

Rec'd Thurs. July 26-45-
Larmita. Bowler

July 1945.



Story of "SERVICE SQUADRON TEN"

The Shangri-La of Task Forces, -
Springboard of the Fleet.

Editor: Clive N. Pillsbury, Y2c.

The mobile squadron serving the fleet in the forward area, officially designated "SERVICE SQUADRON TEN", is also known as Mobile Supply Base No. 1, and as ComServRon TEN, the latter being an abbreviated or telescoped version of Commodore Carter's title, "Commander Service Squadron TEN".

Commodore Worrall R. Carter, born 60 years ago aboard the square rigger Storm King on the Pacific, and a sailor before the mast in the days of wooden ships, organized the Squadron or Mobile Base on a plan perfected in detail to such extent that from its origin it efficiently served naval task forces. Steady growth enabled the Squadron to meet obligations of the Truk and Palau raids, the Marianas' campaign, and each new step on thru the conquest of Okinawa.

Merging in one organization and making available afloat wherever needed the functions of supply, service, repair, communications and others heretofore limited to land bases, the Mobile Supply Base was created on the order of Admiral Nimitz given in the autumn of '43. The base swiftly became a potent secret weapon effectively serving as a springboard for conquest of key islands along the Tokyo Road and, of even greater importance, permitted by-passing such heavily fortified Japanese strongholds as Truk, Yap & Babelthaup, cutting by months or even years the timetable of Pacific operations.

The Japanese had not foreseen the Mobile Supply Base, had gambled the future of their entire nation on their ability to hold us at arm's length through the almost impregnable fortresses guarding the few scattered islands large enough for land bases on the approaches of the Tokyo Road such as Truk and Yap. Neutralizing and then by-passing these bases completely upset Jap strategy contemplating the increased fortification of the Marianas and other inner islands while we were struggling with the outer fortresses.

.....
 "If we've got it, you can have it", motto of Service Squadron TEN, is of deeper meaning than appears on the surface for the Supply and Maintenance divisions, among others, perform much like the stage magician who starts off with a silk hat from which he proceeds to draw rabbits, ducks, pigeons and a bewildering assortment of amazing items.

The Squadron has demonstrated uncanny ability to anticipate and supply needs. Staples such as ammunition, fuel, equipment, food and clothing are provided in enormous quantities as a matter of routine. The surprising element begins with men, tools and material for effecting speedy repairs afloat, even when serious battle damage has been incurred both below and above the water line, and ranges on to the ability to deliver extensive ready-to-run shore facilities such as electric power generating plants, water distillation units, telephone and lighting systems; hospitals, construction material and equipment, and then the Hollywood touch - theatres and entertainment, libraries and lipsticks, dry goods and electric toasters, newspapers and ice cream.

Men, too, are in stock, affording capable, seasoned replacements for every battle position and service need. Here use is made of the carefully tabulated background information concerning every man, listing his schooling, practical training, skill in specialized fields and his hobbies. Basic training in fundamentals of seamanship pays off as many given advanced training in a specialty are employed in routine tasks ranging from cargo handling to the splicing of lines and general maintenance work pending call for men skilled in their specialty.

Flexibility of the Mobile Base is noteworthy, involving constant remodeling, enlargement, discarding and branching out, keeping pace or ahead of new developments of war such as rockets, rocket planes, Super Fortresses and kamikaze type weapons of the enemy. Now and then the loading, unloading, reloading and shifting of material becomes confusing to personnel involved, viewing one phase of the work, but the governing motive is the need of being up to the minute or a jump ahead. This sometimes necessitates disposing of strategic reserves, which it was never necessary to fall back on, in preparation for future operations.

The magic touch that more than fills the pledge, "If we've got it, you can have it", is the ability to reproduce minute or giant parts, to design and make on the spot new items for new needs, to solve almost every problem, many by brilliantly ingenious methods. The Squadron has numerous floating machine shops, production units and laboratories staffed by highly skilled men representing many fields of science and industry, but where necessary it does not hesitate to cannibalize its own ships, or vessels returning to major home bases, for parts and equipment.

Successful service must be complete service for lack of one or more small parts may cripple a ship as seriously as shortage of fuel or supplies. This recalls the tale, "For want of a nail the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost, for want of a horse the kingdom was lost". The accomplishment of Squadron TEN, the Service Force of which it is a part, and the supply division of the Navy is truly amazing, meriting the many tributes and commendations received. This springboard of the fleet in the forward area, often within the shadow of enemy bases, symbolizes the industrial power, the devotion and the organization of technical resources of the Navy. It is a great contribution toward victory, recognized in military circles as a unique and memorable military achievement.

The service program operates about like this: Personnel of a task force returning from combat, such as the Iwo Jima invasion or at Okinawa, and approaching a rendezvous with the main body of Squadron TEN might first see on the horizon a thin, broken line of low lying land topped by shell blasted palms. As the line of ships entered a passage into the atoll lagoon patrol craft passed aboard harbor charts, bulletins, copies of the servicing schedule and a supply base directory. The program of services and supplies is so extensive that a 38 page booklet is required merely to outline services and list key ships without attempting to catalog items or list the hundreds of ships concerned. Berth assignments are flashed to each vessel from the harbor entrance signal tower. The view moving through the harbor is of an amazing armada of ships stretching in all directions, in some to the vanishing point on the horizon. Few have ever seen such an array before, fighting ships and service vessels riding alone at anchor or moored together in groups of two or more with here and there a giant tender in the center of a cluster of destroyers, DEs or PCs like a hen mothering a flock of chicks. The service and supply ships are chunky, bristling with cranes, masts, booms and rigging, as different from the sleek combat ships as steam freight engines and box-cars are from streamlined passenger trains of electric diesel engines and glistening pullman cars.

As each task force ship drew into the berth assigned for anchorage, a boat drew alongside to pass aboard mail and parcel post, then to standby for duty such as procuring supplies or transporting recreation parties to the beach. Station oilers followed alongside for the purpose of supplying fuel and lubricants. Water barges were available for delivery of fresh water whenever need of overhaul or repairs required shutting down the ship's distillation plant.

At dusk an impression of fire flies is created by the flicker of cutting and welding torches for repair work and servicing continues through the night, round the clock. The surface of the lagoon between ships is a crisscross pattern of lighters and landing craft shuttling repair material and supplies between ships.

As an example of efficiency, the program of provisioning ships starts at Naval Supply depots in USA where Supply Corps officers trained in selection of food for a balanced diet draw from available warehouse stocks and order assembled at the dock in time for the ships arrival carload lots of flour, beans, rice, sugar, coffee, canned vegetables and fruit, tea, bacon and other essentials of appetizing, healthful meals. Loaded and enroute to Squadron TEN in the forward area, the ship's Supply Officer and staff prepare on paper from the cargo list an assortment of one, two or five tons quantity which is known as a "unit". The same practice is followed with fresh provisions (frozen meat, chilled fruit, vegetables and eggs) whether handled by the same ship or one designed exclusively for this class of provisions. Ships drawing supplies order "units"

in accordance with their storage facilities. This eliminates need of shopping lists and the visiting of many ships which would greatly increase the work and lead to situations whereby the first to draw provisions might obtain an excessive share of choice cuts of meat and fancy fruits whereas the last vessels on the list might be faced with the problem of devising 57 ways of serving hamburger and applesauce.

.....

The Squadron's units vary from small quonset huts secured to a pontoon type barge and cumbersome floating drydocks to huge tenders honeycombed with shops equipped with precision machinery. Some of the shops are designed for servicing and rebuilding delicate instruments, some handle torpedoes and ordnance equipment, many handle motors of all kinds, and some are metal shops capable of handling anything from tin to armor plate. Others are for optical equipment, sensitive electrical devices, watches and aircraft. Construction of many of the specialized ships required a year or more compared with a few weeks for liberty or other cargo vessels.

Some of the ships are made of concrete heavily reinforced with steel. Non-critical material was used in turning out these ships, even in the case of the steel for this could be produced in plants not tooled for rolling plates. The formula for the concrete is about as far removed from that employed in the construction of sidewalks as tempered stainless steel is from the sheet metal in cans, as a result the concrete is tougher, lighter and more resilient. This is due to the use of special ingredients throughout, one of which is the aggregate of a special kind of shale which is heat treated until puffed like breakfast cereal. The tensile strength is increased by the process and the spongelike texture absorbs cement making a bond vastly superior to a product made with ordinary, smooth pebbles. The Japanese were amazed, as were some of our own Navy men, when their bullets bounced harmlessly off the deck of a strange American vessel last year. Then when an honorable bomb failed to shatter the deck, merely scattering its own fragments around, their rage knew no bounds. Determined little rascals they finally sunk it with seven torpedoes but not until after the vessel remained afloat for a whole day. Now that the enemy has stubbed his ammunition against these vessels it is no longer necessary to conceal their existence. Most of them are non-self-propelled, affording greater storage capacity. Then, too, this allows use of the scarce and costly power plant in a tug which when not engaged in towing the concrete ship may shift vessels in the harbor, tow lighters, etc. Other advantages of concrete ships are: they are cooler; quieter; free from vibration; there is very little seepage; the hulls do not need to be continually scraped and painted below the water line for the purpose of preventing rust or rot thus they may go indefinitely without drydocking.

One of the strangest tales of the war concerns a concrete ship attacked by Japanese light bombers while under tow in the Southwest Pacific. One bomb shattered on deck, several scored near misses - close enough to have torn the hull of a steel ship - without inflicting damage. Another bomb sunk the tug which had the concrete under tow. The tug was carrying a load of depth bombs. As the tug sank the concrete vessel glided over it and just at that instant the bombs let go. Witnesses said the concrete ship was lifted clear of the water so that sky was visible between the keel and the water. It was quite a blow as the skipper bumped his head on the overhead ten feet off the deck yet the ship itself was unhurt. No one knows what amazing extremes of punishment these ships may absorb. Incredibly, it seems that the reinforced concrete bends and rebounds instead of splintering.

Some units of the Service Force accompany invasion fleets, others follow in a steady stream to the newly established beachhead, while occasionally a little known and highly specialized unit such as a Hydrographic Survey ship actually precedes the invasion, moving deep into enemy waters for the purpose of charting dangers such as shoals, reefs and man made barriers. Our charts of some Jap held areas are made from surveys nearly a century old and from widely spaced sound-

ings, with detail substantially confined to commercial harbors, giving very little data concerning beaches selected for landings. Scientists on these ships, which have but meager gun protection, work heedless of danger to the end that combat ships may have up-to-the-minute charts.

.....

Life in the Service Squadron reflects the interest and concern of officers afloat and in the Navy Department, of a grateful home-front and Government, with good living conditions, ample food, almost nightly movies, radio music and entertainment, generous supplies of cigarettes and candy, yet in many respects it is less endurable and more mentally depressing than service in other fields. The stimuli of motion, of conflict, of changing activity is lacking. Whereas combat scenes may leave only time for action and a minimum of sleep, here there is often leisure time, periods for thought and loneliness. Elements of adventure are blotted out by monotony, relative confinement and the accumulative strain of crowded conditions and lack of privacy. It is much like a never ending house party, with guests restricted to the building, constant activity around, all rooms crowded, with standing in line to shower, wash, eat, and even to make purchases at the ship's store counter. Shipmates are congenial and for brief periods conditions may be considered ideal but in the long run pent up desire for variation, home standards, wears away the lustre from the sunniest disposition. Routine under varying mental stresses and lengths of isolation may cross over from a standard that may be taken in stride to one of genuine hardship not offset or compensated for in tangible evidence of valor in service and devotion comparable with the awards of decorations and stars to combat forces where admittedly hazards are greater physically but not mentally.

The American version of fighting a war is always mingled with fun but in remote anchorages the lack of feminine influences dampen the gaiety. Where humor bubbles forth and sparkles at home, here it veers toward satire. Consider the popular names given by the boys to craft officially designated only by letters and number, for after all a number is not warmly expressive enough for the personality of a home at sea, not when the vessel may be called the "Ritz Carlton" or the "New Yorker" and these names, of course, were not given owing to any resemblance of these arks to famed hotels. While picturesque the name of another unit, the "Sea Hag" is more accurately descriptive. Another in this class has been dubbed the "Hafastor". Then we have the "Gunga Din" and "She-nuff", "My Sunday Gal" and the "Ragged Stranger". Some of these are illuminated with sketches from Walt Disney's fold or a brainchild of the artist. Take the code names on harbor talkie circuits, selected like telephone exchange names for distinctive sound identification, they run about like this; "Sad Sam" calling "Dirty Gertie", come in "Dirty Gertie", or perhaps it is "Tin Horn" calling "Smoked Fish". Another outlet for fun consists of clipping comical or even cynical cartoons, selected with an eye toward portrayal of exaggerated mannerisms or caricature of one of the boys aboard, labeling the cartoon accordingly and then posting it. There is no malice in the practice and the custom is accepted as intended in a spirit of fun. Another variation in humor takes the form of sarcastic remarks concerning the other fellows home state or city such as referring to Texas as the state where the jack rabbits carry lunches in knapsacks and all the loyal boosters are living elsewhere; California is the state of tall trees and tall tales; Florida is the hurricanes' playground; Missouri is the state where the inquiring reporter gives out information instead of taking it in; Oklahoma is said to take its census of citizens in California; and Pittsburg is where life goes on as usual behind a permanent smoke screen.

Correspondence consumes more thought and time than reflected by letters home due in part to enervation from tropical heat, to lack of interesting material owing to isolation and monotonous routine, and to a restlessness that lures one from concentrating on an intended letter into a group exploring wishfully the latest communique, the current estimate of V-J day or the latest scuttlebut concerning rotation leave. The other side of the picture is the dampening

effect on expressiveness when a letter must be read by a third person, however impersonal censorship may be, resulting in a restrained or stilted style. Romantic conversation has probably always been subdued on a crowded bus and in the presence of a chaperon, reaching out for the stars and flowering in all its fire and brilliance only when free from intrusion or out of the range of others. Few are literary artists or good actors, or maybe it's stagefright even with an unseen audience, so for many where the heart whispers "Wonderful Darling", the pen writes "Dearest"; the thought arises, "To be with you would be as in the Seventh Heaven" but the letter reads, "Wish I were there"; the theme in mind is "Pleasant as it is to write of and plan for future good times, adventures hand in hand, what I really long for is the day that these dreams shall crystalize in reality, when a kiss shall be a heavenly experience instead of a four letter word on paper, when we may share the moonlight and the fireside, may find thrills in smiles and warmth in fingers entwined", but instead we find ourselves jotting down, "There is little news, everything is much the same as usual. Bye now - an ocean of love".

.....

HALLUCINATION!

We hate to go home, you know how it is -
 Back to the life of women and song,
 We would rather stay here for one more year,
 Where nothing ever goes wrong.

Here where we have our powdered milk,
 And all the Spam we can take;
 If we went home we'd have to eat
 Those old fashioned eggs you break.

Here's where we rush for our noonday meal
 With its wonderful soup and stew.
 If we went home we would have to eat
 A tenderloin steak or two.

Here's where we lie on padded bunks,
 Reading or eating musty sweets;
 If we went home we would have to sleep
 Between those clean old white sheets.

Here's where our mail comes by plane and boat,
 Bringing us love from one we adore;
 If we went home we would have to kiss,
 Running the risk of germs galore.

..... Sez You.

Squadron TEN is part of the great Navy team, playing an essential part, contributing to every campaign, to every victory. Some phases of the work can't be revealed at this time, other parts are obscure yet vital for all serve with the same fine spirit, the same high courage and the same determination. The organization includes most of the trades and professions common to a great city - laundries, tailors, barber shops, opticians, printers, an efficient mail organization, freight section, disbursing offices, administrative offices, insurance, legal office, motion picture exchange, cobblers and a medical division spread like a network throughout the Squadron.

While heat, rain and sweat, as work goes on 'round the clock, are the most common troubles with byproduct discomforts in the form of heat rash, skin trouble, abrasions and various kinds of digestive disturbances from dehydration, sudden death is no stranger to the Squadron as units have been torpedoed and bombed, kamikaze planes have attacked, typhoons have engulfed ships and men, tidal waves have taken a toll, mines have inflicted losses, boats have capsized in tropical squalls and men have drowned, yet there are gun crews which have never fired a shot except in practice, and men carry on with an abiding sense of safety, firm in the conviction that they are doing their bit here and now in return for a flock of golden tomorrows.

Men may "gripe" or "let off steam" about wanting to go home, but not due to any lack of interest in the task or to a lack of courage, as every chance of combat, every hazardous assignment brings a deluge of volunteers. The explanation is that in war there is less of polish and diplomacy, more elementary talk, and home is nearest to mens' hearts. We may be fighting for the "Four Freedoms", to avenge "Pearl harbor", or for one of the other expressive patriotic themes, and these are not without influence, yet deep in our hearts it is "To Have and To Hold our own version of the American Way of Life, for how can you compare a letter with the heart stirring warmth and a tenderness of a kiss from a loved one in your arms.

Expressions of doubt such as "Too good to be true" are often made on reading tabulations of American vs Japanese losses reflecting a 14 to 1 advantage in our favor. It is accepted that our men, our arms are superior, yet there remains the fixed belief that the advantage is with the defense, that men in ambush, men behind prepared fortifications, men that must be pursued over mined ground have all the advantages. This theory is basically sound but reversing the advantage is an American miracle of planning, preparation, organization and execution, starting at the top in Washington and with teamwork by all hands. Preparatory bombing and naval bombardment has been so destructive to the enemy that by the time Okinawa was invaded they had chosen not to resist the landing and had retired to ground better sheltered from the sea. Our forces having landed, it is not a case of men on foot alone against the enemy for actually the marines and infantrymen have stout teammates in the Army Air Force, the Navy Air Force, Navy firepower and in mechanized land forces as one may judge from the following official OWI table of supplies for an invasion force of 250,000 men:

	Measurement in tons	
	First Landing	30 days maintenance
Weapons and ammunition	200,000	33,000
Combat vehicles (tanks, etc.)	325,000	8,000
General purpose vehicles	525,000	5,000
Signal apparatus	50,000	1,000
Rations	12,000	36,000
Petroleum products	20,000	100,000
Other quartermaster supplies	---	13,000
Transportation	100,000	1,000
Engineering Equipment	100,000	80,000
Chemical warfare equipment	25,000	2,000
Medical equipment and supplies	100,000	3,000
Air Corps equipment and supplies	---	20,000
	<u>1,557,000</u>	<u>332,000</u>

(These supplies include everything from buttons to locomotives)

Delivery of supplies is where the Service Force plays its part. The part of the program allotted Service Squadron TEN is the swift servicing of combat vessels that they may return to strike again and again, maintaining overwhelming superiority against the enemy, destroying his supplies and cutting off reinforcements.

Briefing: "You men will hold this position, at all costs, and if there's an explosion one of the sergeants will blow a whistle. Any questions ...? Yes, Sergeant Walsh?"

WALSH: "Just one question. Do we blow that whistle going up or coming down?"

.....
Here's to the girl with the turned-up nose
The well turned figure and the turned-down nose,
With the turned-on charm and the turned-down light
I'm going to marry her if things turn out right.

.....
Navy Bridegroom: "With all my worldly goods I thee endow."
His Father: "There goes his seabag and fountain pen!"

.....
KHOURI: "Look here, Gravel, this man on fatigue detail is doing twice as much work as you are."

GRAVEL: "I know, Chief, that's what I've been telling him for the last hour, but he won't slow down."

.....
"Dizzy Daffynitions"

FLEET-FOOTED: A girl who is always running after sailors.
BORE: A drip that's unnecessary.
BARGAIN SALE: A commando raid with petticoats.
SWEATER GIRL: A sight for G.I.'s.
RIPPLE: A little girl who wants to grow up to be a Wave.
GAMBOL: How many people look on marriage.
WAFFLE: A welcome mate with syrup on it.
INFATUATION: Love at first sight.
MEADOW: A cowfeteria.
SARONG: A dish towel that made good.
FRANCHISE: What French girls wink with.
HOE: What comes after hi-di.
GINGERALE: A drink that tastes like when your foot's asleep.
DANDRUFF: Chips off the old block.
BACHELOR: A man who never Mrs. anything.
OLD MAID: A gal who cries 'wolf' once too often.

.....
THERRIEN: "Are you saving half of what you earn?"
RALMO: "How can I? They don't pay me that much."

.....
BIGLAY: "If this storm continues we'll have to heave to."
KING: "What do you think I've been doing this past hour?"

.....
CUTIE: "I intend to marry a Marine sergeant and a gentleman."
BLOMQUIST: "But honey, that would be bigamy."

.....
ROBERTS: "You know Chief, when I get out of the Navy I think I'll raise chickens."

THERRIEN: "I suggest you raise bats. I think you'll find their hours suit you better."

.....
An odd-looking scraggly haired woman made some pointed remarks about PARTIN'S conduct at the USO as she prepared to close for the night. Glancing at her watch, she said "Hurry, I've got to be on my way to Burlingame."
PARTIN: "Don't let me stop you, I know you want to make the early morning broom."