

# Ships Diary

Aug. 25, 1944

A brief ceremony marked the occasion of the ELDORADO's commissioning ..... Captain Wallace accepted command of the ship, the first watches were set, and officially the Navy took over from Bethlehem Steel Corp. Actually the commissioning made no noticeable difference in life aboard the uncompleted ship. Work continued at a furious pace, workers swarmed over the hull with welding torches, pneumatic chisels, other scientific noise makers; ship's crew continued to work day and night to ready the ship for sea. On....

Sept. 6, 1944

The ELDORADO was ready, and cast off on her maiden voyage. For the majority of men aboard, this was their first ship and their first voyage, and they made the usual contribution to Neptune as the ship rode the rough water between New York and Norfolk. These nouveau-salts offered fervent thanks when the ship dropped anchor in Norfolk on

Sept. 7, 1944

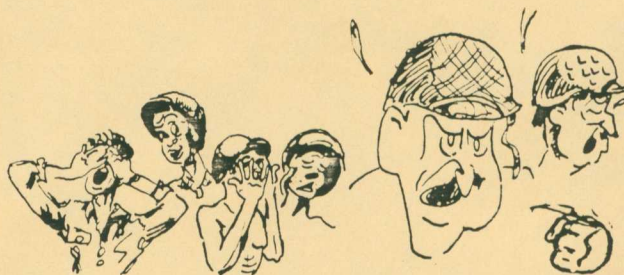
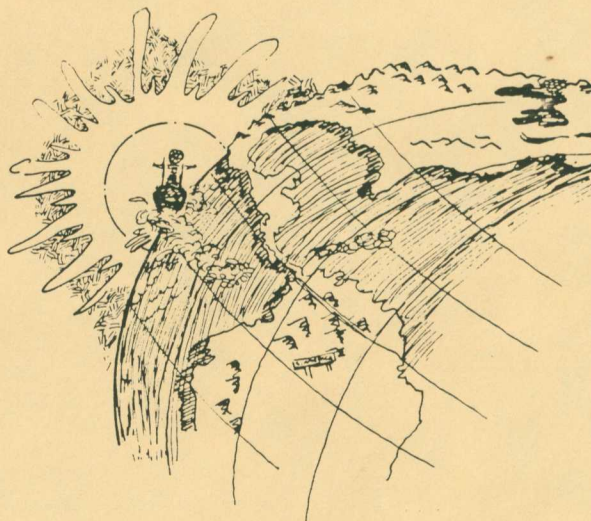
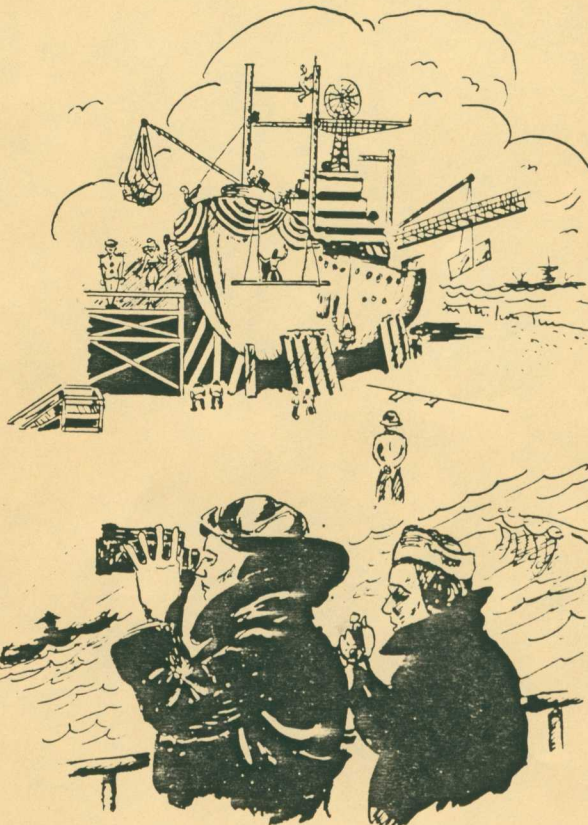
Although they may have thought themselves dying of mal-de-mere enroute, these new-comers recuperated swiftly and discovered for themselves why Norfolk is the sailor's FAVORITE LIBERTY PORT! It was with mingled feelings that the ship's company readied the ship for another step toward her ultimate destination. By September 14th the ship was standing out to sea, when the reports of a great hurricane sweeping the East Coast began to come in. The ELDORADO wisely remained at the mouth of the harbor, until the next day. During that time she performed her first service by picking up a weak "SOS" signal on her radio equipment and by relaying it, she was directly responsible for the salvation of a vessel in distress. The hurricane abated sufficiently by

Sept. 15, 1944

So that the ELDORADO was able to continue her voyage. Smooth sailing from Norfolk to the mouth of the Panama Canal, and on September 21st the ELDORADO slipped through the Canal and emerged in the Pacific the next morning. No stop-overs in Panama.....time was too valuable to waste and the ELDORADO was a vital ship, so it was straight from Panama to San Diego, where she arrived on

Sept. 29, 1944

She stopped there long enough only to take on stores and ammunition, and to drop the weeping Marine Detachment, which, instead of enjoying liberties in San Francisco and Sacramento, would undergo a "toughening" process in San Diego. Sadly we said good-bye to the Marines, and left San Diego, to arrive next day.



Sept. 30, 1944

At Mare Island. There it was Bethlehem Steel Yard all over again, with shipyard workers crowding aboard and cutting viciously into the vessel. Apparently the entire ship had to be torn apart and reassembled on different lines. The job was miraculously completed in a few short weeks; stores were brought aboard, ammunition, all last minute bits of miscellaneous gear. Our Marines were returned to us, tanned and rugged, and still weeping. No liberty for them, for we shoved off.

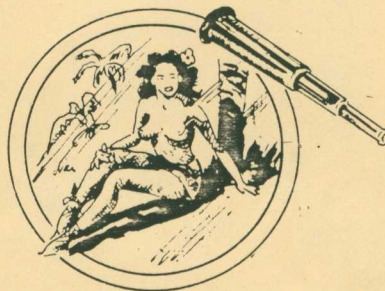


Nov. 22, 1944

Our destination was one of those secrets known to everyone.... Pearl Harbor. En-route a plane crashed into the ocean near the ship and we stopped long enough to pick up the planes former occupants, who were damp, but unhurt.

Nov. 28, 1944

And the ELDORADO pulled into Pearl Harbor with the crew eagerly gazing over the side for a first glimpse of the Hawaiian Islands, Land of Paradise, hula girls, leis! No leis.....work! More last minute repairs, gear brought aboard, stores.... and the boys came back from liberty saying much the same thing about Pearl Harbor as they said about Norfolk. Almost a month there, but on

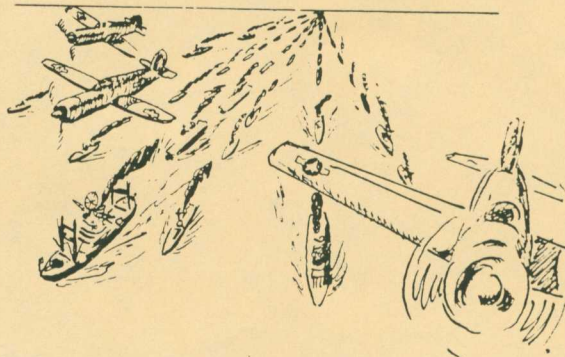


Jan. 27, 1945

We pulled out of Pearl Harbor, bound for the forward areas of the Pacific. We stopped for two days at Eniwetok.... not much to see on that atoll.. and hove to at Saipan on

Feb. 11, 1945

We took a long look at that island, taken only a short time before from the Japanese. It began to dawn upon us that war was something besides liberties and chow lines. The meaning of war became even clearer on

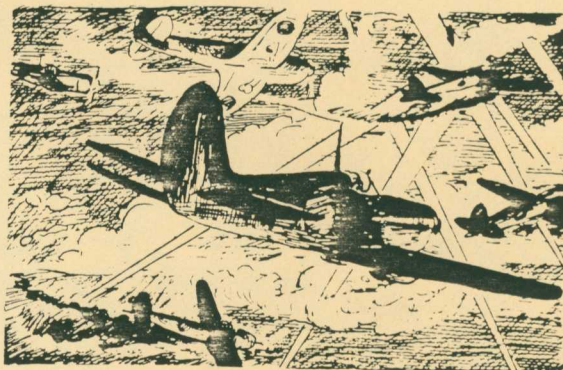


Feb. 12, 1945

When we left Saipan for a short rehearsal, off Tinian. A dress rehearsal, complete with planes, bombs, ships, marines. It proceeded, apparently, quite satisfactorily, and on February 16th we left Saipan in convoy, and arrived at Iwo Jima in time for the grand opening on

Feb. 19, 1945

Our first contact with those little yellow men we'd been hearing so much about! None of us were scared..... even on February 22, when the Japanese deluged us with 12 air-raids that one night.... but our sensations were rather peculiar! No one seemed to regret it when we left Iwo Jima on

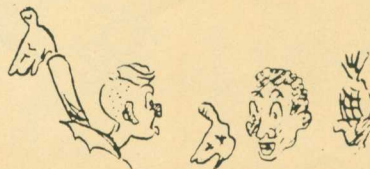


March 9, 1945

Two days later we arrived in Guam, and two days after that, before we had a chance to tell the Guamanians that we were heroes, we left Guam. Leyte, of the Philippines, was our objective this time, and we arrived on

March 16, 1945

We successfully invaded the fleet recreational area, drank beer, traded with the natives (and many of us lost our shirts), and on



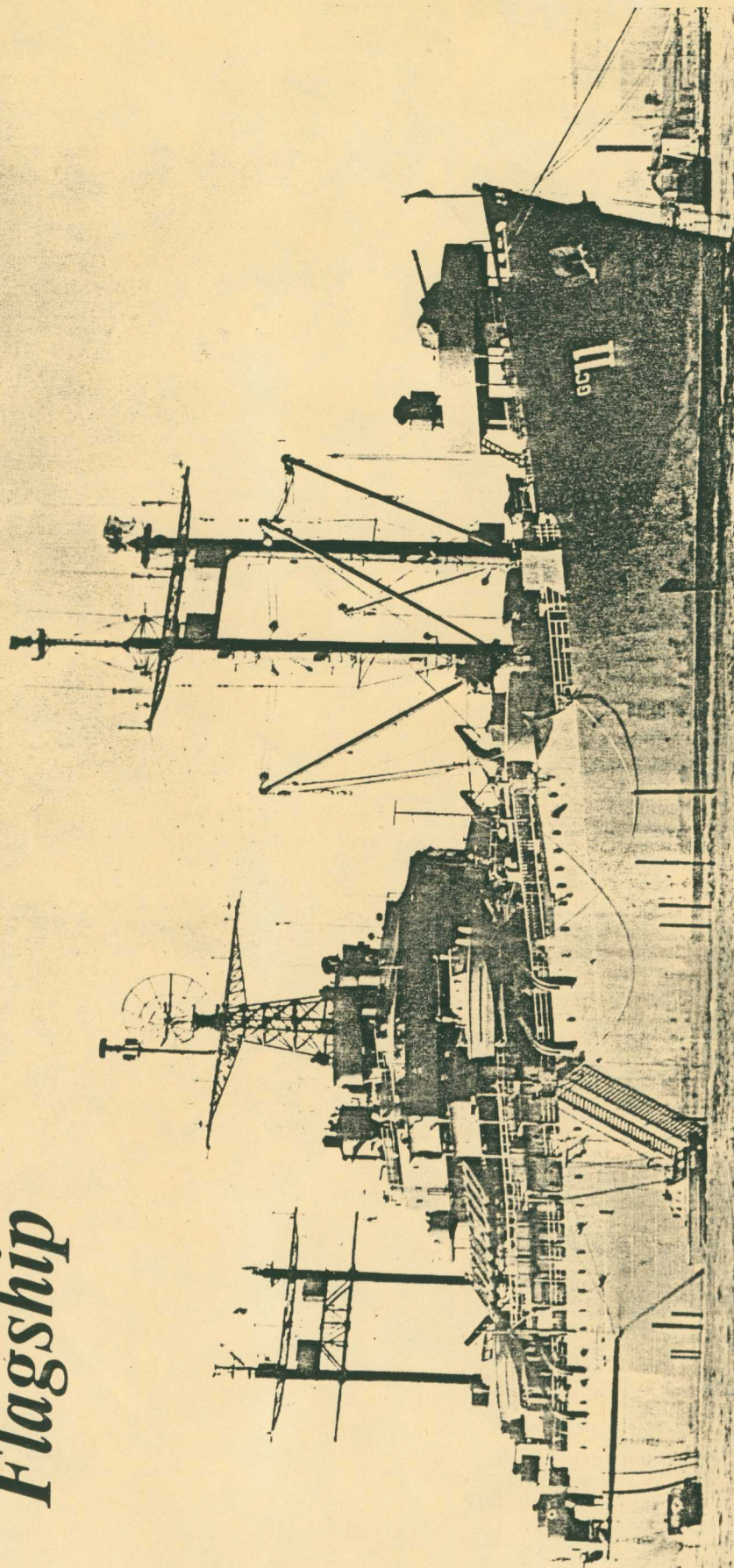
March 27, 1945

We left Leyte again in convoy, and on

# AGC-11

*Flagship*

# USS ELDORADO



April 1, 1945

We arrived for the opening of "Okinawa". To us, the battle-worn and bogie-wise veterans of one invasion, it was all routine...the "Flash Red, Control Green" that sounded night after night, the smoke that filled our compartments, the suicide bent Japanese airmen. It was more intensified at Okinawa; the raids came oftener, and the Japs dived more recklessly. There was the night of Hirohito's birthday, celebrated by the Jap airmen in an unprecedented mass raid on the Okinawa invasion fleet. On

May 18, 1945

We left Okinawa, and cheerfully! The Japanese suicide plane that swept close by us shortly before we left and, missing us, plunged into the New Mexico, did nothing to dampen that cheerfulness. We made Guam by

May 22, 1945

Where we breathed deeply once again and relaxed. Stores, painting, ship's work....everything possible was done to make the ship perfectly conditioned. On

June 9, 1945

We left Guam, bound for the Philippines, and on

June 14, 1945

We dropped anchor in Manila Bay. Liberty ashore..... we gaped at the blasted city, explored the sights, sounds----and smells; aboard ship we were readying for the next operation, when on

August 9, 1945

The first atomic bomb was dropped! From then on smooth sailing! The ELDORADO had accomplished her mission, and was an honored survivor!

Frisco, here we come!!

