

UNITED STATES
MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS
SQUADRON 16
HISTORY

Dedicated to the brave men who served so honorably and proudly in the squadron and especially to the men who lost their lives while doing so.

Compiled, written and edited by Cele Piotter

Wife of Alfred F. Piotter
(CCS of Squadron 16)

With sincere appreciation to many members of the squadron for their generous assistance. To list them would be unfair to those who would be inadvertently omitted. However, Tommy Hart is the exception. Without his most complete diary, Squadron 16 History would never have made it off the ground.

THANK YOU!!! --- ALL OF YOU.

IS IT!

THE HOME LIFE OF PT SQUADRON 16 ... IN THE SOUTH WEST PACIFIC

our great Naval Command and here we find the Vice-Admiral-in-Charge-of-All P.T. Squadrons



WHERE IS SQUADRON 16?

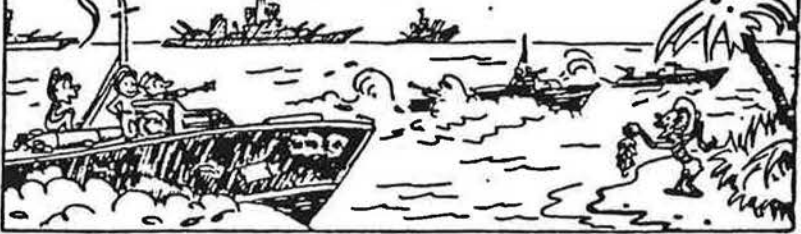
'SQUADRON 16' - ON THE LITTLE ISLAND OF 'BOOLA-LAGOOLA' SPRINGS INTO INSTANT ACTION ON THE ARRIVAL OF ORDERS -- FROM DISTANT WASHINGTON--



DUTY CALLS! -- AND OUR MILE-A-MINUTE MOSQUITO FLEET RUSHES OUT TO MANGLE THE "NIPS"...

JEEPERS! WHAT A WAR! NOBODY'S MAD AT US -- PEACHY STUFF!

ACCOMPANIED BY A MIGHTY TASK FORCE OF UNCLE SAM'S NAVY - (AND A FEW UNION SOLDIERS) - THE SQUADRON PROCEEDS TO ESTABLISH THEIR ADVANCE BASE AGAINST SLIGHT OPPOSITION --



WHILE THE GREAT SHIPS STEAM MAJESTICALLY BACK TO THE PEARL HARBOR OFFICERS CLUB -- (HON. YIPES!)



OUR LITTLE GROUP IS SPOTTED BY AN EXTREMELY INTERESTED PARTY

THIS CHARACTER IS SOON JOINED BY A NUMBER OF HIS HAIRY COUSINS...

--FLYING A NICE, TIGHT FORMATION, TODAY -- PLEASE TO GIVE ORDER FOR HON. "ATTACK!"



A FEW OF THESE UNPLEASANT PEOPLE WERE SHOT DOWN BY THE MOSQUITOES -- BUT MOST SIMPLY CRASHED DUE TO CROWDED CONDITIONS OVER THE BOATS --

DRAT!! ANOTHER CRANK-CASE IN MY SEA-BAG!



AND THEIR NAVY ALSO PEEKED IN ON US --

OK! OK! SO WE'RE BEING ATTACKED! -- THROW ROCKS AT 'EM --!

AFTER A WEEK, THINGS WERE GETTING BACK TO NORMAL FOR THE SQUADRON...



WHILE... BACK IN WASHINGTON --

--THOSE BOYS DID A GREAT JOB, MISS ROLINS, --WIRELESS "EM A WELL DONE" AND "CARRY ON"--OH--AND SEND THEM ALL THE "LITTLE COMFORTS" -- THEY CERTAINLY DESERVE THE BEST!!



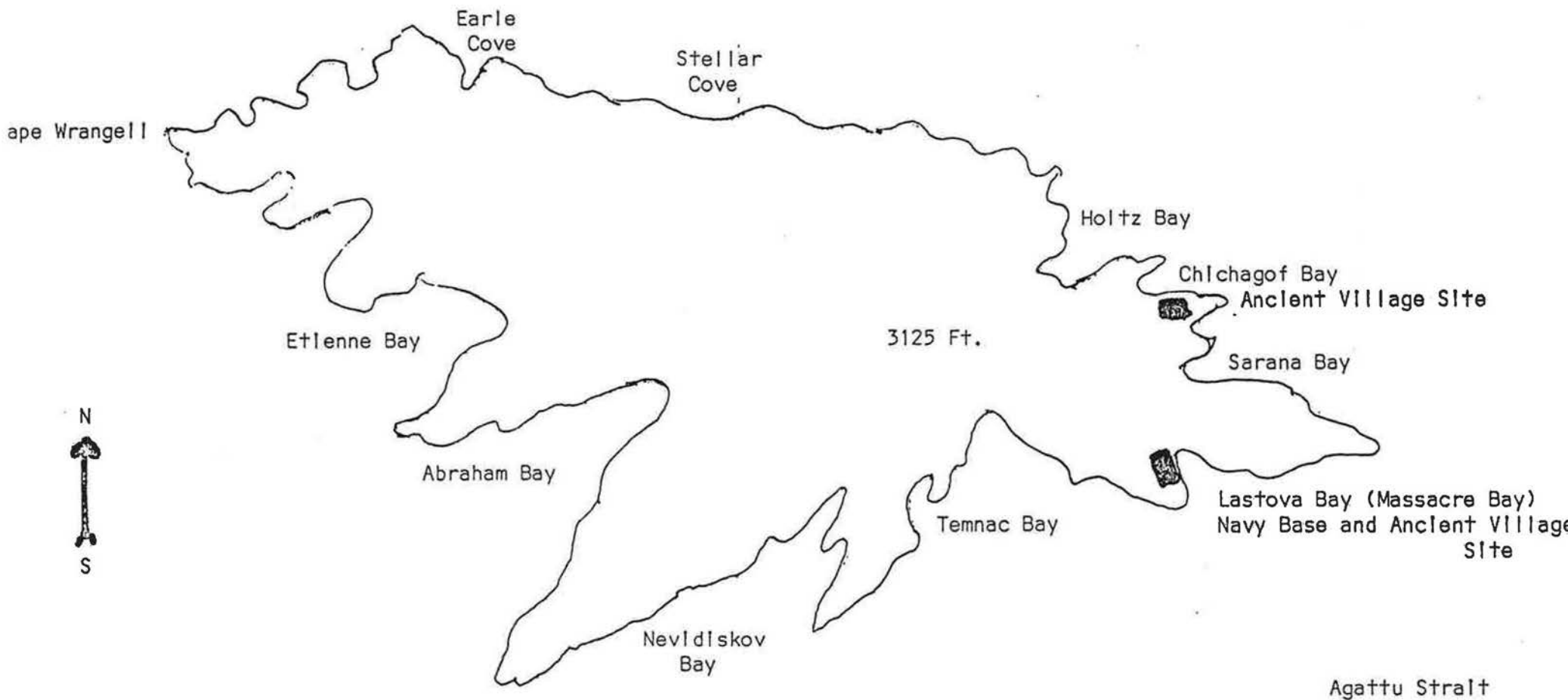
TRUE TO ITS TRADITIONS, THE GREAT "LINE OF SUPPLY" REACHES OUT--BRINGING JOY AND COMFORT TO SQUADRON 16.

CREEPS! WE'VE STRUCK IT RICH! --67 TONS OF SPAM! -- FUR-LINED, ARCTIC WATER WINGS--SIZE FIFTY-SIX!



THAT'S MY NAVY!

ATTU ISLAND



THE STINGERS OF SOME OF THE MOSQUITOES FROM THE MOSQUITO FLEET

SQUADRON 16

Torpedo Boat fighting has a style all its own. The PTs become a sort of naval guerilla force, operating in strange waters that have in many instances never been charted, subject to attack from planes, surface units and shore fire, and with the added hazard of patrolling through the long black nights in waters where the slightest wrong move means a boat with its bottom sliced out on the razor-edged coral neggerheads. It is no wonder that after an all night patrol the boat crews are haggard and unshaven with red-rimmed eyes and weary aching bodies.

By daybreak, the patrols are usually over. They come in, before noon, skirting the reefs that mark the entrance to the little harbor. They come slowly past, in column, and if the night has been productive, proudly sema-phoring their score ahead to the men on the beach. There are times, too, when they come limping in with a hull riddled with shell holes and men to be lifted over the side and carried to sick bay.

When the patrols come in the Boat Skippers go ashore to write out their reports. At the same time, the execs take the boats over to the fuel docks to gas up. Even though all hands have been at battle stations throughout the night there is still no sleep for anyone until the boats are again in fighting shape. That means: refueled, radios and engines checked, and all guns completely stripped down and cleaned. After a night spent plowing through heavy seas, a fifty caliber machine gun is a mass of rusty junk; an unholy mess that has to be sweated over for hours. The boys work in the blistering noon-day sun, or a cold blizzard, their tired fingers doing mechanically the job they have done so many countless times before.

The work done, the boats move over to their nests along the edge of the jungle, or rock infested tundra shores. These dispersal points are carefully chosen with an eye to protection from air reconnaissance and attack.

Squadron 16 was officially commissioned as a fighting unit of the United States Navy on February 26, 1943, at the Higgins Boat Yard, New Orleans, Louisiana. It was decommissioned November 26, 1945, at PT Base 17, Samar, Philippine Islands. PT 213 was the boat used for the commissioning.

Squadron 16 participated in the Aleutian campaign from August 1943 to May 1944. Transferred to the Southwest Pacific, the squadron had action at Mios Woendi, Dutch New Guinea; Mindoro, Philippine Islands; and Brunel Bay, Borneo. It also based for a time at Dreger Harbor, New Guinea; and San Pedro Bay, Philippine Islands, but had no action from these bases. As part of Task Unit 70.1.4, Squadron 16 was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation for action at Mindoro, from December 15 to 19, 1944.

The squadron was commissioned under the command of Lieutenant Commander Russell H. Smith, hence the Squadron Insignia, "Snuffy Smith" (a popular cartoon character), riding a torpedo.

He held the command until April 1943, a period of approximately 2 months, when the Executive Officer Lieutenant Almer P. Colvin received the command. About 20 months later, having been wounded in action, Lieutenant Commander Colvin was relieved of his command, and replaced by Lieutenant John H. Stillman, USNR, on December 18, 1944. Less than 2 months later, Lieutenant Stillman was killed in action on February 1, 1945, when Lieutenant Robert J. Wehrli, USNR, was placed in temporary command until February 12, when he was replaced by Lieutenant Philip A. Swart, USNR, also temporarily. On February 22, 1945, Lieutenant Roger H. Hallowell, USNR, replaced Lieutenant Swart, and held the command until October 14, 1945. The last command was given to Lieutenant John V. McElroy who remained with the squadron until its decommissioning, November 26, 1945.

Boats manufactured by Higgins were assigned to Squadron 16. They were 78' long, and 20' wide at their widest point which was the bridge. The hulls were mahogany---two layers of 5/8" planking, between which was a layer of canvas coated with marine glue. They drew 4½' to 5¼' of water and weighed 121,000 pounds. Top speed, under ideal conditions was 55 knots. (Conditions were seldom ideal.) There were seven compartments. From bow to stern, they were: The rope locker, used as storage for all lines, fenders, shackles, etc.; the crews quarters and head, the officers' quarters and head. Compartment 3 also had the two forward gas tanks - one on each side of the officers' head; the engine room, containing the three twelve-cylinder packard V-12 engines, giving 4500 shaft horsepower; the auxilliary generator, and heater; the tank room, between the two aft gasoline tanks - the tanks held 3,000 gallons of high octane gasoline and 200 gallons of potable water; the

lazaret, a storage room and improvised sleeping quarters; the rudder room which housed the steering apparatus, and furnished improvised sleeping accommodations for two. Each boat could carry enough provisions for about five days.

Originally the boats armament consisted of two turret mounts of twin-fifty caliber machine guns, one on each side of the chart house; a 20mm anti-aircraft gun on the stern; rifles, pistols, sub-machine guns, and two automatic shot guns. The boats also carried four torpedoes in tubes, two along each side of the deck. They carried three depth charges and a smoke screen generator. The original compass - a 4" magnetic compass designed for aircraft by Pioneer Company proved very inefficient for the PT boats. For communications the boats had a two-way voice VHF radio and a direction finder. Pound for pound, the PT boat was by far the most heavily armed vessel afloat.

The galley and sleeping quarters for eight men were in the crews quarters. The four upper bunks were built into the bulkhead. The four lower bunks served as seats during the day, their occupants folding their mattresses and blankets and storing them in the upper bunks.

Personnel consisted of two officers and nine men. Additional armaments were stuck aboard in various theatres depending upon the need. As armament increased more personnel was added.

Boats assigned to Squadron 16 were:

PTs 71, 72. Transferred from Squadron 4, January 20, 1943. Transferred to Squadron 17, March 13, 1943.

PT213. Placed in service, February 16, 1943. Transferred to Squadron 15, March 13, 1943.

PT214. Placed in service, February 18, 1943. Transferred to Squadron 15, March 13, 1943.

PTs 215, 216. Placed in service, February 26, 1943. Transferred to Squadron 15, March 13, 1943.

PTs 217, 218. Placed in service, March 5, 1943. Transferred to Squadron 15, March 13, 1943.

PT219. Placed in service, March 5, 1943. Damaged in storm, September 14, 1943, at Casco Cove, Aleutian Islands, and scrapped.

PTs 220, 221. Placed in service, March 12, 1943. Placed out of service, stripped and destroyed, November 26, 1945.

PTs 222, 223, 224. Placed in service, March 19, 1943. Placed out of service, stripped and destroyed, November 26, 1945.

PT235. Transferred from Squadron 20, February 10, 1945. placed out of service, stripped and destroyed, November 26, 1945.

PTs 241, 242. Transferred from Squadron 23, February 25, 1945. placed out of service, stripped and destroyed, November 26; 1945.

PT295. Placed in service, October 15, 1943. Transferred to Squadron 4, December 2, 1943.

PT296. Placed in service, October 18, 1943. Transferred to Squadron 4, December 2, 1943.

PT297. placed in service, October 20, 1943. placed out of service, stripped and destroyed, November 26, 1945.

PTs 298, 299. Placed in service, October 26, 1943. placed out of service stripped and destroyed, November 26, 1945.

PT300. Placed in service, October 29, 1943. Destroyed by enemy suicide plane, December 18, 1944, at Mindoro, Philippine Islands.

PT301. Placed in service, November 4, 1943. Damaged by explosion, in port at Mios Woendi, off the coast of New Guinea, November 7, 1944.

PTs 295-301, placed in service after the Squadron had departed for the Aleutian Islands, were designated as Squadron 16B, which was commissioned as a separate command under Lieutenant James H. VanSicklen, USNR. Squadron 16B was placed out of commission on May 31, 1944, when it joined the parent Squadron, in Seattle, Washington.

Tools and equipment for Squadron 16's base force arrived on March 1, 1943.

The work assigned to the men in the shop on March 3, 1943, consisted of assembling mail-boxes, fire-axe boxes and silverware trays. A load of 2'x4's and cypress was delivered to the base.

On March 4, 1943, the base force carpenters installed shelves on PT214, made file boxes for the Disbursing Office and mounted clocks aboard the boats.

One of Squadron 16's first assignments was to deliver PTs 199 and 200 to MTBTS (Motor Torpedo Boat Training Station), Melville, Rhode Island, and to return after a weather beaten cruise, with PTs 71 and 72, on March 5, 1943, to Lake Pontchartrain, New Orleans, Louisiana. They were delivered to Higgins for refitting and then assigned to Squadron 17.

A Captain's Mast was held on March 6, 1943, for George Johnson. He was given five days restriction and five extra hours of duty for being twenty minutes AWOL.

On March 9, 1943, shelves were installed in the lazarette of PT215, by the base carpenters, who continued working on the boats on the 10th.

The carpenters experimented on PT217, putting a bunk in the lazarette, at Mr. Colvin's suggestion, on March 11, 1943, and worked out a method for securing the screws.

On March 12, 1943, the work on the boats was partially done while underway. The men found it quite an experiment to walk and work in the lazarette while the boat bounced on the water. They worked under the same conditions on the 13th. Joe Brunner wound up in sick bay with an infected knee from a fall he took while working on the moving boats.

More work was done on the bunks of the lazarettes, on March 16, 17 and 18, 1943, plus work in the shop outfitting an office for the Personnel Officer.

Work was done on Ensign Sherman's PT220, on March 20, 1943, and they took a group of N.R.O.T.C. for a cruise.

On the morning of March 21, 1943, PT215 collided with a PBY out on the lake. Rough water and a stuck throttle were the cause of the accident.

Lazarette work was done on PTs 219, 220, 221, 222, 223 and 224, on March 22, 1943.

PTs 213, 214, 215, 216 217 and 218 left New Orleans, Louisiana, on March 23, 1943, and sailed for Pensacola. The base carpenters worked on CO2 installations and gun racks on PTs 219, 220, 221, 222, 223 and 224.

On March 28, 1943, some visiting WAVES were taken aboard the boats and were given a cruise around the lake.

A ball game between the officers and the enlisted men of the Squadron was held on the afternoon of March 30, 1943, with two kegs of beer as a thirst quencher. "Pop" Havens was the umpire, but no score was reported to this writer.

Mid-morning of April 16, 1943, Squadron 16, then consisting of PTs 219, 220, 221, 222, 223 and 224, slowly drew into formation and left the West End Yacht Club, New Orleans, Louisiana. They cleared the lagoon and sailed on a course across Lake Pontchartrain entering the Gulf of Mexico, about 1300 hours of the same afternoon.

Encountering stormy weather, Squadron Commander Colvin gave the order to change course. The remainder of the voyage from Alabama to Pensacola, Florida, was made by way of Inter-coastal Waterway. The boats were docked at the air base while still daylight.

There was a general scramble for a building near the dock where some other sailors were showering.

Everyone wanted to make liberty that night. The two sections of each boat were to take turns. Some of the fellows of the first group found the city rather sedate and quiet. However, Tex Henderson, radioman on the 221 boat made the acquaintance of some civilians who were well supplied with whiskey. On their way to an out of town spot that supposedly stayed open late, they smashed the car. Henderson nearly fractured his skull, cut a long gash under one eye, and received numerous bruises. He presented a sorry spectacle the next day.

The next night the other half of the crews rated liberty. Shore patrol was particularly active and obnoxious that night, and almost snared some of the Squadron 16 boys. Pete Rock, captain of the 221 boat, Shorty Ellis, Whitey Kiendzior and O. O. Fowler had been making the rounds of the taverns. At about eleven-thirty they bought a quart of whiskey and started unsteadily back to the boats. A Shore Patrol truck screeched to a halt beside them and three SPS and an officer, on SP duty, leaped out and grabbed them.

"These men are too drunk to roam the streets," the officer said to his men. "Take them in and lock them up." He then noticed that Pete Rock was an officer. "Are these your men?" he asked. None of them were from his boat, but Rock said, "Sure they are and I'll take care of them." The SP officer said, "In that case I'll leave them in your hands, if you think you can get them back to the boat. I'll take this though," he said, taking the whiskey from Ellis and setting it in the back of the truck.

The officer and his three helpers got in the truck and the motor roared. "Get that quart," Rock ordered. Ellis jerked the rear door open, grabbed the bottle and was nearly bowled over by the rush of the culprits from inside the truck.

They dashed off down the street, Pete Rock in the lead and Fowler bringing up the rear. The drunken and rowdy sailors who were being hauled off to the brig ran in every direction. The SPS gave chase but finally drove away with an empty truck in search of new victims.

On April 19, 1943, the squadron left Pensacola for Tampa, Florida, refueled and sailed on at mid-night for Key West.

The boats moored at the dock of Key West, Florida, late in the afternoon of April 20, 1943, pulling out on the morning of the 22nd and reached La Fe, Cuba, on the morning of the 24th.

On the night of April 26, 1943, the squadron set sail for Cozumel Island, reaching there on the afternoon of the 27th. The boats refueled and on the 29th were underway for Honduras.

Due to erroneous computation of the compass, of 10 degrees, on the

lead boat, with the squadron commander aboard, the squadron traveled south-southwest and made landfall about 60 miles to the west of destination. Upon discovery of the error the squadron commander changed course easterly towards Islas De La Bahia Island. According to the chart there was a lighthouse on Islas De La Bahia Island. The squadron proceeded to the point where the light should have been visible but no light was seen. Proceeding a short distance further, the decision was made to stream sea anchors. When daylight arrived one boat's sea anchor was caught on the bottom and the island loomed about a half mile away.

The squadron arrived at La Ceiba, Honduras, on April 30, 1943. After a few hours, it was on to Puerto Castilla, arriving the same night. The trip was short and the boats were due to dock at 2200. As the boats drew near the port, a ship suddenly challenged with blinker. The lead boat, PT219, did not answer immediately, for some reason. By the time the first challenge was answered other challenges came from ships and shore positions. The first ship could not understand the 219's answer. Searchlights suddenly came on from several directions. Some searched the sky, - others the water. More ships and shore positions began challenging with blinker, and signaling messages back and forth to each other. All six boats were busy answering challenges from all directions.

PT219 manned her guns. No one would have been surprised if the ships and shore batteries had opened fire. After the searchlights finally spotted the boats and the challenges were answered satisfactorily, the squadron was permitted to proceed to the dock of Puerto Castilla. There it was learned the squadron had been mistaken for a submarine or submarines, especially since the PTs had given the signal for the previous day.

The following day the boats refueled and in early evening set sail for Cabezas, Nicaragua. On May 3, 1943, the squadron was underway to Port Lemon, Costa Rica, arriving at 1100 hours.

The squadron remained at port Lemon for three days, during which time the men found time for a bit of recreation. A group of the athletes from the squadron formed a baseball team and took on the port Lemon team. At the time of this writing the final score has long since been forgotten, but it is recalled that the squadron gave the natives quite a shellacking. In the first inning, Al Szczech tripled followed by a home run by Pete Rock. He hit the ball so hard it traveled out of the park, over the railroad tracks and the boxcars standing on them. The natives were so impressed, they carried Pete all around the town. (All 200 plus pounds of him.)

Early on the morning of May 7, 1943, the squadron was underway for Panama. The voyage was made in pleasant weather on a comparative smooth sea. As

usual under such circumstances the trip was enlivened by numerous amusing or interesting incidents such as the following which occurred on PT224. Ensign Benton decided that his crew should be more "Navy". He ordered the lookouts to stop such reporting as "I see land up ahead, Sir" or "There's a buoy off to port". They were instructed to sing out "Land-ho" or "Buoy-ho". The officer in charge was then supposed to respond, "Where away". The lookout would then indicate the direction.

One of the lookouts, John Klemanski, soon grew tired of this. "Land-ho" he called.

"Where away," Benton echoed.

"Far, far away" called Klemanski. He was called down from his position behind the gun turret and given a lecture. However, after this incident not much more was heard about being more "Navy".

The squadron was due to arrive at 1630 but as afternoon wore on there was no sight of land. Tom Hart was the lookout on PT221, trying to keep alert for driftwood or other objects in the water ahead, while scanning the horizon for any ship, buoy or land that might appear. Cliff Anderson was at the wheel. Suddenly a 20'-30' log appeared in the side of an oncoming wave. Hart cried "port! port!" but there was no time to avoid it. The boat hit the log with a slight shock, then began vibrating so badly that both officers were immediately up on deck.

While damage to the screws was being determined a man was sent below to see if there had been any damage to the hull of the boat. He immediately came flying topside crying that the boat was leaking and that the water was already 14 inches deep in the officers' head. Everyone was excited thinking that the boat was sinking. Since the bilge pump refused to work, Chief Johnson, Jim Donald and Tom Hart jerked up the deck plate to facilitate bailing. All the water fell into the bilge, which to everyone's surprise, was almost dry instead of overflowing. Only then did someone notice that water was boiling out of the toilet bowl. The sea valve to the head had been left open and the water was coming in through it. The sea valve was closed and the deck plate replaced. The only damage that occurred was to two suitcases of clothing belonging to Pete Rock which had been floating around in the water.

The soft darkness of the tropics began to settle over the boats making them continually more indistinct and difficult for the lookouts to keep track of. The squadron was already six hours overdue, but there was no sign of being near its destination. On into the night the boats continued southward --- so far, it was later determined that they were near the coast of Columbia. Near midnight the lead boat turned back and after a half hour's sailing put out the sea anchor. All

but a lookout on each boat retired for the night.

The following morning the squadron resumed its search for the canal. All boats were low on gas and it was feared they might run out and be stranded in the Caribbean. Soon low flat islands covered with palm trees and long sandy spits of land began to appear. By this time the boats were so low on gas they came in on one engine. A submarine followed the squadron until it docked. Reaching the canal was a great relief. In addition to the fear of being stranded without gas it was known that the waters off the canal were heavily mined. There were mine-free lanes for friendly shipping to follow but the boats had already sailed through the mine fields before the location of the canal was found.

The squadron docked at the Naval Base of Coca Sola, on May 10, 1943. PT221 moved to a narrow arm of the harbor and put in for repairs. Night had fallen before the boats tied up at Balboa, on the Pacific end of the canal.

Taboga Island was to be the temporary destination of the squadron. On arrival PT221 immediately went into drydock since the repair job at Coca Sola had not been entirely successful. At Taboga nightly practice maneuvers were held. The training of both - officers and men continued relentlessly. Sham attacks were made at larger ships, and aircraft were fought off.

One of the diversionary outings for the squadron, while stationed at Taboga was a steak cook-out, on Morro Island. The Skipper had insisted on no garlic on his steak. John Holt Harris, Executive Officer, ordered Cookie Piotter to put garlic on the Skipper's steak, assuring him he would take the responsibility. Needless to say it delighted the Skipper, as some months later, the squadron was stationed at Attu, in the Aleutian Islands, when a plane arrived from Seattle carrying only mail and a case of garlic.

On May 16, 1943, PT223 was taken to Balboa for repairs, having burned out two bearings. The shaft was replaced and a new generator installed.

While refueling at Balboa the crews of PTs 219, 220, 221 and 222 learned that they had seen Taboga for the last time. On June 4, 1943, these four boats were floated over sunken cradles, lifted by crane, swung aboard the U.S.S. Schuykill, a tanker, and lowered to prepared resting places on the deck.

PTs 223 and 224 returned to Taboga to be shipped later.

Leaving Panama the U.S.S. Schuykill's destination was to have been New Caledonia. After one day out, the orders were changed to Pearl Harbor. On the third day the orders were again changed and the ship altered her course for Bremerton, Washington. On June 17, 1943, the U.S.S. Schuykill with her cargo of PT boats entered Puget Sound. The ship docked at Bremerton Navy Yard and the boats were

unloaded by crane the same night.

A few of the crewmen were from the Seattle area and were permitted to spend most nights at home. Al Szczech was given a leave to go to New York where his wife was soon to make him a father. Several wives came to visit their sailor husbands. (Among them this writer.) Two marriages occurred. The first to get married was George Johnson, Radioman on PT222. The bride was given in marriage by John Holt Harris, Executive Officer of the squadron. After the ceremony champagne and rum flowed along with an ample supply of sandwiches. Jack Topping, Radioman of PT220 was the next to be married. Lieutenant Colvin, Squadron Commander presented Topping's bride to him.

After three weeks in Bremerton, the boats moved to Seattle. This made it more convenient for the crews, who spent most of their liberties in Seattle anyway, and that entailed an hour's ride on the ferry, from Bremerton.

PTs 223 and 224 were loaded aboard the U.S.S. Sepulga on June 30, 1943, at Balboa. They were underway at 1200 hours on July 14. The U.S.S. Sepulga with her cargo of PT boats left San Pedro at 1400 hours on July 15 and arrived at Seattle, Washington, on July 22 at 2100 hours. The boats were immediately unloaded by means of a large crane and moored at pier 7, Bremerton Navy Yard.

⁶⁻²⁸⁻⁴³ The torpedo tubes were removed and replaced with Mark 15 tubes. Radar and a Cyro Compass were added.

After a briefing by the squadron's Executive Officer, Lieutenant John Holt Harris, PTs 219, 220, 221 and 222 departed Seattle, on July 20, 1943. At mid-afternoon they put in at Patricia Bay on the southern end of Vancouver Island.

The morning of July 21, 1943, after a run up the inland waterway separating Vancouver Island from British Columbia, the boats docked at port Hardy.

Underway on the morning of July 22, 1943, the voyage was resumed reaching the Canadian Army Camp of Shearwater, where the boats were refueled.

Continuing the journey on the morning of July 23, 1943, the boats drew into a small cove to Princess Royal Island in late afternoon.

The boats refueled at Ketchikan, the first port reached in Alaska, and sailed for Baranof where they docked the first night out.

On the following morning the boats set sail mooring at port Althorp, with Yukatat being the next port reached.

After reaching Seward the voyage continued to Kodiak Island encountering very rough seas.

The next port was Chignik, in Chignik Bay. Casting off the next morning, the boats made way for Sand point. This was the last stop before sailing for the

Aleutian Islands, where the first port was Dutch Harbor on Unalaska Island. PT221 went into drydock to be scraped and painted during the four days the boats remained at this base.

When the boats set sail from Dutch Harbor they faced a stiff gale. As the day wore on the wind rose steadily and the sea continued to grow rougher. To continue the voyage was next to impossible so the boats put in at Inanudak Bay, on the northern coast of Umnak Island. Here they remained until the following day when they retraced part of the previous days course. The boats anchored at point Otter, on the eastern side of Umnak Island. After a few hours the boats crossed the narrow channel that separates Umnak and Unalaska and put in for refueling at Chernofski, on the latter island. When the boats were refueled they sailed through Umnak Pass into the Bering Sea and continued the voyage to Atka Island.

The trip from Atka to Adak was uneventful and the squadron continued to Attu making a stop at Amchitka enroute.

The Naval Base at Attu was situated on a peninsula at Massacre Bay, in the midst of an ancient Aleut village site.

PTs 219, 220, 221 and 222, attached to Task Group 91,3, arrived at Attu about the first of August 1943. The island had been recaptured from the Japanese the previous May, but a few stragglers remained in the mountains. Several were found and captured.

About mid-August 1943, PTs 223 and 224, the last two boats of Squadron 16, sailed from Seattle. Their first stop was York Island, in British Columbia. The next port was Bella Bella where they refueled and were underway the following morning, for Ketchikan, Alaska.

After a two day rest, they shoved off for Juneau. On the way, PT224 had trouble with her engine. The two boats remained in Juneau for eight days for the replacement.

Seward was their next port. After refueling they set sail for Kodiak encountering very rough weather. The Skipper of PT223, Lieutenant Chet Bell, USNR, suffered an attack of appendicitis, and Ed Kalinowski, MOMM2/c, also of PT223, had his chin opened, in the crews quarters, before the men could get topside. Ed chipped several teeth and bit the tip of his tongue off, due to the rough seas. It required ten stitches to close his chin --- the tongue healed by itself. Both boats returned to Seward.

The following day they again set sail for Kodiak. The stacks of the starboard engine on PT223 burned out. A monstrous wave smashed the cockpit on PT224 but both boats stayed on course. PT223 also had a hot run on one of her torpedoes but no damage was done. The two boats reached Kodiak August 27, 1943, where they

This was the 221 few Hinderley

put in for repairs.

On September 1, 1943, PTs 223 and 224 sailed for Dutch Harbor arriving on the 2nd. They reached Adak on the 4th.

PTs 223 and 224 were to have met the first four boats of the squadron at Adak but found they had already left for Attu. The 223 and 224 remained at Adak for replacement of an engine on the (224). 224 Engine was repaired in June 1943 and immediately

Arriving at Attu PT223 lost her center screw and (PT224) snapped a shaft. Both boats went directly into drydock for repairs.

Squadron 16's Base Force left Seattle aboard the U.S.S. Chaumont on August 1, 1943. They arrived at Kodiak on the 5th. The next day they sailed for Dutch Harbor arriving on the 8th, and Sea Bees were unloaded.

After a day at Dutch Harbor they resumed their journey arriving at the PT Base at Finger Bay, Adak, on August 11, 1943. They were sent to Happy Valley to care for gear which was arriving by freighters.

On September 7, 1943, PTs 223 and 224 loaded base force members aboard for the remainder of the journey. They left Adak and arrived at Amchitka on the 8th.

Leaving Amchitka on September 9, 1943, they were alerted to a plane crash in the area. They investigated but found nothing but oil on the surface. They arrived at Attu the same day.

With Lieutenant Commander Almer P. Colvin in command, Squadron 16 relieved Squadron 13 at Attu, in September 1943.

The Boats of Squadron 16 saw no more action than their predecessors but took a worse beating from the weather. Weather in the Aleutians is always unsettled, and often thick and rough. The hazards of surface and air navigation are greater there than any other part of the world.

On the morning of September 14, 1943, PT219 (Ensign Harold F. Grove, USNR) was moored to a buoy in Casco Cove, 350 yards from shore. The wind velocity was 40 knots with gusts to 55 knots. One gust parted the cable between anchor and buoy and though the 219 lighted off her engines within a minute, the boat was already aground on a rocky spit. Five hours later the Seaplane Tender Casco pulled the 219 off the rocks and started to bring her alongside. The bottom had been badly holed and as the Casco hauled the PT toward her, water rushed into the hull and built up air pressure until the engine room vent covers blew off. The engine room immediately filled with water and the boat sank by the stern leaving the forecastle deck awash. The Casco got her alongside and tried to pump her out. After two hours with no improvement the Casco cast off the 219 and the boat sank in 25 feet of water. On the 18th, the weather moderated sufficiently to send down a diver. The seaplane

S. DOWNES OFF PT
INTO DUTCH HARBOR NAVAL HOSPITAL
FROM INJURIES WHEN WE
ALMOST SANK 2:11

Told no frascull
that this happens

wrecking derrick, Y.S.D. 26, raised the 219 on the 20th, and pumped out enough water to put the boat in drydock. Later a heavy wind swept the drydock, boat and all ashore. PT219 was eventually scrapped.

The Aleutian campaign entered its final phase August 15, 1943, with the American occupation of Kiska. For a time it appeared that the PTs, at last, would see some action since it was estimated that the Japanese had 4,000 to 7,000 troops on the island. The enemy had evacuated the island secretly, and completely.

PT222 was one of the two boats used to land Rangers on Kiska. While on this mission she had a hot run on one of her torpedoes which they managed to fire without injuries or damage to the boat. They did, however, have to break radio silence to alert the U.S. ships in the area.

The first alert for the squadron on Attu came on September 15, 1943, when 200 bombers were reported about one hundred miles away. Battle stations were maintained for about 8 hours before the order to secure was received. Since it was the first alert for most of the men there was great excitement. Only skeleton crews were aboard the boats at the time and men came running to the boats from every direction. Bill Kiendzior, MOMM on PT223, was in the engine room starting the motors barefooted, in pajamas, with a thermometer protruding from his mouth. He had been in sick bay when the alert was sounded.

On October 13, 1943, Squadron 16 experienced its first air raid when 12-15 Jap "Betty Type" bombers flew over dropping bombs in the bay. Several of the boats opened fire but no scoring was done by either side. The Jap planes returned two days later but there was no action.

On October 16, 1943, Tokyo radio reported 18,000 Japanese troops had landed on Attu, which came as a great surprise to the men in the squadron who were defending it. They hadn't seen any.

Tokyo radio broadcast at 0800 on October 18, 1943, sent a warning to Squadron 16, giving them until 1000 on the 19th to evacuate the entire island. They threatened to bomb them off the earth if they failed to comply.

The October 19, 1943, 1000 deadline came and went and the squadron on Attu remained intact with no sign of the Japanese.

The squadron's mess hall burned on the night of October 31, 1943. Very little food or material was worth salvaging. The crews were required to eat on the boats, while the base force used the new recreation hall until a new mess hall was completed. The cooking was done on field ranges.

Lieutenant (j.g.) J.E. Braun, Executive Officer of the squadron, was in the hospital on November 1, 1943, with pneumonia. He was also suffering from the loss of a finger while salvaging the engines on PT219.

Henry Clay lost the end of one finger while working aboard PT221 on the hatchway engine.

On November 3, 1943, PT220 was damaged trying to move a Patrol Cutter from the beach after a storm.

PTs 221, 222 and 224 were underway at 1400 on November 11, 1943, for a torpedo attack problem in the area 5 miles south of Theodore Point, Attu. They returned to base at 1730.

With Lieutenant Commander Colvin and a medical officer aboard, PT221 went to the rescue of a soldier with a broken leg, near Stellar Cove. The leg was taken care of as well as possible under the circumstances, and he was brought to the 221 in a collapsible rubber boat and taken to the base.

Another damaging Williwaw blew on the night of November 19-20, 1943. The crash boat parted her mooring and was on the beach. Fortunately, she piled up on the 30 feet of sand beach, east of the dock. The base force's paint locker was down, the floating dock broke up, the whale boat was smashed in pieces on the rocks, the small tank lighter was blown ashore and several base huts had tin sheathing blown off.

At noon after the winds subsided, the men began work on the crash boat. "Wearing hip boots, I tried putting 12" by 12" timbers under the stern to keep the surf from putting the screws through the bottom," said Phil Lund. "The waves were too high and my boots were filled. Finally the frigid water (29^o) got to me and it was all I could do to return to my hut with frozen legs. Now, I really understand why this is known as the worst duty in the world."

On November 23, 1943, PT221 proceeded to Karab Cove, Agattu Island, to rescue personnel of a downed Navy plane. They returned at 1400 with the personnel aboard.

PT223 got underway on December 4, 1943, for Cape Wrangell, Attu, with Lieutenant Commander J.M. Gute, MC-USN, and Lieutenant Commander D.D. Mason, MC-USN, aboard, to test fire all automatic weapons while underway.

On December 11, 1943, while helping to pull a Sub Chaser off the beach, PT220 crashed into the patrol boat, U.S.S. Citrus, damaging the hull of the 220 very badly.

PT223 left the base on December 23, 1943, for the Navy dock in Massacre Bay, where she picked up the Captain of the port and proceeded to Shemya Island. The Captain was sent ashore to conduct salvaging of the S.S. Scotia which had gone aground there.

On December 24, 1943, PT223 proceeded to Theodore Point where an injured man was reported to be. At 1700 she returned to base with the injured man.

"Christmas dinner was good," said Phil Lund. "We had all the things that make a Christmas dinner, including turkey." In late afternoon, all enlisted men were invited to the officers' wardroom for eggnogs.

A flare (Sub Attack) was set off without cause on Christmas night alerting the entire island.

On December 31, 1943, the base force worked all night and far into the morning, changing struts, shafts and props on PT221, which had gone into the new drydock that morning. Just before the New Year, Ensigns Johnston and Grove brought them a quart of Walker's De Luxe bourbon and all hands had a toast to '44. Most of the men who didn't have duty celebrated on the beach. Instead of the usual fireworks, tracer bullets shot skyward were substituted.

Another williwaw blew into Attu, on January 3, 1944. Snow blown by wind of hurricane velocity cuts like sand. In exposed places the men of the squadron had difficulty staying on their feet. Snow drifts banked up by the williwaw made navigation around the base next to impossible.

On January 4, 1944, John Klemanski lost two fingers in the hatch of PT220.

The severe snowstorms of the past few days blanketed everything. Drifts piled so deep it was dangerous to wander off the beaten path. Bulldozers were used to clear the roads.

Williwaws continued their destruction. As of January 10, 1944, the rock jetty protecting the boats of Squadron 16 had been whipped up and washed away completely in three places. A Chief Warrant B.M. was washed overboard. A seaman, in full gear of underway and foul weather clothing, dove in and saved his life, in very treacherous waters.

More snowstorms and williwaws hit Attu, on January 15, 1944, and the base force continued repairs on PT221.

On January 16, 1944, the base force headed for the drydock at 0730. At 1800 they found that by working all night they could complete the repairs on the 221. They finished at 0530, on the 17th, and were rewarded with a quart of "Mount Vernon" whiskey, compliments of Ensign Grove. Captain Colvin complimented them on a job well done and rewarded them with two days off to sleep in.

A wave of PBYS, Vegas and Flying Fortresses flew out on a mission, on January 19, 1944. The boats of Squadron 16 stood by to rescue any that might crash due to heavy bomb and fuel loads. Those flyers rated a lot of credit in these raids. Weather alone was a vicious enemy.

PTs 221, 222, 223 and 224 sailed on February 19, 1944, for Abraham Bay for practice firing.

On March 3, 1944, PTs 221, 222, 223 and 224, at 1400 stood out for

practice on formation tactics 5 miles south of Attu. They practiced echelon, deploy, column and formations as well as search lines. All boats returned to Casco Cove at 1735.

At 1416, on March 6, 1944, these same boats practiced torpedo runs south of Theodore Point. All boats returned to base at 1635. At 2015, a report was received of an enemy Sub two miles from Agattu. The boats of the squadron, with the U.S.S. Doherty in command, immediately set out to investigate, searching the entire night. They returned to base, had breakfast and resumed the patrol. Later, two destroyers arrived and the squadron was ordered back to base.

USO Show 128 came to the PT Base 13. It had three honest-to-goodness live, white women, the first Squadron 16 men had seen in seven months. Bonnie Holland was the vocalist and sang seven nostalgic songs, but was interrupted three times when PT crews were called out because of the Jap Sub report. Vivian Francis did an acrobatic dance and Roberta Carney entertained the men with her comedy routine. Needless to say, the men really enjoyed it.

PTs 221, 222 and 224, at 0930 on March 18, 1944, stood out for an area south of Abraham Bay for formation and practice. At 1430, PTs 223 and 224 stood out for a point 25 miles from Attu for communications drill. They radioed for aircraft to rendezvous with them but low ceiling prevented the planes from taking off. All boats returned to base at 1735.

On March 23, 1944, PTs 221, 222 and 224 again practiced formation and tactics south of Abraham Bay. Most of the month was spent on maneuvers.

PT221 received a report on March 31, 1944, that one of our planes was down about 60 miles southwest of the base. Enroute to investigate they received a radio message that none of our planes were missing but that a life raft with 5 men aboard had been spotted. The 221 began a search but because of rough seas and poor visibility they were ordered to return to base.

On April 2, 1944, at 1445, PTs 221, 222 and 224 again stood out for torpedo firing and tactics 5 miles south of Theodore point. At 1550, PT222 lost a torpedo in an erratic run. After searching for the lost torpedo all boats returned to base at 1750.

At 1211, on April 3, 1944, PTs 222 and 224 departed for a point $16\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Alexai point to search for pilots of two p38s which collided in mid-air in that area. At 1306, PT221 joined in the search. All boats returned to Casco Cove at 1535, having found only oil slick and bits of wreckage.

On April 4, 1944, another williwaw blew into Attu. They had had several of them in the month of March, each lasting four or five days, and each reaching

hurricane velocity. One of them broke the wind gauge meter at 135 knots per hour.

Sal Bergamo on the 90mm was relieved and sent stateside. Most of the original officers had been replaced. Squadron 16 had the distinction of the longest service in this wild-weather territory.

"Duke" Eckhardt and Phil Lund worked all night on an RDF for the 221 boat.

More practice of torpedo firing and tactics was done on April 6, 1944. At 1356, PT221 was underway to a point 15 miles south of Cape Wrangell to test RDF equipment. PTs 222, 223 and 224 returned to base at 1720. PT221 returned at 1750.

"Tex" Ellisor was sent to a stateside hospital on an emergency medical transfer.

On April 7, 8 and 9, 1944, all boats had more practice south of Abraham Bay. There was AA firing at a towed sleeve, they practiced laying smoke screens, simulated torpedo attacks through the smoke screens and formation tactics. On the 9th (Easter) another report was received of an enemy Sub about 3 miles from Abraham Bay. The boats set out to investigate only to find it was a false alarm.

On a run to Kamchatka, one of the squadron boats took a Sea Bee Chief along for the ride. It was believed that this particular Chief would never voluntarily take another PT boat ride. Due to the rough seas, he lost everything he had eaten for a week. Even destroyers were taking a beating that day.

For the past ten days, the men of Squadron 16 had been standing Condition #2 watches, meaning full battle gear at all times.

At 0955, on April 10, 1944, PTs 221, 222 and 224 again stood out 5 miles south of Abraham Bay for firing at a towed sleeve. At 1219, PTs 221 and 222 returned to base while PT224 proceeded to circle Attu Island to acquaint the new officers with the various anchorages available for emergency use. At 1706, PT224 returned to base.

PT222 got underway at 0910, on April 11, 1944, for radar practice south of Attu Island and returned to base at 1155. At 1352, PTs 221, 222 and 224 stood out to an area 5 miles south of Temnac Bay for torpedo tactics. By 1610, all boats had returned to base.

More practice was given to the crews on April 12, 13 and 14, 1944. However, on the 13th the squadron got underway for target practice at 2200. Being too dark to see the target Lieutenant Commander Colvin gave the order to return to base. PT221 heading directly over the nets put all engines astern. PT222 close behind had no time to get clear and rammed the stern of the 221, tearing her 20mm box loose. Both boats were put in for repairs.

On April 20, 1944, at 1310, PTs 222, 223, and 224 departed Casco Cove to fire at a series 60 sled target south of Temnac Bay. After the firing was completed PT222 launched two practice torpedoes at the U.S.S. Doneff. This practice was repeated on the 23rd with the boats getting underway at 1430 and returning to base at 1610.

The base force had it's work cut out for them, repairing PTs 221 and 222. They replaced the entire transom on the 221 working two shifts. The 222 had a depth charge rack through her deck as well as a hole in her port side. Weather on the dry dock was nasty with below freezing temperatures combined with sleet and snow.

On April 22, 1944, Tillie, Chilles, Druzba, Clougherty and Newsome got into the 190 proof "torpedo juice", and took off in a jeep. Army MPs picked them up on the other side of Navy Town, stripped them and brigged them before turning them over to the Marines. The Marines brigged them and phoned a report to the Officer of the Day. Max Johnson and Duff Hawkins went after them in a weapon carrier.

PT220 stood out for Adak on April 25, 1944, to undergo major repairs, arriving at 1820. At 1410, PT221 circled Attu Island to acquaint the officers with the various anchorages and returned to base at 2110.

At 0013, on April 27, 1944, PTs 223 and 224 departed for an area 40 miles from the westernmost point of Agattu to search for the crew of a B24 reported down at sea. Both boats returned with negative results of the search.

More firing practice was held for PTs 221, 222 and 224 south of Abraham Bay, on April 28, 1944, and on the 30th, PTs 222, 223 and 224 stood out to an area south of Temnac Bay to practice formation tactics and simulated firing runs using the Mark IX torpedo angle solver.

On May 3, 1944, the order was received by Squadron 16 to withdraw from Attu. The return trip would be different for PT221 in two respects. The commander of the squadron, Lieutenant Commander Colvin, had decided to make the 221 his flag boat, consequently he would be riding that boat. He apparently felt that the commander of a squadron should be well fed for he commandeered as cook Alfred Piotter, a man of such pre-war experience as to have already been a chef before he enlisted in the Navy. For the first time PT221 would have a cook who really knew how to prepare food.

The boats traveling under their own power cleared Massacre Bay on the morning of May 5, 1944, and headed for Amchitka reaching this destination at 1630. The boats were refueled but due to rough weather the squadron remained at Amchitka another day and night.

Thirty-one members of the base force remained at Attu to secure all the gear in the warehouse for future shipment. This was completed in five days.

On May 7, 1944, the squadron arrived at Adak after traveling eight hours on a rough and choppy sea.

The boats were underway to Atka arriving May 10, 1944. After refueling the journey continued reaching Dutch Harbor on the 11th. Again the boats were refueled and underway for Cold Bay. About noon the boats began the traverse of Unimak pass from the Bering Sea to the Pacific Ocean. Most of the crew of PT221 had finished their noon meal by the time the squadron hit the tide rips in the pass. However, Ray Rosenthal, an officer on the 221, Bob Carlson and Tom Hart were still at the table. Dishes, platters of food, and silverware began doing a crazy dance and sliding from one end of the table to the other, while the three men tried to keep their seats and at the same time keep the food and utensils from falling off the table. Mostly everything ended up on the floor. Topside the helmsman was having difficulty steering a straight course. The tide rips are caused by the tide in the Bering Sea and that in the North Pacific swirling around the Unalaska, Akutan and Akun group of islands and meeting in the pass. The tide rips whirled and tossed the boats about like pieces of flotsam. The boats tied up at Cold Bay at 1730.

For ne'er can sailor salty be
Until he sails the Bering Sea
And views Alaska's dreary shore
And fills himself with Arctic lore.

Columbus and Balboa too,
With Nelson form a salty crew,
But they are fresh to you and me -
They never sailed the Bering Sea.

So when you boast of fiercest gale
That ever ocean you did sail
You can not salty sailor be
Until you cruise the Bering Sea. (Amen.)

(Trident Society - The Book of Navy Songs.)

Squadron 16 was detained at Cold Bay for three days due to damages to Squadron 13 boats. Squadron 13 was to precede Squadron 16 to the States. The damaged boats were eventually left behind when Squadron 13 left.

At 0900 on May 13, 1944, the squadron was underway for Sand point arriving on the island of Papof at 1400. Due to rough seas they remained at this port until

the 15th, when they set sail for Kodiak docking at 1800. Some of the base force joined the squadron here.

Leaving Kodiak on May 22, 1944, the squadron reached Seward in late afternoon. It was here that the men of the squadron received the first fresh milk in almost eleven months. A half gallon was given each man. Some of them never left the place of distribution before they finished every drop.

From Seward the boats sailed on a straight course, across the upper part of the Gulf of Alaska to Yakutat reaching this destination at 1700 on May 24, 1944.

After refueling the squadron got underway May 25, 1944, but due to heavy seas returned to port. On the 26th, the boats again set sail for Juneau at 1000. For $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours they encountered heavy seas reaching the Inland Channel at the northern tip of Chickagof Island at 2200.

When the boats were refueled they were underway for Ketchikan. Enroute PT223 hit a log knocking the prop from her center engine. Repairs were attempted at Annette Island but the shaft was broken. As the 223 was casting off she hit another log and bent the port prop so she returned to port for further repairs. At 1900 the squadron reached Ketchikan.

The voyage to Bella Bella began at 0400 on May 30, 1944, arriving at 1800. The boats were traveling at a slow pace due to the damaged PT223. A stop was made at the Canadian Army Base of Shearwater. Patricia Bay was reached by nightfall of the next day.

On May 31, 1944, the squadron pulled into Bremerton Navy Yard, --- ten months and eleven days from the day of departure.

While the base force awaited their return to the States from Attu, they experienced another alert on May 15, 1944. Only one Jap plane checking weather conditions came over.

Base force personnel were loaded aboard Troop Transport DC3, #5R 133, on May 18, 1944, and landed at Adak at 1600. At 1430, on the 20th, they were loaded aboard a DC4, #5R 201. They landed at Anchorage, Alaska, for fuel and refreshments taking off again at 2300, for Seattle, Washington, landing on May 21, at 0600.

Bremerton seemed to have the franchise on marriages. While the boats were being refitted for shipment to the Southwest Pacific, several members of the squadron were married. Among them were E.B. Newsome, Carlton Spiers, Donald LaCasse, George Walsh and John Fuller.

The second half of Squadron 16, designated as Squadron 16B, was formed in New Orleans, Louisiana, from July to November 1943, under the command of Lieutenant

James H. VanSicklen, USNR.

As enlisted members reported to New Orleans they were temporarily quartered at Algiers Naval Station, Algiers, Louisiana, for approximately two weeks until such time as facilities became available at the West End Yacht Club, Lake Ponchartrain, New Orleans.

This arrangement continued until the PT boats were delivered from Higgins Industries for trial runs on Lake Ponchartrain. Upon delivery the crews (officers and enlisted men) moved their gear aboard and the PT boats became their home.

The original boats delivered to Squadron 16B were PTs 265, 266, 267, 268, 269 and 270. Some accounts show these boats to have been assigned to Squadron 22. However, Squadron 16B personnel took these boats through trial runs on Lake Ponchartrain and received some of their training aboard them.

In late September or early October 1943, Squadron 16B boat crews sailed these boats from New Orleans, Louisiana, to New York, N.Y. Various stops were made along the Florida and East Coasts enroute to New York. Upon arrival the six boats were turned over to the U.S.S.R., under lend-lease. The Squadron 16B crews boarded a train at Hoboken, New Jersey for their return to New Orleans, Louisiana.

From October 15 to November 4, 1943, PTs 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300 and 301 were received by Squadron 16B from Higgins Industries. Seven boats were assigned at this time to give Squadron 16 a full complement of twelve boats. Squadron 16 had lost PT219 in the Aleutian Islands.

About mid-November 1943, Squadron 16B sailed from New Orleans, Louisiana, to Miami, Florida. Stops were made at Pensacola, St. Petersburg, Tampa and Key West before reaching Miami.

Upon arrival at Miami on December 1, 1943, the squadron underwent about two weeks of "Shakedown Detail". On the 3rd, PTs 295 and 296 along with their crews were transferred to Squadron 4 and sailed for Melville, Rhode Island. As a result of this transfer Squadron 16 was reduced to a complement of ten boats, - five in the Aleutian Islands and five in Miami, Florida.

While undergoing speed calibration runs on December 4, 1943, PT301 blew up the pressure cooker on the galley range causing minor damage to the crews compartment and a minor fire in the galley.

Between December 6 and 12, 1943, the five boats of Squadron 16B were made ready for the sea. Engine checks were made on all boats. They were all placed out of the water at Merrill Stevens Drydock, Miami, Florida. All damaged chine caps were replaced, any hull casualties were repaired, all bottoms refinished,

cowling and ventilation systems were installed in all chart rooms, all underwater zincs were replaced, and all screws were refinished and cleaned.

Squadron 16B, with PTs 297, 298, 299, 300 and 301 sailed on December 13, 1943, from Miami for Panama. Refueling stops were made at Cayo Francis, Puerto de Neuvitas and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Before arriving at Guantanamo Bay at 1021 on December 15, 1943, PT299 lost her salt water pressure port engine. The stacks were burned but were still serviceable. At 1200 she lost her salt water pressure starboard engine. The stacks were burned beyond use and the left exhaust manifold was also cracked beyond use. At 1230, PT299 in company with PT301 dropped from formation to continue on two engines. They moored three hours later than the other three boats.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day were spent at Guantanamo Bay. In fact, the boats were moored here for ten days awaiting spare parts for PT299. The damaged manifold was welded and the spare stacks arrived on the 25th and placed on the 299. During their stay general quarters gun crews and 8 officers were sent through an A.A.T.C. course in firing and night vision.

On December 27, 1943, Squadron 16B set sail for Kingston, Jamaica, arriving at 1241 with pilots aboard PTs 298 and 301.

The five boats sailed in column from Kingston across the Caribbean Sea to Barranquilla, Colombia, on December 28, 1943, a distance of about 550 Nautical miles, and moored at the dock at 1445 on the 29th.

To maintain sufficient fuel for this trip each boat carried four drums of 100 octane gasoline as deck cargo, with a capacity of 54 gallons per drum. After sufficient fuel had been expended in the main tanks each boat secured all engines and drifted while the crew members strained the gasoline from the drums into the main tanks. The empty tanks were jettisoned over the side and sunk by 50 caliber machine gun fire. The five boats arrived at Barranquilla safely, with practically all of their fuel expended.

After a brief stay at Barranquilla, Colombia, Squadron 16B sailed for the Panama Canal. New Year's Eve and New Year's Day were spent enroute, and they moored at 1010 on the 1st.

The five boats sailed through the Panama Canal on January 2, 1944, and moored on the Pacific Coast. Shortly after arrival they made the trip through the locks of the canal and Gatun Lake under their own power.

Upon reaching Balboa the boats were sent to Taboga, off the Panama Coast arriving at 1539 for further training of the crews.

On January 25, 1944, PT298 attempted unsuccessfully to rescue a pilot

of an Army P40, who had crashed off San Carlos, R.P.

After several weeks of training the boats sailed to Balboa on January 28, 1944, to prepare for shipment.

On February 6, 1944, PT301 was loaded aboard the S.S. James P. Kelly for transshipment to Seattle, Washington. It was transferred to the S.S. Shenandoah, arrived and was unloaded at Bremerton Navy Yard on March 5, 1944. TEXAS
Oil Tanker

Routine operations, instructions and drills were held between February 26 and 29, 1944, after which PTs 297, 298, 299 and 300 were loaded at Balboa as deck cargo aboard the Merchant Liberty Ship, S.S. Hiram Bingham, between March 2-3, 1944.

The ship sailed on March 4, 1944, with her cargo of PT boats, from Panama to Bremerton Navy Yard arriving on the 22nd. After the boats were unloaded they sailed across Puget Sound and tied up at Pier #41 in Seattle, Washington.

From April 1, 1944 through the 16th, the five boats of Squadron 16B were outfitted and prepared for North Pacific duty. They were overhauled, all auxiliaries and radio material was checked, all non-aromatic resistant fuel system fittings were replaced, all instruments were calibrated, and each boat received four Mark XIII torpedoes.

The five boats of Squadron 16B departed on April 17, 1944, and proceeded through Puget Sound, Admiralty Inlet and Satellite Channel arriving at Patricia Bay at 1520, for fuel. On the 18th, they were underway for port Hardy arriving at 1600, where they again refueled. At 0830 on the 19th, the five boats sailed for Bella Bella, B.C. Enroute PT298 broke her center shaft and lost the center propellers. They arrived at 1320, where they took on more fuel. On the 20th, they were again underway for Ketchikan, Alaska, PT298 travelling on two engines. At 1950, they arrived at Ketchikan for fuel and repairs to PT298. Here they remained until the 23rd when they set sail for Petersburg, Alaska, arriving at 1700. On the 24th, the five boats started out for Pleasant Island, Alaska, but due to apparent underwater damage to PT297 the destination was changed to Sitka where they docked at 1540. The damaged center wheel was replaced and her starboard rudder was repaired.

At 1415 on April 26, 1944, upon request of the Naval Air Station, Sitka, the boats proceeded to a PBY which had been forced down 130 miles west of Sitka. They removed all personnel, towed and tended the plane until a tug arrived.

On May 7, 1944, while in Sitka orders were received to return to Bremerton Navy Yard to await the arrival of the parent squadron which was already returning from the Aleutian Islands.

The five boats of Squadron 16B sailed across the Gulf of Alaska from Sitka to Prince Rupert, to Bella Bella, B.C. to Hardy Bay and from this port to

Bremerton Navy Yard arriving on May 11, 1944. When Squadron 16A arrived at Bremerton, Squadron 16B was placed out of separate commission making the ten boats Squadron 16.

From June 1 through 11, 1944, while Squadron 16 remained at Bremerton Navy Yard, considerable alterations were made on the boats. Among them, the stern 20mm guns were removed and replaced by 40mm. Places were made on the bows and on the starboard sides amidships for 60mm mortars. Two 50 caliber machine guns were installed amidships. The torpedo tubes were removed and replaced by torpedo launching racks. A cable to prevent men from falling overboard was stretched around the edge of the deck at a height of two feet. These changes necessitated enlarging the crews.

Shortly after the men returned from leave the squadron moved to Seattle and moored there from June 15 through June 20, 1944. More exercises and practice maneuvers were held while the boats were stationed here.

On June 21-22, 1944, PTs 297, 298 and 299 were loaded aboard the S.S. Shenandoah together with half of each boat crew. PTs 300, 301 and 220 were loaded aboard the S.S. Yorba Linda. Both ships with their cargoes of PT boats stood out for San Francisco, California, mooring at the Naval Base on Treasure Island, in San Francisco Bay, on the 26th.

One day lacking a year from the time Squadron 16 left Seattle for the Aleutian Islands, on July 19, 1944, PTs 221, 222, 223 and 224 aboard the Texaco Oil Company Tanker, Shenandoah, were again leaving Seattle. The Shenandoah with her cargo of PT boats, passed under the Golden Gate Bridge into San Francisco Bay on July 23, 1944, where most of the squadron still remained.

Two more members of the squadron, Howard Osmer and John Zellers, were married while stationed here.

During their stay at Treasure Island modifications were made to the engines of all boats. This change increased the horsepower and speed of each boat. Trial runs were made shortly after, on a measured mile in San Francisco Bay, proving the modifications successful.

Shortly before leaving San Francisco most of the men of the squadron went in a body to the Red Cross Hospital to donate blood.

On July 3, 1944, PTs 298, 299, 300 and 301 were loaded aboard the S.S. James J. O'Kelly and on the 5th, were underway to Milne Bay, New Guinea, with five men and the boat captain aboard each boat. The squadron executive officer and eight base force men were aboard ship as passengers. The remainder of the crews of these boats and some of the base force were transported via the S.S. Alcoa Patriot. On August 3rd, the S.S. James J. O'Kelly with her cargo of PT boats, crews and base force reached Milne Bay and on August 10-11, all boats were unloaded,

fueled, provisioned and made ready for the sea. On the 14th, these four boats set sail for Dreger Bay arriving at 2240. Enroute PT300 broke her center shaft and lost the center wheel.

On September 8, 1944, PTs 298, 299, 300 and 301 left Dreger Harbor, refueled at Berlin Harbor, Aitape, on the 9th. They departed Berlin Harbor on the 10th, and moored at Mios Woendi at 1043 on the 11th.

While some of Squadron 16's base force had been shipped earlier, sixty-four members left Seattle, Washington, from Pier 91, aboard a flat top U.S.S. Matanikau (C.V.E.101) on July 19, 1944, and docked at San Francisco, at 0900, on the 22nd. They then traveled by bus to Treasure Island.

On August 11, 1944, PTs 220 and 297 were shipped from Oakland to the Southwest Pacific, aboard the Merchant Ship, George D. Prentice.

After several days at sea, mechanical difficulties developed in the refrigeration system of the George D. Prentice. As a result the ship sailed into Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, for repairs, which required approximately two weeks to complete.

Upon completion, the George D. Prentice with her cargo of PT boats sailed for the Admiralty Islands, in the Southwest Pacific. The boats were unloaded at Manus, in the Admiralty Group, on September 19, 1944. They then sailed south to Hollandia, refueled, then sailed west along the coast to Mios Woendi arriving on October 3rd.

On September 9, 1944, PTs 221, 222, 223 and 224 were loaded aboard the Merchant Ship, James Lawson, in Oakland, California. They journeyed to Richmond to load ammunition. The same procedure of part of the crew and the boat captain aboard each boat was followed. The men who accompanied PT221 were Cliff Anderson, Jim Donald, Tom Hart, Al Szczech, Don Swanchak, Leon Czarniak and the boat captain, Pete Rock.

The men were mustered aboard the S.S. James Lawson at 0800 on September 16, 1944, cleared San Francisco Bay and began the voyage to the Southwest Pacific. General Quarters stations were appointed to all hands.

All the boats were scraped while on the ship. Phil Lund fell attempting to pry a 2x4 that was spiked to a 12x12. His injuries were a banged elbow and a scratched back.

PTs 223 and 224 practiced firing 50 caliber and 20mm guns, bursting four out of five balloons.

On the seventh evening out, the ship passed south of the Hawaiian Islands. The equator was crossed on the 27th.

The customary practice of initiating those who had never crossed before

was, for some reason, conducted on Sunday, a few days previous to the actual crossing. About half the ship's crew and armed guards had made previous voyages across the equator, but of all the Squadron 16 men aboard the Lawson only Captain Colvin, Ensign Johnson and Chief Novak had previously done so.

The "Jolly Roger" was hoisted in the morning and was flown all day. Immediately after the noon meal, the "shellbacks" appeared, dressed as pirates, and herded the "pollywogs" toward the stern of the ship. From here they were summoned, one at a time, to go through the initiation ordeal. Once through, they were permitted to help initiate the others.

The first land sighted was the island of Ulawa on October 6, 1944. Maramasiki was passed the same evening.

On October 9, 1944, the S.S. James Lawson slipped through China Strait and entered Milne Bay, New Guinea. The ship anchored the night of arrival and most of the next day, then pulled out for Manus Island, in the Admiralty Group arriving on the 13th. Practice of .45 caliber gun firing was held off the fantail, and again at a sled target towed astern.

In Papitalei Harbor on October 16, 1944, the boats were lifted off the S.S. James Lawson and the crews stepped ashore for the first time in a month. What a sight this harbor was. It was lit up like a Christmas tree with all the shore installations in operation, 24 hours a day.

After taking on ammunition the boats went to the repair dock at Lombrum point, Los Negros, Admiralty Islands, changed the reverse gears on PT222 and installed a new engine.

All the ships were leaving. It was a sight few people get to witness. Transport after transport passed loaded with men. The push was on. The men of Squadron 16 knew that they were watching thousands of men heading for combat. More than 17 battleships, 95 or more destroyers, 50 transports, 20 aircraft carriers and innumerable other ships pulled out. This task force was being formed in 4 ports, so this was about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the invasion force. It was really a tremendous sight. As the Squadron was anchored by the submarine net, all ships passed by it as they went out.

On October 21, 1944, PT224 went to Manus Island for beer. All hands chipped in to buy it. PT222 got six cases. Some of the crew got so noisy that they were thrown off the boat at midnight, so they continued their singing on the dock, much to the dismay of the ships moored there. Hank Pierotti fell overboard but managed to get back up with the help of the towing cable.

LCI 686 tied alongside PT222 on October 22, 1944. On it were the Squadron 16 crews that had shipped out of the states before the boats. The crews came aboard their

boats and Phil Lund was ordered to board the LCI, where he met Fred Welz, Tom Gaynor, B.J. Goddard and Joe Lardiere, also members of Squadron 16.

The next destination was to be Biak, an island in the Schouten Group. The boats pulled out of the harbor at 0800, for a 440 mile voyage to Tanah Merah Bay, New Guinea. Each boat carried on deck an auxiliary rubber tank holding 150 gallons of gasoline, but still had to proceed at greatly reduced speed to conserve fuel. The trip took 30 hours to complete, and after a four hour layover, at Tanah Merah Bay, Netherlands New Guinea for fuel, destination was changed from Biak to Mios Woendi, arriving on October 24, 1944.

The engines had not improved by idling up from New Guinea in the slow convoy and certain differences were noted from the well stocked Aleutian campaign. Getting a new set of spark plugs became a days work for a boat officer. Morals, especially honesty, suffered considerably. The "Moonlight Requisition" became popular by necessity. The sincere hope was that a reasonable percentage of the crews involved would be able to reform and go straight in the post-war world. In a word, the squadron learned how to keep operating in the Pacific, a process requiring a high degree of skull-duggery.

As soon as the boats were tied up, Bill Kiendzior, MOMM on PT223, went to see the crew of the 220, who had made the voyage by way of another ship. The first thing Bill was told was that his brother was also at Mios Woendi at the Seaplane Base. Bill and his brother spent many happy hours together before the squadron left on November 19, 1944.

On September 19, 1944, the remaining members of the Base Force were mustered aboard the cargo and transport ship, the Nightingale, at 1430, and got underway.

The ship passed approximately 350 miles off Hawaii on September 15, 1944, and crossed the equator on the 20th. The first land sighted was the Soloman Islands on the 17th.

At Milne Bay, New Guinea the Nightingale dropped anchor at 1000 on September 28, 1944. They took on fresh water and unloaded all the mail and cargo for this base. The ship, with Squadron 16's Base Force still aboard, got underway for Finchaven on October 2nd and dropped anchor there on the 4th. Disembarking with all their gear, the men headed for the PT receiving center and arrived at 1500.

On October 21, 1944, the Base Force and some of the boat crews traveling with them left the PT base on Finchaven at 0830 by truck, and boarded LCI 386. They arrived at Manus at 1630 on the 22nd, where they dropped off the boat crews. The Base Force continued on to Humboldt Bay arriving at 0115 on the 24th. The LCI layed to until 0600 when she departed for Hollandia where they picked up spare parts needed for the LCI. At 0720 they departed for Mios Woendi joining the rest of the squadron

at 0700 on the 25th. A very impressive sight it was, with more than 65 PT boats lined around the harbor.

A confiscated Japanese truck was used by Squadron 16 to take the base force gear up the beach. Tents were pitched for officers and all hands.

The boats of Squadron 16 had some action in the New Guinea campaign. They made a number of patrols in and around the Gulf of Japan. These patrols were usually made at night and were designed to stop Japanese landing barges from any movement. During daylight hours the Japanese barges were covered by fighter planes of the U.S. Army Air Force. On some patrols the boats carried U.S. Army Rangers, and the Royal Dutch Army, dropping them off on the New Guinea Coast to be picked up later, many times with Japanese Prisoners of War. It was here that Squadron 16 got its first enemy barge and its first Japanese prisoner. All the boats took part in patrols and missions in which Netherland natives were rescued from the Japs in New Guinea.

On September 19, 1944, before the complete squadron was assembled, at 1345, PTs 299 and 300 patrolled Dore Bay to Roemberpon Island. At 0600 on the 20th, while they were strafing huts and beach installations in Dore Bay, they received 75mm and 40mm return fire from south of Manokwari and from Mansinam Island, suffering no casualties. At 1400, PT298 in company with PT331 (Squadron 21) stood out for patrol of Dore Bay-Roemberpon Island. At 0600 on the 21st, while strafing docks and encampment north of Mawi Bay, in the Wareni area, received accurate .30 caliber and 40mm return fire. One personal casualty was sustained on PT331.

At 1415 on September 23, 1944, PT300 in company with PT525 (Squadron 36) stood out for Osmer Bay-Roemberpon patrol. At 0615 on the 24th, they destroyed two "A" type barges off Sombroke Island. At 1400, PTs 299 and 301 also went on patrol of this area. PT299 lost her center screw at the entrance to Wandanmen Bay. Both boats returned to base.

PTs 299 and 301 went on patrol for Wandanmen Bay, at 1400 on September 27, 1944, with a special mission to recover Dutch prisoners of War at point Oransbari, with four Alamo scouts aboard. The special mission was cancelled but at 0715 on the 28th, they sank one "A" type barge, ten miles north of Mios Noem Island.

On September 29, 1944, at 1300, PTs 298 and 300 stood out for patrol of Wandanmen Bay-Roemberpon. They returned to base at 2015, because both port engine stacks of PT300 burned out in rough seas.

PTs 298 and 301, on one of these patrols, spotted a barge about a mile ahead. Closing in, they saw five men in the water. PT301 picked up four of them, and PT298 picked up the other. He was turned over to the Army, after being relieved of a hand grenade concealed in his belt.

On October 4, 1944, PT300 in company with PT74 (Squadron 13) landed a commando party of Alamo Scouts ten miles north of Pt. Oransbari, Netherlands New Guinea. At dawn they picked up the scouts and 140 rescued prisoners of war.

PT298 damaged two screws on a submerged log, on the night of October 5-6, 1944, while on patrol with PT297 between Wandanmen Bay and Roemberpon. The two boats returned to base.

On October 8-9, 1944, PTs 298 and 300 patrolled the area between Wandanmen Bay and Roemberpon Island, Netherlands New Guinea. They put Lieutenant Raupmann, N.I.C.A., and two natives ashore on Roemberpon Island. They picked up twelve Javanese soldiers from New Guinea and put them ashore at Jamakino Village, Roemberpon Island.

PTs 299 and 301 patrolled the area between Wandanmen Bay and Roemberpon Island, on the night of October 9-10, 1944. They strafed a camouflaged lugger on the beach in Windisi Harbor, Netherlands New Guinea. The lugger had been previously rendered unserviceable but observation indicated it had recently been worked on.

On the night of October 11-12, 1944, PT298 and PT84 (Squadron 13) patrolled the area between Omar Bay and Roemberpon Island. They removed Lieutenant Raupmann and twelve other N.I.C.A. scouts and thirty former Japanese held prisoners of war from Roemberpon Island.

PTs 220 and 298 patrolled between Dore Bay and Roemberpon Island, on October 15-16, 1944. They strafed Jap huts and installations at Mansinam Island, Ransiki and Maori with no return fire.

On October 17-18, 1944, PTs 297 and 301 patrolled the area between Wandanmen Bay and Roemberpon Island. They picked up four natives and two Formosans who had escaped from the Japs at Wasimi.

Rocket Launchers, Mark VII, were installed on PTs 220 and 297, two per boat, on October 19-20, 1944. The two boats departed Mios Woendi for patrol. PT220 burned out her port exhaust stack and both boats returned to base.

PTs 220 and 300 patrolled the area between Wandanmen and Roemberpon Island, on October 26-27, 1944. They destroyed one "A" type army barge at Windisi Harbor, Netherlands New Guinea.

Radar installations were fixed on PT224 and the forward hatches were changed on the 221 and 222.

While on patrol in the area between Dore Bay and Roemberpon Island on October 28-29, 1944, PTs 220 and 223 strafed a Jap bivouac area at Maori, Netherlands New Guinea, with 40mm, 20mm, 50 caliber and 4.5 rockets. They received ineffective sniper return fire from the beach.

PT222 ran on a reef while on patrol, but was refloated at high tide. After several attempts to go on patrol, which ended in engine trouble, or radio transmission problems, PT221 made an uneventful patrol, along with PT223, whose patrol was not

so uneventful. About dawn, PT223 picked up about 20 natives who had been driven from their homes by the Japanese.

On October 30, 1944, repairs were made to the deck plate stringers of PT224. They had been cut deliberately with a saw to simplify cleaning the bilge. The deck supports were increased from 3/8" to 3/4" for better support. With Diving helmets on, "Swede" Carlsen and "Duke" Eckhardt changed the screws, which had been damaged by floating logs while on patrol the previous night.

More patrols were made the first week of November, 1944, but the boats made no contacts.

Sunday, November 5, 1944, the Base Force worked like stevedores, in the hot sun, loading and unloading crates on the drydocks.

payday was on the 6th, and at least one crap game was in progress.

On November 7, 1944, PT224 got underway for Hollandia Bay to check on the supply shipment and arrived safely.

It was at Mios Woendi that the practice of cleaning engine room bilges with high octane gasoline came to an abrupt halt, when PT301 blew up, killing the engineer, George M. Chilles. Russo, M0MM3/c, landed on one of PT300's fifty caliber gun mounts and died four days later, of broken bones and a skull fracture. The third man in the engine room was Noack, M0MM2/c. He was fortunate to land in the water, although unconscious, and would have drowned if Ed Kalinowski had not immediately leaped in the water and taken hold of him, endangering his own life, as PT300 had cast off her lines and began backing down, to get away from PT301, in the event there should be a fire aboard. Kalinowski held on to Noack with one hand while pushing against the stern of the boat with the other, in an attempt to keep from being sucked into the screws. Dozens of voices yelled for PT300 to stop, and she finally threw her motors into forward and ran on the beach. Kalinowski had been so near to the screws that the suction had drawn his shoes off. Noack lost a leg but otherwise recovered. For this act of heroism, Ed Kalinowski was awarded the Navy Marine Medal, after receiving a deck court martial for going overboard without orders, and he was fined the sum of one dollar. Dunbar, a torpedoman striker was blown overboard and suffered severe shock. Jarred H. Rankin, torpedoman, was on deck working on a torpedo at the time of the explosion. He was blown across PT300 and struck a torpedo on PT223, sustaining serious injuries from which he fortunately recovered. Russell L. Enyeart, cook on the 301, was in the officers' quarters at the time of the explosion and was blown through the door of the ammunition locker, but received no injuries. Chilles was given a military burial the same day, in a graveyard at Biak. PT301 was scrapped. Full fuel tanks on the boats presented a major disaster. Fortunately they didn't blow.

"Duke" Eckhardt, "Swede" Carlsen, "Chips" Gleason and "Mousie" Lund got Phil Swart's permission to take PT298 to the dry dock to pick up their tools, before starting to patch the hole in the starboard side. In a matter of minutes after leaving the nest from alongside PTs 300 and 301, they heard the explosion. They saw the entire deck of the 301 blow sky-high.

Henry Clay, Carl Hoffer, Bob Street, Ladislas Miegsl, Andy Boyuka, Joe Brunner, Lieutenant Ray Castle, Joe Spence, Phil Lund and several others boarded PT300 for the trip to Biak Island. From the dock, an Army truck took them to the cemetery. An Army bugler and a six man rifle salute squad were awaiting. The funeral was military type, simple and short. After the gun salute, the men marched off and returned to the boat via the Army truck. While at Biak, the men passed through the historic battlefields where the Japs holed up in coral caves on the ridge. Russo was also buried at Biak.

Two men were also killed in a PBX crash at the PT base on this day.

On the night of November 8-9, 1944, PT297 in company with PT532 (Squadron 36) patrolled Roemberpon Island-Wandanmen Bay area. They destroyed a type "A" barge on the beach at Wendissi River, by gunfire. On the 9th, PT224 got underway from Hollandia, arriving safely at Mios Woendi.

One anecdote about PT298 and the Malay language kick, as told to this writer by F. Gardner Cox, Skipper of the 298: "PT298 had on her then Bontaites, RM, (outstanding), Borkovich (a super-special gunner on a 40mm) Wick, C.B. Jones (both running a beautiful engine room), Huebner as QM, Ritchie (who got a well deserved Commendatory Captain's Mast for putting out an engineroom fire at dockside in Bremerton Navy Yard), and other first class guys. We got to Mios Woendi (which was real Malay speaking area). I had been studying the language off and on for 2 years, but had never said a word of it to anybody who understood it. Jones or Wick dropped a book in the water alongside the boat. It drifted out of range. A small guy in a slim dugout canoe came paddling along. I hailed him and (holding my breath) tried the first trial words of Malay I had ever pushed out into the air. I told him 'Bawa Itu Boekoe Sine' (bring that book here) and maybe I added 'Trima Kasi' (please). Miraculously the guy headed for the floating book, picked it up and handed it to us. Jones' comment (which was a fine compliment) was, 'Well, I'll be damned'. And I could have said the same".

From November 11 through the 18th, while the squadron was still in Mios Woendi, all patrols were secured and all PTs underwent necessary repairs in preparation for the sea. Forty millimeter guns were installed on the bows of PTs 221 and 223. (Making them barge busters, as Phil Lund described them.) The twenty millimeters were removed and placed on the bows of PTs 222 and 224, giving them two twenty millimeter guns on their bows.

As told to this historian, some thirty odd years after WWII, by H.H. Peter Wells, an officer on PT221, and later, skipper of the 220. "I remember that 40mm very well. It made the boat nose heavy and every wave it crossed came over the bridge in a green sheet. Later, we cut a B24 radar dome in half, bolted it to the bridge and tried to duck from the seas behind it." He said, referring to James C. (Pete) Rock, Skipper of PT221, "pete's head was huge and we 'liberated' a talker's helmet for him from an LST's gun mount; one of those things with room for ear-phones. It fit him just fine."

In anticipation of the long journey ahead, some restrictions were imposed on the squadron. Orders were to travel light - commando packs and bare essentials. Also, water was to be used for drinking and cooking only.

The men were suffering from a lack of mail during this period. What they were receiving had been written more than two months earlier.

Admiral Kinkaid issued his plans for the Mindoro landings on November 9, 1944. The task was given to Rear Admiral Arthur D. Struble, then commanding the Ormoc resupply convoys; and as the assigned troops were then fighting on Leyte, all detailed planning had to be done on that island.

In the meantime, the kamikazes were raising the devil with Allied shipping in Leyte Gulf. Thus, the more that Kinkaid knew about conditions in the islands to be liberated, the less he liked the target dates of 5 and 20 December. (Lingayen landings having been scheduled for the 20th.) So, toward the end of November he made another visit to MacArthur's headquarters at Tacloban, again to argue postponement. Generals Sutherland and Kinney joined him. The result was that General MacArthur agreed to postpone the Mindoro operation to December 15, 1944.

A few days before the D-Day for Mindoro, General MacArthur held a top-level conference at his Tacloban headquarters. Here it was learned that, despite the postponement, the Army Air Force would not be ready to take responsibility for air cover of the Mindoro convoys. Not only airfield and weather problems, said General Kinney, but the inexperience of his pilots would preclude their taking off before daylight or landing after dark. General MacArthur turned to Admiral Kinkaid for a solution. The Admiral, after a private conference with one of his staff, and with a member of Admiral Halsey's staff, decided to use escort carriers.

There was no urgency to liberate the inhabitants of Mindoro, since the Japanese held the island very lightly and did not interfere much with the natives. The island was badly wanted by Allied forces as a stepping stone to Luzon. Possession of it would enable the Army Engineers to build airfields from which Southwest Pacific Air Forces could operate against enemy air forces on Luzon, and cover the Lingayen landings coming up in January.

Mindoro is separated from Luzon by the $7\frac{1}{2}$ mile wide Verde Island Passage, from the Sibuyan Sea by Tablas Strait, from the Calamian Islands by Apo East Pass. All sea traffic from Mindanao, and from Leyte via the Surigao and San Bernadino Straits to central and northern Luzon, must pass close aboard this island, whose northern point, Cape Calavite, lies only ninety miles from Manila by sea.

The southeastern coast, the San Jose' area, where there were level cane fields served by a narrow gauge railroad, (Known by the forces on Mindoro as "Colvin's Railroad"), four nonoperational airfields, and ample sites for new ones, attracted naval planners.

The move to Mindoro was one of the boldest during the Pacific war. To drive this wedge into the Central Philippines it would be necessary to bypass several important enemy-held islands, and when established at the San Jose' base, we would be almost surrounded by enemy airfields, yet 262 air miles from Dulag, our own nearest base in Leyte, and 260 miles was then beyond the normal range of land-based fighter planes.

Rear Admiral Arthur D. Struble was appointed commander of the Visayan Attack Force, as the expedition to Mindoro was designated. Upon returning to Leyte Gulf from Ormoc, December 8, 1944, he raised his flag in light cruiser Nashville, and resumed planning. He drew his logistic support from Leyte, through Seventh Fleet Service Force representatives in Leyte Gulf. The Visayan Attack Force was divided into three groups:

Mindoro Attack Group, under Admiral Struble's direct command. Nashville, 8 destroyer transports, 30 LSTs, 12 LSMs, 31 LCIs, 10 large and 7 small minesweepers and 14 other small craft, with 12 escorting destroyers.

Close covering group, commanded by Rear Admiral Berkey. Two light cruisers, one heavy cruiser and seven destroyers.

Motor Torpedo Boat Group, consisting of 23 PTs, under Lieutenant Commander N. Burt Davis.

In addition, Rear Admiral T.D. Ruddock commanded a Heavy Covering and Carrier Group of battleships, cruisers, escort carriers and destroyers, to operate in the Sulu Sea in support. The inclusion of the CVEs was Admiral Kinkaid's idea, as the one means of protecting the convoy during hours when the AAF could not be present. It comprised battleships West Virginia, Colorado, and New Mexico; light cruisers Denver, Columbia and Montpelier; escort carriers Natoma Bay, Manila Bay, Marcus Island, Kadashan Bay, Savo Island and Ommaney Bay; and 18 destroyers. In anticipation of a series of air battles, they increased their complement of fighter planes from 16 to 24, at the same time reducing the number of torpedo bombers from 12 to 9. For the first time the CVEs were given an adequate screen - Captain J.G. Coward's Desron 54.

Battleships and cruisers, included largely for their anti-aircraft fire, were screened by Captain R. H. Smith's Desron 22.

All hands worked as stevedores loading supplies, all day and night before leaving Mios Woendi.

Henry Clay was a last minute replacement on PT224, replacing Stavely who had a foot infection.

Squadron 16 along with Squadrons 13 and 25, half of Squadron 36 and PTs 227 and 230 of Squadron 17, a total of 44 PT boats, in company with 8 crash boats, and 3 PT Tenders left Mios Woendi for Leyte, P.I., on November 19, 1944. The Base Force also left, boarding the PT Tender, Pontus (LST 301). One of the boats broke down and had to turn back. Two others accompanied it, - none of which were Squadron 16 boats. They were underway for Kossol Passage, Palau Islands, from the 19th through the 22nd. The other Tenders were the U.S.S. Wachaprague and the U.S.S. Willoughby.

Two of the PT Tenders continually sailed a zigzag course to make a torpedo strike difficult. The squadron anchored in shallow water, at the northern tip of the Palau Group, Kossol Passage, where the boats were refueled and necessary repairs were made. Other refuelings were made while underway, from the PT Tenders.

"It's a swell sea, but this 'barge' really rolls, due to its being so shallow drafted", said Phil Lund, aboard the U.S.S. Pontus. The PT men on the Pontus turned to at 0800 and began stowing gear, down on the tank deck. Much to the surprise of the men, they enjoyed the food. However, there was no mess hall, so after going through the chow line, they plopped down anywhere on deck to eat. Sleeping arrangements were the same. Tom Gaynor and Phil Lund found a place to sleep on deck on top of some plywood which was cool and comfortable.

On the second day out, the Base Force again turned to on the tank deck, - this time uncrating. The cargo had shifted the night before, and had spread all over below.

About a hundred ships were anchored in the area at the time of Squadron 16's arrival. Several thousand Japanese troops were believed to still be in the palaus but since they posed no significant threat to Allied Forces, they were ignored.

The PT squadrons left the palaus on November 24, 1944, and a destroyer was added to the convoy. The PT Tenders now in the convoy were the Pontus, Orestes, Willoughby, Wachaprague, Oyster Bay and the Hilo.

After leaving the palaus it was considered necessary to stand a "condition two" watch. Two men were stationed at the aft forty, two at the forward forty and one at each of the midship turrets. This necessitated everyone standing two hours on watch, and two off, continuously.

The first two days of this voyage were uneventful. On the third day, the Tenders began firing their guns. Everyone thought this was merely test firing, and greatly

surprised, when the message, "I am under heavy aerial attack", came over the radio. The principal thrust of the attack was at a fleet of cruisers and destroyers, that had just passed to starboard. Squadron 16 was at the extreme forward port side of the fleet and nowhere near the action. Three bombs were dropped between two PT boats and one was strafed. Other than that, none of the PTs were attacked and few of them even had a chance to fire their guns. Fifteen enemy planes had been shot down in this action. It was later learned that the St. Louis and the Colorado had been hit by Kamikaze.

This item was taken from Phil Lund's diary: "The weather was cloudy and overcast with a low ceiling, with numerous rain squalls. One interesting item of the attack happened when an enemy plane swooped down off the starboard of the U.S.S. Pontus, to strafe a PT boat from a nearby base that was racing down to the Task Force. After a low-flying strafing run over the PT's stern, he flew low on the water, dead ahead for a rain squall. Much to his sorrow, a battleship lay behind the squall, and firing by it's radar knocked him into a million pieces. In trying to avoid the PT's fire, he caught the wagon's head on."

On November 28, 1944, the fleet pulled into San Pedro Bay, at the island of Leyte, and was based at Tacloban. The voyage had covered a distance of more than 1,100 miles.

The day after arrival at Leyte, on November 29, 1944, the U.S.S. Pontus moved to Suicide Gulch to move the supplies from the Pontus onto the LST 605. This had to be done with a minimum of time as no two ships could lay alongside during daylight hours.

Suicide Gulch had been so named because of it's narrow cut of water, where the PT Tenders laid to, and were the main object of suicide attacks. The planes would hedge-hop through the hills to foul up radar, then hop over the ridge to crash dive into the Tenders.

Immediately after arrival at Leyte, there was an air raid alert. Two or three occurred every hour, well into the night. The boats anchored near the Tenders, a couple of miles off the new Tacloban air strip which came in for an enthusiastic massaging nightly, by the Japs. The presence of larger units anchored nearby also proved highly attractive to the enemy, making the nights much like a continuous Fourth of July celebration. Most of the Tenders' crews were as green as most of the PT boats' crews under fire, which gave the men on the PT boats some very bad times at night, when the Tenders' AA batteries of all calibers, would follow the diving planes down to the surface. The PTs, too, were on the surface, but their chances of staying there didn't look too bright. Finally, an order was received against firing at night and the PT boat crews breathed easier.

On November 30, 1944, PTs 227 and 230 of Squadron 17, combined with the nine boats of Squadron 16 and the twelve boats of Squadron 13 were designated Task Unit 70.1.4.

For several days, things were fouled up for the Base Force aboard the U.S.S. Pontus, and they had numerous working parties. Some were in the mud on the beach, and others were from ships at anchor. While aboard the Pontus, some of the survivors from destroyers that had been sunk around Ormoc Bay were brought aboard. The Cooper got it fast, - in 37 seconds she went down, at the hands of Enemy Suicide Bombers. One hundred and fourteen men were saved. A PT boat from a squadron operating out of Leyte got it, too, when 3 Zekes ganged up on it. All hands were lost.

Hundreds of ships filled the bay and American planes flew overhead constantly. The reconquest of Leyte had begun little more than a month before and fighting was still intense a few miles inland. The soldier's mortar fire could be seen and heard by the men out in the bay. The following detailed account of this action was contributed to this writer by Robert J. Wehrli, XO-CO PT224, approximately thirty-six years later.

On the evening of December 4, 1944, at dusk, PT224 and another PT (no recall on which one) were alongside a larger naval vessel (probably an Attack Transport) in an area of Leyte Gulf about 300 yards off the end of the runway to a landing strip. Ensign Ray Rosenthal, Exec. of 224 was aboard the large ship begging and borrowing and bartering for something we needed and I was on the bridge of the 224 watching the returning flight of U.S. Army bombers coming over our position to land on the above mentioned airstrip. As we were standing a "Condition 2" watch the two gun turrets were manned. One of the men in the turret said, "Hey Captain, that was a Japanese bomber that just passed over us." Sure enough following him came another. "Open Fire" ordered the Captain of PT224 (R.J.W.). The first two Jap planes filled with paratroopers landed safely on the airstrip. Number three was hit by us and probably many others as most ships started firing within seconds after we started it all. I cannot recall how many Jap planes full of paratroopers were shot down by American Naval Forces but I think about four. The first two that landed safely unloaded their people and caused quite a problem as they held the airstrip all night and until about noon the next day when they were finally wiped out. They blew up fuel storage tanks, some Army Bombers and several buildings as well as blowing big holes in the runway.

At a later date (early February, 1945) Admiral Kinkaid of the 7th Fleet, at breakfast aboard his Flagship, discussed this incident with Robert Wehrli and said he had been informed that the PTs had been the first to identify and open fire on this attempt by the Japs to regain the airstrip and wanted to hear our version of the incident and was highly complimentary of the excellent job the PTs attached to his 7th Fleet were doing and how proud he was to have such highly trained fighting men such as our PT boaters under his command.

While sailing around the bay, PT223 hit a reef and knocked off her rudder and one of her screws. The shipfitters worked day and night to repair the 223 and ready her for the scheduled raid on Mindoro.

The first chance the crew of PT221 had to go ashore came when the boat was required to take Commander N. Burt Davis to the city of Tacloban. Forty-five minutes of liberty was granted.

On December 6, 1944, at about 0800, there was a heavy air-raid. The sky was full of tracer shells, of every caliber. One enemy plane came in low to strafe the airfield and escaped under a heavy barrage of anti-aircraft shells. The second plane, directly behind him wasn't as lucky. As he was coming up, he ran into a solid wall of flak. The plane burst into flames and crashed on the beach where it exploded. The attack lasted about an hour.

In one of these skirmishes, LST 605 took credit for three planes and the Oyster Bay got eight. A couple of them were knocked down 50 feet from the ships. One of them left paint marks on the Oyster Bay's side.

Everything was clear until sundown on December 10, 1944, when an alert was sounded. No planes appeared, but a fuel dump fire burned well into the night, apparently ignited by the paratroopers who had survived the December 4th action.

Meanwhile, the powers that be had been looking over charts of the Philippines, and gathering their reconnaissance data. Far away, up on the southern tip of Mindoro Island, was a small harbor surrounded by large areas, suitable for airfields. A spot there would make a fine PT base and there were two elderly and highly expendable squadrons right at hand. That did it.

The first outfit to get going from Leyte Gulf and the last to arrive at Mindoro was an aggregation of tugs and barges known as "Slow Tow Convoy". At 1500 on December 11, 1944, Captain J.B. McLean, Comdesdiv 48, received an order from Admiral Struble to organize this unit and depart for Mindoro at 0600 next morning. As Captain McLean observed with considerable restraint, only limited preparations could be made. His group comprised three destroyers, two destroyer escorts, six tug boats (one of the Australian Navy, one of the U.S. Navy, and four of the U.S. Army), an Army aviation gasoline tanker and two LCTs. Other vessels scheduled never got the word, but some not expected joined. Each tug had a tow which made forming up difficult, especially since there was no voice communications between ships.

In an effort to determine what the tugs were supposed to do with their tows, once they reached Mindoro, Captain McLean inquired: "What are your orders?" and received the following replies:

U.S.S. Whippoorwill: "Turn tow over to PT Unit."

H.M.A.S. Reserve: "Deliver to PT base."

First Army Tug: "We have no instructions. Sixth Army is to give them."

Second Army Tug: "As far as we know, the Army will take them."

Third Army Tug: "Don't know."

Fourth Army Tug: "Drop barge and return."

Both LCTs: "Report to Senior Officer present on arrival."

Tanker: "Awaiting orders."

A semblance of order was finally established, but when Captain McLean tried to make a feint into Panaon Bay to deceive enemy air, he was blocked off by a resupply echelon returning from Ormoc Bay. No air attack developed and, in the early hours of December 13, 1944, Slow Tow was overtaken and passed by Admiral Struble's Mindoro Attack Force, which had formed off Dulag, and Admiral Ruddock's battleships and escort carriers, from Kossol Passage.

On December 11, 1944, the Base Force boarded the LST 605, after all supplies were aboard.

Since it was anticipated that the principal resistance to an Allied occupation of Mindoro would be offered by the Kamikaze Corps, an air plan was carefully worked out. At a conference between Lieutenant General George Kinney, U.S.A., and Rear Admiral Felix Stump, U.S.N., on December 7, 1944, it was agreed that V Army Air Force would augment combat air patrol in the Mindanao Sea during the passage and take complete responsibility at dusk every day. The escort carriers would provide fighter cover at other times and direct support at the objective area up to and including N-Day (as Mindoro D-Day was called). Then Army Air would take over support duties at the beachhead.

Task Unit 70.1.4., under operational command of Lieutenant Commander N. Burt Davis got underway from Leyte, at 1300 on December 12, 1944, in the convoy carrying VIII Army's Visayan Task Force, to the invasion of Mindoro, 300 miles to the northwest. Because of the likelihood of heavy enemy air attacks, the PTs had no Tenders; instead, an advance Base Unit was loaded in LST 605, with the PT Detachment of the 113th Naval Construction Battalion. This convoy had as its objective, to make a landing at Mindoro, P.I., put Army troops ashore, to establish an air-strip and to put Naval personnel ashore, to establish a PT operating base. "Condition two" watches were required at all times during this voyage. As previously stated, this necessitated standing two hours on watch, and two off alternately.

The invasion convoy had a portent of enemy intentions on December 13, 1944. It was an unlucky 13th for the main convoy, the Mindoro Attack Force. The forenoon watch was uneventful, but the presence of the force was discovered by a Japanese reconnaissance plane as early as 0900, and a few hours later kamikaze bombers with fighter escort took off from one of the Visayan fields to attack. Shortly before 1500, as the convoy was about to round the southern Cape of Negros into the Sulu Sea, a kamikaze Val sneaked in low from astern and crashed Nashville on her port side abaft Admiral Struble's cabin. That Japanese pilot was certainly loaded to kill. Besides crashing himself, he carried two bombs, both of which exploded. The ship was shaken from stem to stern. Fires

immediately broke out. Flag bridge, combat information center and communications office were wrecked. Ready ammunition from the 5 inch guns and 40mm mounts started going off. No fewer than 133 officers and men, including the Admiral's and General's chiefs of staff, Captain E.W. Abdill and Colonel Bruce C. Hill, U.S.A., and Colonel John T. Murtha, U.S.A., commanding 310th Bombardment Wing, were killed or died of their wounds, and 190, including General Dunckel and several other members of his staff, were wounded. Only four men in the Marine division escaped death. A light cruiser carries 50 Marines in its complement. The Nashville's decks were covered with the dead and wounded. The explosions sent chunks of hot steel raining down on the crew. Nashville maneuvered radically until destroyer Stanly closed to render assistance, while Y.M.S. 315 picked up men who had been blown overboard. Admiral Struble, General Dunckel and some fifty staff officers and war correspondents transferred to destroyer Dashiell. The damaged cruiser, escorted by Stanly returned to Leyte Gulf.

At 1705, shortly after Admiral Ruddock's group entered the Sulu Sea, bogeys appeared on radar screens closing from the northeast. These represented seven kamikazes with three fighter escorts which had taken off from Cebu at 1630. Combat Air patrol intercepted them thirteen miles out, but three broke through. One was shot down by a screening destroyer, a second by West Virginia; but the third bore in on Haraden. Its right wing sheared the starboard end and after side of that destroyer's bridge; the fuselage, after clearing the starboard boat, struck the searchlight on No.1 stack and exploded with its bomb load. The stack was carried away and burning gasoline splashed over the after part of the ship. Numerous small fires sprang up and steam shot out from several uptakes, making it difficult for sailors to move about, but they managed to bring everything under control. Haraden's casualties were 14 dead and 24 wounded. She, too, had to return to Leyte Gulf. The PT boats huddled close to the rest of the convoy to add their batteries to the curtain of fire.

About a half hour after Haraden was hit, the enemy started to work over Slow Tow Convoy astern, but Captain McLean's destroyers took very good care of their clumsy charges. Two enemy planes that managed to elude C.A.P. were so badly shot up by anti-aircraft fire that they splashed, one so near the Army gasoline tanker that two of her men were blown overboard.

Coming around the tip of Ilin Island, on December 14, 1944, the Japs really gave the invasion force a going over. At 0715, twenty-nine Japanese Army planes (including 16 kamikazes) and 40 Navy planes (including 33 kamikazes) took off from the Clark Field complex. At 1000, eight suicide dive bombers came over. Two of the LSTs were hit, inside Ilin, set afire and abandoned. LST 605 got two of the planes, PT223 got two more and the P38s got the remaining four. The rest of the enemy planes never got near the convoy. All PT boats did a commendable job picking up survivors, under hazardous conditions. The

following is another addition supplied by Robert J. Wehrli:

As PT224 was within 200 yards of one of the LSTs when it was hit by a Jap suicide plane we were heavily involved in picking up survivors. We were close enough to see men blown overboard and others jumping off the LST with clothing afire. Some had life jackets on and many did not. Most were wounded or burned, with many fractured arms and legs. Most all the boats participated in this rescue and the 224 was high point team with 78 victims logged aboard. First aid was administered, shots of morphine given to suffering victims, fractures splinted, sheets and blankets used to cover the severely burned. The most difficult part of the rescue was getting a victim up the six feet of cargo net from the water to the deck, especially those victims who couldn't help themselves in any way.

During the rescue operation the Exec. of 224, Ensign Ray Rosenthal, a very strong swimmer who had college competition in swimming, requested permission to go into the sea to assist a sailor obviously drowning. With great reluctance and after some heated discussion, permission was granted by Robert J. Wehrli. However, as all boats were underway it took us some time to maneuver back to where Rosie was keeping the sailor afloat. Harry Griffin, CO of the 223 reached them first and to say that Harry was surprised to see Rosie in the water is a vast understatement. The questions Harry asked Rosie were the subject of many laughs throughout the squadron in the months ahead.

On the night of December 14-15, 1944, Admiral Berkey's Close Covering Group maintained a position about five miles ahead of the transports. "Black Cats" (night flying Catalinas) sent from Leyte, patrolled twenty to thirty miles ahead and on each flank. At about 0300 on the 15th, one of them reported a surface contact approximately fifteen miles northwest of the Mindoro Attack Group. After a check to make sure it wasn't one of our minesweepers, Admiral Berkey instructed the Catalina pilot to attack. Five minutes later he reported scoring one hit on a cargo transport. At 1455, destroyers Barton and Ingraham closed this target and took it under fire. The ship was soon enveloped in flames and left sinking. The victim turned out to be an inter-island freighter of 150 to 500 tons.

"Beach Red" on Caminawit Point, a narrow sandspit about 2,000 yards long, was the designated unloading area for LSTs carrying men and equipment for the PT base to be constructed on Mangarin Bay.

At dawn, on December 15, 1944, the objective was sighted. About an hour later, the Task Force veered toward the island. At about 0900, the destroyers began shelling the beach. The landing was simple, no return fire was encountered and the weather was perfect, so everything proceeded according to plan. All ships, with the exception of one destroyer, ceased firing after a few rounds. The lone destroyer continued lobbing shells into the location where the enemy base was believed to be. The LSTs and LCIs slid up on the sandy beach and disgorged their men and machines, with little opposition at the beachhead.

Over 16,500 men and 27,600 tons of equipment and supplies were landed during the assault, and an additional 5,100 men with 16,800 tons of supplies were transported to Mindoro by Vii Amphibian Force during the resupply phase of the operation.

Half an hour later, Lieutenant Commander Davis went ahead with five PT boats, accompanying several of the escort vessels into Mangarin Bay, the prospective site of the PT base, while the other eighteen PT boats remained with a group of LSTs approaching Mangarin Bay.

Lieutenant Commander Davis, armed to the teeth with everything from bowie knives to hand grenades, stepped ashore on the dock of the old enemy float plane base. Two Japs who had not received the word to retreat, were killed. The rest fled to the hills without their baggage.

The Japanese defenses were very inadequate. About 200 soldiers were in the San Jose' area, and not more than 500 on the entire island. But the Japanese air forces had a dozen or more airfields in Luzon and the Visayas, all within range.

Indeed, the landing was almost too good. Some of the seasoned campaigners smelled a rat. He was coming on wings. A Japanese reconnaissance plane had spotted the landing operations at about 0530; and shortly after, some 15 to 18 kamikazes with as many escorts took off from Davao and Clark Fields.

At 0800, A.A.F. planes arrived over Mindoro beachhead to relieve the carrier-based aircraft, and Admiral Stump's unit with Admiral Ruddock's group, started back to Leyte. Slow Tow Convoy was still coming up.

Already there was action at the beachhead. A few minutes later, C.A.P. tallyhoed about 20 planes approaching from the southward. Ten got by and came in low from both sides of Ilin Island. They spotted LSTs off Beach White on their way to the line of departure, and at 0855, started diving from about 300 feet altitude. The LSTs and destroyer Moale opened fire and diminished their number, but the rest headed for LST 738, despite hits from her and the destroyer. One crashed the landing ship just above the waterline, breaking through into the tank deck, where high octane gasoline ignited and ammunition exploded. The second plane made for her bridge but was shot down by Moale.

LST 738, however, was in a bad way. A second explosion, followed by a third occurred, and orders were received to abandon ship. She burned all day and was finally sunk by naval gunfire.

LST 472 a short distance away, was undergoing a similar experience, when off Beach Red. After one plane splashed to port and another clipped the port after gun tubs, she was crashed at deck level, just forward of the main superstructure. The plane's engine and burning parts were scattered across the ship; the bomb penetrated to the tank deck and exploded there. As if this were not enough, another plane following closely came in strafing. A Japanese pilot, hit by gunfire from another ship, tried to wing-over and hit the deck of LST 472, but overshot and splashed on her port beam. A minute or so later,

a fourth plane come in strafing but did no damage; it was followed by a fifth, which dove onto the LST's bow, was taken under fire, and splashed. Thus, within 5 minutes, LST 472 shot down or assisted in shooting down three or four attacking planes, a record that she had to pay for with her life. Two large explosions occurred and she burned until sunk by gunfire later in the day. Her casualties were fortunately light; 6 dead or missing and several wounded.

Lieutenant Commander Alvin W. Fargo, Jr., USNR, commander of Squadron 13, had ordered the PT boats to speed up to get between the LSTs and the approaching enemy planes. Seven planes peeled off and strafed the PT boats ineffectively. The boats shot down three of them. Two more were brought down by combined fire of the PT boats and the LSTs. The PT boats picked up more than 200 survivors from LSTs 738 and 472. PT224 had 76 aboard that they had pulled out of the bay.

Just as it began to look like the most bloodless invasion of the war to the men inside the bay, four Japanese came over attacking ships in the bay. A destroyer was the target of the first crash dive. The plane flew over it, dived and attempted to cut back and crash on the deck. It missed by fifty feet or more. Two more enemy planes tried for the same destroyer. They were shot down by combined fire of all ships. The fourth plane swooped in over the bow of PT221. Al Szczech, Bill Dowty and Ralph Records, of the crew of the 221, brought it down. It cartwheeled along the surface of the bay, spraying water and flames, until it sank from sight.

PT221 joined the other PT boats and made for the LST which was the most badly damaged, to help pick up the survivors, most of whom were already in the water. As the boat nosed in among the floating men, the explosion aboard the LST shook PT221, and its force was felt by all those on deck. Robert Carlson dived to the deck, clutching his shoulder. As soon as the shock was over, it was seen that a metal fragment had struck his arm, cutting it enough to draw blood. Carlson was acclaimed Squadron 16's first battle casualty.

Shortly after all the LSTs and LCIs had landed, Squadron 16 cruised along the beach. Lieutenant Commander Davis radioed for permission to take two PT boats up a small strait, between Mindoro and Ilin Island, for the purpose of capturing any small craft that might be escaping that way. It was later learned that permission was granted immediately, but PT220's radioman failed to properly interpret the message. After a short delay, Lieutenant Commander Davis, presuming he was acting without orders, sent PTs 221 and 222. Nothing was found but it was later learned that the delay had prevented the capture of two enemy barges, by the PT boats.

As Squadron 16 cruised along the shore, everyone was surprised to note that none of the enemy were in evidence and that no return fire was encountered. It was later learned that the Japanese had evacuated shortly before the invasion. About a dozen of the enemy were found near the coast. One or two of these were captured. The rest were killed.

At Caminawit Point, Lieutenant Commander N. Burt Davis had set up the advance base for his 23 PT boats by 1400. By nightfall of the 15th, every landing ship but one was unloaded and Admiral Struble was ready to pull out for Leyte.

Lieutenant Joe Loftus, Supply Officer for the squadron, was well versed in the Japanese language. He took over the Japanese radio that was still operating and received messages from the enemy which were to the advantage of the Allied Forces.

That evening during the darkness before moonrise, when all the boats and shore positions were in total obscurity, except for a welder's blue light, a plane was heard droning low overhead. The crew of PT221 was sitting on deck, saw the blinding flash and heard the loud explosion of a heavy bomb that was dropped near the blue light. Captain Colvin, who was welding a little railway which ran to the water dock, wasn't even injured. Repairs were called off for the night. During the night, three or four more bombs were dropped but no casualties or damage resulted. The Mindoro invasion was successful but costly, in lives and equipment to the U.S. Forces.

As told to this writer by Al Abeckerle, CMOMM, Squadron 16: "While Commander Colvin was welding the railroad track on Mindoro, the night of December 15, 1944, my job was to bring fuel drums down to the dock so the boats (all of them with tanks almost empty) could get at least enough fuel to maneuver. I had three flat cars of fifty-two gallon drums of 100 octane gas aboard, and I broke out a brand new gasoline powered 'Handy Billy pump' (new in crate) to refuel from drums to the boats.

Well, the d--- thing would not start. I had spark, but no gasoline to the carburetor. I had traced the fuel to the carburetor but it stopped there. (All of this in pitch black night.) I did, however, have the presence of mind to have a flashlight with me. I took out my handkerchief and spread it on the dock. (It was an old rotten dock with a lot of cracks and holes in it.) I had to take the carburetor apart to find the trouble and I could not afford to lose any of the screws, gaskets, etc., hence the handkerchief.

What did I finally find was wrong? Well, some no good 'War Work Ba-----' had put a gob of common window putty into the carburetor bowl, holding down the intake needle valve. I cleaned the bowl and valve and was putting it all together when that lone plane came over and let loose his frag bomb, aiming at the welder's blue flash. I naturally ran for cover, but in the dark (I had turned the flashlight out and left it at the scene of the repair.) I ran out of dock and hit the water and rocks on the shore side of the dock. I scrambled out of the water (about four feet deep) onto some rocks. Just then the bomb exploded and shrapnel came whizzing by and down into the drink I went again.

When I felt that this was it for awhile, I came out of the water and went up to Commander Colvin and said, 'Captain, I think we'd better get the hell out of here', and he said, 'I think you are right'. I asked, 'What are my orders now'? He said, "Go back to LST 605 and we will continue tomorrow'. I plodded back along the railroad track to the 605. I was never so cautious in my life and it took a long time to get there. After

a cup of strong black coffee in the galley of the 605, I went to my army cot on the tank deck for a rest. I couldn't sleep so at the crack of dawn, I went to the chief's area on the 605, had coffee and a snack, then went down to the tank deck for off-loading instructions. No officer was present to direct the unloading, so I gathered a working party to off-load the gas drums and spare engines and also help Chief Al Piotter with canned goods, etc.

We started early because LST 605 was the only LST left after the initial invasion. The fuel was the most important item so I insisted on making three piles of gas drums as far apart as possible. The first drum was way to the port of LST 605. The next just ahead of the tank deck with the spare engines, food supplies and ammo to starboard of the 605, the rest of them back up the beach where ever space could be found close to the sugar cane railroad track that went down to the dock so we could transport the fuel drums to the boats via the pumps. The slow Tow Convoy was still two days away, making the PT boats very vulnerable at this point being low on fuel."

The Army had unloaded in record time and the LSTs which had brought them, pulled out. The rest of the U.S. Navy left in a hurry to guard them on their return to Leyte. Except for LST 605 which had carried the PT Base Force and extra replacements, the PT boats alone remained.

PT300 in company with PT230 (Squadron 17) made a night patrol up the west coast of Mindoro with no contacts.

On the morning of December 16, 1944, the Japanese air force turned out early and headed for Mindoro to polish off the Task Force. They were apparently infuriated to discover that the fleet had disappeared. Then they spotted the PT boats. The Japs had high bombers, fighters, sea planes and float planes with a good percentage of suicide planes. Then started five days of almost continuous general quarters. Crews developed necks with 360 degree swivels and became very agile at ducking the miscellaneous airplane parts that showered about them.

Admiral Stump's escort carriers in Admiral Ruddock's group were ordered to furnish air cover off the Mindoro beachhead for one more day, as foul weather at Leyte prevented most Army planes from taking off. Only eight Army planes showed up that morning, which was marked by several unsuccessful air attacks.

All of the PT boats were in Mangarin Bay and LST 605 was unloading base equipment on the beach. PT300 in company with PT230 (Squadron 17) had just entered the bay, returning from patrol, when a single enemy plane (Sally) strafed PT230, without causing any damage, made a complete circle and started to dive on LST 605. The Sally was heading for the open door of the LST. The LST and all of the PT boats opened fire shooting off a wing. This altered its course causing it to crash on the beach, fifty yards from the LST. It landed in the gasoline dump exploding a three week's supply of fuel. Five men were killed and eleven wounded.

This is another item supplied by Al Abeckerle? "As we were moving on the lower tank deck of the 605, all of her guns topside began firing ordered all hands to take cover. A few seconds later, the Jap plane crashed first large pile of fuel drums. The explosion that followed lifted the front end of the 605, and flame, sand and debris blew into the tank deck.

Well, the fire just had to be put out as there was raw 100 octane gasoline in the tank deck bilges from leaking drums along the way. Damage control had the salt water pumps going as soon as the alert was sounded, the port and starboard fire hoses were taken down and directed at the flames around the front of LST 605 until it was under control.

A lot of us left the 605 and hid along the beach at this point. I remember Piotter had a good spot behind one of the crated Packard engines that took a large chunk of shrapnel.

I also remember Tom Allison as we hit the brush, making a fist and saying to the other Jap planes flying about, 'You buck-toothed b-----, - come down here and fight like a man'. All in all it was quite hectic".

Squadrons 16 and 13 moved out into the open water of the bay. They had just begun to lay to when a formation of eight fighter planes (Oscars) appeared. They made no attempt at bombing. Lieutenant (j.g.) Frank A. Treddinick, USNR, whose PT77 (Squadron 13) was under attack by a single plane, waited until the last second and pulled down his throttles causing the plane to crash in the water, 10 yards ahead of the boat. Lieutenant (j.g.) Harry E. Griffin, USNR, similarly avoided a plane by swinging the rudder of his PT223 hard right. The plane crashed into the water, about 10 feet from the 223 and scattered parts of the plane on her deck. Lieutenant (j.g.) John R. Erickson, USNR, with two planes headed for his PT298, maneuvered at top speed to avoid them. "The gunners fired a steady stream of shells into one plane", he reported, "as it came down in a steep dive, and crashed 15 feet off our port bow. Just then the second plane circled once and dived down on our stern strafing as he dove. The gunners fired on him until he crashed, about 3 feet off our starboard bow spraying the deck with debris and water. One man was blown over the side by the concussion but was rescued uninjured". The man on the bow 20mm saw a man in the water and thought it was one of the Jap kamikaze pilots. He wanted to help him die so he started shooting at him. He was stopped before he hit one of his own shipmates. Another plane was shot down by the combined fire of several PT boats.

Lieutenant (j.g.) Byron F. Kent, whose PT230 (Squadron 17) was also a target, tells of applying broken-field running football tactics to the problem:

"Three of the planes chose my boat as their target. All our fire was concentrated on the first as it dove for the boat in a gradual sweep, increasing to an angle of about seventy degrees. I maneuvered at high speed to present a starboard broadside to

the oncoming plane. When it was apparent that the plane could not pull out of the dive, I fainted in several directions and then turned hard right rudder under the plane. It struck the water, thirty feet off the starboard bow.

The second plane began its dive. When the pilot committed himself to his final direction, I swung the boat away from the plane's right bank. The plane hit the water, fifty feet away.

The third plane came in at a seventy degree dive. After zigzagging rapidly as the plane came down, I swung suddenly at right angles. The plane landed in the water, just astern, raising the stern out of the water and showering the 40mm gun crew with flame, smoke, debris and water. All of us were slightly dazed but there were no injuries and the boat was undamaged".

That evening as PTs 224 and 297 were departing for the night's patrol of the Tables Island area and passing through Ilin Straits, two enemy planes dropped three bombs near them. The two boats shot down one plane in the water which narrowly missed PT224, and they saw the other plane glide over the treetops on Mindoro, trailing fire and losing altitude.

Action Report of U.S. PT224

Made by - Lieutenant Robert J. Wehrli, USNR, 15306

Boat Captain PT224

Date - 16 December 1944

Location - North end of Ilin St., Mindoro Is.

Time - 1855 - Dusk

ACTION - ~~PT224~~ in column astern 250 yds. of PT297 starting out on assigned patrol. Two Vals approached at 150 ft. altitude from directly ahead and about 100 yds. to stbd. We opened fire as they were on our stbd. bow. First val after passing us turned to right and came back over us from stbd. quarter to port bow at altitude of 40 ft. and released bomb, which hit water 20 yds. off our port bow and threw water all over deck. He was under fire all this time by us and other boats well astern of us. Val was definitely on fire as he passed overhead and went away disappearing low over trees on Mindoro Is. Did not see him explode but have reason to believe he crashed on island.

Second val after turning to his left passed directly overhead at 300 ft. from our stbd. to our port dropping two bombs which hit water 50 yds. to stbd. and 30 yds. to port. We had him under fire after he released first bomb as that was as soon as we saw him. He came left and the next thing we knew he was 50 yds. directly astern of us in a dive on us. We again opened fire at this point blank range and hit him with everything, --- really pouring it into him. Just off our stern his dive broke abruptly, he fell off to our left and nosed over and hit water 20 yds. off our port quarter --- the flame from crash felt by our 40mm crew on stern. We sincerely feel we broke his dive and shot him

down thereby saving ourselves and our boat. On this run of his he was under fire only by our guns as no other boats saw him dive at us. We continued in column with PT297 and resumed assigned patrol.

Casualties --- none at all.

Damage to Boat --- none.

Outstanding work by Boat Crew --- The 40mm crew directed by John Novak, CTM, USN, did a wonderful job in the face of a suicide dive, stuck to the gun and shot hell out of the Val. Both turret gunners, Clark, A.C., GM3/c, and Fuller, J.W., RdM2/c, did very outstanding shooting on all runs the Vals made and were first to see the targets on both occasions. I cannot speak too highly of their cool, accurate shooting.

As Al Holmes, M0MM1/c, PT297 put it: "Those planes were so close to the boat, you could see the color of the pilot's eyes. We wouldn't have needed to use the guns. We could have thrown potatoes at them".

Later that evening PT224 struck something which fouled her rudders making it necessary to cancel the patrol. On seeking anchorage PT297 went hard aground on the north side of Ilin Island. Attempts to pull her off were unsuccessful, and there she perched for more than a month before being hauled off.

Weather conditions improved, and at 1310 more Army planes arrived, allowing the Ruddock group to shove off for Leyte.

A convoy came, that evening, bringing much needed supplies, including food and gasoline.

Slow Tow Convoy arrived off the beachhead after dark, on the 16th. Commander E.D. McEathron, at that time senior officer present, helped Captain McLean to herd the tows to an anchorage off Beach White; but the boat pool officer ashore, after being asked to send out a number of craft to take over the craft and beach them in desperation did nothing, and signed off for the night. Some charitably inclined small craft and PTs came to its rescue, and by next morning watch, had taken it in charge.

December 17, 1944, began as a peaceful day, with nothing of importance occurring all forenoon. PT221 and three other PT boats tied up at the dock. It was the first time any of the boats had been bold enough to do so. PT221 tied to the dock and began taking on what little water was to be had. The other three boats came in and tied one to another, tandem style, outward from PT221. A short time later, Tom Hart went to relieve Leon Czarniak as lookout on the aft 40mm of PT221. They chatted for a minute or two, while Czarniak was removing his life jacket and Hart was putting his on. Neither man looked up. Hart seated himself in the pointer's seat and was fastening his helmet when the 40mm on the boat alongside suddenly thundered into action. Looking up, Hart was astounded to see three enemy planes so low and so near that they could not have been over a thousand feet away. A few other guns opened up and much shouting was heard. The appearance of the planes was so sudden that some of the men were momentarily frozen in their tracks and

others dashed ashore and about six leaped overboard. Everyone expected at least one of the planes to crash the boats. One of the planes strafed PT224, the outward boat. George Walsh, SC on the 224, who was at the forward 20mm at the time, received two 50 caliber slugs in the arm and fell through the hatch into the crews quarters, but returned immediately to man his gun. He also caught a piece of shrapnel in the right cheek. Bob Spofford removed the shrapnel and administered first aid.

Tom Hart was already at the stern 40mm of PT221 and Joyner and Robinson nearby. All jumped into position but there was no pointer. Leon Czarniak had disappeared. The same situation prevailed on the bow 40mm.

"When those planes started their run" related Herbert H. (Peter) Wells, third officer on PT221, and the only officer aboard, "I yelled to get the (expletives deleted) off the boat. Off what I thought was going to go up like a string of firecrackers.

I was hunkered down behind an iron water tank with another crew member. When the planes missed, we looked at each other, decided to be brave and got back on board." Pete, who is a professional artist, said thirty years later, "I could still draw a picture of the expression on that crewman's face, but can't remember his name."

Ralph Records obeyed Wells' order, racing so fast that his shoes flew off. This left Al Szczech with no trainer for his gun.

The boats were casting off one from another as fast as possible. PT221's spring line had drawn tight and could not be released quickly. Robert Carlson cut it with a knife, then came back and assumed the pointer's position of the aft 40mm. As the boats began backing down to get into position to clear the dock, there were anguished cries from the water astern. Clifford Anderson, who was at the wheel, signaled Jim Donald in the engine room to throw the motors in forward position. Immediately there were anguished cries from the water at the bow. Finally the swimming men were out of the way but getting away from the dock was further delayed because one of Squadron 13's boats, that was also at the dock, fouled up the others. As PT221 cleared the dock, Mr. Wells returned and took over the trainer's position on the bow 40mm. Guns were now rearing on all four boats making a deafening sound, due to their proximity to each other.

The three planes had passed up a certain opportunity to destroy four boats at one time. They flew over the base and one of them, which had been hit, crashed and set fire to an insignificant supply dump.

All the Boat Captains and first executive officers had gone ashore for a briefing by superior officers, to a fairly large frame house with a thatched roof near the dock, which had been taken over for temporary officer's headquarters. Only the second executive officer was left aboard each boat. When the attack occurred, those ashore raced into the thorn thickets, where the Japanese had dug a considerable number of foxholes. James BC Rock Boat Captain of PT221, was dashing at top speed into the brush, when a barbed wire loomed

before him. He dove over it and landed in a thorn bush. Captain Almer P. Colvin was just behind him and they ended up in the same foxhole. Mr. Rock's hands were so badly swollen from the thorns, he was unable to handle the boat for two days.

The other two planes splashed trying to dive on PTs 75 and 84 (Squadron 13). Four men on PT75 suffered minor injuries from flying debris.

At 1800, three enemy planes passed over the base but made no attack. Another enemy plane flew over during the night but only dropped flares. They were not taken under fire by order of C.T.G. 70.1.4 for reasons of security.

On the night of December 17-18, 1944, PT222 along with PT227 (Squadron 17) patrolled to Marinduque Island. They were shadowed by an enemy twin-engines bomber that suffered no attack. The patrol was turned back due to heavy weather.

"We hated to see the dawn come, because sooner or later,
one of our PT boats was going to get hit".

It happened, --- on the third day.

December 18, 1944, was perhaps the roughest day on Mindoro. Early in the forenoon, a "Nell", one of Japan's new medium bombers, came over and dropped three or four bombs, all of which missed their mark. The anti-aircraft fire was terrific but did not bring the plane down. Two fighters (Oscars) came over a little later. One of them made a suicide dive at one of the PT boats but missed. Two of the p38s were hit and set afire but the pilots bailed out safely.

Immediately after the unsuccessful suicide dive another plane came into view from the same direction. The events of the past few days made the PT sailors rather jittery.

Most of the boats opened fire as soon as it was in range. Suddenly the plane veered aside and most of the boat crews recognized it as a PBY, one of their own planes. One boat, however, continued firing at it for another thirty seconds. Needless to say, the pilot, after he bailed out, wasn't exactly happy with PT boat personnel that day.

Conditions were quiet until mid-afternoon. At 1600, immediately after an all clear flash, when everyone began to relax a bit, more enemy planes (Vals) appeared. One of them dropped a couple of bombs that missed. Another came in for a dive but turned away under heavy fire. He appeared to be leaving but suddenly heeled over and came directly at PT300. Lieutenant Commander Almer P. Colvin, commander of Squadron 16, gave the 300 a last-second swing to the right. The pilot apparently had anticipated the maneuver. He swung right with the boat and crashed into the engine room splitting PT300 in half. The stern sank immediately; the bow burned for 8 hours. All but one of her men were killed or wounded, seriously wounding the Squadron Commander Colvin. Killed were:

John W. Ball, USNR, QM2/c

John R. Bowers, USNR, M0MM2/c

William L. Dudas, USNR, M0MM2/c

Valmore W. Beauregard, USNR, F1/c
 Joseph M. Brunner MM1/c
 Joseph G. Amos, USNR, RM3/c
 Albert E. Boone, USNR, GM3/c
 Albert J. Basso, USNR, S1/c

The wounded, in addition to Colvin, were:

Ensign Harry T. Hilliard, USNR
 William J. Rorick, USNR, QM3/c
 Peter Paul Riga
 Raymond C. Hill, USNR, SC2/c
 Frank W. Wheelbarger, USNR, S1/c
 Francis F. Viger, USNR, M0MM2/c

Everett Nussman, TM2/c on PT300 was the only survivor who was uninjured. He was on the starboard twin-fifty caliber machine guns at the time of the attack. He kept firing until the plane was almost ready to strike, then ducked down into the bottom of the turret. The explosion caved the turret in on him but he wriggled free and dove overboard.

The work of the remaining PT boats, especially that of PT222, in rescuing the wounded under fire, resulted in some of the best-deserved Bronze Stars won in this war. One of the wounded rescued by PT222 was Squadron Commander Almer P. Colvin. They also retrieved the body of Joseph Brunner.

Shortly after PT300 was destroyed, more enemy planes appeared. The boats of Squadrons 16 and 13, plus other boats and ships, opened fire. None of the enemy aircraft was hit but unfortunately an American Corsair was. One of the enemy planes also shot up a P38. Both pilots bailed out of their burning crafts safely. Other P38s shot down two of the Japanese planes.

PT221 was scheduled for night patrol but was unable to refuel until dusk. Refueling had barely begun when there was another alert. PT221 immediately moved away from the fuel barge and lay to in the bay. PT223 was also waiting to refuel and was moored nearer the shore. They were laying to, straining their ears for the sound of planes, when they heard a swish and six deafening explosions. The enemy planes dropped three bombs off the stern of PT223 and three off the starboard bow. The last bomb struck near the fuel barge which was just offshore. The blast was so great that Raymond F. Lawrence, Andy Boyuka, Ladislav Miegler and three others were blown off the deck of PT223, into the water. All swam ashore, with the exception of Miegler who needed assistance. Lieutenant Commander Davis was one of the men who assisted him. A metal fragment from the bomb struck the base of the aft 40mm on PT223, glanced upward and struck Angelo R. Cortese, a gunner's mate, in the abdomen. He didn't appear to be seriously wounded but died four days later. Robert

E. Hopkins, a gunner's mate striker on PT223, was hit in the chest and arm with shrapnel. Charles Mahoney, who was operating the smoke screen during the attack, received a shrapnel wound in the left leg and was hospitalized. Ed Kalinowski began to wonder where the blood was coming from in the starboard turret, only to discover he had caught some shrapnel in his right leg. The bombs that landed off the bow of PT223 started the 40mm ammo afire but it was extinguished before it could explode. The quick action of Ed Reitz, throwing overboard the ready ammunition that had been hit, causing the fire, presumably saved PT223 from being demolished. On examination the following morning, shrapnel holes were found in the bow and the stern of PT223 and debris of steel was found on her deck.

The PT boats held their fire to avoid revealing their positions.

The first week on Mindoro was an endurance test for the boat crews. Meals were a sort of "catch as catch can" affair. Practically all the day light hours were spent at General Quarters or on watch. The nights were not quite as difficult, for the boats were not to move or fire, unless directly attacked.

On December 19, 1944, the enemy came over before daylight, and dropped flares lighting up the bay and shore. One flare was dropped near PT221, causing it to stand out in clear silhouette but none of the planes made any attempt to attack.

Work had been rushed on a landing field at San Jose', almost from the day of arrival, and the Japanese were beginning to turn their attention to it. The landing field that had been built by the Japanese was too small to be of much use for American planes. The new air strip was built more quickly than any previous one. The PT base was also built up rapidly. Many of the native huts were taken over for living quarters.

About evening, a lone enemy float plane (Jake) came over the bay. It was well within range and several boats opened fire. It flew away slowly and crashed on the horizon. At dusk, another enemy plane dropped a string of four or five bombs, some of which fell near two of the PT boats. Immediately after dusk, more enemy planes arrived and a heavy barrage was sent up.

Tom Hart on PT221 had just cleaned the aft 40mm, before dark. The grease-soaked canvas, on which the gun parts had been laid out, had left a greasy spot on the deck. When the alert was sounded, the above mentioned planes were already overhead. The men on the aft 40mm quickly took their places. Joyner, the ammunition passer, was below deck and was the last to arrive. He rushed aft, his long legs taking four foot strides. There was a look of surprised alarm on his face when his heel struck the oil spot on the deck, and his feet shot forward and upward. His six foot frame appeared momentarily suspended horizontally in space before he crashed to the deck. He was on his knees in an instant, threw back the lid of the ammunition box, extracted a clip of shells and leaped to his feet, only to crash to the deck again with the added weight of the clip of ammunition

across his chest. Again he rose quickly but held to the framework of the gun with one hand, as he passed Hart the ammunition. Rapidly, efficiently, he bent down, seized another clip of shells and thrust them at Hart. But again, the treacherous deck betrayed him. He was on his feet, quicker than ever, this time holding to the gun, his face livid with rage. He said, "Hart, you son of a b----, if you ever spill another drop of oil on this deck, I'll pound your head to a pulp". All thought of danger had been erased from his mind. No sounds of the pandemonium of roaring guns, exploding bombs and shouting men penetrated his consciousness. For a few seconds, he alone, of the hundreds of men on the boats, ships and shore was completely oblivious of all danger, his mind encompassing only an oil spot on the deck, and the man who put it there.

An amphibious landing is the first step in any overseas operation. Keeping the men supplied with food, clothing, implements of war and other necessities is often a most difficult and important aspect of a successful campaign. To accomplish this, resupply convoys are formed and delivered to the new beachhead, on schedules dictated by needs and circumstances.

The first resupply eschelon for Mindoro, consisting of 14 LSTs and six chartered freighters, escorted by eleven destroyers, departed Leyte Gulf during the evening of December 19th. Two Oscars saluted the dawn of 21 December by making a hurried attack; they dropped bombs harmlessly and made off. Five planes of the first raid at 1718 broke through the twelve Army P38s to attack the convoy. Although the screen had been well alerted and opened heavy fire, three Oscars passed over at 6,000 feet without loss of control, picked out their targets and, diving vertically, crashed LST 460, LST 749 and Liberty Ship Juan de Fuca. The fourth, a Tojo, came down in a shallow glide and splashed close aboard destroyer Foote, slightly damaging her.

Within two minutes it was all over, but in that short time the two LSTs had sustained fatal wounds.

LST 460, carrying gasoline and ammunition and hit amidships, was soon blazing and exploding from stem to stern and became a total loss, lighting the sky for hours. LST 749 was also hit amidships. The plane that crashed her carried two bombs, one of which exploded on the deck and the other in the provision issuing room, killing all men stationed there and tearing out the steering gear. Soon the entire after part of the ship was burning, but she continued to make headway as it was impossible to stop her engines. Destroyer Converse had hoses rigged and was about to fight the fire when four twin-engined Japanese planes made a glide attack. Three were shot down by the destroyers, and the fourth retired, but during this attack the fires in LST 749 gained such headway that she too had to be abandoned. Of the 774 soldiers and sailors aboard the two LSTs, 107 were lost.

The damage to Juan de Fuca was not serious; she could still maintain speed. All

stragglers caught up with the convoy by dawn 22 December, and soon after that the LSTs went into Beach Red, Mindoro.

No enemy aircraft appeared, at Mindoro, until noon on December 20, 1944. At that time, two unidentified enemy planes flew over the air strip. Neither of them was brought down. However, a few minutes later two more enemy planes appeared and were set afire by P38s. One of them attempted to crash a PT boat but missed. The pilot of the other burning plane parachuted to the bay and was captured. PT220 picked up the enemy pilot at Ilin Island and brought him back to the base to be turned over to the Army. Parachuting where capture was almost inevitable had heretofore seldom been done by Japanese pilots in any theater of the war. The P38s shot down a total of five enemy aircraft during the day. One "Zeke" was destroyed by PT boats.

That night PT221 went on its first patrol on the west coast of Mindoro, from base to Dongon Point, where it cruised back and forth for the purpose of preventing enemy barges from landing troops. No barges were seen, but an enemy plane flying low over the water passed within a hundred yards of PT221. PT boats were still under orders not to fire at enemy planes at night, unless attacked. Other enemy planes were flying high overhead. They were caught in the beams of shore-based searchlights and were being fired on by radar controlled 90mm shore batteries.

The Mindoro airstrip began operations on the 20th but even the presence of locally based fighters could not immediately stop the enemy attacks. Six fighter planes, two night fighters and fifteen cargo planes landed on the airstrip on its first day of operation. The P38s celebrated the occasion by shooting down five enemy planes when intercepting attacks on the convoy, and ten more over Mindoro.

While returning from patrol on the morning of December 21, 1944, PT221 met PTs 220 and 222, also returning from patrol. The latter two boats reported having shot down an enemy float plane (Rufe) at daybreak. The object of their mission had been to transport some guerillas back to their base and to bring back a Japanese pilot, who had fallen into guerilla hands after his plane had been shot down. The enemy pilot claimed to have been a flying instructor for five years.

PTs 220 and 222 patrolled from base to Ilog Anchorage. There they were to land an Army Radar team and pick up Lieutenant Rowe, who was in charge of a Guerilla Camp. The mission was only partially completed as daylight approached. Arrangements were made to complete the mission at a later date.

In mid-afternoon an alert was sounded and a little later, an enemy "Hap" dropped out of the clouds in the midst of the PT boats. It made a dive at one of the boats, missed, skimmed just over the water, banked and turned in toward PT221. The aft 40mm stopped firing at the moment the plane banked and was spread-eagled, a perfect target. The motors had suddenly failed a few moments earlier, and PT221 was sliding slowly through the water under its own momentum. A perfect target for a kamikaze. Practically

everyone aboard thought the end had arrived. Ensign Joseph F. Raffo wheel of PT221 at the time, later described his sensations. "I felt "I just thought this is the end". This was probably the thought held. As Tom Hart expressed it, the thought "this is the end" came to his more - not even fright. For some unknown reason the plane wheeled again low over the water. This incident of the Japanese pilot passing up an opportunity for a successful crash dive, then a few moments later trying one with much poorer prospects of success, had happened many times.

PT223 went on a reef and had to have all three screws changed.

The usual bombing raids were experienced that night but no damage resulted.

December 22, 1944, was quiet most of the day. At 1630, three enemy planes came over and were brought down by P38s. One P38 was shot down, the pilot bailed out and was picked up by PT boats. Japanese planes came over again, after dark and dropped bombs. No PT personnel was hurt but soldiers were on the beach making coffee when the raid occurred. Three were killed and two injured. The P-61s also arrived on this day.

On the night of December 22-23, 1944, PTs 220 and 222 patrolled to Ilog Anchorage, picked up Lieutenant Commander Rowe, leader of Mindoro Guerillas, five American Flyers, who were shot down over Manila, more than a month before, one American P.O.W. and two Japanese P.O.W.s.

PT220, piloted by Lieutenant (j.g.) Eugene Johnson and PT222, by Lieutenant (j.g.) Robert J. Roth raced through the Mindoro Straits in the early morning and came within sight of the Japanese garrison on Luzon to pick up the aviators, who had paddled out to meet them in native bancas (canoes):

The rescued airmen were Lieutenant (j.g.) William Rising III, Lieutenant (j.g.) J.M. Newsome, Lieutenant (j.g.) Donald Dundero, Lieutenant (j.g.) William Elwood Miller and Rising's gunner, J.W. Montgomery.

They picked them up on Northern Mindoro shortly after midnight and raced south through the strait and were only an hour from Mangarin Bay, when at 1100 hours a Japanese float plane (Rufe) overtook them. Evidently the Japanese pilot wasn't sure whether the boats were friendly or enemy. He circled twice while the PT gunners held their fire. Then he came at them, dropping bombs that narrowly missed both boats. He turned for a strafing run, but his guns barely opened up before he was caught in crossfire from the PT boats' AA fire. The plane sank just astern of the rear boat.

Although missing for periods ranging from twenty-three to ninety-three days, the pilots never abandoned hope of being rescued.

The first really quiet day on Mindoro was December 23, 1944. There was only one alert and even then no planes came over, until after dark. At about 1030, Lieutenant Commander Davis boarded PT221. The 221 was to investigate an enemy lugger that had been spotted by the Air Force, about fifty miles north along the coast. PT221 got underway

immediately and cruised about in the area where the lugger was supposed to be; nothing.

That night several of the PT boats anchored in a shallow slew at the extremity of the bay. The boats dropped stern anchors near the shore. As bit, men jumped over the bow into the shallow water and pulled bow lines ashore, which they made fast to trees. Men waded ashore with machetes and chopped branches from the trees and shrubs, which they placed on the deck for camouflage. Planes droned overhead intermittently all night and dropped many bombs, none of which came close, with the exception of a phosphorous bomb. It burst about a hundred feet above the water and its contents slowly trickled down in thin streams and threads of light. Mosquitoes appeared in vast numbers and proved a greater source of dread than the enemy planes had when the boats were anchored in the open bay.

An even more uneventful day than the previous one was December 24, 1944. The gunners' mates had an opportunity to clean their guns and other men to do the work for which they were responsible. A damaged screw on PT221 was changed, under water, and a mattress cover unwound from another screw.

That night, most of the men aboard PT221 did not favor anchoring in the slew so she sounded her way in toward the east shore of the bay anchoring in two fathoms of water. During the night a few bombs and flares were dropped. "Washing Machine Charlie", a Japanese pilot, dropped eight Daisy Cutters then continued to fly over the base most of the night.

The exact date of the following incident is beyond recall at this time. It happened during the latter days of 1944, off the island of Mindoro. A radio signal was received concerning a group of Army soldiers who were ambushed. They were pinned down on the beach and requested rescue of one who was wounded. PT222 went in to find them, proceeding as far as possible. When they reached this point, Lieutenant (j.g.) Robert Roth asked for volunteers. George A. Dwyer, QM on the 222, being an excellent swimmer offered to swim in to find the wounded man. So saying, he dove off PT222, knife in his teeth, flashlight in one hand and pushing a yellow raft. After code blinking and swimming in shark infested waters for a half mile, he received an answering blink. He continued swimming until he heard an audible call, in code for help. The wounded man was placed in the raft and George pushed him back to the 222. Two dead men were buried and their graves marked. The wounded man, General Dustin, was taken to base at Caminawit Point. For this heroic deed George Dwyer was awarded the Navy and Marine Medals for valor beyond the call of duty. One of these arrived many years after hostilities ceased.

The work done by Squadron 16's Base Force in the early days at Mindoro cannot be praised too highly. The good Base Force ashore took a pasting from bombs, their equipment was sketchy and their improvisations awesome, but the boats kept operating, dodging and firing. The air was filled with hardware, the foxholes with personnel but a full course

Christmas dinner was served, regardless. Work had progressed rapidly on the base. By December 25, 1944, ten days after landing at Mindoro, Sick Bay was completed, the Radio Shack was up and the Chow Hall was well on its way.

Ensign John Zulick stepped off of "Colvin's Railroad", on Christmas morning, from the Airfield and announced that since he had now arrived, the war was over and all hands could relax. The rest of his speech was drowned out by stick bombs which just missed that White House with the red roof used as operations base headquarters.

Everybody, but six men to a boat, were at Christmas Services on the island. At 0840, a Jap fighter (Judy) came roaring over about 100 yards high. PT boats opened fire and brought it down. The men figured it was well secured until word was received that a Jap Task Force was headed for Mindoro. By this time the airstrip was secured and P38s, B25s and A20s were there.

PTs 221 and 227 (Squadron 17) made what was called the southern patrol, passing through the channel between Mindoro and Ilin Island on the way. The patrol was the secondary purpose of the trip. The main objective was to transport a security crew of six men and put them aboard damaged LST 740, off Marcanos Islands. These men were to repair (if possible) the ship and bring it back to Mindoro.

Fifty miles south, the LST swung at anchor. Her stern was down, every wave breaking over it. The superstructure at that end of the ship was a mass of twisted, fire-blackened metal. Her pumps and engines were still running although she had been abandoned for six days. There had been a direct bomb strike on the stern, fire had broken out and the stern began to settle. Thinking the ship would soon blow up, the Captain and her entire crew deserted her and boarded another ship. Two days later, another ship found her adrift among numerous islands, the fire completely extinguished. Some of the ship's crew boarded her, dropped anchor and reported her position and condition to the base at Mindoro.

When PT221 came alongside LST 740, the six men clambered up a cargo net and boarded her. PTs 221 and 227 (Squadron 17) were to standby and escort the ship to Mindoro if she could get underway. By nightfall the bilges had been pumped nearly dry and the ship was on an even keel. The steering gear, however, was badly damaged and could not be repaired immediately.

PT221 in company with PT227 (Squadron 17) left and went on patrol. The boats proceeded to a small island where some enemy barges had been reported moored. They moved in near shore and fired illuminating shells from the mortars. No barges were seen. After a few hours of patrol, during all of which time water came over the boats in sheets as it had during the entire trip, the boats returned to LST 740. The men had not been able to get the ship underway but believed this would be possible by morning. PTs 221 and 227 returned to base, taking a beating all the way from the heavy sheets of spray. Christmas wasn't exactly an enjoyable occasion for the crews of these two boats.

Unbeknown to anyone on Mindoro, the Japanese Navy already had a task group underway

to bombard the beachhead on December 20, 1944. Field Marshal Terauchi urged a Mindoro Counterlanding on General Tamashita, who wished to write the island off, but Imperial General Headquarters, feeling that Mindoro in American hands was a serious threat insisted on doing something. The result was a half-hearted compromise.

Admiral Mikawa placed this "Penetration Unit", as it was called, under the command of Rear Admiral Masanori Kimura. It departed Camranh Bay, Indo-China, Christmas Eve. Wearing his flag in destroyer Kasumi, Admiral Kimura had with him heavy cruiser Ashigara, light cruiser Oyodo and five other destroyers. His orders were to sink any Allied shipping encountered off Mindoro beachhead and to shell airfields and other installations around San Jose'.

For two days Penetration Unit steamed unmokested across the South China Sea, eluding all United States submarines that might have sighted it. Coming in under cover of foul weather, it achieved almost total surprise. Fortunately, at 1600, December 26, 1944, a Leyte-based Navy Liberator piloted by Lieutenant Paul F. Stevens, which was returning from a patrol to Camranh Bay, spotted it about 180 miles W. by N. of the San Jose' beachhead; and reported it. He counted the number of ships very nearly correctly and flashed the bad news promptly to the almost defenseless forces on Mindoro and to Seventh Fleet Headquarters in Leyte Gulf.

December 26, 1944, gave promise of being a quiet day. There were no alerts during the day. PT221 had no patrol scheduled for the night, so the gunners' mates took the opportunity to clean the guns. All were cleaned with the exception of one turret of twin-fifty calibers.

At 1530, PT230 (Squadron 17) pulled alongside the 221 and announced that the two boats were to exchange crews for the night. PT230 was not in condition to make patrols but her crew was, having had plenty of rest. The crew of PT221, however, had been on several patrols and were quite exhausted. PT230, with the crew of the 221 aboard, prepared to anchor and spend a quiet restful night.

Restful nights on Mindoro had thus far been almost non-existent. This night was no exception. Before the anchor was cast, orders were received by PT230 and several other boats, to proceed to the dock immediately. Upon reaching it the crews were greatly surprised at the excitement prevailing there. Officers and men swarmed aboard the boats begging for carbines, pistols, Thompson machine guns, - anything. Most of the small arms were given out. Word had been received at 1645, that the aforementioned Japanese Task Force was on its way, at a speed of 20 knots. It was the second enemy force sighted that day, in Philippine waters. The other, a group of cargo ships and transports off Subic Bay, Luzon, was already under air attack by Mindoro-based planes. It seemed likely that the enemy planned to drop paratroops plus make an amphibious landing to regain control of Mindoro.

All available planes were sent out to bomb and strafe the enemy task force. When

planes returned from Subic Bay they were refueled, reloaded and sent out to join the attack. Through most of the night the planes shuttled between the Japanese ships and the Mindoro strip, dropping their bombs and returning for more.

All PT boats in proper fighting trim were sent out. There were only four Squadron 16 boats in such condition. The others had bent screws, no generators, motor defects, radio trouble, etc. PT224 was one which was out of the water, in the cradle. Two more Squadron 16 boats, PT221 with the crew of the 230 aboard and PT223 were ready for action, but had already departed from the base. Their mission was to carry an Army Radar Team and several guerillas to Abra de Ilog, on northern Mindoro, and could not be reached by radio immediately, when word of the approaching enemy was received.

"Recall all patrols to assist in the defense of Mindoro", Admiral Kinkaid ordered Lieutenant Commander Davis.

While the Army ground forces and the PT base force deployed to meet the landing ashore, PT boats under the command of Lieutenant Commander N. Burt Davis, the only Allied Naval Forces present, prepared to disrupt any invasion forces before they hit the beach. They also had to protect the merchant ships present. Lieutenant Commander Davis sent Lieutenant Commander Fargo with PTs 77, 80, 84 and another PT boat to patrol ten miles off Dongon Point to report the enemy's approach. Lieutenant John H. Stillman, USNR, who succeeded Lieutenant Commander Almer P. Colvin as commander of Squadron 16, with PTs 76, 78 and 81 was sent to patrol near Ilin Island off the entrance to Mangarin Bay.

PTs 227 and 230 were in fair condition and were sent out beyond the entrance to the bay for the purpose of relaying messages which could not be heard clearly at the base, and to support either Fargo or Stillman. None of the 221 boat crew were very happy aboard PT230. She had only two engines in running order, some of the guns were slightly different, due to different attachments, and no one knew where to find anything. All wished they were back on PT221.

The other eleven damaged boats which had suffered casualties in the past twelve days of operations and unfit for offshore work were dispersed about the inner bay to protect the anchorage and to counter any landings on the southwestern coast of Mindoro, below the main Allied Defense Perimeter.

PTs 227 and 230 had just taken their positions when the area was lit up like Times Square. Large bomb flashes appeared on the horizon, flaring up pale red, two, three and sometimes more at a time. A veritable whirlwind of tracer fire was flying upward, the most intensive yet seen on Mindoro. From the distance at which it was viewed, there did not appear to be a square foot of air space that did not have tracers cutting through it. The American tracers burned with a red light, the Japanese with a white light. Both the American and the Japanese pilots were flying their planes with lights on to confound the anti-aircraft gunners. Enemy planes were dropping bombs on shore and attempting to bomb several merchant ships, which lay in the harbor. Flares from enemy ships and planes were

dropping everywhere from the entrance to the bay to its easternmost extremity. The task force now appeared to be lying before the entrance to the bay, but far out to sea.

Lieutenant Commander Davis reasoned correctly, that if a landing was attempted, the PT boats would be of greatest value when the transports closed the beach to put troops ashore. Then the PT boats could attack the transports with torpedoes, and use their machine guns and depth charges against any ship's boats or landing barges that the transports might put in the water. For this reason and because the battleship, cruiser and destroyer force was already under air attack, he instructed Fargo and Stillman to scout and report on the force, but not to attack until the enemy should approach the beach, in the probable landing area.

Lieutenant Commander Fargo was the first to pick up the enemy, by radar at 2048. He made radio contact on Lieutenant Swart, then off Cape Calavite, the northwestern point of Mindoro, and ordered him to shape a course converging with the enemy. At 2135, when about six miles off shore, Fargo's group was first taken under gunfire by the Japanese. Fargo picked up speed to 30 knots, zigzagged and laid small diversionary smoke puffs, thus escaping all the enemy shots.

Stillman's PT boats, north of Ilin Island, observed the approach of the Japanese Penetration Unit and were taken under sporadic shellfire. None of the shells came closer than 100 yards. During the time that Stillman had the enemy in sight, approximately two hours, the enemy ships were under constant air attack, a circumstance which undoubtedly affected the accuracy of their shellfire. Stillman requested permission to attack. Lieutenant Commander Davis, preferring to hold his PT boats in reserve for a last ditch stand ordered Stillman not to attack as long as our planes were still in action.

Soon after midnight, after shelling the PT base for 80 minutes, the enemy succumbed to the air attack, fired three poorly aimed salvos at the PT boats, and fled northward at high speed, shelling the beach on the way.

Kimura was not to be allowed to retire unscathed. When about eight miles north of Dongon Point, he encountered Lieutenant (j.g.) Harry E. Griffin's PT223 and Lieutenant (j.g.) E.H. Lockwood with the crew of PT230 aboard PT221. Lieutenant Philip A. Swart, as section leader, had received the order to return and was doing so at top speed, hoping to be in time for the fight. His wish was gratified. At 0030, they met Admiral Kimura and his task force as it steamed northward. The boat skippers and the Japanese discovered each other simultaneously. They radioed that they were in a position to make a torpedo attack if permission was granted. Since the enemy force was retiring, Lieutenant Commander Davis gave permission. As the two PTs closed, the Japanese illuminated PT221 with a searchlight and fired dangerously accurate salvos - the first good shooting that force had done all night. PT221 retired, laying smoke. PT223 apparently unobserved, closed to 4,000 yards and fired both her torpedoes. The runs were straight, hot and normal. There was a bright orange-red flash on the third ship in line, followed by the sound of a heavy

explosion, and she was observed to go dead in the water.

PT230 had scarcely finished relaying the message that PTs 221 and 223 were returning to base when an excited, almost unintelligible voice came over the radio from PT77, saying, "We have been hit, have casualties and damage to the boat". They were hit, incidentally, by one of our own Army planes, doing more damage to it than the kamikazes had been able to do in days of ferocious attack. PT77 was ordered to return to base and the other boats to accompany her. When PT77 and the boats accompanying her appeared, PTs 227 and 230 fell in astern, followed by PTs 221 and 223. PTs 80 and 82 had gone aground on a reef. PT80 got off the reef without much difficulty, but PT82 was not freed until the following day. There were seven casualties from PT77, none of them serious.

On the beach a group of the Squadron 16 base force also prepared for the enemy. Over a large foxhole they built a gun emplacement, alternating layers of hundred pound bags of hardened flour and 12" by 12" mahogany timbers. On this they mounted two 40mm guns, four 20mm guns, six or eight twin-fifty calibers plus a number of small arms. Their objective was to protect the base from any paratroopers who may be dropped. The following day they were advised of their foolhardy adventure. Had their flour been hit by a tracer bullet, it would have sent the entire group into "God's Little Acre".

One of the enemy planes dove on a small LCM, an insignificant target, and dropped three bombs. The small boat, going at top speed, twisted and turned, causing the bombs and the ensuing strafing by the plane to miss.

Liberty ships were anchored near the southern shore of Mindoro, and here the shelling was the heaviest. Suddenly, one of them began firing low over the water, the shells ricocheting over the surface and endangering some of the PT boats. A sudden explosion enveloped a large part of the ship in smoke and fire. Its gun ceased firing. PT230 immediately got underway to pick up survivors. Before reaching the ship, the crew of PT230 saw an SOS signal being flashed from the water and a voice, choking with fear, calling for help. There were several men in the water. PT230 pulled them aboard assuming they were from the burning ship and delivered them ashore, only to find out they had deserted another ship, in fear. Afterward, another boat load was picked up that were from the burning ship.

At dawn December 27, 1944, PT boats searched the scene of action of the previous night. Four torpedoes were found to have slid up on the sandy beach without exploding. They were the type used in the two-man midget submarines, - much larger than any American torpedo. This was the only evidence on the beach that the enemy had paid a night call.

PT boats picked up the man, who had been blown over the side of PT84. He was slightly water-logged but uninjured. They also picked up five Japanese sailors, survivors of the 2100 ton destroyer, Kiyoshima, one of the newest and most powerful in the Japanese Navy, which became a victim of Lieutenant Harry Griffin's steady eye. It had been damaged during the air attack and sank after being hit by one of PT223's torpedoes. In addition to

losing the destroyer, almost every enemy ship sustained damage; a very commendable score. No appreciable damage was done to the airfield or to installations, by the enemy bombardment.

The Allied Air Force had also done valiant work. Twenty-five planes of various kinds, especially Corsairs, were lost in this action.

On December 27, 1944, PT221, now with her own crew aboard, was sent out to pick up a pilot who had parachuted from his plane. After much searching, a man was found, wearing a life jacket and floating upright, but with his face in the water. He had been dead for some time and was probably not the one the boat had been sent to find. The man was transferred to another boat that had arrived on the scene, and PTs 221 and 223 then went on patrol.

Each boat had about a half ton of supplies aboard for guerilla forces on Northern Mindoro. These supplies had not been delivered the previous night due to the interruption of the enemy task force. The boats also carried a number of guerillas which they planned to land at their base, along with their supplies. The two boats were then to patrol around the Verde Islands, which lay in the channel between Mindoro and Luzon, and were believed to harbor both - barges and larger ships. It was also believed there were shore batteries on the islands.

As the destination was reached, the boats slowed to idling speed and glided slowly into the bay. When near the beach a signal light was shown and was answered by a light ashore. A few minutes later, a boat about sixty feet long by ten feet wide, appeared out of the darkness. Her two sails were woven of coconut leaves and were approximately twenty feet in height and ten feet across the base. It had a built in cabin and storage room. The entire craft had been freshly painted.

As soon as the sailboat came alongside, eight American Naval Aviators, whose bomber had been shot down at Manila in November, sprang aboard. They told their story while the Philipino guerillas and the PT boat crews rushed the transfer of the supplies, from the PT boats to the sailcraft. The Lieutenant from the bomber narrated their experiences and talked at considerable length about the activities of the guerillas, and of the speed in which they rescued downed pilots.

After the supplies were unloaded, Lieutenant Philip A. Swart called off the patrol among the Verde Islands. The rescued Americans had come through so much danger unharmed that he was reluctant to risk their lives further.

On the night of December 28, 1944, PT221 anchored near the channel between Mindoro and a very small island at the eastern extremity of the bay. During the night an enemy plane flew overhead. It was no more than a hundred feet above the boat and could have easily been shot down except for the provision that no enemy planes were to be fired on at night unless attacked. In a few minutes it flew back and again passed over the boat. Everyone believed it was returning for an attack. Tom Hart, who for some reason was

stationed on the forward instead of the aft 40mm, was unable to identify the plane as it flew over the first time. He was not even sure it was an enemy plane. Its nearness, however, made definite identification urgent. John (Ducky) Matthews, who was also stationed on the forward 40mm, was the only member of the crew recognized as an authority on plane identification. As the plane approached, Hart asked, "What kind of plane is that, Duck"? Matthews was kneeling by the gun and did not answer. When asked the second time, he still did not reply. The plane returning, Hart again asked Matthews for an identification. When he still didn't reply, Hart lost patience and booted him in the rear pitching him forward. This brought immediate action. Matthews leaped to his feet and poured out a stream of words such as no one had ever heard him use before. A few days later, it occurred to Hart that Matthews had not answered because he had probably been praying, but if "Anyone Up There" was listening, He must have been surprised at the sudden change in the tenor of Matthews' words.

The enemy airforce made two daylight raids, a bombing and strafing run of the boats, plus their usual nightly raids over Mindoro but inflicted no damage.

Meanwhile, the worst ordeal of the Mindoro landings was prepared on the last three days of 1944, when a resupply convoy shaped up near Dulag on Leyte Island. The convoy led off with twenty-five LSTs in five columns of five ships; next came three Liberty ships, one Navy tanker, six Army tankers, two aviation gasoline tankers and the PT Tender "Orestes", in five columns at the center of the convoy; last came twenty-three LCIs in five columns. Nine destroyers formed an outer screen; twenty-nine PT boats formed an inner screen, on each flank, under the command of Captain J.B. McLean. Orestes acted as flagship for Captain G.F. Mentz, Commander Diversionary Attack Group of LCIs and PTs, which were being moved to Mindoro with an eye to the future; for mounting amphibious landings behind the Japanese lines.

It was a quiet and peaceful day on Mindoro. However, a Japanese night snooper spotted the convoy at about 0400, and at the same time the convoy commander learned that the weather was so foul over Leyte airfields, that he could expect no air cover until noon the next day. Unfortunately, the weather was fine over the convoy, - perfect weather for the kamikazes to draw a bead on the slow ships of the supply train.

Captain McLean expected trouble and was not disappointed. From the time his convoy rounded into Surigao Strait, it was either being attacked or had "bandits" on the radar screens. Attacks came at dawn, morning, noon, dusk and night. Flagship Bush sounded general quarters 49 times in 72 hours. Three days of hell and hard work for the sailors of 99 ships.

At 1012 two groups of three planes each from Cebu attacked. The first tried to crash dive the LCIs and was shot down in flames by LCI 1076. Another attempted to crash aviation gasoline (avgas) tanker porcupine but overshot and splashed. Almost immediately two others crashed Liberty ships William Sharon and John Burke. No kamikaze pilot ever obtained a

more complete reward for his efforts than the one who landed on board the second of these ships, loaded with ammunition. Pilot, plane, ship, cargo and crew, including the master, Herbert A. Faak disappeared with all hands; 68 merchant mariners, and a small Army freighter went down with her. As she sank to the depths of the Mindanao Sea, other ships in the vicinity felt a severe underwater explosion.

William Sharon was also in a bad way, her entire superstructure aflame, Destroyer Wilson closed to assist, fought the fire and took the entire crew aboard. At 1111, "Flash Red" was sounded and Wilson was forced to clear the Liberty ship. By that time the fire was fairly under control, and with another half hour's work might have been quenched. Unfortunately an LCM that she had in tow drifted against Sharon's weather side and had to be cut clear before the destroyer could close. With its engine still running, but no helmsman the landing craft took off, pursued by 40mm fire from Wilson, but when last seen was still traveling to an unrecorded end.

Fire-fighters from Wilson had just reboarded Sharon when the ammunition in her ready boxes began to go off, forcing the destroyer to clear for a second time. But her CO, Commander C.J. MacKenzie did not give up. He waited for the explosions to subside, then closed again, resumed fire-fighting, and within two hours had all fires out and the Liberty ship anchored in the middle of the Mindanao Sea. Loss of this ship was a sad blow to forces ashore at Mindoro, for included in her cargo was a large stock of beer, dearest of all commodities in the steaming Philippines.

Friendly air cover arrived and ran off that particular flight of enemy planes, but the convoy was under almost constant attack that night. At about 1830, when the convoy was off the southern point of Negros, 20 to 30 enemy planes opened an attack which lasted an hour and three quarters. The planes split into two groups for a co-ordinated attack. Shortly after 1900, in the bright moonlight, three more groups of planes closed the convoy on both quarters and stern, and a torpedo bomber put a fatal fish into LST 750. Seaplane tender, Half Moon, sent to investigate, reported that she was finished. After destroyer Edwards had confirmed this sad state of affairs, and had sent over a boarding party to search the LST for wounded (the others having been taken off by LCIs) she was ordered to be sunk. This air attack was over by 2013, but there were bogies on radar screens all night

Some of the LCIs had surgical units aboard and many of the wounded were run over to these handy, impromptu hospital ships.

Meanwhile, back at Mindoro, PT222 rescued a U.S. Army pilot from the water south of Ilin Island.

On December 29, 1944, PT221 took Lieutenant Commander Davis to a location a few miles away where a large Army hospital had been set up. One of the injured men from PT77 was brought along and delivered to the hospital.

Leyte was still blacked in, but Mindoro complied generously to a request for air cover, and at one time had as many as 36 planes covering the convoy. Enemy aircraft were

still about, and at dusk came the usual attack, with 20 to 30 planes. Combat Air Patrol was forced to depart at the critical hour of 1715 - and this was the night of the full moon. Two P61s came out later, and with the aid of the ships' gunfire splashed several enemy aircraft, and kept the rest away.

Air attack was incessant in daylight and dark, and too monotonously similar to recount in detail unless there was scoring.

Considering the previous action on Mindoro the daily and nightly raids were also monotonously similar with the exception of an enemy two-engine bomber which was shot down on a night raid of the airfield. It crash dived into a fuel dump.

During the early morning of December 30, 1944, three more planes were shot down by the ships, and at 0710, the convoy made Mangarin Bay, Mindoro. The PTs were immediately turned over to Lieutenant Commander Davis.

Captain McLean was naturally eager to unload his ships and head back to Leyte before dark. His sailors were equally as eager to leave this unfriendly land.

The PT boats had just rounded the sandy point and emerged into the bay, when at 1540, five Vals pierced the friendly fighter-cover and whistled down from 14,000 feet in their suicide dives. They made a suicide attack that did the Kamikaze Corps proud. Destroyers Gansevoort and Pringle, PT Tender Orestes and avgas tanker Porcupine were hit within a minute or two.

There had not been many alerts at the PT base for a few days and the watches had somewhat relaxed their vigilance. When an alert was sounded late that afternoon there was great consternation. PT221 had just cleared the dock when there was an explosion on the other side of the peninsula. It was dull, muffled, and little or no concussion was felt on the boat. The crew, looking up in mild interest were electrified by an astounding sight such as none of them had ever seen. A gigantic column of black smoke was shooting skyward at terrific speed, the entire column lighted wierdly by millions of sparks, burning balls of flame and red hot projectiles bursting in hundreds of fiery pieces. Suddenly the myriads of balls of fire, sparks and exploding projectiles vanished. The great column ever widening turned a dense slate gray, and rose billow on billow ever higher and higher until mushrooming at the top, it slowed and irresistably, smoothly, soundlessly rolled upward until it mingled with the rain clouds in the sky.

Personnel on the peninsula felt and heard the explosion much more than the men on the boats. Those nearest the ship were hurled to the ground. Bob Schulz, who was ashore at the time, was almost swept off his feet by the wall of air that swept the peninsula.

The destroyer Pringle suffered only light damage. The second plane hit the avgas tanker Porcupine with such impact that its engine went clear through the decks and out the bottom, tearing a large hole in the hull. Seven men were killed and eight wounded. The stern burst into flames, a dangerous development on a ship carrying a tankful of avgas forward.

No sooner had Porcupine been hit than a third plane made for destroyer Gansevoort patrolling off Mangarin Bay. She turned up flank speed and fired continuously with all her batteries, but the plane crashed her amidships. The main deck was peeled back like the lid of an empty sardine can. The impact cut steering and electric power lines, and set fires but caused surprisingly light casualties. Damage control parties could not gain access to the after part of the ship, as the main deck was blown upward on both sides. Destroyers Wilson and Philip were soon alongside and exercised the fire-fighting crew by putting them aboard the Gansevoort to fight the flames. By 1640, the fires were out and Captain McLean ordered two LCIs and an Army tug to tow her to the PT base, where she was anchored in 15 fathoms. There she was given the bizarre task of torpedoing the burning Porcupine to knock off the blazing stern before the fire reached the gasoline tanks forward. But the water was too shoal for torpedoes to be effective, and in spite of one torpedo hit, the fire spread and the gasoline ignited, spreading across the water until it endangered the destroyer, which was towed to another anchorage. There she was abandoned. She was boarded without orders by volunteer officers and seamen from a PT boat, and their efforts saved a fine destroyer which otherwise would have been a total loss. Porcupine burned to her water line.

The most grievous blow of the kamikaze attack, however, was struck at the PT Navy. Another Japanese dive bomber nosed into a steep dive. There was a P38 in hot pursuit. The enemy plane, diving at terrific speed, was headed for an LST. PT boats and other boats and ships opened fire. PT220 almost jumped out of the nearby drydock from which she was fighting the action. The enemy plane was not hit but unfortunately the P38 was. The bomber continued its dive and the boats and ships continued firing as long as they dared without hitting their own craft. It appeared evident that the plane would miss its target. It disappeared behind some ships and seemed to have splashed. Seconds later the enemy plane reappeared, skimming inches above the water in the midst of half a dozen ships. Some of the boats again opened fire, disregarding the danger to the other craft in the bay.

After skimming among the ships the plane rose about twenty feet, banked sharply and crashed into the Orestes, a supply ship for Squadron 16. The bomber had been hit by tracers from PT boats and LCIs. It hit the water and bounced upward into the starboard side of the PT Tender. The plane's bombs punched through the side and exploded within, blowing officers and men into the bay. The ship burst into violent flame, all power was lost and fire mains were ruptured by the blast. Fifty-nine men were killed, among them Ensign Frederick A. (Zeke) Zeithen, (nucleus of Squadron 16), and Commander John Kremer, Jr., chief of staff to Captain Mentz, was among the 106 severely wounded.

The waters around the Orestes were teeming with swimming sailors and PTs and LCIs hustled about pulling in the stunned survivors. The ship had become a hell of exploding ammunition and burning avgas.

Mr. Walter Rauh, an officer on PT221, and always cautious, was the last to approach the ship. A whaleboat which was picking up survivors came alongside the 221 and asked Mr. Rauh to rush a burned man to the base. The man had been wearing only a pair of dungarees when his ship was hit. He had received a flash burn over the complete upper part of his body with the exception of the back of his neck, which shown clean and white. His outer skin had been scorched loose and hung on him in tatters, like ragged clothing. Cliff Anderson applied a gelatin compound to the man's body and gave him a shot of morphine. The injured man was a cook from one of the Elco Squadrons that had arrived with the convoy from Leyte. He and several other cooks from the Elco boats had gone aboard the Orestes to stock up on food for their boats. Several of them lost their lives.

Led by Lieutenant Commander Davis many PT sailors went aboard the Orestes to pull wounded shipmates out of the fire. A call was put out for all PT boats to deliver their fire extinguishers to the firefighters. Mr. Rauh brought PT221 alongside an LCI that was moored to the Orestes. Pumps were in operation on the LCI and the hoses were dragged across the deck of the Orestes where the streams of water could be played directly on the fire. Lieutenant Commander Davis, hose in hand was foremost among those fighting the fire. Tom Hart from PT221, George Dwyer, Hank Pierotti, Fran Clougherty and Don Carter from PT 222 among other PT sailors took turns on the hoses, facing the fire and acrid smoke as long as possible, then turning the hoses over to others.

The entire upper deck of the starboard side of the Orestes was a mass of twisted, jumbled metal and loose smashed cargo. Among this wreckage the flames roared. On the port side a long row of men who had apparently been in chow line, lay in every form of dismemberment and mutilation. Some were blackened by fire. One man lay by himself untouched by fire and almost unmarked. He lay on his back with dull eyes wide open staring at the sky, and on his face was a look of surprise frozen there by death. An officer ordered the PT men to take canvas and cover the bodies of the dead men.

More than an inch of blood sloshed back and forth among the bodies with the rocking of the ship. Over this mass of blasted humanity men tramped and stumbled dragging fire hoses. Further inside of what had once been part of the superstructure a large refrigerator packed with meat had been blasted open and its contents hurled about. In that area huge chunks of meat and parts of men were so mangled and intermingled with twisted metal and burning wood, it was difficult to determine which was human and which was not.

The firefighters kept advancing on the fire beating it back and water was also directed through holes in the deck, through which smoke was pouring from below. The water and blood washing over the deck soon became so hot it was painful to stand in.

A sudden alert and report of more enemy planes approaching brought an order for everyone to abandon ship. The LCI was still alongside and the men and fire hoses were quickly taken aboard. As the LCI pulled out it was discovered that George Dwyer, from PT222, was still aboard the Orestes. He ran to the stern and slid down a dangling line

from which he was seized and dragged aboard the LCI. Hart and Dwyer transferred to a PT boat which soon delivered them to their respective boats. The enemy planes that had caused the alert failed to appear.

A couple of hours later, Liberty Ship Hobart Baker was hit by bombs and sunk off Mindoro beachhead. In the midst of all this excitement, Captain McLean, with his seven remaining destroyers, rounded up the return convoy.

By 2145, flames were out on the Orestes; an LCI was lashed to either side and they pushed her up on the beach.

At dusk, PTs and LCIs scattered and hugged the shoreline to make the worst possible targets for night marauders. The small craft had good reason to be shaken. The five kamikazes had made 100 percent hits, and any weapon that is 100 percent effective is a fearsome weapon indeed.

The losses from this action created a critical supply situation at Mindoro beachhead, and a difficult problem for the Navy. Not since the Anzio operation had the Navy experienced such difficulty supporting an amphibious operation after the initial landing.

Air attacks on Mangarin Bay were not quite over. On the night of December 30-31, 1944, PTs 220 and 224, in company with PTs 75 and 78 (Squadron 13) escorted an Army landing party to the east coast of Mindoro. They were attacked by an enemy plane (Zeke) and destroyed it with AA fire.

On the last morning of 1944, Liberty ships Simeon G. Reed and Juan de Fuca were bombed and run aground on Barriage Reef off Mindoro. It was uneventful for the boats of Squadron 16, but for the crews who went aboard the Orestes to salvage supplies, it was a day none of them shall ever forget, as they viewed the mayhem previously detailed.

In the early morning hours of New Year's Day 1945, enemy bombers again came over the PT base. One plane came in low and cut his engines to add to the surprise of the attack. One fragmentation bomb, dropping near sleeping men, killed 11 and seriously wounded 10 more, most of them survivors of the Orestes.

When two dry-weather runways were operational on Hill and San Jose' airfields, General Eichelberger's Eighth Army replaced General Krueger's Sixth Army, General Dunckel was relieved by Major General Roscoe B. Woodruff, commanding 24th Infantry Division. The transfer of command was marked by a party at paratroops headquarters where PT sailors furnished the basis for refreshments - five gallons of torpedo alcohol.

Destructive raids continued into the first few days of January. On the night of January 1-2, 1945, Liberty Ship John Clayton received a bomb hit in her #3 hold, killing 6 men and wounding 11. She had to be beached to prevent sinking.

On January 2, 1945, PTs 220, 222, 223 and 224 with Lieutenant Robert J. Wehrli, USNR, aboard as O.T.C. on the 224, screened LCIs 1076 and 703 and six LCMs in an Army landing operation on Marinduque Island. PTs 220 and 224 carried 30 troops as an advance landing

party, leaving Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, P.I. at 1800.

At 0150 on January 3, 1945, the PTs left the rest of the task force at Danagan Point on N.E. Mindoro, and proceeded independently to Beunavista on Marinduque. They arrived at 0300 and landed the advance party without incident. The landing was completed at 0324, and PTs 222 and 223 returned to the LCIs and LCMs, leaving PTs 220 and 224 to patrol the coast of Marinduque around Beunavista. PTs 222 and 223 led the LCIs and LCMs to Beunavista and then the four PTs covered their landing at 0500. All the landings proceeded without incident. The natives welcomed the Americans and furnished labor for building the PT base and the airfields. The PTs then escorted the LCIs and LCMs back to Danagan Point on Mindoro, and proceeded independently southward along the east coast of Mindoro. The PTs contacted the Army at Bulalacao who reported 76 Nips and two barges at Buyallao Pass. The PTs returned to Buyallao Pass and made a port and starboard run from 200 yards on the barges, one type "A" and one type "B" which were well camouflaged, and also on the caves in which the Nips were supposedly hiding. The barges were rendered unserviceable beyond repair. Light machine gun fire was received from high on a cliff but the boats suffered no damage or casualties.

PARADISE ISLAND

"I don't remember the date, but it was shortly before we went to take Luzon back from the Japanese. Our squadron rounded up about ten people, (I have always suspected they were classed as the 'rabble-rousers'), and hauled us and our supplies to a place called Mog Pog Marinduque to put in a refueling and mini repair base. We had a basketball playing Ensign, the Skipper, a Chief Radio Technician, (yours truly) a Radioman, a Cook, (I think his nickname was Tillie), one officers' Mess Attendant, two Gunnersmates, two Torpedomen, an everpresent Bosun and I think there was a Pharmacist mate. As far as I can remember I think that was the crew. We had an uneventful trip from Mindoro to Mog Pog where we were met by the friendly Philipino welcoming committee. There was a bunch of children banging short pieces of hardwood together making a strange kind of music. They offered us fresh cool Coconut milk and some terrible tasting Tuba and some very strong booze called 'Wild Tiger'. All of this was what the welcome committee offered as we pulled up to the old broken down cement and steel dock that was to be our new home.

They told us that there were only three Japanese soldiers on the island and that these fearless warriors had hidden under the brick school house. Fortunately, we had some soldiers of our own with Bazookas. When those Bazookas dumped their shells into the old school house it all collapsed and buried our enemies on the spot.

It was then that we got about the business of establishing our new home. We had one enormous pile of junk, I'll tell you. We ended up with a kitchen and mess tent, two Army Field Kitchens, an oven, table equipped with benches and all the other needed stuff.

We had a kerosene operated refrigerator and an Ice Cream machine that we had 'liberated' from a dock in Bremerton (Washington). The base was built on the access road that went to the old cement pier. It was all of twenty-five feet wide and about a hundred and fifty feet long before it turned around the mountain and started up to the top. Down a little from the road there was an old farmer named Marieacall, his wife, two twin boys and a daughter whose husband was a Guerilla.

The kitchen was built on the dock. Next the officers' tent with his attendant quarters. Then came the radio station and spare radio equipment. This was quite a unique place; it had a mahogany floor, bamboo wall studs and ceiling rafters with thatched roof and walls. I can still remember 'Tokyo Rose' playing Rum and Coca Cola for us.

Next were two tents, then across the road on a rocky point the tent of 'Snakie Jake'. Jake's tent was built on this pile of rocks on the left where the road turned right around the end of the mountain. We called him 'Snakie' because at least once a week in the morning there would be a Philippine Cobra under his cot. There was someone else in that tent too, but I can't remember who he was. Lou Novie was there; he is the one that did some metalsmith work for me, but I don't remember whether he was a Metalsmith or a Torpedoman, but he was from Asti, California. Perhaps someone can recognize some of them from the photographs of the still workers work party.

One of the unique things about this base was the two enormous floating barges. One of them for gasoline and oil, the other for ammunition and torpedoes. The barges were covered with dirt and jungle growth for cover. We had lots of customers for our barges and we did plenty of work on radios, radar, guns and whatever else that came up, some called P.R. work.

We had to get up before the sun came up or the flies would try to crawl into your ears, eyes, nose and mouth. As I remember, the cook made wonderful bread. We had tomatoes from the jungle, and the Philipinos would not eat them, so they brought them to us. There was a dessert called 'mura' that consisted of a green coconut cut in half with canned milk and sugar poured in. It was kind of like Jello.

Out over the road in front between the two tents we had a wonderful shower with hot water. As it happened, at the top of the hill there was a cold water spring, so we ran pipe from the spring over the hill down to the base. This made for nice hot water for the shower and for the cook, and plenty of hot water for drinking. The Pharmacists Mate used to pour some kind of a disinfectant on the shower boards and warn us not to step on them for half an hour. One day a couple of good looking Philippino girls came down to the base and wanted to take a shower. Of course we were all for this and told them to go ahead. Yep - they took the shower with their clothes on. This was rather a disappointment, so we restricted showers to base personnel.

We eventually got around to the most important part of the base, this was the still.

Lou Novie lined a forty millimeter ammo case with copper for me. We 'liberated' another Army field kitchen and then mounted it on half a fifty gallon steel drum. The still sat on top of this. Then we ran the condenser coils through another fifty gallon drum that had the nice cool spring water running through it for cooling. Now we had an "A" grade number one still.

The Philipinos charged me five cents a gallon for the Tuba which they delivered to the still in enormous crocks. Up on top of the hill in the shade with this cold spring made a beautiful spot for the still. The first run gave up one gallon of about 160 proof for seven gallons of twenty-four old tuba. That twenty-four old tuba smelled like an old septic tank, but sure gave up the alcohol. When we started the second gallon you could see little curlies of water coming, so I started to turn it off. The Tuba people asked if they could run off a couple of beer bottles of the juice before I turned it off. They did and from there on the tuba was free for a few beer bottles of tailings. We ran enough to deliver six gallons for the officers' club, seven gallons for the enlisted mens' club and seven gallons for the chiefs club, with enough to keep the base going with company.

Once a week when the supply boats came up from Mindoro, they brought twenty (one gallon) emptys and took back their supply at no charge. Finally when the boats would come up with the mail, supplies, and the empty jugs they brought a couple of jungle jolly sailors for R and R at Paradise Island. That was how it became Paradise Island and how the name of Paradise Island Gin got its name.

We made good use of the ice cream machine. We would put in one pint of that terrible concentrated lemon juice, one quart of Paradise Gin, a pint of sugar, fill it up with water and turn it on. In about a half an hour you had the best Lemon Daiquiri, a whole gallon, enough to fill one of those big old aluminum coffee pitchers. It was the best Lemon Daiquiri for miles around.

One day when we were sitting out on the dock fishing for supper with hand grenades, an Army Crash Boat pulled up and the crew wanted to know if they could have some gasoline. We told them sure, but come ashore and have a cool drink first. The Skipper, a Second Lieutenant, had them let him off and told them to stand by. We told him that we had offered drinks for everyone, so he had them tie up the boat and the crew came ashore. There we were with 'do it yourself' canvas swimming trunks, worn out dungarees, and of course a good tan. Our two pet monkeys had been enjoying the refreshments with all of us and now were laying on the dock dipping their hands into their drinks - for they were too tired to get up. This made the Second Lieutenant wonder what was going on and he asked who was in charge. He probably doubted the whole thing, but they gave us a pound of butter for the drinks, then gassed up and took off.

We had another strange native on our base, - a Tock-ou Lizard, the spelling of his

name I can't vouch for, but that is what their war call was. They stood about a foot to a foot and a half and were better than three feet long. They could run fast enough to chase and catch the farmer's chickens.

One night just about sundown we had a surprise visitor, a Japanese Sub. They pulled in about three hundred yards off shore on the port side of the dock. Luckily we had no lights on and the green tents blended in with the jungle growth. It was then we took a good accounting of our local arms situation and ammo supplies. I had a High Standard 22 and a Carbine, some of the guys had 45s and we had one Thompson Submachine gun. At this point we decided that discretion was the better point, kept low and out of sight and quiet. They finally left after missing us completely. We didn't have enough food to feed all those prisoners anyway, so we let them go.

We had many other experiences there at Mog Pog. The May Day celebration which lasts for the whole month of May. We 'liberated' an old broken down convertible car, fixed it up and had transportation, other than the Skipper's jeep.

Then there was the time about six or eight of us went to lunch in Santa Cruz, at the Mayor's house. We put in some 110 volt alternators and lights in various locations thereby becoming local heroes.

We found an old speed boat out there in the jungle and put it in working order. I had a dug-out canoe with out-riggers.

To remember what happened in the right order is too hard after thirty some years. One day when the supply boats came in they took some of us back to San Jose', Mindoro, to go to Brunei Bay, Borneo. Well, this was good-bye to paradise Island and the friends that we had made there at Mog Pog, and my still.

However, whoever took over the distillery decided to start selling the booze for a dollar a gallon. This was his undoing. While we were still at San Jose', I heard that he had been arrested on a Federal charge for bootlegging.

The whole thing sounds like McHales Navy, but that's the way it was".

Bob Street, CRT, Ron 16

Lieutenant General Robert L. Eichelberger inspected the base at 1500 on January 3, 1945.

The base had three night alerts during which numerous enemy planes were in the air. Bombs were dropped but caused no damage.

PTs 221 and 222 were sent through the channel between Mindoro and Ilin Island to the place off Marcanos Islands where LST 740 had been bombed, and on which PT221 in company with PT230 (Squadron 17) had left six men. A report had been received that the men had been unable to repair the steering gear and were, therefore, to be picked up and brought back to base. When the boats arrived at the place the ship had been anchored, they were surprised to find it was no longer there. There were several small islands in

the vicinity and the boats circled them in the event the ship had gone aground. There was a small town on one of the islands and Captain Stillman considered sending two men ashore to question the inhabitants on the disappearance of the ship, but abandoned the idea because of the possibility of the Japanese occupying the island. The search was abandoned and it was later learned that LST 740 had caught fire, drifted and finally gone on a reef ninety miles south of Cuyo Island. Two or three of the six men aboard had lost their lives.

The kamikazes were not through with the Mindoro shipping. At 1700 on January 4, 1945, four enemy planes appeared to the east of Mangarin Bay and passed over the bay at high altitude. When well to the west, they broke formation and dived at individual targets. One, a Val, dived on the U.S.S. Half Moon and dropped two bombs, both failing to explode. During its dive the Val was under heavy AA fire from PTs and the tenders but escaped to the south trailing smoke. PTs 78 and 81 (Squadron 13) set fire to the second Val. Trailing a plume of smoke and flame the plane glided into the side of the Liberty Ship Lewis Dyche, which was loaded to the gunwales with ammunition. The ship exploded with a thunderous roar, disintegrated, and went down with all hands; 71 merchant mariners. The concussion lifted PTs 78 and 81, a half mile away, right out of the water. The hulls of the PTs were badly damaged by the concussion and flying debris. Two men were killed, and ten wounded. PT298 took the wounded to the Army hospital and PT223 towed the 78 to the base. The concussion was also felt by the men ashore, almost knocking them off their feet. A blown-up but unexploded shell from the Dyche fell into a gun tub on LCI (L) 621, killing one man and wounding four. A minelayer and an oiler were also damaged. A third enemy plane strafed the airstrip and was shot down. The fourth plane was damaged by AA fire and flew to the south trailing smoke.

ADVANCED PT BASE
Mindoro Island, P.I.

Squadrons 13 and 16

6 January 1945

The following message has been received from Captain Bowling, USN, Commanding Officer of all PT Boats, Southwest Pacific, addressed to Com TU 70.1.4. dated 4 January 1945:

PLEASE TELL ALL HANDS WITH YOU THAT ALL HANDS HERE GREATLY ADMIRE
THE SPIRIT AND GUTS SHOWN BY YOUR WHOLE OUTFIT IN GETTING ESTABLISHED X
HOLDING ON X AND DISHING IT OUT AS WELL AS TAKING IT X AND
EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION X WELL DONE X

S.S.BOWLING, CAPT., USN

On January 7, 1945, PTs 220 and 221 were ordered to deliver a bag to one of the sections of the task force that was proceeding to the invasion of Luzon. The boats caught up with them, delivered the bag at dusk and proceeded back toward base at full speed. The return had been almost completed when there was a sudden shock to the 221 an immediate

arresting of speed, another shock immediately followed by a final shock. Tom Hart, who was sitting in the head, reading the first mail he had received in a month, was thrown against the bulkhead, his letters scattered all over the crews quarters and head.

PT220, being a considerable distance behind, was warned by radio in time to avert the same fate.

By some miscalculation, PT221 had laid her course too close to a tiny coral island. The boat was solidly on a coral reef, rocking back and forth with each wave that broke against her side. The steering gear in the rudder room was completely wrecked, with one of the rudders protruding into the bilge.

The apparent condition and location were radioed to base. Shortly, two LCMs arrived with Captain Stillman aboard. The crew of PT221 had their gear packed in sea bags and mattress covers in the event the boat would sink after being pulled off the reef. Captain Stillman quietly took cognizance of the situation and decided on a course of action.

The LCMs stood at anchor about 300 feet from PT221. Joe Rafferty, an officer on the 221, and Tom Hart got into the rubber boat and attempted to drag a line to each of the LCMs. After about six hours of the lines snagging on the rough coral bottom and working it loose, the lines were drawn but unfortunately by this time the tide had gone out and PT221 was harder aground than before. Attempts to move her were abandoned until high tide. At this time an LCI was to attempt to free the 221. This too proved unsuccessful, so Captain Stillman and the LCMs returned. The boat was finally freed and quickly towed to the dock for repairs.

PTs 222 and 224 delivered flame throwers and other equipment to the Army at Beunavista on Marinduque Island. They picked up 5 Japanese POWs from the Army at Bongabong on their return trip.

On the night of the 7th, PT222 in company with PT76 (Squadron 13) and PTs 227 and 230 (Squadron 17) escorted three LCIs to Bongabong, Mindoro, with Army reinforcements and supplies. The landings were made without incident.

PTs 220 and 223 departed base at 1800 on January 8, 1945, to investigate Coron Bay, Busuanga. Lieutenant Philip A. Swart was aboard Lieutenant (j.g.) Robert H. Beasley's PT220 as OTC. The boats proceeded to the west side of Busuanga Island and patrolled the Japanese shipping lanes until 0300 on the 9th. They then went south and approached Coron Bay from that direction. While investigating around Minilay Island PT220 hit an uncharted reef damaging her underwater gear and cut holes in her bottom. PT220 got off the reef at 0500 and the two boats proceeded into Coron Bay. A blinking light was sighted in Cullian Village and small arms fired on them. Two barges were seen approaching the village but were not investigated. PT223 approached PT220 and all moveable gear and confidential material were put aboard PT223, with all the crew except an engineer, a torpedoman and

the boat Captain, and the 220 was faced with the necessity of lightening the boat to keep it afloat, as she was taking on water fast. The torpedoes were prepared to be jettisoned. As this was being done, a 2,000 ton freighter, Fox Tare Dog or small Fox Tare Charlie, was sighted. PT220 closed range to 1500 yards. The boat was considerably lightened when she fired four torpedoes at the freighter. The first was erratic; the second and third hit it; completely demolishing it and the fourth passed through the debris and exploded on the beach. There was no evidence of cargo or survivors. Men from PT223 and the crew of the 220 then went back aboard PT220. As the 220 limped homeward the crew bailed for five hours to keep her afloat. Help was radioed for and PTs 75 and 83 (Squadron 13) brought tow lines and pumps. All boats returned to base without further incident. PT220 was put in drydock and found to have extensive underwater gear and hull damage.

At 1715 on January 9, 1945, PTs 298 and 299 departed the base to patrol the eastern Mindoro coast to Calapan. At 0345 on the 10th, the boats turned back due to an engine casualty. Enroute to the base the boats stopped at Bongabong and picked up five evacuees from Army authorities. These were brought to base and turned over to the Army hospital.

PT223 in company with PT83 (Squadron 13) departed base at 1200 on January 10, 1945, to rescue PT74 (Squadron 13) from a reef in Coron Bay. PT74 was in company with PT75 (Squadron 13). While PT83 stood by the 74, PTs 223 and 75 made a daylight sweep of Coron Bay. Near the dock by Coron Village, two abandoned luggers were seen on the beach. The boats directed fighters to strafe the dock and a barge at its end. PT74 was pulled clear and the four boats returned to base without further incident arriving at 0300 on the 11th.

On January 12, 1945, PT299 in company with PT81 (Squadron 13) began what was to this command its first shuttle run to Leyte. At 2130, north of Baracay, the boats investigated an outrigger canoe with sail. As the boats approached, the occupants of the canoe scuttled their boat. Nine of the eleven occupants were picked up from the water and the captain of the crew explained the reason for scuttling the canoe, some of the crewmen believed the PTs to be Japanese boats. The nine men were taken to Leyte and turned over to G-2 USAFFE for questioning. Other than that the patrol was uneventful.

PTs 223 and 224 departed base at 1610, to investigate reported small craft in Pagapas Bay, Southern Luzon. The boats arrived at 2345, and entered the bay on one engine ahead. Visibility was less than 500 yards. After determining position with radar, PT224 fired one torpedo at the dock from 1500 yards. There was a violent explosion and smoke and water rose 200 feet in the air, well above the skyline. The boats strafed for four minutes, retiring at 0011 on the 13th, and returned to base at 1050.

On January 13, 1945, PTs 222 and 298 departed at 1700, to patrol the Tablas-Romblon Island area. At 1815, the boats investigated a Japanese destroyer beached due south of Tabanan Point on Semirari Island. The ship appeared to have been gutted by fire and abandoned. It was strafed with 40mm fire but there was no return fire. At 2128, due

south of Capid Point, Tablas Island, two pips were picked up on the radar one half mile off the beach. PT298 closed range to 500 yards and fired two torpedoes at the target which was on the bow and believed to be a destroyer or ship of similar size. Runs were hot, straight and normal. Both torpedoes exploded on the beach behind the target. Investigation showed the target to be a two-masted sailboat thirty to forty feet in length. The other target was a smaller sailboat and both were manned by Filipino civilians. The patrol retired from the scene without further incident. After sighting numerous lights along the east coast of Tablas Island, the boats entered Romblon Harbor. At 0300 on the 14th, PT298 had a radar failure and within a few minutes PT222 had generator failure. The boats retired from the area and proceeded to Paclaman where an Army guerilla leader and his family were evacuated. The boats returned to base at 1030.

PT223 in company with PT227 (Squadron 17) departed the base at 1645 on January 14, 1945, to patrol Marinduque and Romblon. At 2140, the boats contacted a large native sailboat south of Marinduque and were told that four enemy barges left Santa Cruz on Marinduque, the night before. The course and destination of the barges was not known. The boats returned to base after checking Romblon Harbor with no contacts.

On January 15, 1945, PT299 in company with PT81 (Squadron 13) returned from shuttle patrol to Leyte. Captain S.S. Bowling, USN, Commander Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons, Seventh Fleet, was aboard PT299. The patrol was uneventful.

PT298 in company with PT230 (Squadron 17) departed base at 1600, to patrol clockwise around Mindoro Island, and to carry out three missions for the Army. The boats arrived at Ilog Anchorage and disembarked eleven Army and Guerilla personnel and stores for the Guerilla Garrison at Camp Nimetz. They then proceeded through Verde Island passage with no enemy contacts. They arrived at Laylay, Marinduque Island at 0149 on the 16th, to pick up Army casualties. After an hour and a half of unsuccessful attempts to contact the Army forces by signal they proceeded to Pinimalayan, Mindoro Island, and evacuated two Army stretcher cases. They delivered the patients to Army authorities at Blue Beach, San Jose', Mindoro, and returned to base at 0930.

On January 16, 1945, PTs 222 and 224, with Robert J. Wehrli as OTC aboard, departed base to proceed to Abra de Ilog for a special mission. Upon arrival at Ilog they were briefed as to their mission. They departed Ilog at 0045 on the 17th, and landed Army Captain of the Guerillas and a special Army scout team at Fuego Point, Luzon, at 0340. At 0403, they received an all clear signal from the beach and returned to Ilog arriving at 0630. They departed Ilog at 1030 and got back to base at 1645.

Ed Kalinowski and Bill Klendzior "liberated" a truck from the Sea Bees and went to the village where they became mired in quicksand. A tractor was needed to pull them out. They were unable to do any exploring while waiting for the tractor, since every time they stepped out of the truck they were chased by water buffalo.

The following is Robert J. Wehrli's account of this mission:

On January 17, 1945, a special mission was carried out that turned out to be of extreme importance, highly dangerous and very hazardous due to extremely bad weather.

The PTs 222 Captained by Bob Roth and the 223 Captained by Harry Griffin with Robert J. Wehrli aboard the 222 as OTC made a normal trip to Ilog Anchorage and then on to a small bay just below Fuego Point to land an Army Captain and a Philipino Scout. This two-man team was highly trained and had a big reputation for successful scouting missions behind enemy lines. As I cannot recall their names, for purposes of writing this report, I shall call them Captain Guts and phil.

By the time we dropped the two scouts off in a two-man rubber boat, in the middle of the small bay below Fuego Point, Captain Guts had convinced me that unless we picked them up in two nights they would be dead men. After a firm promise not to abandon them we made a normal trip back to home base.

Getting them out was a nightmare. The weather was so bad the boats should not have been out in seas of 20 to 30 foot swells. We set out on the 18th of January at 1350. We fought our way north and then east to Ilog Anchorage arriving there about 2100. Everyone aboard was sick from the rough seas and it was only the firm promise made by me to Captain Guts that we (same boats as above) got underway again to pull out the scouts. We were due to rendezvous with them at 0100 in the bay where we dropped them off. As we slowly crawled into the bay about 0230 (way late due to weather) one of the gunners in the turret of the 222 caught a finger spasm in his trigger finger and fired a few rounds. This of course disclosed our presence and scared hell out of everybody. After sweating out a few seconds and no response to our faulty burst we proceeded to look around the bay but came up empty. We then proceeded to our alternate rendezvous spot which was off the tip of Fuego Point. We soon caught a flashlight signal from the beach, put over a rubber boat and two men from the 222 went to pick up our scouts. Only one returned, - Captain Guts, with several wounds and a vivid story. They had both been captured that day by a Jap patrol of eight men. After being beaten and interrogated by this patrol they were being taken south towards Nasugbu when they saw a chance to escape. During the escape they stopped from time to time to shoot back at their pursuers with the only weapons they had; handguns (45s). They did kill some of their pursuers but finally phil stayed behind to pin the pursuit down while Captain Guts ran like hell for Fuego point. Later it was learned that phil was killed in this delaying action.

Captain Guts said he realized we could be late for the pick-up due to the bad weather but he never doubted we would pick him up and his hopes had picked up when he heard the few shots fired out in the bay. We had to patch him up a bit but he stayed topside and never stopped talking all the way back to base even though we were holding on at all times as we glided down and shuddered up through white water all the way back

to base. I doubt if any PT boater ever had a rougher 24 hours on the boats (weatherwise) than these two boat crews had on this mission. But the effort put forth paid big dividends at a later date when General Douglas MacArthur decided to pinch Manila and Manila Bay from below by having the 7th Fleet under Admiral Kinkaid land a force at Nasugbu.

Dates are hard to remember and researching for them is time consuming so as I recall about early February, the 7th Fleet invasion force came by our base in Mindoro on their way North to make the landing at Nasugbu.

Lieutenant Commander N. Burt Davis, CO of 70.1.4. (which was all PTs, Tenders and Base Facilities attached to the 7th Fleet) was ordered by Admiral Kinkaid to bring along Lieutenant Robert J. Wehrli and rendezvous with him aboard his Flagship at 0700 for breakfast as the huge fleet proceeded north up the coast of Mindoro toward their landing. It was a real thrill to go alongside the U.S.S. Nashville, climb the ladder and be piped aboard and greeted personally by Admiral Kinkaid. At this breakfast gathering were all the big brass of the invasion force. The Army General Eichelberger, Marine Colonel Woodruff and at least 12 others including last but not most important Captain Guts. His report of the Jap positions, strength and weaknesses had played a vital role in the decision to hit the Manila area from below by landing at Nasugbu. He had been with Admiral Kinkaid for a few weeks and was highly regarded and treated as a super person. Of course he had told also about the role the PT boys had played in his successful mission and the rough ride we had doing it. Lots of questions were asked by the assembled brass and Burt Davis was answering the first few when Admiral Kinkaid said, "Commander Davis were you on that mission?" "No Sir, Lieutenant Wehrli was OTC." "Then Lieutenant Wehrli will answer the questions while you and I listen." This was the only time in my experience with him that Burt was ever "put Down" and I personally enjoyed it a little bit.

It was at this breakfast aboard the Flagship that Admiral Kinkaid told all assembled how proud he was of the PT people assigned to his 7th Fleet, how he was aware that they were highly trained and highly efficient in all areas, how courageous and dedicated to duty they all were, and how their leadership and performance was playing so vital a part in the success of his entire 7th Fleet. To ALL HANDS; a "Well Done."

PT299 investigated a report of a sailboat in distress on January 18, 1945, and returned six Army personnel from the sailboat which had swamped 12 miles west of Ambulong Island.

PTs 222 and 223 departed base at 1350, to carry out a special mission for the Army. They delivered Army personnel to Ilog Anchorage, then proceeded to Fuego point, Western Luzon, to pick up Army scouts landed there two nights previously. At 0255 on the 19th, they successfully completed the mission, returned to Ilog Anchorage, departing there at

0950, and arriving at the base at 1525.

Bill Kiendzior and Ed Kalinowski went to Ilin Island in a rowboat. When they arrived there the natives treated them like kings, serving them roast chicken, bananas and "Tuba". It was a delightful liberty.

On January 20, 1945, PT299 in company with PT227 (Squadron 17) departed base at 1200, to patrol around Lubang Island and the entrance to Manila Bay. They arrived at Agkawayan at 1820, and saw one two-masted sailboat at anchor, two two-masted and three one-masted sailboats on the beach. All were 50 to 60 feet in length. The two-masters were seriously damaged and the others were slightly damaged. The boats then patrolled off the entrance to Manila Bay with no contacts. They returned to base at 0800 on the 21st.

PT222 in company with PT83 (Squadron 13) departed base at 1600 on January 21, 1945, to patrol around Calapan, Northeast Mindoro. They were forced back by heavy seas returning to base at 2030.

PT298 in company with PT75 (Squadron 13) were forced back from a shuttle run to Leyte. They departed base at 1800, and returned at 2100. They were underway at 0100 on the 22nd, to deliver an important message to PTs 80 and 81 (both of Squadron 13). The 298 and 75 returned to base at 0800, after proceeding well to the north of Cape Calavite to deliver the message.

On January 23, 1945, PT298 in company with PT75 (Squadron 13) departed the PT base at 1500, to patrol Lubang Island to Fortune Island and Iaco Cove, Luzon, with no contacts. At 2120, they arrived at Ambil Pass, Lubang Island and investigated the area where PT73 (Squadron 13) was reefed and destroyed. The investigation was made in bright moonlight with flares but no wreckage was observed at a time when the tide was 18 inches higher than the time PT73 was reefed. The boats proceeded to south Balayan Bay to rendezvous with PTs 222 and 223 for a combined air-sea strike at a suicide boat hideout in pagapas Bay, Luzon. These suicide boats, known as Q boats, were small fast boats heavily laden with explosives. They carried a heavier explosive charge than a torpedo and since they struck at the water line, were considered dangerous indeed.

PTs 222 and 223 departed base at 1500, to proceed to Ilog Anchorage for a conference and to pick up guerilla spotters for a combined air-sea strike at the suicide boat hideout. They arrived at Ilog at 2158. At 2400, they were underway to put the guerillas ashore at Ligpo Point, Luzon. They completed the mission and returned to Ilog without incident. At 0651 on the 24th, they rendezvoused with PTs 298 and 75 (Squadron 13).

PTs 222, 223, 298 and 75 (Squadron 13) with Robert J. Wehrli aboard the 222 as O.T.C. rendezvoused off pagapas Bay with two B25s and four P38s.

The planes went in first and strafed the warehouses with 75mm guns, then dropped their bombs along the banks of the river. The boats proceeded into pagapas Bay and two at a time fell into position about a half mile off shore, to bombard the base. PT223 was

delayed a few minutes getting into position due to running on a reef. The boats shelled, bombed, strafed and damaged one lugger near the mouth of the Santiago River. Spotting of targets was directed by the XO of the guerilla force from northern Mindoro. The attack began at 0850 and lasted until 1010.

PTs 222 and 223 were sent to Abra de Ilog and proceeded independently for a daylight sweep around Santiago Point. At 1030, they strafed and damaged beyond repair one lugger near the beach, and three flat ramp-type barges 35 to 40 feet in length. At 1045, they strafed and damaged beyond repair a lugger at anchor $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles northwest of Santiago Point. After a hard day at the office they returned to base at 1515.

PTs 298 and 75 (Squadron 13) returned to Ilog with Lieutenant Commander Rowe, then returned to base without further incident.

To the amazement of the PT crews, they learned a few days later, when the guerillas were picked up, that more than 300 Japanese had been killed or wounded in this action. The entire town was evacuated.

The Japanese had more than a justifiable fear of PT boats, referring to them as "Devil Boats". If there were PT boats in the area when their ships were sunk they usually attributed the sinkings to PT boats. On one of her broadcasts Tokyo Rose was heard to say, "Show no mercy to captured PT men. They are barbarians."

On January 24, 1945, PT224 in company with PT227 (Squadron 17) carried out an uneventful patrol between Lubang Island and Manila Harbor, departing base at 1730 and returning at 1015 on the 25th.

PT224 in company with PT84 (Squadron 13) departed base at 0220 on January 26, 1945, and patrolled to Ilog arriving there at 0530. At 0630, they departed for Balayan Bay with guerilla spotters aboard for a combined air-sea strike at Q boat hideouts near Anilao in Janao Bay. They made rendezvous with PTs 78 and 81 (both of Squadron 13), two B25s and four P38s from the 310th Bomber Wing. At 0840, they directed strafing and pointed out targets for bombing by the aircraft, with PTs' strafing alternated with the plane attacks until 0945. Numerous fires were started in areas, said by guerillas to contain Q boats. The boats returned to base at 1830.

Of the many daylight air-sea strikes, two of the most successful were led by Lieutenant Robert J. Wehrli. The first of these occurred January 28-29, 1945. Lieutenant (j.g.) Robert J. Roth's PT222 with Lieutenant Wehrli, USNR, aboard as O.T.C., and PT223 departed the base for Ilog to pick up spotters for a combined air-sea attack on Batangas Bay.

At 0800, these two boats made rendezvous with PTs 77 and 81 (both of Squadron 13), two P38s and two B25s for the attack. In spite of intense enemy shore fire from light, medium and heavy machine guns and one 105mm, the boats were in the bay for 67 minutes and made four strafing runs against the target area. After each run the aircraft made

strafing and bombing runs on the installations and gun positions. The results of the PT attacks were two luggers that were rendered unserviceable beyond repair. In addition the boats scored numerous hits on the dock, various buildings in the Batangas-Wawa area, and at Tabungao, and knocked out several gun positions in the target area. Along with the aircraft they started at least eight fires, one of them a large oil dump. The cost to the PTs was one officer wounded, and minor damage to the boats. Lieutenant (j.g.) William B. Helme, who had recently been placed in command of PT221, had gone along on the mission because it was expected to be a difficult patrol and PT222 had a new XO., Lieutenant J.G. Johnson, who had arrived that day. Lieutenant Helme was hit in the abdomen by shrapnel. He was put aboard PT81 and in company with PT77 returned to Ilog.

After parting company with the Squadron 13 boats, PTs 222 and 223 conducted an anti-shipping patrol, without air cover, along the eastern and northern coasts of Maricaban Island. They made one of the largest catches of small boats ever credited to PT boats. In this phase of the operation the two boats strafed and rendered unserviceable beyond repair two 25 to 30 feet ramp-type barges; four sailboats 30 to 40 feet in length; and 20 sailboats 45 to 60 feet in length. Although the boats received enemy light machine gun fire from the beaches during the attacks, they suffered no casualties or damage. Both boats carried guerilla officers who identified all targets as enemy. The boats returned to base at 1730.

On January 30, 1945, PTs 222, 223 and 224 in company with PT84 (Squadron 13) conducted a barrier patrol of the southern Calavite Straits and Balayan Bay in support of the Mike-six operations. After a night patrol of no enemy contacts, PTs 222 and 84 returned to base, while PTs 223 and 224 proceeded north to contact CTG 78.2 for further orders. They were directed to return to base. Enroute through the straits at 1100, they strafed and slightly damaged a lugger which was on the beach approximately two miles north of Santiago Point. They then returned to base without further incident.

The following report was received from Guerilla Sources:

"The combined PT and Air Corps raids on the Pagapas Bay area resulted in the following: Heavy Jap casualties. It is believed that over 300 Japs were killed in the raids of the past four days according to civilians in the area. Our men observed many carts loaded with Japs being evacuated from the area for burial. It is believed that the Q boats in the Santiago River were hit. However, up to the present time it has been impossible to determine the exact damage due to the enemy positions surrounding the river and the difficult terrain in the approaches to the river from the mountains. The Japs are reported moving the boats from the Santiago River to a fish pond nearby. This combined Air and PT operation on this position was well coordinated and it is believed the entire operation was successful."

Mindoro was a tough little operation from start to finish. There were 334 alerts of

enemy raids on the beach during the first thirty days. It marked a great step in the aerial aspect of the Philippines campaign, and Mindoro proved to be a useful staging and assembly point for the expeditions to liberate the Southern Philippines.

Both in lives and materiel, the Mindoro campaign was the most costly that the PTs had in the Southwest Pacific. Yet, the damage they did far overbalanced their losses. They met and overcame the most savage air attacks the enemy could mount, causing destruction of more than 20 enemy aircraft. Together with Army Bombers, they sank one of the newest and finest destroyers in the Japanese Navy. They stopped Japanese Inter-island traffic, cut off evacuation from Mindoro to Luzon, ferreted out and destroyed small craft in the harbors. They cleaned out whole nests of suicide boats. They supported guerillas on Mindoro and Luzon, and carried out many valuable reconnaissance missions.

Task Unit 70.1.4 comprising Squadrons 16, 13 and PTs 227 and 230 of Squadron 17 received a Navy Unit Commendation which read in part: "As the only Naval force present, following the retirement of the invasion convoys, this Task Unit served as the major obstruction to enemy counter-landings from nearby Luzon, Panay and Palawan, and bore the brunt of concentrated hostile air attacks, throughout a 5-day period. Providing the only anti-aircraft protection available for personnel ashore, engaged in the establishment of a motor torpedo boat operating and repair base, the gallant officers and men, who commanded and staffed the Task Unit, and who manned the boats, maintained the vigil watch by night, and stood out in the open water, close to base by day, to fight off repeated Japanese bombing, strafing and suicide attacks, expending in 3 days the ammunition which had been expected to last approximately 3 weeks, in the destruction or damaging of a large percentage of the attacking planes. Their invaluable service in support of the expeditious completion of operations ashore, vital to the furtherance of the Mindoro campaign reflects the highest credit upon the United States Naval Service."

The last PT boats lost in the war were destroyed by our own warships, as a result of mistaken identity. Troops landed at Nasugbu, on western Luzon, on January 31, 1945, and that night, ships of the screen were attacked by 20 or more suicide boats. One rammed and sank PC 1129. The rest were destroyed or driven off. The following night, Lieutenant John H. Stillman, USNR, Commander of Squadron 16, was ordered to patrol with PTs 77 and 79 (both of Squadron 13) against suicide boats, south of the landing beaches. He was not to go north of Talin Point because our destroyers and destroyer escorts were patrolling north of the point.

Three miles south of Talin Point the PTs were illuminated by starshell and were taken under fire by ships that they recognized as our own. The PTs fled southward at top speed, trying to identify themselves by radio and by signal light. The ships that fired on them, a destroyer and a destroyer escort, had tried repeatedly to reach the boats by radio, and failing to get an answer, concluded that they were enemy PTs or suicide boats.

The ships did not see the visual recognition from the PTs.

Even then, the PTs might have outrun pursuit if PT77 had not run on a reef. The crew abandoned ship. Ten minutes later a shell hit the boat amidships. PT79, following 100 yards astern of the 77, swung hard right and reduced speed to avoid the reef. Running slowly, she was an easy mark. A shell hit her squarely on the port side. The 79 exploded and burned.

After the crew was safely ashore, Lieutenant Stillman, who had been aboard PT77, was last seen swimming away to try to contact help. Lieutenant Stillman was a fine officer and a man who had risen through the ranks from enlisted man to Lieutenant.

At 1500 the next day, PTs 222 and 223 were underway to search for survivors of PTs 77 and 79, but the search was unsuccessful and they returned to base at 1020 on February 3rd. PTs 298 and 299 were at San Pedro Bay undergoing engine change.

As told to this writer by Bob Roth:

"In an effort to locate Lieutenant Stillman and the crews of PTs 77 and 79, I made a flight from the Air Force base with an Air Force flying Sergeant. We flew in a single engine plane and carried a signal light with which we hoped to make contact if any sign of the crews was seen. We flew low over the beach and jungle north and south of Talin Point. The search was negative and we returned to base."

Another quote from Bob Roth in tribute to Lieutenant Stillman:

"I had the pleasure of his company during the long trip going into Mindoro. Even though he knew that he would be our next Skipper, he took his turn of the watch and always respected the fact that I was Skipper of the 222 and that the decisions concerning the welfare of boat and crew were mine.

In conversations with Lieutenant Stillman during this trip, he indicated that he would like to stay in the war zone until the war was terminated.

Although we were lucky to get a fine replacement for Lieutenant Stillman, I'm sorry he couldn't have served us longer."

Lieutenant Stillman was later reported to have been captured by the Japs and beheaded.

On February 7, 1945, PTs 222 and 223 were underway at 1020, to land scouts on Palawan Island, for the invasion in which Squadrons 20 and 23 took part. They arrived at Cuyo Island at 1445, and were underway for Palawan at 1810, about fifty miles north of Puerto Princessa. At 0210 on the 8th, the scouts aboard the two boats were landed without incident and the boats got underway for Cuyo Island at 0302. They arrived at Cuyo at 0900, departed for Mindoro at 1100 and were back to base at 2130.

At 0905 on February 12, 1945, PTs 222 and 223 got underway to pick up the scouts they had landed on Palawan. At 1335, they arrived at Cuyo Island and departed for Palawan at 1725. The scouts were picked up without incident at 0130 on the 13th, and arrived at

Cuyo Island at 0900. Departing Cuyo at 1030, they were back at base on Mindoro at 2200. The crews of the 222 and 223 were enchanted with the beauty of Cuyo Island.

PT222 in company with PT226 (Squadron 17) got underway at 1200 on February 20, 1945, to Southern Luzon to make an anti-Q boat patrol from Talin Point to Maricaban Island. PT298 returned from Leyte and moored in Mangarin Bay.

At 0200 on February 21, 1945, PT222 in company with PT226 (Squadron 17) picked up an Army Radar team at Cape Calavite, on Mindoro Island and returned to base at 0730. At 1720, PT298 in company with PT227 (Squadron 17) got underway to Southern Luzon to make an anti-Q boat patrol from Talin Point to Santiago Point. At 0430 on the 22nd, they arrived at Abra de Ilog, after a negative patrol on Luzon shores, and picked up two Army Signal Corps officers and two Filipinos to return to Army Headquarters on Mindoro. They arrived at base at 1040.

The second successful air-sea strike led by Lieutenant Wehrli occurred on February 23, 1945, when PTs 224 and 298 in company with PT229 (Squadron 17) and PTs 76, 78 and 83 (all of Squadron 13) departed base at 0930, to make a joint air-sea strike on Coron Bay, Busanga. A search by PTs 83 and 229 of the Conception area was negative. PTs 78 and 76 found no evidence of enemy activity at Culion, which was a leper colony. PTs 224 and 298 with two P47s as cover attacked two 70 to 80 foot lighters off the dock at Coron town and set them afire; one lugger was also destroyed by burning and two "B" type barges were sunk. These boats retired from the area and rendezvoused with PTs 78 and 76. PTs 224 and 78 returned to the area west of Coron and sank two 40 foot motor launches and rendered unserviceable beyond repair one more motor launch, a 35 foot gig and whaleboat. They also destroyed one large fuel dump. The aircraft burned out the Japanese camp area, the Coron mines and strafed the waterfront area. All boats returned to base at 1830, having sustained no damage.

On February 24, 1945, PT224 in company with PT74 (Squadron 13) after conducting a barrier patrol in the Cape Santiago-Lubang area, destroyed two barges previously rendered unserviceable beyond repair, on the tip of Santiago Point. A lugger also previously rendered unserviceable beyond repair was strafed.

At 1300 on February 25, 1945, PT298 in company with PT78 (Squadron 13) departed base to take a party of Seventh Fleet officers to investigate a Japanese destroyer beached on Semirari Island and returned to base at 1730.

After February, life took on a dreamy quality for the men on Mindoro's sandspit. They regaled new squadrons with sea stories and by the month of June they were thoroughly sick of listening to each other.

The base was holding fire at this time. The boats took practice runs around the area, taking on fuel occasionally. They would clear the point and go up the shore toward Tacloban where there was a fuel pier. As they would take on avgas, some straining was necessary as there was some contamination and water in it.

The invasion of Brunei Bay, Borneo was being cooked up and the same high officers remembered that Squadrons 13 and 16 were still in existence. Older and leakier, too, and all the more expendable on that account. Abruptly the men's loose talk about past heroism stopped and more thought was given to squaring away matters pertaining to next of kin.

On March 2, 1945, PTs 235 and 242 departed the base escorting the F-120 and a double-bubble gasoline barge to Balanacan Bay, Marinduque Island, P.I., arriving without incident on the 3rd at 1700.

An advance base was set up at Balanacan Bay Island, on March 3, 1945. Most of the time six boats operated from this base. Boats were sent to Mangarin Bay for major repairs or having operated from Balanacan Bay for six days. The boats returning from Balanacan Bay were relieved by other boats from Mangarin Bay.

PTs 241 and 298 departed base at 1900, for Marinduque with orders to land scouts on Romblon, Simara and Sibuyan Islands enroute. The scouts were landed on all three islands before midnight without incident.

At 0400 on March 4, 1945, PTs 235 and 242 departed Balanacan Bay to patrol Tayabas Bay from Lucina eastward. They returned to base with no contacts at 1600. PT242 in company with PT230 (Squadron 17) departed Balanacan Bay at 1900, to escort F-120 to Mangarin Bay.

On March 5, 1945, at 0400, PTs 241 and 298 departed Balanacan Bay to patrol Tayabas Bay. At 0840, PT242 in company with PT230 (Squadron 17) arrived at Mangarin Bay with F-120 having made no contacts. At 1035, PT235 in company with PT226 (Squadron 17) departed Balanacan Bay to make a patrol to Matoco Point, Batangas Bay. They arrived at Matoco point at 1400 and fired 75 rounds of 40mm, and 60 rounds of 20mm at a house. This was returned by .25 caliber machine gun fire. PT226 was hit by two projectiles, one of which tore a hole in the starboard forward gasoline tank. PT235 towed the 226 to Balanacan Bay arriving at 1910. At 1240, PT222 in company with PT229 (Squadron 17) departed for Balanacan Bay arriving at 1730. At 1610, PTs 241 and 298 returned to Balanacan Bay having made a negative patrol. At 1824, PTs 222 and 229 departed Balanacan Bay to patrol Bagliilio Bay. At 1835, PTs 241 and 298 departed Balanacan Bay to pick up scouts from Sibuyan, Simara and Romblon Islands.

PT235 in company with PT226 (Squadron 17) departed Balanacan Bay at 0400 on March 6, 1945, to patrol Ragay Gulf and returned at 1600 after a negative patrol. At 0626, PTs 241 and 298 arrived at Mangarin Bay having picked up scouts without incident. At 0805, PT222 in company with PT229 (Squadron 17) returned to Balanacan Bay after a negative patrol. At 1650, PTs 222 and 229 departed Balanacan Bay to patrol the southeast end of Batangas Bay, returning at 0735 on the 7th.

The invitation (shown on following page) resulted from a patrol the 222 boat made to the Batangas Bay area. The mission was the destruction of suicide boats which were causing problems in that location. On this patrol we carried an U.S. Air Force Colonel

(command pilot) as an observer. We located and destroyed a number of suicide boats during which our guest took a turn firing most of our guns.

The Colonel was very pleased with this patrol and several days later sent his Sergeant to our base and delivered to me a pair of Air Force sun glasses and the invitation to a party which I felt duty bound to attend.--- Bob Roth.

Daily patrols were continued by the boats. On March 8, 1945, PTs 223 and 298 departed Mangarin Bay at 1230, to land scouts on Sibay Island. They landed them at 1520 without incident and returned to base at 1905.

At 0530 on March 10, 1945, PT223 in company with PT78 (Squadron 13) got underway to pick up Army scouts on Sibay Island returning to base at 1120 having picked up the scouts without incident. At 0900, PT242 in company with PT230 (Squadron 17) and PT76 (Squadron 13) departed Balanacan Bay and proceeded to Padre Burgas, Luzon. They arrived at 1120 and PT242 returned to Balanacan arriving at 1400 with three Filipinos who had been wounded in an air attack. At 1310, PT224 in company with PT226 (Squadron 17) departed Mangarin Bay to land scouts at Lloido, Panay. The landing was made at 2345.

On March 11, 1945, PTs 223 and 298 departed Mangarin Bay for Odiangan Bay, Tablas Island for a conference with Army and Navy officials aboard LCI 780, relative to Army landings on Simara Island. They arrived at Odiangan at 1000, departing for Simara Island and arriving at 2400. On the 12th, they patrolled the southern coast of Simara Island, covering the Army landings until 0630, at which time they rendezvoused with DE 424 off Mahini, Sibay Island, and assisted in shelling a Jap concentration there. During this action Lieutenant (j.g.) Harry E. Griffin suffered a punctured eardrum due to the gunfire on his boat, PT223. There was no return fire. The boats retired at 0900 and returned to Balanacan Bay arriving at 1200.

At 0100 on March 14, 1945, PT235 in company with PT82 (Squadron 13) departed Mangarin Bay for Lubang Island where Army officials were contacted and arrangements made for delivery of captured Jap suicide boats to CTU 1.4. Three Jap prisoners of war, one of which was a suicide boat pilot, were brought back to base for questioning and then turned over to Army authorities. The boats returned to base at 1715. At 0900, PTs 223 and 298 departed Balanacan arriving at Romblon at 1230, where one Jap prisoner, three stretcher cases and other personnel were picked up and brought to Mangarin Bay arriving at 1715.

On March 20, 1945, PT224 in company with PT226 (Squadron 17) departed at 1000 from Balanacan Bay to Romblon Island, picked up personnel and proceeded to Mangarin Bay arriving at 1715. At 0900, PT298 in company with PT84 (Squadron 13) departed Mangarin Bay for Cuyo Island arriving at 1500. They took some Army personnel and rendezvoused with them to go up on top of a mountain where an Army plane had apparently crashed.

At 0710 on March 23, 1945, PT223 in company with PT232 (Squadron 17) departed Balanacan Bay for Calapan. Arriving at 0845, they picked up Army personnel and got

underway for Balanacan Bay arriving at 1025. At 1040, they departed for Laylay, Marinduque, arriving at 1105, and putting the Army personnel ashore. At 1545, this same personnel came aboard and were taken to Calapan arriving at 1716. Departing at 1730, they returned to Balanacan Bay at 1900.

PT222 in company with PT76 (Squadron 13) got underway at 0700 on March 27, 1945, from Balanacan for Calapan on Mindoro Island. They arrived at 0835, and contacted Army officials. At 0930, they were underway for Odiangan Bay, Tablas Island arriving at 1120. They left for Balanacan Bay at 1445 and arrived at 1800.

On March 30, 1945, at 0830, PT235 in company with PT226 (Squadron 17) got underway from San Pedro Bay escorting F-120 to Mangarin Bay.

At 1315 on March 31, 1945, PT235 in company with PT226 (Squadron 17) picked up seven Filipinos who were hanging to an overturned sailboat off Semirari Island. At 1400, they arrived at Mangarin Bay. At 1401, PTs 222 and 223 left Balanacan Bay for Batangas Bay via Capulaan Bay arriving at 1655. At 1755, they moored to the S.S. John Rossiter for instructions. At 2025, they were underway to conduct an anti-Q boat patrol of Batangas Bay, P.I. The patrol had negative results.

PT223 in company with PT76 (Squadron 13) departed Balanacan Bay at 1500 on April 1, 1945, to patrol Tablas Bay, P.I. To Batangas Bay, P.I. Three injured Filipinos were taken aboard at Padre Burgas, Luzon, and the boats returned to Balanacan. At 1700, PT223 alone departed with the Filipino casualties for Mangarin Bay arriving at 2230.

On April 6, 1945, PTs 224, 235 and 298, with Squadron 16 Commander Roger Hallowell and Warrant Officer Bob Butler aboard, delivered supplies to the Culion Leper Colony, Coron Bay. They had their own silver pesos that said, "Culion Leper Colony". The folks there said these were the first people to come in to the island since the Japanese had evacuated. They were most anxious to welcome the men. They had a town dance that evening and everyone turned out in their finery, - the traditional Filipino garb, and the town orchestra that played some of the oldies but goodies like, "Doing the Lambeth Walk". The ladies were going to have refreshments too, at the dance. To make their cakes they needed sugar. A note was sent out to Ensign Jim Martin, who had been required to remain aboard the 298. He went down, looked around and found sugar (he guessed) and sent it along in. As Jim told it to this writer: "I guess everybody thought I could tell the difference between sugar and salt, but it was salt. No one thought to taste it before it went into the cakes, and there went a lot of good ingredients wasted because I gave them salt instead of sugar." Culion had a pleasant climate and was such a delightful spot, - untouched by time. The townfolk had lost contact with the world for so long. Some of the town fathers had a few hand grenades they had hidden from the Japanese. They wanted to contribute them to help with the war effort. They had no idea how the war was going. They only knew that they had been liberated. The young school teacher was out seeking school supplies

from the PT men, - any kind of paper, pencils, books, etc. The children wanted to study but had no material. There was a white man living in the town, left over from the Spanish-American War. He had apparently found his Shangri-la and hadn't, from appearances, suffered too badly under the Japanese.

PT220 in company with an Army crash boat departed Balanacan on April 14, 1945, arriving at Mangarin Bay at 1200.

On April 18, 1945, PT220 in company with PT225 (Squadron 17) departed Mangarin Bay to make a submarine search off Balanacan arriving at Balanacan on the 19th, after a negative patrol.

PT224 in company with PT75 (Squadron 13) and PT229 (Squadron 17) made a search for crewmen of a disabled B24 which crashed on Mindoro mainland opposite Ilin Island on April 21, 1945. With the help of an Army crash boat two Liberator crewmen were found in the water and the boats returned to base.

On April 22, 1945, PT220 in company with PT230 (Squadron 17) departed Balanacan at 1700, for a special Army mission, in Ragay Gulf. They completed their combined patrol and Army mission on the 24, and returned to Balanacan Bay. PTs 242 and 299 departed Mangarin Bay on a special Army mission to Mansalay Bay, Mindoro, on the 24th and returned at 1730.

PT223 in company with PT229 (Squadron 17) departed Mangarin Bay on April 25, 1945, to deliver supplies to the guerillas at Libertad, Panay, and returned to Mangarin Bay.

In addition to the events described for the month of April, numerous patrols were made by the boats of Squadron 16. They were negative, with no contacts and much too similar to make interesting reading.

During the month of May the PT base at Mindoro was not only used as a supply and repair base, but a training program of target firing and warfare tactics was also conducted.

On May 2, 1945, PT220 in company with PT75 (Squadron 13) was underway to land Naval personnel on Lubang Island to inspect a site suitable for a Loran Navigational Station. The boats returned at 1630.

From the 3rd of May, through the 6th, all the boats of Squadron 16 were moored at Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, for repairs and maintenance. On the 7th, PT222 tested new engines and the tests proved satisfactory. At 1330 on the 8th, PTs 222, 223, 224, 298 and 299 began training maneuvers and tactics in cooperation with P38 planes. The exercise was completed at 1600.

On May 10, 1945, PTs 220, 241 and 299 made a run on a small island south of Mindoro for practice beach strafing. PTs 241 and 242 departed base at 2230, in search of a native sailboat reportedly containing stolen government property. The search which covered Ilin Straits and Bullacao Bay was negative and the boats returned to base at 0300 on the 11th.

Planes were taking off from the Airforce base on their bombing runs and would mysteriously crash a few minutes after take-off and go down in the sea. This necessitated a detail for a couple of PT boats every morning as crash boat duty. Sabotage was suspected.

At 0615 on May 12, 1945, PTs 223, 242 and 299 departed base to a scene of a B24 crash 20 miles west bearing 240 degrees T from San Jose', Mindoro. Although the wreckage was sighted at 0725, no survivors were found and the boats returned to base at 1300.

On May 17, 1945, PTs 235 and 241 departed Mangarin Bay at 0530, to the scene of a B24 crash off Blue Beach, San Jose', Mindoro. The search was completed when the air controller reported all planes accounted for.

PTs 223 and 299 stood out to the scene of a B24 crash off Maguire Airstrip on May 22, 1945. One survivor was picked up and transferred to an Army crash boat. He was pronounced dead on arrival at the dock. PT298 in company with PT226 (Squadron 17) departed Mangarin Bay at 0615, to investigate a distress signal fifty miles bearing 300 degrees from Caminawit point. They reached the scene just as SC 1269 freed herself from Apo reef without help, and the boats returned to base at 1100.

It has been suggested that this history would not be complete if the "early morning lineups" were not chronicled. The boats were nested at Caminawit Point, Mindoro. The "Heads" on the PT boats below, between the gas tanks, weren't comfortable so every boat had its own little outhouse built out over the fantail. Some were very fancy works of art and the early morning lineup with everybody back at the outhouse was a sight that will long be remembered.

Another item not to be overlooked is the officers' club on Mindoro. The bar was made from the tail of a P38. It was open on Wednesday and Saturday nights. The men were given chits for several beers per week. They did a bit of swapping with the non-beer-drinkers. Some lively song fests developed with such famous PT songs as, "Gilly Gilly Gammy Go to Waga Waga", "Wee Wee on Wewak", "If You Want to Know Where the Ensigns Are" and this gem:

They sent for the Army to come to the islands,
And Douglas MacArthur said, "No".
He gave as the reason, "this isn't the season
Besides, there's no U.S.O."

(Chorus with Obsenities)

They sent for the Gyrenes to come to the islands
And our gallant Gyrenes said, "No".
We'll sit on our bustles this side of the Russels.
We're heroes already, you know."

(Chorus)

They sent for the Navy to come to the islands
 And our gallant Navy agreed.
 But they sent all the sections in different directions.
 It looked like a cattle stampede.

(Chorus)

These song fests could go on for some time and the more beer chits that went down the louder the singing became. Schaefer beer was one of the brands available. At the time of this writing there is a great enthusiasm for beer can collecting with the Schaefer beer can being one of the most sought after, and with a current price of one hundred dollars (or more) per can. What a fortune was tossed away every Wednesday and Saturday, as the beer chits went down on Mindoro.

The men were living in tents at this time. Occasionally a ship would come to the PT base at Mindoro. On one occasion a large hospital ship came up and went to anchor. Ensigns Jim Martin, Bob LaRue and Francis Carrier thought that might bear investigating. Jim Martin asked Captain Hallowell if he thought someone aboard the ship would like to come in and stretch their legs. With Hallowell's O.K., they went out and buzzed the ship a couple of times. There were women waving and they waved back. It was an Army hospital ship with a Merchant Marine crew. The Skipper thought some of them would like to come ashore so they loaded PT298 and went ashore. That started an exodus. The other boats went out and brought a load ashore. There was a lot of jollification that night at the PT base, as the nurses came ashore for a little beer drinking and the like. A bit of levity came to the island.

On another occasion a U.S.O. show came to Mindoro. U.S.O. shows didn't find PT bases very often. They also had a base movie and the men sat on coconut logs.

The boats would make a run periodically to Guiuan to Base 17.

PTs 223 and 235 made a test fire cruise on May 29, 1945.

With the liberation of Tawi Tawi and Jolo, Eighth Army was only a few miles from the great island of Borneo which would be liberated by the Australian Army and Seventh Fleet.

The mountainous island of Borneo is civilized (in the Western sense) only at a few points along the coast. Before WWII, the greater part of it belonged to the Netherlands East Indies, but along the coast were four areas under the British aegis - the sultanate of Sarawak, which Sir James ("Rajah") Brooke had made a British protectorate, and the oil resources are such that the reigning potentate had been able to build the biggest mosque in the Far East.

It was here that Lieutenant William B. Helme almost started a religious war, and caused an Aussie General to have a case of apoplexy. On a trip by LCVP up the river to Brunei with some other officers and a case of beer, they wandered through the gate of a

nice looking house and shared the beer and the time of day with a nice young civilian native. Said native was the Rajah himself --- and it was Ramadan, a fast period for all Muhammedans whose local, temporal and spiritual leader wasn't ever supposed to touch alcohol.

Brunei, a tiny but rich native sultanate, also under British protection; the crown colony of Labuan; and North Borneo, ruled by one of the last of those chartered companies which bore so large a part in the colonial history of North America.

The Japanese wanted Borneo for its oil and its strategic position in the South China Sea. They captured it during the first few weeks of WWII, despite all efforts of the Royal Netherlands Navy, the United States Asiatic Fleet and a small but valiant Punjabi garrison in the north.

Borneo under Japanese control became a major source of fuel oil for the Japanese Navy. As such, Allied strategists would have liked very much to recover the big island but it lay too deep in enemy-held territory; either the Southern Philippines or Singapore would have to be liberated first.

Z-Day, as General MacArthur designated D-Day for Brunei, was originally set for May 23, 1945, but troops and supplies were slow to arrive and Z-Day was postponed to June 10.

On June 5, 1945, Motor Torpedo Squadrons 13 and 16 were detached from Task Unit 70.1.4 to form Task Unit 70.1.7, Seventh Fleet. On this day PTs 223, 241 and 298 in company with Squadron 13 left Mangarin Bay, Mindoro Island, P.I., to take part in the invasion of Brunei Bay, Borneo. A training program of firing practice and war tactics was conducted during the month for those boats remaining at Mangarin Bay. PTs 298 (OTC), 241 and 223 in company with PTs 74, 75 and 76 (Squadron 13) got underway enroute to Puerta Princesa, Palawan, at 2000, arriving at the pier at 0740 on the 6th. The boats fueled throughout the day. They were underway again at 1930 on the 7th, enroute to Balabac Islands, where they arrived at 0800 on the 8th. These same boats joined the assault convoy enroute to Brunei Bay, Borneo at 1645. The boats had to go slow because of the LSTs in the convoy. They just sort of idled along and occasionally would have to make speed runs out and around to blow out the excess carbon that would build up at that speed.

The call sign for the boats operating out of Brunei was "Baseball". PT298 was "Baseball Nine" or "Baseball Leader" when the OTC was aboard. This was used on radio communications.

Before the boats entered Victoria Harbor the town was bombarded by a large force of our cruisers and destroyers. This effectively put a stop to dreams of liberty in this little outpost of Britain, because the town wasn't there anymore after that. There were quite a few ships in there. Among them the PT Tender Willoughby, the light cruiser Boise and several LCIs.

COPY OF MESSAGE RECEIVED FOLLOWING LANDING OF AUSTRALIAN
TROOPS IN NORTH BORNEO. PT 298 participated in the invasion
and served as an escort to a landing craft which carried
General Douglas MacArthur ashore.

U.S. NAVAL
COMMUNICATION SERVICE
AMPHIBIOUS FORCE

PT 298 -

CTG 78.1
CTU 70.1.7

170720

PLEASE CONVEY TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN
UNDER YOUR COMMAND MY APPRECIATION AND
COMMENDATIONS FOR THE COURAGEOUS AND
EFFICIENT SERVICE PERFORMED AND THE READY
COOPERATION DISPLAYED BY THE MOTOR TORPEDO
BOATS IN THE ASSAULT ON BRUNIE ^{ET} X ADMIRAL
ROYAL

INFO COPIES

PTs 298, 241 and 223 in company with Squadron 13 arrived at anchorage along with the PT Tender Willoughby at Brunei Bay at 0730 on June 10, 1945. The morning of Z-Day an enemy plane came over, dropped a bomb and disappeared. At 0950, on a special mission, PT298 (OTC) along with PT83 (Squadron 13) were underway to the U.S.S. Boise. At 1030, the boats escorted 2 LCVPs, with General MacArthur and his staff aboard, to Brown Beach.

The Australian troops landed on the morning of the 10th, and after a brief scuffle, the town was ours.

An impressive group of high ranking officers - Lieutenant General Morshead of the Australian Army, General Kenny of the AAF, Air Vice Marshall W. D. Bostock, RAAF, (who commanded air support for all Borneo operations), Rear Admiral Royal, and General of the Army Douglas MacArthur landed on Labuan Island for a look around, until 1428, when General MacArthur and party boarded the LCVPs and got underway to the U.S.S. Boise, the the PTs escorting the LCVPs. The boats returned to the PT Tender Willoughby at 1501.

A brave squad of men from the Tender Willoughby cut an entrance through the side of a beached Japanese freighter, made tables from its hatch covers and served beer to the battle-hardened veterans.

General MacArthur, who also inspected progress at Brooketon, sent this parting message to the commanders at the objective: "The execution of the Brunei Bay operation has been flawless. Please accept for yourself and convey to your officers and men the pride and gratification I feel in such a splendid performance."

Major General G.F. Wooten commanded the 9th Australian Division, Motor Torpedo Squadron 13 was commanded by Lieutenant Commander Alvin W. Fargo, Jr., USNR, Squadron 16 was commanded by Lieutenant Roger H. Hallowell, USNR, and the Willoughby was commanded by Lieutenant Joseph P. E. Brouillette.

Patrols were sent north and south, frightening all the natives caught out in their canoes after dark.

At 1812 on the 10th, PTs 241 (OTC) and 223 were underway from Victoria Harbor patrolling south to Miri. At 2020, the boats strafed Tutong with unobserved results. At 2110, large oil fires were observed at Seria. The fires appeared to have been set by enemy fire. At 2149, the boats strafed Seria, - the results were unobserved. At 2258, two large fires were started (apparently by the Japs) at Kuala Belait and the area was strafed. At 0050 on the 11th, the boats strafed Miri setting fire to a possible barracks. At 0130, a large explosion at Lutong started new fires. At 0155, a sunken hulk was investigated 2 and 3/4 miles due west of Miri. At 0205, the boats strafed Lutong with unobserved results. The boats returned to the U.S.S. Willoughby at 0745.

PT298 in company with PT80 (Squadron 13) leaving Victoria Harbor at 1730, patrolled from Punyet Island to Tg. Lobang. Two large oil well fires were observed at 2047. Going down south around Miri you could see the flame from the oil fields for miles, and anything between you and the shore was silhouetted in the flame. Another oil fire was

observed at Kuala Belait.

At 0030 on June 12, 1945, the boats strafed the Miri River mouth with unobserved results. At 0415, the boats proceeding north, passing Seria observed five new oil well fires in the area. During the course of the patrol six sailing craft were intercepted. The natives appeared to be of Malayan extraction and no information of value was obtained. PTs 298 and 80 returned to Victoria Harbor at 1000.

PTs 241 and 223 left Victoria Harbor to patrol from Bethune Head to Tg. Indeh. At 2008, a large fire was observed in the vicinity of Kuala Penyu. At 2225, the boats searched the parpar River mouth and pulo Iaing with negative results. They patrolled Gaya Bay from 2325 to 0100 on the 13th, working to within 500 yards of Jesselton Harbor and Gaya Island. At 0130, small arms fire was observed off the Jesselton Railroad pier. The patrol returned to base with no other contacts.

PT298 with Roger Hallowell aboard as OTC, in company with PT80 (Squadron 13), leaving Victoria Harbor at 1805 on June 13, 1945, patrolled from punyet Island to Tg. Lobang. As they were leaving the harbor one twin-engine enemy craft flew over and dropped a bomb near the DE guarding the entrance to the bay. It was also very close to the two patrolling PTs. The boats opened up with their 40mm. They were doing well, too, but at 1940 a night fighter, Black Widow (P61) shot it down in flames. The Jap aircraft crashed and burned just behind the trees along the beach area at a point approximately 2 miles northeast of Brunei Bluffs.

At 2001, three sampans were sighted and the occupants interrogated. No information of value was obtained. Huge fires were sighted at Seria. At 0300 on June 14, 1945, the boats strafed lighted areas between Kuala Miri and Tg. Loban. The patrol lay to off Miri from 0315 to 0830. The planes scheduled for a joint strike failed to rendezvous. From 0845 to 0932, the boats strafed Tg. Lobang Brighton Beach and Miri town with unobserved results. At 0950, the boats drew 75mm or 90mm fire from a point near punyet. A plane was going overhead and the boats established contact, suggesting he may want to go down and investigate but he was on another mission and couldn't detour. At 1020, the boats investigated the anchorage area used by Jap Merchantmen. One Jap ship "Atago Maru" was observed, the hull beneath the water with the forecastle midships superstructure and main foremast clearly visible above water. The patrol returned to base at 1550.

On June 15, 1945, PTs 241 and 223 leaving Victoria Harbor at 1801, patrolled south from punyet Island to Tg. Lobang without enemy contact. At 2001, the patrol strafed the Tutong river mouth and also strafed Kuala Belait at 2232. The results were unobserved and the boats returned to base at 0730 on the 16th.

PT298 in company with PT80 (Squadron 13) leaving Victoria Harbor at 1615, patrolled north to Ambong Bay. Ambong Bay was illuminated with flares at 0010 on the 17th, with no sightings of the enemy. At 0740, while patrolling in Gaya Bay they sighted five or

six enemy barges moving west in the vicinity of Karamunsing River to eastern Gaya Island. Because of the shallow water, the target range could not be closed and necessitated going around Gaya Island to southward. PT298 approached Kasupon Bay looking for barges. At 0822, large caliber (75mm or larger) accurate mortar fire was drawn from a point immediately south of the Karamunsing-Simbulan river mouth. The first rounds landed close aboard PT298. At approximately the same time five beached, camouflaged Jap Army type "A" barges were sighted along the northeast Kasuapon Bay. Three high speed runs were made on targets at one half mile range. Shallow water made it impossible to get closer to the targets. Mortar fire from the enemy continued intermittantly. PT298 secured firing at 0908. Results could not be determined although many hits in the target area were observed. The patrol returned to base, Victoria Harbor, Brunei Bay.

On June 18, 1945, PTs 241 (OTC) and 223 leaving Victoria Harbor at 1806, patrolled from Nosong Point to Kuala Penyu. At 2043, when closing in on a radar pip two and a quarter miles southeast of Kuala Penyu, and one and an eighth miles off beach, the boats drew rifle fire from the beach. The patrol counter-marched, strafing the beach continuing on towards Gaya Island. Another radar pip appeared at position one and one half miles off shore due east of Mt. Nosong. As the boats closed in on the radar target the object could be seen visually and was taken to be a periscope. The slender object was raised about four feet above water. At 2133, PT223 dropped one depth charge in the target area which did not detonate due to the shallow water, - four fathoms deep. A contact report was sent to OTC 76.20 at 2234. The search was renewed and one object was determined to be a bamboo stick. However, another similar object was thought to be a periscope and PT223 fired 40mm rounds on it. Sight of the target was lost due to rain. At 2343, a second depth charge was dropped by PT223, also set at 30 feet and it, too, failed to detonate in four and three quarters fathoms of water (charted depth). The boats remained in the target area until 0030 on the 19th. Negative sweeps were made at slow speed three miles off shore between Tangit Rock and Kuala Penyu with the boats returning to base at 0849.

PT241 in company with PT75 (Squadron 13) were underway from Victoria Harbor at 0711 on June 21, 1945, on a special mission to escort an Australian Survey party aboard an LCVP along the Klias Peninsula to Nosong Point. The LCVP sank at 0925, when its ramp was accidentally released a quarter mile off shore. The personnel - 16 officers and men - were rescued by the PT boats and returned to base at 1053. PT298 in company with PT78 (Squadron 13) left the PT tender, U.S.S. Willoughby, Victoria Harbor, Brunei Bay, at 1802, for a patrol south to Tg. Lobang. Contact was made with Australian Army Forces at Lutong. The patrol returned to the tender at Victoria Harbor using slow speed with negative results.

On June 22, 1945, PTs 223 (OTC) and 241 leaving Victoria Harbor at 1801, patrolled north to Gaya Bay. Kimanias Bay, Gaya Bay and Ambong Bay areas were searched with negative results. PT298 in company with PT76 (OTC)(Squadron 13) leaving Victoria Harbor at 1800, patrolled south between Tg. Lobang and Kuala Nish. At 1320, mail was exchanged and one passenger (of the Australian Army) was taken aboard at Lutong. The patrol searched the area in the vicinity of Tg. Lobang and Kuala Sibuti with negative results and the boats returned to base at 0815 on the 23rd.

PT298 in company with PT84 (OTC)(Squadron 13) leaving Victoria Harbor at 1750 on June 24, 1945, patrolled the areas in the vicinity of Kiaru, Purum, Sungei Damit, Dinawan Island, Tg. Dumpil, Tg. Aru, Sulug Island and Woking Point with negative results. The patrol returned to base at 0802 on the 25th.

At 1802, PT223 in company with PT84(OTC)(Squadron 13) patrolled south to Tg. Lobang. At 2258, the boats lay to off Lutong to exchange communications with the Australian Army Forces. At 2331, the patrol continued south to Tg. Lobang and reversed course to return to base arriving at 0702 on the 26th with negative results.

PTs 241 and 298 patrolled north, leaving Brunei Bay at 1749. The boats made a close sweep of Kimanis Bay from 1935 to 2345. The beach south of Parpar River was illuminated and the huts strafed at 0001 on June 27, 1945. The results were unobserved. The patrol continued in the areas of Kinarut, Dinawan Island, Tg. Aru and Gaya Island. At 0330, the boats strafed a building on eastern Manukan Island with no enemy reaction. Four native craft were investigated west of Gaya Island at 0710. The occupants were fishermen. Two natives were taken aboard for interrogation at 9th Australian Division Headquarters, Victoria. The patrol returned to base at 1114.

On June 28, 1945, PT223 in company with PT73 (OTC)(Squadron 13) left Victoria Harbor at 0741, on a special mission to Lutong carrying Lieutenant General Morshead and Major General Wooten as passengers. The boats completed the mission and returned to base at 2010.

At 1601 on June 29, 1945, PTs 241 (OTC) and 298 left Victoria Harbor to patrol southward. At 2053, communications were exchanged with the Australian Army Forces at Lutong. At 2141, the boats got underway to Similayau closing in the beach at Kuala Similayan one mile off shore. Patrolling northward, the mouth of the Myalau River was investigated with negative results. At 0355 on the 30th, the patrol was completed and the boats returned to base, stopping at Lutong to pick up the Australian Army personnel and arriving at Victoria Harbor at 1120.

PTs 223 and 298 (OTC) departed base at 1800 on July 2, 1945, patrolling south to Lutong where dispatches, mail and passengers were discharged from 2230 to 2322. The boats lay to off Lutong until 0245 on the 3rd, when they commenced their return to base arriving alongside the U.S.S. Willoughby, Victoria Harbor, Brunei Bay at 0700.

At 0937, PTs 224 and 220 left Mangarin Bay enroute to Balanacan Bay, Marinduque, for a training cruise arriving at 1327. PT235 test fired guns south of Ilin Island at 0820. At 0132, PTs 224 and 220 left Balanacan Bay for Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, arriving at 0621.

On July 5, 1945, PTs 298 and 223 departed Victoria Harbor, Borneo at 1800, for a patrol to Usakan Bay. The boats kept well to seaward until their arrival off Kuala Abai at 0045 on the 6th. Flares were fired over Kuala Abai but nothing was observed. The patrol continued northward to the Tampassuk River where the boats lay to until the first light, investigating two small craft containing natives, at 0555. The patrol entered Usakan Bay at 0745, and commenced strafing a possible Jap hilltop lookout station, the results of which were unobserved. Usakan Bay appeared to be deserted. The boats then altered course and headed south for Ambong Bay sighting many fires enroute. At 0910, they entered Ambong Bay and contacted several natives, one of whom appeared to be in possession of valuable information concerning the enemy. This native was taken aboard PT298 and brought to Brunei Bay. At 0910, the boats got underway to base arriving alongside the U.S.S. Willoughby at 1330. PT241 (OTC) in company with PT74 (Squadron 13) left Victoria Harbor at 1213, on a south patrol to Kidurong point. They transported Brigadier Rastick, Colonel Cummings and Colonel Wilson of the 9th Australian Division to Lutong, they were dispatched, and the above named officers were discharged. At 1720, the boats departed Lutong and proceeded south to Kidurong Point, keeping twelve to thirteen miles off shore. At 2223, the boats anchored three quarters of a mile from Kidurong Point and maintained a visual watch until 0624, with no enemy sightings. The patrol then got underway to base arriving Victoria Harbor at 1245.

At 0927, PTs 242 and 299 left Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, to transport Army personnel to Sibay Island. They arrived at Sibay Island at 1130. At 1334, the boats got underway to Mangarin Bay arriving at 1600. PT235 test fired her guns south of Ilin Island at 1435. PT297 was waterborne, having been in drydock since April 7, 1945, and undergoing repairs since December 17, 1944, when it ran on a reef.

PT223 in company with PT74 (OTC)(Squadron 13) departed Victoria Harbor at 1815 on July 8, 1945, on a patrol to the south. The boats arrived off Kuala Belait at 2110, and discharged two RAAF officers, dispatches and mail for the 20th Brigade, Australian 9th Division, taking aboard mail for delivery to 9th Australian Division Headquarters. At 2220, the boats anchored off Kuala Belait, remaining until 0411 on the 9th, when they commenced their return to base arriving at 0735. PT241 (OTC) in company with PT80 (Squadron 13) departed base at 1814, on patrol to Usukan Bay. The boats arrived off Kuala Papar at 2004, closing to within a mile of the beach. Lights were sighted three quarters of a mile south of pangallat point, which the boats strafed with 70 rounds of 40mm HE. The area was illuminated with star shells, but no results were observed in the vicinity of Kawang River. When the boats closed to within one half mile of the beach all

the lights were extinguished. The boats then lay to approximately two and a half miles west of the position of the sighting until 2347, maintaining radar and visual watch. Between 0055 and 0234 on the 9th, a close inshore investigation was made off the Gaya Island and Manukan Island area with no sign of activity being noted. At 0234, the boats proceeded south along the coast to Pangallat point until 0410 with no sightings, then commenced the return to base arriving at Brunei Bay at 0700.

On July 9th, the rest of Squadron 16, too, set off for the wars. They had been held up by repairs needed to keep them afloat.

PTs 220, 221, 222 and 224 departed Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, at 1930, enroute to Puerto Princessa, Palawan. PT298 in company with PT78 (OTC)(Squadron 13) departed Victoria Harbor at 1800, on patrol to Usakan Bay arriving off Dinawan Island at 2005. A light was sighted on a mountain one third mile due east of Kinarut Station. The boats then proceeded northward to Jesselton, and at 2035, a flashing light was observed one and one half miles southwest of the town. Continuing northerly along the coast in Gaya Bay, many lights were observed in the mountains of this area. One distant light was noted one mile inland from Tarak-Tarak Point. Upon arrival at Usakan Bay at 2200, the area was illuminated but no enemy activity was observed. The boats lay to in Usakan Bay maintaining radar and visual watch until 0020 on the 10th of July, 1945. They then commenced a close inshore patrol southward to Gaya Island. A flare was fired over the island but nothing was seen. At 0508, with Tega Island abeam to starboard, the boats got underway for the base arriving at 0700.

At 0718, PTs 235, 242 and 299 departed Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, enroute to Puerto Princessa, Palawan, arriving at 1630. The Squadron Staff and Base Personnel, aboard the U.S.S. Jamestown, departed Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, enroute to Brunei Bay. PT297 was left at Mangarin Bay to continue repairs. PTs 220, 221, 222 and 224 enroute from Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, arrived at Puerto Princessa, Palawan at 0630.

On July 11, 1945, PTs 220, 221, 222, 224, 235, 242 and 299 moored at Puerto Princessa, Palawan for fueling during daylight hours and got underway at 2130, enroute to Brunei Bay, Borneo. PTs 241 (OTC) and 298 departed Muara Island, Brunei Bay at 1419, on a patrol south to Bintulu. The patrol arrived at Kuala Belait at 1812, discharged passengers and mail, continuing on to Kidurag point where they anchored at 2350. The boats got underway for base at 0445 on the 12th and arrived at Muara Island at 1210. Victoria, although it wasn't there anymore, had proved much too civilized for PTs. Muara had an ideal sun-drenched sandspit.

PTs 220, 221, 222, 224, 235, 242 and 299 underway enroute from Puerto Princessa, Palawan, arrived at Sapo point, Muara Island, Brunei Bay, Borneo, to join Task Unit 70.1.7. All boats arrived in good condition. PTs 223, 241 and 298 moored at Muara Island, for maintenance and repairs. The Squadron Staff and Base Personnel aboard the

U.S.S. Jamestown arrived at Brunei Bay at 1600.

All boats of Squadron 16, except PT297 which was still moored at Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, made preparations on July 13, 1945, for patrolling the enemy held coast line north and south of Brunei Bay, Borneo. Construction of a shore base was started, to aid in the maintenance and repairs of the boats, on Sapu Point, Muara Island.

At 1915 on July 14, 1945, PTs 298 (OTC) and 220 departed Muara Island for a patrol north to Usakan Bay. The boats arrived at Ambong Bay at 0200 on the 15th, and lay at anchor maintaining radar and visual watch until 0630, but no targets or sightings were observed. The patrol then proceeded south and entered Jesselton Harbor where smoke from fires previously reported in this area was observed. As the boats retired from Jesselton at 0845, a low muffled explosion was heard but there was no visible evidence to indicate from where it came. Continuing enroute to base the boats arrived at Muara Island at 1430. PTs 241 (OTC) and 242 got underway from Muara Island at 1735, on a patrol south to Bintulu. At 2109, the boats arrived at Kuala Belait, discharged passengers and mail, then continued south to the Kuala Nish and Kuala Sibuti area where five fires were observed. The patrol remained in the area until 0238 without further sightings. They got underway for the base arriving at Muara Island, Brunei Bay at 0935.

On July 16, 1945, PTs 235 (OTC) and 299 departed base at 1802, to patrol south to Kuala Belait. At 2123, a radar target was picked up three and a half miles off Seria. Attempts to contact the target on both 3115 Kes and 2716 Kes were negative. The target was visually determined to be one ship and a smaller vessel proceeding in a northerly direction. The targets were closed to within one and a half miles when the largest vessel challenged the PTs with the proper challenge. The patrol continued to track the targets until 2258 when the lead boat challenged the ship and received a proper reply. The two boats then continued south to Kuala Belait where passengers were debarked at 0020 on the 17th. The return to base commenced at 0145 arriving at 0802. PTs 221 (OTC) and 222 departed Muara Island at 1730, to patrol north to Kranga Point. Due to poor visibility and rough seas the patrol proceeded north slowly arriving at Ambong Bay at 0213 without having observed any signs of enemy action enroute. A search of the bay and also of the coast south to Gaya Head with negative results. At 0410, the patrol entered Gaya Head where the boats lay to until 0653. Closing to within four tenths of a mile of the beach north of the railway dock, at 0710, the patrol was taken under light machine gun fire from a native hut approximately 200 yards north of the railway pier. Sniper fire continued as the boats moved out into the bay but the locations from which the single shots were fired could not be determined. Enemy fire did not damage either boat although concentrated patterns were observed within twenty feet of each boat. The patrol departed Jesselton Harbor at 0731, without being able to determine the extent of damage inflicted on the enemy. The boats returned to base, Muara Island, Brunei Bay, at 1104.

PTs 298 (OTC) and 220 departed Muara Island at 1813 on July 18, 1945, to patrol south to Kuala Balinglan. The patrol proceeded without incident directly to Kuala Balinglan arriving on station at 2325. At 2345, the patrol commenced idling northeast about one and a half miles offshore. A flashing light was observed at 0100 on the 19th, which appeared to be located on Mount Kidurong. A second light was observed at the same time from the vicinity of Bintulu, which appeared to be answering the light on Mount Kidurong. The boats lay to off Kuala Bintulu from 0143 to 0239 without further sightings, except for two small island fires along Bungei Bintulu. The patrol departed the area for base at 0245 arriving off Kuala Belait at 0810, where mail was delivered to the officer from the 20th Brigade Headquarters. PT298 took on fuel from PT220 and at 1020 both boats got underway for base arriving alongside the U.S.S. Willoughby at 1311. PTs 242 (OTC) and 224 were underway at 1838, to patrol north to Usakan Bay arriving at 2314, having made no contacts or sightings enroute. At 2320, Usakan jetty was illuminated and huts in the vicinity were strafed and bombarded with 60mm, high explosive mortar projectiles. At 0015, a 40 foot prahu, half beached 300 yards south of the Usakan jetty was illuminated and strafed, rendering it completely unserviceable. The boats then departed Usakan Bay and patrolled south to Gaya Bay, entering the bay at first light. An observation run was made at 900 yards off shore north of the Jesselton railroad pier at 0725. During this run the boats drew fairly accurate light machine gun fire from native huts just north of the pier. The patrol retired to the north of Gaya Island, and while retiring, observed a large explosion 600 yards off the White Clock Tower in Jesselton. At 0807, the boats made the scheduled rendezvous with seven Australian Kittyhawks north of Gaya Island. The boats proceeded into Jesselton Harbor and strafed the huts from which they had previously drawn fire at 0815. The planes then having been directed to the targets, bombed and thoroughly strafed the area starting several fires in the target area. The aircraft reported receiving machine gun fire from the hills immediately behind Jesselton. At 0820 and 0850, the boats made strafing runs from an 1100 yard range on the gun positions receiving no return fire on the first run, but receiving light moderate and fairly accurate machine gun fire from the hills north of Jesselton on the final run. The patrol departed the area for base at 0855 arriving at Franklin Wharf, Victoria Harbor at 1218 without further contact, except for two motor launches, both of which were determined to be friendly.

At 1735 on July 20, 1945, PTs 241 and 242 were underway from Muara Island to patrol north to Usakan Bay. At 2048, when the patrol was approximately 12 miles southeast of Jesselton, a large fire was sighted in that city. The boats arrived in Usakan Bay at 2230 where they remained until 2317, illuminating various portions of the bay, but without sighting new targets. At 0050 on the 21st, a light or fire was sighted north of Mengkabong Bluff, which was immediately extinguished upon illumination of the area by the boats. The boats lay to off Jesselton and south of Gaya Island from 0310 to 0358,

observing two sizable fires north of the railroad pier, and a light on the hill behind the city. The light was extinguished when illuminating flares were thrown over the area. The boats commenced their return to base at 0358 arriving at Victoria Harbor at 0715 and alongside the U.S.S. Willoughby at 1041 after a negative patrol. PTs 221 and 224 worked south to Tanjong Kidurong departing base at 1330 and returning at 1247. Dispatches were delivered to the 20th Brigade at Kuala Belait between 1715 and 1800, when the boats got underway to the south. At 0003, the patrol lay to 14 miles north of Tanjong Kidurong to make minor repairs, and then proceeded in to within two miles of the cape. The boats commenced their return to base at 0456 arriving at Muara Island at 1247 without enemy contacts or sightings.

On July 22, 1945, PTs 298 (OTC) and 224 departed base at 1745, on patrol to Usakan Bay. The boats arrived at Usakan at 2306, and illuminated the beach with flares. They fired 60mm HE mortar shells from a distance of five hundred yards inflicting minor damage to various shore installations including a government house. The patrol then retired and proceeded south to Ambong Bay patrolling slowly through the bay between 0135 and 0158 on the 23rd, without sighting anything. At 0326, the patrol entered Jesselton Harbor and made two firing runs on buildings to the north of Jesselton pier. The area was shelled with 40mm, 20mm and 50 caliber gunfire and 60mm mortar shells, the results of which could not be observed. The boats received several bursts of light, inaccurate machine gun fire from an unlocated position ashore. Firing was discontinued at 0425, and the area was illuminated with flares but no enemy sightings were had. At 0441, the boats proceeded to base arriving alongside the U.S.S. Willoughby, Muara Island at 1200. PTs 241 (OTC) and 235 departed Muara Island at 1300, on a mission to Kuala Balinglan. The boats arrived at a point five miles south of Kuala Balinglan at 0638. They then reversed course and proceeded northward keeping close inshore. At 0742, off Kuala Tatau several Malayan natives were contacted and interviewed. Continuing northward an inspection was made of Kuala Bintulu and many buildings were seen but no activity was observed. An effort was made to contact natives at Tg. Kidurong without success. Later, at 1130, off Kuala Nyalau, a Dyak was interviewed and considerable enemy information was obtained. At 1230, the boats were off Suai enroute to base arriving alongside the U.S.S. Willoughby at 1900.

PTs 220 (with Lieutenant Helme aboard as (OTC) and 222 departed base at 1743 on July 24, 1945, to patrol Usakan Bay. At 2135, off Petagas River, a fire was sighted on the beach which was extinguished when the boats closed to 700 yards. The boats lay to for ten minutes, then illuminated the area with star shells but could see nothing in the nature of enemy activity. About 2315, while in Jesselton Harbor, a light was seen in back of the town. After a few minutes observation the boats opened fire on the light at 2321, and continued firing until 2335. No return fire was received from the shore

nor could the damage, if any, to the enemy be observed. The patrol then proceeded north to Usakan Bay, returning to Jesselton at 0400 on the 25th, and opened fire on Lipat Point for several minutes with unobserved results. They arrived at Victoria Harbor at 0735, refueled and returned to base. PTs 242 (OTC) and 221 departed Muara Island at 0130 on patrol to Bintulu. The boats arrived off Kuala Bibuit at sundown, where they lay to and attempted to contact natives on the shore. After calling them for some time without a reply, the OTC gave the order to make a strafing run on the beach, to fire at a large white oil tank near the town. Just as the boats were about to begin their run, a group of natives came out on the beach waving a white flag. Nine of them put out from shore in canoes and were taken aboard PT242 for interrogation. They brought forth a considerable amount of valuable intelligence of the enemy. After the interviews the patrol got underway toward Bintulu arriving there at approximately 0200. The boats closed the beach to 3700 yards and made a strafing run on the town firing several hundred rounds of 40mm shells with unobserved results. No sign of life was observed in the area. Firing was discontinued after the strafing runs at 0300. The boats then got underway for base arriving alongside the U.S.S. Willoughby at 1600. PT297 was towed from Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, P.I., to Base 17, Samar for completion of repairs.

At 1745 on July 26, 1945, PTs 298 (OTC) and 235 departed Muara Island proceeding north until 2200, when three sailboats were sighted off Dinawan Island. Investigation of the craft revealed them to contain natives enroute to Mangalum Island from Dinawan with a load of tapioca. The natives apparently from Mangalum Island, denied any knowledge of Japanese activities. The patrol idled north to the Petagas River which was illuminated at 2339 without sightings. They then proceeded to a point north and west of Gaya Bay where they lay to from 0120 to 1210 on the 27th, when they got underway for Jesselton. At 0240, the patrol commenced entering Gaya Bay through the Kechil Islands and Sapangar Bay. The boats lay to, one mile off Lipat point at 0300 and fired a few rounds of 40mm into the point. A couple of barges were spotted moving toward the island. PT298 went in to see if they could get them. As they approached, there was some machine gun fire from the island, but there was also something heavier lobbing shells close to the boat. PT298 shot up a lot of her 40mm at the barges. They didn't observe any hits on the barges nor were they hit, but it made for some lively filming for the Australian News Team aboard PT298. At 0400, the patrol commenced retirement from the bay. A small fire was on the west tip of Gaya Head at 0420, which was extinguished when a star shell was fired over the area. The boats commenced return to Brunei Bay at 0425 arriving at Franklin Wharf, Victoria Harbor, at 0700 and alongside the U.S.S. Willoughby, Muara Island at 0910. PTs 220 (OTC) and 223 departed base at 1757 on a mission to Kuala Belait. At 2104, the boats lay to off Kuala Belait taking aboard mail for delivery to the 9th Australian Division Headquarters on Labuan Island. At 0400, return to base was commenced,

the boats arriving alongside the Willoughby at 0700.

On July 28, 1945, PTs 298 (OTC) and 220 departed base at 1800, on a mission to Kuala Belait. The boats arrived off Kuala Belait at 2120, at which time three passengers were put ashore, dispatches were delivered to the 20th Brigade and other dispatches were taken aboard for delivery to 9th Australian Division Headquarters. At 0315 on the 29th, the boats were underway for Muara Island arriving at 1730, and worked north without sightings until 2200 when a large number of bright fires (30-40) visible for 8 to 9 miles were sighted on the beach east of Dinawan Island, all of which were extinguished when the boats approached to investigate. At 2330, the patrol lay to off the south channel entrance to Jesselton Harbor. The boats fired 40mm HE into Jesselton at 2354, without any enemy reactions. Continuing north the boats arrived abeam of Sapangar Island at 0115, at which time due to mechanical failure aboard PT222, return to base was commenced. They arrived in Victoria Harbor at 0730 without further sightings and arrived alongside the Willoughby at 1012.

PTs 241 (OTC) and 235 got underway from Muara Island at 1825 on July 30, 1945, for patrol to Ambong Bay. At 2115, PT 235 struck a floating object which damaged her underwater gear and she was compelled to return to base. The patrol set course for base at 2154 and arrived at Muara Island at 0350 on the 31st. PTs 222 (OTC) and 235 got underway from Muara Island at 1804, for patrol to Kuala Belait. At 2107, passengers were discharged at Kuala Belait and mail was taken aboard for delivery to 9th Australian Division Headquarters. The boats anchored offshore from 2155 to 0345, then got underway to base arriving at Muara Island at 0720.

At 1730 on August 1, 1945, PTs 242 (OTC) and 299 departed Muara Island for patrol to Usakan Bay. Enroute the boats fired flares over Kinarut with no observed results. At 0100 on the 2nd, the patrol entered Jesselton Harbor and fired flares. One burst of machine gun fire was received from an unlocated position ashore. No other fire was sighted and the boats returned to Kinarut where they re-illuminated the area without incident. The patrol returned to Muara Island. PTs 224 (OTC) and 220 departed base at 1807, enroute to Kuala Belait where they discharged passengers and mail. After anchoring at Kuala Belait from 2100 to 0410 the boats returned to Muara Island at 0711.

On August 3, 1945, PTs 298 (OTC) and 235 departed Muara Island at 1623, on a special mission to land an S.R.D. party at Kuala Similajau. The landing party was put ashore at destination at 0001. After a radio check with the party ashore, the boats returned to base at Maura Island, Brunei Bay, Borneo, arriving at 0930. The boats had put rubber gas tanks aboard the PTs as it was an extended

haul. The Aussies they put ashore had some pretty sophisticated equipment, with everything padded so they could be noiseless as they went in to prow around. They had all this fine equipment and were so careful, but just before they climbed aboard their rubber rafts, they each tied on a "billy", which was a #10 can with wire around it, on the back of their pack so they could make their tea. The billy clanked and rattled but they weren't going to go without tea.

On Z-Day (D-Day for Borneo) when the Aussies and 9th Australian Infantry went ashore, (as told to this writer by Jim Martin, Ensign on PT298), "I happened to be there looking around, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. At 1000, a whistle blew and they just stopped fighting and made tea. You could hear rifles and see explosions, but it was time out to have a tea. They were quite a rugged group and real fine folks."

PT222, with Lieutenant Roger Hallowell, commander of Squadron 16 aboard as (OTC), and PT224 departed base, Muara Island at 0754, on a patrol to Agal Bay. Enroute, the patrol fired flares over Jesselton Harbor with no observed results and continued to Batumandi Rocks, where the boats lay to until 0652 on the 4th. At this time the patrol headed into Agal Bay contacting natives for intelligence information and continued on until reaching Usakan Bay which was immediately investigated with negative results. The boats then returned to base arriving at Muara Island at 1713.

PTs 221 (OTC) and 299 departed base at 1737 on August 5, 1945, going north to Dinawan Anchorage where intelligence information was sought. With negative results, the patrol continued to Jesselton, where they closed to within 40mm range while advancing shoreward south of Gaya Island. Several rounds were fired with negative results and the boats returned to base arriving at Muara Island at 1012 on the 6th. PTs 242 (OTC) and 241 got underway from the U.S.S. Willoughby at 1740, and proceeded north to Kuala Belait to deliver mail, and proceeded south to Kuala Sibutu where intelligence information was obtained from natives. The boats then returned to base, Muara Island, Brunei Bay, Borneo, at 0715.

At 1730 on August 7, 1945, PTs 222 (OTC) and 299 departed Muara Island, Brunei Bay, Borneo, discharged passengers and picked up mail at Kuala Belait at 2100. The patrol continued south to Kuala Sibutu. Efforts to obtain intelligence information from natives were unsuccessful and the boats began their return to base at 0045 on the 8th, arriving at Muara Island, Brunei Bay, at 1045. PTs 224 (OTC) and 235 departed base at 0742 enroute to Usakan Bay. Close inshore patrolling was conducted from Pagar River to Gaya Head and return. The patrol with negative results arrived at Muara Island Brunei Bay at 1045.

On August 9, 1945, PTs 224 (OTC) and 298 departed base at 1744, for a patrol to Kuala Sibutu. Upon reaching destination, the boats made contact with natives and interrogation followed. The patrol began their return to base at 0200 on the 10th, arriving at Muara Island at 0705. PTs 235 (OTC) and 221 departed Muara Island at 1745, enroute to Usakan Bay. The boats conducted a slow inshore patrol from Gaya Island to Ambong point, where they lay to until 0215, when they began their return to base arriving at Muara Island at 1100.

PTs 222 (OTC) and 299 departed base at 1730 on August 11, 1945, enroute to Usakan Bay. While patrolling off Sapangar Island, natives were interrogated with negative results. The boats continued to Usakan Bay, then returned to base arriving at Muara Island at 0900 on the 12th. PTs 223 (OTC) and 220, with Brigadier Maitland and Colonel Lampriere as passengers, departed Muara Island at 1746 arriving off Kuala Belait at 2115. Return to base was begun at 0404 arriving at 0715.

At 1740 on August 13, 1945, PTs 222 (OTC) and 299 departed Muara Island to deliver mail to the Australian Army personnel at Kuala Belait. Arriving at destination at 2120, the boats anchored until 0610 on the 14th, when they proceeded to base arriving at Muara Island at 0920. PTs 224 (OTC) and 223 departed Muara Island at 1744, enroute to Usakan Bay. After a close inshore patrol along the coast to Usakan Bay, the boats anchored from 2315 to 0330, at which time they returned to base arriving at 1031.

patrols and operations were conducted against the enemy until August 15, 1945, at which time CTU 70.1.7 terminated all operations. In conjunction with Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 13, daily routine trips from Muara Island to Labuan Island were continued for the purpose of obtaining official mail, and to maintain liaison with the 9th Australian Division.

During the remainder of the month, a program of firing and torpedo tactics and extensive proficiency training of boat personnel was continued.

Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 16 commanded by Lieutenant Roger H. Hallowell, and composed of PTs 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 235, 241, 242, 297, 298 and 299 operated from Muara Island, Brunei Bay, Borneo, as part of Task Unit 93.4. 64. This unit was composed of Squadrons 13 and 16, and the U.S.S. Willoughby (AGP 9) and commanded by Lieutenant Commander A. W. Fargo, Jr.

In the last days of the war the PTs fought the familiar kind of mop up action against by-passed pockets of Japanese troops that they had been fighting for three years in the Pacific. Nightly patrols fought minor actions, but targets became harder to find. When the war ended on August 14, 1945, the Japanese came out of the woods and the PTs learned for the first time the tremendous enemy power they had kept bottled up far from the fighting front.

At Halmahera, for instance, six PTs picked up Lieutenant General Ishil, Commanding General of the Japanese Army forces there, and Captain Fujita, Naval Commander, and took them to 93rd Division headquarters on Morotai, where they surrendered 37,000 troops, 4,000 Japanese civilians, 19,000 rifles, 900 cannon, 600 machine guns and a mountain of miscellaneous supplies.

The Japanese themselves paid the top tribute to the PT Fleet. "The enemy has used PT boats aggressively", one of their tactical publications read, "On their account our naval ships have had many a bitter pill to swallow."

The crews of the boats did quite a bit of scrounging around, as they would bum fresh water or magazines. They would take some of the merchantmen for a ride on a PT boat in exchange for magazines, water, etc. Then there was one little boat that was manned by some Aussies. They came along and tried to scrounge something from the PT boats. In the words of Jim Martin, Ensign on PT298, "I think it was the first time in history that anyone tried to scrounge anything off a PT boat. We struck up quite a friendship with them".

Duty at Brunei had its interesting sidelights. One point of interest was a fuel barge with three men on it, where the boats would go to get their avgas. Men working around machinery have a need for rags and the men on the barge had procured a bundle of them from somewhere. In this bundle were some ladies panties and bras. The men on the barge had rigged up a clothes line on the end of the barge and had all these undies flying out there.

During the month of September Squadron 16 took part in special missions, including the surrender of Kuching. Maintenance and training programs were carried out in accordance with directives from the Commander of Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons, Philippine Sea Frontier.

From September 1 through 7, 1945, all boats of the squadron, with the exception of PT297, which was still undergoing repairs, carried on a routine ready boat trip to Labuan Island, and continued with the training program.

On September 8, 1945, PTs 221, 223, 241, 242 and 298, comprising Division Able, under the command of Lieutenant John V. McElroy, departed Brunei Bay at 1300, for Puerto Princessa, Palawan, arriving at 1400 on the 9th, and remaining at Palawan effecting repairs to underwater gear, sustained from hitting logs and/or floating debris. The boats, carrying extra passengers, encountered heavy seas. The fuel line of PT298 broke, and there was a lot of avgas sloshing around in the bilges. It made for a ticklish situation until it was corrected.

At 1000 on September 10, 1945, PTs 220, 224 and 299, in company with PTs 74, 75 and 84 of Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 13, departed Muara Island to

rendezvous with the U.S.S. Willoughby, to refuel at sea and continue to the mouth of the Sarawak River, to accept the surrender of the Kuching garrison. The Sarawak River wasn't very deep. The boats going up were in danger of going aground on the depressions pulled in the water by the preceding boat. Pete Wells, Skipper of the 220, says he had never seen this phenomenon before.

PTs 220, 224 and 299 arrived off Tanjong Po at 0825 on September 11, 1945, with the U.S.S. Willoughby and the remainder of the "Kuching Force". The boats refueled, took on Australian troops for the passage up the Sarawak River, and departed for Pending where the official surrender of the Japanese General was to take place on board the H.M.A.S. Kapunda at 1400. The Japanese General who was to sign the surrender kept the Aussie General (a nice solid little General, built like a keg of nails) waiting on the deck of the Kapunda. This vessel wasn't very large. It was made of sheet steel and uninsulated. Below decks was a large oil-fired steam engine. The temperature ashore was about 98 degrees. On board, with steam up, it must have been 198 degrees, with everyone in full uniform --- jackets and neck ties. The Aussies weren't too happy to be kept waiting by the Nipponese, who probably thought this ploy would gain them some "face". When the Japanese C.O. and his staff finally came down onto a small floating dock for transportation aboard the Kapunda, the launch coxwain, probably on orders, gave it full throttle, swerved around the dock and sent a knee-high wake over some highly polished Samurai boots. The PTs made reconnaissance of the Sarawak River as far as Kuching City and also served as a screen in the neighborhood of Pending anchorage. At 1700, the Australian troops were disembarked at the S.S. Wharf, Kuching, and all the boats returned to the U.S.S. Willoughby anchored off Tanjong Po.

On September 12, 1945, Division Able departed Puerto Princessa, Palawan at 0001, for Mindoro arriving at Mangarin Bay at 1700. These boats remained at Mindoro throughout the month, carrying out the maintenance and training programs. PTs 220, 224 and 299 carried the remaining Australian troops from the U.S.S. Willoughby to Kuching and returned with approximately 60 POWs each.

Among the first POWs to be evacuated from Kuching was Agnes Newton Kieth, author of the book "Three Came Home", plus many other well known books. She, along with her husband and young son had been prisoners of war for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. Most of the POWs were Australian and English. The Governor of Kuching was also evacuated. Many of the prisoners were litter cases, while some had regained 20 pounds since the cessation of hostilities.

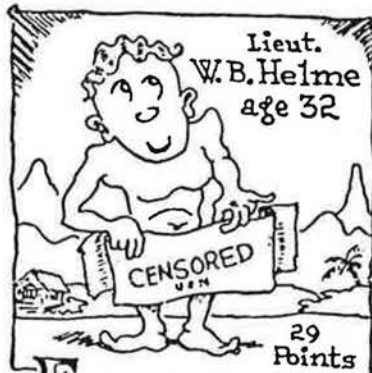
All the PTs of the Kuching Force continued on September 13, 1945, to evacuate POWs from Kuching, taking them to the U.S.S. Willoughby and to the

MTB Ron 16
Same Old Sandspit, Philippine Is.

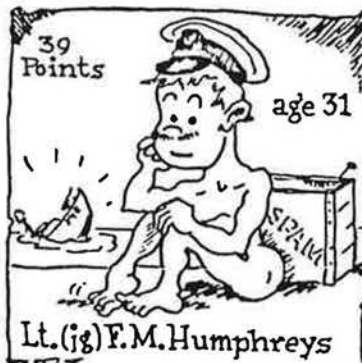
10 October, 1945

Dear Capt. Bowling :

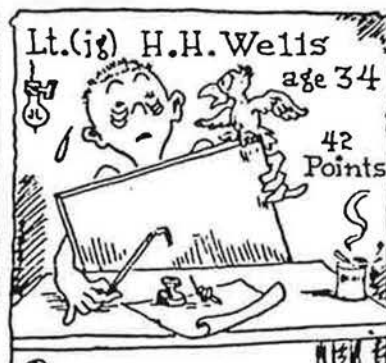
Here at Mindoro there remain three **Sad Cases**. They are the only surviving officers of the Squadron who have seen the New Guinea, Leyte, Mindoro and Borneo operations. At present they are on the beach, their rotation (Sept. 1st) fouled up by the end of hostilities. Their time is spent in contemplation of their navels, no other duties are theirs.....



Eminent Ex-G-Man. Wounded in a fascinating spot, but not evacuated. Bow-legged with medals, Nervous in the Service.



Wishes to resume Medical Studies before becoming a Subject for same. Kind to his wife and two children.



Afflicted with "Bulk-head Stares" brought on by financial news from Wife and three small sons. He's beat-up.

All possible Clemency is requested for the above. They are of no use whatsoever.
respectfully submitted,

R. H. Hallowell
Lieut. R.H. Hallowell, commanding

egged on by:
Lt.(jg) H.H.(Peter) Wells

Australian Hospital Ship, Mamunda, anchored off Tanjong Po. All PTs refueled, and at 1758, the U.S.S. Willoughby, with 210 Allied evacuees aboard, got underway for Victoria Harbor, Brunei Bay, with PTs following in formation. The boats of the Kuching Force refueled from the U.S.S. Willoughby on the 14th, and proceeded independently to the PT base at Muara Island arriving at 1800.

At 0700 on September 16, 1945, PT224 got underway to transport emissaries from Labuan to Miri in connection with the surrender of the Japanese Miri garrison. The mission was accomplished and PT224 returned to Muara Island.

PTs 224 and 235 in company with PTs 81 and 78 (Squadron 13) departed Muara for Kuching on September 18, 1945, making rendezvous for fueling from the U.S.S. Willoughby. The Willoughby and the four PTs arrived at Tanjong Po at 0737 on the 19th. The PTs loaded 50 Australian troops aboard for transportation to Kuching. At 1247, they departed Kuching with approximately 100 evacuees aboard for delivery to the U.S.S. Willoughby. At 1630, the PTs returned to Kuching and moored alongside the H.M.A.S. Bundaberg at Kuching wharf. The Willoughby departed for Brunei Bay with 201 Allied POWs aboard.

PT220 transported Colonel Suga, who was C.O. of the POW camp on Kuching, down the river to the U.S.S. Willoughby where he committed "Sepuku" by slitting his wrists that night.

On September 23, 1945, PTs 224 and 235 were underway from Kuching at 0715, to rendezvous with the U.S.S. Willoughby off Tanjong Po. The PTs loaded troops at 0800, and proceeded to Kuching. At 1125, they were again underway from Kuching to the Willoughby with 133 POWs, plus 34 AAGH personnel aboard. At 1330, the Willoughby in company with the PTs got underway from Tanjong Po to Brunei Bay, refueled at 1700, from the Willoughby and proceeded independently.

PTs 222 and 224 in company with PTs 78 and 81 (Squadron 13) arrived at the PT base, Muara Island from Kuching on September 24, 1945.

On September 26, 1945, PTs 220, 222 and 235 in company with PTs 74, 75 and 81 (Squadron 13) departed Brunei Bay for Puerto Princessa arriving at 0800 on the 27th. They remained over night due to underwater damage. They departed Puerto Princessa at 0800 on the 28th, arriving at Mangarin Bay, Mindoro at 2000. "The trip back to Mindoro via Liberty Island and Palawan was very pleasant and freely lubricated by beer and anything else we could get our hands on," stated the Skipper of one of the boats. "By that time there was a Naval Air Station at Puerto Princessa, and we got a look at how the other half lived. To us, it looked like something Hollywood dreamed up."

At 1200 on September 30, 1945, PTs 224 and 299 in company with PTs 78 and 84 (Squadron 13) departed Brunei Bay for Puerto Princessa arriving at 0700

on October 1st. They refueled and continued on to Mindoro and arrived at 1700 on the 2nd, where they remained throughout the month, all boats being subsisted and berthed by Navy 3100.

Much to the dismay of the cooks in the squadron, they discovered on return to Mindoro that weavels had made a home in their flour. There were two schools of thought on this when the men went to chow. One group would have no part of them and would pick them out of the bread, one by one. The other group thought they added a crunchy goodness so they ate the bread - weavels and all. It apparently wasn't fatal, as it was related to this writer some thirty years later by one of the men who ate them.

When the squadron got back to Mindoro and the war was over, it was a sort sit and wait situation. Then things started catching up with them. All of a sudden all the athletic gear that had been requisitioned over the months or years began to arrive. There was a surplus of fishing tackle, volley balls and baseball equipment. Jim Martin was appointed athletic officer and had quite an active soft-ball team, etc. Some fishing was done at Mindoro. They left the dock and went around on the ocean side, anchored with a stern anchor and spent the night there. Some catfish and a few others were caught. It was also a great swimming area.

The athletic equipment went along with the squadron when they left Mindoro and went to Guiuan where the boats were dismantled. What to do with it? Whatever anyone wanted they were welcome to. One day some men from a PT tender in the area came over and asked to borrow some fishing tackle. Jim Martin agreed provided he was allowed to share in the sport. They put together some spar drag reels, bamboo rods and some gigs, and went out in a small skiff that the men from the tender had. They trolled and trolled and trolled, and though it was pleasant they didn't catch anything. Several miles from the base, the Sea Bees were out blasting coral (called naggerheads) and had just touched off a big blast. The fishermen decided to go take a look. The blast had killed hundreds and hundreds of fish. The natives were out loading them up in their bancas, so the PT fishermen scooped some up, too. A true fisherman would have known by looking at them that they weren't the type of fish you would catch on feathered gigs, but they made quite a sight as they arrived back to the tender. Everyone was curious to know how they caught them, and these very sincere fishermen convinced them they were fishing with gigs. This caused quite a demand for the surplus fishing tackle for a few days. Of course, they didn't catch anything, but it made the original fishermen look like real pros.

While the crews were just killing time, some of the men started making small sailboats for diversion. Wally Underwood made one, and Bob LaRue promoted a sailboat from somewhere and invited Jim Martin to sail with him. Jim admitted knowing very little about sailing, but he figured he made a good passenger. They set forth for Ilin Island which was across from the PT base on Mindoro. After sailing for some time, they came across a little old wrinkled man in a banca with bananas in it. In their best pidgin English they indicated they would like to trade some cigarettes for bananas. They pointed, grunted and made noises. The little old man looked at them for awhile, and finally said, in perfect English, "Gentlemen, I'll be happy to trade my bananas for your cigarettes, but I don't think you'll like these bananas. They're not the type you're accustomed to." Observing their surprise, he explained that he had lived more than 20 years in the Hawaiian Islands.

They reached Ilin Island and sailed right on up, stepped ashore on a sandy beach and walked in. The two men found a native hut and visited with the people for a few hours. When they returned to where they had left the boat, it was more or less high and dry. It was a very shallow drop and though they had sailed right to the beach, the tide had dropped a couple of feet which left them about 300 yards from open water, and it was nothing but coral. They had quite a time getting that sailboat out to open sea. They wrestled it over the coral with lifts, shoves and grunts. Their troubles were not yet over. When they got to the open sea and got aboard, the wind died. It was a dead calm and they weren't going anywhere. By now the night is falling, so Jim Martin got overboard and behind the sailboat. He pushed, dog-paddled and kicked to make a little headway, but they were going no place fast, and they wasted a lot of time out there wondering what was going to happen to them. By this time it was long past dark but suddenly a little storm cloud came over and it started to rain. That little boat caught the wind and they went zipping along. There was a tin can (DD) at the Harbor Patrol. When the two men in their sailboat went by, they were hollering, "Halt, who goes there?" The two men couldn't answer, - they just hung on for dear life, but they did make it back to base. Said Jim Martin, "That was pretty much the end of my sailing career."

On another occasion a Lieutenant Davis organized a pig hunt near Tacloban, and invited Jim Martin to join him. They took a carbine, procured a half-track from the Army and went up in the jungle. They didn't get any pigs, but they met some little old wrinkled pigmies, complete with loin cloth, bows and arrows, who were impressed with the carbine.

The men took up many hobbies to occupy their time and to keep from becoming basket cases waiting to go home. Some of them became quite proficient at ring making. They made rings from coins, spoons and cat's eyes. The cat's eyes were obtained by diving down and taking them out of a certain type of sea snail that had a cat's eye for its trap door. One of the machinists made little hammers out of monel metal, a hard metal that was used for shafts on the boats.

There were other hobbies going on. As told to this writer by Jim Martin, Ensign on PT298, "I remember on VJ Day, the boatswain, Bill Jackie, invited me to their tent to sample some 'jungle juice' they had made from raisins, etc. It was mighty potent stuff and a very good blend. It certainly helped celebrate VJ Day. As I recall it was a very short celebration on my part."

The boats were moved to Samar in November 1945, where for a time these beautiful boats were used as tugs. They were then piled up on the beach and burned. Some of the PT boats were saved, but Squadron 16 was an old squadron and the boats had seen their days.

"It was rather a sad event to watch the boats go up in flames." --- Amen.

There were pets in the squadron, in addition to the monkeys described in "paradise Island". Some of the boats had monkeys, too. Jim Martin, Ensign on PT298, had one he called "Tojo". Jim admitted that they are not the best pet to have on a PT boat. They do get into mischief. The monkey he had was quite a pest. He'd rip a pack of cigarettes apart and scatter it around. The fellows would feed him beer which he preferred to water. He'd get a buzz on and do some funny acrobatics. When he'd spot someone in the officers' club with a can of beer, he'd run and jump on their shoulder trying to get a swig of beer about the time the officer decided to have a sip. This would come as a startling surprise to the unsuspecting beer drinker.

While the boats were at Kodiak, on their return from the Aleutian Islands, two visitors aboard PT221 left a "curse" on the boat in the form of a huge, blundering, feeble minded dog named Uga. No one was ever able to determine his breed, but it was believed he was part husky and part wolf. He never threatened to bite and would obey any order he understood, which was about all that could be said in his favor. Pete Rock disliked Uga. However, Uga liked Pete well enough to sleep in his bunk every chance he got. Pete would order him up on deck which was a terrible ordeal for Uga. He had all manner of difficulty with the steps. The officers would put him through the hatch into the crews quarters, and as soon as the crew saw their chance, back he went to the officers quarters. Uga had his difficulties with the hatchway, too. He did help Captain Colvin spend some of

his leisure time. Colvin intended to take Uga to his home in San Francisco, but when the squadron arrived at Seattle, Uga discovered how much fun it was to chase the harbor police and drag them off their motorcycles. After one of the police tried to kill Uga with a blackjack, Colvin gave him away.

PT222 brought a dog named Duchess back from Attu. The dog, along with some of the crew, got seasick due to rough seas on the trip from Attu to Amchitka.

Shortly before leaving Kodiak, while PT223 was tied up at a dock, a tiny pup came toddling off the dock onto the 223 and gobbled up a section of orange someone had dropped. Thinking it was hungry someone fed it and the crew kept it aboard when they sailed. It was given the name "Snafu".

ADDITIONA

The following information was given to this writer by George Walsh: "I can remember this incident as if it happened yesterday. On December 16, 1944, PTs 223 and 224 were out on patrol. The boats were attacked by two Japanese fighter planes. One was shot down and crashed into a hill. The second one was also shot down and just missed the 223. On December 17, at noon, the Japanese planes attacked again. At this time I was shot in the arm. The bullet went through the forearm and came out on the back of the arm above the elbow. I also caught a piece of shrapnel in the right cheek. At this time, Bob Spofford removed the shrapnel from my cheek. I was then sent to a little shack on the island. An air raid attack came at that time. Everyone ran for cover and left me on the porch of the shack. Bombs were dropping all around me. Boy, was I scared! After the attack the wounded were brought in. I overheard a man saying that Brunner was shot in the chest and was dead.

I was then taken by a small train to an Army Hospital three miles inland and then operated on. During the night there was another attack. I could hear the shrapnel hitting the side of the building.

The next morning the wounded were brought in. Among them Cortis and Hilliard. Toby was bandaged from head to foot, suffering from burns received in the attack. I went out and talked to Cortis. He told me he had just written a letter to his mother. When I went to see him the next day I was told he had died during the night. He had been shot in the stomach. He had been on PT223.

I went back to my room. A while later, Captain Colvin came in and told Hilliard and me we were being shipped home and he wished us good luck. This all happened on Mindoro Island."

As told to this writer, forty years later, by Bill Robinson: "I remember Jim Martin very well. He was on PT298, and the only boat with pure alcohol in their torpedoes. As VJ Day neared, a couple of fellows from PT221, - Sands and Small, - as I recall, drained the alcohol from PT298's torpedoes. It was used to celebrate hostilities' end. It seems when the 298 was decommissioned, the empty torpedoes could not be accounted for."

"Pete Wells is another fellow I remember well. At that time, he illustrated children's books. I remember thinking 'how can you make a living doing that?' Pete drew cartoons (and at this writing he still does). One was called 'The Reefer Club' - a membership card for all those who had hit reefs. I thought, 'not me.' I was too good at piloting and navigation. Then one day we went on patrol off Luzon - Battangas Bay or somewhere. We had a violent storm. When we returned to Southern Mindoro to our base the next morning, the buoy that had marked a sunken Jap PC was gone. I'm not sure who we were patrolling with - Pete Wells or Dick Buttons on the 220 boat. The other boat led the way. I thought they went right over the sunken PC, but they had no problems. Therefore, I followed exactly behind them, 'the safest course'. Unfortunately, they had rolled the sunken PC and as I went over I impaled the 221 on the PC mast. They gave me a 'Reefer Club' card over my objections that I didn't hit a reef, but was stabbed by a sunken Jap ship".

CORRECTION

In the action of December 18, 1944, I made the statement that only one man was uninjured on PT300, when struck by a Kamikase plane. I was unformed by Everett Nussman that he was injured, an action for which he was awarded the Purple Heart.

A contribution from Robert Beer JM PT298

In reference to the Convoy that left Leyte Gulf on it's way to Mindoro, P.I. December 13, 1944.

"When Ron 16 left Leyte Gulf in the Phillipines, we travelled in Convoy for the invasion of Mindoro Island.

The Convoy was led by the cruiser Nashville on which General Douglas MacArthur was travelling.

One afternoon about 10 days out my P298 was about two yards off the port side of the Nashville when Kamakazi planes appeared. A destroyer behind us started firing at the planes as she wound up the screaming turbine. One plane crashed into the bridge of the Nashville and fell over the side. Fortunately General MacArthur wasn't hurt, but we later learned that about 15 men were killed.

Ron 16 was also in on the invasion of Brunei Bay in British North Borneo. After nesting up to tenders for about two nights, we were requested to escort General MacArthur's small landing craft ashore. Another PT boat was on his starboard side. We were on his port side.

The landing craft grounded on the beach and let down it's ramp. General MacArthur and several officers marched off to the sandy beach. He then proceeded to walk down directly into the forest of very tall trees. No firing occured but we heard that Jap snipers hanging in nets had been shot early that morning.

All our crew was thrilled by the General's military manner and by the bold way he walked into the forest. I don't recall his having a pipe.

PT298 was almost torpedoed later offshore from the burning oil fields.

One night on patrol close to shore we picked up a sub on our Radar, straight ahead. We ran down to where it had submerged. We then circled for a few minutes, hoping it would come to the surface so we would have a shot with torpedoes.

I went over to the port side for a breather. While I was looking down in the water, I suddenly saw a torpedo run exactly between my feet. Myself and another crewman watched the track in the twilight. Apparently, the Jap Radar man thought that our 3 propellers indicated a Destroyer and set the "fish" depth for a Destroyer. Thank goodness for the extra 6 feet.

A few days later, we were told to prepare the boats for our 5th invasion, the landing at Singapore. As I recall we scraped and painted the hull in a hurry, and tuned up the engines. Fortunately the "Bomb" dropped on Hiroshima in the next few weeks, and the operation was called off.

Soon Jap planes began to appear on mornings over the forests surrounding Brunei Bay. Our enthusiasm for trying to shoot down more planes had waned with our battles at Mindoro, P.I., where we won the Naval Commendation Medal for

shooting down 39 planes in 19 days, while losing only one boat in our Squadron
The PT 300.

Commanding Officers
Motor Torpedo Boats
Squadron 16

Lieutenant Commander Russell H. Smith
Lieutenant Commander Almer P. Colvin
Lieutenant John H. Stillman, USNR
Lieutenant Robert J. Wehrli, USNR
Lieutenant Philip A. Swart, USNR
Lieutenant Roger H. Hallowell, USNR
Lieutenant John V. McElroy, USNR
Lieutenant James H. Van Sicklen (CO of Squadron 16B)

Executive Officers

Lieutenant Commander Almer P. Colvin
Lieutenant J. E. (Mickey) Braun
Lieutenant John Holt Harris
Lieutenant Philip A. Swart
Lieutenant Robert J. Wehrli
Lieutenant William B. Helme
Lieutenant Jay J. Reynolds

Intelligence Officers

Lieutenant John Holt Harris
Lieutenant George E. (Scoop) Goodwin
Lieutenant (j.g.) Thomas G. Hall
Lieutenant W. H. Triplett

Supply Officers

Lieutenant Joseph E. Loftus
~~Joe Loftus~~

Staff

Lieutenant George E. Goodwin
Lieutenant Commander Frank A. Rago
Lieutenant (j.g.) Lowe H. Wiggers, Jr. M.D.

PT 199

J. M. Boone CO
Ensign Harold F. Grove XO

Crew

Matt Bodven SC
Henry L. Clay MOMM
H. L. Ellisor MOMM
Bruce Halsey MOMM
Oscar Ostert GM
Jarred H. Rankin TM
Ralph R. Records RM
Dan C. Saunders JM
Jack Topping RM
Jack H. Warren MOMM

This crew transferred to PT71
for the return trip from Mellville,
R.I. to New Orleans, La.

PT 200

Ensign Don Geyer CO
James C. Rock XO

Crew

Alfred G. Abeckerle MOMM
Gilbert B. Adams TM
Duff Hawkins TM
Richard Hunnicutt RM
George E. Johnson RM
Chester Kasnak MOMM 1/c
Edward B. Newsome JM
Alfred F. Pi^Potter SC
Eugene Powell GM
William A. Rucker MOMM

This crew transferred to PT72
for the return trip from Melville,
R.I. to New Orleans, La.

PT 219

Harold F. Grove CO

Lieutenant Robert V. Howard XO

Crew

Thomas S. Allison JMH

Andrew W. Boyuka GM 1/c

Chizmar

Francis E. Clougherty MOMM2/c

Dodson (Engineer)

Andrew Druzba HOFH

John W. Fuller RDM 1/c

Charles Hammett

James J. McKeon RDM 2/c

Charles A. Metz SC

Ladislav Miegler GM 2/c

Stephen Mitchell CQM

Everett Nussman TM 2/c

Jarred H. Rankin TM

Joe Spence RM 1/c

Omen of the Seas

Lieutenant (j.g.) James C. Rock CO

Joseph P. Rafferty XO-CO

Lieutenant (j.g.) Don J. Kaiser CO

Ensign Walter F. Rauh, Jr.

Tom A. Christie, Jr.

Earl Henley

Lt. L. B. J. Jr.

Fred Bender XO

William T. Robinson XO-CO

ewis
~~Louis~~ Hindley XO

Ensign Raymond W. Rosenthal

Lieutenant Herbert H. Wells

Lieutenant (j.g.) William B. Helme CO

Crew

Alfred G. Abeckerle CMOMM

Richard L. Bacon MOMM

Charles Brent MOMM2/c

Robert C. Carlson TM1/c

Jack Crawford RM2/c

James Donald MOMM1/c

William E. Dowty S2/c

Francis L. Gelzheiser SC

MacIntyre E. Henderson RM2/c

Jeff E. Hopper RM

Ward
Joyner SC3/c

Lowell R. Lamoureux

John G. Matthews S

Roland A. Parent S

Alfred F. Piotter CCS

George Robinson GM3/c

Robert J. Schulz TM2/c

Robert H. Small RM

Alexander J. Szczech GM2/c

Clifford Anderson QM1/c

Seymour Blank TM3/c

Henry J. Byrne CMM

Don W. Carter TM1/c

Leon D. Czarniak GM3/c

Edward A. Douzanis S2/c

Paul Florentz GM3/c

Thomas B. Hart GM1/c

~~Donald~~
Robert E. Hopkins S1/c *Ernest T*

Johnson CMOMM

Holloway RM

James Dewy Kain SC

Francis X. Lerz S

C. R. Murphy MM1/c

~~Roy G. Patzke GM2/c~~ *Roy G. Patzke GM2/c*

Ralph R. Records RM2/c

William A. Rucker MOMM1/c

Silhanek

Donald Swanchak MOMM2/c

Eldred Wittmaier MOMM2/c

~~Ed. Reitz~~

Ed Reitz
Lonnie R. Rigshy
BM2/c

Edward E. Strohmaier
TM1/c

PT 220
"Chow Down"

J. M. Boone CO
Lieutenant Herbert H. Wells XO-CO
Lieutenant Tom A. Christie, Jr.
Lieutenant Robert J. Wehrli
Harry J. Liederlach
Lieutenant L. B. Fijux XO

Ensign Robert P. Sherman XC-CO
Lieutenant (J.G.) Robert E. Beasley XO
Ensign Walter F. Rauh
Ensign Robert H. Haight CO
L. H. Veal XO
Lieutenant (J.G.) Robert LaRue XO
Lieutenant (J.G.) Eugene Johnson

Crew

Richard Aylward TM1/c
Matt Bodven CCS
Henry L. Clay MOHM
Jack Crawford RH2/c
H. L. Ellisor MOHM
James F. Girard SC3/c
Bruce Halsey GM1/c
"Duff" Hawkins TM
Johnson CMH
John Klemanski P
Henry R. Laurich CM
John G. Matthews GM3/c
Manuel M. Medeiros S1/c
Oscar F. Ostert CCM
Lonnie Riggsby Cox
Harold R. Seltzer RM
Harold H. Soder S
Joe Spence RH1/c
Jack G. Topping RM
Jack H. Warren MOHM1/c

R. W. Bagwell RDM
H. R. Castonia S
Tom Costello S M³/c
Robert A. Dahlstrom QM2/c
Bernard L. Frank SC1/c
Bruce A. Gunn MM1/c
Charles Hammett TM
Leonard J. Jacob TM
Kish
Andy Krizan MOHM
Raymond E. Luka GM2/c
Louis J. McKinney
Albert W. Opinsky QM3/c
Roy C. Patzke CM
Dan G. Saunders QM1/c
John J. Shwiner MOHM
William A. Sosnowski GM
Glenn G. Sturdivant S
L. H. Veal CCM

PT 223
BALL BUSTERS

Lieutenant (j.g.) Chet Bell CO	Lieutenant (j.g.) Don D. Shallow XO
Lieutenant (j.g.) Harry E. Griffin CO	Ensign Jack W. Jeffrey (C)
Stewart Button	W. R. Schwenk
Ensign Walter F. Rauh, Jr.	Lieutenant W. B. Helme
Ensign William T. Robinson XO-CO	Lieutenant (j.g.) L. B. Fijux, Jr.
<i>E. A. Nielson (RNS)</i>	Crew
Richard L. Bacon MOMM	William J. Bober GM
Andrew Boyuka GM2/c	John S. Brown GM3/c
H. R. Castonia	Art E. Cavalluzo GM2/c
Francis J. Cavanaugh RM2/c	W. Collier S2/c
Angelo R. Cortese GM3/c	Ralph Dispenette MOMM1/c
William E. Dowty S2/c	Everett A. Dunbar TM
Jim M. Egan MOMM2/c	Lester P. Ellis QM1/c
Richard Fox QM	Joe Garcia GM3/c
Billie J. Goddard TM1/c	Thomas B. Hart GM1/c
Robert E. Hopkins QM2/c	Glen I. Hyde MOMM1/c
Ray S. Jacobs	James Dewy Kain SC
Edmund I. Kalinowski MOMM2/c	William Kiendzior MOMM1/c
Donald E. LaCasse MOMM1/c	Raymond F. Lawrence
James J. McKeon RDM2/c	Ray R Charles F. Mahoney TM1/c
Roger Lawrence GM3/c	<i>Louis J. McKinney MOMM3/c</i>
Ladislav Miegler GM 2/c	Charles A. Metz SC2/c
Eugene J. Parry TM	Don M. Newman TM
Alden C. Smith	Edward R. Reitz GM3/c
T. R. Weller SC2/c	W. Earl Stavely MOMM
Eldred Wittmaier MOMM2/c	C. P. Whipple RM1/c
John P. Brown G.M.L.C.	John F. Zellers GM1/c

Roger Lawrence CH/c

FRANK PAVLAKOVICH SC 1/c

~~FRANK S. PAVLAKOVICH SC 1/c~~

Mary Jane

Destitute Virgin

Destitute Prostitute

Tail End

Ensign Lewis M Hindley, Jr
~~Hindley XO~~

Ensign Earl Benton CO

William R. Brannan XO

Lieutenant Robert J. Wehrli XO-CO

Ensign Raymond W. Rosenthal

Lieutenant (j.g.) Warren R. DeYoung CO

Lieutenant Robert H. Lewis CO

Ensign H. T. Hilliard CO

Ensign H. A. Bunch CO

Crew

Charles W. Adams MoMM 3/c

Gilbert B. Adams TM2/c

Andrew Boyuka GM2/c

Edward F. Brady RM *3/c*

John J. Cerny QM3/c

Albert C. Clark GM2/c

Henry Clay Momm

Steve ^A Downs

John W. Fuller RdM1/c

Joe Garcia GM3/c

Bob Hammond

Donald R. Hollis RdM2/c

Samuel Levine MoMM 3/c

John Klemanski F1/c

Charles F. Mahoney TM2/c

Mc Ginnis

Charles R. Murphy GM1/c

John A. Novak CTM

Howard J. Osmer Momm3/c

Frank J. Pogash Momm1/c

Jarred H. Rankin TM1/c

Edward R. Reitz GM3/c

William Joseph Ronhock

Don Ryan S1/c

Carlton Spiers CMOMM

Robert N. Spofford, Jr. TM2/c

Richard W. Stanton GM1/c

W. Earl Stavely Momm

Paul A. Stevens QM2/c

Stratton TM 2/c

Alex Urczyk GM2/c

George T. Walsh SC2/c

Everett Wohltman TM

~~ED REITZ~~

~~Stratton (TM 2/c)~~

PT 235

Rebel

Lieutenant (j.g.) Alfred J. Fleisher CO

Ensign Jack Jeffrey CO

Ensign Stanley - XO ^{Ens. Thomas R. Leech}
Crew ^{Ens. H. H. Rice}

Harold BARRIOS

Frank L. Bloss MOMM2/c

Claude ~~E.~~ J. Bourgeois Cox

Edwin ~~E.~~ Buchanan TM2/c

Lloyd Clifford RM

Milton Donadt QM
Drinkert

~~Albert Pagano GM~~
Clifford H. Floyd

Lester P. Ellis QM1/c

John A. Fink QM

Hodges

Floyd Kahlkammer SC
Clifford H. Lloyd RM

Edward ~~E.~~ Lucas MOMM1/c

Raymond ~~E.~~ F. Marsh TM → William May MOMM

Charles M. Mertz GM2/c

Charles E. Nelson S1/c

Milford Talada

→ Albert Pagano GM
Maeter Smith

Joseph B. ~~E.~~ Tatko GM

A. E. White

Milton Donadt Q.M. Donadt

Albert ~~E.~~ Pagano ~~E.~~ GM

Lynn Aulich TM
Charles Brown MoMM

PT241

Snuffy

Ens. Albert L.

~~But~~ Marshall XO

Alexander }
Dalida }
RM 2/c }

Ensign Arthur F. Disque CO

Edwin M. Luedeka CO

Robert E. White

Crew

M. Claine Ferguson MoMM 2/c

Harry Frederick QM

George Foster GM 3/c

(3rd Off.)

Edwin M. Luedeka -e-o

W. F. Marshall Cox "Pop" -i.Va.

A. Pagano GM

^{at}
P. V. Puglia GM 3/c

~~Reagan RM~~ Reagan Thornton Reagan RM

Frederick E. Serraccia SC 2/c

A. M. Taylor TM 1/c

George W. Welch MoMM 2/c

J. A. Yuhase MoMM

~~Reagan RM~~

~~Clare Ferguson MoMM 2/c~~

~~Thornton Reagan RM~~

~~J. A. Yuhase MoMM~~

~~Alexander Dalida~~

~~Charles Brown MoMM~~

~~Lynn Aulich TM~~

~~George Foster GM 3/c~~

PT 242

Celeste

Lieutenant (~~jrg.~~) F. M. Humphreys CO
Ensign R. C. Ries
Crew

Rank

Irving L. Buck Momm

R. A. Fitzpatrick QM

Charley Foxx Momm

Frederick McNulty QM2/c

W. E. Norris Momm2/c

Al J. Pemberton GM

Schmitt TM

William Joseph Renhock S.

W. T. Selander TM

Shannahan GM

Wellington Robinson Shellenberger SC

"Red" Shotte Momm

Kieth R. Soderberg RM

Stuart A. Warner Momm2/c

PT 297

Old 97

Lieutenant Commander Harry J. Liederbach CO

Lieutenant (j.g.) Robert H. Beasley, Jr. XO

Russell E. Schuster CO

Lieutenant (j.g.) Harry E. Griffin XO

Lieutenant (j.g.) W. R. Schwenk XO

Ensign Quirk

Lieutenant Henry L. Carlson CO

Crew

Richard Aylward TM1/c

Donald J. Bussey RM3/c

C. J. Buzzeli

Robert Gordon Center

Ralph Dispenette MOMM1/c

Donald E. Fisher RM1/c

Bernard L. Frank SC1/c

Bruce A. Gunn MM1/c

Alfred C. Holmes MOMM1/c

Stephen H. Mitchell CQM

Roy G. Patzke ~~S2/c~~ GM 2/c

William A. Rucker MOMM1/c

Don Ryan S1/c

H. R. Seltzer MM

Ray Stinson

Carlton Syrus

George Zimmerman GM1/c

> JOHN W. BALL QM 2/c

> Michael J. Drago Cox

> William Klaus MOMM 2/c

Big Time Charlie

Lieutenant (j.g.) F. Gardner Cox CO

Ensign Virgil Hubner

Lieutenant (j.g.) John R. Erickson CO

Norman Duke XO

Ensign Jim A. Martin

Ensign Robert S. LaRue

Ensign Wallace A. Underwood CO *J. Ward*

Francis Carrier

Bob Butler-WO

Crew

'Wae'

W. E. Allen S

Robert A. Beer QM2/c

'Borky' John Borkovich SC1/c *Wille Bond*

Ralph Dispenette MOMM1/c

Huebner QM

Charles B. Jones MOMM2/c

'Black Luke'
Luke A. McGrath TM*'Jerry'*
John F. Reichert RDM
Jeacme

Mervin L. Ritchie RM

'one eye'
John J. Wattai QM

Raymond D. Wilson GM

F. H. Andrews GM

'the Creek'
George J. Bontaites RM

John DeFranco MOMM

Donald E. Fisher RM1/c

William Jackie BM2/c

'Al'
Carl Majeau RM

James D. Miles CTM

'Windy'
Edward T James Reilly GM 2/c

Harold Robman CPHM

'Pappy' Shields
C. I. Wick MOMM1/c*'R1'*
Dick Young

Two Ninety Niner

Lt. (jg)

Ensign Arthur F. Disque CO

Lieutenant Henry L. Carlson *0 *0 CO

Robert H. Beasley XO
Ensign Jack Jeffrey

Lieutenant (j.g.) E. J. Rothfuss CO

Ensign James Young CO

YOU CAN OWN IT

Crew

Wilburn C. Aldridge GM 1/2

R. Bobik GM

W. A. Bahn QM 1/2

Jack Burch MOMM

John W. Deasy MOMM 2/c

Vernon Paul Carlsson PM

John J. Duncan STM

Potts Down

Andrew Druzba MOMM

Jacob Foos TM 1/c

Bernard A. Frechette TM

Elmer
Joyner SC 3/2
Steve Leska MOMM 1/2

Earle H. Lightner, Jr. RM

Charles B. Marton RdM 2/c

Ernest Mercier GM

Charles
Bruce Murphy, TM

Kenneth R. Noser QM

Frank

E. C. Sanders QM 2/c

Richard H. "Barney" Ross BM

Carlton Spiers CMOMM

Ralph Clyde Sullivan GM 3/c

Arthur H. Tegenkamp S

Harley R. Upton SC

Edward Woltz MOMM

Joseph S. Wuertz MOMM 3/c

~~Steve Leska MOMM 1/2~~

~~MITCHEL ZELMAN SC 2/c~~

JOYNER SC 3/c

~~JACK BURCH MOMM~~

~~POTTS DOWN~~

~~R. BOBIK GM~~

EAST COAST

~~EDWARD WOLTZ MOMM~~

~~BRUCE MURPHY~~

*Jungle
Pilot*
Avis M. Campbell
GM

Robert B. Kelly
RM

Joseph E. Moxie
MOMM

PT 300

Kamikaze Val

Lieutenant Ray T. Castle CO

Lieutenant (j.g.) Frank P. Carlsen XO

Ensign H. T. Hilliard ^{GARY} Henry Carlson ~~to~~ ~~to~~ XO

Crew

Joseph G. Amos RM3/c (KIA)

John W. Ball QM2/c (KIA)

Albert J. Basso S1/c (KIA)

Valmore W. Beauregard F1/c (KIA)

Albert E. Boone GM3/c (KIA)

John R. Bowers Momm2/c (KIA)

Joseph M. Brunner MM1/c ~~MS/c~~ MM1/c (KIA)

William L. Dudas Momm2/c (KIA)

H. Walter Gleason CM2/c

Raymond C. Hill SC2/c
Metcalf GM

Vanas Midkiff GM

Everett Nussman TM2/c

Roy G. Patzke S2/c GM 2/c

Peter Paul Riga

Roark RdM

William J. Rorick QM3/c

Clyde Farris Smith TM2/c

Charles G. Gusker Smith TM

H. Francis F. Viger Momm2/c

Frank W. Wheelbarger S1/c

~~John S. S. S.~~

Snuffy Smith - THRU ALBAT
Norman B. Duke CO
Lieutenant Philip A. Swart CO

Lieutenant Earl Benton CO

Ensign Haskins ~~→~~

Ensign Jack Jeffrey

Ensign William T. Robinson

Crew

Robert A. Beer QM2/c

Albert E. Boone GM3/c

Andrew Boyuka GM4/c

George M. Chilles Momm1/c

Everett A. Dunbar ~~TM~~ TM (SC)

James M. Egan Momm2/c

Russell ^{1/2} Enyeart SC4/c

Ladislav Mieg1 GM2/c

Nolan B.

Noack Momm2/c

Jarred ^{'ma'} H. Rankin TM1/c

George Robinson GM3/c

Rousaco Momm3/c

Russo Momm3/c → Fred Simonson M. MM

Joe Spence RM1/c

Straton TM2/c

Young GM2/c

Ollie H. Young QM 1/2
~~Simonson M. MM~~

Base

"Pappy" Havens WO-MM

Henry Kahles WO-MM
Joseph P. Fox ~~WO-MM~~ (CWO)

Robert H. Abbott YM Bob Butler WO

Gilbert B. Adams TM

Matt Bodven CCS

Joseph M. Brunner MM1/c

Henry J. Byrne CMM ^{Louis J. Buehner}

Verner P. Carlsen CCM

George M. Chilles MoMM1/c

Robert A. Coe YM ^{Robert M. Jr. OH 3/c}
^{R.C. Davis, CM 3/c}

W. C. DeCamp CM 3/c
Andrew Druzba MoMM ^{Kenneth D. Dyer SK 1/c}

Russel T. Enyeart SC2/c

Elton M. Foster PhM1/c

~~Joseph F. Fox~~ CWO ^{B.R. Gallagher SF 3/c}

Tom Gaynor SK 2/c

H. Walter Gleason CM2/c

Charles Green ^{Willie} ~~EPD~~ CDM

Charles Hammett TM

A. W. Herendeen PhM1/c ¹¹⁰⁻¹¹

Ernest T. Holloway S1/c

Richard Huff YM2/c

Edwin C. Hutchinson PhM1/c

Johnson CMM

Clyde E. Johnson GM2/c

James H. Johnston

James Dewy Kain SC

Alfred G. Abeckerle CMOMM

Thomas S. Allison CMM

Floyd W. Boiden EM1/c ^{A.S. Boucher SR 3}

Louis J. Buehner SK1/c

J. L. Campbell EM

J. F. Castro ~~SC~~ YM

Henry Clay MoMM

William E. Cosgrove PhM1/c

Ralph Dispenette MoMM1/c

Harold W. Eckhardt CM 1/c ^{Dodson EM}

Alton H. Ervin EM1/c

Ormand O. Fowler MM1/c

John W. Fuller RdM1/c

Francis L. Gelzheiser EM2/c

Billie J. Goddard TM 1/c TM 1/c

R. J. Greene

"Doc" Hanson PhM

Carl D. Hoffer CRdM

Frank E. Horn CMOMM

Andrew J. Hummel SF 1/c

Glen I. Hyde MoMM1/c

Alfred L. Johnson SC3/c

Max A. Johnson CBM

Franklin W. Joyce CMOMM

William Kiendzior MoMM1/c

Base (Con't)

R.M. Kimble R MoMM
Kish

John Klemanski Momm

Walter S. LaBohrie SC3/c

Donald E. LaCasse Momm1/c

Joseph H. Lardiere MS

R. C. Link CQM

Michael C. Markowski F

B. J. McNana PhM1/c

Ladislav Mieg1 GM 3/c

Stephen H. Mitchell CQM

John A. Novak CTM ~~CTM~~

Oscar Ostert CGM

Frank Pogash Momm 1/2 ~~1/2~~

E. L. Reasons YM ~~and~~

G. Richman Bkr

Robert J. Routh EM2/c

Fred Salchli Bkr2/c ~~Samuel Salerno~~

John A. Sanborn S1/c

Richard B. Schofield GM1/c

John J. Shwiner Momm

Joe Spence RM1/c

Joe Spence PhM

Ray H. Stallkamp PhM3/c

Robert J. Street CRM

John Tille SC

L. H. Veal CQM

Frederick A. Zeithen GM1/c

John Kimpton Momm3/c

Raymond M Koplin SF1/c

F. J. Lamb, Jr. CM ^{Frank} A1 Kosta

Lowell R. Lamoureux

G. C. Larson F.

Philip Lund CM1/c ^{A.}

James J. McKeon RdM2/c

Jack Meyerhardt YM

James D. Miles CTM

Charles R. Murphy GM1/c MM1/c

Everett Nussman TM2/c

Alfred F. Piottter CCS

Eugene J. Powell GM

Anthony Richards CPO

Harold Robman CPhM

William A. Rucker MM1/c

Mondell T. Salter CCM

Caspar A. Schmitt SK

Clare Sheldon SK1/c

Silhanek

Simonson C M o M M ~~1/c~~

Carlton Splers CMOMM ^{Lewis R. Souther} ^{gil}

Richard W. Stanton GM1/c

Miles Terry CMOMM

Milton J. Tuuri CMOMM

Everett Wohltman BM

Frank Kish
Frank Pogash

Before

R.F. Meyler CM 3/c

John B. Patterson EM

Wallace J. Siewers
CTM

RICHARD Sonne
1/2 CM

Filipino Men

Pedro Barrera

Manuel Abeleda

José Zaldúa

Pablo Denusta

Torebio Tanje

Other Men in the Squadron

Lieutenant J. W. Flanagan

Ensign Johnson

~~Ensign A. L. Marshall~~

~~Ensign E. G. Nielson~~

Ensign J. F. Stark

Lieutenant (j.g.) Alva C. Trueblood

~~Ensign James Young~~

Bruce Ager

Ralph Barque S2/c

Don Baumhover F1/c

James E. Biggs

G. Bobes

Brant

Sam Brown SC3/c

Arvis M. Campbell S1/c

H. Casiano GM

James J. Charland

Clements

Edwin J. Collins

B. L. Corey MOMM

~~Alexander Dalida RM2/c~~

George DeOrio

~~M. J. Drago Cox~~

~~R. A. Evans TM~~

John J. Falatic

~~M. C. Ferguson MOMM~~

~~Berl W. Friend F1/c~~

R. B. Gallant MOMM

Lt. jg. John G. Holman

Stan Ames

Marvin F. Ashburn

H.A. (Bill) Bahn

L. Henry Beazley

H. A. Bunch

W. Carole

Dave Copper

Robert M. Davis, Jr.

James J. Duggan

Flaherty

John P. Foley

H. Gordon Fraser, Jr.

Richard Frank

Harold V. Geary

William Gordon

Lieutenant H. Gordon Fraser

Lieutenant E. C. Johnson

Lieutenant (j.g.) Samuel W. Mitchell

~~Ensign H. H. Rice~~ *PT. 235*

~~W. H. Triplett~~

~~Lieutenant (j.g.) Lowe H. Wiggers, Jr.~~ *(4)*

Lieutenant (j.g.) John S. Zulick

Frank Anderson

~~Harold Barrios~~ *PT 235*

Vincent A. Berra QM3/c

J. Blauvelt

E. Bobik GM

E. C. Breckenridge S

~~N. J. Burch MOMM~~

Anthony Caserta SC3/c

John J. F. Cowley RM2/c

J. Chiseski MOMM2/c

Donald A. Coffey SC1/c

Anthony Conte

Al Costa SC

John R. G. Dove RM

Richard Doherty, Jr.

Wm. Knox Eldridge

H. Fagan

ARL C. F. Feldges F

G. Foster S

R. E. Fuller

B. D. Gilbert GM

Sidney F. Arthur

PT 235

Bill Bates

William C. Bates

RAN: Diono III

Charles J. Brackling

Pearl L. Butler

John F. Cowley RM 2/c

John F. Cowley

Ernest O. Cox

Samuel Dedian

R.A. Fitzpatrick

John Foster

T. Foy

H. Gordon Fraser, Jr.

Michael R. Gaidosh

Other Men in the Squadron (Con't)

Francis H. Glenn

William Gordon

Louis Grant

Bill Hartman

Leo Q. Harvey

George Hutchenson

^{ident}
A. B. Kelly, Jr. MOMM

~~R. M. Kimbler MOMM~~

Wally Klodt

R. Kreutzer

Richard Lawrence MOMM1/c

Logan S

Joseph M. McCarthy RDM3/c

~~McGinnis~~

S. Milazzo

Clarence Miller GM 3/c

P. Morgan

Nardone - AL NARKIEWICZ

C. B. Norton RDM

Francis A. Norton RM 1/c

~~Frank S. Pavlakovich SC1/c~~ ~~John Patterson~~

P. S. Reep RM

T. N. Regas RM

L. E. Rikend

J. C. Roce

Rooshkoff RDM Samuel Salerno

Jesse Sands MOMM3/c Don L. Sealy

~~W. S. Seavers TM~~ ~~Wallace F. Seavers~~

~~Simonson~~ ~~CHMM~~ Sellers ~~Shannahan~~

J. Sisti, Jr. S

R. D. Godfrey

James T. Granbery, Jr.

Richard J. Hagel

Edwin H. Hartmeier ^{Willis} W.G. Holder

Berwin Howard ^{Ralph M. Haught}

William G. Keller

Kierkland GM

S. P. Kischik RDM

^A
~~F. M. Kohlhamer SC~~

^A
~~F. Landon SC2/e~~

~~Samuel Levine MOMM3/c~~

~~W. L. May MOMM~~

John McEvoy

~~R. F. Meyler GM~~

William C. Moen MOMM1/c

~~G. Bruce Murphy~~

^{HARRY R. MURROC, SR}

Edward J. Nycz ^S Wendall Musser

Donald Lyle Ream ^{Walter Obois}

^{R. William Olson}

~~Refore~~ ~~GASE~~ ^{Robert G. Perschen MOMM} 3/c

Jack Reynolds J. J. Reynolds

L. C. Robinson F

~~W. J. Renbock S~~

Richard H. Ross BM2/c ^{William J. Rorick} Joseph Roveto SC 1/c

J. M. Schmidt ^{Edward C. Schrader}

James M. Sechrest

^{H. A. Sims}
Sinkowich

Walter A. Siwierka

Other Men in the Squadron (Con't)

Edward Skrzypinski

Sornson

G. A. Steele CO 215

Stanley E. Stewart S1/c

George Strong RM 2/c

~~Gerald O. Sweeney~~ Gerald O. Sweeney

R. O. Thiers F

Roy H. Thomas

C. R. Toppen

K. D. Turner

Stanley J. Walker

~~Fred Welz~~

R. H. Wind

~~J. A. Yuhase~~ HOMM

~~Robert H. Small~~

~~Richard Sonnie~~ CM

C. R. Spiller S

Lawrence Stevens

~~Edward E. Strohmaier, Sr.~~

E. R. Swartz S

Sylvia S Augie Tefts

George Thilmany TM

Tilford Thompson SC2/c

J. R. Tucker S

Cecil E. Vester S1/c

R. H. Webster RT3/c

~~Fred Willenbrack~~

"Scobie" Winslow Charles E. Works

~~Robert E. White~~

Harry Von Neida

~~Myde~~

#1

LIL and DON SHALLOW
240 HOT SPRINGS ROAD
SANTA BARBARA CA93108
In Newport
Mar 21 Hosp: Land
Belong shipping out to

October 25, 1993 Box 4

Dear Ed:

What a wonderful experience
it has been to read about Ron 16
and especially 223. I cant thank
you enough for sending me
all the items. When I was
getting ready to send it back
~~I wanted to put a \$~~
~~with the book to thank you,~~

so to cover your handling, shipping,
and mailing costs.

Many times as I read of
things I remembered and those
I had forgotten I was crying
or laughing and ran
the gamut of emotions that

we sometimes forget we possess. Thanks again.

Chet Bell and I volunteered for "extra hazardous duty" with OSS (Office of Strategic Services) in the spring of 1945 during a presentation by a Chief Petty Officer from Wild Bell Donovan's office. The yarn he spun about what the duty would consist of was really a far out version about 150 Knot MTBs which we would take to enemy harbors like Hamburg and Tokyo.

Anyway, we didn't want

to leave Ron 4 and go
overseas for the 4th time
so we signed into the covert
operations, special weapons
division on the SECRET PROJECT
JAVAMAN. Clinton took us to
a "secret" base in St. Petersburg
Florida where we went through
training to become certified NAVAL
OBSERVERS. This included training
in flying as crew members of
B 17 Bombers working the machine
gun turrets; nose, tail, belly, high
altitude pressure tank training
and use of oxygen, Crack Cocaine
on the sea, LORAN ~~etc~~
(Long Range navigation) and

believe it or not television;
camera and monitor, adjustment.

The plan was a strategic
mission to end the war in one
operation, first in Europe, then
Japan.

We flew at 30 to 35,000 ft
altitude ^{sitting} at a console TV monitor
screen in the B17 on 29

On the surface, thirty to 50 miles
away was a PT boat ~~or~~ or
QAT-Craft Boat as we used for
training in Florida to Cuba.

On the bow of the PT was
a Television Camera which
transmitted a picture to us

on the B-17 showing the
~~sea~~ surface of the waterway
 with all the buoys and
 other navigation aids on
 waterway and the landmarks
 ashore! Think about it;
 in 1945 I didn't even know
 about Television; and you
 probably thought Buck Rogers
 was "far out"

We would take the boat, hands
 on helm, disguised as bays for
 the Hamburg Capes, and junkies
 for the Tokyo Capes as close
 as we could to the
 entrance channels. Upon

rendevous with a submarine
which took us aboard, we
left the tug on junk and
~~started~~ we were taken to
the nearest bomber base on airfield
where the Television Screen
equipped airplanes waited for
us. Oh yeah, I forgot to
tell you that on the plane
we had little black boxes with
miniature "joy sticks" and
we maneuvered the disguised
P.T.s, controlled the engines, and
changed course and speeds!

Honest to God

We speculated about what

explosive charge would be carried
but we knew it could be huge
because everything below decks
was removed to carry tons of
munitions. We were ready to
leave for Europe when the
war ended so we concentrated
on the Pacific Target.

After the ~~war~~ war and
the A Bomb had been used,
there was speculation that we
could have been the cause of an
A bomb because we learned
that Truman, the Joint Chiefs of
Staff, the scientists on the Bomb
Project had not decided
until August of 1944

whether the bomb should be detonated at some altitude, on the surface; ocean or land, or underwater. I guess we'll never know how close we came for designated deliveries because the ENCOHA GUY did the job.

So, we "bumped out" again as we were still in St. Pete when the bomb fell.

As far as I know, that and I were the only personnel in project SAVAMAN who came out of RON 4 or any RON. Either everybody else was

I hope I was in for the 1st thing I did (in a panic) in the morning. Sorry

#9

too smart or we were
too eager to avoid the 4th
overseas. P.T. Campaign.

After the war, Jeanne and
I settled in Walla Walla, Washington
where I was field manager
for the Bidsseye Frozen Food
factory; a subsidiary of GENERAL FOODS
CORP. We stayed there and
were able to have three daughters
and one son, until I volunteered
again for a job in the Foreign
Service as an Entomologist
in Central of Desert Locust in
the Middle East. The
children were 8, 7, 3, and one year

of age when, in one fell swoop we moved to Baghdad, Iraq. I look back and marvel at our fortitude in taking an assignment that took us into a completely out of this world environment; that was 1954. From that time until I retired here in ~~1956~~ 1975 we had tours of duty in

Baghdad 2 yrs

Kabul Afghanistan 2 yrs

Teheran, Iran 2 yrs

Washington D.C 4 yrs

Uganda 7 yrs

Tunisia 2 yrs

Sahel-Sudano Zone 2 yrs

Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Upper
Volta, Chad, Camerouns

It's been a wonderful life so far
even though I lost Jeanne in 1986.

But I found another true love
in 1989; we were married Feb 90.

also, an interesting fact is that
we have the same mother-in-law!

She was Jeanne's brother's wife.

Dig it?

Well, I got wound up
in this narrative and hope
you enjoy it.

Again, many, many, many,
thanks for the PT materials.

So long and God Bless

Don Shallenbarger
P.S. Don't have Whistle's address. Thank you, D. + J.