

The Men on USCG LST 791

1944–1946

by

CDR. Reed Adams USCG (Ret.)

with contributions from the men who
served on USCG LST 791



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Preface

I plan to continue this story about the men on LST 791, including the Marine heroes on board at Okinawa. I believe it will be most interesting to share the experiences of our generation, having survived both the Great Depression and World War II, plus their contributions before and after the war.

A website based on this book, that includes a photo gallery and an updated file for printing, is available online. (<http://www.duet.com/LST791/>)

Reed Adams
5175 Oakdale Ct.
Pleasanton, CA 94588

Home phone: (925) 462-9089
FAX: (925) 462-9002
e-mail: radamstuba@aol.com

Greetings from the President of the United States...

THE WHITE HOUSE

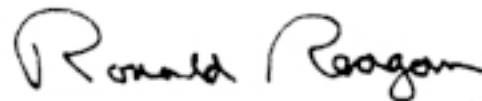
WASHINGTON

September 27, 1988

It gives me great pleasure to send warm greetings to all those who served aboard USS LST 791 as you meet for your second reunion in Alexandria Bay, New York.

Each of you has gone his separate way in the world, but -- as this reunion proves once again -- your service and sacrifice together forged a bond of fellowship that time and distance cannot break. Together you confronted danger and endured terrible hardships, and together you rose to the challenge; you never faltered. Many of your brothers gave their last full measure of devotion so that others might live in freedom. Your accomplishments in defense of liberty will never be forgotten, and America's debt to you will remain far more than we can ever repay.

I take a moment with you to honor your brothers who can no longer answer roll call. God bless you all.



Forward

My name is Jim Day. I am a Marine presently serving in Ukraine.

The first edition of this memoir, “The Heroes of USCG LST 791” mentions my father, James L. Day, now deceased. Cdr. Adams’ words about him and those with whom he fought during their time north of Naha on Sugarloaf Hill tugged at my heart. Scanning the names within the deck log, I recognize names of men whom I have been honored to meet—sadly those names are too few. Most of those men, as you well know, never left Okinawa, at least not alive. Other names I recognize only through my father’s and others’ stories: Woodhouse, Bertoli, McDonald, and Tashjian—these and others whom I’ll never know, were the men who my father credited for his good fortune of a long life and the family that he was eventually able to enjoy.

My family appreciates this illustration of the man we knew so well, yet knew too little about. Regarding his wartime experiences, he had little desire to speak of its horrors (all you guys of that era are the same). I recall the day I came home with the news that I had enlisted into the Marine Corps. I wasn’t sure how my father would react, for I knew of his strong desire to see me in college. Nonetheless, he put on a stern face and said, “Son, you’re old enough now to know what you want.” He was surprised, I know that for certain, but I wasn’t sure if he was disappointed or pleased. What I do remember was his support. Later, after many years of my own service, he shared with me his feelings on that day. His words are still with me today and have allowed me to better understand my role as a Marine and a father.

He, like Cdr. Adams and all the others who fought WWII, endured the horrors of war understanding fully that only victory or death would end the nightmare, took respite in the fact that by doing so, their wives—whom they had yet to meet—and the children they had yet to bring into this world would never have to endure the same. History proved otherwise, but this belief helped a young man find a greater sense to the madness surrounding him and helped him face the next day’s battle with grim determination. My joining the Corps brought to mind those forgotten thoughts and in a minor way shook the foundation of a belief system that helped him through those hellish times.

To all those Americans who fought our Nation’s wars, and in particular to those of LST 791 and the men you put on the beach that Easter morning, I salute you.

20 Sep 2002
James A. Day
Colonel, USMC

The Men on USCG LST 791

This is a story about some of the young Americans who survived the Great Depression, enlisted in their country's service for the duration of World War II, and then returned to help lead the nation in an economic boom that continued for more than half a century. All of the men whose stories are told here served together aboard the U.S. Coast Guard LST (Landing Ship, Tank) 791 in the Pacific Theater during WWII. I am Reed Adams. My wife, Mackie, and I live in Pleasanton, California. This year we will celebrate our 54th anniversary.



Reed Adams

Our Civilian Roots—Life on the Farm

My parents were dairy farmers, so during the Great Depression, I grew up on farms near Fresno, California. From the time I was 10 years old (1927) until I left home for college (1934), it was my job to milk 10 cows each morning and night as well as to do other work needed on the farm. One of the cows was appropriately named “Old Dynamite.” If you milked this cow on her left side and forgot to hobble her, she would send you flying with a hard kick.

There was alfalfa in the fields that my older brother, Gayle, and I would mow, rake, and stack into shocks. We would then load the hay onto a horse-drawn wagon and stack it in the barn for storage.

The 4:15 a.m. train passing through Gregg, California every day was my father’s alarm clock. He would wake my brother Gayle and me to help milk the 36 cows. After that, we would dress, eat breakfast, and walk a mile to the two-room, K-8 grade Sweetflower School in Gregg.

Miss Theresa Footman was a strict but wonderful principal and teacher.



Reed's dad with a team of mules about 1937

Wonderful, loving parents made it a rich life, but during the Depression we accepted hard work and being poor as a normal way of life. Mother baked biscuits and prepared hot syrup every day for our breakfast. On the way to school, with a bag lunch prepared by mom, I would stop by one of our orange trees and pick an orange for lunch. The farm in Gregg had lots of fruit trees, so there was plenty to eat and to can. We had peaches, apricots, and oranges, blackberries, corn, string beans, and watermelons. We also raised chickens, turkeys, and hogs. I guess the farmers during the Depression had the advantage of not going hungry.

Music—an Important Influence

My mother played the piano and dad the harmonica, so my interest in music came naturally. When I entered Madera High School in 1930, I learned to play a school-owned clarinet. At the end of the year, we moved and I enrolled at Kerman High School. Kerman High had a state championship band, but no school-owned clarinet, and my parents couldn’t afford to buy one. The band director, Major Earl Dillon, tried me out on several school instruments, and that’s how I happened to become a tuba player.

During the summer, Major Dillon ran the Sierra Music Camp in the Sierra Nevada Mountains at Shaver Lake. I attended on a scholarship (plus doing odd jobs such as serving food and busing dishes).

Two of the guest instructors and directors were Alfred Hertz, legendary director of the San Francisco Symphony; and Frank Manchini, Modesto High School band director and former solo clarinet player with the John Philip Sousa Band.

Robert Ingraham, a Kerman High School graduate and a student at the University of Southern California (USC), also started learning to play the tuba that summer so he



Sierra Music Camp participants at Nation's Christmas Tree

could play with the great USC Trojan Band. Later he became the tuba player with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Great Depression

In 1933, my parents went to Fresno to arrange for food stamps. Those were tough times. It was a difficult decision for them to ask for help.

I graduated from Kerman High School in 1934 and worked that summer for a nearby cotton farmer, irrigating his crop. The pay was 10 cents an hour, so I made sure to keep the water running for at least 18 hours each day. When I enrolled at Fresno State College, I got a job on Saturdays at Woolworth's 5¢ & 10¢ store earning \$2.65 a day plus all the

chocolate candy I could eat while near the barrel.

Art Forsblad, The Fresno State College Band Director, also directed the 185th Infantry National Guard Band, which I joined in 1935. We earned \$1.00 for each weekly rehearsal and also attended a two week active duty camp at San Luis Obispo, California.

In 1936 I joined the Fresno Municipal Band which played two concerts each Sunday in the Summer at Roeding Park and a downtown city park, so I resigned from the National Guard Band.

Tuba players were not in demand at that time, so I learned to play the string bass. My first job was at a "dime-a-dance" place for \$1.00 an evening. Next, I got a job with the WPA, playing in their orchestra each morning and attended classes at Fresno State in the afternoons. My meals often consisted of a 10-cent can of vegetable-beef soup.



Alfred Hertz, at Sierra Music Camp in 1934



Sherman Dix Band in 1938 in Fresno, California



Reed with Martin recording bass tuba

In 1936, my father lent me \$50.00 for a down payment on a brand-new \$350.00 Martin recording bass tuba.

I joined the Sherman Dix Band and the musicians' union, and from that point on, was financially better off—and was able to make the payments on the tuba. The Dix Band wrote their own arrangements, and they sounded like the well-known Jan Garber Band. Jan Garber had us travel to Hollywood to the Crosby Studios to make some records. When Jan took over and led us, we really sounded like the Jan Garber Band.

The Dix Band later became a Jan Garber Band and went on the road in 1940 playing mostly one-nighters in the Midwest. The U.S. entry into WWII broke up the band.

The War Years

I graduated from Fresno State College in 1940. My first teaching job was in Tulare County, teaching instrumental music for a half day in each of 10 rural elementary schools. Each school paid \$200.00 for the year. I continued to supplement my teaching pay by playing in bands. I moved to the San Francisco Bay area and spent the last two weeks before joining the U.S. Coast Guard playing with the famous Lu Watters Yerba

Buena Jazz Band, performing at the Dawn Club in downtown San Francisco.

On June 16, 1942 I enlisted in the Coast Guard, to join a band being formed at Government Island in Alameda, California.

The Coast Guard Band had the pick of the crop of musicians from major symphonies and big bands. I could have remained with the band for the duration, but in 1943 I applied for admission to the USCG Academy at New London, Connecticut. Four months later, I was commissioned an Ensign in the class of 3/43.

I will never forget the final month at the Academy, training and sailing on the square-rigged sailing ship, *Danmark* (you'll read more about the *Danmark* later!).

My first assignment in August 1943 was aboard the *Arbutus*, a buoy tender moored at Newport, Rhode Island, tending buoys and anti-submarine nets in Narragansett Bay. This assignment presented a good opportunity to learn the basics of seamanship, navigation, and work on the deck.

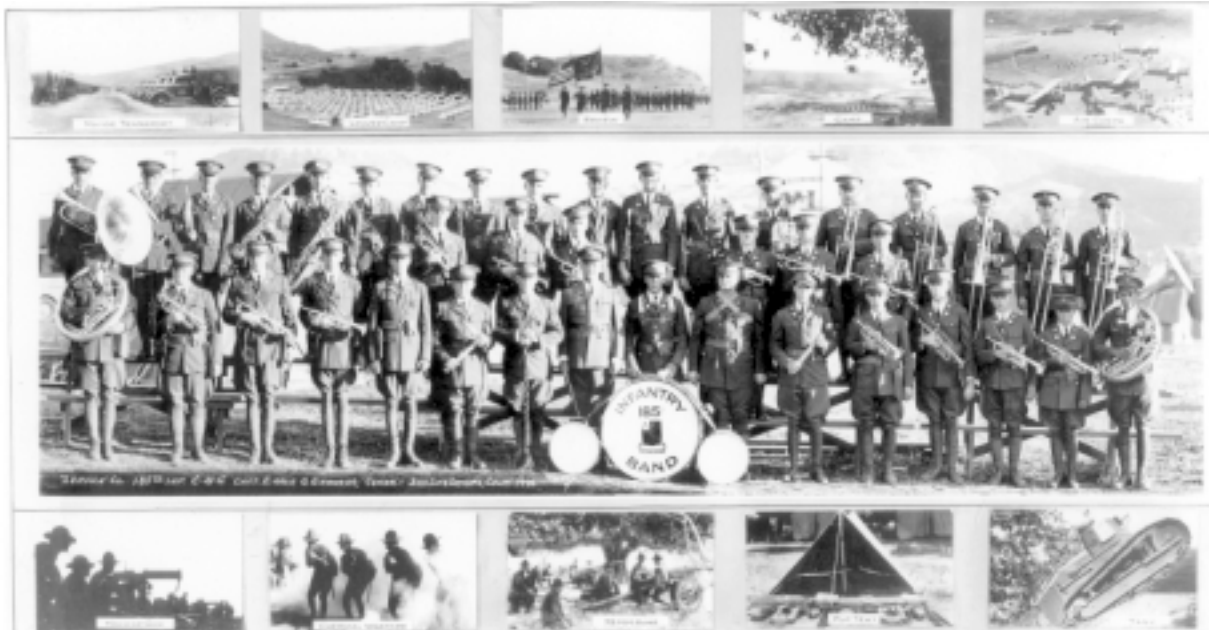
Nearby Boston provided great weekend liberty for Executive Officer Wendell Holbert

and myself. His favorite drink was port wine and ginger ale.

In March 1944, I was transferred to the 165-foot Coast Guard Cutter *Mohawk*,



Reed on Sousaphone



185th Infantry California National Guard Band at San Luis Obispo



The 165-foot USCG Cutter Mohawk In Greenland

headed from Boston for the Greenland Patrol.

After escorting ships as far east as Greenland, the ship proceeded to a point south of Greenland and gave weather reports in preparation for the invasion of Normandy.

The storms and seas were awesome, along with ice fields that were always present.

We sometimes retrieved ice from alongside and made ice cream, using an ice cream freezer someone had brought aboard.

Pacific Area Overseas Orders

In June 1944, after the Normandy landing, Lt. Lester W. Newton, Lt. (jg) David L. Russell, Ens. George T. Stoudenmire, and I were transferred from the *Mohawk* in



USCG Academy training ship Danmark

Greenland to Camp Bradford in Norfolk, Virginia for training as crews to man LSTs headed for the Pacific. It was here that we first met the boys who would become the men of LST 791. Most were just out of boot camp, but we were fortunate that there were enough excellent petty officers with sea duty experience to develop an outstanding crew in time to carry out our mission.



Reed on CGC Mohawk—1944



Lots of ice in Greenland

LST 791 Log Wednesday, 27 September, 1944

Commissioning ceremonies were held this date. LT CDR J. Wildman, the Commandant's representative, read his directive and caused the National Ensign and the Commission Pennant to be hoisted. The Commandant's Representative then turned the vessel over to LT Andrew Duncan Jr., USCGR who then read his orders to assume command of this vessel. The Commanding Officer ordered the Executive Officer to set the watch. The officers and enlisted personnel attached to this vessel on date of commissioning are as follows:

[See *Appendix B* for the complete list of personnel.]

LST Training

While in training at Camp Bradford, another student in the First Lieutenants' class discovered that some army-surplus *Indian* motorcycles were for sale in Philadelphia, and we thought it would be a good idea to buy one to have aboard ship. With Commanding Officer Lt. Andrew Duncan's permission, I purchased one of the motorcycles, which was delivered to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where we boarded the 791. BM 1/c Dick Schlernitzauer picked it up, and we were surprised to discover that it had arrived disassembled—Dick ended up assembling it on board! I had never owned a motorcycle, so learned to ride it on the tank deck while we sailed down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Dick used it at times to pick up the ship's mail. The ship was fortunate to have Dick in charge



Officers of LST 791

1st Row: Reed Adams, Harold T. Durkin, Andrew Duncan, Edward M. Horton, Wladislaw Zizik

2nd Row: Ralph R. Bohrer, Charles J. Berlau, James E. Bradford, Dr. Pritchett

The Men on USCG LST 791



LST 791 launched in 1944 at Dravo Shipyard in Pittsburgh, PA



Crew of LST 791

of the deck division. He set an example as a leader that all hands admired and contributed greatly to the success of our mission.

Before departing New Orleans, and anticipating Wendell Holbert's and my paths might cross in the Pacific Area, I purchased a bottle of port wine (his favorite drink) and ginger ale for him. Finally caught up with him when LST 791 arrived in Tokyo in the occupation of Japan. Wendell had been Commanding Officer of LST 66 and was presently Coast Guard Liaison Officer in Tokyo. Imagine his surprise when I arrived at his office and placed the bottles of port wine and ginger ale on his desk.

Emergency Leave

We were on shakedown training cruise in Panama City, Florida, when I received word that my mother, visiting in Eastern Texas, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Captain Duncan granted me 10 days leave. Our LST was at anchor, so Chief Kenneth Chandler, using the ship's crane, loaded my motorcycle into an LCVP, beached the LCVP, went ashore, and I departed on the motorcycle for New Orleans.

Southern hospitality prevailed and I was able to get enough rationed gasoline to get to New Orleans, where I also sampled grits with breakfast for the first time. I parked the motorcycle at a Coast Guard facility and took a bus to Texas. My brother, Gayle, in the Marine Corps (and recuperating from action on Guadalcanal at Oak Knoll Hospital in Oakland, California) met me in Texas. Precious last hours



Chief Kenneth Chandler with crane used for loading motorcycle

were spent with Mom on the train ride back to California, where I received a message to return to the ship in New Orleans for an early departure. By the time we sailed through the Panama Canal and arrived in San Diego, my mother had died. I will forever be grateful to Captain Andrew Duncan for granting me emergency leave while on shakedown cruise.



LST 791 at Leyte Beach



Leyte Beach after unloading

The Philippines, Guadalcanal, and Okinawa

The USCG-manned LST 791 made her first landing in the war zone at Taclobin in the Philippines on the same beach where MacArthur had waded ashore earlier.

We experienced some general quarters sessions due to suspected Japanese *bogies* in the area, but didn't get any gunnery practice.

We sailed 2500 miles to Guadalcanal where we again beached and waited for the Marines of the Second Battalion, 22nd Regiment to come aboard for practice landings. One evening while beached, our officers stepped off the ramp onto the sandy beach and departed for the Officers' Club. I remained aboard as Officer of the Deck. By the time they returned, the tide had come in, and they had to wade waist-deep in water to get aboard. Gunnery Officer Ralph Bohrer was the first aboard the ramp, so he helped Seabee Lt. N. E. McDougal get aboard, then "accidentally" brushed him back into the water. McDougal made it back onboard, but he was really soaked.

Upon loading the Marines' equipment, and after some practice landings, the 791 departed for the impending invasion of Okinawa.

We got to know the Marines' commanding officer, Col. Horatio Woodhouse, from visits in the wardroom. He was a wonderful gentleman and a fine officer. In spite of his anticipating a tough invasion of



LST 791 in the Philippines



Lt. N. E. Macdougall of Seabees



Lt. Adams on bridge remodeled by Navy Seabees



View of rebuilt conn courtesy of Seabees

Okinawa, he took the time to write the ship's crew the following letter (*see box*).

Two nights before arriving at Okinawa, we found ourselves in a hurricane type storm, so rough that the pontoons alongside the ship were breaking loose. We got permission from the convoy commander to secure the pontoons, practically welding them to the ship. The acetylene torches were so bright, it was almost like daytime. We breathed a sigh of relief that we had not been detected, and proceeded sailing without lights.

Only 13 of the 343 Marines we transported survived Okinawa. We made the trip with a heavily loaded LST 1800 miles to Ulithe where the Marines came aboard, and then another 1300 miles to Okinawa, arriving on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945 along with hundreds of other ships—the second largest invasion in history, France being the largest. It was so warm and crowded below deck that many of the Marines slept topside under the LCT. They really appreciated the good, hot food served aboard ship.

Sugar Loaf Hill, Okinawa

Following is an account that appeared in The Readers Digest in December 1998 that details the activities of the Marines who were put ashore on Okinawa by the crew of LST 791 on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945 (*see box, page 13*).

Kamikaze!

On April 10, LST 791 departed in a convoy to Saipan to pick up ammunition. I was Officer of the Deck as we approached Okinawa on our return. We had two radios on the bridge—one for the Convoy Commander, and another tuned to the Okinawa Command frequency. Several *kamikaze* planes were being reported on the Okinawa Command frequency, and about the

United States Marine Corps

Easter Sunday

1 April, 1945

To the Officers and Men of LST 791:
On behalf of the Marines whom you have safely brought to their target and whom you have had crowded on your ship these last seven days, I'd like to thank you all for being such wonderful host to us.

It has been indeed a pleasure to have traveled with you, and to have known you all. Your cooperation has been outstanding and we wish to thank you for all you have done to make our stay with you enjoyable.

Best of luck to you all—Happy Easter Bunny.

H. C. Woodhouse, Jr.,
Lt. Col., USMC

time I thought one might be in our vicinity, the Convoy Commander sent a message: "Bogey bearing 090, 1000 yards." Each ship in the convoy then acknowledged.

I asked for his message to be repeated. His next message was: "Bogey bearing 270, 1000 yards." The *kamikaze* had passed right over our convoy, but a cloud cover luckily prevented his seeing us. Fortunately, someone was looking over us and we were able to deliver our badly needed cargo of ammunition to an Okinawa beach pontoon.

Making Smoke

On May 31st, we received orders to depart Okinawa at first light for Ie Shima and report to the Island Government Command. We reported in upon arrival, but they didn't know why we were there, and we didn't either. We sat at anchor for ten days making smoke to screen the other ships present and

THE MARINES DEPARTED THE SHIP ON Easter morning, April 1, 1945, as planned, including Lt. Col. Horatio Woodhouse, Cpl. James Day, and Pfc. Dale Bertoli—who were all destined to become war heroes. By dawn of May 14th, the Marines of the 2nd Battalion, 22nd regiment had been pinned down for 30 hours. Cpl. James Day with his platoon was ordered to try to take and hold the western slope of Sugar Loaf Hill. If the hill could be secured, the enemy's cross fire would be disrupted, allowing the Americans to break through.

Day—a survivor of Eniwetok and Guam—and his crew fought their way up the hill in the face of heavy artillery fire, and dropped into a 30-foot crater. They were immediately attacked by Japanese soldiers. When they rose to defend themselves, they were hit by bullets and shrapnel. Day felt searing metal across his arms. He jammed fresh clips into his rifle and threw hand grenades so they would bounce down the hill. The attack was beaten back.

Of the eight men who had made it with him to the crater, three were dead and three were wounded. Minutes later, the Japanese launched a second attack. Day shot three who had made their way into the crater.

Night came and the Japanese soldiers tried making their way up the hill. When Day heard them coming up the hill, he threw hand grenades at the shadows. At daylight, the hill was pounded with mortar fire. The enemy moved up the slope, but Day rose and turned back the attack.

Late in the afternoon of May 15, another attack began. Day and McDonald fired bursts down

the slope when an anti-tank gun fired. McDonald was killed instantly and shrapnel riddled Day's hands. Day dragged a machine gun to the lip of the crater and fired until the attackers retreated.

At dawn, May 16, Day heard the scrape of boots. The enemy soldiers were only 40 feet away. He cut several down and drove the rest off. At nightfall, Day fought to stay awake, continued to fire at the enemy, taking out two machine gun nests.

The next day the Marines arrived and relieved Day and Bertoli, who had struggled down the slope through the advancing column. Defending Sugar Loaf Hill for three days and nights would prove to be the key to smashing the enemy's line across Okinawa.

Lt. Col. Horatio Woodhouse, Day's battalion commander, set the wheels in motion to recommend Day for the Congressional Medal of Honor. Woodhouse and Bertoli were killed in battle and Day was badly wounded. His Medal of Honor never moved up the chain of command.

53 Years Later

Mark Stebbens, nephew to Day's deceased company commander, later located a box with all the necessary records and forwarded them to Day.

On January 20, 1998, Maj. Gen. James Day (Ret.) stood in the East Room of the White House and received the Medal of Honor.

Readers Digest, December 1998

*General Day and
Marines.
Left to right:
Charles E Stines,
Raymond Schindler,
General James L. Day,
George Niland,
James Chaisson,
Lenly M. Cotton.*



we were almost constantly at general quarters—firing frequently at the *kamikaze* planes. The smoke machine would constantly catch on fire, so we rigged a fog nozzle right above it. A Marine airfield was nearby, and we proudly watched the P-38s return, rolling once for each plane they had shot down. On June 11, we departed for Kerama Rhetto, with Government Command personnel on board.



Statue dedicated to General James L. Day

LST 791 Log for Sunday, 1 April, 1945

4 - 8

Anchored off Okinawa Island in twenty-eight (28) fathoms of water to six hundred (600) feet of cable on the stern anchor.

0702- Commenced debarking troops.

8 - 12

Anchored as before.

0828- Debarkation completed. The following Marine officers and men of the Second Battalion, 22nd Regiment departed, transportation completed.

[See *Appendix C* for complete list of personnel]

LST 791 Deck Log for Monday, 2 April, 1945

4 - 8

Underway as before. 0530- Went to general quarters. 0726- Anchored off Okinawa Island in 33 fathoms of water to 325 feet of cable to the stern anchor.

0746- Launched port pontoon causeway.

8 - 12

Anchored as before. 0827- Launched starboard pontoon causeway.

Making preparations to launch LCT.

12 - 16

Anchored as before. 1200- Pontoon causeways towed away from ship.

LT. N. E. MacDougal, CEC, USNR, and the following Seabees departed, transportation completed.

[See *Appendix D* for complete list of personnel]

LST-791 Deck Log for Tuesday, 3 April, 1945

0 - 4

Anchored off Okinawa Island, White Beach, in thirty-three fathoms of water with 325 feet of cable to stern anchor. 0015- Commenced fueling LCT-828.

0210- Completed fueling LCT-828, 3450 gallons of fuel transferred.

0215- LCT-828 departed with the following officers and men, transportation completed.

[See *Appendix E* for complete list of personnel]



Unloading ammunition using pontoons at Okinawa

Brother Gayle

I am not sure how the letter got past the censors, but I received a letter from my brother Gayle, a Marine. He was now aboard a “baby carrier,” the *Cowpens*, which was headed for Saipan, and was hoping by chance our paths would cross. On June 21, we received orders to depart for Saipan. There was a heavy air raid that day, and we were ordered to return to Okinawa. On June 22, our orders were changed to depart for Leyte. On June 27, we arrived in Leyte; imagine my surprise to find the *Cowpens* at anchor! The next day, one of our LCVP crews took me over, and we went aboard. Gayle was a cook, so we found him sitting in the mess deck. Gayle returned with us to the 791; we spent the night catching up on things at home, then returned to the *Cowpens* the next day.

Good News From Australian Radio

The 791 was anchored off the coast of Luzon, Philippines, practicing landings for the anticipated invasion of Japan. I was Officer of the Deck and the crew was watching a movie in the tank deck. I was on the ship’s bridge trying to tune in some news on the ship’s radio, when I picked up a Reuters News Agency broadcast from Australia, announcing peace overtures were being forwarded by Japan to end the war. I’m not sure how other ships in the area got the word, but a lot of celebrating commenced. We were not aware of the atomic bombs having been dropped. Our beer supply was short, but I was able to have acquired two five-gallon cans of 180- proof grain alcohol on a supply trip. It was placed in the two large vats in the galley and mixed with grapefruit juice. We must have been lucky to have not lost a single man overboard. We departed the next morning for Manila, thankful we didn’t have to invade Japan.

What Happened To the Crew of LST 791?

Most of the crew had suffered through the Great Depression in the years prior to WW II, so took advantage of the GI Bill and went back to school. There were many whose education had been interrupted by the attack on Pearl Harbor. Due to the passage of time and the aging of our shipmates, many have been lost. Following are notes from a few of those who have survived.



Lt. Reed Adams and Lt. Harry Kannis, Dentist, on bow ramp—Saipan

Charles Haight

I was a Motor Machinist 1st Class on the 791. My wife, Sally, and I live in Palmetto, Florida. We recently celebrated our 56th anniversary.

I was born in 1921 on a 150-acre farm in W. Kendall, New York where I attended a one-room schoolhouse with eight students in grades 1 through 8. My family sold our farm in 1926 and moved to Rochester. I lettered in three sports in high school and was sports editor of the school newspaper and yearbook. To earn extra money, I sold magazines and newspapers, and also ran a mink trap line.

After high school, I bought my first sailing boat, a 40-foot Comet, and commenced a hobby that would continue after the war. I also went to work in an aircraft industry machine shop.

In 1943, I enlisted in the Coast Guard. Following boot camp, I attended motor machinist school and was rated a Motor Machinist 2nd Class. While on duty on 40-footers, I met and married Sally, and was later transferred to Camp Bradford (Norfolk, Virginia). On a shakedown cruise in Florida, Captain Duncan offered me leave to see my 5-day-old child.

On our way to occupy Japan, the Captain made the announcement about the atomic bombs being dropped. Three days after arriving in Japan, the Captain asked if I would like to go home; he gave me one hour to get aboard the aircraft carrier *Ticonderoga*.

Under the GI Bill, I entered a co-op program in pattern making, working a half-day and in school a half-day. Next, I entered an engineering program for 3 years and received my diploma. I then accepted a position with the State University of New York as principal engineer. I later accepted an offer to be the superintendent of buildings and grounds for a school district near Rochester. During my tenure I set up an

engineering department that handled the construction of 4 high schools, 12 elementary schools, and 3 middle schools. While at the State University, I helped prepare several students with doctorates and masters degrees for positions in a new atomic plant being built nearby. I taught instrumentation, thermodynamics generation, and transmittal of power.

For nine semesters, I taught plant operation and maintenance at the University of Rochester, and in my spare time studied business management at the University's Institute of Technology. During this time I was President of the Directors and Superintendents of Buildings and Grounds for the State of New York and President of my Rotary Club.

For 10 years I served as vice president of an international construction company in the Florida Keys. Presently I am teaching art and sculpture at the County Art Gallery in Palmetto, Florida, where Sally and I operate our own art studio.

Ray Burdick

I was a Carpenter's Mate 1st Class aboard the 791. I live with my wife, Millie, in Keuka Park, New York. Millie and I were married on July 2, 1942. We have 2 sons and 4 grandchildren. Needless to say, we are doting grandparents.

I was born in Belmont, New York on March 11, 1919; my brother was 14 months older. My father was a machinist. My family moved to Wellsville in the 1920s. When the job there ran out, my father got a job with the Sinclair Oil Company in Olean as a pipefitter. After that was finished and he was unable to find other work in his field, my family decided to try a new venture.

In early 1931 we moved to Penn Yan on Keuka Lake, one of the Finger Lakes located in upstate New York. We lived on a small

farm with a grape vineyard as income. My mother and father did whatever they could to make a living. There was always work to be had when the cottage people arrived for the summer. My mother did baking and cleaning for them and my father did whatever projects came his way. He was a jack of all trades.

Times were hard for everyone in those days, and we were all in the same boat. Kids who lived on farms always had plenty to eat. My parents would always have a big garden and my mother would can the excess produce for use in the winter. We also hunted, as small game was always plentiful. We made our own fun and entertainment. Because of the lake, we always had lots of friends come to swim, sail, and fish in the summer and to skate and ice boat in the winter. Those were good days and we never felt we were deprived. For spending money, my brother and I did odd jobs for the cottagers and helped local farmers at harvest time.

In 1936, my father was able to find work as a machinist at Eastman Kodak Co. in Rochester, where he stayed until his retirement. My brother and I attended Penn Yan Academy, and both played in the school band.

In 1937 we enlisted in the U.S. Navy. Following boot camp at Newport, Rhode Island, we boarded a transport, which took us through the Panama Canal to Long Beach, California where we reported for duty aboard the battleship *Pennsylvania*. I was in the deck force for about 2 years then transferred to the shipfitters' shop.

In March 1939, the Pacific Fleet went through the Panama Canal—headed for New York City to help open the 1939 World's Fair. When Hitler invaded France, the Pacific Fleet was sent back to the west coast. The fleet spent a lot of time in Pearl Harbor in 1940 and 1941.

I was paid off from the Navy in October of 1941 with a rate of Shipfitter 3rd Class. I got a job with Eastman Kodak, but that

terminated after 2 weeks when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Had I not been discharged from the Navy ten days early, I would have been in Pearl Harbor on the *Pennsylvania*.

On December 16, my brother and I enlisted together again, this time in the U.S. Coast Guard. I spent the next 2 years as a Carpenters' Mate 3rd Class in Buffalo, and my brother was sent to the west coast and remained in the Coast Guard until his retirement.

On July 4, 1944 I reported to Camp Bradford, Norfolk, Virginia for LST training. I was assigned to the LST 791 with the rate of Carpenters' Mate 1st Class. I departed for home and discharge from Manila in August of 1945.

After the Coast Guard, I worked as a carpenter and cabinetmaker. Using the GI Bill, I took courses in architectural drafting and blueprint reading. Two knee replacements forced an early retirement, but I have kept busy with remodeling our home, doing odd jobs for others, and remodeling our church kitchen and dining room. Millie and I have lived in our present home for 45 years and were married 58 years in July 2000.

Charles Berlau

I live in Fort Smith, Arkansas, with my wife, Mae. I was born Sept. 8, 1919 in the historical city of Easton, Pennsylvania, founded about 1752. Easton was called "the Forks of the Delaware." It was here that the Lehigh River ran into the Delaware. It was an important supply depot for Washington's army. He passed through the area several times although he never "slept" here. In the early Indian days, it was the site of many meetings between warring tribes and settlement founders. William Penn received the first grant from the King of England. It is

also the site of Lafayette College—founded in 1832 with 47 students.

Growing up during the “Roaring Twenties” and the dismal Great Depression days, our family never lacked for the necessities of life—nor was there a surplus of anything but love. During the depression, my father was out of work for some time. We were fortunate that a relative owned the house and assisted us for a while.

Our neighborhood was blessed with many boys. Our playground was the street, and our activities mostly football, baseball, kick the ricky, and playing cards on a neighbor’s porch. Cars were few and far between, which enhanced the size of our playing field. We were a frisky bunch—woe to the neighbor who gave us a bad time. When Hallowe’en came around, our antics sometimes resulted in “sprints” to escape the clutches of an irate neighbor. On occasion,

the friendly gendarmes came by to remind us of our civic responsibilities.

Schools were within walking distance, which really didn’t matter since we had no cars, anyway.

They hardly ever shut down the schools because of snow. Hills and 18-24 inch snowfalls made for great sledding. (Skis were unknown to us in those days.) I played trumpet in the band in junior high, and played football in high school. The schools in those days meant learning the “3 R’s.” Our teachers did not put up with any bad behavior. They put the fear of God in us.

When I graduated from high school in 1937, I got my first job—grinding coffee and slicing cheese at an A&P store. The lack of funds made the choice of college simple. There was Lafayette College in Easton and Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Because I had no transportation, I enrolled in Lafayette, where good old shoe leather got me to and from the “College on the Hill.” I was in the ROTC unit the first two years but decided the Army was not for me. I graduated in 1941 with a degree in mechanical engineering, and took my first job with Timken Roller Bridge Co. in Canton, Ohio.

With the war in the background, I returned home to work at Bethlehem Steel, but after Dec. 7th I decided to get in. I checked into the Navy V-7 program and then applied for the United States Coast Guard Officers’ Candidate School in New London, Connecticut. During the physical, my blood pressure was high. The doc asked me if I wanted in, and I told him yes. I lay on a bench for awhile; later, he checked again and it was okay.

I enlisted July 7, 1942 in Philadelphia. I was called to active duty Aug. 24, and sent to Groton Training Station in Groton, Connecticut. The culture shock did not take long. At 0530 the next morning we were mustered and had a mile run which damn



Charles Berlau in Cebu taxi

near killed us; the transition from civilian to Coast Guard Officer had begun!

The highlight of the 4-month program was the month we spent on the Danish training ship *Danmark*, a 3-masted, square-rigger. Sleeping in hammocks was quite an experience, as was manning sail stations and otherwise acting like sailors. Sail stations involved handling sails while standing on ropes attached to the spars. I lucked out on the lowest, biggest sail on the foremast. Some of the big guys drew the topsails—80 feet above the deck. On the trip back to New London, strong head winds forced an anchorage off Block Island. The auxiliary engine lacked power to get back to New London.

On departing the *Danmark*, we were commissioned Ensigns on Dec. 24, 1942, with orders to report to the Fairbanks Morse plant in Beloit, Wisconsin—to a Navy diesel engine school. Obviously, diesels were in our future. That winter, minus-20-degree temperatures were the norm, but a local pub and friendly gals kept our spirits high!

The 6-week course ended Feb. 20 1943, and I was ordered to report to the *Diligence*, a Coast Guard buoy tender stationed at Terminal Island, San Pedro, California. *Diligence* was responsible for servicing buoys in the Los Angeles harbor and the islands off the coast. My most important job, as Ensign, was to stay out of the way. For the crew, this was hard and dangerous work. My first and only bout with seasickness occurred in the waters between San Clemente Island and the coast—known for rough waters.

On July 20, 1943, orders sent me to the Sub Chaser Training Center in Miami, Florida. I lucked out with air transport to Philadelphia. Because of a delay en route, I had time to see my parents and my ex-heart-throb (who soon became Mrs. B). SBTC was five weeks of intensive training on PCs and on the anti-sub simulators pilots used. On Sept. 3, 1943, new orders sent me to Norfolk,

NOB for temporary duty in connection with the assembly and training program for DE (destroyer escort) duty. The only thing I remember about this place was Saturday Review and guys passing out on the parade ground.

On Oct. 20, 1943, I was placed in charge of the draft (our crew) for movement to the Brown Shipyard In Orange, Texas, for assignment and commissioning of the *USS Rhodes* (DE384) under the command of LCDR E. A. Coffin, U.S.C.G. We departed for Charleston Navy Yard and a shakedown cruise with two other DEs.

Part of our training—off Bermuda—involved escorting a water ship into the island from a returning convoy. Water was a scarce commodity.

We joined the Fleet and headed for New York to join a convoy—destination, Casablanca. My buddy and I got caught, while on Shore Patrol, in the Casbah—the off-limits area not very friendly to the Allied Forces. The skipper really reamed our butts out. The return voyage was followed by our second convoy—this time, through the Straits of Gibraltar to Algiers. In the middle of the night, German planes jumped our convoy, but no casualties were sustained. On the return trip, a severe storm tested the mettle of the crew. For three days, chow was eaten on the fly (if you could eat at all). To keep my balance on a flying bridge watch, my feet found the bulkhead. One of the forward gun shields was torn loose. The old USA had never looked better. On two trips, we never had a submarine contact.

I was granted six days leave to marry Mae on May 4, 1944 and then received orders to the Coast Guard Receiving Station on Ellis Island for temporary duty. On June 29, 1944 I got orders to the Amphibious Training Base (Camp Bradford) in Norfolk for training and assembly of a crew for LST Flotilla 29. I remember this place for the Saturday review and guys passing out on the

parade ground from the heat and humidity. I think we were billeted in tents.

We reported next to the Dravo Shipyard, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where—on Sept. 27, 1944—the LST 791 was launched. A Navy pilot crew guided us to New Orleans Algiers Base where the mast was installed and we were outfitted for sea. Even the pilot grounded us at least once on the Mississippi.

Having said our last lump-in-the-throat good-byes, we left the States fully loaded with an LCT on deck, a 90-ton pontoon strapped on each side, ballast tanks full of bunker C oil, and a cargo deck of ammo. What a workhorse the LST was! Winston Churchill once said it looked like we were going to win the war with



J. A. Charbonnet as Davey Jones



Lt. Ralph Bohrer as lookout for Davey Jones



Bedpan ceremony

some damned thing called an LST. The trip to San Diego helped break us in for the job. My recall is that twin 40-mm guns were installed in the San Diego Naval Yard.

So long, USA—hello Pearl, where we unloaded the oil and the ammo.

After spending Christmas on the beach, we headed west with a loaded tank deck to Eniwetok, Guam, and finally our first action beaching at Taclobin, Leyte Gulf. There was still fighting on the island. After unloading, it was a 2500-mile trip to Guadalcanal.

The uninitiated were inducted into the realm of “Neptune Rex” after crossing the Equator for the first time. It was a welcome diversion from a boring trip. Inductees received a shaved head and a membership card to show proof of passage. I have a picture of Adams and me with our bald heads.

Somewhere during our Western passage, the fresh water evaporator froze up; the “black gang” worked their butts off to install

the spare. I remember Jim Hill and Charlie Haight were involved. I was real proud of our great crew leaders, Chuck Higgins and Phil Oaks.

Our primary mission came with the boarding of elements of 2nd Battalion 22 Marine Regiment, under the command of Col. Woodhouse—destination Okinawa Ryukyu Island. The final staging area was Ulithe, where we joined a massive convoy for the final 1300-mile voyage.

An unexpected event threatened the tight security of the entire convoy. A clamp holding one of the pontoons broke loose in rough seas. The convoy Commodore approved making repairs, which involved welding braces at 2:00 a.m. Fortunately, there was a heavy cloud cover. I think a member of the Seabee crew did the welding.

We arrived on D-day—April 1, 1945—at Naha Harbor, and started unloading the LCT, the pontoons, and—sad to say—our Marine friends, into God-knows-what. General quarters was often called with *kamikaze* raids, some of which were downed nearby. I recall one hit the water not far from a hospital ship. Several local missions were carried out—one to Ie Shima, where Ernie Pyle was killed.

On April 11, we went to Guam for a load of ammo for Okinawa.

About the time the island was secured, orders detached the ship first to Subic Bay and then Batangas Bay for training with the 1st Cavalry Division for the first wave of the anticipated invasion of Japan. Manila was heavily damaged by the Japanese; the Allies tried to keep it an open city. On August 8, the crew was on deck watching “A Tree Grows in Brooklyn,” when Adams, the duty officer, sounded out, “Now hear this: the war is over and the Japanese have surrendered.” We all jumped up, cheered, and hugged each other, and—believe it or not—sat down watched the end of the movie. Then the celebration began! Grapefruit juice and alcohol appeared



Equatorial haircuts for Reed Adams and Charles Berlau



A building used by the Japanese headquarters received a direct hit by a 500-lb. bomb

from God knows where. There were a lot of hangovers next morning.

We received orders sending us to Subic Bay and then to the island of Cebu, where we loaded an Army Engineer outfit for duty in the occupation of Japan. These guys had just arrived from France and were mad as hell.

The 791 was the first LST in Tokyo Bay—and the first Allied ship to enter Tokyo



Reed Adams in Cebu taxi

Inner Harbor—only three days after the signing of the surrender document. The Captain refused to let the Japanese pilot come aboard as we entered the Inner Harbor. It is about 15 miles from Yokohama to Tokyo, and there was not one building standing as a result of the fire bombing by the B29s. The Emperor's Palace area was spared.

It was great to renew friendships with all the guys at the reunion in 1999 in Orlando, Florida.

Chuck Higgins

Chuck was a Chief Motor Machinist aboard the 791, and remained in the service after the war. He lives In Atlantic City, New Jersey.

I am still racing sailboats and have been replacing the stern and putting in a new deck. Also, the weekly races just started, and I am still working on the boat. The main goal is preparing the boat for the Regatta at Brigantine, New Jersey, which is on the

outskirts of Atlantic City. These boats are called the Moth Class; I've been sailing them since I was 10 years old. I feel like this will be my last year. You know age creeps up on you after awhile. I'm not fast and sharp as the younger groups, but it's fun getting in their way.

I retired as a Chief Warrant Officer, and enjoyed every minute of it. I was aboard Sub Chasers, Cutters, and Troop Transports, as well as the LST 791. I have been retired for 22 years and love it. I enjoy fishing from the surf, have a beach buggy, and like to spend time at Cape Hatteras.

Jim Hill

Jim and Gladys Hill live in Waco, Texas.

I was born in 1925 in a small town near Burlington, Iowa. My earliest recollections are of the Great Depression era. My father was one of the lucky people who had a job—ten hours a day, six and a half days a week—of furiously paced labor that never produced quite enough money to pay all the bills.

At the age of nine, I obtained a job selling the *Saturday Evening Post* from door to door. It sold for five cents and I kept one and a half cents of it. I made enough money to pay the modest book rental fee at school and sometimes the dime it took to get into the western movie matinee on Saturday afternoon—two cowboy shows, a cartoon, and an episode of a serial. I am of the opinion that my grandson will never experience entertainment like it!

At the age of eleven, I obtained a paper route, from which I earned more than a dollar a week. In 1936 that seemed a magnificent sum. I built up the route, and when I left it four years later, it was earning over four dollars a week.

After junior year in high school, at the age of 16, I dropped out of school, lied about my age, and obtained a job turning gloves

right-side-out in a glove factory. The gloves were sewn with the seams on the inside, and I used a treadle-operated steam press that turned them right-side-out and pressed them at the same time. The piecework rate of 10 cents per dozen pairs earned enough money (about \$16 a week) to enable me to leave home and become self-sufficient.

I enlisted in the Coast Guard in February 1943 while still a few months shy of my eighteenth birthday. I served for a while on a buoy tender in the Caribbean before being assigned to the LST 791 crew being formed up at Camp Bradford, Virginia in the summer of 1944.

After my discharge from the U.S.C.G.R. as a water tender 3rd Class (March of 1946), I took the merchant marine engineers' license exam and made a number of voyages before leaving seafaring to attend engineering college under the GI Bill (in the spring of 1948). I left college without getting the engineering degree—to accept a job running a power house at a gold mine in Saudi Arabia.

Upon my return, a year and a half later, I resumed my education for awhile, but left to take another job. This time I went to Greenland and Labrador to build power houses for the DEW (Distant Early Warning) radar system across the Arctic Ocean from the Soviet Union.

Powerhouses completed, I came back to the U.S. and spent between two and ten years each on a variety of jobs: test engineer, application engineer, instructor in factory service school, design engineer, and a few more. Along the way, I acquired a wife and a son, a night school engineering degree, and passed the exam for registration as a professional engineer in four states.

In 1984, at the age of 59, I quit a job as chief engineer for an oil field drilling rig manufacturer to spend the last 13 years of my engineering career as an independent “contract engineer” working on short-term

assignments for firms needing temporary engineering assistance. It was the most interesting and profitable period of my working life. Some ten jobs in seven states included everything from the space shuttle main engine to household cooking ranges.

I retired in 1997 on my 72nd birthday. Since retiring, I have written a novel about an engineer who worked on the Great Pyramid. As of this writing (December 1999), it remains unpublished.

Russell Meshurel

Russ and Lillian live in Orange City, Florida.

I was born August 5, 1923, in Springfield, Massachusetts, attending all my K-12 schooling in that city. I attended the High School of Commerce, majoring in sales and business management, and graduating in December 1941.

I remember the Great Depression, although I was very young. It was fortunate that my dad had a job as a foreman of a machine shop in a large factory and was able to come up with work two days a week. We always had food on the table, but sometimes it was slim. A number of my high-school friends went into the CCC, and I remember WPA projects.

As far back as I can remember, I was always working. As a young child, I sold Larkins Products (household products), selling enough to earn a little wagon. Later I had a newspaper route in the city. While attending high school, I went on a work-study program with the Forbes & Wallace Company, which was a large New England department store with headquarters in Boston. Working after school hours, I started out on that job as a ready-to-wear service boy, bringing down racks of clothing to different departments from other areas. After that, I worked my way up to elevator

operator; then into the job of salesman for men's wear and sporting goods. From there I went to where the money appeared to be better—helping on the delivery trucks. In the city where I lived, apartment blocks went up to eight floors; and, as luck would have it, most of the people who bought things to be delivered lived on the upper floors. After working on the package delivery truck, I moved up to furniture delivery. I worked at the department store after school until graduation in December, 1941. Then I went to work for Smith & Wesson Revolver Company.

Pearl Harbor was in 1941, and I immediately wanted to join the service in the Navy, but my mother would not sign for me. I was not 18, and I could not join on my own. My mother made the concession that if I would wait and participate in the June graduation ceremony (which was the full class graduation), she would sign for me. I attended the June 17th graduation ceremonies my mother requested, so she would sign the papers for me to join the Coast Guard.

On June 18th, the day after graduation, I was inducted into the United States Coast Guard and went to Manhattan Beach Training Station, New York. After basic training, my first station was Toms River Station in New Jersey, where I was assigned to beach patrol.

I then went on to Headquarters at Washington, D.C., and for eight weeks took fire control training. After my training there, I was sent to CGTS, St. Augustine, Florida, for 12 weeks of gunnery school.

My next station was Captain of the Port, New York City, where I served as turnkey for the brig. After that, I went to Quogue (Long Island) Lifeboat Station, where I was Gunner's Mate in charge of firearms for the station. I was then sent to the Amphibious Base, Norfolk, for assignment to LST 791, where I remained until returning to the States in 1945. I disembarked the ship in San

Francisco, and found my way back to Boston, where I was placed in a receiving station for assignment to Coast Guard Group, Narragansett, Rhode Island, to lighthouse duty. I was not overly thrilled at the prospect of what I thought I was going to have to do in the lighthouse—sit up in the tower and watch the light go round; so I developed a very severe toothache two days later and requested to go to the Brighton Marine Hospital in Boston. After getting out of the hospital, I reported to the Boston Separation Center for discharge. I was honorably discharged in February 1945 after serving three years, seven months, and 24 days active duty in the United States Coast Guard. My rank at discharge was Gunner's Mate Third Class. I am entitled to wear the American Area Campaign Ribbon; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Ribbon with Bronze Star; the Philippine Liberation Bar with Bronze Star; Victory Ribbon, World War II, and Good Conduct Ribbon.

When I went home, I met a young lady (Lillian) who was a school teacher and librarian at the local high school. Six months later we were married. Using my GI benefits, I was able to obtain money to open a small ice cream parlor and restaurant in Russell, New York. I turned this business over to my father on the day that Lillian and I were married, so I started married life totally unemployed.

I was able to get a job driving a tractor-trailer for Benson Mines in Star Lake, New York. It was a side dump-truck trailer. We had to go down into the pit with mammoth shovels and scrape up the iron ore, put it in the truck, and take the ore to the crusher.

I had always wanted to go to electrical school, and while driving the truck, I had the opportunity—under the GI Bill—to go to State Agricultural and Technical College. I requested the electrical program, but it was full. My next option was heating/plumbing. During the time I was at school, I became

involved in Scouting. While putting on a seminary for Scout leaders at the Wannakena Range School, I met two gentlemen from the town of Norwood, New York, who were owners of a plumbing and heating establishment. They told me that if I would come and take over their Scout troop (which was a senior Scout troop—Explorers), they would give me a job. At that time in my young married life, a full-time job looked better to me than one more year in school; so I left school and went to work as a plumbing-heating and metal man. They also hired me under the GI program, where they paid me \$25 a week and the Government paid me a certain amount.

I left that company after about two years, when I had the opportunity to take over as Chief Installer for the Holland Furnace Company. Next we went to Hermon, New York where I opened my own business, Hermon Heating and Plumbing. I stayed there until 1952; then moved my business to Massena, New York, where there was a big project—putting in the St. Lawrence Seaway, the Robert Moses Power Dam, and shipping locks. This was a boon for home building, due to the influx of all the people coming there to work. I built the business up to the point where I had five installation crews working. I also opened a side business called Hermon's Service Center, where we maintained a number of major oil company gas stations. Things were going well until the Seaway work ended and there was a mass exodus of homebuyers.

I ended up closing my business and going into the marine business. I ran a large marina on the St. Lawrence River. After ten years in the marine business, I had the opportunity to teach heating, plumbing, and air conditioning. At that time I decided I needed more education, so I attended State University of New York College at Oswego, New York, where I received a Bachelor of Science Degree, *magna cum laude*, in the

area of vocational technical studies. I went on and was certified by the State of New York to teach plumbing, heating, air conditioning, janitorial, ground maintenance, and building upkeep.

I taught at two schools, the first being Seaway Area Technical School, where I taught plumbing and heating. I then transferred to Northwest Technical School in Ogdensburg, KY, where I taught for ten years. I retired in 1985 from teaching and shortly thereafter moved to Florida.

My personal life has been blessed in many ways. My wife and I have two sons—Ronald, born in 1946, who is Director of Continuing Education with the State University College in Canton, New York; and Dean, born in 1948, who was a manager for UPS in the Transportation Division and is now retired and living in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

I gave myself to the Lord after He saved me from a terminal cancer situation. I had my bladder removed in 1982. I should have died within five years after surgery, but it has now been 18 years. I went into the ministry as a local licensed pastor in the United Methodist Church of Stockholm, New York. Right now, my major activity is with my church—the Orange City United Methodist Church—where I have been able to put my varied experience to good use helping others.

George W. Frank, Jr.

George and Garnet Frank live in Columbus, Ohio.

My years as a youth growing up were eventful. I was adopted at the age of 3 days; my biological father had been killed in an accident prior to my mother dying at childbirth. The only parents I knew were wonderful people. My father, a Navy veteran of the Spanish American War (Philippines), was a dentist in Arkansas City, Kansas. My

mother worked in his office. He had graduated from University of Maryland, but in 1929 a freak accident cost him part of his left hand—and his career. We lost our home, but there was no self pity. We moved to Kansas City where he was employed by American Red Cross.

My schooling started in rural surroundings—the usual activities in junior high school: baseball, basketball, and band (clarinet and saxophone). I attended a segregated high school, Washington Rural. I lettered in football and track my freshman year. I played in high school and American Legion band. I fell in love three times my sophomore year.

After football season my junior year, I ran away from home and joined the Royal Canadian Artillery in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I have always regretted the heartache I caused my parents—they didn't know my whereabouts for four months. Homesick—yes. I grew up very quickly in the Canadian service, having lied about my age, but they were taking anybody who could walk.

I will skip the next two years and commence with my leave from the Canadian service, during which I hitchhiked home from Vancouver, British Columbia to Kansas City. I returned from leave late and served a short time at Little Mountain, a tough brig. My last day there was a Sunday—Pearl Harbor Day. When I swore allegiance to the King upon enlistment, I lost my U.S. citizenship. President Roosevelt restored it and the Canadian

government released any volunteer who wished to return to the States. I did!

Upon my return home, I was allowed to return to high school. During the summer of 1942 I enlisted in the Coast Guard: basic training at Manhattan Beach, New York, where I met Lt. (jg) Jack Dempsey, Lou Ambers (Lightweight Champion), and several other athletes who had been given rates. Eventually was shipped to Norfolk as a replacement for the crew of LST 791.

A few things I recall I will share with you. I purchased Reed Adams' *Indian* motorcycle and had to sell it in Manila—orders from the Captain. Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Dick Schlernitzauer put me in charge of the boatswain and paint locker. I enjoyed it.

I remember watching "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" the night we heard the war was over.

Attending these reunions— learning that people thought I stole a jeep only to have Clarence Blair admit it after all these years; having a reporter from The Columbus Dispatch give me an autographed copy of a book written by Ernie Pyle. I had enough



LST 791 on a Philippines beach, Oct. 4, 1945

points (Canadian time counted) to be one of the first “lucky seven” to depart LST 791.

I returned to Pittsburgh and served a plumbing apprenticeship. I then joined the Coast Guard Reserve with a 1st Class Petty Officer rating, and within 30 days was called to active duty during the Korean Conflict.

No overseas duty this time—only flood duty on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers.

After discharge, we returned to Pittsburgh, then moved to Columbus. After a couple of years I started my own business. I’m still working and have been active in local and national offices of our trade associations and government commissions.

Two sons are about to the point of causing a change of the locks on the doors. My wonderful wife Garnet and I can’t wait. I left out some of the *best* parts!

Walter Dekar

Walt and June Dekar live in Binghamton, New York.

I was born in Rattskovice, Czechoslovakia and came to this country when three years old. I grew up on a farm within a mile of where we live today. My two brothers and I did the farming

while our parents worked in a shoe factory. We had a few cows, raised pigs, and chickens. We also raised potatoes, beets, corn, and whatever we (and the animals) ate. We always had plenty of food—and were short on sugar, salt, shoes, and clothes—but had no luxuries.

Paul and I cut all the firewood needed to keep the family warm (sort of) with a crosscut saw. My shoulders ache thinking about it, although I was in good shape then.

I graduated from high school and got a job at IBM running a lathe. After working six



Forever Amber and monkey playing on deck hatch



Walter Dekar on bridge with brother Paul approaching LST 791 in B-24

months, I turned 18 and became eligible for the draft, so I joined the U.S. Coast Guard.

Following is my personal log of LST 791's trip home:

Oct 3, 1945 – Pulled into Cebu City this morning and are now loading the 77th Field Artillery Division

Oct. 3, 1945 – Departed Cebu City

Oct. 4, 1945 – Arrived Leyte Harbor

Oct. 7, 1945 – Departed Leyte

Oct. 19, 1945 – Arrived in Otaru, Hokkaido

Oct. 20, 1945 – Had shore patrol in the city today

Oct. 22, 1945 – Departed Otaru

Oct. 23, 1945 – Arrived in Hakkodate

Oct. 27, 1945 – Departed Hakkodate

Oct. 30, 1945 – Arrived in Yokohama Bay

Nov. 6, 1945 – Departed Yokohama Bay

Nov. 12, 1945 – Arrived in Saipan

Nov. 20, 1945 – Departed Saipan flying the Homeward Bound Pennant with a load of gas semi's

Nov. 28, 1945 – Crossed the International Date Line—had two Wednesdays

Dec. 3, 1945 – Arrived in Pearl Harbor. Brother Paul came aboard. Later we left together for Kuhukee Air Base, where I spent the night.

Dec. 4, 1945 – Paul flew me in his B-24 for a tour of the islands. He let me fly the beast. We buzzed the 791 in Pearl Harbor. After returning to the 791, had dinner in the officers' mess.

Paul had promised me he would buzz our ship as we left Honolulu. As Paul approached, Reed Adams, the Officer of the Deck and on the conn, sent for Walt to come up and observe his brother's attempt to



LST 791 with deck unloaded, Oct. 4, 1945

remove our Going Home Pennant. He made several close passes. Adams got some good pictures of Walt with his brother's B-24 in the background.

After surviving the perils of the Atlantic and the Pacific, I was discharged in New York City in January, 1946 and returned to Binghamton, New York—and went back to work for IBM. I married in June, 1946 and started raising the first of our three children.

I worked toward a mechanical engineering degree with ICS while moving up to assistant foreman. Got my certificate, and was transferred into purchasing where I became a purchasing manager (38 years) and retired. I lost my wife in 1966, and married June, a lovely widow with 2 beautiful children. The kids have all left, but so far June has stayed.

Jim Morley

Jim and Evelyn Morley live in La Crescent, Minnesota.

Jim was a Pharmacist's Mate 1st Class and one of the leading petty officers who helped shape our crew. The following letter was written by Jim to the most recently located shipmate, Yeoman 1st Class Howard Riley.

[Editor's note: Howard was terminally ill, and was residing in a nursing home. He was sent a VCR and this story of LST 791, which his daughter said he enjoyed. He died a few months later.]

Howard Riley
Roslyn Nursing Home
Roslyn, Pennsylvania

Dear Howard,

It Pleases me very much to find another former shipmate. You are the most recent. I do hope this finds you feeling better. As you know, I have talked to your daughter several times. I am glad she is there for you.

How about you? How old are you? How long were you in the Coast Guard? Where was your hometown? Where were you stationed after the war? Several of the others re-enlisted after discharge. Phil Oakes—Navy, and Caesar Mestre—Seabees. Caesar retired as a chief warrant but Phil didn't stay in very long. Phil has a very large electrical contracting business. None of his kids want it and he can't sell it.

I just took a break and went through some of my stuff (I have boxes of literature and pictures) to see if I had a picture of you. I probably wouldn't recognize you. A lot of the pictures have no names on them. Please send me one of you on board the 791, or even later, when you can.

I assume you were the only yeoman we had, since you are the only one listed. You must have been busy, with all the logs and the lists that I received. Was that your doing? Thanks a lot. It took me years to get a crew list at the time of commission-



Ralph Bohrer and Reed Adams back home in Burlingame, California

ing, 27 September, 1944. As you can see, I was no yeoman. I recently purchased this electronic typewriter and am still learning to operate the gadgets on it.

At present we have three of the officers still living. Ed Horton was the Exec. Charles Berlau was Engineering, and Reed Adams was the First Lt. (Deck). Reed is very active in our reunions. He arranged for us to partake of activities and places at both the Air Force Academy and the Coast Guard Academy. Those were memorable reunions. Mr. Bradford was living in Texas with his daughter and was active. But later developed Alzheimer's disease and passed away in 1995. He came aboard after we got to New Orleans. Edward Horton lives in Hopedale, Massachusetts, Near Boston.

Ralph Bohrer came to our reunion in 1996, and passed away the next year.

He spent most of his years working for a Becton-Dickson Medical Supply Company. He was really happy to be there. Another officer who came aboard later was Frank Ruppert. I kept in touch with him for awhile. Then one day I got a letter from his twin brother who

informed me that that he had found him dead on his boat in California. Coincidentally, Jim Cutler was also found dead on his boat in Miami. He was supposed to be at the 9th reunion (held in Tampa).

I made an intensive search for the Captain. The first year we went to Florida we went through Kentucky, where he was born and went to school. I went through the phone book; nobody seemed to know him. I talked to a lady who was taking care of his first wife, but she wouldn't give me any information, except she did mention Hampton. I made a note of it at the time and when we got home I found it. I called a lawyer friend of mine and he said to give the info to his secretary and she would get back to me when she found anything (this was 1987). In about 30 minutes she called me back. The good news was she talked to his wife (in Hampton, Virginia) and she gave her the bad news; he had passed away the week before from a heart condition. As you will read in his obituary he had three daughters from his first marriage.

Apparently he had written quite extensively to them all during the war, as he compiled a journal based on all these letters. Although he never lived to complete it, his wife did, right after his death. She made me several copies, which I passed around to the others but managed to keep one and will send it to you, if you will be sure to return it when finished. Also, did you know he was in much of the North African and Sicilian campaign? I have a few copies of that journal; I'll send you one. I only had a few occasions to talk to him and came away with a good impression. I think most of the crew spoke well of him and he treated us fairly. How did you feel about him? I keep in touch with his wife.

I shall finally close this epistle with a little about my family and myself. I received my discharge on Dec. 19, 1945 at Detroit, Michigan. Just made it home for Christmas. I

was lucky in that I had a job waiting for me. I had worked in the local bank several years before the war started. I was one of seven kids including five boys and two girls. Three brothers have passed away. Most of us were born in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan (a great Coast Guard town). I stayed home a year and decided there was no future for me in a small town bank, so I enrolled at Alexyan Brothers Hospital school of nursing in Chicago. It was a new field—but promising—for men, and I graduated in 1950. I worked in a TB sanitarium in Waukegan, IL for a year and a half, then to a V. A. hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota. After the first few days, I decided it wasn't for me. Most of the nurses had been in the army or navy and thought they were still in. They all wore their gold and silver bars and I know some of them expected me to salute them. There was one nurse in particular I took a great liking to, Evelyn Burnett, and we shortly became engaged.

When I left the V. A., I went back to school at the Minneapolis General Hospital and pursued a course in anesthesia. I really enjoyed it, but wished I had gone to medical school. I took some courses at the University of Minneapolis, and eventually got my degree. Evelyn and I got to know each other a little more, as she kept working at the V. A. On August 7, 1954 were married at Sauk Rapids, Minnesota. We continued to live in Minneapolis, and our first child was born there. Three more just came along in various places throughout the Midwest.

We ended up here in 1971 and I went to work for a large clinic, across the Mississippi River in Lacrosse, Wisconsin. I spent 17 years there, retiring in 1985. We intend to stay here for the duration (does that sound familiar?). By the way, we have seven grandchildren—six girls and one boy. They all live in Minnesota, two to three hours away. By the way, they are all very smart, talented, fairly obedient and handsome, beautiful girls. Our one boy is all of that and

at 8 years old, plays the piano beautifully. His sister, at 12, plays the violin, beautifully.

A little bragging is not sinful. And this is the story of our lives.

We both have some serious medical problems, which I won't go into, but we are both being watched closely and are coping with our situation. Our kids keep in constant contact and have suggestions from time to time, which we usually ignore, but consider.

I began the search for the crew the year after I retired. I started in the public library, in their phone books. After a few hundred letters and some phone calls, by 1987 I had found about 25. Got several responses from the original crew list, even though the addresses were over 45 years old. I have kept all the letters I have received since I started this quest. It has been fun and I shall continue to the end. Last year I found a fellow LST Coastie who has a computer with 800,000 names on it and doesn't charge anything. He found five new ones for me. Reed Adams and four others have "on line" computers and have found Charles Berlau and Tom Sanchez (now Gonzalez).

I got several names through the V. A. They charge \$2.00 per name, won't give out the addresses, but will forward mail to the last address they have. I have found a few that way. I had responses from wives, parents, sons, and daughters. Many thanked me for what we had done for our country.

In the letters I received from the crew, many expressed the fact that they never thought of themselves as heroes. We did a good job and can be proud of it. Compared to many other ships and crews, we were very lucky as far as anyone getting hurt. Our first reunion was held across the river from Cincinnati, Ohio. I felt that was appropriate since we had gone right past it on the way to New Orleans. We had 21 guys and their wives. We certainly came as strangers, but left as shipmates. It was a great, memorable occasion, and we have had one almost every

year since. Now we are lucky to have 10 or 14 who come. But we are getting older every year. We have been all over the country and enjoyed everyone.

So, I think I have covered the years. I hope you will enjoy reading this and, if possible let me hear from you. Our very best to you and yours. You are on our prayer list.

Sincerely, Jim & Evelyn Morley

Howard Riley

The following diary by Howard Riley was received from his daughter, Mary Ann Osmoski, and was a welcome surprise.

LST 791 Diary by Howard J Riley November 1944

Saturday November 11, 1994

At the time of this first writing we are passing through the Panama Canal. We were in Coco Solo last night and had about five hours of liberty. We took a bus over to Colon, and what a town that is. It is the most wide open place I have ever seen. There are apparently only two professions practiced there—bartenders and those who dwell in the red light district.

We have several tons of ammunition aboard as cargo and five LCT sections on deck. Also two Navy crews for the LCTs. We picked up the LCTs in New Orleans and the ammo in Mobile and then left the States. Prior to that we boarded the ship in Pittsburgh (which, incidentally is the best town anywhere, except New York of course). Had a very scenic trip down the rivers to New Orleans. From there to Panama City, Florida, for training and shake down and then back to New Orleans. Scuttlebutt is that we are going to San Diego and then to Pearl Harbor. Pearl Harbor is for sure, but Diego is, as I said, strictly scuttlebutt.

I might add a word about Stogie, our mascot. Stogie shipped in, in New Orleans after dark and under a gunner's mate's jumper. It seemed that she had belonged to the superintendent of the shipyard where we were tied up. She is a little, chubby, white soup hound, who stands about eight inches high at present. Poor little mutt got seasick on the way down, but she was all right after that.

I guess that brings us up to the present and the Canal again. We passed through the famous Gatun Locks late this afternoon, but it is dark now, as usual at 10:00 p.m. We can't see much of the scenery. What we did see was very beautiful country, though. The foliage comes clear to the water's edge and is so dense that you cannot see two feet inland. A lot of the trees are coconut palms, something we didn't have in Greenland. This dense green growth, with the mountains rising in the background makes a beautiful picture. The waterfront at Coco Solo and Colon look like something out of a Dotty Lamour movie.

Thursday December 12, 1944

Quite a lot of water has gone under the fantail since the previous page was written, more than I had intended to let go by. However, we did go up to San Diego from Panama and had wonderful weather all of the way. In fact, we have had good weather ever since we left Pittsburgh in September. It hasn't rained more than two or three times and no storms at all. The trip up from the Canal Zone to Diego was uneventful, nothing but the seagulls, flying fish, and one day a couple of water spouts. A couple of times you could see rainbows, although it was not raining.

San Diego is not much of a liberty town, although it is better than one might expect considering the thousands of service men there. While we were there some of us went over to Mexico. We went to a little place

named Tijuana, just over the border. We didn't have much time or money and although I intended to pick up a couple of souvenirs, I didn't. Neither did I get any in Panama. After a few days in San Diego, we shoved off again and in company with the LSD 940, pointed our homely prow toward the fabled land of sunshine, grass skirts, and Robert's Committee investigations. We made the run without escort and except for the carrier and the destroyer sighted the second day out we didn't see another ship the whole trip. Yes we did, too. About four days out of 'Dego, another LST, the 756, fell in with us and the three ugly ducklings waddled into Pearl Harbor on the 10th of December, just three years and three days after the Japanese delivered their Irish upper cut. It was a Sunday morning, too. The run from 'Dego to PH took us about twelve days—about 2300 miles.

There are very beautiful hills and mountains behind the city, but from what I hear of the place I hardly think it would be much use going ashore. The SPs are tough. Too many sailors with no place to go, and so forth. I haven't been ashore yet, but I guess I will go in one of these days. It looks like we will be here at least a month, maybe longer.

We got rid of the LCT sections today and our cargo of ammunition goes next. Nobody is sorry to see that go. Just like riding around in a time bomb, wondering if and when it's going to go off. All they have to do now is load us with high-octane gas and we will all go over the hill. Come to think of it, there are plenty of hills, but where would we go? It is a long way back to Jersey.

So here I am, in a place I always wanted to see, Hawaii, land of the hula girls. I haven't believed that malarkey for a long time. But so far I haven't seen a girl of any kind. In fact, I don't even feel like going ashore. This war is sure going to knock hell out of the Cooks' Tour business.

Thursday January 11, 1945

Now I want to say that the island of Oahu, on which Honolulu is situated, is a very lovely place indeed. Oahu is the only island in the group we were able to visit. Our liberty was from 0830 to 1900, which in this case was a break because we could really see something. Everyone, civilians included, had to be off the streets by 2030. Things were not so bad ashore as we had been led to believe; that is, if we got out of town. Honolulu, as we had surmised, was very overcrowded. It was even an effort to walk along the streets.

However, Charbonnet and I found our spot the first day we were ashore. One look at the town, that is, the corner where we got off the bus, and we decided—no good. So we boarded another bus and in ten minutes we were surrounded by all of the fabled splendor of the renowned beach at Waikiki. It was truly a beautiful spot.

Kalakakua Avenue, the principal street, is a very wide boulevard, lined with coconut palms and walls and fences covered with flowering vines. After all of the crowded cities, navy yards, and many days at sea, it was a wonderful experience just to walk in such an enchanting atmosphere. Enchanting is really the word for it, or so it struck us. It didn't seem like the same world at all. This state of mind may have been partially caused by the monotonous and very restricted life aboard ship, but not entirely. Waikiki has something that just lifts you right out of this world.

After walking around awhile, we rented some swimming trunks and went for a dip, after which we just lay on the beach basking in the sun with an eye out for any female who may appear to complete the picture. Somehow, it seems no situation is complete without them. In this, however, we were disappointed. No more than two or three appeared, and they were well convoyed by a full regiment of Army officers. While we are

lying here in all of our bachelor glory, I will describe the beach.

Off to the left, Diamond Head, an extinct volcano, thrust out into the sea. A short distance off to the right is the famous Royal Hawaiian Hotel and closer is the Moana. As you wade out into the water it gets deep very fast and fifty feet off shore it is five or six feet deep. There it starts to get shallow again and you start breaking toes on the coral. This reef runs out a quarter of mile or so with only a couple of feet of water covering it. This accounts for the long rollers, which make the surfboards so popular here. In fact, they are almost a necessity if you want to save your feet. It is either get a surfboard or stay in the gully close to the beach.

We spent at least a part of each of our four liberties on the beach, but after one feeble attempt on the boards, we stayed in the gully. It takes an artist to navigate on the damn things. After the beach, we had lunch at the Waikiki Tavern. This was just like any other restaurant, except a couple of the sides were missing. A lot of business places in town are built like that. A couple of little birds came in and hopped around the floor eating crumbs.

Here too, was a character who might have come out of a novel about the islands. A man approaching middle age, mostly bald and slightly bleary-eyed, and with a very red complexion caused by the prolonged use of alcoholics—specially the nose, lined with broken veins. When we spoke to him, he talked like a very well educated and cultured person. Truly, the broken down intellectual type who had ended up in the islands, playing the piano for what ever he would get. "Eddy Manly at the piano from Noon to 5 daily."

Before we leave the beach, a word about the Royal Hawaiian. If there is a more beautiful structure any where on earth, I would certainly like to see it. I don't know just what type of architecture it is, but it

appeared to me to be a cross of Moorish and Oriental. It is a sort of pinkish color, which may seem odd, but set as it is in its deep grove of palms, and rising above them, it looks like something out of Arabian Nights. The interior defies any description I could give it. The walls are all paneled and intricately designed in color. The hotel is used now by the Navy as a rehabilitation spot, I believe.

On a later liberty, we took a bus ride to Kailua. This took us to Nuuanu Pass. The road wound itself right up the side of the mountain—it seemed almost vertical. Looking out of the bus and straight down at some places you could see the road directly below, two or three sections of it, each heading in a different direction. Then came one of the many tight hairpin curves—and the road you had just traveled would be just overhead. At the highest points, the road was up in the clouds. Practically every turn brought some new delightful view. At one point you could see clear out to the ocean. The hills, trees, farms, the blue ocean's white breakers, all in vivid colors, it hardly seems real. I guess the great heights and sheer drop beneath us added to the effect.

When we got to Kailua, there was nothing but cross roads, so we hitched a ride in an Army truck to the camp, where they had a small USO. As we set there eating and looking at the palms and the beach, two songs kept running through my mind; Ebb Tide and Moonlight in Kailua. I can see now what inspired them, although once again, I didn't have a girl as those fellows evidently did. Then again I wonder: chances are those writers had never seen the place and had never been out of Tin Pan Alley. We took other rides too, and saw the sugar and pineapple plantations and the papaya fields.

Later we took the ship to Kewalo basin and took on our present cargo, some more ammunition, Army trucks, jeeps, and

armored cars. A unit of Seabees, part of an Army tank battalion, and some Army and Navy casualties came aboard as passengers.

We left Hawaii on the 28th of December and the next land we sighted was Kwajalein Atoll. We didn't stop there but continued on to our present position at Eniwetok, arriving there yesterday. There is quite a lot of shipping lying here, mostly freighters and tankers, a couple of destroyers, and several more LSTs. We now have a whole LCT on deck and four other smaller landing crafts in and around it. Also, huge pontoons secured to our sides running about two thirds of the length of the ship. We are really an unwieldy looking craft now.

We heard today that Luzon had been invaded. We thought we might be in on that deal ourselves, although no one was over-anxious to be. I guess they are saving Formosa and the China coast for us.

Tomorrow I am going to try to get ashore and see what this place looks like at the close-up. It is plain from where we are anchored that they have had a battle here. Hardly any trees left standing, just a few stumps.

Wednesday February 14, 1945

We have piled up quite a lot more mileage by now but I will start off again on Eniwetok.

I didn't get ashore on the next day, but on the following day we went into the beach for a little recreation. We went swimming, had a ball game, and a few cans of beer. The island is nothing but an oversized sand bar with what is left of a few trees on it. There is an airstrip and a few huts on it, and that's all.

The next day we shoved off again bound for Leyte, in the Philippines. We were expecting to run into trouble on this run, but the trip proved to be uneventful. We had one GQ in the middle of the night, but it was just a dummy run. I guess somebody on one of the other ships had an itchy trigger finger and

started shooting. We stood at GQ for about twenty minutes and then hit the sack again.

Upon arrival at Leyte, we beached on Dulag Beach, where some of the initial landings were made in the invasion of the island. Some of the soldiers we had aboard had hit the beach in the same spot on the first day. They had been back to Pearl Harbor to the hospital and were now coming back to join their outfits.

There were still some Japanese around on the island, but they had them pretty well rounded up now. We had one alert while we were there, but if there was a raid it must have been way off, as we saw and heard nothing. We are all very much surprised at having come so far, right up into the middle of the Philippines without getting shot at. We haven't so much as seen a Japanese yet.

Here at Dulag, there had been a small village. There was a fairly large church, but it had been wrecked by the bombs—although the front wall was nearly intact, and the cross at the peak was still there.

After we discharged our Army casualties and the Tank Battalion, we went down to Taclobin and put off the Navy casualties. We went ashore for an hour or so to look at the town. Such a hell hole for human beings to live in, I never saw before. All the streets looked and smelled just like the pig pens from back home. Just about ankle deep in mud and slime. There are a few pavements on the main drag but all streets are lined with ditches to carry off the sewage. You can smell it clear out to the ship. The houses are merely shacks and the only people who are not in rags, are those who have acquired some GI clothes.

There were a few who looked half-way decent, but not many. We saw about eight truck loads of American girls just in off a transport. If they are nurses, it may be necessary. But if they were WACs, it's not only unnecessary but a God Damn Shame to send them to a place like this.

About the only humorous thing I saw was a sign in the City Hall. It read "NOTICE – do not pay more than two pesos for a Marriage License." It struck me as funny, anyway.

Out on the ship again, the natives were paddling all around us in their outriggers, trading grass hats, knives, and so forth for some of our clothes or mattress covers. If you offer them money, they won't take it. I guess that is no more good to them than it is to us. The next morning we shoved off again. We rather thought we would go up to Luzon from there. But instead we headed south to Guadalcanal and the Solomons.

On the sixth day out, we crossed the equator and were duly visited by his majesty Neptune Rex and Davie Jones and the rest of the royal party. Those of us who were not Shellbacks, but only mere Pollywogs, were initiated in to the Solemn Mysteries Of The Deep and as a consequence there are only six men aboard who have all of their hair. This took place just yesterday, so as I write this, my head looks like an elongated cue ball. So, now we are all Shellbacks.

Guadalcanal is still four or five days off, but our escort left us yesterday and we are now carrying running lights, so I guess there isn't much in these waters except flying fish—but plenty of those. We are, by the way, off the coast of New Guinea.

Wednesday, February 21, 1945

Arrived at Guadalcanal the day before yesterday. Stayed overnight, left for Tulagi, had our orders changed, and are now at Florida Island.

A couple of days out we found a water-logged dinghy that had been converted into a sort of raft. A couple of oars had been nailed upright and a makeshift sail had been rigged from scraps of cloth, a sugar sack, and a part of a pair of trousers. There were two big holes in the bottom, and there were at least a thousand tiny fish inside the dinghy. Many

larger fish of various kinds were hovering about and three sharks, 6 to 8 feet long, were also on patrol. There was no sign of any bodies, so there is no telling of what happened to anyone who might have been in it.

The skipper just gave us a talk and it seems that we are due for an invasion in a couple of weeks. We are taking on some Marines and going on maneuvers for a few days and then what?

I worked all day yesterday and through 0900 this morning. It seems that they are going to pay us at last after two months, and we had to get the pay accounts up. After that I slept all day and it is now 2100 and I am getting hungry. Guess I'll see if I can find some chow in the galley.

Speaking of chow reminds me of one day when we were going through the chow line and one boy looked at his tray, shook his

head, and said "This chow is going to win the war, but how the hell are we going to get the Japanese to eat it?" It really wasn't that bad, not quite.

Sunday, March 18 1945

We hung around Guadalcanal until the twelfth of this month, or rather bounced back and forth between there and Tulagi and the Florida Islands. They are just a few hours apart. We went on maneuvers and had a couple of rehearsals for this little surprise party we are planning for the Japanese. At least, we hope it will be a surprise. The Seabees and their pontoons are still aboard, as is the LCT and its crew. Also 17 LVTs and their Marine crews and a gang of Marine infantrymen. LVTs are landing vehicles, track. They are big steel monsters that can run off the end of our ramp and swim ashore. Then, with their caterpillar treads they can



Richard Lundin, the ship's baker, was a popular source of snacks

walk right up the beach like a tank. There is a four-man crew for each one. They are used to carry personnel and supplies.

One of the LVTs has a little black and white dog for a mascot—name is Tojo. He is a cross between a dog and a hand grenade. He is only a little fellow, but they have teased him so much that he wants to take a leg off of anybody who looks cross-eyed at him. He has a powerful voice for such a little mutt and he sure does use it. I have made friends with him though, and can pick him up without getting growled at. That's three dogs we have aboard now, Sugie, USCG, LST791; Duke, USN, LCT828; and Tojo, USMC. Tojo used to bark like hell every time he saw a sailor, but he is used to them now.

A few days ago, one of our crew was taken sick and he really looked bad. Yesterday, we transferred him to another ship that has a doctor aboard. Late last night we received a message; "Rowland has malaria, condition serious." We hope it is not contagious—he was in my bunk the last three days he was aboard.

Now that we are up to the present again we are in convoy and bound for Ulithi, in the Caroline Islands. That is to be the jumping off place for this little rumpus we are going into. The place we are going to hit is Okinawa Nansui Shoto, about 750 miles from Tokyo. I imagine that when that show starts, the landscape will be messed up for miles around. It not only has a large airstrip of its own but it is within easy flying time from Formosa, China, and Japan itself. Well, we'll see about that later. Some of these Marines have already made a couple of invasions and this is to be their last and then back to the States. And I hope they make it.

Sunday, March 25, 1945

We arrived in Ulithi on the 21st after another uneventful cruise. We lay there until 1600 today getting squared away for the next lap. And this is it. We are on our way now to

strike at an island that is closer to the Japanese mainland than any that have been struck yet by the Allies. Okinawa is one of the string of islands that runs off the lower end of the main islands of Japan.

We are really crowded on here now. The ship has a complement of 122 officers and men; now there are 532 aboard. It won't be for long, though. We expect to hit on the first of April, April Fools' Day. I wonder who is going to get fooled.

There is a little swell out now and this god damn scow is rolling like a barrow in a mill race.

April 20, 1945, Friday

Well, we done it. On April 1, Easter Sunday, and April Fools' Day, we participated in our first operation. I don't know if the Japanese were surprised or not, but we certainly were. We didn't even get shot at.

To start at the beginning, I'll go back to the evening, "L minus 1." We had been standing a GQ continuously for a day or two, with the gun crews and repair parties sleeping at their stations. My station is on the conn, and as I couldn't very well stay up there 24 hours a day, I had been relieved for a couple of hours by a fellow whose station didn't have to be manned until actual action occurred. Well I was pretty tired, so instead of flaking out on the deck someplace, I said, "the Hell with it" and went below and turned in. After a while somebody came along and shook me and said "Hey, GQ—they want you on the conn." I got up and went up to the conn, but it was all over. One of our escorts had picked up a Japanese plane and shot it down. This ship didn't get a chance to fire, but GQ had been sounded and I slept through the whole damn thing.

Early the next morning, we were at it again. This time we were closing in on the beach. We had entered the East China Sea the night before, passed the southern end of

the Island of Okinawa, continued on toward China, and then doubled back in time to go to work just after breakfast.

This was the largest amphibious operation in the Pacific to date. Some 60 thousand men were put ashore on L-Day; more than went ashore on D-Day in Normandy, and the naval barrage was something terrific. As far as could be seen, there was a line of war ships: battle ships, cruisers, destroyers, DEs, LCTs, and so forth. They were blasting the beach with everything from 16-inchers to 20-mm. Overhead was an umbrella of planes, all American—strafing, bombing, and launching rockets.

All of a sudden a plane swooped down as if in attack and straightened out on a course just between the line of ships shelling the beach and the line of LSTs, LSMs, and LCIs fanning out for the operation. By that time, everybody within range was shooting at him. When they discovered it was an American plane, it was too late. He had crashed in flames into the China Sea. I'm only glad that we were not shooting at him. I hope his folks don't find out how he died. It's bad enough to go out when there is a good reason for it, but to die like that, so futilely—it just shouldn't be.

Nothing much happened for the next few days. We had numerous GQs, but it wasn't until the seventh day that anything came close enough for us to shoot at. We had so many carriers between us and Japan, and between us and Formosa and China, that the Japanese couldn't get through in any number. They would send out 150 planes and maybe 6 or 8 would get to Okinawa. None of them ever got back.

During this particular attack, a Japanese plane came from over the island and started down in a suicide dive. Just like a Japanese, it picked a hospital ship as his target. He didn't quite make it. For a minute it looked like he would, but he started to wobble and crashed into the water close to the ship.

Ernie Pyle wrote that he had never seen such a concentration of anti-aircraft fire anywhere. As so far as we were concerned, that was the invasion of Okinawa.

May 13, 1945, Sunday

After leaving Okinawa on April 11th we went to Saipan for repairs and then to Guam for our present cargo. This cargo, and I don't like it, consists of about 1200 tons of ammunition. We went back to Saipan and are now on our way back to Okinawa. According to new reports, things are getting pretty warm up that way. The Japanese started raising Hell a couple of days after we left and are still at it. We are now about 28 hours out of Saipan, but we had a GQ just a few minutes ago. We secured after a few minutes, so I guess they decided the warning was for someplace else.

We have four new guns now, giving us a total of 22 guns: eight 40-mm, twelve 20-mm, and two 50-calibers, probably making us the best-armed LST afloat. We have two more 20s. I guess we are going to mount them too, if we can find room.

Now that the war is over in Europe and we can concentrate entirely on Japan, it shouldn't take quite so long to finish them off. Maybe not this year, but by sometime next year we may all be home again.

Andrew W Duncan, Jr.

Commanding Officer of LST 791, Lt. Andrew Duncan, wrote his memoirs of his experiences in the Pacific during World War II during his voyage from Saipan to San Francisco.

Foreword

This is written for my children and grandchildren, as a permanent memoir from the chronicle our years indict. It is of things which interest me—and I enjoy recording them—but my animating desire is that my children shall know me better. We see our parents through the distorting perspective of an age differential which at first seems immeasurable, and it is only after we have reached maturity that we may comprehend the extent to which our parents once responded to the matchless gifts of youth. Because I have had no experience in writing, I may use the simple third person in places. And as I have no talent, it is the events which will have to depict the man; but if through the means of this rough narrative my children are enabled to perceive even dimly the manner of man I was, it may deepen with a fuller mutual understanding their response to the boundless affection I feel for them.



Captain Andrew Duncan departs LST 791

Though some of the notes antedate the end of the war, the concept and preparation of the memoirs as such began when we were steaming eastward from Saipan in November 1945. I may be useful to set out the initial passage here, just as I wrote it at that time (*see box*):

Standing Orders—LST 791

The following statements of ship's policy are set out so that they may be completely clear and so that you will not have to trust to your memory concerning them. They will also serve the purpose of keeping the writer from carelessly changing the rules without notice in the middle of the game.

Duties of Officers

The writer regards the obligation of officers as being a high one, especially in combat work. The lives of many men are entrusted to our care, not because of any great virtue or skill of ours but because the pressure of war has made it necessary. We need not be bowed down by our responsibility, but let us never forget it.

Function of Ship

This is first and foremost a fighting ship. Keep this in mind when making decisions.

Department Heads

Department heads will have full authority in their departments. Every effort will be made to procure for them such personnel, material, and repairs and alterations as may seem desirable, with the opinion of the department head being accorded great weight in the determination of desirability. The head of the department will be fully responsible for his department's results. He should be familiar with the Navy

My little ones, there are days when the sky is very bright and very clear, so that instead of having a soft blue look it has a hot and shinier appearance. Such a sky you sometimes find near the equator.

When the massive single cumulus cloud the water and the air occasionally produce towers alone against the heavens you may see him for a very long way. The clouds on the horizon usually merge into a blur near the rim of the ocean, but on these very clear days the rim is a fine etched line and the lucid brightness of the great clouds runs undiminished until cut off by the water. Hence you may see the very top of one of the high white fellows standing stiffly at the limits of your visible world, and know that his base is many miles away, far below the line that marks your horizon. It is not your cloud, really; it is part of another traveler's sphere. It may cast its enormous glistening reflection across an empty sea, but even so you have the feeling that it is a part of that sea, whether empty or not. You see its head as you see the head of a great peak at sunset and, on a slow ship, will travel all night before seeing the port that will take you in. By chance, you are given a glimpse, but you are looking very far and into another of the little worlds through which man takes his way.

As I now course slowly eastward and out of the worlds which war wrought, there are some memories which stand alone against the western sky, up above the rim of transition, outlasting the minutiae which color the background of all recollection. In the morning I shall see these things no longer, and their memory may be vague as their image on a ruffled sea. There are things I shall never forget; but this is the last time that my human and fallible memory will see the details from the world over whose rim we now so slowly crawl. For some reason I cannot fully understand or explain, I feel impelled to set down those experiences that stand above the rest in clarity and meaning. You will be glad, my little ones, to know that I have no inclination to moralize; indeed, I have been too little given to reflection on or analysis of the incidents in which I have participated. Some of them have simply remained with exceptional distinctness and vigor in my memory, and if there is any reason for their tenacity it may be discovered in the telling.

Regulations and ship's orders defining his duties. All matters concerning personnel within his department will be handled through him.

Petty Officers

If given sufficient authority and responsibility, petty officers should be of great value. As long as they carry out their assignments competently, they should be supported in their dealings with those below them. Initiative and suggestions should be

encouraged. As with commissioned officers, a public reprimand or correction is not only unkind, but defeats its purpose by diminishing the stature of the person addressed.

Information Concerning Operations

Much information is given to a commanding officer with a specific admonition against immediate release. As soon as is consistent with security requirements, every officer will be advised in

detail concerning the ship's prospective operations. Only by full understanding of operations plans by every one concerned can they be properly carried out.

Mail, Food, Pay

These things are important morale factors. You will receive my full support in seeing that the handling of mail and pay is prompt and efficient; and in seeing that our food is good, varied, and plentiful.

Leave and Liberty

It won't be often, but when circumstances permit liberty or leave let us be as liberal as is consistent with the safety of the ship and the accomplishment of its function.

Rating of Men

While a man's overseas and combat duty naturally inclines one to leniency in considering his qualifications for a rate, the policy of the ship will be to require compliance with all effective requirements as a prerequisite to rating.

Quarterly Marks

Department heads will submit quarterly marks for their men to the Executive Officer, who will review them and submit them to the commanding officer with recommendations. The Executive Officer will try to see that the department heads follow a reasonably uniform system of marking.

Promises to Men

The writer will attempt to honor any promise made by any officer to any man, feeling that the confidence of the men in their officers is involved. Because of this, no officer should make a promise to a man if he feels any doubt at all about his authority or ability to carry it out. Among things sometimes promised to men and later regretted, are advancements, intra- or inter-

ship transfers, the privilege of striking, 48s, and leave.

Uniforms

Consistent with this type of duty, a good deal of latitude may be permitted in the matter of uniforms, with emphasis on cleanliness. There will be no latitude in the matter of cover for all parts of the body in action areas, for protection against flash burns and gas.

Hospitality

This duty is much more pleasant when we can see something of our friends from other ships from time to time. Consequently the friends of any ship's officer will be welcomed aboard at any time for meals and quarters or transportation, without prior reference to the Executive or Commanding Officer. The Stores

Officer and First Lieutenant should be given such notice of guests as they may desire.

Camp Bradford

"Just tell him it's because I'm an old fool," I said. "It's what they'll think anyhow. And if you want to expand on it you can add that I think the danger of someone being drowned here is greater than the offsetting pleasure of the swimmers."

I watched the messenger withdraw, maintaining a commendable effort to conceal the fact that the members of my prospective crew were not the only ones who would consider me an old fool. I hated the decision all the more because I felt that it should not have been thrust upon me. Either all of the formed crews should have been given swimming privileges or none of them should have. The hard experience of the preceding two years had taught me that the function of a Commanding Officer was to command, which inevitably involved hard and unpopular decisions. But there was no sense

in forcing such a decision as this on a man with a new crew, especially with a new crew most of whom were softened by long stretches of coddling shore duty. I could hear Johnson now, who would come to me to complain that the best work could not be expected of the men in the deck division if they didn't feel that the Prospective Commanding Officer was duly interested in their comfort and happiness. Johnson would say it was a matter of morale. Johnson's conception of morale had been acquired at a base where dissatisfaction with the prevailing order had occasionally been expressed in private communications to congressmen, to the resulting discomfiture of those responsible. There might be trouble with Johnson. The amphibious training command should never have assigned him to the deck division.

I thought moodily that I should have been less abrupt with the messenger. I also thought of the manner in which my own convictions about the dangers of the sea had been acquired. We were beached now at the mouth of the Potomac, and it had been only a few miles south, at Lynnhaven Roads, that the sudden squall had caught the landing boats and drowned three men. It was two years and many thousands of miles ago that I had inventoried the effects of the one whose body had floated to the surface on the third day. Even to one who had not been very green and very junior the incident would have been pitiful and impressive.

After that had followed the other casual accidents—drownings, shootings, falls, and all the other categories—which marked naval and military life. In time one grew to accept thorn as an inevitable result of the extraordinary risks of the business, but when it was possible to reduce the risks it was wasteful and shameful not to do it. No one who had inventoried the childish effects of a young apprentice seaman could have had anything but pity for the limited powers of

self-preservation which might be expected of such a one, or fail to exert the utmost effort to avoid a situation which might overtax those powers.

Far more formidable than all the other risks was the omnipresent menace of the sea itself. It was most deceptively dangerous when it was quiet and peaceful, for then it might either lash out in an unheralded storm and so trap the unwary or simply draw down into its fatal embrace the weak swimmer, the stunned, the drunken, the sick, or the careless. A growing familiarity with the sea's vastness made some of the men contemptuous of the fact that six feet of water could drown an able man and six inches a disabled one. Swimming was fine when properly supervised (as it would not be off training LSTs), but to turn a bunch of careless kids loose in the water was making an unprofitable bet against the law of averages.

There was a knock on the door. "Come in," I said, and looked around. "What can I do for you, Mr. Johnson?" It was not until the last evening that it happened. A messenger came in just as we were assembling in the wardroom for supper and spoke to me quietly. I walked out rapidly, followed by my Executive Officer, and in a moment one of the junior officers came in with the news that a man was missing from the swimming party at the bow of the outboard ship. The officers were to proceed with supper without the Commanding Officer.

these acts would be the ritual of investigation. If the officer in command of the training exercise had any confidence in the predictive value of past occurrences, he would not be too concerned about the consequences.

The officers in the wardroom dutifully proceeded with their suppers, and straggled out on deck. They congregated at the high, sloping bow and looked over at the place where the drowning had taken place. It

looked innocent enough in the fading light. According to the story going around, a treacherous tidal current had developed on the other side of the ship and the boy had been taken out by it.

Horton was standing by me at the rail. “I hope our men have learned something from this.”

I agreed, without indicating that I considered the hope well founded. Horton hesitated. He wanted to say something he thought indisputable, but was inhibited by the sound disinclination to do anything that could be considered flattering. Finally, his innate kindness and his confidence that he would not be misunderstood released the sentence. “They ought to be grateful.” I continued to look at the beach. “Gratitude has become one of the lost virtues.” I started to say that it involved humility, but checked myself, and the two of us watched in quiet understanding as the colors of the evening softened into night.

The Crew

I entered the Quonset hut and threw my hat on the bunk. “Here are our copies of the orders, I said to Horton. “There are some extras there.” I looked at the personnel jackets, which Horton had been sorting. “Did they give you all of them?” I asked. “All except two,” was the reply. “They’re going to send two seamen second over at eighteen hundred with their own orders and jackets. We can quarter them in the Queen area tonight.

“Well, plenty of things will come up tomorrow,” I said regretfully. “They always do at the last minute. But I think we’re about ready.”

“I’ll be glad to get the men out of this place,” Horton said with feeling.

“So will I.” I sat down on his footlocker. I paused, then spoke suddenly, as if making a reluctant confession—which it was well to

have over with as quickly as possible. “They’re a sorry lot.” I chose my words carefully. “Perhaps it’s difficult, without a fuller standard of comparison, to assay just how sorry they are. It’s not just that they lack spirit. Except in such a case as yours, or where a man has just come into the service, the fact that he hasn’t gone to sea by now shows how much spirit he has. Some of them are cowards. There are a percentage of them who will malingering before we get out of Pittsburgh, and some more of them will be in the hospital by the time we leave New Orleans.

“The fundamental trouble is that they don’t want to fight. There are a few men in the crowd, but by and large the crew will have to be made to fight, and to the extent that we can do it, made to want to fight. It can be done, and we can do it, but it will be hard.” I rose, and the sight of the personnel jackets inspired an afterthought. “This isn’t just my idea. I don’t have any figures on comparative discipline records, but look at the trails these men have left behind them: AOEI, AWOL, whiskey in possession, shirking duty, disobedience—the whole list.” I thought of the great brawl at Key West. “If there were just a few manly crimes recorded, I wouldn’t mind quite so much. Thank Heaven for the few men we have who do look as if they might be able to stand up and be counted. There are some quiet ones that we’ll hear from later on. It’s a good thing. We’ll need them.”

Horton listened to this discouraging evaluation in silence. He realized that it had been deliberately timed. Had it been given earlier, it might have prejudiced Horton, but on the eve of their departure for the shipyard, an opinion such as this had to be furnished to the Executive Officer as a clear warning of trouble to come.

“I wish we were going to sea tomorrow,” he said.

“I’ll say. In fact, I wish we had gone to sea the day we reported to this place. We’d all be better off.”

Okinawa

Okinawa may not be the Pearl of the Pacific, but it looks more desirable from a military standpoint than most of the places I’ve seen out here. It has a bunch of airfields, some good anchorages, and, of all things on Pacific islands, a little harbor. At this writing Naha, the harbor, is still in the hands of the Japs. But it is just a matter of time before it falls. When we start bombers working from Okinawa, the Japanese homefolks are going to have their problems. Of course, Okinawa will be bombed too, off and on, but we’ll probably hurt them worse than they hurt us.

On the way up to Okinawa, the weather was rough, rainy, and miserable. Troops were all over the ship like ants on a piece of fruitcake. We were able to feed them well, and most of them ate, but it was a pretty hard life for them. We ran from Ulithi, right in the trough of the sea, the 1200 miles to Okinawa. But a couple of days from Okinawa, the weather broke and we had good steaming.

D-day (L-day as it was called in this operation for no reason I know of) was a beautiful, calm, cloudless day. The night before, we steamed under a beautiful moon, which the Japanese appreciated more than we did. Their attacks were light and comparatively ineffective. Our rehearsal for this operation had been excellent, and on the morning of D-day we all did our stuff as planned.

The supporting naval bombardment far exceeded our fondest hopes and was quite the heaviest I have ever seen. However, the fact that there was no counter-fire was a great surprise to me. The landings were almost entirely unopposed. The stories of the ease by which the beach and adjacent areas were secured are quite true. Apparently, the

Japanese committed their entire force to a defense elsewhere, and did not man their positions where our people went in. They did have excellent prepared positions from which a small number of men could have fought effectively enough to have slowed our advance and made the securing of the beachhead costly.

The Japanese expended a great many planes in action against our naval forces—and in attacks on our ground troops—but their expenditures are so out of proportion to their results that I do not think their air power can do anything but decline as the unequal struggle goes on. They are losing far more planes than we are. Many of their planes are intercepted on the way to the place where they are going to do their bombing. It seems to me from the reports of specific engagements with which I am familiar, that at least half of the Japanese planes are being shot down before they get where they’re going. By the time they have run the gauntlet, the rest of the Japanese are disorganized and scattered, so that they are unable to launch a coordinated attack. Of course, it isn’t always like that, but I have never heard of any big air group getting past our fighter cover, maybe three or four at a time, but no more.

Once they do get in, the various weapons now carried by naval ships knock most of them down. Some are successful, but they certainly pay for their successes. The Germans got better results at less cost. We were all pleased when the Yamato was sunk. She was supposedly a very fine battleship. The Japanese have very little naval strength left.

By the way, the fine weather of D-day degenerated by about D plus 3, but by that time we had our people pretty well set-up ashore. The operation seemed to run off pretty well on the whole. It was organized intelligently, and considering its magnitude, the details of execution were adequately

handled. There was a thorough rehearsal that readied us for the mechanics of the operation and familiarized us with the basic problems involved. It was the easiest invasion I have ever been in, and if we can arrange for them to all be like this I will have few harsh words for the Pacific Theater.

Air Attacks at Sea

There was general air activity the night before the landings on Okinawa. We could keep fairly good track of the planes by the bogey reports that came in. There were several groups of ships within our horizon. Sometimes there was firing, sometimes the short bright glow that means a plane has crashed; more rarely there was the sustained flame of a ship on fire. The one attack on our own convoy was unsuccessful, but alerted the ship's company to the full possibilities of the situation.

An increase in aerial attacks is normally expected at dawn and sunset. For a short time the planes can see ships very clearly and it is most difficult to see the planes. Just before the sun came up, we were a little north of Cape Lampa Misaki, standing down toward the area where we would launch our LVTs. There was a lovely pink eastern sky, and our battleships were ranged in their bombardment line ready to commence their work.

Astern of us, some transports were under attack. A plane went down. Some more tracer fire began to arc up from a point below the horizon and swing deliberately across the sky, following a plane. A small float plane appeared on the port side of our convoy. He was going the same way we were. When he was just abeam of the center ships, two of them opened up. Nearly all the others followed suit. Accuracy was not exceptional, but there was enough volume to do the work. The plane's right wing went down with a gesture which seems almost animatedly to

say, "I'm done for." He burst into flames, crossed the forward port ships in the convoy, and crashed a little ahead and to starboard of the leading ship in our column. When he began to flame, our troops and ships' company cheered wildly, and the cheering rose to a crescendo when he crashed harmlessly.

They were almost dazed at our public-address system announcement: "You have just seen an American plane shot down. Now you understand why you were not allowed to fire."

The Special Attack Corps

You have probably read in magazines about the *Kamikaze*, or Special Attack Corps. This is a group of earnest young Nipponese who have as their primary ambition diving their planes into American ships. It seems quite a cold-blooded pursuit at first blush, and of course when you see these gentlemen in action, the lethal nature of their intentions is graphically impressed upon one.

Well, you know a lot of gossip goes around during a war even as during peace. One of the items is that a plane tried to crash one of our battleships and missed, crashing into the water close aboard. Surprising enough, the pilot lived a little while. He turned out to be fifteen years old. He had 60 hours of flying time. He had a flame resistant suit so if his plane caught fire he could pilot it to its objective anyway.

Now when I see one of these misguided citizens, I do not have an uncontrollable impulse to order the guns to hold their fire. Do not get the wrong idea. Nevertheless, I have never cheered when an enemy plane fell, and now when one of those chaps goes down, I can't help thinking of some of the 15 year old boys I know.

A plane itself, like a ship, seems pretty impersonal, but there may be in that Japanese plane a scared little undernourished 15-year-

old boy. He's all hopped up with a lot of stuff about the divinity of the Emperor, and of course he has already had a snappy funeral and send off, but I have an idea that when the tracers start reaching up toward him he's just a scared kid.

I saw one in the April 6th attack on the invasion forces at Okinawa; he made a bee-line for a hospital ship. He took plenty of punishment going in, but they just knocked him down a hundred or so yards short of the ship. Of course that doesn't stimulate any springs of compassion for the pilot. Surely though, if we could arrange to bring that lad up right he would be of some use to the world. He might not exactly be a second Pasteur or Lister, but at least he probably wouldn't be going around in an airplane trying to knock off a lot of guys who are already wounded and can't take very good care of themselves anyway.

From the little I have seen of the suicide planes, which is not enough to qualify me as an authority, I would say they are overrated as a menace. Of course, a certain number of them may get through to hit an objective, like bombs do, but their average doesn't seem very high. A modern ship can throw up an awful lot of lead.

The Reporters

The attached clipping provoked many guffaws when the April 16 *TIME* magazine turned up. The fellow who wrote this must have been hiding in the bilges of the landing boat, not looking out of it.

We were close enough to this incident to contribute some anti-aircraft fire, and consequently feel some confidence in our observations. It wasn't a twin bomber. He didn't pick out a transport; he tried to crash-land a hospital ship. (He just missed, too.) He didn't really throw one of his engines at the reporter, either. He didn't catch fire and start to roll over. He just put one wing down to

adjust his course a little. You have to do that when you turn.

What got all of us was that the incident was dramatic enough in the most factual telling. Why these characters overlay their accounts with a lot of fantasy is beyond me. If he had sent home a factual narrative of what actually happened, he would have had a good story. One of the little fantasies we indulge in from time to time is the idea of an invasion, the first wave of which would consist entirely of reporters and cameramen. As you can imagine, we embroider and embellish this concept with great pleasure.

We felt ever so badly about Ernie Pyle. He is the one reporter who we felt was one of us. It made me feel sort of *good* to know he was going to be at Okinawa. We found it out at Ulithi; he was there, too. Most of us took a very personal interest in him, and considered him a semi acquaintance. I suppose that is particularly true of those who had been in an operation with him. I think his stature will increase rather than diminish. Certainly he will be remembered with great affection by a lot of fighting men.

Things I'll Never Understand

When I was a young man and all fired up with intellectual curiosity, either I understood something that came into my sphere of activity or I belabored the subject—and myself—in an effort to find the answers. In those days I either did not know or would not admit that there were any questions too difficult for an answer.

But now that I am old and sage, I realize and confess that there are a good many things that will never be comprehended by anyone. We may guess, but not know. So when the war began, I opened up a special department in my mind entitled *Things I'll Never Understand*, feeling certain that my naval career would amplify my realization of what I know not. This device has been very

useful indeed. Many of my associates, envying my calm when the orders conflict, the signals make no sense, or a mild administrative muddle raises its head, have established similar devices to their profit.

One thing in particular I am convinced I know nothing about is why our enemies act the way they do. This is no great loss; the deficiency can be made up by a careful reading of Madeleine's history books, most of which will probably have been written by conscientious objectors. Or the *Atlantic Monthly* or even *Readers Digest* may favor us with a five-page button-up of the *Fascist Mind*.

Of course one gets a differing perspective through a peep-sight than when viewing the enemy from the summits of Radio City. The latter view is undoubtedly more objective and detached. In fact, it is so detached that it probably never heard of a couple of incidents that I am about to drag out of my intellectual skeleton closet. Read me the answer to this:

On D-day, the Japs apparently thought we were going to land on the southern part of the island, whereas we landed on the western beaches. They concentrated their defensive units in the south. This was a simple mistake. But within a thousand or so yards of our beaches were two of the best airfields in the Ryukyu chain; they were protected by many guns and other installations. These weren't manned. Even that, though incautious, is explicable. But when our people moved in, there was literally almost no one there. I heard there was one man on one airfield, a few on the other. Where were the maintenance personnel? They could have fought from the pillboxes there. They were not needed for the southern defense sector because they were not combat troops. The fields were under attack, but they were not unusable. Had we been delayed there, our air power would have been that much longer getting established. They say it was quite an odd feeling, to move in to those deserted

areas. (Since writing that I have learned more about how many Japanese were on the island, and their failure to defend the airfields is even more mystifying.)

Here is another odd one: On D plus 1 or D plus 2 the Japanese knew we had their airfields, but all the same a plane deliberately came into one. It was a single-engine fighter plane with plenty of gas and ammunition. He strafed an LVT, setting it on fire, circled the field, and calmly landed. Our people stopped firing and covered him. The pilot got out, put his head down, and started running toward nowhere in particular. He was shot. The next day a fighter plane came in, strafed a pillbox, and landed. The pilot ran and was shot. Nobody here seems able to figure that out. Were the pilots saki'd up? Were they indulging in the Japanese gesture of contempt accomplished by committing *hare kiri* on an enemy's doorstep? You guess; I just work here.

24 June 1945

Several times I have watched Japanese planes in the rays of searchlights. The first time, the character up in the sky just cruised along looking around. A twin engine bomber, he went right over the transport area with all the large caliber guns in the place blazing away at him, and when he got almost out of searchlight range obligingly turned around and came back. He was quite high, but within range. He took no evasive action at all. The shooting was pretty bad; he went home. As far as we know he never did drop any bombs. What impressed us was the way he just streamed along in a straight line. Any self-respecting German pilot would have been cavorting all over the place. Another Jap tried the same thing sometime later and took a slug. He put the nose right down so as to get where he was going in a hurry. About half way down there was an explosion and he shed a few pieces. The plane fell harmlessly into the water. If he had been aiming for

someone, I guess the explosion threw him off the target. But the question is, why don't they take evasive action?

Remember the Sunday you said you hoped I wasn't at Okinawa? Well, I was, but it was quiet on the whole. That day a lone Jap kept popping in and out of a cloud over the beach. Maybe he was sending a story home about us, maybe he was trying to make up his mind. He wasn't really inexplicable, but he was an odd number. He was knocked down without having a chance to explain his intentions.

For all these tidbits about the Japanese, I would rather fight them than the "Goimans." There has been a good deal of air activity, but they are expending an awful lot of planes, and of course they have many more naval targets in this theater. There is no use calling attention to Japanese deficiencies, but the Germans were more effective, plane for plane. When the war is over, we'll be glad to point out the Japanese mistakes.

The Suburbs of Okinawa

As you have undoubtedly gathered, there are a number of small islands near Okinawa, which seem characteristic of the Ryukyu chain. We have been lucky to see most of the ones we hold, in the course of doing a few odd jobs subsequent to the initial phase of the operation. Those we have seen are Ie Shima, Kerama Retto, Iheya, and Aguni.

Ie Shima lies off Motobu Peninsula, part of Okinawa. It is off the northwest coast. All of the above islands are in the East China Sea. It is best known for being the place where Ernie Pyle was killed. There were still a few snipers hanging around (none sniped at us). There's nothing distinctive about the place. Iheya is next, geographically. It is really quite pretty. There are smaller islands around it. Of course, you have seen newspaper charts of all of these. We took Iheya without opposition. There had been some Japanese there, but they apparently

considered defense impracticable and went to Okinawa in boats after the shooting began on Okinawa. Some of them probably got through.

There is much disease and malnutrition among the natives on Iheya. Aguni lies off to the west of the Hagushi area of Okinawa, where the original landings were made. It has a fairly nice cliff on one end, but is otherwise undistinguished. It has the customary reef around it. Kerama Retto is south and west of Haguishi. It provides quite the most striking scenery we have seen in the Pacific to date. It seems to be a group of sunken mountains, with their tops sticking out of the water. They are wooded and, as an intelligence report would say, "afford excellent concealment for a defending force." Mist hangs around the tops of the hills and the general impression is reminiscent of the Trossachs. On the largest island are between 600 and 800 well-organized Japanese. Two captured Japanese volunteered to go in and talk to them about surrender. They stopped at a native village at one end of the island and got a couple of ladies to accompany them. Upon arriving at Japanese HQ, the heads of all four were carefully detached and returned to the native village. So the word has been passed, as we say, that the garrison means to fight. We have since learned that they expect to be able to hold on until Nippon wins the war and comes back to relieve them. They think it's just a question of time. Some of the islands we hold have snipers. Those who go far from the beach alone have a good chance of not returning.

We saw a pretty little shrine on one island. It is mined; stay away.

The story about the children blowing themselves up—along with a few of our people—on one of the islands of Kerama Retto seems to be true. I thought it was very pitiful. The children on Okinawa were cute. However, I didn't try to take any back to the ship. There was a Jap poem in *TIME* about

The Men on USCG LST 791

the children on Kerama Retto. I guess the guy who told them whatever you tell children to make them do such things is a Japanese hero. What a bunch of bastards.

The following letter was presented to all hands by Captain Andrew Duncan and placed in their personnel jackets:

U.S.S. LST-791
Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.
4 July 1945

From: Commanding Officer
To:

1. Because memory is short and because recognition of your combat duty should be assured, this is written by a grateful commanding officer to serve as a permanent record of your participation in the Okinawa campaign. It will certify that as a member of the ship's company of LST 791 you carried United States Marines from Guadalcanal to Ulithi to Okinawa, participating in the major assault on 1 April 1945. It will remind you of the useful and varied load we carried through rough seas: LVTs, pontoon causeways, an LCT, gasoline, ammunition, field rations, and other odds and ends which serve the forces of invasion. This will establish the fact that you stayed at the beachhead throughout the period of 1 - 11 April 1945, defending your ship and cargo effectively against the attacks of the enemy and delivering the goods intact.

2. On your return to the Marianas, after an availability, the ship took on a full load of Army ammunition. With a small tug in tow you returned to Okinawa, arriving on 19 May. After unloading the ammunition and dispatching the tug, you performed varied duties at Okinawa, Ie Shima, Kerama Retto, Iheya, and Aguni, leaving the area on 22 June. This was the day Okinawa was declared secured.

3. The large number of Marines and other passengers carried to Okinawa taxed the ship's facilities and presented many problems. Your successful handling of these is affirmed by the enclosed letter from the Marine commanding officer, Lt. Colonel H. C. Woodhouse, Jr.

4. Your fine work in this campaign has made you and your ship a tempered weapon, ready for further use against the enemies of your country.

Passed by Naval Censor
(s) WBN
ANDREW DUNCAN, JR.
Lieutenant, USCGR

NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST BY RADIO.

27 July 1945

Miscellaneous Observations of an Army Engineer

One day an Army engineer was aboard for awhile. He had served in China for and had helped build some of the Chinese air bases. He said it was quite amazing what the Chinese had done in the way of building airstrips and roads by hand. They are just like ants, he had said. He had seen children building roads by carrying earth on large leaves. In time they get them built. Apparently the reason they don't all burn out from this labor is the fact that haste is not considered essential. There are frequent conferences for this and that; and meals, while not abundant, are frequent. The Chinese evidently take a few Jap prisoners. When one of these is marched by, all thousand of the human ants will rush over and shout insults quite bravely, returning to their labors in due time. Of course all this is hearsay, but the Chinese and their part in the war do sound interesting.

Even as the bulldozer is our engineers' favorite weapon, the steamroller is the Japanese's. They will try to take them anywhere and over the most difficult roads, with fair success. The earth they tamp down is carried by hand, by impressed labor.

When this engineer officer left China, he went to the Philippines. He says he ran into some guerillas at a place where the Japanese had been particularly brutal and they captured a Jap soldier. They made him eat his ears then cut his head off. The engineer got in late, but said he felt the guerillas had overdone themselves a bit.

Further History of Doctors as they Come and Go

Do you recall my telling you about Dr. Pritchett, who turned up in April after setting out in November? And that the day he turned up his orders came to return to the States upon being relieved? That was 17 April (the

orders were dated 12 May). Dr. Cluxton was ordered out to relieve him. Well, I didn't tell Dr. Pritchett for about a month, anticipating what actually happened, because he was supposed to start flight surgeons' school on 22 April or as soon thereafter as he could get back after being relieved, and I knew he would be disappointed. In May I told him, but cautioned him not to write his wife unless he wanted to take a chance on disappointing her. He wrote her anyway (he is only 24), and two days later we learned that Dr. Cluxton had hotfooted it to Washington and gotten his orders changed, a second McNulty. Of course, Dr. Pritchett was crushed, and didn't know what to tell his wife, either. So he stewed around at a terrific rate for two months, saying "What do you think I should tell my wife?" to anyone who would listen. About two weeks ago, he finally quit stalling and told her it was all a mistake and he wasn't coming home. But a relief was finally dug up for him, who arrived several days ago. We have packed the Doc off in a state of justifiable confusion.

We had a lot of fun out of Dr. Pritchett, because he once told Mr. Bohrer he (B.) had an abnormal startle reaction. A couple of days later, we were in Kerama Retto and got underway at first light to discharge some cargo. We had to cross a seaplane runway and at about six o'clock a twin-engine plane took off right astern of the ship, very low. The motors made a good deep roar. The Doc thought it was one of the Japanese coming aboard the hard way and got out of his bunk, rushed to the head, and flung himself on the deck, a bare and quivering mass. Mr. Bohrer came in to shave at that point, and as a consequence the subject of startle reactions was thoroughly discussed for several days to come. The new Doctor is named Wilson and is from Texas. He is quiet, a virtue in a shipmate, and any idiosyncrasies will be faithfully recorded for your amusement.

The Perils of the Sea (as the Marine Insurance Policies put it)

In default of mail I shall chronicle a few heavy weather incidents—which sound kind of dull but had their moments. How much the public is told about the details of carrying pontoon causeways is an indeterminate which will make me a little vague. But I suppose the numerous articles about them have informed you that they weigh 90 to 100 tons, cost the government \$200,000 apiece, and are of a size that is quite in keeping with their cost and weight.

Well, we lugged a couple of these cozy little items a good many thousand miles, but they and the weather didn't really get cantankerous until we stood out of Ulithi for Okinawa. It had been messy before, but not too bad.

The main thing an LST hates is a beam sea. She rolls so jerkily that cargo has to be constantly tended or it will come adrift. (LSTs have an 8-second roll.) We put out of Ulithi on 25 March into a nasty patch of weather and it was as bad or worse until the 31st, when it providentially broke. (That, by the way, is the third time in four invasions that the weather has turned good just before we went in.) It seemed there was a good chance that the beam sea we had on the 25th would hold, and it certainly did. We couldn't deviate far enough from our base course to get much relief.

Only a few of the ships had their pontoons as long as we, which was a good thing because metal fatigue was setting in on the securing gear. Every now and then a big sea would kick us hard and something would break. We had a detachment of Seabees aboard whose contributions to the invasion was the care and feeding of our pontoons. They knew their job, like most Seabees, and when something carried away they were right on the scene to weld it together again. That system worked all right when only one thing came apart at a time, but sometimes

more than one came apart and then we had to cross our fingers pretty fervently. Every now and then something would go overboard or be broken irreparably, and we were steadily losing ground. None of us had been able to get any spare securing gear, I guess because of the size of the operation. MacDougall, the Seabee officer, and I had talked about this and had decided that we would cut into parts of the ship that were nonessential if necessary but that we were going to keep the pontoons.

The 769 was next ahead of us and I was concerned about him. They had operated under my command at a time when I had taken four other LSTs on a little junket. We had been together for a couple of months and I suspected his situation was close. Bertini, the captain, was a good sailor, but I was afraid his pontoon might go in the drink some dark night right in my way. It must have been about the 29th, in the afternoon, that he pulled out hard and dropped back between the columns. The starboard columns saw what was happening and opened up to him go out into the sea and minimize the roll, but it was no use. We couldn't see it too well for the rain and mist, but we got the general idea. No one was hurt or lost overboard, though. One more was lost that day by another ship and one the next day.

Poor Bertini got back in station about sunset; about ten that night he turned on his breakdown lights and hauled out again. This time it was a crane, which had parted its securing chains and was charging about like Victor Hugo's cannon. To make it worse, it had ripped into some oil drums and there was no decent footing. Much to their credit, they were able to get it secured again. I heard his report on the radio and we certainly felt for him. About 0200 there was a sharp crash and we began to fear for ourselves. Several securing members had carried away simultaneously and the after-end of the pontoon causeway was hopping around with

each roll as though it was ready to continue the voyage alone. I told MacDougall to break out his welding gear and charged back up to the conn. The convoy commodore gave us permission to weld—so the Japanese, if they were looking, were treated to the weird spectacle of an LST wallowing around drunkenly and emitting about as much blue light as the Brooklyn Navy Yard. We welded and cut for a couple of hours and were very relieved when at the end of it the causeway seemed firmly with us once more. Essentially, we had simply welded the pontoon to the side of the ship, since most of the securing gear was gone.

The next day we continued to embellish a structure which is peculiar enough as originally designed. The weather continued to remind us of the North Atlantic and there was a fairly deep kicking sea. There were low traveling gray clouds with occasional rain, and you know how salty the water gets in that weather. But at least planes couldn't find us and it was rough for subs.

On D minus 1, the wind and sea died down, the sun shone, and life was good again. As usual, the fine weather raised our spirits greatly, and if anyone had seemed interested we would have been glad to carry the pontoons on to Tokyo.

I can see that I should have told you more about anyone I enjoy as much as Bertini. He is a little Italian, 32, and had his own 125-foot patrol boat out of San Pedro for a while. Those who have operated on small boats always have a feeling for their ships that big-ship men lack. When we meet we always spend a lot of time talking about our ships. Bertini always starts off pessimistically. He waves his hands, shrugs his shoulders, screws up his little dark face. Things are very bad. "And then guess what happened?" he will say, commencing a still more trying incident in the existence of the 769. "You wouldn't believe it" usually ushers in some tale which sounds as though it could only

end in the loss of the ship with all hands. About this time somebody usually clubs him on the back and says "Where did she go down, Bert?" So he grins wryly and says things have come out pretty well, all things considered.

The Seabees are very fine. I think they are the most competent workmen I have seen during the war. They are renowned for their ingenuity and are very industrious. They are masters at handling heavy weights. MacDougall and his crowd stayed at Okinawa about six weeks, then were relieved.

Engineers' Items

Some of the large ammunition ships that carried the stuff up to Okinawa originally had unsuccessful encounters with the *Kamikaze*, so some LSTs were thrown in as pinch-hitters. We were among those lucky to be so nominated, and picked up 1183 tons of plain and fancy explosives at Guam. We also got three tons of mail. Returning to Saipan, we took a small tug in tow (they threw it in for nothing) and set out. There were two other LSTs and a few harebrained escorts.

Contrary to what may be the popular view, ammunition is good cargo. They always stow it well so that it does not shift; it is clean, and it furnishes none of the small incidental problems that vehicles or general cargo present. Also, when you carry ammunition you don't carry personnel. Carrying personnel is our job, but when we legitimately get out of it we don't mind. Another thing is that ammunition is good and heavy and sets the hull well down in the water, making the ship ride well. We had carried ammo from Mobile to Pearl and were familiar with it. However, people who do not believe in predestination are apt to feel that such cargo causes a temporary alteration of one's life expectancy, and sometimes other ships have a tendency to avoid you if you have the red flag flying. One's normal care in

handling the ship is increased by the inadvisability of bumping anything very hard. Most ammo is fairly inert, but in a mixed ammo cargo there is so much fused stuff that accidents are possible.

Since you (my uncle) are accustomed to the handling of explosives, I thought you might be interested in the foregoing. It also gives a little background to an accident that took place while we were unloading.

Two of the great weapons of this war are the pontoon and the bulldozer, and I often wish you could see them as they are used in the forward areas. The beaches at Hagushi were not the best in the world and it was necessary to use pontoon causeways for handling major loads in quantity. Here is how they do it. The coral reef extends some distance, say about 400 or 500 yards. On the reef there is between zero and about seven feet of water, depending on the state of the tide and the indentations on the reef. In many places the reef is above water at low tide. With dump trucks and bulldozers they push a fill out along the highest convenient portion of the reef, using oil drums filled with dirt to bulwark the sides. The top of this improvised road is above high tide. Although the road has to be repaired from time to time, it does not usually erode too fast because the reef breaks up the big seas, when there are any. However, as the road goes out, it meets stronger opposition from the sea, and ultimately it is necessary to use pontoon causeways. These are floated into place at high tide and anchored, sometimes after preparatory demolition work on the reef. Pontoon sections may be wholly or partially flooded for stability, depending on the depth of the reef. The inshore one was completely flooded, I believe, and the middle one was partially or completely flooded. They were good and stable. The out-shore pontoon was free to move at high tide, and though grounded at the inshore end, had play. Good

many chains secured it to the middle pontoon.

We were ordered in there one night to unload. We beached, or rather moored, our bow to the pontoon. We had 500 feet of stern anchor cable out and had lines to the two seaward pontoons. In addition, we had chained the bow ramp to the seaward causeway because an appliance, designed to hold it steady, had been torn off by a previous customer. On the second day of the unloading, a strong wind and sea came up from about south-southwest. We put two more chains on the bow ramp, doubled our lines, and finally put a boat on the port side to push and thus help hold her still. The ammunition was badly needed, but the wind and sea increased so that under normal conditions we would have called it off. However, I asked for discretion to take any steps that might become necessary. Upon getting it (including permission to secure unloading, if desired), I felt fortified.

Just about midnight, I was standing at the bow watching our massive loose linkage shudder as each wave came in, when the messenger on watch brought a message that a cold front with high winds was expected at 0400. We stood there chewing over that item, and in about 10 minutes the conn called to say our heading was slowly diminishing. (They had orders to advise of any change of as much as one degree.) The boat was ordered to stop pushing; just then, with a great whoop the cold front arrived.

I had started up to the conn as soon as the reverse swing started, but the initial gust was so hard that by the time I got up there—and before the boat could check the swing—we had snapped the ramp-to-pontoon chains, carried away the bits on the second pontoon, and except for one or two sets of chains, the outboard pontoon was free of the middle one. As a very heavy rain began, we closed the bow, heaved-in on the stern anchor, cast off from the pontoon, used the boat to hold our

head up, and when clear dropped the bow anchor. We sat between the two anchors, with a good strain on each, until the good old Seabees had induced their errant pontoon to quiet down. The weather became calmer in about an hour and the Seabees were able to start lacing the pontoons together again. They were ready by dawn, so we reestablished connection and proceeded with the war.

11 Sept 1945

Manila

My observation of Manila was of limited scope and duration, but some things stood out clearly.

Like many large cities, Manila is composed of several smaller cities, all contiguous but all distinguishable. The demarcations, though slightly blurred by the damage, are clearer than in many cities. The Chinese section is very distinctive; the poor suburbs approach in places the wretched hovels of the rural sections. The metropolitan section contains some very substantial old structures, including the inevitable cathedrals, which may be relics of the Spanish era. There is an old-fashioned business district with office buildings of the type built in the early twenties—in the midst of less pretentious structures, such as grocery stores. It is a sort of cross between Mobile, Market Street, and parts of Oran.

The entrepreneurs' proprietary interest in the sidewalk, one of the more valuable intangible assets of any business conducted by those of Latin blood or background, is clearly manifested in this section. Then there is the part of town which was planned, and which as a consequence has broad streets, traffic circles, large public buildings, and vacant places where further luster was intended for the Pearl of the Orient.

A few buildings are relatively intact, but most of them gutted, dynamited, or at least shot-up. In some of the poorer sections,

damage was haphazard and limited, but good many of the better buildings were ruined. The overall destruction is not comparable to that of a city that has been carefully bombed and subjected to artillery attack, such as Bizerte. But it is enough, and it was the result of vandalism, not war.

The People We Took to Tokyo

In June 1943, when I was getting ready for an excursion to Sicily and people at a safe distance were still talking about the soft underbelly of Europe, the 13g 3rd Engineers arrived in England. To give you an idea of how the service was mushrooming in those days, it was the 36th Engineers we took to Licata; they had come to Africa with the great old 3rd Division. So the 13g 3rd were probably pretty green when they got to England.

During the next year, they must have learned a great deal, because when they landed in Normandy on the greatest D-day of the war, they evidently gave a pretty good account of themselves. Then they followed General Patton's wild riding 3rd Army right across Europe. They worked hard, were in five major battles, and saw the whole show.

In July of this year, they went to Marseilles and embarked for Manila. The only pause was at the Panama Canal, where they awaited their turn like every one does. In August they reached Manila, which is not a garden spot. Early the next month they came aboard us to go to Tokyo.

Some of them became eligible for point discharge while we were en route. Maybe they will get home in a few months. Their spirit is good. Except for a little routine beefing, they do not crab. They did not expect the war to be a picnic, and it isn't. They are good soldiers; we were proud to have them aboard and we told them so.

Yokohama

Tokyo Bay is one of the finest bays in the world and Yokohama is a great industrial

port that takes full advantage of its position on the bay. It is protected by two extensive breakwaters and has good dock space. Inlets enlarge the alongside area and it is apparent from the soundings we were getting that the bottom has been dredged out to a greater depth than that shown on the charts. Hammerhead cranes and railway facilities enable bulky lifts to be handled without great difficulty. Extensive industrial plants of all sorts line the waterfront just back of the docks. Behind the industrial section was apparently the business and residential section.

Most of the industrial plants are standing. Some are burned out, some are slightly damaged, and some untouched. Damage here was disappointing. But the business and residential section was practically demolished. Some isolated buildings stood—a few shells, and the rest a flattened waste. The rubble was of a flimsy light type and in many places the construction must have been of such a type that it was almost all consumed by fire. What remained of their architecture was undistinguished by any remarkable features. It was an imitation of conventional European and American including some of the less desirable modernistic.

Tokyo

The LST 791 had the distinction of being the first ship larger than a minesweeper to enter Tokyo Harbor after the peace. And it will probably continue to be the only LST ever to enter.

Tokyo Harbor is at the head of Tokyo Bay, several miles above Yokohama. Entry is made by a fairly narrow channel. The harbor itself is long and wide enough for easy maneuvering. Facilities are good, but not as extensively developed as Yokohama.

We went in one afternoon and arrived inside just as the Army discovered that the concrete ramp they had selected for us had

no egress for the mechanized equipment we carried. So we tied up to a mooring buoy and Mr. Horton, Major Graddison, and I went ashore for a reconnaissance. We proceeded quite far up the river, but there was no suitable place to discharge the load. The only result of that search and a similar one the next morning was some good sight-seeing. We ultimately had to go back to Yokohama and discharge our cargo there, though the Army would have preferred Tokyo, had a suitable beach been found. The other LSTs booked for Tokyo did not even enter the harbor and all LST unloading scheduled for Tokyo was transferred to Yokohama.

Just as we were about to moor in the harbor, having managed the channel by constant use of the sounding lead and a liberal application of luck, what should come puffing up but a Japanese pilot boat and an important-looking pilot. The Jacob's Ladder was over the side for the use of the beach master, so it was hauled up just as the pilot hove alongside. Although I was unable to see him from the conn, it is reported that he was suffering great loss of face and was requesting that the ladder be lowered. It was not, and I fear it is barely possible that some unruly members of the crew may have been unnecessarily emphatic in advising the pilot that, having entered the harbor without his assistance, we would be able to tie up to the buoy unaided.

We much regretted that we were unable to go into the interior of the city, which, like that of Yokohama, was reported to have been largely destroyed. Some portions of the business and shopping sections were reported to be in good condition, though, and I would like to have gotten some gifts. Near the waterfront there was little destruction. A few warehouses had been burned. Most of the people had been moved away from the waterfront, and the impression was almost that of a deserted city. A few people were fishing from the docks. No chimneys were

smoking, no vehicles were visible. There were signs of looting and a few Japanese were seen quietly engaging in this time-honored practice.

When we went up the river, we passed under a fine-looking, 3-span cantilever bridge with white stone supports. The middle span was navigational; a drawbridge with the cantilever under the road way, bisected, rather than hinged at only one end. As it was dusk, we felt lucky not to get a fishhook in the eye from the anglers above, if nothing worse.

A ferry passing ahead of us showed that there was still life in the somnolent city; it was crowded and reminded us a little of—well, there is a ferry in Dartmouth like it, but English would resent the likeness. The occasion gave rise to much mutual rubbernecking. We were in an LCVP, which I'll grant is odd-looking anyway, and it must have been the first American boat to come above the bridge. A number of Japanese waved, but we maintained a glum and conquering impassivity.

From the sea, most cities look alike in so many respects that the differences are easier to remark than the similarities. And now that I think of the appearance of the Tokyo waterfront, realize that most of the notable details are so purely nautical as to be of little significance to one who has not spent a good deal of time looking at cities waterfront-first. However, one thing that had a fairly distinct character was a poor part of the city where it impinged on the river. It was crowded, as all poor parts are, but worse, and even in the soft light of evening there was something evil and diseased about the flimsy mass. The stilted structures tottering above the water made me think of a glacier, as if the sinister things evolving there were from time to time cast out into the world.

The Bronze Buddha of Kamakura

The Bronze Buddha of Kamakura is easily the most impressive single thing I have viewed in Japan. Four little photographs were purchased at the site. I am completely unable to identify the objects in the three small photographs not of the Buddha. Though I did not remain long in silent communion with this bronze idol, I considered the interview very enlightening. The idol spends his time in passive contemplation of those who are energetic and curious enough to come and gaze at him. Since he keeps his great big mouth permanently shut, his reputation as a prophet is never diminished by a mistake and no one ever goes away disappointed. At the gates to the grounds, the following sign appears: "Stranger, whosoever be thy gods or whatsoever be thy creed, remember as you enter here that the ground you tread has been hallowed by the worship of the Ages."

The Buddha was cast in sections (the seams are horizontal and just visible in the photographs.) A temple was erected around it many years ago, but a tidal wave has since destroyed the temple and is said to have moved the statue 30 feet.

Fafa's Visit

Draw up your high chairs, my frowsy headed little darlings, and Fafa will tell you how he happened to visit a Japanese household. The facts are rather involved, and if you can follow them you will be doing better than Fafa will do when he is as old as the square of your combined ages; but hang on to your Jell-O cups and away we'll go.

In the first place, Fafa is a well known sucker for kiddies. This even applies to the Japanese kiddies, if they give Fafa half a break, even though the old boy was earnestly trying to score on the Japanese just a few months back.

Well, I was standing in this little shop in Hakkadate one morning, scowling angrily at other customers who came in leaving the door open to the wintry blast, when who should come tripping in on their tiny geta but two of the cutest little girls in the Japanese Empire. And they were just the ages of you, Mammy Pie, and you, my darling little Weezie what doesn't even know her own Fafa. Now, I am not a great fraternizer with the Japanese, for reasons of no interest to you innocents, but there is no evil in children, and certainly these were as appealing as any you would see anywhere. For one thing, they were clean. For another, they were exceptionally well dressed. They were pretty, too; I am beginning to see the differences in Jap facial types. The two little doll-like figures stood there quietly, quite plainly abashed by thus having blundered into the presence of an American soldier. This was unusual; most Japanese children are very forward. Also, all Japanese children's noses run. All but these two noses.

In Fafa's complete beguilement, he kneeled and addressed the children in what he always (and always erroneously) hopes will prove to be a universal language. Why he clings to this oft-shattered illusion is not clear, but you may as well understand it now because if in later life if you ever travel with the old boy it may be a source of embarrassment. You will want to learn when to start sidling away and leaving the old codger to his own peculiar methods.

However, the smiles, grimaces, and soft tones in which I expressed myself served as a tenuous bridge over the linguistic gulf. From the interested and giggling chirp they exchanged, it was evident that they appraised me as a harmless and friendly fool who regretted that he could speak naught but gibberish.

Their approbation so bewitched me that I made a great sacrifice. From a pocket (this process was watched with fascination) I

dragged a box of candy, my intended lunch, and bestowed a piece upon each of my little friends. They did not grab.

At this point the proprietor, who had emerged as the father during my harebrained conversation with the animated dolls, addressed himself to them. In response, the children turned toward me, uttered a few words, and bowed. I uttered a few words, bowed, and we all giggled cheerily. They went behind the counter and presently emerged. At the door they turned, said a passable imitation of "Good-bye" and bowed. I glowed and beamed with appreciation, said "Good-bye" and bowed as they rattled away, hand-in-hand.

Later on in the day, I was back in the shop and wanted to have something changed. The proprietor by the use of signs indicated that I was to accompany him. This I did, I knew not where. He had only one leg, so our progress was slow. We turned up a narrow street and who should come laughing down it but my two little friends. They had a package for their father, and then I realized for the first time that instead of taking me to another shop where part of the work was farmed out, he was taking me home. Presumably, Uncle Steve was working away at one of Japan's celebrated home industries.

My prospective host insisted that I come along, because he wanted to make sure everything was all right while we were still in Uncle Steve's neighborhood (I guess). So I consented and we walked along to an extremely unprepossessing front. Mine host preceded me by a few steps (the kiddies had already preceded him) and bade me welcome. I paused at the raised platform, which is just inside the entrance to Japanese houses, and members of the family were presented. The children had heralded my arrival well, and I was, it seemed to me, being received as a foreign devil who had a distinctly better side. Though I must say to

the great credit of the occupation forces that there is very little fear of us.

There at the threshold, a Japanese Social Moment had obviously arrived. I confess that I stalled a bit and smiled a bit longer than necessary to see what they would do. They were Spartan, and did nothing, but it seemed to me obvious as they looked at me that they were thinking “Will this character have enough sense to take off his shoes?” As I sat down and removed them, what I construed as a restrained sigh of relief was barely audible. When we left this spot, the man of the house quickly bent over and reversed my shoes so that they pointed outward. I later learned that this was a mark of respect, a courtesy.

I see it is getting late, my angels. More anon.

More Concerning Fafa's Visit

At the threshold with the kiddies had been two middle-aged women, apparently the mother and Uncle Steve's wife. We proceeded inside; my host, having discarded his crutch, hopped along much remindful of a rooster, and myself following after him. In the second inner room was an elderly woman kneeling by a brazier and apparently whipping up a little tea for lunch. We bowed at each other.

The Japanese, by the way, are very practiced bowers. They can bow very gracefully from a sitting, kneeling, or squatting position. I tried this in my cabin one day (privately), succeeding only in producing an ungracious wrinkle in my ever-thickening mid-portion.

I could understand the old lady's interest in the brazier. It was the only visible source of heat. When it gets colder, the Japanese simply put on more clothes. The effect must be quite ponderous in sub-zero weather. The braziers burn charcoal or coke. From a heat-producing standpoint they are inefficient; the radiating surface is very small.

We proceeded up a wide flight of steep wooden stairs and I noticed with interest that—arranged in tasteful graceful garlands above the stairs—were hanging strings of dried small squid, a staple article of diet. And the next time, my pampered ones, I hear so much as a squeak out of either of you about your spinachÖ.

At the top of the stairs was a passageway or narrow hail with living apartments on each side. We stopped at the second on the right and my host opened a flimsy door. He ushered me in and I preceded him as he apparently desired.

There in this little room, sitting with his back to me (at a table not over six inches high) was—who do you think? Not Hirohito's white horse, not the Bronze Buddha of Kamakura, but Uncle Steve himself. He did not look up from his work, and merely uttered a few words. Our one-legged friend spoke with a rising inflection and Uncle Steve turned his head. Well, he was funny, my sweet ones, and very surprised indeed. Uncle Steve must have been the retiring type and it gave him quite a start to have his immaculate little workshop thus violated. However, he grinned nervously and I felt that we were at least potentially *en rapport*, as your Cousin Ellen is fond of saying.

The work done had been satisfactory, and after a brief sojourn I departed. The family, including Grandmother, was mustered to bid me farewell, and the lady of the house presented me with two pears. After demurring briefly, which is said to be proper, I stuffed the pears into the pockets of my parka and bowed. After putting on my shoes, I bowed again. The smaller of my two little charmers made the cutest bow I have ever seen, and I more than ever regretted my lack of the gift of tongues.

As I departed, I bore away the most wonderful idea, Why not let the children of

the world act as its ambassadors, and keep the old people at home where they can't do too much harm? For at the present time it is not the meek that inherit the earth, but the children. Certainly they are the only ones who deserve it.

Captain Duffield

On our last run to Japan, we carried a very nice guy named Captain Duffield, who had a fine artillery outfit that had fought on Saipan, Leyte, and Okinawa. The details of this story may be a little hazy, but in essence it is as he told it to me several weeks ago.

A lucky Jap shell hit the Battery's ammunition dump on Okinawa and a first-rate series of explosions began. One of Captain Duffield's men saw that fire had reached his pup tent and crawled out from cover to get a picture in the pup tent before it was destroyed. (We are running fast and vibrating badly, hence the wavy writing.) An explosion at this point caught the lad with a shell fragment in the leg. He was sent back to a field hospital and from there, Captain Duffield learned that he had been sent to a hospital ship.

That was toward the end of the campaign. Several weeks later, when things quieted down, Captain Duffield got a formal notification that Coker (that was the man's name) had died. Normally, he would have written Coker's next of kin. But he didn't believe Coker was dead.

Captain Duffield fills the average man's conception of a Texan. He is very large, speaks softly and slowly, and is courteous, thoughtful, and calm. He is a fine friend and the fact that he has eliminated several Japanese personally disinclines me to select him as a desirable enemy. He is a reasonable and somewhat reflective man, and for this reason is hard to sway when his mind is made up.

His mind was made up that Coker had not died. "Hell," he told me, "He might have

lost the leg but it just didn't stand to reason that the man would die." He certainly wasn't going to disturb Coker's family by telling them Coker was dead. It just didn't stand to reason.

Well, it was his duty to write a letter. People were beginning to make a fuss about it. So he doubled himself up at the hinges and got into a jeep and went to Regimental Headquarters. They said the man was dead all right. The War Department had sent his family a telegram. Captain Duffield should write.

So he reflected upon the matter and went to the Graves Registration Service. They had Coker, all right—brought ashore from the hospital ship with another man. The records showed they were buried together, in adjoining graves, 10 days or two weeks before. Had he written Coker's family?

Captain Duffield considered the matter anew and returned to Regimental Headquarters. An order for exhumation was what he wanted. Of course it was pointed out to him that he was taking up a lot of everybody's time, including his own, and that a letter should be written to Coker's family. He patiently and in his soft voice averred that it just didn't stand to reason that Coker had died. So they gave him the order.

The little party was assembled for the mournful task, and two of the man's closest associates went along for identification. An annoyed representative of the Graves Registration Service located the grave, and the digging commenced. At about the right depth the spades touched something solid and uncovered a blanket. The Chaplain drew nearer and the exhumation proceeded. The blanket was uncovered. Carefully it was folded back. There was Coker's leg.

Captain Duffield then considered it appropriate to write a letter to Coker's family. He apologized for any mental anguish or distress the War Department's telegram had caused. He said it didn't stand

to reason Coker could have died. But he was sorry about the leg. The family wasn't worried, though. Coker had been flown back to the States and was sent home for convalescence. He had opened the telegram.

Kossol Passage

This is merely a shallow place in the ocean, slightly protected by a reef. We have a couple of small islands in the Palau group, but the biggest, Babelthaup, is still held by the Japanese. Kossol Passage is just north of that. So: Looks crazy, doesn't it? Our planes bomb and strafe the big island from time to time. It's very leisurely. The Japanese can't seem to get planes in to their field there. We have one or more fields on the little islands. We lie too far offshore to be shot at. My chart is oversimplified. The *NEWSWEEK* account of all this is more intelligent, but may not be right at hand. Out here you get used to having Japanese all around on bypassed island bases. Wotje, Yap, Babelthaup, Bougainville, some of the Philippine islands—all of these have Japanese on them. They are still ready to fight, too. So we just go by and don't get too close. I have an idea that for a good many years people will be just going by some of these islands. That would suit me all right. Many have no value even now. When the Empire is gone, they will be no menace at all.

Leyte

Of all the places I have entered as either a liberator, conqueror, or camp-follower, Tacloban, Leyte, seemed to me the least desirable. It would be going pretty far to say it was dirtier than Porto Empedocle, a Sicilian town which I once located at night by the strong smell brought by an offshore breeze. And the people, while lacking in charm, have the sort of eyes that make you want to get back to the ship before sunset. There was mud, but there can be mud anywhere if it rains. I guess it's just that with all the vice and decadence of the south

European countries and their African offshoots, they have some remaining vestiges of the great civilizations that once flourished there. And they have some of the strength that has made the European war such a hard and brutal one. Luzon may be different. Certainly in its day Manila must have been quite a city. But Tacloban is a primitive, colorless, flaccid, squalid non sequitur. It's really a hole.

Leyte is quite lush, and the terrain is hilly. There are flats near the sea, but the land in that and the adjoining islands is pretty rough. The climate is apparently good. Rural dwellings are very grubby.

Guadalcanal

So much fighting, both naval and land, went on around Guadalcanal that you heard a lot about it. We went in there in August of 1942, with light naval forces and too few Marines, but it was all we had. The Japanese navy was strong and plentiful. We avoided a decisive action, and the Japanese, at the end of their extended supply lines, apparently did not feel like forcing one. But they sank plenty of our ships in that area, and by making the most of what we had, we sank plenty of theirs. Because there are so many sunken ships in the area between Guadalcanal and Tulagi, it is called Iron Bottom Sound. Some of the pilots say there is a Jap carrier on the bottom there and that you can see planes sitting on her flight deck when the sea is smooth. But that may be just pilot's talk.

The islands along the sides of New Georgia Sound, now called the Slot, are the New Georgia Group, the Russells, Vella Lavella, Bougainville, Santa Isabel, and maybe other groups, though I believe they are the major ones.

At first, we held only part of Guadalcanal. The Japanese had the rest. They would send reinforcements down the Slot. There was much air and sub activity, as well

as surface engagements. Do you remember when three of our cruisers were lost there? They were at anchor near Guadalcanal. The Japanese came in and apparently were undetected because of Savo Island, the little island out by itself. They came into the clear at point-blank range, it is said. The result is referred to by some as the battle of the sitting ducks.

You hear a lot about the steamy jungles of Guadalcanal. The rainfall there is the heaviest I ever saw. When it rains, it rains hard then clears up for a while, but it isn't especially steamy aboard ship. Perhaps ashore it is. I was ashore very little. The vegetation is dense, the terrain rugged. It is bad fighting country. Japanese have been cleaned out of most of the Solomons, but there are still some on Bougainville. The Australians are fighting them there. The Japanese are reported by learned and distant commentators to be withering on the vine. According to the Australians, "They take a bloody lot of withering."

Eniwetok

There are many lagoons in the Pacific, and Eniwetok seems to be fairly typical. You have heard of peaceful lagoons. So have I, but I haven't seen one yet—maybe in another season. But in January, when we were there for nearly a week, it was almost constantly rough. The trade winds blow with no hindrance across the vast spaces of the Pacific and there is little daily change in their direction or intensity. A lagoon is merely a shallow place in the ocean, bordered in places by a narrow island amounting to nothing more than a glorified sandbar.

On the largest island we usually would put an airfield, or airstrip. In some places there are practically no facilities ashore—everything is afloat. Supply ships, repair ships, oilers—even water ships—take care of our needs. This ship has not been alongside a

dock for well over three months—not since leaving Pearl.

At first sight, Eniwetok scarcely seemed worth bothering with, let alone fighting for. But it is useful as an anchorage. It is large, and offers a little shelter for afloat maintenance and supply, which could not be handled underway in the open sea. The airstrip is useful.

Kwajelein seemed much the same. We went close by there—but did not stop.

Lagoons

The islands of the characteristic Central Pacific lagoon seem low, seldom rising more than a few feet above sea level. The unfortunate individuals who are stationed on these islands are also low. It is a monotonous existence. One may swim, or walk around the island and gather coconuts and seashells, or drink a few cool ones at the officers' club, but facilities are not elaborate. There are usually movies, but in all my time overseas I have never seen but one good movie or heard of but one good one being shown. Most of them are old grade B or C movies. (I have seen two movies since October—the one good one was "Random Harvest," which I saw on a transport at Oran.) So much for lagoons. They are scrub islands with a hole in the middle.

Saipan

Saipan is not an atoll, but a real island. There are coral reefs around it but it sticks right up above the water and bears trees which are not palm trees and in general looks like a self-respecting piece of land. There is no more sand than you would find on any beach. After seeing many atolls in the course of some months it is significant to report that you can't look right across Saipan to the sea on the other side. We have moved in and enlarged the air fields greatly, as well as constructing roads and improving the harbor facilities. It still isn't what a civilized sailor would call a harbor, but at least it is a place

where you can lie in the lee of the land if the wind blows from the right direction. If it blows from the wrong direction you get the hook up to prevent being set on shore.

There are still some Japanese wandering about the island and they sometimes take a potshot at anyone foolish enough to go up into the hills. But the last time I heard a rumor concerning the subject it seemed that there was a big roundup on and there was considerable whacking of shrubbery to get the Nips out of their cover. We were at Saipan about two weeks, then moved down to Guam for a few days.

Guam

Little Pearl, as the more erudite call it, has asphalt roads with signs such as "GUAM," like in the States. A cultural note indicating the degree to which civilization has pushed back the jungle is the fact that one of Guam's hills is called Flush-toilet Hill, this area having the only flush toilets west of Pearl.

Guam is the scene of much activity. There is sufficient rank around so that there are many regulations. The result is that Saipan is much preferred. But both places are pretty quiet and good for seeing a lot of your friends. Phil Pelts, Jimmy Mulligan, and Bill

Cain were at Saipan. Don Taylor, Frank Canker, and Al Brodtkin were at Guam. Barry Bingham was at Ulithi when we were in Guam (29 June). Dave McCandless apparently left Saipan just before I got a chance to see him.

There are some *Chamarros* on Guam and Saipan. There is a story that these ladies have what are sometimes termed "loose" ways. Personally, I see no reason for criticizing friendship in an area where there hasn't been much of it lately. However, even a young and ignorant Marine would have to be out here quite a long time before he would be attracted by a Chamorro charmer. Or so I would think.

Japanese are still prodded out of the Guamanian hinterland from time to time. They apparently have pretty good intelligence there. It is said that within two hours after a certain ship got to Guam Tokyo Rose broadcast it was there and charitably promised to bomb it. I was in Guam when that happened; it seems to be accepted as true. But they didn't bomb it. Rota, between Guam and Saipan, is still held by the Japanese. Our bombers use it for practice work. What a job—being a practice target. "Hold still, please."

Closing Remarks

LST 791 Miscellaneous Statistics—*Reed Adams*

The longest straight course we ever steered was 1500 miles. The old girl has made over a million gallons of fresh water. We took on fresh water at Samar last week, the first time we have received any since 10 May.

We have been out of dry dock over a year. (She had to be hauled out when we got down the river. Water was low and the propellers were bent.)

By the time we get back from Hokkaido, I shall have spent every night on the ship for a year, and during that year will have had four meals ashore (one at San Diego, one at Guam, two at Pearl).

We have not gone alongside a dock in 1945. And oddly enough I have not felt cooped up, because a clean, snug ship is so much more desirable than most of the places ashore out here.

Here is a list of the seas I have been in, and right now I hope the list won't get any longer: North, Caribbean, Mediterranean,

Tyrrhenian, Irish, Philippine, Bismarck, Solomons, Coral, East China, Mindanao, Camotes, Sulu, South China, and Japan.



LST 791 and the Golden Gate Bridge with Jim Bradford and Adams as OD



LST 791 and the Golden Gate Bridge

Reed—After the War

Reed and Mackie Adams live in Pleasanton, California.

After turning the LST 791 over to the Navy in San Francisco Bay on March 15, 1946, I was transferred to Government Island, Alameda, California for separation from active duty and transfer to the Coast Guard Reserve.

My separation was postponed one day, to return to the 791 to write letters explaining one missing .45 caliber pistol. I have often wondered who took it home.

I secured a California real estate license and embarked on a career in real estate in San Francisco. I sold the very first home in San Francisco using a GI loan. I retrieved my string bass and worked various jobs in San Francisco with the Paul Law, Jack Martens, Dick Dildine, and Jack Fisher orchestras. I also had the thrill of playing one concert with the San Francisco Symphony.

I really got lucky in 1948 when I met and married Mackie Craig. In 1950 we were blessed with the arrival of our son Craig, who resides nearby in Castro Valley with his wife Jeanette.

1949 presented an opportunity to return to teaching in Oakland. Under the GI Bill I earned a masters degree at San Francisco State College.

Following various assignments in Coast Guard Port

Security units, I was appointed Commanding Officer of ORTUPS 12-537 in February 1962.

Each summer, I went on active duty for 90 days on the staff at Government Island, Alameda, California, for both the Direct Commissioned Officers' School and the Command School for COs and XO's from the Western States.

In 1966 I was promoted to the rank of Commander and transferred to the Volunteer CG Reserve, ending my career in the Coast Guard.

In 1972 I retired from teaching and returned to the more lucrative real estate business, from which I've since retired.

I presently play my tuba with the AAHMES (Shrine) Concert Band, and six years ago organized the New Yerba Buena Dixieland Band. We play music from the original Lu Watters library and recently recorded our first CD.



Reed Adams departs 791



Niece, Shirley Adams Angus, Owen P. Doherty, & Amber



New Yerba Buena Dixieland band in Pleasanton, California



Ortups 12-537 inspection for change of command at Government Island



*Command school staff
at Government Island,
Alameda, California*

*1st row:
USCG Base XO;
Al Simmons, USCG
Base CO; Command
School CO:
Ted Lawrence
2nd row:
Roger Seccombe,
Byron Haglund,
Reed Adams,
Francis McGraw,
James Frost,
Gene Miller*



LST 791 1993 reunion at Reno, Nevada

*1st row: Reed Adams, Phil Oaks, Bill Myers, Jim Morley
2nd row: Dick Baker, Bob Richards, Ralph Bohrer, Tony Barcewski, Bill White, Ray Burdick, Walt Dekar,
Paul Dekar*



*LST 791 1995 reunion at USCG Academy at New London Connecticut.
1st row: Clarence Blair, Reed Adams, Phil Oaks.
2nd row: George Frank, Walt Dekar, Jim Morley, Ray Burdick.
3rd row: Bob Richards, Dick Baker, Bill Myers, Russ Meshurel*

Appendix A: The Payoff

Translation:

HIROHITO,

By the Grace of Heaven, Emperor of Japan, seated on the Throne occupied by the same Dynasty changeless through ages eternal,

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting!

We do hereby authorize Mamoru Shigemitsu, Zyosanmi, First Class of the Imperial Order of the Rising Sun to attach his signature by command and in behalf of Ourselves and Our Government unto the Instrument of Surrender which is required by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers to be signed.

In witness whereof, We have hereunto set Our signature and caused the Great Seal of the Empire to be affixed.

Given at Our Palace in Tokyo, this first day of the ninth month of the twentieth year of Syowa, being the two thousand six hundred and fifth year from the Accession of the Emperor Zinmu.

Seal of and Empire

Signed: Hirohito

Emperor

Countersigned:

Naruhiko-o

Prime Minister

Proclamation

Accepting the terms set forth in Declaration issued by the heads of the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, and China on July 26th, 1945 at Potsdam and subsequently adhered to by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, We have commanded the Japanese Imperial Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters to sign on Our behalf the Instrument of Surrender presented by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and to issue General Orders to the Military and Naval Forces in accordance with the direction of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. We command Our people forthwith to cease hostilities, to lay down their arms and faithfully to carry out all the provisions of Instrument of Surrender and the General Orders issued by the Japanese Imperial Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters hereunder.

This second day of the ninth month of the twentieth year of Syowa.

Seal of the Emperor

Signed; *Hirohito*

Countersigned; *Naruhiko-o* Prime Minister
Mamoru Shigemitsu Minister for Foreign Affairs
Iwao Yamazaki Minister for Home Affairs
Juichi Tsushima Minister of Finance
Sadamu Shimomura Minister of War
Mitsumasa Yonai Minister of Navy
Chuzo Iwata Minister of Justice
Tamon Maeda Minister of Education
Kenzo Matsumura Minister of Welfare
Kotaro Sengoku Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
Chikuhei Nekajiaa Minister of Commerce and Industry
Naoto Kobiyama Minister of Transportation
Fumimaro Konoe Minister without Portfolio
Takatora Ogata Minister without Portfolio
Binshiro Obata Minister without Portfolio

Accepted at Tokyo Bay, Japan at 0809 on the second day of September, 1945, for the United States, Republic of China, United Kingdom, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and in the interests of the other United Nations at war with Japan

Douglas MacArthur
Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers

C. W. Limits
United States Representative
Republic of China Representative
United Kingdom Representative
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Representative
Commonwealth of Australia Representative
Dominion of Canada Representative
Provisional Government of the French Republic Representative
Kingdom of the Netherlands Representative
Dominion of New Zealand Representative

Appendix B: LST 791 Log for Wednesday, 27 September, 1944

Commissioning ceremonies were held this date. LT CDR J. Wildman, the Commandant's representative, read his directive and caused the National Ensign and the Commission Pennant to be hoisted. The Commandant's Representative then turned the vessel over to LT Andrew Duncan Jr., USCGR who then read his orders to assume command of this vessel. The Commanding Officer ordered the Executive Officer to set the watch. The officers and enlisted personnel attached to this vessel on date of commissioning are as follows:

(Located survivors are in **boldface** type)

OFFICERS

DUNCAN, ANDREW	LT	USCGR	COMMANDING OFFICER
<u>HORTON, EDWARD M.</u>	LT	USCGR	EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DURKIN, HAROLD T.	LT	USCGR	STORES OFFICER
BERLAU, CHARLES J.	LT(jg)	USCGR	ENGINEERING OFFICER
ADAMS, REED L.	LT(jg)	USCGR	FIRST LIEUTENANT
BRADFORD, JAMES E.	LT(jg)	USCGR	RECOGNITION OFFICER
BOHRER, RALPH R.	ENS	USCGR	GUNNERY OFFICER
ZIZIK, WLADISLAW J.	ENS	USCGR	COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

ENLISTED PERSONNEL

ABBOTT, FRANCIS J.	S1C	CARPENTER, T. H.	S1C
ALLISON, GEORGE C.	F2C	CERAJEWSKI, EDWARD J.	S2C
ALMY, BRYANT L.	GM2C	CHANDLER, KENNETH	MM1C
ANDRESON, JAMES C.	S2C	CHARBONNET, J. A.	BM2C
ANDERSON, ROBERT L.	CBM	CLARK, LLOYD G.	F1C
ANGERMAN, F. O.	SC	COURTMANCHE, ROLAND A.	STM3C
BAKER, MELVIN	MM3C	CRAMER, RENELL J.	GM3C
BAKER, RICHARD W.	RM3C	CROWE, ROBERT H.	STM3C
BANI, JOHN A.	COX	CUTLER, JAMES E.	STM3C
BARCEWSKI, A. C.	MM3C	CZERNIAK, CHESTER	STM3C
BARRON, JOHN H.	S2C	DAWSON, JOHN W.	S2C
BASS, JOSEPH T.	RM3C	DEKAR, WALTER	
BEATTY RUSSELL L.	S1C	DELGADO, MIGUEL A.	S2C
BECKMANN, GEORGE M.	S1C	DOHERTY, OWEN P.	S1C
BEDNARZ, CASIMIR J.	S1C	DOLAN, RAYMOND L.	S2C
BLAIR, CLARENCE W.	EM	DONNELLY, C. J.	GM1C
BOHLER, HUGO A.	S1C	DOUGLASS, HOWARD W.	GM3C
BREITZMAN, MARVIN	MM2C	DOWNHAM, ROBERT W.	MM2C
BUDNICK, JOHN M.	S1C	DULEMBA, HENRY H.	GM3C
BURN, FRANCIS M.	S1C	DWORK, GEORGE	S2C
BURDICK, RAYMOND E.	CM1C	KARLL, MORRIS H.	CMM

The Men on USCG LST 791

ECCLESTON, LOUIS A.	S2C	ROEDER, CARL O.	RM3C
EISENBERG, MYRON D.	S2C	ROWLAND, MARVIN D.	WT
FARROW, HUBERT Jr.	S2C	SANCHEZ, DILAR	PHM3C
FERNANDEZ, VICTOR	S1C	SCHIERER, JOHN E.	MM3C
FINGER, CHARLES W.	GM3C	SCHLERN ITZAUER, R. F.	BM1C
FORBUS, DONALD B.	SC2C	SEGARITIS, FRANK J.	F2C
FRANK, GEORGE W., Jr.	AS	SERRIDGE, EDWARD	S1C
GONZALES, THOMAS	S1C	SHANE, JOSEPH C.	MM3C
GRAHAM, CHARLES B.	GM1C	SKINNER, BILLY O. E.	SC
GRIFFIN, HAROLD J.	F1C	SLIGER, EDWARD L.	S1C
HAIGHT, CHARLES L.	MM2C	SMITH, GILBERT Jr.	S1C
HANSES, WILLIAM R.	QM3C	SMITH, LAWRENCE E.	MM
HIGGINS, C. W., Jr.	CMM	SMITH, LEROY C.	RT3C
HILL, JAMES E.	F1C	SNAY, EDWARD J. Jr.	S2C
IVEY, NOBLE B.	EM3C	SPECHT, EDWARD X.	SC2C
JOYCE, EUGENE F.	S1C	STANDFAST, MILTON	WT
KECK, CHARLES W.	MM1C	STRIPE, MAX E.	S1C
LAFOUNTAIN, R. J.	MM2C	STRIPP, WALTER M.	S1C
LANE, THOMAS J.	MM1C	SULLIVAN, R. M., Jr.	S1C
LEININGER, R. J.	S2C	SUMINSKI, LEON W.	S2C
LOHR, HAROLD R.	S1C	SWEENEY, RICHARD T.	S1C
LUNDIN, RICHARD		TALKIN, BERNARD J.	SC2C
MACLEAN, KARL S.	SM3C	THOMAS, RUFUS M.	S2C
MALONEY, RICHARD C.	S2C	THOMPSON, HUGH L.	F1C
MARLOW, ELBERT W.	MM2C	THORNHILL, BILLY	F2C
McMAHON, GORDON F.	S2C	TIEGS, LEROY H.	S1C
McMEECHAN, JOHN V.	F2C	TINKER, ZACK H.	S1C
MESHUREL, RUSSELL E.	GM3C	VIOLIS, MICHAEL	
MESTRE, CAESAR	S2C	VASQUEZ, GEORGE	CCSTD
MIESEN, DONALD B.	S2C	WAITES, STACEY C.	S1C
MORLEY, JAMES E.	PHM2C	WALLACE, MINOTT T. Jr.	PHM1C
MOTOLA, LEON	EM	WATT, THOMAS G.	S1C
MUSSER, FRANCIS M.	BM2C	WEAVER, ROBERT F.	S1C
MYERS, WILLIAM H.	S2C	WERSCHLER, THOMAS	S1C
NASH, CLYDE	AS	WILSON, MERLE S.	CQM
OAKS, PHILLIP A.	EM2C	WOOD, ROBERT L.	COX
PINCKNEY, AMBROSE J.	CM1C		
POPPINO, WILLIAM H.	S2C		
POYNER, URIAS D.	SC2C		
PRESCOTT, F. F.	S1C		
PRICE, JAMES E.	S1C		
PUSCAR, CARTER M.	F2C		
REID, WILLIAM L.	F2C		
REISER, EDWARD F.	S2C		
RICHARDS, ROBERT M.	RDM		
RILEY, HOWARD J.	Y2C		

Appendix C: LST 791 Log for 1, April 1945

0400 to 0800

Anchored off Okinawa Island in twenty-eight (28) fathoms of water to six hundred (600) feet of cable on the stern anchor.

0702- Commenced debarking troops.

0800 to 1200

Anchored as before.

0828- Debarkation completed. The following Marine officers and men of the Second Battalion, 22nd Regiment departed, transportation completed:

DAYES, Frank, 1st Lt.	HAMBRIGHT, A. B.	FLAHERTY, R. J.
DEER, Jas. D., 2 nd Lt.	HARTMAN, J. M.	FRAZIER, E.
MEEKS, T. A.	HILDEBRAND T. L.	GORDON, B. C.
GREENE, J. S.	HIXENBAUGH, C.W.	GORDON, M. A.
TRZECIAKIEWICZ, A.	KOCH, J.	GOTT, A. T.
JONES, R. A.	MEDINTZ, C. C.	GOULD, W. H.
NELTNER, R. H.	OMIATEK, E.	GRANT, H. E.
SMITH, J. P.	AMONETTE, R.L Lt. (jg)	HAAG, J. C.
WILLIAMS, E. M.	CARNAHAN, H.L. Lt. (jg)	HARRISON, C.M.
ANDRZEJEWSKI, Z. B.	<u>WOODHOUSE, H. C., Jr., Lt. Col.</u>	HART, J. E.
BASILE, R.T.	MARTIN, G. E., Major	HILLIARD, R. A.
BOALS, J.B.	DEAL, J.C. Jr., Capt.	JONG, B. L.
BOYD, L.G.	MILLER, D.E., 1 st Lt.	LOAG, W. J.
CHENEY, N. H.	O'CONNELL, J. J., 1 st Lt.	MARTIN, J. W.
DAMON, E. H.	SWINDAL, F. L., 1 st Lt.	MATHEWS, T. J., Jr.
JARELS, H. W.	HARRIS, R. E., 2 nd Lt.	MC CULLOCH, J., Jr.
MAYERAN, W.	SUTTON, J. R., 2 nd Lt.	MC DANIEL, D.
MOORE, J. C.	MIHALAK, S. J.	MC NALLY, J. C.
SCOTT, J. A.	ALLEN, W. W.	MOHLER, C. D.
TURNER J. G., Jr.	THOMAS, R. G.	MOORE, H. R.
WARREN, J. C.	BAILEY, E. G.	NEILL, O. E., Sr.
WELLENKOTTER, E. K.	KEMP, D. M.	NEUHART, R. F.
BAXTER, L. H.	BURDEN, J. B.	NOTTE, G. A.
BEAUDRY, S. A.	COFER, D.	PALMER, R. A.
BROOKS, H. R.	COREY, R. A.	PERKINS, R. W.
BRUNS, R. H.	HAM, P.	POER, K. W.
BYRD, C. S.	HEARD, W. H.	ROGAN, J. L.
CAROTHERS, T. M.	HERN, W. O.	ROOT, T. J.
CASTO, A. W.	LEACH, R. J.	SOLBERG, L.C.
CLEVENGER, D.W.	LIPES, C. D., Jr.	STINTON, B.A.
DUFFY, T. H.	MC ALISTER, A. E.	THOMAS, R.L.
ESSA, W. L.	ROGERS, W. B.	URSICH, S., Jr.
FOLSOM, E. E.	WRIGHT, R. G.	WEBSTER, H.W.
ISAACS, A. H.	ADAMS, G. H.	WHITE, J.W., Jr.
JONES, J. T.	ANDONIAN, L. S.	LOVELL, J. E.

LIVINGSTON, F. R.
BEALL, M. F. Jr., 1st LT
O'GRADY, J. J., Jr.
ALTAMIRANO, A. J.
COLVIN, F. L.
HOLT, R. L.
IOHNSON, R. E.
KING, H. T.
MANGUM, G. L., Jr.
QUETSCHENBACK, R. N.
WEISE, E. J., Jr.
BRAMSCHREIBER, H. E.
DAVIS, O., Jr.
MITCHLL, J. C.
NEWHOUSE, W. H.
NEWMAN, M.
SHEEHY, J. B. Jr.
FLECK, R. L. Lt. (jg)
VALLON, R.
CLARK, B.
HALLER, A. J.
WATKINS, E. R.
WEBB, K. L.
FALK, G. J.
JORDAN, S.
KLEEGER, S.
MILLER, W. R.
POTTER, D. C.
WELCHER, R. D.
PESELY, E. H., 1st Lt.
FLYNN, M. E., 2nd Lt.
GAUMNITZ, R. E., 2nd Lt.
GAGAT, S.
MC COLLUM, R. E.
GRUBB, G.A.
PREZZANO, R.W.
ABRAHAMS, N.E.
GENAKOS, H.S.
HALL, L.D.
HOLLIDAY, M.M.
KERESZTURI, E.J.
KIVETT, A. L.
LEO, J.E.
LESMEISTER, P.
PAVALKO, G. E.
ROBERSON, W. G.

ASAY, W. F.
BALISCIANO, J. A
BARCIAY, F. J., Jr.
BASSFORD, B. E.
BAUER, E. S.
BOFTO, E. C.
BISIO, R. P.
BREISCH, C. C
BOUDREAU, J. L.
BUTLER, J. P.
CLAY, N.
CUTLER, R.T.
DUNN, B.A
KELLY, C.
MAKOUSKY, M. R
MAZZOLA, J. J., Jr.
McCAIN, R. O.
McDANIEL, R. J.
OSTBOE, K. L.
OSTERMAN, J. F.
OWENS, D. T.
ROBERTS, A. L. R.
LEBAHAIN, E. L.
BAIR, D. W., 1st Lt.
STEVENS, J. A., 1st Lt.
MARESH, P. C.
HABERN, F., Jr.
GOSLOWSKI, A. F.
BROWN, J. C.
BUDZINSKI, W.
BULLIN, H.
BUTCHER, I. L.
CATANIA, C. J.
ELLIS, W. T.
HEADRICK, R. E.
PORTER, R. Jr.
SMITH, J.E.
STANKOVICH, S.
BLAIR, F.J.
BOWERS, J.F.
BRUHN, C. J.
CALHOUN, T.S.
CAMPANELLA, J.L.
CAPALARE, D. G.
DERESCHUK, D.
DESHER, J. T.

MC LAUGHLIN, G. H.
ANGERHAUSER, W. A.
BARRETT, M. V.
BARTLOMEJCZIK, M. J.
BATDORF, F.
BEALL, F. L.
BEARD, A. M.
GILKER, J. A.
KNEPPER, F. A.
MC DONELL, L. D.
MC RAE, D.
MERRION, E. P., Jr.
MILLER, H. C.
KUMPF, C. M.
STEWART, J. A., 2nd Lt
JACKMAN, C. J.
LOTZ, G. D.
McGOOKIN, A. G.
MEYER, F. F.
MORGAN, D. E.
MORLOCK, R. C.
PIENTA, F. T.
THIBAUL, J. E.
PARKER, A. H.
SUMMERS, C. C.
MORGAN, J. E.
TWITTY, H. W.
TASHJIAN, K. V., 2nd Lt
PETERSON, V. E.
MILLER, H., Jr.
HRISTIANSECN, L. G.
STALEY, P. I.
FRANZNIK, W. J.
MOGILSKY, J. W.
BECKER, G. P., Jr.
BERTOLI, D.C.
BOEKE, C.H.
FELIX, R.F.
HENRY, C.A. Jr.
JOVAAG, J.P.
PROWANT, D.E.
SIMPSON, W.G.
STINES, C. E., Jr.
THOMPSON, M.G.
JENNINGS, L. R.
GILBERT, E. S.

ALDOUS, M. C.
CASSIDY, J. J.
CRISANTI, A. D.
DORNICK, J.
ELWOOD, J. A.
FINKBEINER, R. H.
FLOSOM, N. F.
FONTAINE, A. J.
GARCIA, D.
GREENWOOD, L. P., Jr.
JUDD, F. J.
KAHLE, E. W.
KALTENBROWN, G. F.
KASTLER, E. L.
KING, B. A.
LEONARD, P. M.
LOW, K. M.
NUYIANES, J. S.
ODOM, S. H.
PAQUETTE, W. J.
PERRY, K. C.
PIERMAN, D. H.
SPENCER, M. G.
WARD, G.
ZELLNER, F. M.
ZUBAL, S., Jr.
BUSS, H. E.
CAPEAU, E. R.
DADDARIO, M. E.
DEL CIOPPO, V. J.
FISH, D. A.
GLEASON, A.
JOHNSON, E. A.

DURBIN, O.
ERICKSON, J. P., Jr.
FAVER, W. R.
GALLEGOS, L. S.
HENRY, E. N.
HERB, M., Jr.
HERRING, M. B.
JORDAN, L. F.
MORGAN, W. F.
MONACO, S.
MUSGROVE, J. W.
OTZENBERGER, J.
PARSONS, E.
PFORTMILLER, W.H.
SAVAGE, R. J.
TEW, E., Jr.
YOUNG, E. G.
McCALL, J. W.
HAAG, E. M.
JEDRA, F. D.
JONES, R. E.
JOYNER, J. W.
JUSE, D. W.
KELLY, W. E. R.
KISHISH, G. W.
KOONCE, W. M.
LANGSTON, R. L.
MULLOOLY, G. D.
PAPP, J.G., Jr.
PARINELLO, J.
SLAVICEK, F. R.
HANLIN, R. E.

LUNDQUIST, M.C.
MACHOWSKI, E. J.
MANLEY, M.C.
MAUZEY, E.F.
McCARTY, J.G.
BIRSTOL, C.P.
EVANCEK, R.
DAY, J. L.
CASH, R.M.
MARASCOLA, A. F.
SCHROFFRANECK, W. F.
YOUNG, R.F.
BARNETT, D. E., 2nd Lt.
QUINET, J. J. Lt (jg)
SMITH, T. J.
HARRINGTON, W. H.
McGRAY, G. W.
BARNES, L. A., Jr.
KIRKMAN, P.
NICKS, W. R.
TOOTHAKER, N. E.
WALLACE, J. C.
SLESNICK, I. L.
LINDSAY, C. S., 1st Lt.
ALICEA, W.
WOODARD, W. D., Sr.
BLACKSTON, B. H.
FERDIO, J. M.
FUNARO, R. P.
PIERCE, J. E.
URESSMAN, D.
SCHUHART, R. C.

Appendix D: LST 791 Deck Log for Monday, 2 April, 1945

4 - 8

Underway as before.

0530- Went to general quarters.

0726- Anchored off Okinawa Island in 33 fathoms of water to 325 feet of cable to the stern anchor.

0746- Launched port pontoon causeway.

8 - 12

Anchored as before.

0827- Launched starboard pontoon causeway.

Making preparations to launch LCT.

12 - 16

Anchored as before.

1200- Pontoon causeways towed away from ship.

LT N. E. MacDougall, CEC, USNR, and the following Seabees departed, transportation completed:

RAY, ANGUS M,	CMM
BARTLETT, RAYMOND I.	S2C
BATH, CHAS. H., Jr.	CM2C
BRASIER, JAS. G.	MMS2C
BUSH, LEROY W.	MM2C
CALABRESE, LAWRENCE W.	S2C
DESPAIN, PAUL A.	MM2C
DENT, CLARENCE W., Jr.	MMS2C
FAIRBANKS, HAROLD J.	WT2C
HERRING, GLENWOOD	MM2C
HOWARD, CURTIS E.	MM2C
KAMINISKI, FRANK J.	MM2C
KEITH, WILLIE T.	MM2C
LOCKLIN, CLAUDE E.	S2C
RAPP, HENRY J.	MM2C
MONTOYA, MANUEL G.	SF3C
MORRISON, JOHN H.	CM1C
NELSON, ERNEST C.	MM2C
PATTERSON, OLIVER G.	MM3C
STOLIGITS, FRANK M.	MM2C
RESTER, GEORGE H.	MM2C
RIDDLEBARGER, CLAUDE D.	PHM2C

Appendix E: LST-791 Deck Log for Tuesday, 3 April, 1945

0 - 4

Anchored off Okinawa Island, White Beach, in thirty-three fathoms of water with 325 feet of cable to stern anchor. 0015- Commenced fueling LCT-828.
0210- Completed fueling LCT-828, 3450 gallons of fuel transferred.
0215- LCT-828 departed with the following officers and men, transportation completed.

Ensign E. S. ROCKETT, USNR
Ensign F. L. RODGERS, USNR
BOYD, Leon, 942 34 23, MOMM 3c(T), V-6 USNR
GALE, Lloyd E. Jr., 641 97 88, S1c, V-6 USNR
HAGEN, Robert, 313 59 47, S2c, V-6 USNR
HARDY, Raymond B., 895 77 40, QM3c, V-6 USNR
HEATH, James W., 895 22 80, S1c, V-6 USNR
KOEHLER, Henry E., 875 23 11, S1c (RM), V-6 USNR
LEONARD, Raymond O., 233 97 20, BM2c., V-6 USNR
LOVELACE, George W., 881 19 56, S2c, V-6 USNR
MC LAUGHLIN, Francis J., 802 72 00, EM3c. V-6 USNR
MORRIS, Frank H., 561 04 01, S2c, V-6 USNR
MUNN, Elmer L., 722 40 16, S2c, V-6 USNR
PASTURA, Anthony L., 613 63 41, S1c, V-6 USNR
REED, Chas. H., 876 62 67, GM3c., V-6 USNR
ROBBINS, Martin Jr., 611 93 26, SC2c, V-6 USNR
WOLCOTT, Robert , 858 70 03, S1c. V-6 USNR
ISBY, Harvey S., 922 32 24, Cox SV-6 USNR
MAUPIN, H. W., 266 76 50, SC3c, USN