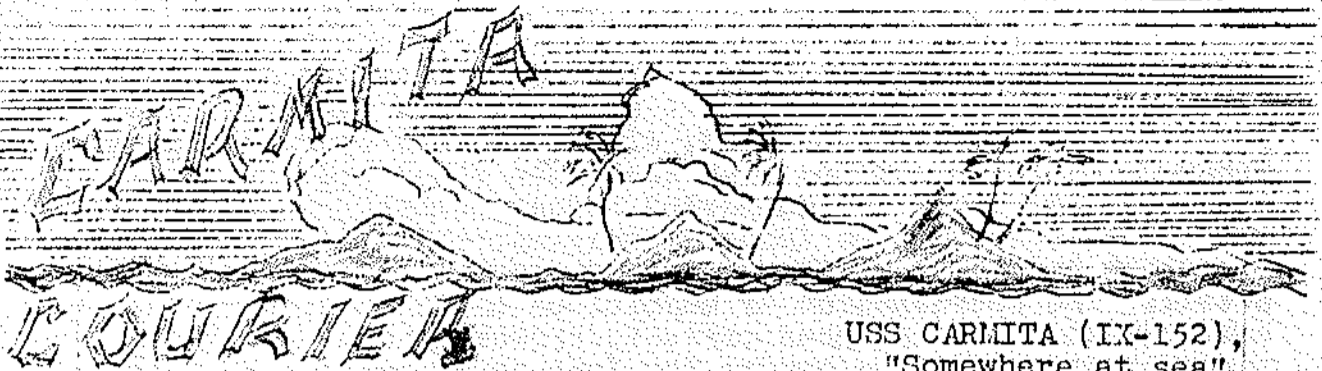


Rec'd Mar. 23-45



USS CARMITA (IX-152),
"Somewhere at sea",
Wednesday,
14 March 1945.

Dearest and loveliest One,

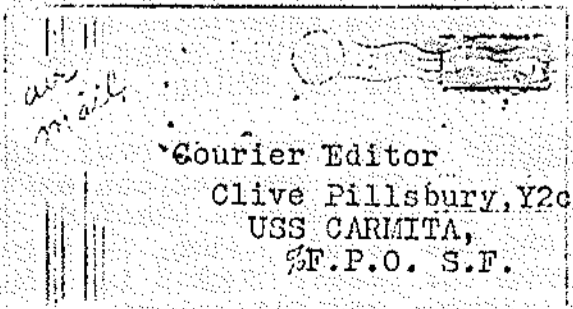
Your lovely, glowing thoughts fashioned of life
And woven with bits of stardust
Wing their way swiftly to bring me joy, -
To weave a spell of enchantment 'round my heart.
Others see only a letter, a thing of paper and ink,
Not knowing of the magic spark
That imparts life to each page, each word.

Your letters have lines that all but sing, -
My heart does that in tune with yours.
You may use simple words yet each paragraph
Sketches a picture as fair as painted by any artist.
You tell of rain, and I sense the patter on the roof;
Mention fire on the hearth, and I hear flames crackle;
Speak of Spring, - I smell the fragrance of blossoms.

I pause to turn a page, then visualize you
Brushing back a wisp of hair.
A bit of humor, and I can see the twinkle in your eyes, -
There's mist in mine.
I want to reach out and draw you near,
To find your sweet lips turned toward mine.
Darling, I love you.

Your picture before me guides my thoughts
Like a star of inspiration.
Yet, apart from you, time passes all too slowly.
Keep writing, dearest.
Each letter is a bit of Heaven, but what I want most
Is to hold the Angel that writes them.
'Til then, sweet dreams enfold you,

P.S. News from here and there, and notes of interest
concerning the Carmita accompany this letter.



MINDANAO, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS:

Zamboanga City and San Roque airdrome were captured late yesterday by the 41st division, after they had overrun strong enemy defensive positions with elaborate steel and concrete pillboxes and artillery supported strong points. So effective was our assault that we incurred only minor losses, due to the excellent team work of ground forces, aerial support and Naval attack. The coordination of amphibious units with the Naval bombardment was pronounced perfect, effecting the landing of powerful ground forces before the Japs could reorganize following the softening up rain of steel and fire from warships and planes.

Field officers expressed satisfaction with gains and said that our principal objectives would soon be taken. First to fall was the "Wolfe" airstrip on the southwestern tip of Mindanao.

Seventh Fleet cruisers and destroyers shelled the beach, then elevated their guns to silence strong points behind the beachhead. Meanwhile Liberators loosened tons of bombs on gun positions until the entire area was a blanket of rolling orange explosions and everything moveable or fixed for miles around was vibrating like a punching bag from concussion.

IWO JIMA: The curtain is about to ring down as the final scenes in the battle for this island, also known as Sulphur Island, are being staged on the north tip where sulphur fumes arise from fissures, along with steam, as though the gates of hell were literally swinging open for the surviving Japs now cornered in a 1,000 yard triangle on Kitano point. One small enemy pocket was bypassed, to be mopped up later, leaving only a few snipers aside from the relatively strong force now entrenched on Kitano Point. Here the Japs are fighting furiously from pillboxes, blockhouses, caves and jagged passages in the cliffs.

THE TOKYO AFFAIR: Japan has been battered a total of 32 times since the small fleet of B-29s roared in from China last June to make their first raid. Today's raiders took off from Guam, Tinian and Saipan and flew to Nagoya, making a raid comparable in size to the Tokyo raid, and this one destroyed an area equal in size to that of Manhattan Island. The official estimate is that 25 more similar Superfort attacks would be adequate to blot out Tokyo's remaining 250 square miles. Sixty more such raids would destroy all of the Tokyo-Yokohama area. The destruction of 3500 square blocks in the heart of Tokyo Saturday was wrought by 2300 tons of fire bombs, most of which were dropped from an elevation of only 1,000 feet, possible to the light resistance. This is the sort of treatment given Nagoya this morning. Nagoya, Japan's third city, produces a high percentage of the enemy's combat aircraft and aircraft engines.

WATCH ON THE RHINE: The Yanks fought to enlarge their bridgehead on the east of the Rhine and succeeded in grasping eleven miles of the east bank and penetrating to a depth of four and one half miles. Then the First U.S. Army struck out in their first big assault eastward from the Rhine. One American outfit pushed to within three miles of a super highway leading into the rich industrial Ruhr Valley. One lateral highway has been severed by the Yanks who hold a dozen or more towns on the east side of the Rhine.

LONDON: An armada of over 2100 American warplanes slashed a wide path across northern Germany today, with a main force of 650 bombers blasting military and Naval installations along the Baltic coast, in direct support of the Russian armies. Among the points bombed in Germany were Siege, Betzdorf, Marburg, Friedburg, and Dillenburg.

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY LIEUT. CHARLES E. BURCH, Jr., COMMANDING OFFICER, U.S.S. CARMITA, TO CREW ASSEMBLED AT QUARTERS.

You are called to quarters for the purpose of the presentation of a formal letter of commendation by the Commander Service Squadron TEN, Service Force Fleet of the United States Pacific Fleet,

So far as we know, this is the first such specific commendation extended any of this type of ship.

It reads as follows:

Serial: 1040

From: Commander Service Squadron TEN.
To: BIGLAY, Jesse Samuel, BM2c, 360-27-64, USN.,
WHITE, Robert (n), Slc, 857-98-55, USNR.,
SCHROEDER, Morris William, Flc, 944-89-24, USNR.,
DOLLISON, Gene Raymond, Slc, 956-36-98, USNR.,
GRAVEL, Francis Lawrence, Slc, 666-44-86, USNR.,
CAMPBELL, Raymond Eugene, S2c, 629-91-54, USNR.,
TYLER, Robert Christopher, S2c, 283-93-07, USN.

Via: Officer-in-Charge, U.S.S. CARMITA (IX-152).

Subject: Commendation.

1. You are commended for the intelligence and efficiency with which you effected the rescue of several of the survivors of _____ after that _____ . Your presence at the scene of the disaster in VP-1 assigned to the U.S.S. CARMITA (IX-152) and your efforts contributed to the saving of lives. Well Done!

2. The Officer-in-Charge, U.S.S. CARMITA, is directed to make a copy of this letter a part of your official service record.

/s/ W. R. CARTER.

E. E. DUVALL,
By direction.

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I am able to read the letter. When we left San Francisco for the forward area we stated to you that you would have a chance to serve in many ways, unknown to us at the time. Your chance came to do something a little more than "in line of duty" and you came through with flying colors. No officers were there to tell you what to do, but with typical American resourcefulness and ingenuity you did a fine piece of work in saving the lives of 37 men.

Because of your job, wives, sweethearts and parents back home who would otherwise have been sad will be glad that their loved ones are yet alive.

You may never have quite the same opportunity again; and you might not have been able to do as much even on a battleship or large fighting unit. So it is that we learn in the service that every job is a part of the larger program, and can be made a means of rendering a service to get this war over with so we can all return to our homes.

You have evidenced the usual American stuff that makes the Navy, Marine Corps & Army of our country what it is, and we see in this recognition that the Navy does not overlook what its men are doing.

This will be made a permanent part of your record as directed. Carry on!

ODYSSEY OF THE CARMITA

A touch of drama marked the maiden voyage of the Carmita, sometimes affectionately called "The Green Dragon", when unannounced and without benefit of a gallery to bid us farewell, she glided under the Golden Gate bridge and out to sea on one of San Francisco's 'delightfully cool' afternoons with wisps of fog veiling her superstructure. The boys fondly watched the shoreline recede, speculating on how many months would pass before we should once again gaze on familiar landmarks. It was cold and the sea rough and a few became seasick but yet no one anticipated the mechanical casualty that occurred about midnight, casting the ship adrift off coastal mine fields, wallowing in heavy ground swells and moving toward the target area where guns fire seaward ceaselessly. Blacked out completely we drifted like a ghost ship until contacted by Navy Blimps soon after dawn. The Blimps from the mainland flew low enough for conversation. A bit later tugs made fast and returned us to the harbor.

The second cruise, mechanical repairs having been effected, was uneventful except for the thrills associated with the first visit to Hawaii. The rich blue color of the sea, the beautiful panorama of mountains with peaks shrouded in fleecy clouds, colorful vegetation and artistic palms produced one unforgettable scene after another.

Liberty in Honolulu and vicinity! Like the fulfillment of a dream we found many picturesque places, lovely native girls adorned with exotic tropical flowers, festive resorts along the shore, curious Oriental bazaars, and here and there oases providing gay music and offering refreshing drinks amid scenery and atmosphere in keeping with the theme "Paradise of the Pacific".

Appropriately, final preparations for our part in the war effort were made in Pearl Harbor, on the site where Japan struck the first blow in the war with the United States. From our anchorage we could see the Stars and Stripes proudly flying just above the water, marking the resting spot of a gallant Navy ship that went down that first day except for the standard holding aloft the American Flag.

Proceeding westward we spotted floating debris including empty life rafts and water soaked life-jackets, mute evidence of toll paid in lives on the Road to Tokyo. In July we passed near Truk, a few minutes away by plane, enroute to our rendezvous. Now, close to the equator, we were rapidly becoming accustomed to the intense heat and great humidity of the tropics, to frequent down-pours, and to the fact that perspiration streamed off with every muscular effort.

THIS IS
WHERE
I CAME
ABOARD

→ Anchored in Eniwetok, we learned at first hand the structure of a coral atoll, a circular ring of small islands linked by reefs with an occasional break or passage into the lagoon encircled by the low islands and reefs. We found some of the smaller, normally uninhabited islands in their natural state and others, which had been Jap occupied, virtually stripped of vegetation and with palms shattered, battlegrounds telling eloquently of the fierceness of the struggle for possession.

Then westward again to other scenes; native villages and a flotilla of skilfully built boats of the type with which natives have navigated the Pacific for centuries; long hours of vigil at battle stations; the first impression made by the volcano of fire and smoke marking a stricken tanker, incident in an encounter with enemy submarines; experience with tropical storms and riding out a typhoon; the sound of Japanese planes overhead and the sight of Kamkazi or fanatical Jap suicide planes striking nearby; and other adventures on the Road to Tokyo, such as ball games in deep sand on the beach fringing a tropical jungle.

FLOATING SUPPLY BASE ACCOMPANIES U.S. FLEET FOR MAJOR NAVAL BLOWS

(Quoted from a February press release of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, concerning the Squadron of which the USS GARMITA is a unit, Marine Corps Supply Section.)

A FLOATING NAVAL BASE SOMEWHERE IN THE PACIFIC: The Navy took its own supply base along with it for the assaults on Iwo Jima and the Honshu coast.

The American answer to the most gigantic logistics problem in Naval history - that of supplying provisions, fuel and ammunition for warships in action far from island bases or docking facilities - was revealed by Fleet Admiral Nimitz as the "secret weapon" which has upset all Japanese strategy.

The answer is simple, all Naval installations in this most advanced area are floating. Everything from drydocks to quonset huts bobs right along in the wake of the fleet itself.

This base is located as far from San Francisco as San Francisco is from London. It is operated by Squadron 10 of the Pacific Fleet Service Forces.

Installations include floating cranes, hotels, repair units, bakeries, offices, refrigerated warehouses, wells, drydocks and repair ships. This base has more than 12,000 workers, many of whom live in the floating hotel called "Ritz Carlton".

More than 400 pieces of floating equipment including electrical equipment repair ships, tug-boats, three fresh water tankers, and evaporation vessels capable of making 12,000 gallons of water daily, and a ship which does nothing but supply bakery goods, are part of the Squadron.

The maze of ships is so confusing that we had to stop three separate warships to ask where our objective was located.

For the current operations, enough food was loaded on the task force vessels to feed Columbus, Ohio, for 30 days; enough spare clothing to clad 1,500,000 persons, and enough candy, shaving cream, tooth paste and miscellaneous items to stock fully 6,000 drug stores. In addition, the force carried 100,000,000 cigarettes.

No Naval Base anywhere ever was required to service in such limited time so many ships as were handled here before this operation, involving the largest concentration of warships in Naval history.

3/16/45

Dear Folks,

Just a few lines to let you know I'm well and happy. Haven't heard from you since last week so there isn't much I can write about anyway. Probably get some mail tomorrow though and then I'll write you a letter. If you shouldn't hear from me for awhile after my next letter don't worry about it. Hope you enjoy reading this little paper.

Love, Bee-

Capt. William C. Walsh

Steward's Mate, USS MASSACHUSETTS: "Fellah, when dat boy of ouahs play Pay Call, it sounds 'zactly lak de Boston Symphony playin' De Rosary."

Steward's Mate, USS ESSEX: "Broteh, you ain't got no buglah atall. When Snowball Jones wraps his lips aroun' dat bugle ob his, an' plays Mess Call, Ah looks down at mah beans, an Ah sez: 'Strawberries, behave! Yo' is kickin' de whipped cream out oh mah plate."

SWEET OLD LADY TO KING: "So, you were in the drug business, and what duty do you have in the Navy?"

KING: I'm a Pharmacist's Mate.

SWEET OLD THING: "My, my! I suppose your wife, the Pharmacist, is a Wave."

GRIM: (Glancing at news item, "British bomb Sumatra") "Why are they picking on poor Frankie, I thought he was crooning on our side."

C.B. (Member of working party, - in Chow Line): I'm so hungry I could eat a horse.

LAKERDAS: "Well, you couldn't have come to a better place."

SANDERS: "What is more beautiful to behold than a pretty girl."

TILBOR: "Such grammar, - you mean 'to be held'."

JOHNSON: "Why did you volunteer?"

KORZENIOWSKI: "First, I wanted to fight; second, I knew it would build me up physically; third, they came and got me." *

And then we have GRAVEL who joined the Navy before he found out who kept the ships so nice and clean.

WALSH: "What's the difference between wrestling and dancing?"

ARCHER: "Tell me."

WALSH: "In wrestling some holds are barred."

ASKEW: "Some girls can make a fool out of a fellow in two minutes - but, aaaah, those two minutes."

CHIEF MM: (Reflectively, as he gazes at native Chief surrounded by women) "I wonder if we couldn't work out some sort of lend-lease arrangement with him."

KOZLOWSKI: (Opening instruction period with Marine Privates) "What have you learned about booby traps?"

SHERWOOD: "The original booby trap was mistletoe."

So KING took NALLEN to the Hospital Ship for observation. - He wanted to get another look at the nurse.

CAMPELL (To class Marines): "Now, take our new rifle. It fires so rapidly that it shoots six times before you didn't know it was loaded."

TYLER: "Is the Oak Leaf Cluster a new decoration?"

BIGLAY: "Why no, Adam wore one."

JANE to MARY: (Honolulu girls observing that they were trailed by AUGUSTON & WARDLAW) "Remember - don't let them put over this divide and conquer business."

ERICKSON: "I dreamed I got a commission."

SHIRLEY: "Salling what?"

HILL: "Who introduced you to your wife?"

BLOMQUIST: "We just met, I don't blame nobody."