

PT 195

*"So I'm singing the blues for the rest of my cruise
On a PT in Ole Ormoc Bay"*

by

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DEDICATION

*To a boat and her sailors;
to an experience that united families and generations;
to a country founded on liberty and freedom.
God Bless the United States, God Bless PT 195 and the men she
served,
and God Bless Dad...*

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D.N.D., December 1993

DESCRIPTION OF PT BOATS

As World War II in the Pacific began to unfold for America, the Japanese came to rely heavily upon their inter-island barge traffic both as a means of communication and a method of resupplying their troops and strongholds. Hugging the coastlines of the jungle islands and travelling only at night, these barges were difficult to detect with aircraft, and they were too close to the shores to be attacked by heavier allied surface ships. America's solution to this problem resulted in the renaissance of Patrol Torpedo Boats (P.T. Boats) as an offensive weapon.



Some of the crew pose for a photo on PT Boat 195

Originally developed for defensive purposes, the early PT Boats were primarily used to deny enemy access to particular areas. But as Japanese barges continued successfully to resupply and communicate in this leapfrogging war, the PT Boats soon found their niche. Available in large quantities and able to patrol as far as 200 miles at night and return by the next morning, the PT Boats of World War II were redesigned and rearmored in a manner that secured their role in the Pacific Theater as a vital player in the island-hopping defeat of the Japanese.

Out of the Higgins Industries City Park Plant in New Orleans, Louisiana, and The Electric Boat Company (Elco) in Bayonne, New Jersey, came the fleet of PT Boats that went on to serve their country and their sailors so gallantly. Squadron 12 (Ron 12) to which PT 195 belonged, found its planks in the city of Bayonne. These 80 foot Elco boats were born through an innova-

tive process of production to meet the demands established by the U.S. Navy. Prefabricated main frames or bulkheads were constructed of laminated spruce, white oak and mahogany whose joints were secured with screws and marine glue. These skeletons were then covered with marine plywood and sealed for water tight integrity. After the bulkheads were fastened to the keel by brass bolts, the boat was turned upside down and two layers of 6" wide by 1" thick mahogany planks were diagonally applied. For added strength and water tight integrity, aircraft fabric soaked in marine glue was placed between the two layers. At this point the boat would be righted and the deck planked in a similar fashion.

As the interior was being completed, a 1350 HP, 12 cylinder Packard Engine was set in place as well as the fuel tanks that held up to 3,000 gallons of 100 octane aviation gasoline. Consuming 500 gallons in one hour, these "speed" boats had a range of 500 miles when travelling at 35 knots. Inaccurately termed "Plywood Wonders" or "Plywood Derby", these boats were now ready to be armed with the munitions needed to combat the enemy forces which included but was not limited to barges, submarines, destroyers and fighter planes.

Squadron 12 boats gained the notoriety of being the first PT's to mount a 40-mm cannon. Located at the stern of the boat, this cannon was capable of firing at a rate of 130 rounds per minute with a range of 5,420 yards. This experimental mounting emerged as the most successful anti-barge gun the boats ever had. Accurate, automatic and sufficiently powerful to blast holes in the heaviest armored barge, the 40-mm Bofors gun eventually became standard equipment for the rest of the PT fleet.

Mounted at the bow on a 20-mm pedestal was an automatic .37 mm cannon which had a fire rate of 120 rounds per minute and a range of 8,875 yards. Shortly left of center on the bow were quad 50's. Further down the boat were twin .50 caliber machine guns set in twin mounts, one port and aft and the other starboard and forward of the cockpit. Stored below the boat were two portable .30 caliber Lewis machine guns. Collectively these armaments provided an open PT boat with a reasonable chance of defending itself.

Squadron 12 boats also became the standard bearer for the armament that gave the PT's their name—torpedoes. All Ron 12 boats installed new two-piece racks that would hold and then roll the more advanced Mark XIII aircraft torpedo. A manually operated handle attached to a series of cables and pulleys started the gyro and motor of the torpedo which was then released, moments later, sliding down a greased skid. This two-piece rack modification put to rest the Mark VIII torpedoes that were fired from tubes via a black powder charge. From this point, all standard equipment for all PT Boats in service as well as

those under construction included this two-piece rack for their four Mark XIII torpedoes whose 600-pound warhead travelled at a speed of 45 knots.

During the course of the war, armament modifications and changes naturally occurred as experience provided concrete evidence in evaluating the success of weapons. The only armaments that withstood alterations were the two depth charges (aft), the smoke screen generator located at the stern alongside the 40 mm cannon, and the small arms maintained by the crew. These small arms included .45 caliber pistols, rifles, submachine guns and hand grenades.

The hallmark of any boat, however, is the crew she serves. PT 195, named "Toodles" by its skipper Bill Diver, was comprised of men who came from all areas in the United States; who trained at separate times in the PT Training Center in Melville, Rhode Island; who came together as a crew for the first time in Mios Woendi, New Guinea; who saw patriotic duty not as an obligation, but as an honor. It was these men who made PT 195 not merely an effective fighting unit, but a crew who became bonded as brothers.

The crew aboard PT's consisted of two officers, one who served as skipper and the other as executive officer. Serving under their command were four Motor Mechanics (MOMM), four Gunner Mates (GM), one Torpedo Man (TM), one Radio Man (RM), one Quartermaster (QM) and one cook or steward (ST). From July of 1944 through August of 1945 the men aboard PT 195 uniquely blended their personalities with their skills creating a synergism for this fighting vessel. They made PT 195 much more than planks; they made it a home; a boat that nurtured them through difficult times; a family of not just friends, but brothers.

The Officers

Perhaps a commanding officer's biggest task was to bring his men together and make them into a crew. Skipper Bill "Chick" Diver, a Lieutenant, junior grade(j.g.), not only gained the respect of his men, but his crew came to love him as sons would love a father. Sporting a crew-cut and a small moustache, the stocky skipper hailed from Hudson, NY. A quiet leader, his example clearly differentiated the times for work and the times for play. Completely relaxed and informal off-duty, the easy going, "laid-back" leader was always deadly serious while on patrol. His mission was to complete his patrol while bringing all his "boys" home.

The executive officer, Dave Davies, from Youngstown, OH served as officer in the absence of the Skipper. Small, wiry and very "fast on his feet", he too sported a small moustache. Perhaps the most formal of all the crew, Dave controlled a fidgetiness and nervousness by reading and fishing.

The Motor Mechanics

The Motor Mechanics were responsible for the operation, maintenance and upkeep of all engine room equipment, as well as fueling operations. The "crew chief" of the Motor Mechanics was Blaine Snyder of Greensburg, PA. Blaine was of medium height and build with dark, curly hair and a slightly hooked nose. An educated man, upon completion of his tour, he was replaced by Jerry Donovan ("Jere") of Fargo, ND. Jere was a knowledgeable motor mechanic with a good-natured personality. Short with a stocky build and straight black hair and moustache, he was hard working.

The other motor mechanics were Paul Gerhard, a tall, heavy-set man from Harrisburg, PA. Likeable and hard-working Paul, too, sported a crew-cut. From Thomaston, CT came Robert "Andy" Anderson. Small and spunky, Andy was a pleasant, likeable man. Low key and personable, Andy was best under pressure.

Bernard "Bernie" or "Duffy" DuFrene was a quiet, serious motor mechanic from Orlando, FL. Of medium build and height, this dark, wavy-haired man was soft-spoken and respected.

The Gunner's Mates

The "Gunners", besides their patrol stations, were responsible for the operation, maintenance and upkeep of all guns, ammunition and "ready" boxes. Among the gunners was Hugo Hanke of Hillsdale, NJ, a good-looking dark haired and dark eyed man with an ever ready smile. Slender yet solid, "Hanky" was quiet. The antithesis to "Hanky" was Gunner Earl "Moe" or "Duke" Creighton of Smithtown, NY. Medium height with black curly hair, "Moe" was a friendly sort who liked to play "the fool". His seemingly "half nuts" personality helped to ease much of the tension that the war created.

From Edenton, NC came Calvin "Peepsite" Johnson. A fun-loving sailor off duty, this gunner was all business during patrols. Hard working and serious, Calvin was of medium height and build and very competent. Alongside Calvin was Junius "Frenchy" DuPlantis of Houma, LA. As good natured as they come, Frenchy brought with him a heavy Bayou accent and infectious laugh. Short, dark with a swarthy look, Frenchy was liked by everyone.

Like Frenchy, Calvin "Moose" Buras was a "Gunner-Striker" hailing from Buras, LA. He possessed a heavy, athletic build and a deep love of the boat and crew as well as an enduring hatred of the enemy. Friendly and personable, Calvin is best described as "one of a kind".

On the quad 50's was the smallest man on the boat, Frank "Niles" Houston. Frank, from Iron Mountain, MI, was unrefined academically but his strong hands and his ability as a gunner especially on "jams and breakdowns" served the crew well.

Finally there was "Georgia" Hallman, a very muscular Georgian whose long blond hair and reddish face typified the "good ole boy" image. Well liked and much respected, Georgia was of medium height and slightly on the heavy side.

The Torpedomen

The Torpedomen were responsible for the operation, maintenance and upkeep of the four torpedoes, the depth charges and smoke screen generators. Additional duties included assisting the gunners on patrol.

An original 195 member, Charles "Denny" Denison of Buffalo, NY, was a stocky, fair complexioned man with a moustache. Good natured, Denny liked his cigarettes, coffee and "torpedo juice". This blue-eyed imperturbable man with curly hair stayed aboard the 195 until he contracted Malaria in January of 1945. Denny also trained Gil deMarrais (Dad), the tall, rangy, and dark wavy haired man from Cresskill, NJ. Sharp-sighted and able to quickly identify planes as enemy or friend, Gil brought tremendous pride to the boat, instilling that same pride among the men. Hardworking, he also brought with him a sense of humor and a likeable personality.

From Brooklyn, NY came Bob "Junior" or "Buggie" Clarkin who originally served aboard PT 152. Bob was of medium height with black curly hair and a pleasant personality that complimented his good looks.

The Quartermasters

The Quartermaster's domain was the chartroom and bridge of the boat. Responsible for maintenance and upkeep, his duties included the layout of charts and signalling equipment, the operation of the signal lights and semaphore flags and assisting the radiomen on watch and the skipper with navigation and steering.

From Burlington, NC came Jim "Murphy" Murray, a small scrappy man with blond hair and blue eyes. Light on his feet, Jim enjoyed boxing, baseball, fishing and music. Jim maintained a clean-cut image avoiding the customary cigarettes and beer. He possessed a quick dry humor, liking everybody as well as being liked by all.

Replacing Jim Murray as quartermaster was Russell "Russ" Pullano of Endicott, NY. Russ transferred from Squadron 9 bringing with him a mandolin and a likeable personality. Short with brown hair and brown eyes, Russ remained aboard the 195 into October of 1945.

The Radioman

Harold "Hap" Deyo of Brattleboro, VT, served as radioman for PT 195. Responsible for the operation, maintenance and upkeep of all radio and radar equipment, Hap was of medium height and build with blue eyes. A pleasant

man, he was very serious on duty. Hap enjoyed his cigarettes and coffee, as well as a good laugh.

The Stewards

The mess cook and galley duties were left to the culinary talents of Harold "Cookie" Jero of Beloit, WI. This lanky 160 pounder with long straight hair was somewhat of a loner. "Smart enough in his own right but a little 'smart alecky' at times, Cookie needed a little adjustment in attitude" after which he became an integral part of the crew.

"Pappy" Crowder of Tennessee was the cook who relieved Cookie Jero. A little older than most of the crew, Pappy was pulling his third tour when he came aboard the 195. A good cook, Pappy was not only well liked, he was respected.

Does the experience make the men or do the men make the experience? Undoubtedly the history of PT 195 was shaped by the men she served. It was the men who were her hallmark; men from different backgrounds masterfully blended by the skipper who created a unity that neither time nor distance has broken.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF PT 195

Born in Bayonne, New Jersey, inside the plant of the Electric Boat Company, the 195 was placed in service on March 6th, 1943 and assigned to Squadron (Ron) 12. Commanded by Lieutenant Commander John Harlee, Ron 12 was called the Millionaires Squadron because two of the Vanderbilts, Al and George as well as the son of the Post-master General served in this unit. The 195 arrived in the Pacific in August of that year serving her country in the Huon Gulf and Marobe, New Guinea. By October, the 195, as well as all boats of Squadron 12, were in full operation patrolling those waters.

On the evening of November 5 and continuing into the early hours of November 6, PT 195, nicknamed the "Black Angus" encountered two submarines off the Nunzen Plantation just north of Blucher Point. Her original skipper and the author of her nickname, Raymond Turnbull (a one time National Outboard Champion) ordered a torpedo to be fired. Because of the difficulty in confirming hits at night, the 195 was not credited with a sinking. However, a reconnaissance of the area the following day revealed black oil on the surface. Lacking sufficient evidence to confirm a hit, the men aboard were reasonably sure that at least some damage had been inflicted.

On November 25th, 1943, Squadron 12 moved its fleet to Dreger Harbor which became the main PT supply and repair base in New Guinea. Daily

patrols of this harbor and the surrounding waters began on the 30th of November and would continue through March of 1944 when the Japanese forces were finally defeated in the Huon Peninsula Campaign.

Reefs and low fuel supplies were occasional obstacles that deprived PT's from a chief strategic weapon—speed—making them vulnerable targets for the enemy. A PT that fell victim to a reef had to rely upon the rescue efforts of her sister boats. The evenings of December 18th and 19th found the 195 in the role of rescuer as PT 369 from Squadron 18 was stuck on a reef and needed to be freed. Together with PT 323 from Ron 21, the 195 succeeded in freeing the 369 from the coral, towing it back to Dreger Harbor under the protection of the evening sky.

December 1943 into 1944 saw confrontations with the Japanese increase both on the seas and in the air. On January 23rd, 1944, Japanese pilots attacked Dreger Harbor, killing several men on a dock at the north end of the harbor. On the seas, Japanese losses were significant. PT squadrons accounted for 119 barges destroyed or sunk; 22 barges damaged and 8 planes shot down or damaged. Squadron 12's efforts in this campaign as well as the performance of Ron 21, resulted in a Presidential citation for their unit that stated the following:

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons 12 and 21

For outstanding performance during the Huon Peninsula Campaign against enemy Japanese forces from October 1943 to March 1944. Highly vulnerable to damage from treacherous reefs and grounding during close inshore patrols, Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons Twelve and Twenty-One spearheaded a determined waterborne attack on the enemy, boldly penetrating hostile waters and disrupting barge traffic vital to the maintenance of Japanese strongholds in the New Guinea area. Dauntlessly exchanging gunfire with heavily armored gunboats and barges, airplanes and short emplacements, the boats of Squadrons Twelve and Twenty-One have successfully diverted hostile artillery fire to themselves in protection of Allied Land Forces; they have steadily destroyed the enemy's ships carrying troops, food and combat supplies; they have captured Japanese personnel, landed in hostile territory and effected air and sea rescue missions. Tenacious and indomitable in the face of superior fire-power and despite frequent damage to boats and casualties among personnel, the officers and men of Squadrons Twelve and Twenty-One have fought gallantly and served with distinction in crushing enemy resistance in this strategically important area.

In early May, Squadron 12 began a 500 mile trip up the coast of New Guinea. Arriving in Hollandia on May 11, 1944, Ron 12, now commanded by Lieutenant Commander Robert J. Buckley, joined with Ron 18 to secure the region. Sighting eight barges and destroying seven, Ron 12 continued its journey and on June 5th moved 115 miles beyond Hollandia, arriving at Wadke Island which Army forces had occupied since the 18th of May. Because of the distance of Hollandia and Wadke from Dreger Harbor, a new PT repair and supply base had to be established. Mios Woendi, a small island off the coast of the larger island of Biak, became the selected operating base. Having secured Hollandia and Wadke, Squadron 12 departed for Mios Woendi on June 6th, starting patrols two days later. In the ensuing weeks, they would be joined by several other PT squadrons as the Allies readied to liberate all of New Guinea.

It was in Mios Woendi that the crew of PT 195, to whom this history is dedicated, came together for the first time. Dad arrived on the 24th of July after being transferred from Shoemaker, California. Promoted to Torpedo Man 3rd Class, he and the rest of his mates would in a weeks time greet the new skipper of PT 195, Bill Diver. No longer the "Black Agnus", the 195 became known as "Toodles"; complete with Diver's rendition of a french lady in a bikini provocatively displayed on its cabin.

PT's patrolling Mios Woendi claimed 16 barges destroyed during the month of July as the Japanese began evacuating the area. Because of the ominous presence of PT's, the Japanese were forced to evacuate overland, abandoning most of their equipment. August proved to be another productive month with claims of 26 barges destroyed. August also welcomed a new commander for Squadron 12, Lieutenant Weston C. Pullen. In September barge numbers dwindled as the final occupation of New Guinea was completed.

With New Guinea firmly entrenched by the Allies, PT 195 and 38 other PT's departed for Leyte Gulf in the Philippines in what became the largest and longest mass movement of PT's under their own power during the war. Supported by tenders, (These were 310 foot long, 2800 ton ships that towed drydocks to allow for PT repairs. They also served as a mess hall for the crews and carried gasoline, supplies and equipment.) the 195 left Mios Woendi on October 13th, 1944. Covering the 1200 miles in slightly more than a week, the PT fleet arrived in Leyte Gulf at dawn on October 21st where soon they would be witness to a major naval operation while patrolling the Gulf and Surigao Strait.

By December of 1944 the island of Leyte was liberated from the Japanese. Squadrons 12 and 7 moved to the west coast of Leyte to operate a small base at Ormoc. Arriving on the 28th of December, the 195 patrolled off Ormoc until she was relieved on February 21st, 1945.

The 195's final destination was just north of Leyte on the island of Samar at Base 17. Patrolling San Pedro Bay under their final commander, Lieutenant John J. McGlynn, they were in the midst of preparations to move to the China Sea when the war came to a dramatic end.

A final tally had PT 195 credited with destroying 17 barges, one 200 ton freighter, 5 merchant vessels, and 3 planes during her 2 years of service. Along with her other Ron 12 boats, she was placed "out of service" on October 26th, 1945. Her fate remains unclear. Some say she was sold to the Philippine government, while others claim she was set aflame during her proper burial at sea. Regardless of how her bulkhead was dismantled, her heart still beats within the men she served.

THE BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT

"...I was only 18 and prayed that I would be allowed to go on living..."

Bob Clarkin

"...39 PT's in Leyte Gulf had to hold back a Japanese convoy until our big ships got there. I was doing a lot of thinking there for a while ..."

Frenchy DuPlantis

"...Our mission was to frustrate the Japanese convoy while our war ships got into position to attack..."

Calvin Johnson

On Friday the 13th of October, 1944, 39 PT's sailed from Mios Woendi, New Guinea, embarking for the island of Leyte in the Philippines. With the support of three tenders, this was the largest and longest mass movement of PT's under their own power during the war. Covering the 1200 miles in 8 days, the flotilla arrived in Leyte on the 21st of October. On the 23rd of October, Squadron 12 and five boats from Squadron 7 moved to Liloan, on Panoan Island which was off southern Leyte. The PT's mission was to guard Surigao Strait between the island of Leyte and Mindanao.

This passage (Surigao Strait) and the waters of the Mindanao Sea to the south were the scene of one of the three great naval engagements which collectively have been designated as the Battle for Leyte Gulf. Thirty-nine PT's were deployed in groups of 3 on both the port and starboard sides of Surigao Strait. Placed 8-10 miles apart, they were a scouting force used to detect the approach of the enemy and inform the American "heavy ships" of the enemy's advance. Scouting and reporting was their primary mission; their secondary mission was to attack. (At Close Quarters, pg. 379)

Bob Clarkin, a replacement torpedoman on the 195, was aboard PT 152 at the time of the Battle of Surigao Strait. His boat (PT 152) and two others from Squadron 7 were the first set of PT's to make contact with the Japanese fleet. Stationed at the very southern end of the strait their encounter was "an experience that had a profound affect" upon the thinking of Bob Clarkin. He explains:

"Prior to making contact things were pretty quiet. In fact, one of the officers had made fudge and it was passed around. We were eating the fudge when we began to pick up contacts. It seemed we were right in the middle of them. They started to fire and we attempted to leave the area as quickly as we could. A ship put a light on us and our guys either hit it or were getting close enough to discourage its use. I was in the starboard wing with a gunner's mate by the name of Schuppe. He had a 30 caliber machine gun mounted in the wing and had tried to swing it around to shoot at the light. I told him not to because I felt he might hit some of our own people. I also didn't think it could reach the ship. I also suggested he sit down next to me in the wing.

"Shortly after that we were hit and the ammunition on the 37 mm exploded. I felt that my life would end shortly. The explosion mortally wounded Charlie Midgett who was stationed at the 37 mm bow. Some of the crew moved Charlie off the deck into the forward officers quarters where he would pass away during the 152's return trip to base.

"At about this time we dropped depth charges to try to discourage the Japanese pursuit. We also unloaded our smoke generator whose shut off valve was not working properly. The Japanese were using the smoke generator as a means of trying to locate our position. Initially the smoke generator served to protect us but as we lost our speed, it became useless. We eventually dumped it over the side where some of the crew had been burned by globs that spurted out. My eyes became irritated from the smoke and others shared my problem.

"After dumping the smoke generator, I went forward with one of the other officers into the crew's quarters. We were burning, but most of the fires were supported by mattresses, blankets and clothing. We threw those over the side and used the fire extinguishers on the other burning items.

"After the engagement, we were sent to Leyte Gulf near the city of Tacloban. I for one had not slept since the night before the battle. Many of us were overtired and had been given some type of sedative before we started our return trip. It took effect on the way back and I had no recollection of the air attacks that took place against the PT's and the tender. When we arrived, a number of us went aboard the tender "Oyster Bay" for treatment from the smoke screen generator eye irritations and burns. Some others had been wounded from the hit and explosion, especially those who had been on the bow."

The initial encounter of the Battle of Surigao Strait involved PT 152 which was commanded by Joseph Eddins (an original 195er). As for the 195, she sat some miles up the strait awaiting her encounter with the enemy. In groups of three, PT's lined the strait some 8-10 miles apart, ready to scout, report, and, if necessary, attack.

The echoes of each encounter rolled up the strait, resembling a horrific thunder-storm whose intensity magnified with each passing moment. A distant flash lit up the sky followed by a resounding explosion. As the Japanese advanced up the strait toward the 195, the time between the flash and the deafening sound diminished. It would not be long before their nighttime sky would be totally lit and sight and sound would blend themselves into one massive hell.

Jim Murray, the 195's Quartermaster recalls the early stages of the Battle of Surigao Strait. "You could read a book from the light of the explosions. I'll never forget the words of Skipper Diver as the explosions reverberated up the strait towards us. 'God Almighty . . . Slick's getting it.' The way he said it sent shivers down my spine. His icy stare towards the distant flashes seemed to cut through the deafening blasts of each explosion. We waited intently for our turn, which would come all too soon."

As the Japanese convoy moved up the strait in a single file, the 195 suddenly found them on her radar screen. "Lieutenant Leo Leary was put on board to command the 195 because he was a full lieutenant and this was a special mission. He kept turning to the skipper saying "Bill, what do I do". The skipper simply said, "this is your damn show Leo. I know what I would do." (Murray) The decision was to "lay-low" and do as ordered; that was to report the enemy's movements.

"All of a sudden, a destroyer or destroyer's escort was coming right at us. I thought this was it, we wouldn't stand a chance against a ship that size. Fortunately another PT or something else distracted the destroyer and we were no longer the focus of her attention. We remained at our location till daybreak." (Murray)

Although the 195 didn't share in any direct encounters with the Japanese fleet during the Battle of Surigao Strait, it did share the anxiety felt by all the PT's, both prior to and after the battle. Although their primary role was to report and confuse, radio contact was difficult due to the constant static interference created by the Japanese. As the Japanese fleet arrived at the top of the strait, a surprise in the form of America's Seventh Fleet sat ready to "cross their T". This tactical error on the part of the Japanese led to their annihilation.

"What was perhaps scariest of all is that we had no idea what happened during the Battle. We couldn't make radio contact so we didn't know who

won or how much damage was incurred. As we returned towards base the next morning, every turn we made was an anxious moment; for we envisioned ourselves stumbling into an enemy destroyer. It wasn't until we finally got back to our tender in Leyte Gulf that we learned of our victory." (Murray) The Battle of Surigao Strait for the 195 is remembered not for the near encounter with the Japanese, but for the fear created by the unknown.

"The skill, determination and courage displayed by the personnel of these small boats is worthy of the highest praise. Their contact reports, as well as the firing and illumination which they drew from the enemy, gave ample warning to our own main body; and while the issue of the later main engagement was never in doubt, the PT's action very probably threw the Japanese command off balance and contributed to the completeness of their subsequent defeat."

Admiral Nimitz — on PT's at Surigao Strait

SCARY MOMENTS

War produces a multitude of confrontations between opposing forces. Whether its sailor against sailor, boat against boat, or boat against plane, these conflicts remain poignant in their exactness because stakes are very high. Be it a battle of considerable duration or a momentary, unanticipated attack, winning and surviving is the result of skills attained through training and experience and perhaps a little of Lady Luck. It is not until after the conflict that the magnitude of the event is begun to be understood. For the men aboard PT 195 such moments are forever vivid.

Often, the time preceding an encounter can be as traumatic as the encounter itself. The athlete before the "big game" struggles as his mind creates anxiety over the impending conflict. When the game begins, instincts and training take over, momentarily alleviating his fears. For the sailor the time preceding the battle can prove to be overwhelming for he knows that when the gun sounds for him he is not playing a game. Victory or defeat is translated into life or death.

For Frenchy DuPlantis the 24 hours prior to the battle of Surigao Strait epitomized that tension while anticipating an encounter. The 195 was among 39 PT's whose job was to "hold back" a Japanese convoy until American ships arrived. Those 24 hours led to "a lot of thinking" on the part of Frenchy and the rest of the crew. Calvin Johnson echoed Frenchy's sentiments as he recalled the anxiety he felt during the time the 195 "was closing in to engage our radar target at night. As soon as we started firing our guns or releasing

torpedoes, that feeling of being scared left you. Your only thought was destroying your target. The 195 had approximately 150 combat patrols while operating from Leyte, that's 150 engagements with the enemy, all separate stories."

Although each patrol was unique in and of itself all were woven by the common thread of tension, anxiety and fear that preceded each encounter.

The Hot Run

Having received a radio message from Air Force pilots that a nearby Japanese freighter had run onto a beach, the 195 saw an opportunity to add to its list of successes. After a reconnaissance of the area, the freighter was found, but because of Japanese presence on the beaches, it was decided that a torpedo launch at minimum depth would provide the least amount of danger to the 195 while still ensuring the fulfillment of their mission.

"Launching a torpedo off its rack was a simple matter. The firing procedure was a matter of pulling out a pin to release the launching handle at which the torpedo would roll off the rack and be on its way." (Murray) To start the torpedo engine, a lanyard was pulled that set the gyro in motion. It was at this time that the launching handle was released and the "fish" would roll into the water. "After a given number of turns of the propellers, the torpedo would arm itself, ready to explode at 25 pounds of pressure." (Murray)

As the 195 positioned itself to fire its two torpedoes, Dad and Jim Murray successfully launched their starboard torpedo. At the stern, the executive officer Dave Davies was "reluctantly given permission to launch the other torpedo. Forgetting to pull out the pin which secured the releasing mechanism" (Murray), the 195 was faced with a "HOT RUN": an armed torpedo on deck with a screaming engine ready to "break up from the lack of water to cool it". Having panicked, the executive officer shouted "hot run, abandon ship" prompting several men to jump overboard, fearing that the torpedo was going to blow."

"At this time torpedoman Gil deMarras moved across to the stern and approached the torpedo. Remaining calm, he pulled the pin and released the 'fish' on its way. Suffering some burned hands from pushing on the hot, stainless steel casing that covered the turbine engines, Gil managed to launch the 'fish' moments before it would break apart and cause potentially serious damage to the men and the boat." (Johnson)

"The 195 was stopped, noses were counted and it was apparent we had crew members in the water back there about 300 feet. We could hear small arms fire coming from the beach, but we slowly came about and crept back, coasting toward the area where we thought the men should be". (Diver) It was their voices that shed light as to their location in the dark waters of the night-

time sky. "They were retrieved, having suffered only a dunking and some panic. The patrol was secured and we 'started for the barn'". (Diver)

"For his valor under the circumstances, Gil was given an on-the-spot promotion to Torpedoman 2nd class (TM2c). He thought of the crew and the 195 while risking his life at this time of emergency." (Johnson)

Lady Luck

There's an old adage that says "sometimes its better to be lucky than good." All the training, all the drills, all the experience that a person has amassed in order to be successful can sometimes be reduced to pure luck. Despite their training and their collective capabilities that resulted in a remarkable tour of duty, the sailors aboard PT 195 too found their fates resting in the hands of Lady Luck as illustrated in the ensuing three stories:

The Night Fighters: In writing about the PT experience, often forgotten is the fact that 95 percent of the experiences occurred at night. Darkness and limited visibility earmarked the encounters with the enemy. The thought of being aboard a comparatively small boat in the middle of the Pacific and being unable to physically see the target created feelings of trepidation. The sailors were trained to control knee jerk reactions even though many times their inner feelings tried to push them to action.

It was caution that enabled the 195 to survive the Japanese Night fighters. Stationed at Ormoc and patrolling the island of Cebu, the 195 was having considerable success in an area that was still 100 percent Japanese held. "It was here that PT 195 sank five barges on one patrol". (Murray) Shortly after that "banner" patrol, the 195 was "patrolling the east coast of Cebu, about midnight. The crew was forced to 'hunker' in close to the island because of the overhead 'Night Fighters' that they could hear, but of course, couldn't see to shoot. Turning the patrol over to two other boats, they repeatedly advised their relief to 'lay low and be quiet until they were certain that the planes were gone'. The 195 then moved out of the area at barely above idle speed with their mufflers closed." (Murray) This was done to avoid detection until they were safely out to sea.

While departing the area, the 195 radio relayed a conversation between the two boats which assumed the patrol. "I don't believe there's any planes around here. Let's move on down here toward Liloan Cove. I want a look back there." (Murray) Throwing caution to the wind, they moved off "cutting a wake that was visible enough for a plane to dive on them and drop a 'personnel' bomb that killed Motor Mechanic Bob Rausch and wounded a couple of others." (Murray)

PT 320: On November 5th of 1944, "in the early morning hours a high flying plane dropped a bomb squarely on the deck of PT 320 which was anchored in Leyte Gulf. The boat was completely destroyed, with loss of two officers and twelve men. Only one man from the crew was saved." (At Close Quarters, p. 394)

This attack came two days after the 195 shot down a "Betty Bomber" after which the crew took numerous souvenirs off the body of the dead Japanese pilot. Returning from their patrol on November 5th, the 195 moored right next to PT 320. As the engines were turned off, Jim Murray recalled that the men could hear the high-flying bombers hovering above them. He, along with Dad and the other crew members, brought this to the attention of the Skipper and convinced him to go back out to the bay where they would spend the night. Even though the odds that a successful hit by Japanese pilots that high in the air upon an 80 foot craft were remote, the Skipper relieved their anxiety by agreeing to his men's request.

As the sun rose above the waters of the bay a few hours later, the 195 returned to its moor only to be shocked at the wreckage that they found. Lady Luck had given the crew the wisdom to avoid an unnecessary risk. More often than not the low probability of something bad happening creates a false sense of invincibility. We don't know why PT 195 heeded their anxieties this time and why PT 320 ignored or perhaps never felt that same threat. Perhaps God and Lady Luck share the same blueprint.

PT 152: In October of 1944, 39 PT Boats made the 1200 mile trip from New Guinea to the island of Leyte in the Philippines. Squadron 12 was among those boats that made such an unprecedented journey. Unbeknownst to the men, their arrival would soon be followed by the largest naval battle in the history of mankind. For Charles Denison TM2c this battle proved to be a twist of fate that would have cost him his life if he had been allowed to do what he had asked.

Charlie Denison, an original member of PT 195, began his service at Dreger Harbor in New Guinea. He was a member when the 195 was skippered by Raymond Turnbull and was called the Black Angus. He was part of Squadron 12 which received the Presidential Citation for efforts in securing the Harbor and the conquest of New Guinea. Serving with Charlie during this tour was Joseph Eddins of Rosedale, Mississippi. Before leaving for the Philippine Islands, Joseph Eddins was promoted to Lieutenant (j.g.) and given command of PT 152 which also served Squadron 12. Joseph Eddins recalls those early months of the war with a vivid recollection of Charlie Denison as a sharpshooter. "On board we had two old army rifles that we used to shoot

cans with. Travelling at 20 knots or so we'd toss those cans over the water and Charlie would pick them off with ease. It dawned on us then that Charlie, with his eye, would be ideal as the bow gunner on the 37 mm."

When the PT's arrived in Leyte on October 21st, 1944, it was unclear at that point exactly what their patrols would be. Charlie bumped into Joseph Eddins and asked him if Joe was going out on patrol that evening and if he could join them. Eddins replied that they were going out and that it was fine by him. A short while later Charlie was disappointed when Skipper Bill Diver of the 195 informed him that orders had just been received for their own patrol and, thus, he could not go aboard the 152. Although embarking for different patrols that evening, both the 152 and the 195 were heading toward the same battle, the Battle of Surigao Strait and Leyte Gulf.

The 195 maneuvered to the southern end of Surigao Strait where it was ordered to stay and report enemy force movements. Meanwhile the 152 encountered a large Japanese task force in Mindanao Straits. In fierce action, the 152 took a shell on the bow a foot or so away from the 37 mm. The 37 mm exploded killing Charles Midgett MOMM3c of Manteo, North Carolina. Fate and Lady Luck shined on Charlie Denison that day for Joseph Eddins clearly stated that "If Charlie Denison had come aboard that night, there is no doubt that I would have stationed him on that bow."

Found in the clothing of Charles Midgett was this poem clipped from an unknown magazine.

What did you do today, my friend,
From morn until dark?
How many times did you complain
The rationing is too tight?
When are you going to start to do
All of the things you say?
A soldier would like to know, my friend,
What did you do today?

We met the enemy today
And took the town by storm.
Happy reading it will make
For you tomorrow morn.
You'll read with satisfaction
The brief communique
We fought, but are you fighting?
What did you do today?
My gunner died in my arms today;
I feel his warm blood yet.

Your neighbor's dying boy gave out
A scream I can't forget.
On my right a tank was hit,
A flash and then a fire;
The stench of burning flesh
Still rises from the pyre.

What did you do today, my friend,
To help us with the task?
Did you work harder and longer for less
Or is that too much to ask?
What right have I to ask you this?
You probably will say,
Maybe now you'll understand;
You see, I died today.

The C47 Rescue

Encounters with the enemy result in tense moments. The time that elapses between the sighting of a target and the actual engagement seems to take forever. These same feelings of anxiety were experienced one morning at Ormoc when an airplane came in low across the bay "scaring the s___ out of us all." (Johnson) However this encounter was different. This plane was an American C47 that was soon to drop her wings into the waters of the Pacific.

Scrambling to the radio, Radioman Hap Deyo hollered over the air waves "What the hell is going on?" (Murray) The pilot apologized for his low altitude as he informed the 195 that he needed help in a hurry and that he thought this approach would get the assistance he desired. "I'm running out of fuel... can't land at Tacloban because of the dense fog. I have 25 soldiers and 2 crew members on board. We are ditching on the next run. Pick us up in a hurry... this thing will only float for about 5 to 7 minutes." (Johnson)

A parallel tension gripped the men as they anxiously peered at that plane above them. Their war experience said that when a plane came in low over them and then subsequently ditched in the ocean, that was cause for jubilation. Now, they held their baited breaths, praying for their fellow Americans, their fellow freedom fighters, hoping that what they were about to witness didn't turn into disaster.

Taking over the radio, the Skipper informed the pilot that he was ready and had the 195 "underway in less than a minute." (Murray) The Pilot made a perfect landing and all the men were "aboard in about 5 minutes." The first soldier rescued was heard to say "What a hell of a first day's vacation leave." (Johnson)

Incidents such as this provoked the thought "God and the synchronized efforts of the crew got us through this one. This is the time that you felt closest to crew mates and were happy that none were hurt. This created an atmosphere of love, respect and trust — Family for this part of time in our lives." (Johnson)

Mother Nature

In war, the unexpected can happen in the twinkling of an eye. With little notice, the enemy can launch an attack that calls for an instantaneous response requiring skill and composure under pressure. Most encounters with the enemy themselves were relatively brief, with the 195 emerging as victor or, at the least, as a standoff. There was, however, another obstacle that the sailors had to endure from time to time. Mother Nature built up forces that required additional survival skills and a calmness under pressure. The difference between facing the Japanese and facing Mother Nature was that an encounter with Mother Nature was not only considerably longer in duration, but the best they could hope for was a standoff.

Skipper Bill Diver recalls when "advised that a storm was impending, the 195 was ordered away from their anchored tender and told to proceed to the mouth of San Juanico Strait off the city of Tacloban. Embarking for this area, heavy rains, winds and limited visibility forced the 195 aground on a sandbar just south of the entrance to the strait. Stuck on the soft bottom floor the Skipper decided that there was nothing to do but wait out the storm as there appeared to be no imminent danger because the hull was not pounding. After a couple of hours the hull began moving again as the incoming tide lifted the boat. Able to get underway once again, the 195 joined the rest of the flotilla in the gulf circling in a counter-clockwise movement. All the vessels had their running lights on for there was little fear of an enemy attack. The scene resembled nothing so much as a giant dance floor with the lights going slowly round and round." (Diver)

"As the grey stormy dawn appeared, the beach on the southern shore of Samar Island revealed a couple of PT's on the beach. They had anchored but their anchors had been dragged by the tremendous pressure of the storm." (Diver)

Storms at sea pale the wildest roller coaster that man could invent. Shortly after the Battle of Leyte Gulf and Surigao Strait, the 195 found herself on a ride that she and her crew would never forget. Mother Nature called this Southern Hemisphere ride a Typhoon.

The Typhoon hit "right after 'D-Day' at Leyte and put the war on 'hold' for 3 days and nights. Winds up to 145 mph and sustained winds of over 100

mph continuously battered the ships." Quartermaster Jim Murray reflects that "no ship could hold anchor, let alone boats our size. The only thing to do was stay 'underway' and use what power you had to keep from capsizing or crashing into another ship. There were over 3000 ships that took part in that operation (Battle of Leyte Gulf) and most of them were circling San Pedro Bay, just like we were; trying to keep out of one another's way. That was no easy chore, especially at night."

"To make matters worse, we had dropped our Executive Officer (Dave Davies) off on a ship to take a shower and he got in a damn card game down in the Officer's Quarters and didn't want to come back to the boat. So Bill Diver 'shoved off' without him, not realizing (or not giving a damn; I don't know which) that the storm was going to last 3 days. That left all the 'boat-handling' up to Diver or whomever else he might trust with the 'wheel' for a 20 or 30 minute nap. This was a nightmare. Boats, 100 yards apart were in danger of ramming into each other as each cresting wave was ridden." Three hundred ships were damaged or lost during that unforgettable ride that placed the ships at the mercy of Mother Nature's wrath.

The Lugger

While patrolling the Bohol Strait between the islands of Bohol and Cebu, the 195 and PT 137 (Squadron 7) began tracking a big Japanese Lugger (Merchant Ship) by radar. Planning to mount a torpedo attack, the 195 soon found itself altering its plans when "the bottom fell out of a big thunder storm." (Johnson)

As the skies thickened and the rains increased, an uneasiness fell over the 195. They had lost contact not only with their sister ship but their target ship, the Lugger, disappeared as well. The night skies and the pounding rain allowed for no visibility yet their pounding hearts served as the constant reminder that the enemy was near and that this was a perilous situation. Calvin Johnson recalls:

"Out of nowhere we suddenly came alongside a big black silhouette on our starboard. They opened fire on us first but we were so close that they could not depress their guns low enough to hit us. We opened fire with our 40 mm and 30 mm at point blank range. The 'report of the guns' and the explosion of the projectile was one instantaneous sound. The 40 mm got off 16 rounds before Skipper Diver ordered full speed ahead.

The 195 departed losing itself in the darkness. Making radio contact with the 137, the two boats organized an attack on the Lugger that would take place as soon as the rain subsided. While regrouping, they heard a big explosion that pierced the thick skies. "Shortly thereafter, the rain subsided and we

saw the lugger burning amid ship. Another explosion followed and the stern of the Lugger turned up 90 degrees and began sinking. The fire lit the stern showing the huge propeller slowly turning and the big red spot on the white background was fast to disappear below the surface."

Most surface engagements went as planned where men knew what to expect, and in most cases, were successful in eliminating their targets. This "kill" demonstrated to the crew the vulnerability that war creates. "What started out to be a torpedo attack as soon as the Lugger was in a suitable position, turned out to be an unexpected gun battle at close range." (Johnson)

Returning to their base with broom handles protruding from her gun barrels to signify "a clean sweep", the 195 could now inscribe a 200 ton Lugger on its cockpit. While operating out of Ormoc, the 195 "chalked up more tonnage and number of barges than any single boat of Ron 12 or Ron 7. We seemed to have a guardian angel looking after us. Others weren't as lucky." (Johnson)

Zero + Zero = An Eternity

On the morning after the Battle of Surigao Strait, the 195 was returning to her tender when out of nowhere two "Japanese Zeros made a strafing and bombing attack directly upon her. Flying out of the mid morning sun, the low flying planes were upon us almost before we could fire a shot."

"One zero attacked from our stern. He came in strafing and dropped 2 small bombs. One fell about 50 yards astern and exploded. The other fell very close to the port side bow and fortunately didn't explode. The other zero attacked from the port side and dropped 2 bombs which fell approximately 50 yards to the starboard. Neither of these bombs exploded." (Johnson)

With little time to react to this attack, instantaneous decisions were made by the skipper and the crew. Perhaps this attack best illustrates the synergism created by "the synchronized efforts of the crew." (Johnson) There weren't a lot of commands delivered. This was a team of men "who trusted each other"; men who were confident in the abilities and reactions of their crewmates.

Calvin Johnson described the event as follows: "Firing at the zero on the port side forced him to alter his attack causing the bombs to miss. The zero from the stern was now attacking from the bow. The Skipper turned the boat hard starboard enabling our guns to take 'full-advantage' of the incoming zero. The fire was so intense from our guns that he voided his attack and his bombs missed. As he turned away, we saw a grey puff of smoke which trailed as he headed for the shore. The other zero followed. We never got a scratch from that attack, which could have dealt us a serious consequence. Surprise attacks of this sort really scared the 'hell' out of you. We were lucky that time."

The Rockets Red Glare

Torpedo runs required tracking of targets by radar, positioning the PT to maximize the chances of achieving success, and shooting a flare (a 60 mm mortar shell with a parachute attached) to provide light on the target. This was done when torpedoes were launched. The PT could then move within the safe haven of darkness and watch the success of the attack. Thus surprise was a key component to any torpedo run. The light of the flare would take the enemy by surprise; but by the time they reacted, the torpedoes were launched and it was most likely too late.

While patrolling between Bohol and Cebu, the 195 and 132 picked up several targets on their radar. Following the procedures of tracking, positioning and shooting the flare, they patiently waited for the targets to move far enough away from land before attacking. Positioning themselves for the imminent attack, familiar feelings of tension fell over the boat. The directive "shoot the flare" brought feelings of anxiety to a peak. Concurrently, the anxiety was replaced by a growing confidence as they now relied upon their skills and training. The bell had sounded; the task was before them; this was when the crew was at its best.

Frank Houston who was the "Flare Man" launched the night light towards its intended targets. "Consistently accurate during his tour aboard the 195, this time Frank miscalculated as the flare hovered in the night sky directly between the enemy and themselves." (Johnson) Five Japanese barges were surprised not only by the flare, but the fact that they could clearly see the now very vulnerable PT's unable to hide in the safety of darkness. "We opened fire from both sides at the same time. Orange tracers were coming at us while white tracers were directed towards them. On the 40 mm, Frenchy Duplantis was pointer and Calvin Johnson was trainer. The two 'opened up' at the closest target. After a few rounds, a barge exploded with such force that the concussion blew Calvin Johnson's helmet off, ringing his ears and flash-blinding him for a short time. Shortly thereafter the flare burned out and a second flare was then perfectly launched over the targets."

Now losing their formation, the remaining barges were at the mercy of the 195 and 132. The 195 reduced 2 of the barges to splinters while the 132 "took care of the other 2 barges." (Johnson) Both PT's were hit in this encounter though neither resulted in casualties to their respective boats. Calvin Johnson explains:

"We were hit but didn't know it until daylight. An A.P. (Armor Piercing) projectile had passed through our bow where our 'John' was located. There wasn't much damage but, if the projectile had been an H.E. (high explosive) instead of an A.P., part of our bow would have been missing."

As the two boats prepared to leave their sinking victims, a final flare was launched and the surrounding water was strafed, targeting Japanese sailors who were in the water. "We probably would have to fight them if they reached the land." No one aboard the boat was willing to take that risk.

The 195 returned to Ormoc to find that all of her 40 mm ammunition had been expended as well as most of the 20 mm, 30 mm and small caliber ammunition. "This battle probably lasted no more than 30 minutes but the crew was fatigued as if it had lasted 3 hours." (Johnson)

Suicide Planes

Man desires to control. Man finds security with control. Man exudes confidence when in control. Losing control creates fear. The thought of helplessness causes an internal frenzy that can consume rationality. To the crew aboard PT 195 the Japanese suicide pilots created such fear. Trained to combat the enemy in conventional war, the suicide pilots stepped far beyond the paradigm of "rational war". Fear gripped the men as they witnessed for the first time the unconventional attacks aimed directly at their hulls. Disbelief was followed by uncertainty. Their minds could not comprehend what their senses revealed. And then it happened. And again. And again. Frozen by what they had seen they were awakened to their sudden and dramatic vulnerability. "How the hell do you fight such attacks?" wondered Jim Murray. That thought echoed through the minds of the entire crew.

As the war progressed in favor of the Americans, the Japanese had devised a new tactic designed to reverse the direction the war had taken. The Kamikaze pilot, among heraldry and honor ritualistically took off on his final mission. In the name of his beloved country his last act in this world was pre-determined. Having spent his ammunition, the pilot was to crash his plane atop an American ship.

Jim Murray "couldn't believe his eyes" when he witnessed for the first time the plight of the kamikaze. "It was as if it wasn't real. He asked himself, "Did that pilot do that on purpose or was it coincidental?" His bewilderment soon became clear as a succession of pilots made their suicide runs toward the larger ships.

For every action there is a reaction. The U.S. Navy's answer for this suicide tactic was "to throw as much flak up at them as possible." Jim Murray explained:

"As crazy as it seemed, we were ordered to stay at our battle stations, no matter how close that pilot was. We were to just keep shooting. The Navy went so far as to threaten court martial if we left our guns. We soon came to realize that this was the only possible defense against those planes. By throw-

ing up the flak we would blind the pilots causing their planes to miss their targets and fall harmlessly into the sea. It took a lot of nerve to hold your stations when under such attacks, but we did it."

Fortunately for the PT's, they were not the primary targets of the Kamikazes. The larger naval vessels, thought to be more valuable towards American naval strength, were the main focus of the suicide planes. In addition, the chances of landing atop a carrier or destroyer were far greater than crashing into the swifter and much smaller PT. But, on occasion, the PT found itself on the defensive as the kamikaze zeroed in. PT 195 found out first hand "what it was like to be singled out as a target." (Johnson)

During the early days after the invasion of Leyte, P.I. and after the Battle of Surigao Strait, Ron 12 was operating from a tender that was anchored on Tacloban Bay. A narrow canal or river separated Leyte from the island of Samar. Beginning at Tacloban, the waterway ran for approximately 10 miles to the Ormoc side of Leyte. Calvin Johnson relays that:

"Two Ron 12 boats, the 195 and another were navigating this water on our way to our patrolling area along the coast of Samar. It was about one-half hour to sunset. We were about halfway through the canal and at its narrowest point. The 195 was the trail boat with the lead about 200 yards ahead of us. Suddenly about 500 yards to our stern, a Zero was spotted. At the alarm, both boats sped full throttle and opened fire at the incoming plane. There was no room for zig-zagging — we had to hold our course. The Zero released a bomb which fell and exploded close to our stern but there was no damage to the 195. He then circled and attacked from our stern again. This time crash diving close to our stern."

The plane missed by about 50 feet vanishing in a "big cloud of water." Whether it was the "flak" shot up at the pilot or the speed of the boat that caused the miss, the crew aboard the 195 now had first hand experience in combating an incomprehensible foe. Although this was the only time PT 195 was the target of a suicide plane, the horrible thought of a repeat attack remained forever etched in the minds of the crew.

The Gold Tooth

War has been statistically measured for its costs, its toll in human life and injuries, and its destruction of property. What can never be quantified is its affect upon the behaviors of those in the armed forces in terms of attitudes and actions. With short term as well as long term implications, "war produces a callousness" that should not stand in judgement of those who served. Instead, their experience should provide the foundation for understanding an action or reaction of the individual or group. The morality of men in war cannot be understood outside this sphere of experience.

On the morning of November 3, 1944, the 195 was entering "the strait to go to her tender which was anchored out in the gulf." (Diver) This was the breakfast routine they had been following since the Battle of Leyte Gulf. On this particular morning the airfield south of Tacloban was under attack by Japanese Betty bombers. As one of the bombers came off the field he flew across the stern of the 195. Because of their location near the airstrip, the crew had a difficult time ascertaining if this was an enemy plane or if it was "one of ours."

"The skipper had told us to be careful as we didn't want to be shooting at our own planes, so when that Betty began attacking us, we hesitated at first. There was some confusion on our part until the Exec came up from below the deck and screamed 'shoot the bastard.' With that we opened-fire at him." (Murray) The 40 mm crew "shot one round which brought him down." The pilot had ejected from the plane with his "parachute partially opened, keeping the now dead pilot afloat." "We circled around and picked him up laying him on the fore deck. His right leg was severed and his face was burned. The crew then went crazy for souvenirs." (Diver)

"Lieutenant (j.g.) Leo Leary, on temporary assignment to the boat, claimed the silk scarf. Frenchy DuPlantis took the pilot's pistol which was around his neck while others grabbed his helmet and his flight jacket. Gunner's Mate Hugo Hanke secured his silk body flag which displayed his family name and his shoulder patch. He then rushed to the engine room for a pair of pliers which we handed to Charlie Denison. Denny then proceeded to pull out the pilot's gold teeth. Such is the callousness induced by War." (Diver)

The pilot's parachute was cut into pieces and signed by the men to commemorate this victory. Dad brought his memorabilia home, and that parachute became a major "piece of the puzzle" in identifying and locating the crew for a reunion 47 years later.

The word "War" itself invites feelings of tension and fear that only those who have been asked to fight for their country can comprehend. Pre and post battle anxiety as well as actual enemy encounters can strip apart even the toughest of men. The physical and mental scars left by war are products of both isolated conflicts and the synergism of events experienced by the men.

The men aboard PT 195 had many moments that came to dramatize the life and death struggle that war produces. For some, it was the isolated battles that left the greatest marks. For others it was the idle times; those moments of reflection when their minds struggled to cope with what happened, or what might have happened. In every case, the moments eternally altered the men.

War is Hell. And these men were fortunate enough to survive the physical dangers presented to them. The mental trauma and emotional injury endured by each can never be quantified, nor can time measure the strength of the fraternal bond embraced by the men aboard PT 195.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

A sailor never knows when those lighter moments during his tour will suddenly occur. Those moments ease anxieties and break tensions as they lend humor to otherwise precarious situations. These spontaneous moments help maintain a crew's youthfulness during times that can accelerate the aging process.

The crew of PT 195 had many specific incidents that brought smiles of relief and produced tears of laughter. Equally important to those particular moments was the personality of each sailor. A good natured attitude produced many a simple moment of pleasure that today still brings a smile to their faces.

Perhaps it was skipper Bill "Chick" Diver, who threw "formality to the wind", (Murray) and set the tone for his crew as they fought to physically and mentally survive the war. A message was sent to his crew the day he was called up from below the deck as a higher ranking officer came aboard. Hot and in his birthday suit, the skipper promptly showed what he thought of military protocol by saluting his superior wearing only a hat. The message: do your job first and foremost and it's okay to have fun. This attitude was pervasive among the sailors from Frenchy DuPlantis who found delight in singing songs in his heavy Bayou accent and laughing aloud at movies, through Dads nicknaming everyone "Filomena Faciola". Many times they could look over the bow of the ship and see "Moose" Buras aiming his .37 mm canon at fictitious Louisiana ducks. Home was an underlying theme in many of these moments that seemed both simple and silly. Yet there was something beautiful about the naturalness and ease in which these moments occurred. Calvin Johnson perhaps captured best what the crew felt. "We were all close, like family. When we had time to relax, we talked about home and what we intended to do after the war. PT 195 was our home for that period of time and we treated it as such. We all worked as a team and were proud of the 195 and her battle accomplishments. These men who served during my tour of duty will always be remembered by me with love, respect and a special relationship that only we that were there during that period of time can comprehend."

The Boxing Lesson

Jim Murray recalls the crew of 195 as one big family who, like any other family, had an occasional "squabble." When a family member got "a little too rambunctious or needed to learn a little lesson" Jim, a three time Golden Gloves winner, was more than willing to accommodate his sibling. The 195 had boxing gloves aboard and when the cook, Harold Jero, began to "constantly bad mouth the boat" Jim and the crew took offense that this "goof-off was not only insulting their boat, but that he was contributing nothing to make the war situation any better," said Murray. Because most of the crew was bigger than Jero. (They say that was the reason. I think it had much to do with Jim's boxing experience.), Jim Murray was "put up" by the crew to work on Jero's attitude. "The next time he commenced to throwing down the bad mouth, I told him to 'shut it up.' I didn't want to hear no more of it from somebody that didn't do anything to make the boat any better. Jero didn't take too kindly to what I (Jim) said, or he doubted what I might do about it, so I knocked his young ass over into the drink before he knew it and really, he turned out to be a right nice person after that. And, I never heard him say another foul word about the boat either."

We've all had similar lessons during our lives that helped us to see the importance of family and teamwork. It's these hard lessons of love that make us better people and a richer family.

The Foot Soldier

The make-up of a man is that we feel adventure and excitement when we step beyond the bounds of our training. The temporary switching of roles as we "wear another hat" helps break the monotony of mundane tasks. The football lineman who gets a chance to catch and run with the ball, the baseball catcher who practices or plays a game in the infield, the fireman who plays policeman or vice-versa. For the crew aboard PT 195 their training as sailors brought them to the far-away islands of the Pacific to meet an enemy in unfamiliar waters. Operating in conjunction with the other branches of the American armed forces, history records the US Navy's remarkable achievement as they effectively and efficiently played a major role in the defeat of the Japanese.

Occasionally, the sailor was asked to replace his hat with the helmet of the infantryman, the foot soldier. For the crew of PT 195 the chance to step outside the bounds of their training occurred in Northern New Guinea when some native guides took the crew ashore to flush out a Japanese encampment. Gathering their small arms that were stored below deck, this "shore party" went to "try their hand at being foot soldiers. Expecting to find only some

small action", these 'infant' infantrymen saw this as an opportunity to "become heroes without too much risk". Scout information depicted the Japanese occupying a hut as very sick and, according to Jim Murray, they "really were malnourished and extremely weak".

As these foot soldiers "snuck up on that hut, we were all clutching our weapons; we really got tense. Approaching the door, we nudged it open. All that was found was 3 or 4 corpses in Japanese uniforms and one body whose face was covered by old newspaper ." (Murray) Stepping inside and quietly viewing the scene, "tension began to ease". Having anticipated a fateful encounter with the Japanese and finding only corpses, the would-be-heroes could only reflect on the story that might have been written. Their relief soon dissipated when "after about a minute or so, the Japanese underneath the paper moved". (Murray) In an unrehearsed academy award rendition of the



The young crew of PT 195 and an ailing Japanese soldier (center, seated), they captured in North New Guinea

Keystone Kops, "you should have seen us 'soldiers' falling over top of one another getting back out that door. Finally realizing he wasn't much of a threat, we eased on back in there and made him get up". (Murray) With elephantiasis in both legs, this Japanese soldier quietly surrendered to his captives. To this Japanese prisoner, these sailors were a welcomed sight which saved him from a certain death. To these "foot soldiers" the sight of the shoreline and the deep clear water of the Pacific provided a comfort that only familiar surroundings brings.

Whale Watching

Stationed at Ormoc near the conclusion of the War, the 195 was given an assignment to patrol the waters in the area of the Comotoe Islands. The American victories in the Philippines were resulting in fewer and fewer engagements with the enemy. Thus, an air of optimism surrounded the crew as the likelihood of an enemy encounter diminished. As the intensity of the war decreased, its cumulative toll began to take affect. The men were tired, their bodies aching for a well-deserved rest. This depletion of energy is the inevitable product of any sustained routine of stress or trauma.

Calvin "Peepsite" Johnson recalls how such a routine caught up with him during one of their night patrols. He was given the starboard "condition two" watch from the 20mm gun mount. (When underway there were 2 watches, one port and the other starboard. Each was responsible for manning the guns as well as a 180 degree watch from their respective positions.) The 195 was patrolling the islands "with its center engine running and port and starboard engines idling on 'stand by readiness'. After about three hours of night patrolling and no radar targets in the area, Calvin began to doze." Caught between worlds of dream and reality, Calvin was suddenly startled by a surface noise about 100 feet to the starboard side. Reacting quickly, he yelled "Submarine, submarine!" As a whale surfaced in the darkness, exhaling through its air valve, Gil (Dad), who was standing in the cockpit replied "You fxxxxx rebel! Haven't you ever seen a whale before?!"

Momentarily Calvin had escaped the reality of war as his senses were dulled by his dream state, but he was unable to escape the "ribbing" of his soulmates. "It took many a days 'kidding' to live that one down."

Games People Play

Fighting in a war can alter behavior in a variety of ways. The happy-go-lucky man may adopt a mask of seriousness; the serious man may well turn to fun and games to relieve the stress of war. Differentiating whether someone was being serious or playing games was an art that could only be mastered by time spent with each other. Even then there was uncertainty.

"Late one evening after a hard days work of cleaning and taking on ammunition and fuel," Frank Huston's behavior puzzled the crew. They faced the dilemma of discerning whether he was "tantalizing" them or was feeling the terrible strains of war. On the previous nights patrol we expended most of the 195's ammunition. Recovering physically and emotionally from that encounter and subsequent resupplying, the crew "sat down on the forward deck, 'shooting the breeze' to relax." At that time "Frank Huston climbed topside through the forward hatch and sat down on the deck in the center of the men. He had a hand grenade which he began to roll on the deck with the palm

of his hand. Being satisfied that he had everyone's attention, Frank abruptly pulled the 'firing pin', placed the grenade on the deck and just as quickly jumped overboard." (Johnson)

The crew had no time to determine Frank's intent. I'm sure they've heard of similar such acts by men whose emotional strength was being drained. Thus, they "were in quick pursuit to join Frank. To their surprise and amazement the hand grenade didn't explode. Frank greeted his now wet comrades with a smile, "Relax, I dumped the black powder out." At this remark "they damn near drowned him." (Johnson)

The Light Side of the Dark Side

While stationed at Ormoc towards the end of the Japanese threat to the Philippines, the PT squadrons began to relax as encounters with the enemy diminished considerably. The occasional plane overhead was "ours" and there was little reason to believe that would change. (Murray)

However, as the sun was setting one evening, a Japanese "Zeke" plane used that setting sun as a background to hide his attack on the unsuspecting PT's moored at their Ormoc Base. With their tarps covering their decks, these PT's were "free shots" for this Japanese pilot. Relying upon the "relaxed" atmosphere in the bay, a close encounter soon developed that taught these sailors a valuable lesson later captured in words by Yogi Berra; "It ain't over till its over".

Jim Murray and Dad were "topside" at the time that this "Zeke" began his attack run against the unsuspecting targets below. Picking up the binoculars, Dad "put a 'spot' on him and immediately hollered Jap!." Throwing down their tarp and firing a 'Red Alert,' about a "half-a-dozen boats joined the 195 in getting ready for him as he made his run. We threw up enough 'flak' to 'rock him a bit'." (Murray) Passing some 40 to 50 yards directly above the 195, the Japanese pilot dropped two bombs that "straddled us." Able to eye each other during this close encounter, Skipper Bill Diver "thumbed his nose at him," and Jim Murray swears that "that damn Jap wagged his tail fin back at us. We didn't hit him. He got away clear and so did we."

Here were men who knew each other only as enemies. Men who, despite each others intent to kill the adversary, communicated through universal gestures that, translated by a 5 year old child meant "Ha Ha, you missed me!"

Celebrity Sweepstakes

World War II touched people from all walks of life. Young men, rich or poor, answered their nation's call to arms. People on the home front assumed roles for which they were unprepared yet did so enthusiastically since it

helped their "boys" do their job. Entertainers and celebrities left their stages and arenas to try to make the war less stressful for soldiers and sailors. This was a totally united war effort by the home front to do anything it could to ensure that the men on the fighting front would mentally and physically survive the challenges of defeating the enemy.

As a member of the "Millionaires Squadron", PT 195 had its own in-house celebrities in the Vanderbilts and baseball's Rip Collins. Yet despite their frequent contact with the famous names in Ron 12, the sighting of a stateside personality gave the crew moments that they would talk about for the duration of the war. From actor John Wayne, whose large frame filled cabin doors, to George "Papa Bear" Halas, president, coach and founder of the football Chicago Bears, celebrities found their way to the Pacific. Although many encounters were brief or perhaps even distant, they served the purpose of lifting the spirits of the sailors.

PT 195 was fortunate in that, on one occasion, their "sighting" of celebrities lasted for a considerable time as they were assigned to transport entertainers Bob Hope, Frances Langford, Jerry Colonna and tap dancer Patty Thomas, who the men claimed was "the prettiest of them all." This trip proved memorable for it had been a long time since the crew had seen caucasian women, especially ladies so physically appealing as Langford and Thomas. Perhaps it was their beauty that prompted the few incidents during the trip that when recalled, would serve the men so well as they escaped from the realities of war.



Celebrities like New York Yankee shortstop Phil Rizzuto, pictured here with Gil deMarras, left, and John Kwap, right, helped lift morale in the Philippines as a soldier and physical fitness instructor.

Radio Man "Hap" Deyo was assigned a task during the trip that required him to lift a hatch that led to the hull of the ship. As he bent down to lift the hatch, comedian Jerry Colonna realized that a few feet from Hap's head and at direct eye level were the skirted legs of Frances Langford and Patty Thomas who were seated facing the unassuming Deyo. Trying to "sneak a peek", Jerry Colonna ran to the aid of Hap Deyo saying "let me help you with that." For some time, a task usually handled easily by one man, became a difficult struggle for two.

Reaching their destination, it was the departure of Frances Langford that provided the other moment of spontaneity. To make her trip more comfortable, the crew provided her with a seat pillow. As she left the boat, Charlie "Denny" Denison was quick to grab that pillow and relying upon his olfactory senses and his imagination he went into a frenzy as his face soaked up the remaining warmth left by the "cheeks" of Miss Langford. Jim Murray still recalls the muffled, gargled sounds of Denny as he sunk his head deeper into that pillow. Would anyone be surprised if others followed suit or if the men argued over ownership of that pillow?

New York Yankees shortstop Phil "The Scooter" Rizzuto was another celebrity with whom men of PT 195 spent considerable time. A physical fitness instructor, Rizzuto honed his baseball skills at Base 17 in Samar. Shagging fly balls with the "Scooter", Dad, Jim Murray and John Kwap passed time by playing the national pastime, once again bringing a little bit of home into their lives. A picture of Dad, Rizzuto and John Kwap hangs in my home signed by the "Scooter" some 45 years after it was taken.

There's something special about meeting a celebrity. Just being able to "drop a name" as though there is some sort of meaningful relationship gives a person a positive sense about himself. The personalities who shared their celebrity status with the men serving in the armed forces were important participants in the total war effort. Their influence upon the morale of these men has been documented by the tone of the crew of PT 195 as they recalled their celebrity encounters.

The Bird Men

There are many episodes in life that, upon reflection, serve as symbols for greater understanding of events and the make-up of our character. For two men aboard PT 195, Charlie Denison and my father, Gil deMarras, a small parrot became such a symbol that proved significant in two ways.

Adopted by Dad and Charlie, this parrot was named "Filomena Faciola". (A name that was later applied to everyone on the boat). Nurtured through infancy, Filomena Faciola was fed and trained to sit upon the perch of their

shoulders. Like the young sailors, it knew that one day its mettle would be tested when he left home. That day came when the 195 was a few hundred yards off the coast of an island. While trying to teach the bird to talk, "Filomena Faciola" came of age as he leaped from the perch he called home and flew towards his shoreline of adventure. The worrisome "parents" attentively watched as their "child" struggled towards adulthood.

Silent prayers were said. Internally both men were whispering words of encouragement, their eyes intent on that parrot, uncertain that it was up to the task. As Filomena Faciola reached the shoreline, the "whispers of encouragement" became screams of joy. The beaming parents were proud of their son as he conquered his first hurdle. Although, now forever on his own, Filomena Faciola remained an "I wonder" to the two men: I wonder where he is; I wonder what he's doing; I wonder if we'll see him again.

Filomena Faciola came to symbolize the sailors themselves. Leaving proud parents behind to test their own mettle, they were the "I wonders" of their loved ones. I'm sure the parrot survived just as the men survived. Filomena Faciola; significant as a symbol of the challenge to these men; significant as an eternal tie between two men who never saw one another nor spoke to one another after January 1945.

Three months after Dad died, Filomena Faciola found his way into the lives of his children. Not knowing that he passed away, Charlie Denison wrote to Dad in 1982, some 37 years after they had last communicated. Mentioned in the letter was their parrot, a symbol of their youth and their eternal tie. Filomena Faciola now marvelously unites another generation.

A Drink and a Song

All of us have a song, which when heard, immediately reminds us of an earlier time or a special person or a belief we hold dear. Sometimes we even create words, put them to an already existing tune, and call it "our song". It is putting our feelings to verse; music coming from the heart, that makes such songs unforgettable.

Sitting along the pier at Ormoc Bay, a few of the men downed a drink or two and created their song, sung to the tune of "Shanny in Ole Shanny Town". Forty seven years after it was written, co-author Calvin "Moose" Buras recited the words at the reunion as if he and the boys were still dangling their feet off the pier, their torpedo juice in hand as they dulled their senses from the pains of war.

"It's only a PT in ole Ormoc Bay
The Decks are so rotten they are fallin' away
Just a tumble down boat with a tumble down crew
The Ole Man is horse shit, the exec's that way too.

I put in for transfer and it didn't go through
The Ole Man said "Buddy, this is for you"
So I'm singing the blues for the rest of my cruise
On a PT in Ole Ormoc Bay."

It may seem a silly song, and it may have been only a PT "whose decks were rotting away" but only these men were allowed to sing such words about their 195. Like the tight-knit family who only allows criticism from within, these men would lay their lives down for their brothers and their boat. This was their song, the unforgettable words pumped from their hearts. A verse that helped numb their pain. Yet, this song about a tumble down boat served to reinforce the unbreakable bond of this far from tumble down crew.

Of Vice and Men

There are many stories to be told about the vices of men who fight in a war. These episodes are fondly recalled with a hearty chuckle by the men whose memory of the incident is perhaps clearer today than it was the morning after it occurred. Whether it was the 50 cartons of American cigarettes from which the skipper claimed the Camels or "sitting under the 20' x 20' tarpaulin playing cards, sipping a little 'torpedo juice cocktail' ... It was all a fantastic experience and never to be forgotten. It instilled in all of us an appreciation for the fundamentals and basics of life, which made all of us a little tougher and stronger." (Diver)

Bob Clarkin recalls the incidents in which he and a few others tried to buy hot beer from an off-limits area from the non-drinkers. Accumulating quantities of cases, the beer was then passed over a fence and brought to the boat refrigerator for a cold beer party. It seems that beer and "torpedo juice" (the alcohol that was drained from torpedoes — sometimes called pink ladies) were at the center of many of the lighter moments shared by the crew.

The Beer Pen

Each month the men received their beer rations of 12 cans per man. Not everyone aboard PT 195 "indulged", therefore the number of available cans for those who drank surpassed rations. These men went ashore at Ormoc to the Beer Pen which was a wire enclosure. On one such excursion a party of four (Peepsite — Calvin Johnson, Frenchy — Junius DuPlantis, Moose — Calvin Johnson and Gil — Dad) drank their warm, "hot" beer in a rush. "Warm beer in the hot sun can take its toll in a hurry." Calvin Johnson recalls getting back to the 195, but not how. "I was aware of what was going on but as limp as a wet cloth."

As they approached the 195 a discussion ensued as to how to get Calvin Johnson across the 6 foot long, but 6 inch wide gangway. Dad suggested that they throw him across. Yelling to the crew already aboard to "put down a couple of life jackets on the deck at the gangway", the plan was to swing Calvin by his hands and feet and hoist him to his "landing pad". The men on board complied with the life jacket request and the launching of Calvin Johnson was completed. Dragged to one side, Calvin Johnson "slept peacefully until the sky started spinning. After an upchuck or two, Calvin recovered." The effects of the beer wore off in time to allow Calvin to face "some severe 'tongue wagging' the next day."

Christmas Cheer

On Christmas Day 1944, the 195 was anchored at Tacloban. Because it was Christmas, the men were treated to a big 40 mm ammunition can that was filled with great tasting fruit juice. Like most "spiked" punch, the "more you drank the better it tasted."

While the men were enjoying their Christmas Spirits they were entertained by the rest of the Navy which lit up the night skies during 3 or 4 air raids out in the Bay. The 195 was anchored with her sister boats close to shore while the 200 or so big ships out in the middle of the bay fired their tracers. Cheering 'Give 'em Hell', the crew of PT 195 were all having a wonderful time.

Not many days after, the 195 was on patrol when the radar picked up a large target. One of the "fish" failed to start and was subsequently "dumped over the side like scrap metal." The next day, Charlie "Denny" Denison was approached by Skipper "Chick" Diver in reference to the dud torpedo. Denny said, "Skipper, you know that great fruit juice we had at Christmas?" "Yeah" said Chick. "Well," replied Denny, "It was flavored with torpedo juice. I was going to replace it but it slipped my mind." Skipper Diver remembered the fun from a few nights ago and agreed "That was some party" but maintained that "we will use no more torpedo juice for flavor in the future." (Denison)

This story stands as a testimony to the leadership of Skipper Bill "Chick" Diver. What justifiably could have resulted in several reprimands was judiciously handled from within, amongst themselves. It's little wonder that his men loved him so.

Food for Thought

Food rations for the most part were not palatable. For weeks the men would go without fresh meat and the "K rations" that were distributed did little to satisfy their yearnings for a good home cooked meal. Those occasions when the men were able to enjoy entrees that tasted as well as they looked

raised morale creating a festive mood. The trick was to beg, borrow or steal those items that truly travelled the path into the mens hearts through their stomachs.

Two occasions demonstrate the extent the men would go to in order to improve their dietary plans. One occurred during their early days in Leyte (Philippines). The only fresh meat they had was "mutton", an Australian dish that "they couldn't bear to look at or smell." (Diver) As the 195 patrolled in Tacloban Bay, she pulled alongside a Liberty Ship that was known for its stockpile of foods. Lieutenant Leary who temporarily replaced Lieutenant Davies said "Men lets go get some steaks." The men thought he was losing his cool but nevertheless obliged his order to "break out some 'K rations' and start eating the crackers." After receiving permission to board the Liberty Ship, it wasn't long before Lt. Leary and another officer looked down at the impoverished-looking crew.

Soon after a pallet of food was lowered down to the 195 that was stacked with "a beef quarter, fresh vegetables, eggs and bacon." Lt. Leary became an "instant hero." The men ate well for the next three days. (Johnson) Only the cook, Hal Jero, did not find the food so appetizing for he bore the additional burden of preparation.

The other opportunity to improve their meal plan proved to be far less profitable and palatable. While taking food supplies from their tender, Frenchy (Junius DuPlantis) and Peepsite (Calvin Johnson) stood on the Tender deck which at the time was loaded down with boxes of canned foods. In green boxes and identified only by their stock number, Frenchy and Peepsite began "tossing them down to the waiting arms of Gil (Dad) and Moose (Calvin Buras)."

Proud of their caper the Robin Hoods hurried over the side to the 195. Anticipating "canned fruit or something good" they opened the first can from the first carton and found "Ugh" diced carrots." Subsequent cans were opened only to find more carrots prompting Gil (Dad) to chide "If you guys went to rob a bank you'd come back with pennies." (Johnson)

Beating Mother Nature

It didn't take much to keep the sailors content. An occasional decent meal, a good nights sleep and a nice shower went a long way in keeping the men's morale at a reasonable level.

Like food, water was rationed. PT 195 carried 200 gallons aboard which was strictly for cooking and drinking purposes. To bathe, the men relied upon the water they were able to capture from the water cooled generator. After using Government Issue (GI) soap, the men rinsed themselves with this "generated" water leaving an "uncomfortable sticky feeling afterward." (Johnson)

On occasion a welcomed rain shower would serve as the rinsing agent.

"Everyone including Skipper "Chick" Diver would strip naked, soap down with sweet soap and enjoy their fresh bath." Sometimes the men would just complete getting "soaped up" and the tropical shower would move off. "Cranking the engines, they chased the cloud down to finish their shower." (Johnson) This was the 195's answer to the unpredictability of nature; another force with which to contend.

When Mother Nature stormed her way into Tacloban Bay, ingenuity was called upon once again. It was December 1944 and the "typhoon" winds became increasingly stronger. The 195's "2 1/2 inch Hawser (the rope attached to the anchor) parted close to the anchor" forcing the crew to start the engines and turn into the wind. This maneuver was unsuccessful as they couldn't keep the bow of the boat into the wind.

"Gil came up with the idea of using a torpedo for an anchor. They fastened it to the Hawser with a turnbuckle and large shackles at each end. Another shackle went through the eye of the nose of the torpedo. At Skipper "Chick" Diver's command, they dropped the 'fish' over the starboard forward side. Working like an anchor the torpedo enabled the 195 to ride out the storm with the bow in the wind.

During the entire storm, the only men topside were Skipper "Chick" Diver, Gil (Dad), Jim Murray and "Peepsite" (Calvin Johnson). Al Bokum was at the engines. The severity of the storm cost the 195 any item that was not securely latched on the top side. Ammunition boxes, helmets and life vests were among those items swept overboard.

"When we were ready to get underway again, 'Moose' (Calvin Buras) was highly upset because he could not hoist the anchor aboard. That was when he and the rest of the crew found out that a torpedo was missing from its rack. We had to cut the Hawser and had to requisition another anchor and torpedo." (Johnson) Mother Nature proved once again to be a formidable yet manageable foe.

SKETCHES

The war experience is a personal experience. A sailor's perception of an event may differ from those of his crewmates. To the same extent, the ability to recall events is much dependent upon perception and emotion at the time of the occurrence. Isolated in one sailor's mind may be an event that lives as the scariest moment in his life, while that same scenario may be lost to time by another sailor who shared the same experience. This is true, as well, of the lighter moments.

The following are "sketches" recalled by individuals aboard PT 195. Often such recollections jar the memories of the crew - resurrecting a shared

moment. Other times, they remain unique to an individual, emphasizing once again the personal side of war.

"I must relate an occurrence which happened on the west side of the island of Bohol as we were returning from a patrol around the north side of Mindanao. "We were cruising along about 12 knots when we almost ran into a barge on an opposite course. We were taken by surprise, but so were the Japs although they managed to get off a few rounds of small arms fire as we passed. We immediately came about and gave chase in a rough sea, but a stern chase is a long chase, and we were surprised at the speed of the barge. The night was dark and trying to keep the barge in sight was difficult.

"Cal Buras was on the 37 MM bow chaser and was able to get off a round now and then, probably not too effectively due to the wild lurching of the bow and trying to see the barge in the rain and darkness. We managed to follow them and located them where they had beached the barge and had hurriedly taken their machine guns ashore to defend their position. We hoped to disable the barge, and made three passes, firing at the barge from a distance of perhaps 100 yards. Being unable to see the effects of our barrage, but hoping to have inflicted enough damage to disable the barge, we broke off the engagement and returned to base. Air search the next morning failed to locate the barge, so we suppose the Japs were able to get it operational and took off. A very unsatisfactory operation."

Bill Diver

"We had been patrolling a large bay on the north shore of Mindanao which was quite a distance from base requiring a 36 hour patrol. We would leave the base and anchor at a smaller island off the mouth of the bay to wait for darkness before beginning our patrols. There was a nunnery on the island, about a mile from the beach, which we visited. There also was a local bordello not far from the beach, so the crew were restricted to the boat and were not allowed ashore here as we were very close to enemy territory. I was stricken with yellow fever a few days later and a replacement officer took the "Niner-Five" on this patrol in my stead. He allowed some of the crew ashore and not long after, one of those who had gone ashore came down with 'the clap'".

Bill Diver

"Usually after a heavy night of patrolling with two other PTs the group would take three or four days off. These days were filled with the usual chores, cleaning the deck and cleaning the guns (this had to be done every-day), then a canopy was set up and the poker game began. There was also a

lighter side at night when everyone would be in their bunks and the light would still be on. Someone would say "Hey Denny, turn out the light" and whoever was called on would take out their 45 and shoot out the lightbulb."

Charlie Denison

"I had a discussion with "Whitey" the cook who asked to talk to me. It turned out he wanted to marry a Filipino girl and stay in the islands after the war. I could hardly blame him as some of the Filipino girls were very attractive when young. I could not agree to this, but inquired about his family back in the States whom he would probably never see again, but he kept saying he couldn't go back, finally stating that he had killed a man, and some milkman had seen him at the scene of the crime. I was somewhat skeptical of this story wondering if he had concocted it to convince me to approve of his marriage to a local girl. I could not in good conscience do this, and so refused his request. It was never mentioned again."

Bill Diver

"... We were waiting for the Japs. We were sitting behind an island and I had a pipe in my mouth; not lit of course. I bit it in half. I was so scared while we were waiting. The moment we were told to go, we were no longer scared."

Bob Anderson

"There was a planned invasion of Cebu City which lay about midway on the east coast of Cebu Island behind an offshore island where there had been a Chevrolet motor manufacturing plant. We had traversed the waters between the city and the island one night but only observed a man (maybe on watch?) at the end of the pier get on his bicycle and ride into the city. We were supposed to give the alarm, but nothing happened."

"On the other boat was Joe Burke, a former single sculls champion, who was now coach of the University of Pennsylvania rowing crew, but was on leave to the Navy. He was a big red-headed raw boned man with ice water in his veins when it came to patrolling. We had an assignment that night to sound the waters off the beach just south of the city. We laid out a grid and decided to start as close to the beach as possible. So the "Niner-Five" crept closer to the beach until we almost ran into barbed wire entanglements which had been strung along the shore in two lines. As we looked at the beach we could see the muzzles of machine guns in their emplacements. Jim Murray, the Quartermaster, and I were on the bow. Jim doing the sounding and I marking the soundings on the grid as we moved the boat slowly backward then over to the next row, into the beach again and slowly withdrawing,

sounding as we went. "This was about the eeriest operation of all. We found the Japanese well prepared for an assault on that beach—which did take place a few days later after naval guns had softened up the resistance, but it was still a bloody go. Why we were not fired on that night I do not know, but I suspect the Japanese were saving their ammunition for the invasion."

Bill Diver

"... One shot! I imagine I hit it in the fuel tank...I slipped up on the 20 MM and one shot later, that plane was down...I guess accidents will happen."

Bernard Du Frene

"One day while patrolling on the west side of Cebu Island we were hailed by a couple of P51's, the twin fuselage U.S. fighter plane. We had been probing an inlet in the area and when they asked if they could help, we requested they make a few passes to observe anything up the inlet. They came around and approached the shoreline at screaming speed only a few feet off the water and when ready to crash into the palms at waters edge, suddenly shot straight up into the sky. It was a thrilling exhibition of airmanship, but turned up no activity below. It was nice to know there were some of "our guys" around."

Bill Diver

"Surigao Strait was the worst. We came around the corner and that Yokahama came about the other way...Thank God the batteries were out of it..."

Bernard Du Frene

"I didn't particularly like getting bombed!"

Bob Clarkin

"One day while making a last pass along the beach just before breaking off the patrol to return to base, we encountered a lone Japanese in a canoe some distance off shore. We were wary of any such encounter as there had been a few instances of taking a prisoner who was carrying a grenade in his breach clout to use when he was pulled aboard the boat, so we began to fire at the Japanese who quickly jumped overboard and ducked behind the canoe. We could only see a little of his close cropped head as he came up for air from time to time. The scene of a 63 ton naval vessel engaging a single enemy in a canoe was rather sickening and we broke off the engagement and started for base."

Bill Diver