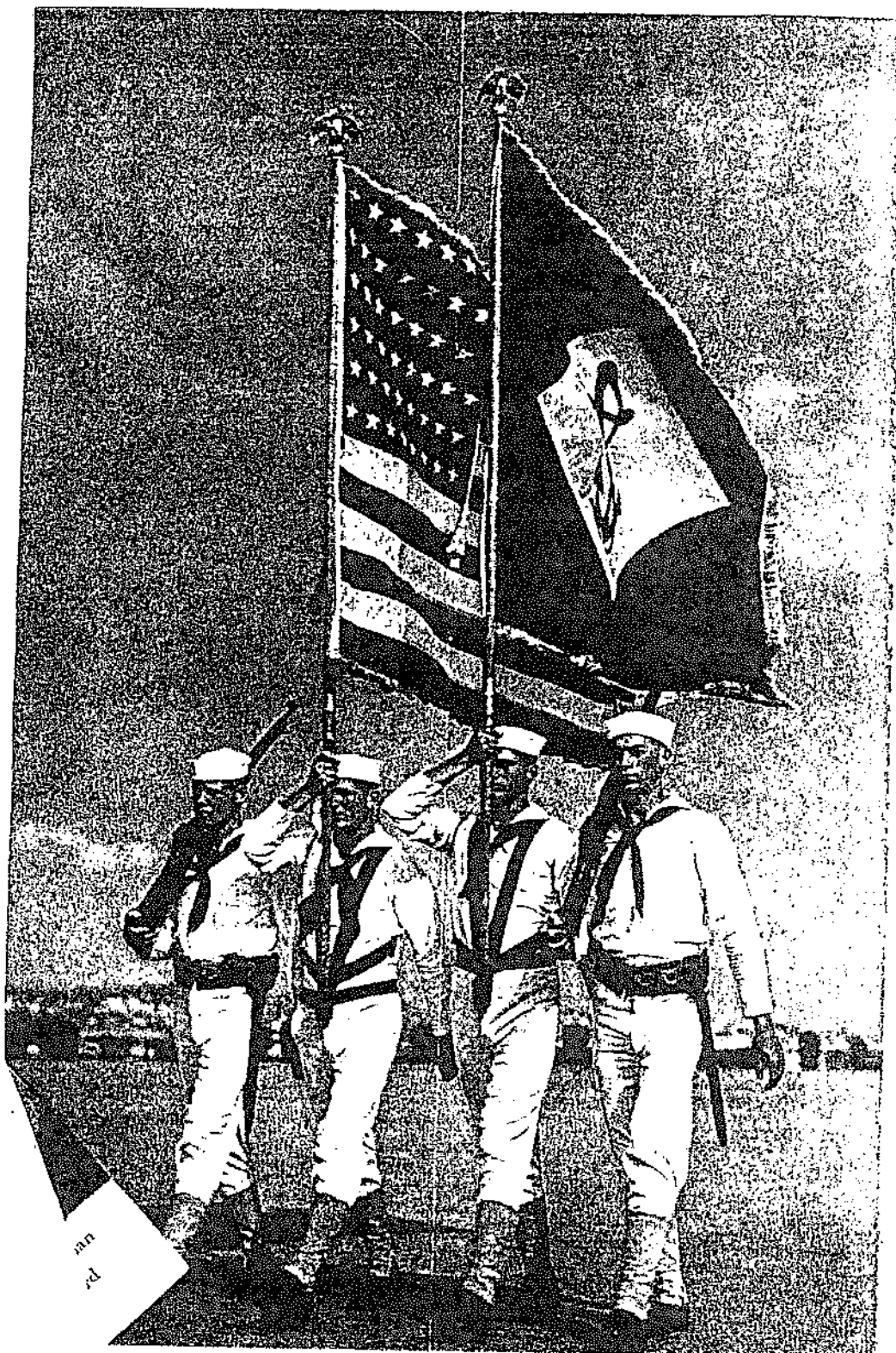
-- San Diego! A crowded city of palm-lined streets, intensely American. And beyond it spreads the orange country where thirty million citrus trees spread their gold and green in amber-lighted splendor over the warm, sunlit valleys and up the foot-hills below the distant snow-capped peaks.

His homeward journey took him through California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, to Great Lakes Training Station once again, where this time, as a veteran, he received his Honorable Discharge. Then--Chicago, Detroit, Big Beaver and HOMER

"Home is the sailor, home from sea."







The Colors Are Passing By.

At San Diego U.S. Naval Training School where 88,000 recruits a year were drilled for duty with the Fleet.

