

Contributed by Jeffery Johnson

THE SAGA OF THE U.S.S. LST 836

EJ SULLIVAN - COMMANDINE

By

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The month was September, the year forty-four,
And a lot had happened in this man's war
And about this time to the enemies woe
A crew was formed, the Four Six Nine Oh.

Oh, happy days at Bradford, we all remember well,
'Twas a long, long way from Heaven, and a little short of hell.
With a one, -two, -three, -three, -four-and-your-left,
Obstacle course, gas drill, stop to get sick and-your-left.

Some one had a tenor,
And we started up a chorus,
We said hello, and thought about
The months that lay before us.

We weathered the mighty Chesapeake
On the wallowing Ten Oh Four,
Had we finished all our training?
No, just one ship more.

We'd done O.K. and then,
Just to celebrate,
We chipped a ton of rust
On the Nine Nine Eight.

When we left the train one morning,
We were wet and cold and gray,
Little we knew that Paradise
Was finally coming our way.
(Just for the record, but need I say,
Kee-rist, what a town was Pittsburgh, P.A.)
(("Go 'way, girls, you bother me!"))

Well, this was in November,
Those nights we'll all remember,
And pretty soon the fourteenth rolled around,
She lay there calmly waiting,
And somewhere within her plating
Something of a heart began to pound.

"Set the watch!
You're in partial commission,
You're bound for the gulf
And you're not goin' fishing!"
Unpack this and open that,
Where does this go?
Whadduya do with that?
Down the Ohio
And down the Mississip
In the depths of the storerooms,
We sweated out that trip.

November Twenty-fifth, and a proud crew stood,
The bos'n set the watch, and the pipe sounded good.
Officially started on here military mission,
The Eight Thirty Six was put into commission.

'Twas out on the gulf, the waves were like mountains;
And most of us salties started making like fountains.
The wind she blew, the waves mounted higher,
Then the first and worst meeting of the Faintail choir.

Through means of anguish there came such a clatter
We crawled to the galley to see what's the matter,
And there to our bloodshot eyes did appear
Knee deep in syrup and miscellaneous gear
Were stomachless fiends, greasy pork chops for chow,
Please pass the bucket, it's my turn now!

On through the horrors of St. Andrews Bay,
It wasn't just clean, it was squared away.
The A.M.I. was our lady's first test,
And don't you forget it, we had the best!

Our troubles were over, we were light-hearted men,
"Hey, the engineers have done it again!"
From each vent, pipe and tank gaily spouted pollution,
Old Bourbon Street seemed the only solution.

We forgot all our troubles, all woes and abuses,
The Eight Thrity Six had found the Three Douces!
Canal Street, Bourbon, La Fitto's and La Lune,
Will all be remembered like some beautiful tune.
(Say, remember new Year's Eve and Press Street landing
And fellows helping buddies who had difficulty standing.)

On January second we were well on our way,
Past the continental limits of the U.S.A.
The Panama Canal, rich in lore and treasure trove,
Cathedrals, and shops, and the Cocconut Grove.

Into the Pacific up the Mexican shore,
To Diego and to Frisco and the States once more.

Came the Sixth of February
And we'd said our last good-byes,
The Golden Gate was fading
Before our moistened eyes.

At good old Pearl, we failed to make the news,
But we made a lot of smoke on a training cruise.
We were eager for the fight, but to our great dejection,
We painted stem to stern for a little old inspection.

It was at Kowala Basin,
And the Army came aboard.
From there 'twas Eniwotok
That we were headed toward.

General Quarters at dawn, General Quarters at night,
We zigged to the left, then rudder hard right.
We were put through our paces, oh we'd like to take more,
But please, commander, stay 'way from our door!

Up to Ulithi and then guess where,
A new invasion was in the air.
In after-crews quarters a silence fell,
The Captain spoke some words
That we remember well:
"Okinawa at the end of the D R track,
A good ship was sure to bring her crew safely back."

April Twelfth and the whole world knelt
To mourn the passing of Franklin Roosevelt.

We slept in our clothes, we arrived at dawn,
It was April eighteenth up at Nago Wan.
Then we moved a little south, and the siren screams away,
A hundred million bogeys were heading right our way.

We waited tense behind our guns,
We were ready, cocked and loaded,
A hiss, a blast then rent the air,
The smoke machine exploded!

We said so long to Army,
To the many friends we'd made
We launched the LCT
No more "hi - hi - hit parade!"

The twenty ninth of April
For the first time headed east,
Back to old Ulithi
And our sleep at nights increased.

We drank warm beer at Mog Mog
And we beat the great Missouri,
Then off again to the mystic realm
That's ruled by Neptune's fury.

One hundred little poly-wogs remember well the day,
With hair shorn, they were shellbacks on the twenty-third of May.
Manus, then Tulagi, and Iron-bottom Bay,
New Caledonia is quite a place they say.

The nickel works, cathedral, shell necklaces and such,
The bars were selling poison and we had a bit too much.
A place of native color, and there was milk to drink,
The houses too were colorful, and one of them was pink.

The Andrews Sisters with plump bandanas
Greet us at Guam in the Marianas.

Gab Gab playground and rain and heat
Our basketball team not its only defeat,
We jumped up to Saipan, and then a dash
To a battle-scarred heap of volcanic ash.

Superforts and Mustangs were really on the go,
We saw the caves and souvenirs, and there on fields below,
We bowed, and thanked the crosses, standing row on row.

Scuttlebut in Saipan
Rose to fever pitch,
War or peace, Susuki,
Won't you tell us which?

The whole world cheers Japan's surrender,
The Fourteenth of August is a date to remember.
The rockets burst, with joy we cried,
Nor could we express the felling inside.

Let's pause a minute and look around
And see who all is here,
There are scrapers, oilers, sackhounds,
and guzzlers of beer.

Many good men have left this ship,
And many are a good addition,
And the spirit sticks
Since the Eight Thirty Six
First went into commission.

So muster on stations 'ere we say adieu,
Here are the men of the original crew:

Bielski, Bingham, Boland, Boock,
Caldwell, Carter, Chewey, Auck;
Aiscowitz, Allen Baldetti, Burr,
Badalamenti and Sandefur;
Cooper, Ethelridge, Corrigan,
Godman, Gross and Donnigan;
Evans, Frederick, Payne, F.D.
Hockman, Cryer, and Daly, C.;
Wooten, Wedlake, Thompson, Steets,
Rancy, Fox, no longer boots;
Johnson, Hotz, Debord, and Taylor,
Maliszewski, Muckenthaler,
Gornick, E mons, and Henderson,
Fortino, Hays, and Peterson;
Cafolla, Fitzgerald, and Gregory,
Grimmel, Dent, and Jones, R.E.;
Nagy, Noble, Steele, Sobrell,
Meyer, Martin, and Sextro, L.;

Hitchcock, Heflin, and Donovan,
Lintemuth, Kearns, and Sullivan;
Roberts, Rolley, Cross, Purcoll,
Tiefenauer, Putnam, raising hell;
Horner, Hines, the Jones named Jack,
Hunter, and Gladden the motor mack;
Schoenhard, Schriefer, Reynolds, R.J.
McBride and Marcy are here today;
Kolevar, Haynes, and Gorisck,
Lufkin making a compass check;
Flores, Cripe, Panopolos,
The officers will follow thus:
Captain Sullivan, Mr. Curtis, Exec,
M.A.K. Turner, the boss of the Dock;
Mr. Rider lay up to conn,
Mr. Tetley's on watch and the signalman's gone.
To these were added in various places,
The following men who are now old faces:

Wyrshhora, Nussbaum, McEvesty, Drew,
Neuman, Dasch, and Lampos were added to our crew;
DeBaise, Dulitz, Howard, Darnell,
Stiarwalt, Ryan, Carter, W.L.;
Warren, Rye, Kilgore, Smith, L.B.
The goddamnedest crew that ever put to sea.
Mr. Watkins in the Engine room,
Mr. Wesebrooke in the galley,
Mr. Wilbanks navigates
With charts by Rand McNally;
Mr. Kresse's planning smokers,
Mr. Given's trading shows,
Mr. Hinnors telling sea tales,
And the salt air blows.

Well, here we are, the war is won,
And now what is our fate?
There's many a month and many a mile
'Til we see the Golden Gate.
At Okinawa we long for home,
To live and love in clover,
Forty-three points! Don't they have the word
This war out here is over!!

Well, you never can tell, you know,
What the future has in store,
We'll hope that soon
Before many a moon
We'll see the Stateside shore.

So we'll toast our ship, her captain,
And our friends among the crew,
Here's luck and health and happiness,
(Though our points are all too few.)

We've bitched while we were cleaning her,
And proud we've been she's clean,
We'll speak of her when we think back
On the Navy life we've seen.

The United States and loved ones
Will dry our home-sick eye,
When we last salute her quarterdeck,
We'll say a fond good-bye.