

POSSESSIONS OF "OUR" JAPANESE PRISONER



The cap, silk loin cloth and cigarettes are in custody of Ned "Dixie" Howell.

Pen and ink drawing was done by Karen Goodloe, daughter of Mike Melnychuk Miller, from a photo.

POST WAR MEMORIES

Phil Garlington

The Allentown story, was an important, if brief, part of our lives. In retrospect, the history of PF 52 must be tied to one man above all others - CDR Gary Collins.

It was said he was "anchor man" at the Academy and under his picture in the yearbook was written "He has yet to be accepted." The story we heard was that after he'd nearly blown the stern off a 125-footer with a wrong depth charge setting, he was slated to spend the rest of his career on the beach. But with our entrance into WW II, the Coast Guard needed many more CO's. Part of the expansion was the C.G. manned frigates, so Collins got his command. At Norfolk, frigate officers in training heard from older hands that Collins was bad news -and we drew him with the Allentown. Without the scars left through his personality, I doubt if the crew and officers ever would have compiled their amazing and unique record of twenty-five reunions in twenty-six years, for surviving on a small floating island under his command welded us all into a closely knit group whose camaraderie has persisted through the years.

The Allentown was launched sideways at Froemming Brothers yard in Milwaukee. As one of our Wisconsin men observed, "Before the war, Froemming Brothers built everything from rowboats on down". Floated down the Mississippi without her masts, she fitted out in the least efficient navy yard in the U.S. The story starts when we assembled in Algiers.

At one of our early meetings with our new C.O. in the ward room, he told his officers that if we didn't shape up, "this will be a hell ship, and if any officer puts in for a transfer, I shall write 'cowardice' on his request". I recall, some weeks later, as we approached the trim new frigate in our motor whale boat, "Rigger" Lane observed, "It doesn't look like a hell ship!"

When I set down my memories of the "Mighty A" I can attest that many are true, some are hearsay, and some, I'm sure are apocryphal, for on those rare occasions when we talked with others from Allentown, we tended to embroider our anecdotes. Many were bitter memories once, but time palliates!

I recall the Captain, on the LMC saying, "Men, your officers are failing you, but I'll stand by you. My shoulders are broad".

One of my clearest memories is of our coming into Bermuda waters. As we progressed down Dundonald Channel, I was plotting bearings. Collins came up behind me and said, all smiling and friendly, "Mr. Garlington, you are bearing down too hard on that pencil. Here, let me show you." He took the pencil and pressed so hard on the chart that he tore a ragged gash in it. Then he handed me the splintered pencil and said sweetly, "See what I mean." "Captain", I replied, "as a civilian I was an educator. I promise I'll never forget."

Some days later, he came into the chart room and looked over my shoulder. I pressed hard on the pencil, splintering it and tearing the chart. He never came near me again at the chart table.

Collins was a lousy ship handler. When he made a landing we broke out the fenders and the line throwing gun and prayed. Once, when trying to tie up to a sea buoy he missed it twice, with amused officers from nearby ships watching. When he missed it a third time he got on the LMC and said loudly. "Mr. Cardwell, you have bitched it up again." LCDR Cardwell, a fine ship handler

was astonished, and I suspect, chagrined to catch the blame for Collins' sloppiness.

Scene: The Brooklyn Navy Yard the night before we sailed for the South Pacific. A couple of Allentown officers - Jack Dugan and maybe "Rigger" Lane - as they leave the Officers Club, feeling no pain, spot a motor scooter, temporarily left unwatched by a yard messenger. Voila! Free transportation back to the ship! I had the midwatch and noted the scooter on the dock, a matter which I pointed out to Mitulski before sauntering up forward to check the lines. When I returned to the quarterdeck a few minutes later the scooter was gone. About 0300 two yard security men came aboard to report that a motor scooter had mysteriously disappeared. I pointed out that there were two DE's outboard of us, reached by a gangplank on the fantail. They said they'd check. An hour or so later they were back. They'd had no success in their search and asked permission to look over our ship. I called Mitulski and asked him to aid them in conducting a thorough search. (By that time the scooter had been disassembled and safely stowed in our seabag locker.) Mitulski looked everywhere with them, but no scooter. Shortly thereafter, we sailed. The first time we had occasion to use the machine was on Bora Bora. Two of our officers - again I think Dugan was one - rode over to a village on the other side of the island. The only details I can remember about their report, when they returned were (1) the village Chief, who was suffering from elephantiasis, had fantastically swollen genitals, and (2) riding back in the night they ran over some land crabs, of which there were a veritable army on the trail. I think the Russians at Cold Bay got our scooter although some maintained it had been converted into a handy billy.

Scene: The Allentown is tied up at a pier on a rainy Sunday noon. Some stores are delivered along side. The officers are having lunch in the wardroom. The O.D. asks a man on the bridge to get on the ILC and ask for a work party. The man, a new seaman gets on the horn. "All hands report to the pier to load stores," he pipes. Collins flies into a rage. "It's not an all hands evolution" he shouts, "But since it's been announced it shall be done. 'All hands' means everybody!" He shoos out the Exec and all the other officers to load stores in the rain while he lunches in solitary splendor.

Scene: Thanksgiving day 1944. A smiling Gary Collins sits at the head of the wardroom table at Thanksgiving dinner, flanked by his sad, gloomy looking officers sitting on each side. A picture is taken from the opposite end of the table. When developed, it shows the beaming Captain's face at top center. The picture is tacked on the bulletin board. The point of the tack is through the Captain's nose, with the tack head obscuring his face. The culprit is not identified.

When mail arrived aboard the Allentown, Collins took to intercepting the officer's magazines. His favorite was Reader's Digest. He would read the condensed novel and then, pretending he'd read the original book, proceed to deliver a book report at dinner. Doc Eslick decided he'd had enough. He invited us to join in his conversation the next time there was a book report. As Collins commenced, Doc introduced the topic of socialized medicine. We all joined in animatedly. It was really quite rude. The frustrated skipper threatened to call a carpenter's mate with a power saw (Ted Hug?) to saw the table in two, so that he could control at least half of the table.

Ralph Eslick was a wonderfully complex man. A much married alcoholic, he was also a skilled surgeon who once performed a difficult operation on another

ship in a full gale. He was his own man and never knuckled under to Collins. He eschewed poker in the wardroom, calling it "Penny Ante". He regularly played for larger stakes in the chief's quarters.

The Navy Officers Club Hollandia at was on stilts, out of sniper range in the bay. When Eslick left it one evening, a little unsteady, he missed the motor whale boat. Eslick was promptly hauled out of the drink, but he lost his only hat. For months, until he could get a new one, he could be seen wearing an imitation pith helmet.

One of the favorite stories about Doc was a hotel room party in New York with plenty of booze. Eslick burst into tears and said "Fellas, please don't dare me to throw this chair out the window". Of course someone did, and out went the chair.

Because he was a Public Health doctor, he felt no responsibility to observe the chain of command. As he became more concerned with the Captain's mental health his warning letters by-passed Collins' scrutiny. I believe Eslick was instrumental in getting the Allentown designated Flag, because it gave Commodore Ryssy an opportunity to observe the C.O. closely.

Sudden thought: Whatever happened to our little white dog "Amazing". He (was it a male?) was so used to hard decks that when he would get ashore at a Naval Base he would avoid grass and only walk on hard surfaces.

Whatever happened to a first class quartermaster named McGrath who isn't on your roster. A Notre Dame grad, he knew more about celestial navigation than most of our officers. I remember I got reprimanded by Collins for being too familiar with an enlisted man - I used to call McGrath "Mac".

Feisty little banty-rooster, Phil Bell, was one of the best communication officers I ever met, either in the Coast Guard, or of later, in the Navy. A career Coast Guard - formerly a chief radioman - nobody would pull the wool over Bell's eyes. When he was reassigned, he dropped by the Captain's cabin to pay his respects. A motor whale boat was waiting to take him ashore. His final speech went something like this: "Captain, you can take your frigate and shove it -not this way" (making a perpendicular gesture with his hands) - "but this way (making a horizontal fish-measuring gesture). He turned to go and then stuck his head back in the cabin once more. "And you can pull the whistle cord three times!" he said. By the time the bemused Collins had recovered, Bell was on his way to the beach.

When Phil Bell left, I became the custodian for two Class III sets of registered publications. (Class III was for DD's, DE's and PF's) One was the ship's and one was the Flag's. According to Navy Regs, the captain and the communications officer should jointly hold the combination to the Registered Pubs safe, but Collins would not accept the responsibility, refusing to learn the combination. When I took over he said, "Garlington, the Pubs are now your responsibility and if any are lost or compromised, you shall go to Portsmouth Naval Prison". I recall Commodore Ryssy spent considerable time pouring over the latest ASW doctrine in his publications.

The cipher key lists were kept in the safe. The ink on them became obliterated in sea water, so if we had to jettison ciphers, they would be useless to the enemy, even if dropped in shallow water. One day when I was decoding, stripped to the waist, for it was hot in the D.F. shack where we kept the

Electric Ciphering Machine, I was horrified to note that the sweat dripping off my chin had erased a part of the key list. I recovered it by sending an S.O.S. by flashing light to the Communications Officer on the Machias, which was keeping station 2000 yards abeam. He sent me the missing section by Aluds lamp.

Allan Comstock Emery, Jr., Robert Lincoln and George A. Earnest were three of the finest men I've been privileged to know. "Ace" Emery, with Adamses on both his and his wife's side was definitely the Blue Blood of the Allentown. His ancestors had gathered a church before the forebears of most Allentonians had seen America's shores. I recall, because he was the most abstemious of us, he was hypnotized so that he could be photographed with a glass of whiskey in his hand. When we went through the Panama Canal Zone, who but Emery should draw shore patrol duty so that he could witness first hand the iniquities of the Blue Queens. When Marian was expecting, we encoded a spurious low priority message from the Red Cross and imbedded it in the middle of a sheet of fox schedule and made sure that Emery, as a member of the coding board, would be the one to break it and discover he had become the father of twins.

Lincoln was my bunkmate. His even temper, his slow smile, and his philosophical approach to life afloat helped me to preserve my sanity. I remember, when we were running a barrier patrol between Hohmohon and Dinigat Islands - that would be late October, 1944 - we went to general quarters in the middle of the night. Linc and I both bailed out of our upper and lower bunks at the same time. I had to laugh. I could see, in my mind's eye, one of us riding the other out of our compartment like a cowboy on a wild Cayuse!

George Earnest shared with me the responsibilities for "C" Division. I mentioned that Collins didn't like us to be so familiar with our men, but because Ernie was so genuinely interested in the men he worked with - their families, girl friends, education, civilian lives - his rapport with them contributed greatly to the generally high morale of the division. I remember one time, in a fit of frustration, he said to Collins, "Captain, I consider you a worse enemy than the Japs"!

I believe some of the nicknames we acquired on the Allentown were unique to that part of our service. I almost immediately became "Gar" and I never was called that again, either in subsequent Coast Guard or Naval service. "Ace" Emery! It sounded as if that Godly man were a Las Vegas dealer. I'll bet he was never "Ace" again. Do you suppose George Earnest is "Ernie" today, or Bob Lincoln "Linc". Did "Rigger" Lane remain "Rigger" in his days at Woods Hole? Did "Pearly" Gates remain "Pearly"? I'm sure the nickname phenomenon obtained among our enlisted personnel as it did in officer country.

Do you recall when some of our party, on a "beer" liberty at Morotai, surprised a Japanese officer sketching the ships tied up in the harbor. He'd probably been put ashore from a sub, for MFDF had picked up a signal a little earlier. With no weapons but beer cans and baseball bats they rushed the Jap before he could get to his rifle, led by our master-at-arms - a former N.Y. state trooper, whose name escapes me - and was turned over to authorities on Morotai. We suspected his presence had something to do with the air raid on the high test gas tanks that were hit early the next morning. That was the morning after Halloween eve. I had the mid watch. CIC called to say they had "Bogeys" and gave the range and bearing. We checked with the other frigates who also had picked them up. Then I almost made the biggest blunder of my career. It was still dark (about 0400) when I reached for the general alarm

on the flying bridge (painted green). I almost tripped the chemical alarm (painted red). That would have broken all of you out at general quarters in your gas masks! As the planes came in low, the frigates blazed away with everything they had, and somebody got a plane. It blazed up like a match box. I'm sure, ever after, every gunners mate on each frigate claimed that he was the guy who personally got the kill. The planes did set off 80,000 gallons of high test gas. Shortly after the action was over, CIC picked up another target coming in on the same bearing, but this one gave an IFF signal. We checked with the other frigates to be sure no one fired at it. In came a big Navy Liberator. The armed guard people in the harbor who were not on our radio-telephone frequency and who had no radar, had finally come GQ. They blazed away and almost blew the tail off the Navy plane, but it managed to land. The frigates subsequently got a commendation letter, hardly mentioning the downed Japanese plane, but praising our forbearance in not firing at the Liberator.

There finally came a time, when thanks to Ryssy, the Captain was about to be transferred. I had a pretty good idea on what crypto channel the transfer orders would arrive. Because the Japanese were jamming our Fox, messages were frequently rerun 48 or 72 hours after their original transmission. At the end of the month, when I normally would burn the old key list and break out the new, I deliberately kept the old key list. Sure enough, on the 2nd I received a message on a Fox retransmission with a date-time group for the previous month. Thus I was able to break the orders transferring Collins. When I delivered the message, he asked me to read it to him. There were a couple of officers with him. Then a miraculous thing happened. It seemed as though in about one minute everyone on the Allentown knew the Captain was leaving. I could hear shouts of joy all over the ship. LCDR Bob Beale was dancing with a steward's mate in the wardroom. Everyone was ecstatic. Collins said he would leave the ship when we got back to Hollandia. The Commodore said "Collins, you'll get your ass off this ship at 0555".

Now when we were cruising off the mouth of Kaoe Bay at Morotai, we heard Tokyo Rose say that there was a U.S. Battleship off Kaoe. Maybe that was what gave Collins the idea he was commanding a battleship. In any event, he decided he would substitute a bugle for a bosn's pipe. I believe it was Arnold Jackson who drew the assignment. The Captain would say, "Bugler, blow Fire in the steering compartment". The bugler would blast away and we'd go to fire drill.

I did not attend the Captain's departure the next morning, so what I now relate is hearsay! At 0500 Capt. Collins had himself piped ashore with the bugle. Then, as the motor whale boat pulled away, the bugler removed the silver mouthpiece and tossed the bugle in the water alongside the Old Man. That, it is said, was the end of bugling on the "Mighty A".

The Captain was not quite done with us. The detachment message said he was to be relieved by our Exec, LCDR Ed Cardwell. He couldn't bear to think his relief was not an Academy man. Collins knew his communications and perceived that I'd broken the message using a superseded cipher. He sent a copy of the test to Machias, substituting the name of her young Exec - an academy man - for Cardwell's. They could check the message number and code groups in their file but could not break the message to check the text. The poor Exec came aboard to what he thought was his first command, only to find it was all a hoax.

Collins was assigned a Captain of the Port job in Seattle (normally held by a

SPAR JG) so that he could be observed. Almost immediately he held a surprise inspection of the SPAR's barracks. That did it. He was mustered out on mental disability. A short time later a story appeared in a Seattle paper - I think it was the Post Intelligencer - with his picture, telling how, as Skipper of the Allentown, he'd practically won the war in the Pacific single-handed. Luckily, George Earnest saw it. Ernie wasted no time in apprising the Seattle P.I. of the true story, which fixed Collins' wagon. At the time of his death, he was working in a Seattle haberdashery, I believe.

When Ed Cardwell assumed command he immediately made it clear that the Allentown was "our ship", not "my ship", and we settled down to a more normal existence. Now, because it was natural when men were living in such confined quarters, there were a few conflicts. I remember, I had a minor hassle with Lt. Wallace over something so trivial I can't remember what it was. Under Collins all our differences had been overridden by our universal animosity for one man. Capt. Cardwell was a fine C.O. and the Allentown became a happy ship.

Do you remember when we'd dropped the hook on the edge of an ammunition anchorage off Leyte, with a Liberty Ship just a few hundred yards away? We assumed she was an ammunition ship. A "Betty" came over and dived into the bridge, killing several officers and starting a fire. Had she been carrying ammunition, we'd have been blown to bits. We sent over a damage control party to help fight the fire. They returned to the Allentown laden with the gunwhales. Part of the ship's cargo was beer for the army on Leyte. I believe we made a couple of more trips over, each time returning with Schaeffer's finest. I know that some of that beer, carefully stashed away, was traded weeks later for Russian vodka, where a couple of boxes of cigars and a few cans of beer brought us the best potato vodka.

On the way home we were privileged to witness a great armada at Ulithi where the allied navies were making up for the invasion of Okinawa. The ship's present list one day in March, 1945, included 22 flattops, 18 battlegroups, 70 odd cruisers, and 220 destroyers (nearly 400,000 Navy and Marine personnel). Although there were nearly 4,000 vessels in the Normandy invasion, with all the troop ships, tankers, supply and support vessels, yet in sheer power the Ulithi Atoll fleet was more powerful. It sobers one to reflect that fighting fleet represented only a small fraction of the power of a single modern American or Soviet nuclear submarine. We may not be too concerned, but what of the future of our grandchildren?

At Bremerton an old Coast Guard four striper assured us that on our next mission he'd guarantee there would be a blonde behind every tree! Do you remember how many trees there were at Cold Bay? The Russians who took over the Allentown wanted to flick every switch and turn every valve immediately. They had no comprehension of sequentially warming up equipment and time-delay relays. We had to watch them every minute. Their gunners mates, as "Ace" Emery would attest, had no conception of safety precautions. Their interpreter, Andre Konievski, had a degree in English Literature from the University of Kuibishev and knew zilch about electronics. I'll bet our radar and sonar gear was completely inoperative by the time they reached Vladivostok. Their officers were nice guys, with a sense of humor more like ours, I thought, than like the Limeys. Russia must have just about reached the bottom of the barrel, for they had been agricultural engineers. None of the officers who took over our frigates ever had any experience with twin screw propulsion. Some of us were asked to evaluate their "officer potential" for

the ONI. It seemed to me at the time that it was a sort of sneaky thing to do, as they were our allies. How wrong I was. I imagine they were evaluating us too. I heard years later that someone had seen the Allentown flying the flag of Taiwan or Korea. She was a rust bucket. Has anyone heard what her fate really was?

Settling Grudges at Sea

Mike Melnyczuk Miller

Part of our recreational equipment was boxing gloves. They were used for teaching, sparring or to settle grudges. If personal animosities became violent, they were to be settled under supervision, with boxing gloves. To introduce the program, Tom Hull and I put on a boxing demonstration. One of Tom's blows dislocated my shoulder. Dr. Eslich was summoned, and with a mighty yank put it back in socket, good as new.

The only grudge match was between Bugler Jackson and George Stavis. George dented the deck when he went down. Does anyone remember others?

While we were in the Norfolk area for some repair, Virginia Beach was a favorite hangout. One day while there, a girl got in trouble in the outgoing surf, and Red Nichols and I went in and rescued her. She was grateful!---eternally??

POST WAR MEMORIES

By Jesse Hayden

(Jesse Hayden) As the captain's GQ talker, I got to see a lot of the Captain and the other personnel who manned the flying bridge during drills or emergencies. When we set sail from Algiers out the Mississippi, I started my acquaintance with Captain Collins. He always had a squint in his eyes with a little grin or showing his front teeth. At South Pass, in the river, one of the steering engines lost steam. Boy, did the Captain get excited, but the pilot got us through South Pass, although we almost landed in a mud bank. The captain gave the engine room fits over this affair. I learned to dread it when he turned to the PA system in his shrill voice and said "Men, now hear this - this is your Captain speaking". Often he described incidents or people as "Amazing" his favorite word. From this came the name of our ship's paper, "The Amazing Wreckord", our nickname, "The Amazing A", and all the incidents referred to as "simply amazing". He kept a bucket close by when we first entered the gulf. Someone picked up the bucket to use it (Jim Godlesky) and he screamed, "Go get your own bucket".

In any tight situation, he always asked "Who's at the wheel?" "Tarquinio, get Tarquinio." One night in Panama when the ship had to be moved, we were treated to a hilarious skit on the PA system as Captain Collins pleaded so all could hear, "Tarquinio, please come to the wheel house. Please Tarquinio, your ship needs you." "Come take over the wheel." Another episode which made his sanity questionable was when he had us all break out our dress whites from our seabags stored below, so he could have his ship give a salute a well-known cruiser that came by. This was in a war zone with air raids a daily occurrence.

Another incident took place at Morotai and almost gave the captain a heart attack. It was a night so dark you couldn't have cussed a black cat if you had it by the tail. CIC was reporting Jap ships (large) coming toward us, 15 or 20 miles away, and closing fast. The captain in his shrill voice says, "My God, what are we going to do?" I heard a voice say "Shutup", and a slapping noise. Then Commander Ryssey spoke up - "When they get in firing range open fire". Then I got excited, but it turned out that the ships were ours and the scare was over. Later someone asked, "Did you know the Commander slapped the Captain?"

Boarding the C54 to go from Cold Bay to Kodiak wasn't one of the highlights of my life, but I would have ridden anything to get out of that place. The take-off wasn't bad but the landing at Kodiak was a lulu. The ride from Kodiak to Seattle was picturesque and I believe it was on the Alaskan Gold Line, but the best part was getting warmer. The Majestic Hotel in Seattle was headquarters.

Memories of the Russians - Their lack of clothing. I gave Nikolai an old jumper from the rag bag and he kissed me on both cheeks. I almost froze with all the clothes I had, my blankets and a stove going, but the wind blowing constantly kept me cold.

Another thought about Captain Collins - A monkey was brought aboard by someone and used the Captain's bed for his bathroom. Next he climbed the mast and nearly got in the search radar. For some reason, the monkey ended up in the drink. By the Captain's hand???

**BIRDSEYE PEAS
and
STRAWBERRIES**

By Allan C. Emery

The fall of 1944 saw the promise of General Douglas MacArthur fulfilled. "I shall return" was a reality, and the U.S.S. Allentown in her small way did her part in the invasion of Leyte.

Our ship was anchored in San Pedro Bay on the northwest end of Leyte Gulf, just off the town of Tacloban. Hundreds of ships of various size and type were evidence of the will of America to free these islands of the Philippines. The distant thunder of guns could be heard coming from the mountains to the west, but the beaches were now quiet with only the evidence of disabled landing craft to witness the horror and death just weeks before.

Out of the relative peace aboard the ship the IMC blared forth. It was the Captain's voice. "Mr. Emery, to the bridge." I knew that the Captain expected me to run when called and I raced up the two sets of ladders to the Conn and found the Captain with a big smile on his face. He pointed to a cargo vessel several miles away, toward Samar and said, "Mr. Emery, that ship that is just anchoring is a refrigerator ship. How would you like some Birdseye peas and strawberries?" I admitted that they would be most acceptable, as did the others on the open bridge. "As boarding officer, I am ordering you to take the motor whaleboat with Mr. Wallace (our supply officer) and the men in you boarding detail and requisition these supplies from that ship. We will be ahead of all the others."

We donned our life jackets, helmets and sidearms and the men carried Thompson machine guns as this was standard equipment for the Boarding Party. Just as we were about to be lowered away three red tracer shells shot across the harbor, fired by army howitzers. This was the signal for an enemy air raid. I looked up at the Captain to see if he'd call us back to man our guns. He said, "We have enough men to man our guns, go get us the Birdseye peas and strawberries."

It seemed like an interminable trip to the "Reefer Ship". Shrapnel from spent 40 MM shells 3"50s and 5"38s splashed in the water about us, but none touched us. We were finally alongside the supply ship. No accommodation ladder had been rigged, - just a Jacob's Ladder hung limply straight down her side. I was the first to start up. Mr. Wallace was not so young, and he suffered terribly from "prickly heat" but he followed me along with the others not part of the boat crew. At the rail, I found no quarterdeck detail. The ship was at General Quarters and we came aboard with no notice. I saw men at a 3"50 with an ensign as a battery officer. I could not attract his attention amid all the noise of the air raid and had to tap him on the shoulder. He looked at me in amazement and at my men. He asked, "What the _____ are you doing here and what do you want?" I replied that we had come for Birdseye peas and strawberries. He said, "Do you think we'd open our hatches in an air raid?" He told me where to go, but instead I went back to the ship.

We were greeted by the Captain who was apparently already tasting the products we were supposed to be bringing. When I told him that we returned empty handed he raced to the IMC, opened the switch to all stations, and began, "Mr. Emery has failed us again, _____."

April 14, 1987

THE POSTMAN RINGETH

RUSS MEYERS

As postmaster from New Guinea to Bremerton, it was my job to pick up our stinking, rotten mail sacks throughout the S. Pacific. Sacks of rotten fruit cakes, smelly cheeses and bugs. However, it was still wonderful to get mail and packages from home.

I remember one dark night in the Philippines. I picked up our censored mail and sailing lists from all our escort vessels to take to headquarters in Tacloban. I went by our whaleboat to a sub chaser, to a duck, to shore. I followed a path through the jungle. My only friend on this long walk was my GI .45, and I held it closely looking for Japs at every turn. Then I suddenly thought--Is it loaded? This thought stayed with me all the way to Headquarters. There I checked it and found it empty!! Before the walk back I made sure there was a round in the chamber and felt a lot more secure. Back on our whaleboat, very dark and all ships blacked out! First ship we sighted was not the PF 52. "Where is the PF 52?" "Over There", we were told! Third ship we approached-- "Where is the PF 52?" "Over There", again we were told. We were wondering if our ship had sailed, but then on our 4th try, we found the 52. What a night that was for a city boy!!

THE HAPPY JAP

NED "DIXIE" HOWELL

On a beer party at an island off Morotai, several others and myself went to a native village. The natives let us know that a Jap was on the other end of the island. They kept saying "no boom-boom" indicating he was unarmed. We followed them and found the Jap sitting under a tree. He smiled continually and appeared very friendly. He was clean, well dressed and possessed drawing instruments and a bag containing his personal goods. Between this time and his appearance on the Allentown, several items came into my possession such as his silk loin cloth, soldiers cap, watch band and cigarettes. Several others also came into possession of his gear which he was happy to let us have. I often wonder if he lived through the war.