

Dear _____

They gave us several copies of this some could let our families and friends know SOME of what we were doing

The censorship regulations have recently been modified so that I can tell you a little more about what we have been doing in the past. When an action in which we have taken part is released to the newspapers, our Commanding Officer has authority to allow us to tell our personal experience after a month has passed. In order to save the censors a lot of work and to prevent having our letters marked up, it has been decided that a mimeographed letter would be written and distributed to all hands, giving what information possible. We can then refer to it and enlarge on our own personal experiences.

As our first letter I would like to give you some information on the history of the ship, up until recent times. As you may know, the TAYLOR was one of the first of this new class of destroyers to reach the Pacific. The TAYLOR, however, began her career with a trip to CASABLANCA convoying a large number of ships laden with supplies and troops. Not far off the coast of AFRICA a Spanish merchantman, the S.S. DARRO was sighted by our force. A boarding party was put on board the DARRO and she was directed to GIBRALTER.

After returning to the States for necessary repairs and replenishment of provisions, etc., the TAYLOR started on her long voyage, on the road to TOKYO. The Japanese Navy was still very strong and very aggressive. The Japs were well entrenched in the SOLOMONS Area and determined to stay there. GUADALCANAL was still the Pacific battlefield. The TAYLOR did not have long to wait before she saw the aggressiveness of the early Japanese Air Force.

On the 27th of January 1943, not too far from GUADALCANAL, our task force was under air attack the the U.S.S. CHICAGO was torpedoed. The TAYLOR was assigned to the anti-submarine screen during the entire attack. During these hectic days the U.S. Fleet and Air Force were forever outnumbered.

As the Allies moved on up through the SOLOMONS, driving the Japs before them the TAYLOR played a part in almost every action. In March we bombarded KOLOMBANGARA ISLAND in a night operation. This was one of the first night bombardments our Navy attempted, and it was a success. During the months of March and April the TAYLOR operated in the waters around the SOLOMONS and we were constantly within reach of the might of the Jap Navy and its Air Force. As you probably remember every night "in the slot" was potentially full of excitement and we were seldom disappointed. On April 7th, 1943 the ship was in the middle of a 100-plane air raid and our expert gunners destroyed at least three enemy planes. We participated in the landings on KOLOMBANGARA, RENDOVA, VELLA LA VELLA, and many bombardments in support of our ground forces. July proved to be one of the busiest months in our history. In that single month the TAYLOR assisted in the occupation of RICE ANCHORAGE, KULA GULF; destroyed a Jap Submarine, took part in the Second Battle of KULA GULF, rescued survivors of the U.S.S. HELENA, landed supplies at various points on NEW GEORGIA. The month ended only after MUNDA had been blasted. Incidentally in the Second Battle of KULA GULF, the TAYLOR had the thrill of saying "Torpedoes Away" - the target a Jap cruiser.

We had one "little task" to accomplish prior to returning to the United States for a much-needed navy yard overhaul and some well-deserved leave. Everyone remembers the invasion of the Gilbert Islands and the bloody

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battle our Marines had before they gained a foothold on Tarawa. The TAYLOR operated for some twenty-five days with the fast carriers and battleships covering these landings and as our naval air power reduced the enemy's defenses. After the Gilbert operation we cruised North a little and launched many air strikes against the enemy in the Marshall Islands. During these periods the force of which we were a part, was under air attack many times but the Jap was unable to stop our advance.

After her long and arduous duties, we were granted an overhaul in December 1943 and January 1944. Refreshed and repaired, the ship returned to aid in the occupation of the MARSHALL ISLANDS, as we started our drive in the Central Pacific. This was followed in short order by moving down to the Southwest Pacific, where we supported and aided in the amphibious progress of General MacArthur's forces in New Guinea, commencing with the bombardment and occupation of HOLLANDIA and AITAPE, New Guinea.

Our duties in this period varied considerably and consisted of the bombardment of enemy positions in New Guinea, and New Ireland, anti-submarine patrols, and as protection for aircraft carriers in their sweeps along and above the Bismarck Archipelago. We also helped in the occupation of Morotai Island in the Northern Molukkas.

Pages could be written about the many hair-raising experiences in the South and Southwest Pacific but we had better get on with the capture of the Philippines.

Last fall we were pleased to take part in the return of the Americans to the Philippine Islands, bringing the first resupply echelon into Leyte Gulf. We barely missed getting into the Battle of Surigao Strait, being about thirty miles away. The glow of the gun flashes was clearly visible, and the sky gave the impression that an electrical storm caused by heat lightning was taking place. We operated with various task forces in support of the landings in the Philippines for some two months. Our ships were under air attack many times and we painted another flag on our director representing a Jap plane that would never again attack an Allied vessel. As you know from the papers, this was a furious phase of the war, and a costly three or four months for the enemy, but we successfully gained our foothold in the Philippines.

Shortly after Jap resistance crumbled in that area, we continued the victorious advance up through the Philippines, and the TAYLOR was in the covering force as our flag returned to Luzon Island in the landings at Lingayen Gulf. Here again the Jap fought back fiercely but futilely. After backing up several additional landings on Luzon we played an active part in the landing at Mariveles on Bataan and the occupation of Corregidor.

The recapture by our forces, of Corregidor was probably the most interesting and spectacular operation of the Philippine Campaign. "The Rock", as Corregidor is known, guards the entrance to Manila Bay, lying between the Bataan Peninsula and the southwestern side of Luzon, where our forces had driven to the Cavite Naval Base, several miles inside the Bay. Mariveles, on the southern tip of Bataan, lies directly across from the northern end of Corregidor. It was here the first landing was made.

Corregidor itself, resembling a giant pollywog, rises sharply from the water, its sheer rocky cliffs giving it an impregnable appearance. The extreme southern end consists of a single high peak, which is joined to the main fortress by a long, narrow string of hilly land, heavy with trees and undergrowth. It was on this center strip that the amphibious units would go ashore.

The cliffs of "The Rock" were marked with scores of caves and tunnels bored deep in the solid rock. In these caves the Japs had mounted heavy calibre guns, ranging from 3 to 8 inch. It was our job to knock out these emplacements. On top Corregidor was flat and dotted with buildings, storage tanks, large guns and cave entrances, already in poor condition, due to the consistent bombing by our Army Air Force.

For two days the TAYLOR, with other destroyers and cruisers went in to point blank range to draw enemy fire so that we could locate and knock out Japanese positions. Long lines of tiny minesweepers cut loose hundreds of mines in Marivales and around Corregidor and we were kept quite busy exploding these obstacles. On the second day the Japs began to open up and it was necessary to bore in closer and fight it out. We knocked out several batteries and escaped without damage. On the third day we landed at Bataan, where due to accurate firing by our ships and heavy aerial bombardment, there was little opposition.

The morning of the fourth day saw the all-out attack upon the rocky fortress. At 7:50 a.m., heavy bombers came over in waves to unload tons of bombs, which exploded with a low rumbling noise as the vibrations echoed through the rock. Medium bombers dropped parachute bombs while fighter planes flew low-level strafing attacks. Our group moved in close and poured shells into the caves, and around the landing beaches. At times the entire rock was hidden behind thick clouds of smoke and dirt.

At exactly 8:30 a.m. long lines of transport planes appeared and lumbered slowly in a great circle over "The Rock". As the smoke from the bombardment cleared away, the huge planes dipped lower, one by one, as Army Paratroops tumbled into space. The sky was filled with red, white and black umbrellas, dropping men, supplies and equipment to the flat surface of Corregidor's rooftop. Some men missed their target, dropped past the steep cliffs to the water where PT boats quickly came to the rescue. Corregidor was soon littered with abandoned parachutes and as the troops began searching out Japs, still more silky puffs floated earthward.

At 1030, the Amphibious Force moved slowly to the center of the Island, as destroyers, cruisers and rocket-firing craft moved to within 500 yards of the beach laying down a shattering barrage. Aircraft bombed and strafed, and troops poured from their landing barges onto the beach. Beachheads were soon established and "Old Glory" flew over Corregidor.

Japanese surface forces have been very reluctant to get within range of our Navy ever since their disastrous efforts to stop us in the Solomons. On the few occasions when they have ventured to hazard ships of their fleet in desperate attempts, the TAYLOR has not been fortunate enough to be there to help make him sorry. However, many of his aircraft and three of his submarines have not lived to regret coming too close to the "Terrific

Taylor", and we have had the satisfaction of pounding his shore installations and in conjunction with our amphibious, land, and air forces, have aided in the long advance toward the heart of his empire.

The Japanese have been unable to stop our advance toward their homeland or to hold on to the territory, which their treachery and aggressiveness won for them early in the war. They have, however, proved themselves to be stubborn and fanatical fighters. That the TAYLOR had acquitted herself with distinction for two and a half years, without suffering any major damage, is a tribute to the alertness, skill, and fighting ability of the men who manned her for these long, difficult, and hazardous months.

During the period 8-12 March we participated in the seizure and occupation of Zamboanga, Mindanao Island, on the occasion of our troops landing on this southern Philippine Island. Our job again consisted of close support of the minesweepers, pounding of beach defenses and close support of our troops advancing to and seizing Zamboanga City. This job was our most difficult one, and provided us with many thrills. The day before the landings we passed so close to the enemy occupied beach that we could see our shells hit gun emplacements and fortified positions at point blank range. Our look-outs spotted a lush, brand new Tojo hidden under a shed. Needless to say that we finished it off very quickly. We had a merry time with the shore batteries, but our expert gun batteries cleaned them out as rapidly as they chose to interfere with our activities. That day, we passed so close to the dock at Zamboanga City we could almost have landed the liberty party without use of boats.

The advance of our troops on Zamboanga City was the outstanding sight to all of us. We were close enough in keeping position to support our troops to really see the soldiers in cautious approach to their objective. It makes one very proud of our soldiers to see them boldly advance against the enemy, armed to the teeth with the best equipment our country can provide. Moreover, one can very easily understand the reasons for buying many bonds, the source of the money with which to buy this equipment which permits our soldiers to advance on and subdue the enemy with a minimum amount of casualties to our troops.

Will write more on our recent activities and keep you up to date as well as possible in the future.

Love
Gerry

P.S. Received your letter with Dick's picture. The other day and thanks a lot, I promise I'll answer it in a day or two.