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The Endurance Test

There is one thing that I would contest about what it says in the book The Men of the Gambier Bay about the timing. According to the book, we were given the order to abandon ship at 10 minutes to 9, and the ship went down for the last time at 11 minutes after 9. That is 21 minutes. Maybe I swam that far against the tide and back and got away from the ship in 21 minutes, but it seemed to me that it took 10 or 15 minutes just to get that raft clear. I guess I will not dispute them if they do not dispute me, but I know what I did in that length of time. The only person I saw get off the carrier after we were clear was the captain. He said he swam around the stern of the ship but I didn't see him until he was on the port side. We called and told him there was

room on our raft if he wanted to get on with us. He said he would swim to where the other rafts were and get on one of them.

I told the young man that was swimming and pushing with me that we should get up on the edge of the raft because at any time the depth charges on the carrier could start exploding. We carried depth charges for our antisubmarine search planes and I was sure that when they got to the right pressure under water they would begin to explode. They did, but I guess they were deep enough and we were far enough away that it did not cause us any ill effects, though we could feel the vibrations on our legs that were hanging in the water over the outside of the raft.

When this boy got set up on the raft's cork rim, I noticed that blood was spurting out of his left leg just above the knee with every beat of his heart. He had a puncture wound that had cut an artery and he did not know it. We worked on that for quite a while before we got the bleeding stopped. He must have lost a lot of blood working to move the raft and not knowing he was so seriously injured.

I do not know how those men came to have that raft. They may have actually lowered their badly injured shipmates into it. I did not pay much attention to what was in the raft until after the ship disappeared. There were four seriously injured men in there.

Each raft consisted of a piece of cork about 8 or 9 inches square in a rectangular shape with rounded corners, which gave the raft somewhat of a doughnut appearance. The outside measurements were 5′ by 7′. The inside were closer to 4′ by 6′. Suspended about a foot below the cork rim was a lattice work of wood or metal slats. No matter which

side of the raft was up, the lattice hung below it, thus forming a protective floor. We sat on the cork rim with our feet inside so sharks could not get to our legs or feet.

These rafts had been mounted on brackets around the ship just off the flight deck, between gun tubs, etc., about 40 feet above the water line. Each one had two metal cylinders and a five gallon wooden keg of fresh water. The cylinders contained such things as Spam and dog biscuits to sustain life in case of a prolonged length of time in the water. They also had some medication such as morphine cerates and two or three kinds of sulfa drugs. Penicillin and most other antibiotics were not available then. These containers also had dye marker to put on the water so that planes could spot the rafts. They had flares to shoot from a Very Gun, flash lights and signaling equipment.

In trying to treat this boy's leg, I put a tourniquet on above the wound with his belt. I had to loosen it about every ten minutes to allow circulation to his lower leg. The first few times I loosened the belt the wound started to bleed again. I finally got some sulfa diazine salts and a compress bandage out of one of the cylinders. Sitting up on the raft as we were, his wound was out of the water. I dumped some salts into the wound and put the compress bandage on. Then I tore part of his shirt off and tied the bandage on tight. It stopped the bleeding, at least for a while.

When the pins were pulled to release the life rafts, the rafts were supposed to scoot off the brackets and hit the water flat on their bottoms. However, the fly in the ointment was that every raft flipped over when released and landed upside down. As they flipped over, the

water kegs hit the hull of the ship and either broke them or knocked off their spigots. I heard of only one keg that did not get broken and that was not with the group I was with. There was not a drop of water to drink aboard these rafts. I assume that every raft had to be turned over in the water, which took a lot of man power, and there were so many wounded men. The men I was with had the raft turned over before I got to it, but how, I do not know. They must have turned it over and then lowered the wounded men into it.

There, in the corner of the raft we had pushed around the hull, sat a man with his left arm completely severed just below the shoulder, with all of the cords and muscles hanging loose. It was a hideous sight. He sat in that corner and held his arm across his lap and would not let anyone throw it away until he died about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Another fellow had his right leg broken right off, shattered on a diagonal from his knee to his ankle. It must have been his friends whom I had helped in getting the raft away from the ship who had taken care of him. At least somebody had wired a piece of board to his leg to serve as a splint, holding the two pieces together. By holding on to the board he could move his leg a little. The other leg had a hole about 2 inches in diameter through the knee joint. He was out of patience and swore some and said, "I won't be able to walk a step for six weeks." That man had more grit than I have ever seen in a human being.

Another man had several little black marks on his forehead, and he was sick. He was restless and kept moving from one place to another, falling on one or another of the men. I told him he had to sit down and

be still. We could not have him wallowing all over these men who were badly wounded. He said he was sick to his stomach. I told him he would be just as sick to his stomach moving as sitting so he had better sit in a corner. Of course that meant sitting on the lattice work which was below the water line. He sat down and became quiet. At this time, I was busy trying to stop the blood from the other man's leg. In about 15 or 20 minutes when I looked again at the sick man, he was dead. It looked like he had been shot a dozen times in the head with a bb gun. He was the first one to die. We took his dog tag and belongings and wrapped them in his shirt and eventually gave it to the executive officer, when we caught up to him. Then we buried him at sea by rolling him over the side of the raft.

About the time the Gambier Bay was trying to elude the Japanese Fleet, our air squadron, being pretty well out of fuel and ammunition, needed a place to land. Since we were running with the wind and were too vulnerable anyway, the planes had to find another base. Many of them went in to Leyte and landed on a partial airstrip that General MacArthur had built. The Army did not have the ammunition the planes needed, but was able to refuel them. The pilots took off sans ammo and joined the battle at sea. Some of the fighter planes still had some strafing ammunition. While they and our destroyers and destroyer escorts made suicide runs on the Japanese warships, our bomber and torpedo planes made dry runs as if to drop bombs. That drew a lot of the fire from the enemy guns and gave the smaller units the opportunity to do more damage. We lost a plane or two, but there is no doubt that such action was the main cause of worry for the Japanese Navy. Admiral

Kurita apparently became confused and ordered a withdrawal. We in the water saw some of what went on, but we had no way of knowing that the enemy had withdrawn without winning the battle.

Each raft had a four foot aluminum oar in it. By paddling and taking advantage of the tide, we caught up with the other rafts late in the afternoon. They had worked out a system of lashing the rafts together, and were in this process when we joined them. There was one net float, consisting of rope and corks. It was about 12' by 12' or a little larger. It floated well and some of the wounded men lay on that. The officers in charge were trying to rearrange the men on rafts to keep their wounds out of the water as much as possible. There were about 140 of us together now on the rope net and eleven cork rafts. We wanted to stay together. The rafts formed a circle with the cork net at the center. Both Captain Vieweg and Executive Officer Ballinger were in this group. I think Executive Officer Ballinger was directing the shuffling. I was assigned to leave the raft I was on and get on another one. While swimming about 50 or 60 feet to the one I was assigned to, I noticed dorsal fins around me. I realized for the first time that we were surrounded by sharks. I also realized that I was not watching a Tarzan of the Apes film and that I was no Johnny Weismuller.

In addition to the rafts and net mentioned above, we had three one man rubber rafts that the pilots from the planes had used. These came in handy. We took the three worst wounded men, as nearly as we could tell, and placed them in the three rubber rafts, thus keeping their wounds out of the water. With an average of about eleven men to each cork raft, not much larger than your living room couch, we kept them

submerged quite a ways into the water.

Although the day had been warm, I shivered all night. During the night, my position on the raft was changed from a side seat to an end seat next to a corner. A white Red Cross box about 14" X 14" X 12" deep was lashed outside of the raft by my left arm. The box was presumably full of medical supplies but we never did open it. It was heavy and hung underwater with its top about even with the bottom of the cork doughnut. We had all the supplies we needed in the canisters that were inside the rafts.

During our first day in the water, a Japanese destroyer made several trips to one of their cruisers that sat dead in the water, probably about a mile from us. I wondered if it was keeping us under surveillance to see that we did not get away. But, about 1:00 A.M., the cruiser exploded, and burned brightly for awhile before sinking. I decided the destroyer had been evacuating and dismantling it during the day, and had set a detonator to explode in the night.

About three or four feet behind my right side, on this corner was a one man rubber raft with a man on it named Barrett. He was the man with the injured legs, who was with me on the first raft. By this time he was unconscious, and he remained so all that day and the next night. With the help of the morphine cerate, he never did regain consciousness. He was left there for me to take care of should he need attention. Barrett's raft began to lose air through its valve late in the second day. As it began to settle in the water, I knew something had to be done quickly. I was able to screw the valve core out of the stem with one hand and pinch the hole at the base of the stem closed with the

other. I was then able to blow enough air into the raft through the stem, to support Barrett's weight and then insert the valve core. It held until we were picked up.

Barrett was wearing white socks. His feet extended just a little over the end of the raft, and his socks, although out of the water, attracted the sharks and they gathered around. Between the white socks and the white Red Cross box, only a few feet apart, I think I had practically all of the sharks that were following us right there on my corner.

The leaky life belt I was wearing had filled with water. I was glad I had not taken it off and thrown it away, however, even though I do not know what might have happened if I had. It was cumbersome to swim with when filled with water, but I was grateful to have it because I always had at least two or three sharks poking their snouts at my back and hitting the life belt. Without the belt's protection, one may have rolled over and taken a bite of me. The weight of the Red Cross box, plus some of us heavier men kept the raft on a downward slope to our end. I was constantly bobbing in and out of the water up to my armpits. I was easy access to those sharks, and the only way I could keep them away was to slap the water beside their heads. They did not like the concussion and would back away two or three feet. As soon as I stopped slapping, they moved up close and started nudging me in my back again. I had to hold onto the raft with one hand all the time to keep from sliding off backwards into the water.

In the late afternoon of the second day the executive officer unscrewed the paddle out of the aluminum oar and gave it to me to slap

the water with and give my hands a rest. The paddle was supposed to make more of a sound and be more effective for a longer period of time, but this did not prove to be the case. I got a little careless as I was slapping around. I was probably not up to my usual alertness after living like that a couple of days without sleep. The paddle was not very selective. It hit one of those big boys on the dorsal fin. He apparently did not like that. He dove down in a loop about 12 feet under the raft and began threshing around, making some very strong waves. He churned the water a couple of times with his tail, but was deep enough that no one was thrown overboard. I heard someone say under his breath that I had better not do that again or I would be out there with them. I was very careful after that to not cause any more of that kind of trouble.

Although we were almost in the tropics, bouncing in and out of the water, at night the water got pretty cool. The first day was not sunny all day, but we had some sun shine, some clouds and even some rain now and then. Each time it rained, I took off my heavy canvas sailor's hat and caught what water I could in it. Any water I caught, I used to moisten the lips of Barrett or anyone else who was feverish. If I rubbed it on their lips or poured a little in their mouths it seemed to revive them some, even if they did not regain consciousness. The amount of water I caught was very small. During the first night it got quite chilly. Since I am one who shivers easily anyway, I shivered all night long. The next day the sun was bright almost all day, and it was hot.

Upon abandoning ship many of the men decided they could swim better

without their dungarees (pants) and shirts so they wore only their skivvies (shorts) and t-shirts. Most of these men got sunburned something awful. I think some of them had second and third degree burns on parts of their bodies, especially those who did not keep their t-shirts on. I heard later that some were sent to hospital ships to be treated for their sunburns.

At least two men were killed by sharks the first day. One of them was a good friend of mine, Lieutenant Buderus. He was the Lieutenant in charge of the Combat Information Center. This was the section of the radar department where they plotted all of the information they received from the radar operators. C.I.C. plotted it on a large, clear plastic, circular board. On that, they traced the movement of aircraft and ships that were within radar range. The information was relayed to the Captain or the officer on the bridge. Lieutenant Buderus did a lot of the plotting himself. He was like one of our radar crew. He was one of the men who had taken off his pants and shirt to be able to swim better. He had also been wounded. The raft he was on was so overloaded that some of the men where hanging around on the outside. He thought he should take his turn. A shark came up and bit him across the buttocks and down his legs. The men were able to get him up onto the raft but he died a short while later.

Someone, during that first day, came up with a little bottle of malted milk tablets. Each pill was about the size of a nickel and twice as thick. The bottle was from one of the canisters. Others had been found and eaten before I got on that raft, but out of this bottle each one of us got two malted milk pills. That was our ration for that day,

and it was the last of the malted milk pills. Late in the evening of the second day, some of the men thought they could not go without food or water for two days without starving, so somebody got the idea of opening a can of Spam and two packages of dog biscuits. Each one of us had a small slice of Spam and a dog biscuit about the size of a Ritz cracker, only thicker, and with added nutrition. I was foolish enough to take a small slice of Spam. Just one small bite, and my throat swelled up, and I wondered if I would be able to breath because I was so dry. The Spam was so salty that it almost instantly closed off my throat. The others must not have been as affected by it in that way but of course it made them even more thirsty than they already were.

During the second day and evening, several of the men became delirious. Some tried to get up. Many were having hallucinations, so those around them administered morphine shots which quieted them down. The instructions were to not give a person more than one cerate, but on the second day it became necessary to do so. I did not administer any of them myself, as there were others who knew what they were doing. I was glad that I did not have to make a choice to administer any morphine.

About that time some of them began taking sips of salt water. Vereen Bell had written a book a few years before the war called Swamp Water. I think the movie from that book was one of the first to win an Academy Award. Bell was one who could not resist taking a sip of salt water and his friend close by told him not to do that because it would kill him. Bell said that he was just rinsing out his mouth and spitting it out. In another few minutes he became delirious. While he was in

the state of delirium he thought he saw land and was going to swim to it. He took off swimming and that was the last they saw of him. A few other men died or swam away after taking sips of salt water.

During the night, one of Barrett's white socks came off and went down into the water. Did the sharks have fun with that sock! It was just like they were playing tag or follow the leader. One big boy zoomed by, grabbed the sock and spit it out; then another and another. It went on for about 10 minutes. The sock went pretty deep and the sharks with it until they gave up the game. Six or seven of the larger ones participated. I had a ringside seat. It all happened within ten feet of me.

After the can of Spam was opened someone threw the empty can into the water. The sharks did the same thing with the can. When the jaws snapped on that can it sounded a lot more vicious than on the sock. They played with the can until it too was out of sight. That gave me a little rest from slapping the water to drive them away from me. Soon I was back to the routine, however, and preparing myself to go through another night.

All this time we were wondering what had happened to the rescue people. We had expected to be picked up long before now. During the morning of the first day there were Japanese ships running back and forth near us, none coming too close to the raft I was on because we were not in the line of their travel like the other rafts were. A friend told me that one of the Japanese destroyers passed fairly close to their raft and the Japanese sailors jumped up and down, pulled their hair and shook their fists at our men but did not fire a shot. The book

tells of two different occasions when the Japanese destroyers passed by the men in the water and stood at attention and saluted them, showing that they had respect for us. One thing for sure is that they were not about to stop and pick us up. Eventually, that turned out to be a good thing.

During the first day we were adrift, we saw a couple of our planes go over us. Apparently they were searching, but did not see us. In a couple of hours they came back right over us, but again did not see us. At least there had been some effort made to find us. We learned later that some landing ships were sent out to try to find us, but had been given erroneous directions and were searching far from us.

I mentioned earlier that prior to abandoning ship or even prior to the battle I felt a profound sense of security and peace. During the time we were in the water on the rafts and as the time began to grow long there seemed to be doubts about us being picked up in time. In fact, much of the time that I was on the raft I had thoughts in my mind relating to the gospel. One item, especially, that occupied my thoughts at that time was the song, "How Firm a Foundation." It is in the Protestant hymn book. At that time I felt like it had been written just for me. I would like to record here three verses of that song that were specifically in my mind during this time. These are the second, fourth and seventh verses:

How Firm a Foundation

2 In every condition, in sickness, in health,
In poverty's vale or abounding in wealth,
At home or abroad, on the land or the sea,
As thy days may demand, so thy succor shall be.

4 When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not thee o'erflow,
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

7 The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I cannot, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!

The other thing that kept my attention during this ordeal was the last four verses of section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants, a book of modern scripture of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

18 And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

19 And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

20 And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

21 And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. Amen.

9

The Rescue and Relief

Between one and two o'clock, during the second night, we became aware of lights on the water in the distance. Now this was a very unusual thing. As far as we were concerned, the Japanese had won the war. It had looked to us from the rafts, that with the Japanese firing power and all they had going for them, it was almost impossible for them to have lost that battle. So, when we saw the lights which were apparently spot lights or search lights from ships on the ocean, we did not know whether to be glad or afraid. There were a lot of men who where almost delirious just from lack of sleep and probably some from pain and hunger. The lack of sleep was a very serious thing. You can go a long time without food and maybe a few days without water, if you

have to, but a couple of days without sleep and you are about done. That seemed to be the extent of my endurance. A lot of the men were drifting off in hallucinations.

After watching the lights for a while it became obvious that they were flashing messages in code but the signalman we had with us just could not stay alert long enough to receive a message or to send one. The captain had him get one of the flashlights out of the canister and try to send a message, but he just kept dozing off after only a few letters. It was the same way when he tried to receive. I got the impression that we did not want to shoot off any flares until we knew whether the ships belonged to friend of foe. According to the book, The Men of the Gambier Bay, however, one or two flares were shot up. Almost everyone there by this time did not care a whole lot just who it was. Anything would be better than sitting out in the water indefinitely.

I did not hear any of the conversation, but one of the fellows that was on another raft told me later that the executive officer suggested to the captain that we cut our raft loose from the rest and paddle toward one of the ships, trying to get as far away from the rafts as we possible could, and find out if it was a Japanese or an American ship. I remember that we did cut away. That was the only use I made of my shark knife. We paddled toward the closest ship, but I, not having heard the conversation, did not know why. The friend told me later that we were to be the decoy in case it was a Jap ship and we would not tell them anyone else was around.

Barrett was still alive, and someone else took him in tow. We paddled up to the ship at about 3 a.m. and found it was one of our

landing ships, LCI (Landing Craft Infantry) # 580. Of course they immediately took us aboard. They hung a rope ladder that was eight to ten feet over the side of the ship. In our raft was the executive officer and the captain's steward, who stuck right with the exec all the time. About six or eight other men who were on it before were still aboard. We had borrowed a paddle from another raft to get to the ship. The captain's steward and I were using the paddles in trying to get our raft close to the hull of the ship. It seemed to me that in everything that I did he was working against me, and we just could not get that raft close enough to the ship. I got a little impatient and said that I had an eleven year old boy at home who could do better than he with an oar. It disturbed him. He raised the oar and stuck it out as if to jab me with it. I took hold of it and pulled it away from him. The executive officer was watching the whole thing, but did not say a word. As soon as I was satisfied that the cook would take the oar back and use it properly, I handed it back to him. We were standing on opposite sides of the cork rim during this operation.

Eventually, we got close to the ship. To tell the truth, I would not swear now if it was he or I who was at fault. I may not have been thinking my very best at the time, either. When we got against the ship and the men on board got a line on our raft, I sat back down where I had previously been sitting. The other men that had been sitting while we were getting close to the ship all of sudden jumped up and began crowding toward the ladder. There was a man getting up on either side of me. One of them flung out his arm, hit me across the chest, and knocked me backwards into the drink. My immediate reflex was to look

out for the sharks, but there were none there. I had heard that when a ships screws were turning, the sharks were usually not very close. Even if they were following in the wake or beside the ship and eating things that were thrown overboard they stayed away from the screws of the ships.

All of the sailors climbed the ladder that had been thrown over the side until only Executive Officer Ballinger and I were left on the raft. He indicated that I should go up the ladder first. I said, "After you, sir."

He said, "Get up that ladder!" I should have known better because the executive officer is always the last one to leave the ship when the captain is not aboard. As I reached the rail of the LCI, one of the crewman took hold of me and pulled me on over. I can remember saying, "I'm still a pretty good man."

The crewmen abdicated their sacks (bunks), and being the first ones there, we were put in bunks. Each of us was given only half a cup of water, which was all they would let us have. I do not know what happened after that as I immediately dropped off to sleep. The next thing I heard was that well known General Quarters alarm sound. It could have been 9 or 10 a.m. I rolled out of the bunk and looked up. There was no cover overhead, as it was an open vessel. I saw a Jap bomber flying low, almost directly over us, which would naturally scare anyone. The pilot, I guess, felt that he was not going to waste a bomb, if he had one, on this little landing ship that had only a deck covered with helpless men. He just maneuvered around a little, saw what we were, and went on his way.

Our hosts gave each of us a cup of split pea soup for breakfast, or lunch. I think I have never tasted anything better. That was a good choice for us because it was nourishing and at least with me did not cause any stomach problems after the long fast. I really liked split pea soup for many years after that. The search ships had taken all of our group aboard and may have found some others during the night. Somewhere around noon of that day a doctor came aboard. He must have come in another boat. He checked all of us. Several of the men were in very serious condition. I am not sure just what the doctor did for them, but by this time I had several sores on my right leg from the knee to the ankle on the shin bone. During the time I was in the water I had noticed something that looked like mud gathering around spots on my shin. I kept rubbing it off and cleansing it with water, but soon there was more there. I learned later that those muddy globs were microscopic animals in the ocean that had been feeding on the sores on my leg. When I went down the rope to abandon ship, apparently I had received some rope burns on my shin from the knots. I had eight burn spots on my right shin. By the time the doctor got to me those sores were inflamed and swelling. All he did was paint them with iodine. He had many other wounded men worse off than I to look after. He advised me to see a doctor as soon as I got to a place where I could because of the infection.

We spent all of that day on the ocean looking for survivors. Not all of them got on rafts or in groups like ours. Some of them just had a part of a plank from the flight deck to hold onto. Some rafts where too full and the extra men had to hold on to the outside of the rafts.

Some were in very precarious conditions, but we did not hear of nearly as many of them getting attacked by sharks as I had thought we would. All day long, until after dark, we were cruising the ocean trying to find survivors. We then went into Leyte Gulf. That night we were transferred to small hospital ships. General MacArthur had brought in three small ships, navy mine sweeps, and converted them into hospital ships with bunks and facilities for the doctors to work in. I was put on one of those vessels and put in the middle bunk in a stack of three.

I went to sleep for a while, but awoke in a few hours, aware that we were in a violent storm. A typhoon was crossing the gulf, and the little mine sweep ship was being tossed about like a cork on the water, thrown upon high waves and coming down in various directions time after time. It seemed like it lasted about 10 or 15 minutes. Men were being tossed out of their bunks. Some of the more seriously wounded were just helpless, being thrown across the deck and banging into things. The only way I could stay in the sack was by wrapping my arms around the metal framework and locking my hands underneath and bracing my feet in the corners. I managed to stay in my bunk. The power and lights were gone so there was nothing anyone could do if they got up. On the deck you would be just as helpless as anyone else. After the violent few minutes it was peaceful again.

The next morning when I went out on the deck, Leyte Gulf was as smooth as glass. There was hardly a ripple on it. The Filipinos were coming toward us from shore in their dinghies with all of the things they had made. They had braided mats and hats, handmade clothing, and all sorts of things to sell. Each of the survivors who was rescued had

been given a carton of cigarettes. The Filipinos would trade anything they had for cigarettes. Some of them had not had a cigarette for years. One Filipino was about to trade his daughter for two cartons of cigarettes. It was a beautiful sight there to be close to the land and have the calm sea again.

My leg was really very sore by now and beginning to swell so I did not stay out on the deck long. I went back and got into the sack. Then, low and behold, the captain's steward was in the bunk just above me. He recognized me, but I had not noticed him. As I was getting into my bunk, he stuck his head over the side to look at me and said, "I hope there is no hard feelings about last night." I told him, "Not a bit" and that I was glad he was there and that I got to see him. We shook hands and everything was fine.

I did not get to see a doctor during the two days I was aboard that ship because they were just too busy. Late in the afternoon of October 30th a large hospital ship pulled into the gulf, coming up next to the little ship I was on. I and a few others were transferred onto this navy Personnel Hospital Ship. It was not one of the white ships that you usually see in pictures. Its name was the USS Tryon, APH 1, (Auxiliary Personnel Hospital). That evening we got underway for, of all places, back to Hollandia, New Guinea. There I was, three or four degrees south of the equator again.

The passengers on this ship were those who had injuries and needed medical attention. Needless to say, there was a long line of us. I got in the line upon going aboard, but did not get my turn to see the doctor until between 10:00 and 10:30 p.m. By that time my right leg was the

same size from the ankle to the thigh. I was unable to stand anymore and had to sit down on the deck and slide along whenever I had a chance to move. I don't suppose they called it blood poisoning then but it was, and they termed it acute cellulitis, which is a serious infection. The doctor prescribed eight sulfa tablets every two hours along with four "bicarbonate of soda pills." Then I was taken into one of the recovery rooms and put in the bottom bunk next to the bulkhead which meant my bunk was about one and a half feet off the deck. There were 21 bunks in this recovery room, and I was at the back end. They fixed a sling and hung my foot up in the air like when I had had jungle rot aboard the Gambier Bay.

I lay in that sack for eight days with my foot elevated in a sling. Around the clock, they awakened me every two hours to give me eight sulfa pills and four of "bicarbonate of soda." The sulfa pills were almost as big around as a quarter and about three times as thick. It was an ordeal! In order for the body to tolerate that much sulfa, it was necessary to drink a lot of water. I was always one to perspire freely all over my body and the sweat that came out of me actually was enough to create a little pond of water in that canvas sack I was lying in. Once or twice a day I would put my elbow near the edge of the canvas and bear down making a crease so the sweat could run out onto the deck. I swear I could hear it sizzling there. The deck was that hot. I know that if I touched that bulkhead it would actually burn me. This room was right over the boiler room. They had some air blowing in from over the door, and there were two or three empty bunks near there. I asked the pharmacist mate if I could have one of the bunks where I could

get some fresh air. He said, "No. They have to be saved for someone who might come in that is close to death." I said that I would move quickly if they needed the bunks. He still said that I could not move and that he had to have those bunks available. He said they knew I was not going to die even though they may have to amputate my leg. I stayed in the sack, back in the hot end.

10

Going Home

We had arrived November 1, in Humboldt Bay near Hollandia, New Guinea. On the morning of November 8, when they took my temperature and my pulse rate, both were normal. That was the navy's signal that you were O.K. The pharmacist mate said I could get up and do whatever I wanted to do that day. Very cautiously I got out of bed, being terribly weak, having lain there 8 or 9 days. I managed to get out on the deck into the fresh air. The air was pretty hot being just a few degrees off the equator, but it was still morning and felt very good. I was sitting there in an attitude of prayer, and thankfulness when an announcement came over the loud speaker, "All Gambier Bay patients who are mobile will leave the ship at 1600 hours to board the S.S. Lurline for a trip

home to the States." The S.S. Lurline was sitting about a mile from us in the Harbor. It was one of the Matsonian cruise liners. Earlier, before World War II, the Matsonian Steam Ship company owned the Hawaiian Islands. At least, I have read that. They had the Matsonian and the Lurline, their luxury liners, taking passengers from the Hawaiian Islands down through the South Pacific. The navy had leased the Lurline and it was sitting in the Bay. At 4 o'clock that afternoon, because I was out of bed, I was able to go to the Lurline with a promise of a trip home.

The first thing I wanted to do when I got on the Lurline was to get any information I could about some of my friends and shipmates. I saw a bulletin board close by and went over to read it. On the board was a list of the Gambier Bay men who were listed as killed or missing in action. I was surprised to find that Earl E. Bagley was the first name on the list. That gave me another deep concern. What if my family got word like that? I began to pray again that my family would never get that information. The next day there was another list posted and my name was not on it. In looking down the passenger list from the Gambier Bay, I found my friends Chris and Lars Anderson were both aboard. I did not know what had become of Lars because I had not seen him while we were in the water. The reason for that is because he was off by himself hanging on a plank for those two days and nights. It was a wonder he was not eaten by sharks or overlooked in the rescue system. I knew that Chris was alive because when we strung the rafts out in a line on the second day in the water, I saw him on a raft quite a ways ahead of my raft. Another friend, Ted Lorenz, was one of the radar operators who

used to sit around in the radar shack talking with us in the evenings. He was a strong Catholic and a real fine friend. I saw him on a raft when they were strung out so I knew he, too, was all right. This especially thrilled me because he could not swim. He had been able to get down into a raft and did not have to swim.

I soon found Lars and Chris among the 15,000 passengers reported to be aboard, and we spent most of our time together while we were on the Lurline. On the 10th or 11th of November we sailed out of Humboldt Bay. But instead of heading for San Francisco, as we had anticipated, we went south to Brisbane, Australia. We had about five days in route there. Of course, we were not nearly as concerned about time now as we had been because we were not involved in battles and danger. In Australia we spent two days with the ship taking on supplies. It was an awfully big ship, and they took on truck load after truck load. We had learned by now that the food was delicious. It was just as good as if they were catering to the elite public. There were two meals a day: 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Boy, what food that was!

About the second day that we were on our way to Brisbane, an announcement came over the loud speaker, "All Gambier Bay men report to the galley immediately." They were planning to assign us K P duty. Our assignment would have been to do all the work in the kitchens and chow halls. When we got there, about half of us had to sit on the deck and wait for someone to tell us why we were there. There were so many of us that could not even stand up for a short time that when they looked us over they changed their minds. We were informed that we did not have enough able bodied men to do the job. Our assignment, instead, for the

Gambier Bay survivors, was to man the library. That required two of us to be in the library during the day. Each pair, on a two hour shift, had to hand out the games and the other things they had. It was not too bad of an assignment.

It was rumored that besides the supplies in Brisbane, we took on 5,000 war brides. We never saw them and I rather doubt that number, but they did take on many of them and housed them on the top deck. The navy had converted this liner into a real troop ship. All of the decks that you usually would see passengers lounging on had been walled up and were just like the housing units. All the spaces were lined with bunks. I know they had at least 5,000 sailors on board but I doubt if there were nearly that many war brides.

It was probably 100 miles up the river from the ocean to Brisbane. The river was wide mouthed except in some places where it was not much wider than the Lurline. It was a really slow moving river filled with jelly fish that were so thick that sometimes you could not even see the water. All you could see were the two colors, a kind of rust and a blue. The fish almost had to breath in harmony. When one exhaled the other could inhale to fit together as they expanded and contracted. I do not know how many layers deep they were, but they were sucked so tightly against the water intake screen, that they completely shut off the ship's water supply. We had to stop and reverse the pumps to blow them off of the screen on the end of the pipe. The pump direction was then changed back so the water necessary for operation could be obtained before the jelly fish again covered the screen.

Many of the houses that we could see along the way, from our

vantage point high on the deck above, had dirt roofs with flower gardens on them. It was late spring there and very beautiful. Trees, foliage and everything had leafed out. At the dock where we took on supplies some of the sailors were able to get off the ship and walk around on the dock a little. I was not able to go anywhere. The only thing that I survived with from the Gambier Bay ordeal was a pair of cutoff dungarees. My other clothing just seemed to rot away. So I did not go anywhere.

After we left Brisbane and were heading toward San Francisco, there was a notice posted on the bulletin board that if you needed something (and a very few items where listed there) to check with the Red Cross office on board during certain hours. A Catholic Priest on board was in charge of that office. I felt like I needed a pair of shoes. All I had was a pair of had been tennis shoes with only the soles left. I found them in a garbage can on the Lurline when I saw the shoe laces hanging out from the top of the can. I went to the Red Cross office wearing these tennis shoe soles that looked more like tied on thongs than shoes. I asked about getting a pair of shoes. The man looked at my feet and said, "Well, now if I give you a pair, will you treat them better than you did this pair that you have on?" After I explained how I came to have them, he gave me a pair of navy work shoes. I knew I looked odd going around the ship in a pair of new navy work shoes and a well worn pair of cut off dungarees, but that was all I had.

About the twentieth of November I was sitting out on the deck alone listening to the news over the ship's radio. The main event on that broadcast was the Battle of Leyte Gulf. Until then, we survivors had

not been permitted even to write home. The news, to my knowledge, had not yet broken in the United States or any where else. It was hush, hush, an absolute secret, just like everything else pertaining to the war. Then, here came this broadcast from Los Angeles on a National Broadcasting station telling in detail the whole story of the battle. They called it the second battle of the Philippines. They said it was at Leyte Gulf and named the ship. They told about the sinking and said that 200 or 300 men were killed or missing in action. All the details of it were told there on the radio. I knew that 99 percent of the people in the United States would be hearing that broadcast. I suppose this was one of the most sincere prayers that I ever offered, that my family would not know about this until I was able to tell them. After the broadcast which was heard by the officers and all passengers, they determined that they had to let the Gambier Bay survivors write to their families and tell them that they were all right. Each one of us was given one small sheet of paper. We were not allowed to say where we were, where we had been or give any information other than that we were alright and that we would be seeing them soon. We were allowed to write on only one side of the small sheet.

My cousin, Duane Higbee, lived in Idaho Falls, and the next night after that broadcast he and his wife Blanche went to see my wife, Alice, and the family. In the course of the evening Alice did not seem to know anything about the news item so they did not mention it. They only asked if she had heard from me lately to which she said, "No, it has been a long time." They did not tell her about the news they had heard. It happened that on the day the newscast came, the Primary in our ward

in Idaho Falls was having some kind of party or carnival. Alice was working in the Primary then, and she had been doing whatever necessary to fulfil her assignment. With her mind on Primary work all day, she had not even turned the radio on. Our son, Dean, usually listened to the news all the time that he could. Alice said he had his ear to the radio nearly all the time. For some reason none of our family heard that broadcast. The next night Duane and Blanche came over again. They came over about every other night for a week to see if Alice had heard anything from me. One night she said, "Yes, I got a letter from him today but I cannot make heads or tails of it." Then they told her the news about the battle. She did not hear of the battle until I told her. A direct answer to prayer.

Every time you cross the International Dateline in the Pacific going west you lose a day (and, of course, you pick up a day going east). On the Lurline, we crossed going east on November 22nd. The next day was also the 22nd. Had we crossed it on the 23th we would have had two Thanksgiving Days. I guess it was just as well. No one could eat any more than they were already feeding us, and especially on that Thanksgiving Day. It was just unbelievable.

When we were about 3 or 4 days out of San Francisco, a blanket was issued to each of us because the weather was getting cold at night. I knew what would happen to me: Eventually, when it got cooler, someone would steal my blanket. I had been in Pearl Harbor, and I needed two blankets there, so I expected some blanket thievery. From the Red Cross office I got a needle and thread. I sewed a circle of red string in the corner of my blanket, so I could identify it. Chris and Lars did the

same. They did not lose theirs, but one time when I came back from chow, or the library, my blanket was gone.

We had no protection against theft. Upon arising, each man folded his blanket into an approximate two foot square and placed it on his bunk. If we did not have it to turn in upon arrival at San Francisco, the cost would be deducted from our pay. Besides, a man could get pretty cold during the nights in that area with no more protection than a pair of knee-length dungarees. I may have to look at the corners of several thousand blankets, but I needed mine. So, I started going up and down the lines. I got several inquiries: "Hey, Mack, whatch ya doing?"

My response was usually, "I'm looking for a blanket with legs. Mine has walked off. I hope you do not mind me checking."

I had not checked more than an hour until I found it on the same deck, but over a hundred yards aft and on the other side of the ship. As soon as I was sure of the identification, I picked up the blanket and turned as if to walk away. Three men were standing close by. I could tell which one was guilty by the expression on his face. He asked the usual question. I merely said, "I can identify this as my blanket. If you want to contest it, we will go and talk to the officer on duty."

He said, "Go ahead and take it. I don't know where it came from." I could see the edge of his own blanket barely visible under his mattress.

It took the Lurline two weeks to get from Brisbane to San Francisco. We arrived a day ahead of schedule, so we had to sit outside the harbor for a day, awaiting our turn to dock. After we sailed into

San Francisco Bay on December 1st, we were assigned to some barracks, I think on Goat Island. Each of us had to take a medical examination. It was quite a coincidence that, as I got off the bus in San Francisco, I saw an old schoolmate of mine from St. Anthony, Idaho high school. His father was a doctor and had been a Bishop at one time. My friend, Ralph Kelly, was in a navy officer's uniform. He was a dentist. We talked for a while, but decided that in order to have a good lengthy visit, I should come to his office. He wrote me an appointment slip to go to his office for a tooth examination the next day. I got away without any trouble and went to his office. He examined my teeth and put a little filling in one of my wisdom teeth. We had a nice visit.

When I had my physical examination an interesting thing happened. They took my normal pulse rate (68), then had me run on a treadmill for 3 or 4 minutes. The exertion rate was 108. After a rest of five to eight minutes, it was still 108. I had to remember that maybe I was not up to normal because of the ordeal and my infection following the rescue. Perhaps that is why my pulse did not go down as fast as it should. I felt sure it would be a temporary condition. Here again I heard the pharmacist mate tell the doctor that after the rest period my pulse was still 108. They were rushing people through as fast as possible and were in an awful hurry. The doctor told him to put 72 on my chart.

On December 4, I was put on a train heading for home in Idaho Falls, Idaho. I arrived December 5th. Alice's birthday was December 6th. I don't know if that was much of a birthday present for her, but

she seemed to think it was at the time. I was facing a 30 day survivor's leave.

Right after I arrived home, the Idaho Falls Post Register, the local daily newspaper, carried a full page advertisement for the C.C. Anderson store promoting one of the newest inventions, the Ball Point Pen. One of its many worthy features was that you could write under water with it, and it was now available for only $9.98. How wonderful, I thought. Think what I could have done if I had only had one of them during those two days in the water!

During the time I was home it was fairly ordinary winter weather. We did not have an automobile so could not get around much, but it was so good just to be home. It was nice not to have to worry. That was my third Christmas since joining the navy and my first one at home. It was fun being at home with Alice and the children. However, I guess all good things come to an end. On the 3rd of January, 1945, I caught the train for San Francisco on my way back to report at the receiving station on Goat Island, the island between Oakland and San Francisco on the Oakland Bay bridge.

11

On the Way Back Out

I mentioned once before that every time I rode a public conveyance during the war I had to stand up. I did have a seat on the train from Idaho Falls to Pocatello and from Pocatello to Ogden, but from Ogden to San Francisco I stood up all the way.

One of the most absurd things that came to my attention in the navy happened in January 1945, soon after I returned to California after my survivor's leave. My schedule of L.D.S. meetings in the area listed a Mutual meeting on Tuesday evening at a park in the east bay area. No one was at the park at the scheduled time, but I decided to wait a while. In about a half hour a couple of sailors arrived. They advised me that the person in charge of the meetings had been transferred, so

meetings were not being held regularly. As we talked, this story unfolded. These men had come from a local medical facility. Both had been scheduled for surgery the same day. One was to have his tonsils removed, and the other to have an appendectomy. A corpsman had accidentally switched their charts. Each received the wrong operation. They were awaiting sufficient recovery to have their correct operations performed.

Immediately after arriving on Goat Island, (real name is Yerba Buena), I was assigned duty chasing prisoners. This was not actually going out and chasing or hunting for prisoners, but was working with the marines who were in charge of the navy general court martial brig. The brig was at the top of Goat Island, and each day I had to go from the barracks at near sea level, 400 steps up to the brig. I reported at 8 a.m. six days a week to get my work crew. It consisted of four of the general court martial prisoners. There were three main reasons why these men were prisoners: AWOL, rape, and murder. I am sure that most of them had gone AWOL.

I was to take my crew to wherever the assigned duty was, stand over them for four hours with a rifle, march them up to the top for lunch, then down again and stand over them for another four hours until 5 o'clock. I then took them back to the brig and to the custody of the marines. It was then back to sea level for chow. That was a lot of exercise, three round trips a day, up and down four hundred steps. Many days, my assignment was to keep the dump cleaned. That was at sea level. The waste that was brought in had to be sorted and piled. Combustible items had to be burned. I was not to get any closer than

six feet to any man at anytime. Instructions were to be ready at all times in case a prisoner started to run or bolt or make any kind of attempt to get away. I was to yell, "Halt! Halt! Halt!" If he had not stopped by then, I had to shoot. It was that simple, and if a man got away from me, I was told I would have to serve the rest of his sentence.

Another assignment I often had was to keep the ramps clean where the trains stopped to take on and unload passengers going to and coming from Treasure Island, Oakland and San Francisco. Each half hour a train from Oakland and one from San Francisco stopped on Goat Island. That was an average of fifteen minutes between trains for us to clean up the litter. By the time an approaching train stopped, I had to have my men in a corner facing away from the train and keep them there until the train left. Imagine, if you can, all the ridicule a man takes when he is standing over a group of men with a rifle while the passengers, many of them civilians, were getting off and on the trains. To hear them talk, I was the culprit, the law breaker, and the trouble causer. I was cruel and inhuman standing over those men with a gun. I was fortunate enough that no one tried any hanky panky. I never did have any trouble.

During the six weeks on this assignment, I went to the bowling alley on the base almost every night and set pins for the bowlers. They didn't have the automatic pin setters like they have now. It was all done by human hands. I received ten cents a line for setting pins. I made enough to buy a new wrist watch to replace the one that had gone down with the Gambier Bay and send a few dollars home. In that six

weeks, I did not bowl a line.

As stated, the marines were in charge of that brig. They did not get their rates as easily as the navy personnel. The man in charge, to whom I was responsible, was only a corporal. He had a lot of authority and a lot of responsibility. I do not know how long he had been in the marines but he was pretty tough and took care of his job really well. One day he asked me if I was related to Admiral Bagley, whom I had never heard of. He told me he was the commanding officer of this station at one time. The corporal then said that I had given him the right answer. I gathered that Admiral Bagley was not held in very high esteem by this corporal.

For each meal, the brig prisoners had to come out of the dormitories on the run with their arms folded, and run across an opening about 100 feet, then through a gate, and into the chow hall. After the meal they had to run back the same way. I was usually there about the time they came out from breakfast, because I was to take charge of my crew at 8 o'clock. I was always there before and after lunch. I did not have to stand there with a rifle, because the marine personal stood in line with sawed off shot guns. They had the same instructions. If a man made a break for it, it was, "Halt! Halt! Halt!" Bang!

One day a big, black man saw that the gate just down the hill was open. He must have thought he could make it, so while running across to the chow hall he took off down the hill toward the open gate 100 feet away. It was the road that the traffic used. A short marine with a sawed off shot gun yelled, "Halt! Halt! Halt!" then fired. The big man dropped. He died three days later. I am glad I was not there to see

that incident.

There was another instance when a marine prisoner and a tall navy man tricked the marines. These two fellows, instead of turning and running into the chow hall as they came through the gate, they ran unnoticed into a door to the heads (restrooms). In their arms, or under their shirts, they had some other clothes which were not detected. They had somehow obtained I.D. cards. They changed clothes, and came out of the heads in only a few minutes in dress uniform as a marine and a sailor. They showed their I.D. cards at the gate and walked out. They walked down the hill past the fence and took off through the brush. They were able to get to the outer fence of the prison boundary and climb over it. One guard, quite a distance away saw them climb over the fence near the highway going toward San Francisco. As soon as they reached the highway, someone in a car picked them up. A few days later they found the navy man by keeping watch on a relative's home. The marine was still missing when I left. The ruling at the brig was, if one of those prisoners got away from the marines, a marine did not have to serve his time but none of the marines on that base would get liberty until the prisoner was back in custody. The marines had been a couple of weeks without liberty when I left. I never learned the outcome.

While on Goat Island, I learned that my friend Chris was in the Lettermen's Hospital at the Army Presidio west of San Francisco. I took a bus one evening and went to see him. He appeared to be well and in control. I was told however, that it was a mental ward that he was in. That was hard to believe, as he and the surroundings all appeared normal. Chris had been bothered with skin rash much of the time we were

in the South Pacific. He said the rash was the cause of his hospitalization. We had a good visit. I did not think at the time that I would never see or hear from Chris again, but that is the case at the time of this writing.

While stationed on Goat Island, I went back to the Berkeley L.D.S. Ward meetings on Sundays. That is where I had been going while in school on Treasure Island. One Sunday morning I saw my name on the draft list in the barracks. It listed the men who would be leaving the next morning. I was sure I would not be allowed to go on liberty that morning, because they always pulled the liberty cards the day before they posted the names on the draft. Since I was right there at the window where the liberty cards were being passed out, I thought I would check. I asked for my card, and it was given to me. I went to Church this one last Sunday. I don't know that it was good. I had a very depressed feeling all day. I had the impression that if I went out to sea again I would not come back. But I said nothing about it to anyone.

The next morning we were put in what they called the stockade. This did not exist 11 months before when I went out. It was like a big pen with barbed wire around the top of a chainlink fence. It was as if they expected everyone to try to go AWOL. There were all kinds of systems to prevent one from getting out. We were in there three days before we boarded a ship to sail out. The last letter I had received from home said the children had the chickenpox or measles or maybe it was scarlet fever. I do not remember which illness they had. They had it for a week by now and I was wondering how they were doing. Little

Bonnie always had all of her sicknesses extremely hard. I went to an officer and asked if there was any way I could go to the post office and get my mail or have someone pick it up for me. He said no, but that I could go talk to the man at the Red Cross office who may be able to help me. This man had an office in the stockade, so I asked him if he could find a way for me to get my mail. The post office was on base. It was not as if there would be travel to San Francisco or some other post office. This Red Cross man was very firm about it. He said they could not get my mail, and could not let me go to the post office. So I heard nothing from the family for at least six weeks.

While I was still on Goat Island, I received a package in the mail from home. I opened it to find what was supposed to be cookies that the family had made for me. It was mailed a long time before the Gambier Bay was sunk and had been sent to the fleet post office. That package had followed me around from October until February. It had been all over the Pacific Ocean in all that humidity. When I opened it, I found half of it was moving and the other half was crumbs. It was full of weevil and things I would never have believed.

Late in the afternoon of March 2nd, the men in the stockade went aboard a Personnel Transport ship, the U.S.S. Bergan, APA 150, headed for the Hawaiian Islands. Leaving late in the evening when it was almost dark, I thought it would be one time I could get to Hawaii without being seasick. Instead of going to my bunk I stood out on deck until it was almost time for lights out. In the breeze and being able to see everything around, I felt fine. I figured that if I went below and went directly to bed I may be able to avoid the seasickness. The

sea was just as rough as always with the big land swells. It was the policy of the navy to cut straight through them instead of taking a diagonal course, which could have helped prevent seasickness. As soon as I started below to the sleeping quarters, and before I reached my bunk, I lost my supper. Just being in closed quarters with all that motion made me ill. I went to the heads and stayed in there for three days. I did not even come out to sleep in my bunk because I was so sick all of the time. Maybe this was tied to the premonition I had experienced that I would not come back. I came pretty close to not making it through those four days to smooth water. That was the most miserable four days I had ever spent up to that time.

We finally reached the welcomed calm and went through the flying fish again, where things were beautiful, then into Pearl Harbor and docked. I was taken by bus to a place called Aiea which is at the northeast corner of Pearl Harbor. I had no idea what awaited me there, but it was surely good to be back in the Hawaiian Islands. The barrack I was assigned to was more like a cottage. There were several bunks in it, but I was the only occupant except for the sailor in charge. During the 12 days I was there I had no assigned duty. I was able to do whatever I pleased as long as the man in charge knew where I was. It was a delightful stay.

I arrived there on March 8, 1945, a Thursday evening. On Sunday morning I was out in front of my quarters at the public wash basin. There were about a dozen sinks for washing clothes, hands, and face. I do not remember what I was doing, probably shaving, about 7:30. I looked to my left and saw a man walking along the path in front of my

quarters, about 50 feet away. This was two or three blocks from any highway or road, and this man was wearing navy whites. He was about 6 feet 4 inches, tall and skinny. I immediately recognized him as my cousin, Nile Meservy, from St. Anthony, Idaho. I do not think he knew why he was there anymore than I did, except that he had been spiritually directed there for us to find each other. I didn't even know he was in the navy. When I was in Bremerton, Washington, Nile was working in the ship yards as a pipe fitter or plumber, repairing the ships that had been damaged in the Pacific. Now, here he was in the navy and stationed in Honolulu.

I had learned the day before where the church services were for the sailors in this area and was planning to attend. So Nile and I walked to church together that morning, about a half mile away. All attenders were sailors. In that meeting, the first person I saw was Fred Mason, also from St. Anthony, Idaho who lived in the same ward that Nile lived in. In fact, I had been Fred's and Nile's Scoutmaster in previous years. Fred was the mechanic for Admiral Nimitz's private yacht, which was docked in Pearl Harbor for a time. The Admiral had gone some place for a couple of weeks on assignment for the war effort. All Fred had to do was be there when Admiral Nimitz returned so he could start the engine for him and keep it running.

The next person I met at Church that I knew was Wilson Chandler. He and I had both lived in the Idaho Falls 6th Ward. About three years before that he had been the Young Men's Superintendent of Mutual and I had been his first counselor. We were members of the same seventies quorum.

Wilson, Fred, Nile and I had quite a reunion there. Nile's station was in Honolulu, approximately 15 miles from Aiea. I don't know what prompted him to come there that Sunday morning. He said he just got out on the highway, caught a ride and rode as far as he could with a sailor in a jeep. When he got to this destination, he just started walking around. I asked Nile a little about his duty and his relationship to his commanding officer. He said they had a very good rapport with each other. I asked Nile to talk to his commanding officer and see if I could get permanently stationed in the Hawaiian Islands, maybe under his jurisdiction. Nile did ask, and came back Tuesday afternoon while on his liberty to tell me about it. The prospects were good until the commanding officer asked what my rate was. When Nile told him I was a Radio Tech, the officer said he could not do anything for me, because the electronics men got their assignments directly from Washington, D.C. I knew then that I was destined for something further on.

Wilson Chandler was stationed on the base I was on. He was one of the ship's company, and had regular working hours. He had time off during the day every day. He and some others usually played basketball during that time on an outside court. It was pretty hot weather for that kind of physical activity, but it was good exercise and I joined them. We did not play games, just practiced and shot baskets, with a little scrimmage. It was enjoyable.

Fred Mason came around a couple of times and I went with him. We walked, of course. He took me to see Admiral Nimitz's yacht. I got to go aboard and see the engine room. Fred's bunk was in the engine room. The second Sunday I was there, Fred and I planned that on Tuesday we

would get out on the road and hitchhike to the Hawaiian Temple. I had never seen it, and still haven't. I was going to get permission to leave and hitchhike to the extreme northwest end of the island where the temple was. It was quite a few miles from Aiea.

When I got in that night, after Fred had left, my name was posted on the bulletin board to go out on a draft Tuesday morning. I never knew if Fred kept that appointment and got to the temple. Before he could have arrived Tuesday morning, I was hustled off onto another ship and was on my way to the Western Pacific.

March 20, 1945, I boarded the U.S.S. Omar Bundy, AP 152, another passenger transport, headed for the anchorage of Ulithi. The last time I saw Ulithi, the Gambier Bay had gone there with the idea that there may be some resistance from the Japanese. We did not find any, and Ulithi was taken over. This Atoll was said to be the most natural anchorage in the world, because there is only one way in and one way out. Many ships were anchored there. We had come via Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands and arrived at Ulithi April 1st. It was smooth water all the way. I never experienced any seasickness in the navy after that last seige between San Francisco and Pearl Harbor.