

Boarded the USS Idaho on December 28 1944, and on Jan. 27 one month after coming aboard we we e headed for Iwo Jima, which turned out to be one of the bloodiest battles in History, as far as the Marines were concerned, there was very little resistance against the Navy, one small carrier the Luscomb Bay one LCI and possibly one or two other landing craft were sunk. One Cruiser he Pennsicola was hit by a shore battery.

Before we reached Iwo Jim we spent four days loading ammo and supplies at Ulithi. The greatest force I had ever seen was here, ships of alltypes, as far, almost, as the eye could see, but on February 12 we arrived at Tinian and Siapan, and again the harbor was filled with ships Part of 58 was there, and I saw my first large group of B-29 's. They were coming to and from bombing missions all day and night. We saw several come in with either a feathered prop or a large flak hole in its belly. Feb 12, the carriers slipped silently out of the harbor, we knew that an operation was at hand, four days later our 14 in. and 5 in. opened up with all they had on Iwo Jima.

I was pretty excited at first, we knew that it was one of the best defended islands in the Pacific, it was supposed to have 8 in. shore batteries, subs and many block houses. We bombarded for severl hours and moved in to about 1000 yds to knock out some very tough blockhouses, ~~xxxxxxx~~ located on the sides of Mt. Seribachi.

Close to the base of the mountain there was a hospital with untold numbers of Jap soldiers in it. With a few salvoes of the main battery it was burried.

We gave the Island all we had, and on the morning of the fourth day the troops moved in. A strikingly few number of the small, craft were sunk, yet, many were hit after they had hit the beach. The water was thick with boats of all types, as far as the eye could see. In a few hours the Marines had the southern end of the south air strip, but in gaining this they had paid dearly. Time and again the tanks were knocked out by morters and anti-tank guns sticking out of the side of the mount. Many Marines were killed in the first few hours hours of fighting, as many in two hours as had been lost in the whole operation at ~~Tawaka~~ Tinawa. During the course of the next two weeks we bombarded the is. almost constantly. I saw thousands of tons of high explosives dumped on the tiny island, saw one or two planes hit and many men killed. On the 7 of March we left and by that time the B29(s were making forced landings on the air strips, the Island was ours.

We wnet back to Ulithi, got fresh supply of ammo, mail and supplies. Again we saw most of 58 and while we were there I was working on the stbd. side of the quarter deck one night and ~~saw~~ heard a plane go over without recognition lights on and wondered about it. In about three minutes there was a terrific explosion on the flight deck of one of our carriers, (later identified as the U.S.S. Randolph). A Jap suicide pilof had slipped in behind one of our own planes and suicided the carrier, several men were killed and a large hole was torn in

the flight deck.

On March 26th we got the dope. One small force was to take Koroma Ritto in the Ryukyus and establish an anchorage there from which to operate and bombard Okinawa. On March 27th our guns again opened up, this time on the 60 mile long island of Okinawa that night we were attacked by suicide dive bombers, and for the first time in her history the Idaho claimed a plane, and another probable. The suicide pilots soon became a menace and many ships were hit by them as will later be mentioned.

There was a very little resistance on the beach of Okinawa. A fake landing on the East side of the island a few hours previous to the real landing proved highly successful and when the real attack came the enemy was taken by surprise and fled into the mountains. The island itself is very beautiful. Soldiers who had landed that day said that it was very prosperous, the houses were well kept and the fields made it appear to be a checkerboard, from the ship.

After the heat of first bombardment began to slaken, I went topside to have a look. I was amazed at the hundreds upon hundreds of ships and boats in the water offshore. It had been previously stated ~~that~~ by the Chaplin over the inter-communications system that aside from the number of planes the landing was almost as great as D day in Europe, and I believed it. Just before the troops went in, many bombers and fighters gave the beach a terrific pounding. We could feel the concussion although we were several miles away. After their departure we covered the troops with heavy 5 in. fire and few men were lost in landing.

As I stood there watching the troops swarming all over the beach the 5 in. battery was still knocking out hidden gun positions. I saw one fellow standing near by with a pair of glasses. He handed them to another and told him to look at a particular little white house with green shutters. The fellow took them and just as he looked one of our 5 in. shells hit, he turned and said "What little white house with green shutters, look now"

In the after noon, we could see trucks, jeeps, half tracks and tanks racing back and forth, up and down the beach carrying men and equipment, it had been said a while before, that the troops were advancing so rapidly the walkie talkies could not keep up with them.

During the course of the bombardment, the Japs attempted to cross a river to get away from the terrific beating, and 14 in shells from our battery were set to explode above them, the result, disaster for the Japs.

In the suicide attacks mentioned before, the plane that we hit, dove into the Pennsylvania aft~~er~~ of turret four. On the same day, the day we began bombarding, I chanced to see a DD make a hit on a sub with ash cans. It's rose slowly out of the water and slid back down, stern first. Again on 1 day our particular force shot down 6 planes, one after being hit, dove into the West Virginia just aft the boat deck at gun 10/

The flak that was put up against the Jap suiciders was terrific, not a plane got to its target without being hit. That amount of flak thrown up can be imagined by realizing that there are 4 or 5 hundred ships firing with at least 60 percent of their guns. Our ship can fire about 50 guns to either side, judge in proportion from this. One of the suiciders headed straight for our ship, but because he was out of control he failed to hit us.

The next day we again bombarded and were attacked again. We found a Jap 20MM slug in the boat deck and a 50 cal. in the quarter dieck. During the course of the next 4 days we stood by for call fire and went to GQ several times each day. On the evening of the 3rd one little DD some miles distant off our starboard beam shot down 7 planes, while we fired at one, that morning she had bagged 3 others.

On April 6 the biggest aerial attack made by the Japs ~~waxxwaxx~~ since our cruise started was made. TF 58 was under attack all day and shot down 128 planes. We were attacked several times and succeded in knocking down another plane. There were many hitting their targets. One DD was hit by 3 suicides amidships one after another, it soon sank. Four others were hit, and 2 transports took hits and sank. The St. Louis was hit and sky top was sheared off; the Witchita was also hit. During the course of the battle one Jap parachuted, a rare sight. We also were so busy that we almost rammed the New Mexico, Full speed astern saved a collission. The 40's and 20's on the stbd. side shot down another plane. At splashed 50 feet from the ship, part of a wing fell on the quarter deck. Later in the day were suddenly called to GQ because of a Val. The Port guns were firing their best before we could get to our stations. The plane was headed straingt for the ship and for the first time I was a little scared. I had to go from my watch station to my GQ station, and in the excitement of running men and smoke and firing of guns, I headed for the wrong ladder. When I reached the hatch many men were trying to crowd into it at once, the men below were trying to get up, and wexx werer trying to get down. As I reached the hatch, I looked up and saw why they were trying to get below, the Val looked as though he had singled me out and was going to make a hit. In nothing flat I found the right ladder and got below in time to help fire at him to Stbd. We lost 4 corsiers during this attack.

The next day April 7, word was passed that the Jap fleet was headed our way and that we along with 5 other battle ships 3 light cruisers, four heavy cruisers, and 35 DD's were going to intercept and attempt to sink them. Late that evening about 1600 we started out in battle formation. I never expect to see a sight or feel the way I did, again. I had seen battle formation, before during a practice run, but only battleships. The 35 DD's alone were a sight to see. The six wagons lined up in a perfectly straight line, the 3 light cruisers ahead and in line, the four heavy cruisers off our port quarter, and in line screened by DD's. Every man aboard ship was almost afraid to think of the results, the reports we received, told of 3 Jap wagons 4 or 5 cruisers and several destroyers. The biggest wagon they had carried 17.7 main battery 6 in. secondary and 28 5 in. They could have done much damage because of range, had we found them. The Captain gave us the scoop and bade us good luck, you can see why we were both excited and slightly worried. Hammocks were piped down early, all work was knocked off. We prepared to wait for GQ some time during the night or early next morning. K rations had been issued for our morning meal.

I had the watch from 12 til 0400 that morning. I was wearing the phones and word was passed over the line, that planes from 58 some 350 in number (They had passed us when we first started out) had attacked and sank one Jap wagon, and, infact, most of what were went after. The wagon that was there, and contrary to previous reports, it was the only one, was the Yomata, Japan's biggest, It took rocket bombs and seven torpedoes to sink her. During the course of that day the Japs lost, in addition to the above mentioned, 391 planes, at a loss of our 7. I forgot to mention that just as we were leaving to attack the Jap fleet, one plane attack us and succeeded in hitting the Maryland, amidships on the blister.

A great relief came over the ship, when we heard that planes from 58 had done the job intended for us. We immediately broke formation and sailed for Korama Ritta for fuel and ammunition.

The next 3 days were spent in standing by for call fire. From April 7 until April 12, we did nothing but stand by and load ammunition and fuel, received mail on the 11th, and from then until we left got mail regularly.

On the afternoon of April 12 at about 1430 we were attacked by a force of about 60 planes, all suicide, we shot down 5 and assisted in a 6th. We were at GQ and had been for about 5 min. then suddenly the port battery started firing, 40's first, which was surprising, because the 5 in. can hit at 12 miles. They came in low two at a time strung out. We had fired for about 2 minutes when suddenly we ~~felt~~ heard an explosion and felt the ship rock violently. We of course all knew that we had been hit. When reports came in as to the damage and lives lost, we found out that he had hit the blistered very low on the port side near frame 90, underneath the quarter deck 40's, and that no men had been killed. There were lots of souvenirs, including

parts of the Jap. One fellow brought the Japs watch up to the galley, which at that time was near my battle station. The watch said 10 minutes to three. I myself got a piece of what appears to be the wing.

Forty two planes were shot down by our force, The DD 777 was hit on the bridge and a large fire was started. This particular can had taken off our mail that morning. The can later sunk.

Next day the word was passed by the Chaplin that the President had died. Late that night we received an unofficial announcement that Germany had surrendered. The same day the Chaplin read a news bulletin about an LCI which had taken 3 suicides had her water and flushing system torn out. Her after engine and magazine sprayed with flying debris, her steering stem knocked out. Steering by hand she came back to the anchorage under her own power.

April 15 we had an air attack, the ship was anchored in amongst a lot of small craft, During the attack two men were wounded by 50 Cal. from one of the small craft. ~~was~~ We stayed at GQ most all night. Next day we bombarded the city of Arakawa.

During the course of the next five days we fired almost continually, both main battery and secondary. At night the 5 in. illuminated and fired Common explosives also.

One DD the Laffy took 4 suicide planes, 3 bombs, shot down six planes and went to Karama Retto for repairs making 20 knots.

The morning of the twentieth we had to turn for Guam, for repairs ~~was~~ the blister was badly torn up, and was getting worse from the poundings of the sea.

On the 25 we arrived at Guam, waited three days for a dry dock. When we got one and had the water out, it was found that the blister could be repaired. The hoe was ten frames (40ft.) vertically and about 8 frames (28 ft) horizontally. The main drive shaft of engine three had been out of commission all this time.

While at Guam we were granted liberty, and at the Fleet Recreation Center we saw some white women. American red-cross nurses served coffee, issued games gave advice and just talked to any one who wanted to talk. I was fortunate in being in a party that had a steak fry at the beach. That was the first good meal I had had since leaving Pearl. The beer was on ice, and was very good. We stayed in dry dock until the 12th May, then proceeded to Ulithi for ammo and stores. At noon the 16th we headed back to Okinawa.

From the 16th to the first of June we spent almost every hour either firing or standing by for call-fire. We were attacked by enemy aircraft every-day. Several planes got in and made hits on small craft and damaged four large units. Two DD's were sunk, the New Mexico, The Mississippi, the West Virginia, and ~~the~~ a light cruiser were hit.

The 10th of June we felt the concussions of thousands of bombs being dropped on enemy positions, the last fighting for Okinawa was at hand. During the course of 24 hours we went to GQ 12 times. The sky by this time was filled with American Okinawan based planes, and ~~an~~ an American radio broadcasting station from Okinawa started business.

Two ships I haven't mentioned were also damaged during the Okinawan campaign. The Louisville lost her ~~sky-top~~ after stack and the Witchita lost her sky-top. During the course of the next 8 days we averaged 3 GQ's a day. On the 13 of June we went to the Pacific side of the Island. The Japs were about to be driven into the sea, and on the 14th I witnessed the greatest aereal and sea bombardment yet. We gave them everything we had.

On the 16th we were entering our anchorage and ran aground, the ship came right off the reef, but the blister was again torn up, this time on the starboard side. The West Virginia ~~sk~~ lost one of her planes today. The pilot and radioman bailed out behind enemy lines.

At about 1500 on the 17 I saw red smoke on the beach. It was a signal I knew, and soon found out that after a terrific pounding, the forces were to stop firing until 1630, loud speakers had been set up, they were trying to make the Japs surrender. They didn't.

~~From this date until the end of June we were firing at the Japs with our 16 inch guns. We fired 100,000 rounds of ammunition. We fired 100,000 rounds of ammunition. We fired 100,000 rounds of ammunition.~~

The next three days we bombarded, then went back to the China Sea side of the Island, spent a day cleaning the ship, then started for the Philippines, Leyte to be exact. We arrived there on the 23rd. When we had anchored we learned that there were twelve hundred ships in the harbor, more than I had ever seen. All of 58 was there, and most of the other fleets.

We spent almost two months at Leyte. I went ashore about three times, but didn't enjoy it a bit. The natives are dirty and full of disease. We also went into dry dock again, and got the starboard blister repaired. Most of the fleet left the Harbor for the mainland of Japan, only the old battleships were left in the harbor. The ship contacted a disease ~~sk~~ called dysentary, and for two weeks we were quarantined. On August 18, after the surrender of Japan we left for Okinawa. We knew that eventually we would wind up in Tokyo harbor.

On the 9 of August, I was in sick bay getting a blood transfusion when it was announced that Japan had surrendered. By some fast talking I managed to get top-side to see the fire works. I'll never see a sight again like that, it can't be described. We were all very, very happy. Next morning we found that Japan was still fighting, then came the atomic bombs and Russia's entering the fight. We knew it couldn't last much longer. *Left Leyte 19 Aug*

*arrived 21* On the 24 of August, we left Okinawa for Tokyo, along with the West Virginia, Colorado, New Mexico, Mississippi, and three escorts. Men were chosen from the divisions to be prepared to make landings the Jap naval base of Yokosuka. *Arrived 27 Sagami Wan*

*Left Leyte Aug. 18, 1945, arrived at Okinawa 21 Aug 1945.*

*Arrived at Sagami Wan Aug 27, 1945.*

On August 27, 1945 we dawned general quarters long before sunrise, to enter the home-land of Japan. Slowly, as the shadows of night receded, the dim great, outlines of the nearby ships, which a seasoned sailor can almost feel when it's too dark to see, began to substantiate their reality. Shadows became outlines and outlines became recognizable types.

By early morning our task group, which consisted of the Idaho, Mississippi, New Mexico, West Virginia, Colorado, and three screening destroyers, joined up with a task force, ~~1381~~, consisting of several cruisers, destroyers, tankers, repair ships, hospital ships, and smaller craft. Ahead of us some few miles were heavy units from TF 38. On our left flank were the British ships, the Duke of York, King George V, and several other craft.

As we sailed into Tokyo Bay Area, the greatest armada of ships ever to sail into an enemy port could be seen. It took six hours for the force to sail past a given point steaming at standard speed 15 knots.

Many miles ahead, but already discernable in this almost unlimited visibility, the haughty summit of Mount Fujiyama loomed above the lesser peaks much as a defeated warrior might stand among his fallen forces.

On September 2, 1945 I was standing watch on the bridge, the inter comm service radio was on, and I heard the broadcast of the Japanese surrender. That morning many hundreds of B29's roared overhead. Corsairs, hellcats, wildcats, avengers, blackwidows, mustangs, C47's, C46's, C54's, B25's, B26's, in fact all we had was there that day.

~~The next day we moved into Tokyo Bay proper. The rest of the fleet was already here. As we steamed into the narrow channel, we passed eleven submarines, (American)~~

The greatest sight I ever saw occurred while we were anchored at Sagami Wan. From the bridge came word that two Japanese subs under American Prize crews were entering our anchorage. As they pulled into the bay we could see the Japanese sailors lined up on deck, and old glory flying above the rising sun. The two subs pulled along side a sub tender. The Japs appeared very healthy and wore green knee pants uniforms.

The day after the signing of the surrender, we moved into Tokyo Bay proper. As we entered we saluted eleven submarines of the U.S. Navy, headed back out to sea. I saw the shattered remnants of the Yokosuka Naval base and one of the two remaining battleships of the Jap navy, the Nagato. The harbor was littered with sunken hulls of the mighty Jap Navy. The base itself looked more like a junk heap. Every where there was a hill high enough or a building high enough to be seen, the American flag waved.

A small Jap trash lighter came alongside, the thing looked very dirty, and was run by two Japanese with an American guard.

On ~~August~~ 6, 1945, the Idaho, Mississippi, New Mexico,  
North Carolina, 20 destroyers, and two carriers, left Tokyo bay  
for Okinawa.

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As we left the harbor that evening, Mt. Fujiyama, and the remnants  
of the city of Tokyo were visible. Mt. Fujiyama appeared to be very  
mysterious, and at the same time it was one of the most beautiful sights  
I ever hope to see. The snow covered peak ~~was very~~ could be seen clearly  
while the base was enshrouded in clouds. As we steamed out of the  
harbor just at sun down, we were 30 miles from it, and yet it towered  
above us as if we were at it's very base.

On <sup>Sept</sup> 10 ~~August~~ the above mentioned force was under way for Pearl  
Harbor, Panama, and the USA!



BATTLESHIP IDAHO FIRES HERE 10,000 SHELL

The U.S.S. IDAHO one of the Nav's old "battlewagons," fired her 10,000th 14-inch shell of the war at Okinawa and kept up her record of participation in all central and north Pac. invasions.

Pacific Fleet Headquarters Credited the 26-year-old modernized battleship with firing 1500 tons of shells at Japanese positions on Okinawa, shooting down nine Japanese planes, destroying several torpedo "suicide" boats and sinking a cargo ship attempting to flee Naha harbor.

Five of the planes were shot down in three minutes and 42 seconds of a wild kamikaze attack.

The Idaho was at Hvalfjord, Iceland, when the war started. She joined the PacFleet in Jan 1942. After a year of patrol operations, she steamed north to support the Attu invasion.

She then was in action at Makin, Kwajalein, Kavieng on New Ireland, Saipan, Guam, Pelelieu, Anguar, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. She had bombarded 13 islands while participating in eight operations.