

First anniversary of the  
U.S.S. Carmita. May 11, 1945



CARMITA  
COURIER

Friday,  
11 May 1945.

A SONG TO OUR NAVY  
(Melody: Stein Song)

Sing a song to our Navy,  
Shout till the rafters ring;  
Stand and sing a song once again,  
Let every loyal man now sing.  
Let's sing to all the happy hours,  
Sing to the carefree days.  
Standing by We're always ready,  
The sea has won our hearts always.  
To the birds, to the skies,  
To the ship and its lasting friendliness!  
To the youth, to our land,  
To the life at home calling us!  
To the gods, to the fates,  
To the rulers of men and their destinies,  
To the lips, to the eyes,  
Of the girls who'll love us always!  
Sing a song to our Navy,  
Shout till the rafters ring;  
Stand and drink a toast once again,  
Then every loyal man now sing!

Editor: Clive N. Pillsbury, Y2c.



## THIS PAST YEAR

Turning from current, warm anniversary greetings, you may be interested in learning that the Carmita has received more than one commendation note directed expressly to this vessel and its crew, and has shared in numerous others addressed to the squadron. Service Squadron TEN, of which the Carmita is a unit, is a division of the Service Force, Pacific Fleet, a giant network of service ships which move from place to place supplying the fighting fleet with fuel, general stores and repair services in the forward area. It is equipped with ships, tenders and harbor craft necessary to render all services required at a fleet anchorage, as well as vessels especially designed for handling aviation supplies and limited storage for Army and Marine Corps stores.

The primary duty of the squadron is to furnish to fleet units supplies beyond those which can be furnished direct by other Service Force vessels and to provide battle damage and emergency repairs and upkeep. It is one of the heavy duty, odd job organizations on the front line.

Highlights from letters of commendation this past year are reviewed:

2 October 1944.

"AGAIN THE SQUADRON HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED A PERIOD OF STRENUOUS SERVICE.....AGAIN YOU HAVE EARNED THE COMMENDATION RECEIVED FROM THE ADMIRAL IN COMAND. YOUR HARD WORK, LOYALTY AND SELF-DENIAL HAVE ACCOMPLISHED WONDERS. THE SQUADRON COMMANDER IS PROUD OF YOU AND GLAD TO SEND "WELL DONE" TO ALL HANDS."

/s/W.R. CARTER,  
Commodore.

15 November 1944.

"Numerous messages including one from Admiral Halsey have been received praising the efforts and good work done during the past weeks. I am very proud of you. Well Done!"

/s/W. R. CARTER

11 December 1944.

"A ROUSING WELL DONE TO YOU AND ALL YOUR HARD WORKING GANG FOR A MAGNIFICENT JOB .....SERON TEN IS A TRIED AND PROVEN MEMBER OF OUR BIG BLUE TEAM."

ADMIRAL HALSEY

31 December 1944.

....."Commanding officers of ships, commanders of task groups and forces, and the Commander of the THIRD Fleet himself, Admiral Halsey, have upon several occasions each sent messages of praise for services received....The purpose of this message is to share with you the pleasure of receiving these commendatory communications, and to add my own congratulations."

/s/W. R. CARTER

12 February 1945.

...."We have been the receipt of messages of praise and other comments testifying to that ability to serve the fleet so effectively that our forces may strike telling blows repeatedly without cessation. Striking closer and closer to the Jap homeland such blows are making history. When you see a task force departing from the scene....you may justly assume that whatever history is made...you have played your part in the making of that history. ....To this increased recognition of our part in pushing the Jap to the wall I wish to add my own congratulations to all hands, officers and men, for the splendid work already done, for your loyalty and perseverance."

/s/ W. R. CARTER



CARMITA DAY

MAY 11, 1944 - 1945

The following initial entry appears in the official log of the USS CARMITA (IX-152):

"Thursday 11 May 1944

14 - 16

1400 USS CARMITA (IX-152) was accepted by U.S. Navy via Twelfth Naval District, represented by Lt. Cmdr. W. W. Emerson, and received by Lieut. Charles E. Burch, Jr., D-V(S), USNR, pursuant to BuPers Orders ND12-14-B/Ms, A4-1, Serial 12443, dated 11 May 1944. Place of putting ship in service, Barrett and Hilp, Belair Shipyards, South San Francisco, California.

Officially present:

Lt. Cmdr. W. W. Emerson, USNR, Commissioning Officer.  
Lieut. Charles E. Burch, Jr., 239749, D-V(S), USNR,  
Officer in Charge (reporting aboard pursuant to above authority).

Partial Crew present on Temporary Duty:

West, R. C.,	346-57-20; CBM (P), USN;
Therrien, E. J.,	212-27-03, CMM (P), USNR;
Khoury, G. J.,	662-42-03, BM1c, USNR;
Biglay, J. S.,	360-27-64, Cox, USN;
Singer, H. L.,	410-86-28, MM2c, USNR;
Wardlaw, F. G.,	644-50-03, MM2c, USNR;
Thaxton, G. E.,	341-77-83, Flc, USNR;
Bearce, A. E.,	393-43-66, SC2c, USN;

reporting aboard this date pursuant to U.S. Receiving Ship, San Francisco, Orders Serial No. NML3/P-16-14/MM, dated May 11, 1944. Security watches immediately set and engines (auxiliary) manned by Navy crew. Ship remained in drydock slip."

Since the ship did not belong to the Navy prior thereto, we find no entries concerning previous efforts of ship's command in gathering together many and varied items of importance for future life aboard. Neither do the ship's equipage details upon which Pillsbury, C. N., then SK2c (now ship's Yeoman), was working earlier in the year nor familiarization trips of CBM West and CMM Therrien taken in April previous find mention in the log. All these things transpired to effect this ship's launching into Naval Service 11 May 1944.

Much has transpired since that date and until this first anniversary thereof; drifting at sea helplessly for several hours, sailing for thousands of miles into the Pacific waters under all types of weather from dead calms to typhoons, watching enemy aircraft fall, seeing results of enemy submarine warfare in the torpedoing of a ship not far away, vainly watching native canoes for a possible island beauty, rescuing fellow sailors from a sinking ship of our own, and the constant repetition of Marine Corps aboard beating our best Navy ball teams has filled the first year full of variety in experience.

The fact that U.S. Marine Corps Mobile Supply Base is aboard casts some hint of the duties assigned to the Carmita which have been carried on since that first May 11.

None can foresee what will be the type of anniversary next May 11 will bring but we all hope we may celebrate it at home after having completed our job out here.

*Charles E. Burch, Jr.*  
CHARLES E. BURCH, Jr.,  
Lieut., USNR.,  
Commanding.



## THE CARMITA THEATRE

The lion's share of recreation time at sea is reserved for motion pictures, held second only in importance to mail from home.

Pictures have been screened in three or four compartments aboard but the favorite theatre is situated on the main deck amidship. Originally the screen, of white canvas stretched taut to a rectangular pipe frame, was made fast to the cabin bulkhead but this arrangement proved unsatisfactory as sound projected into the wind failed to carry in audible volume beyond the lucky few huddled near the loud-speaker. Now the screen rises from one of many deck fales and the boys face the bow of the ship which is usually headed into the wind. About evening chow time chairs of all types and colors, some of steel, others of regulation deck type, some homemade and which permit the boys to slouch at ease, make their appearance, sprinkled around in reservation of choice spots. The preferred viewpoint is atop a hatch square, an elevation of about three feet from deck level. You may judge the appeal of the evening's feature by the extent of the rush for vantage spots.

Frequently the hour before sunset is enlivened by recorded music over the movie loud-speaker. Sometimes it is a request program of selections from the ship's record library which ranges from Boogie Woogie thru jazz, popular ballads and the semi-classical to grand opera. More often the program consists of a series of transcriptions starring top-flight bands and featuring tunes from the hit parade. The last few records to reach the ship included the catchy "Rum and Coca Cola", a craze tune in the same category as "The Music Goes Round and Round", and for the moment it enjoys top billing.

Like neighborhood theatres with frequent program changes our theatre has off nights when Hollywood mistakes are shown. It is amazing how the trap is baited for those who select films by giving the poorest ones the most alluring titles. Sometimes a dud is recognized but accepted in the absence of any selection of other unscreened pictures, yet, on the whole, we have seen our share of good shows. The seven top pictures of '44, as reflected by the Gallup Poll of all classes of movie-goers, have been shown aboard. These are: 1. "Going My Way"; 2. "The Story of Dr. Wassell"; 3. "A Guy Named Joe"; 4. "Mrs. Parkington"; 5. "Laura"; 6. "See Here, Private Hargrove"; 7. "Destination Tokyo".

Outstanding favorites of earlier seasons, such as "Song of Bernadette", "Wakiki Wedding" and "The Great Waltz" have been presented, also such current hits as "The Keys to the Kingdom", "Dragon Seed", "Sunday Dinner for a Soldier" and "Guest in the House". When it comes to encore performances, "Kitty Foyle", starring Ginger Rogers, heads the list closely followed by "Dangerous Blondes".

Some movie palaces are acclaimed for mural decorations but at best these are artificial and lack the variety and lustre of our background drapes of gorgeous sunsets and magnificent cloud effects. As to air-conditioning, we are out in front, with the soft, carressing breezes of evening. Some theatres have a ceiling resembling a star-lit sky, - ours is the natural canopy of heaven. Of course, this may prove a trifle less than perfect when rain falls as the gentle dew from heaven. Such a situation calls for a retreat or time-out unless the show is a super-colossal, that is filled with pretty girls and sweeter music, in which case 'the show must go on' and generally does, for rain may dampen the shirt but not the spirit.

Any story of the Carmita Theatre would be incomplete without reference to a unique if somewhat disconcerting characteristic of the presentation. Just when the play builds up suspense, the hero is about to murmur some immortal lines, zip goes the film in a distorted blur and the sound trails away in a weird howl or dies out with a sputter like a mechanical phonograph running down. You then cool off while the technical trouble is solved. Invariably the fresh start means a change of scene and a terrific let-down.

It may be well to add that the trouble experienced is attributed to film usage and moisture spots, and not a reflection on the operator, several skilled ones being aboard. The chore usually falls to Oscar Archer, Jr., Marine Private, a short, slender lad with a school-girl complexion. From appearance you would judge him to be about sixteen but obviously he must be somewhat older. On the basis of his efficiency and the responsibility assumed he rates well and merits the appreciation of all his shipmates.



## REFLECTIONS

One recent dramatic incident came when alert Glen Bowden, S1c, known as the Oregon Kid, spotted from the bridge a floating object, obviously an explosive container but resembling an aerial bomb rather than a floating mine. The immediate objective was to avoid contact between the Carmita and the infernal device, next to eliminate the menace to other ships. The Captain took to the ship's boat to personally direct operations including salvage of the object. Successfully concluded it was yet a risky undertaking not withstanding eventual disclosure that the finned container was empty. Close-up examination while in the water disclosed that it was a large aerial bomb casing, obviously not normally loaded but giving no indication as to whether partially loaded, charged with gas, of incendiary nature or a booby-trapped device. This souvenir of the ship's fourth mine incident was added to the Carmita's museum.

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Around the turn of the year a few of us found ourselves, unexpectedly, on the corner of Hollywood Blvd. and Vine Street but instead of being in the California movie capital we were on Mogmog Island, Ulithi Atoll. These were not crude signs put up in jest but trim, well painted, professional appearing signs marking a busy intersection on an island with a centuries old reputation as an important Pacific crossroads center. As you might expect, this was near the heart of playland, recreational center for the Pacific Fleet. Thousands of boys were streaming past enroute from the landing pier to the ball fields, the rustic beer garden or the ocean beach. Mogmog is dotted with scores of palm thatched dwellings, native constructed but now used by the American forces. Where alterations were called for or a special type of building such as a circular band stand required the natives have supplied the need.

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One midday during the closing stage of April the signal was given for General Quarters. Soon after this the communication system carried news that a Jap plane was fast approaching off our starboard beam, its appearance to be expected out of a bank of low clouds. Then came word from the bridge that our own interceptors had dived into the clouds, next that a trail of smoke was seen, then the message that the enemy plane, probably a Kamikaze (Divine Tempest), had been shot down. Routine duties were resumed with scarcely a break in discussion of rapidly moving events in Europe. An encounter seconds short of point blank range was unreal in comparison with the absorbing topic of cessation of hostilities in the European theatre of war then impending, meaning two members of the Axis down, - one to go, and our own return to civilian life.

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Dinner on Carmita Day finds Allen Bearce, SC2c, senior Petty Officer of the Commissary Division, one of the guests of honor in recognition of his participation in Commissioning Day exercises and preparation of those first few meals. The special anniversary dinner is being prepared by George Lakerdas, SC3c, who has baked the traditional birthday cake, not overlooking such details as the candle, ribbon, etc. George, now 23 years of age, was born and educated in Greece, having come to this country just a few years ago. When United States entered the war he saw an opportunity to strike a blow for both his native country and his adopted country by volunteering for the Navy. His first cruise was in the Atlantic, his second aboard the Carmita in the Pacific. George became self-educated in English by diligent effort, acquiring in the process an extensive colloquial vocabulary, picturesque and expressive. He is accustomed to hard knocks and retaliates protectively but basically his heart is in the right place and he is as friendly as he is patriotic.

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COMMENTS INSPIRED BY THE COURIER

-From Homefront and Frontier-

"Read by Rotary Club, Baton Rouge."

"Inspired"

"Good snow job."

"Very flowery"

"Pillsie threw the dictionary at the Homefront"

"How come you don't see any natives? Someone aboard seems to have made a life study of them!"

"What do you mean, your as safe as at home? Aren't you and the editor on the same ship?"

"Brought tears to my eyes."

"Please send me every copy you can".

"Now we know what you boys are going through; God bless you all."

"I wish you could have heard what all they said at the club."

"Papa and mama read it from cover to cover, tomorrow I'm showing it to cousin Sue."

"You'd be proud of what the neighbors are saying."

"The Paper gave you a big write-up".

"I'm enclosing a poem that may be suitable"

"The newspaper quoted at length from the issue."

"Are you and the editor fighting the same war?"

"Did that 'Lend-lease' come off, and were you in on the deal?"

"Knowing sailors like I do, I'm sure you didn't trail any girl in Honolulu."

"Are you really on the road to Tokyo? When do you arrive?"

"The paper asked for your picture to run with the article."

"Those poems are great. I never cared for poetry before; maybe it's the community of thought that makes them so appropriate and worthwhile."

"Next time there's excitement, don't let the Courier scoop you."

"I look forward to souvenir issues, others are welcome too."

"Gee Wilkins, pop, I'd sure like to be on the Carmita when I grow up."

"If this 'Now it can be told stuff' applies to you, start shoveling the dirt. Let's have the low-down on ships you've sunk and the number of the crew yet alive."

"Don't you dare hold out any of the Couriers on me. I want the news."

"Best shape paper since our sea!"