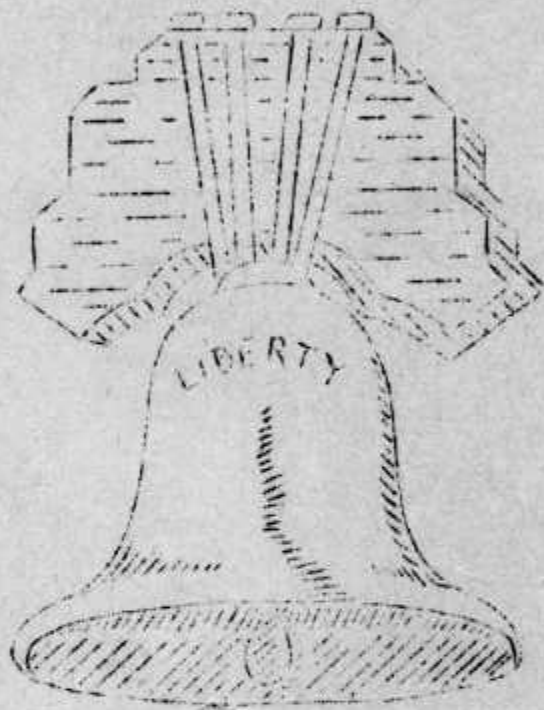


THE
PHILADELPHIAN



EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY
EDITION

November 17, 1944.

U.S.S. PHILADELPHIA



We celebrate today on 17 November 1944 the birthday of our ship -- the anniversary of her launching eight years ago here in the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

Our Chaplain has recorded in the following pages, her progress through these years. It has been a highly successful progress; 259,445 miles of cruising that have reached from Midway in the West, to Malta in the East. It has included an expenditure of some fourteen thousand rounds of six inch ammunition, over nine thousand of them fired at the enemy. But, neither cruising nor shooting would have come about except for the five thousand officers and men who have served in the ship, have warmed her, and given her life and character. It is in that bond of her life and character made from hard work, trouble, some pain, some play, and not a little achievement, that we rejoice together today.

Fortuitously this year's anniversary coincides with our return home from an eventful year's action in the distant Mediterranean. It becomes, therefore, for us, a doubly happy occasion.

For the many anniversaries to come, we wish our gallant ship and all who serve in her the same good fortune that has attended us.

Walter Ansel

WALTER ANSEL.

The Morning Orders for this day, 26 October 1944, inform all hands that the long trick in the Mediterranean comes to a close today. They tell us that at 1630, Chief Boatswain Larsen will have his Special Sea Detail ready to cast off all lines for home sweet home. If your imagination is very vivid, you might be able to see the ship, herself, at 1700, straining to part the lines, to get past the submarine net and out to the open sea; for it's "Home, Boys, Home" in a very special way to all of us, as the U.S.S. PHILADELPHIA pushes her way back to the place where she was spawned, almost eight years ago to the day to the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

Seldom has any ship enjoyed the good luck to unite in one happy chain of coincidences the bright good fortune that we will enjoy on this homeward voyage. First, our course is West. Second, in a few days we will celebrate our ship's birthday. Third, with any sort of luck, we will celebrate our ship's birthday in the place where she was built; and if you search the history of the ship, you will find that she now returns to the United States after one of the longest separations from her home shores. No wonder that she will strain to get free, for she has an appointment with destiny at the Yard where she came into being. We have a date with a birthday!

To a very few of us the pages which follow will not be necessary. Those very few are the twelve plank-owners who have been with the ship from the first. They can narrate her history with the ease of men who have been a part of that history. Ask

Chief Quartermaster Gravel, for instance, where the ship went, what she did those first few months of infancy, and he'll say something like this:

"I can recall pretty well when Captain Jules James, our first Skipper, took the PHILADELPHIA on the "River Run" on 19 October 1937. The river was the Delaware, and we were heading for the Atlantic to undergo some preliminary trials at sea. Yes, we were then sent on a shakedown cruise to the West Indies, and I remember President Batista of Cuba coming aboard for a visit to see the ship. In those days we were the very latest model in cruisers, and I guess even the "Strong Man" of Cuba had a yen to see what we looked like. Commander Davis was our Executive Officer, and had us looking our best in gleaming whites and gold that glittered."

That, Shipmates, is an example of how a favored few know the PHILADELPHIA; where it went, what it did, and all the incidents which go to make up the life history of a ship. For the many non-plank owners we have a record of the ship's activities, compiled, for the most part, with the aid of one man's tenacious memory -- the above mentioned Chief Gravel.

Now, if you ask Chief Commissary Steward Tisdale to continue on from the 1937 West Indies Cruise, he'd tell you that the ship returned to Philadelphia for a check-up before holding final trial runs off Rockland, Maine, in March of '38.

Chief Bitcon ("Swede", to you), would easily take it up from there. He was around when the big event happened. Let him tell it:--

"Yes, sir, we went down to Charleston Navy Yard - must have been about the end of April, '38, and then the big honor came to the PHILADELPHIA. President Roosevelt came aboard for a 'Presidential Cruise'. I remember us manning the rail - all at attention and 'bug-eyed'. It was a great day for the PHILLY when we headed for the West Indies with the President aboard. He brought along a lot of fine fishing tackle - had a special barge, coxswain, and all. But the first fish he hooked measured from head-to-tail about six inches. He seemed to enjoy the joke more than anyone else - except the poor fish, of course. Anyway, he laughed the loudest, and we sort of realized he was one of us.

Down around the Dominican Republic we touched coral bottom, and put a slight hole in our Sound Room, which was then directly below the anchor windlass room. It wasn't serious enough to interrupt the trip, which took us through all the old time pirate haunts of the Spanish Main. We took the President back to Charleston and went on ourselves to Philadelphia to have the hole patched up."

Mr. McMullen, who is still interested in Gunnery, will tell you of that summer of '33 with the ship firing test shots in Long Island Sound. He took part in that exercise - the first firing since the commissioning of the ship. He never realized then that the main battery, one day, not too far distant, would be firing close to a thousand rounds in a single day in the Sicilian fracas.

"All that fall of '38, we spent in Chesapeake Bay, where Short Range Battle Practice was held. With its firing tests completed, the ship left on a "Good Will Tour" of the West Indies,

returning to Philadelphia for the holidays - mighty fine tradition we're doing our best to maintain this year of 1944."

Your Chief Boatswain's Mate, Mike Perillo, will tell you how glad he was to leave Philadelphia that cold January 4, 1939, and head for the warm waters of the Caribbean.

"We joined up with the Fleet off the Canal Zone about the end of January, and had our first tactical exercises, which lasted all of February. Did'ja know we had our first taste of shore bombardment in February of '39? If we only had a crystal ball around in those days to prophesy how much shore bombardment we'd do up, down, and around the Mediterranean. It was around this time that we gave ourselves the name "Quantanamo Ferry" - that seemed to be our beat. But those days, too, were heading to an end."

Mr. Ward will come up from the Log Room anytime and tell you how lucky the ship was that Spring of '39.

"It seems that most of the Fleet in the Atlantic was sent to the Pacific -- you can guess why. But we were lucky enough to get orders to take the ship to New York. That's never hard to take, so we anchored in the Hudson River, enjoyed the World's Fair out in Flushing Meadows, and wondered if a combatant ship would ever see action, what with a World's Fair dedicated to Peace and Progress. Anyway, after three weeks in the Hudson, we got underway for Boston, and a little later, we departed for Hampton Roads. There a new Executive Officer took over, the then Commander Zir-oli, who now is Commodore Zir-oli. (You probably recall that he was aboard not so long ago on a trip from Palermo to Naples.)

We didn't know it at the time, but we were on our way to the Pacific, and in a short while we were making our first transit through the 'big ditch' - the first day of June, 1939. We touched one port after another up the West Coast - San Pedro, Monterey, San Francisco (in time for our second World's Fair), and on to Portland for Fleet Week, and then down to Mare Island for a three month Yard period with time out for leave, liberty, and recreation."

Chief Water Tender Bates remembers the time when the new skipper, Captain Vance D. Chapline, was piped aboard to succeed Captain Jules James. "The date was 6 November and the ship immediately got underway for the Short Range Battle Practice and other practices in the San Clemente Area. The holidays were spent at San Pedro.

Then on to Hawaii to engage in the Fleet Problem, back to the West Coast (Bremerton to be exact), and back again to Pearl Harbor. The ship held the usual horseplay the day we crossed the Equator on July 24th. We returned to San Pedro and later to Mare Island in the late Fall. Christmas and New Year were spent in Hawaii - no White Christmas this year.

We made a trip to historic Midway in February of '40, and then while enroute to the West Coast, we had a sudden change of orders to proceed to Panama and the East Coast".

Chief Gunner's Mate Horne will tell you of the increased tensivity, dating from June 1940. "We knew that more serious days were ahead from many warlike indications and

preparations. For instance, we first went into condition watches about this time, with dawn and dusk General Quarters at frequent intervals. We travelled up to Boston with the ship darkened and when we arrived there we had established a record of thirty-two days without a single liberty. (This record, incidentally, was broken at St. Tropez this past summer).

Captain Moore took command in September, 1941 and Commander Smith became our new Executive Officer (a fine officer, who later went down with his torpedoed ship, the JOSEPH HERTZ off Casablanca in the opening days of the Moroccan Campaign). It's a bit difficult to trace our course from now on, but suppose you just say the ship was doing Neutrality Patrol from Halifax, south to Bermuda, and east to the Azores. We had a stroke of tough luck when the ship ran aground at Casco Bay, putting us in Boston Navy Yard the fateful Sunday, 7 December 1941"

Moore, Boatswain's Mate First Class, still shivers at the recollection of those convoys in the dismal winter of 1941-1942. "Imagine spending the holidays in Argentia, Newfoundland, with the mercury frozen, to say nothing of your nose and toes. And Casco Bay, sheathing us from stem to stern in a couple of inches - feet almost - of ice and snow. We were a beautiful sight returning to Brooklyn - the kind of winter picture the newsreels and rotogravure like to get. Then back we went to Iceland, with submarines having a field day up and down our Atlantic seaboard that winter and early spring of '42.

By one of those crazy bits of hard luck we were sent down to Panama just as soon as the weather took a turn for the better.

It was a speed run all the way from Norfolk to Cristobal, and a mighty fine chance to thaw out and remove the icebergs inside the funnels. I'll bet some of that Newfoundland ice is still around the keel of the ship."

Nobody ever forgets their maiden voyage, and your Chaplain, least of all. "I'll never forget that stormy trip across the North Atlantic in July, 1942 - the ship anchoring in the Clyde, off historic Greenock. Some of the lads aboard still correspond with the charming Scottish lassies. We made that trip once more to Greenock, but this time our trip was marred by a tragic accident on our first night out of Halifax - the gallant destroyer, U.S.S. INGRAHAM, went to the bottom in performance of duty. She collided with a tanker, and all but a few men went down with their ship. It was a dismal experience - one we'll not soon forget. Soon after arriving at Greenock, we held a ship's dance in the town hall and were shown the true meaning of hospitality by the warm-hearted Scots. Remember Tweed Shedden, too, crooning at the dance, while Lyons showed how a rug could be cut even in Scotland?

Many of us will recall that Captain Moore was relieved by Captain Paul Mendren between the two trips to Scotland. It was now that the ship entered upon her real combat history. Gone were the days of shepherding lumbering transports and slow merchantmen. We took the ship to the Chesapeake and started an intensive period of training, lasting through October, 1942. We know we were in for it this time - something bigger than we had ever attempted before.

And so it was that, training completed, we stripped ship of everything superfluous, piled them all aboard a barge alongside, and set out for war. We weren't alone. When the dawn came of our fifth day out, we saw the amphibious force spread out for miles and miles; converted carriers, cruisers, battleships, destroyers, sea-going tugs, tankers, transports, specially fitted four-pipers with silhouette so low we joked about the crew getting sub pay. We knew we were headed for Safi - Captain Hendren had told us the place, the plan and our function in the plan. We'll never forget that final day with the Task Force splitting up into the three attack groups. How we worried about the heavy swells which might bring disaster to the landings! The relief when the swells miraculously subsided - the "T" bone steak dinner - the prayers and hopes as we went into our first battle experience. Were we frightened? Were you scared going into your first trial by fire?

Here's a page or two from some notes made at the time and they may bring back to some of you old timers the realization that we too were scared amateurs once upon a time. If they are written in the first person, remember this Padre was as concerned as any of you as to whether he could take it along with the rest of you. He's still wondering. Here are the observations which begin on the eve of the assault on Safi, Saturday, 7 November 1942:

'General Quarters at 2100. I take my station at the mike on the Navigation Bridge. This night is history-making and it will be our privilege to take a part in it. As far as

possible, I have prepared the souls of the men for any eventuality by Mass, Confession, and Communion. The oils are in the Chart Room and I've left instructions to be called to any lad. May I never have to be called!

The weather is beyond all our hopes, sky studded with stars, water calm (our greatest boon - the lack of a pounding surf will save us a thousand lives). The ship settles to a spooky quietness, following the grand old NEW YORK, and astern of us the transports and tug; near us the destroyer screen slipping along noiselessly through the black African night. Below decks are hundreds of men to whom I must be ears, and most especially eyes. At this post I have an unbroken vision - a fifty-yard-line view of the whole action soon to take place.

By 2230 lights are beginning to appear - our first land since two weeks ago. A good omen these lights - perhaps they don't expect us. Then moving lights - ships, none of which (fortunately for them) intercept us. Closer and closer we come in - this is like something one reads about. At a distance of seven or eight miles is Safi - slumbering. We have every maneuver so carefully planned; every possible shore battery spotted. The Cole and Bernadou, with their daring volunteers, are to sneak in and tie up alongside the docks to prevent sabotage. The Transports start disembarking troops into the landing boats at 2200, to maneuver for the assault and make landings on the different beaches by 0430.

This is really a spot even Winchell would envy me. Boy, am I nervous! My attempt to doze is interrupted by the word that we are all lined up, each ship in the area assigned it. After convoying this armada four thousand miles, zigzagging and twisting, we have set these ships down exactly in the spot determined on, without losing a single ship, much less a man. The long wait from 2300 to 0415, when the fireworks would begin is something I'll never forget. The broadcast at fifteen minute intervals of everything possible to see - the sky, ships, phosphorescent water, the A.A. crews below me, the low talk of the men, the delight of the Skipper about the weather.....Mr. Roosevelt's plea to the French, and General Eisenhower's directions if the French wish to surrender. What a night!

"H" Hour of "D" Day - 0415, 8 November 1942 - the Cole and the Bernadou must be on their way. At 0435 a light flashes - then tracer bullets shoot out toward us - this keeps up for a while. We join in with our turrets booming out. Starshells shoot out toward us - hang like huge chandeliers in the skies, so bright I can see every man's face clearly. Enemy shells seem to float out toward us, hang lazily in the sky and drop miles short. Most of our salvoes are from the starboard side. A huge fire breaks out a mile to port and my heart sinks as the news is sent us by a destroyer that the DIX has been torpedoed. This report, however, is soon corrected. One of her landing boats took fire - a great relief - no lives lost, but a good display of fireworks as heat explodes ammunition she was carrying.

How glad I am that I can correct that first report, especially for the lads in the engine rooms! But, immediately comes the report that the COLE and the BERNADOU missed the dock and ran aground. Both did, but were so built that they could extricate themselves, which they did, seizing the valuable docks and then taking over the ships within the breakwater, losing not a man. By now it's dawn - the fighting and firing have all ceased.

At approximately 0730, their biggest shore battery opens up on the NEW YORK, about a mile ahead of us. The NEW YORK booms back with her big guns belching flame and yellowish smoke. Seems to be in very close, too close - she must be less than five miles off shore, but she surely is laying her eggs right up near the coastal battery. They've straddled her, and she's picking up her 1914 skirts, making a 180° turn, and telling us to go to work on it. Pete Coughlin, one of our aviators, is spotting for us, and on the third salvo, the PHILLY silences those guns.

About two O'clock that afternoon, Lieutenant John Mishanec, another of our aviators, discovers a heavily camouflaged battery which has been shelling our ships in the breakwater and the General asks us to knock it out. Salvos from our main battery silence this battery, and the job is finished by four dive-bombers from the SANTEE. At the fourth or fifth dive they blow up an ammunition dump with a fine burst of flame.

There it is - our first battle - our first realization that people would fire back at us, actually try to kill us. And you ask were we a bit nervous! We did a little mopping up for the next few

days, silencing the remnants of coastal opposition; not that there was much. When I tell you that we were firing into the outskirts of Safi on Sunday, and buying souvenirs in its markets on the following Friday, you can see it was not exactly a second Jutland. But, nonetheless, we did feel a bit cocky, a bit surer of ourselves. We felt we had been blooded. Captain Hendren had told us to "roar like lions", and we felt we had at least given a fair imitation of a cub trying out his larynx. Briefly, we had become, in a few hours, veterans. The PHILADELPHIA had her first campaign star.

And so we returned to the States, leaving Safi, Friday, 13 November 1942, sailing through the Narrows on Thanksgiving Eve, and a cold eve at that. We have been one lucky ship to be home for Thanksgiving three years, '42, '43, and now '44. It was only a short stay in the Yard. Come December 10th, we were escorting a convoy to Casablanca. We'll never forget arriving at Casablanca on Christmas Eve - the carol singing in the hangar, the red alert at midnight, holding up the midnight Mass till 0130. We had trees decorated here and there throughout the ship, and Christmas carols over the P.A. all Christmas Day. In a few days we were racing back to New York through prowling submarines and enjoying the thrill of a positive "kill" by one of our screening destroyers.

Again the stay in Brooklyn was just enough to get ready for another trek to Casablanca, but being a hardy crew, we were able to put up with the harsh rigors of New York life. Ah, them were the days - five weeks away and two weeks in the Yard!

When we returned to New York, late in February, the ship was given a face lifting and alterations which boded big doings ahead. On leaving the yard we packed an A.A. wallop we'd need very much in the days to be. All in all, we were a very modernized job compared to what we'd been a year before.

Now came a long period of training in the Chesapeake - and it was much needed, what with new guns, new men, new plans. We had every type of test firing possible. The day was rare when we didn't assault the ether with our booming. When daylight failed, we kept right on through the night, fighting off imaginary torpedo planes, "E" boats, and a host of fancied foes. You had to be an awful dumbbell not to realize that we were moving into big league pitching, but soon. So it was no great surprise when we found ourselves as part of a vast Task Force moving eastward through the Straits of Gibraltar to anchor at Mers-el-Kebir the last week in June, 1943. There we stayed till 5 July with a few days and nights out for more practice off Arzew.

On July 1st and 2nd, we were buttoned up, ship sealed, and that was that. On the morning of 5 July we moved out in stately procession from Mers-el-Kebir. The big show was on the road, and we finally knew our target was not Greece, nor Sardinia, nor Southern France. We were heading for Sicily - the Achilles heel of the Italian heel, and I do mean "Benito the Bum".

Our ship was a unit in a powerful Task Force consisting of light cruisers and destroyers. We had the job of intervening between any enemy surface Task Force, and hundreds of amphibious

craft then proceeding in a parallel direction along the African coast. Just imagine us as fast blocking backs, equipped to run interference and bowl over opposing ends and backs as they charged in for the tackle, and you have the picture. Strangely enough, we proceeded unscathed, even though we knew we were being shadowed by scouting planes from Sardinia. Maybe we looked rough and tough, but whatever was the reason, we were let severely alone.

You all know either by actual experience or hearsay what took place from then on - the storm which threatened to ruin the invasion, yet calmed down shortly before "H" hour, the storming ashore at Scoglotti, the unbelievably feeble opposition, and the relief of all hands that the first and most hazardous phase was history - successful history.

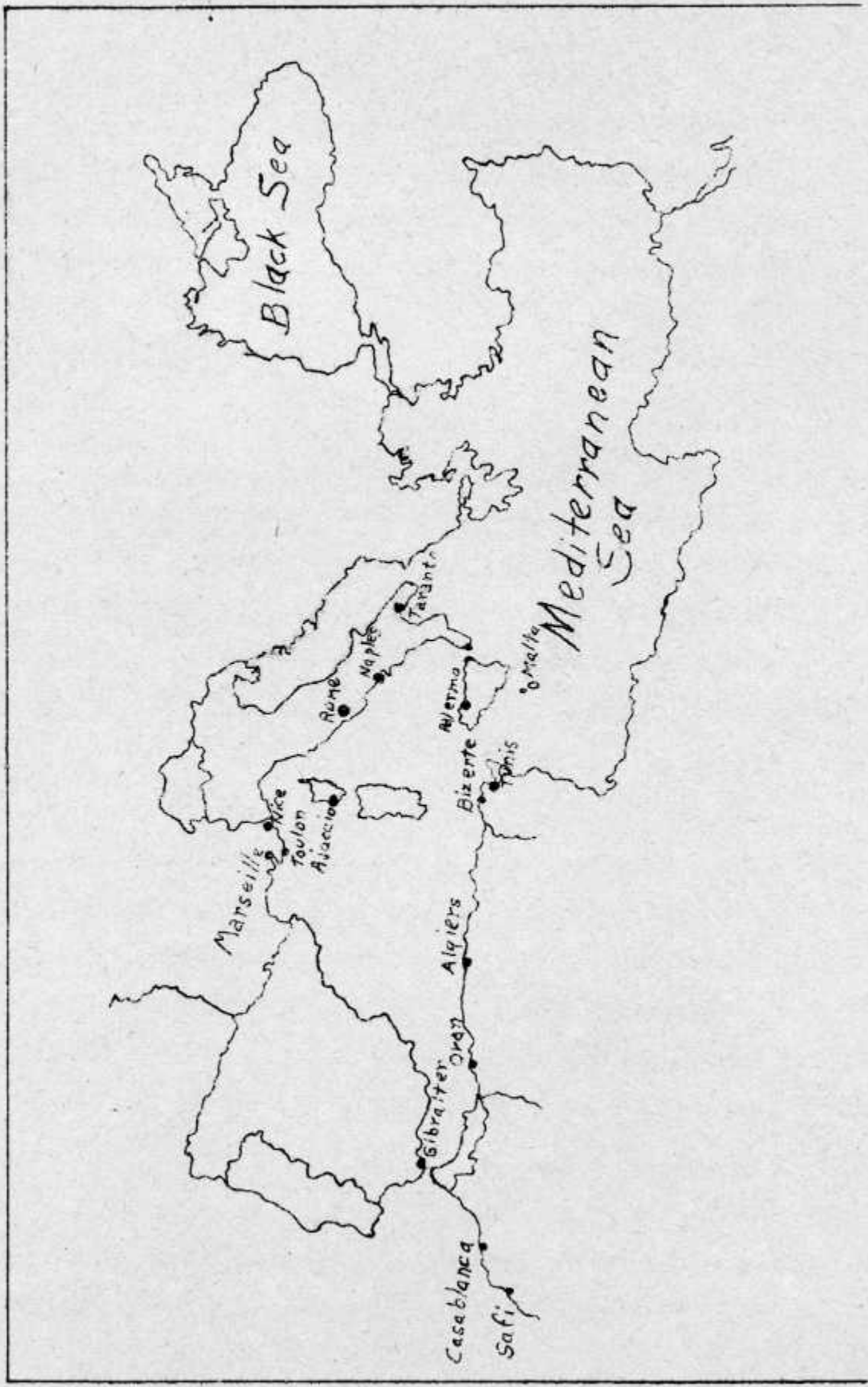
What a bitter blow it was to all of us when Lieutenant Commander Stephenson and Aviation Radioman Douglas Pearson were jumped by two Me's and shot down in flames. Many of you saw that happen, and the worst part of it was the feeling of helplessness. It all happened beyond the range of our A.A. battery. Then there was that day at Porto Empedocle when we fired a thousand rounds into the harbor area - the printing of the ultimatum leaflets to the town - "Surrender or be destroyed" - the scattering of seeds by our SOG's, and how those leaflets were picked up by the incredible Rangers. As comedy relief, remember how we christened the BRACKLYN "YMS-40" (and how they got sweet revenge a year later calling us the "CO-41"); don't forget Lieutenant Coughlin rounding up hapless Italian soldiers hither and yon from a height of 500 feet, all the while singing, "I'm a Lone Cow-Hand" over the radio.

After Porto Empedocle the boys were ready for a look-see at Algiers, our first liberty in almost a month of constant alarms and excursions, of General Quarters all too often, interrupted sleep and a diet of sandwiches and coffee. By this time, General "Two-Gun" Patton had moved his army across Sicily to Palermo with all the speed he could squeeze from his tanks. He needed support as he swung east from captured Palermo, heading for Messina along the north coast of Sicily.

It was our job to furnish that help. So it was that for three weeks in August we acted as General Patton's heavy, but very mobile, artillery. We'd shoot up bridges to delay the Germans retreating toward Messina. We aided 'leap frog' movements, chased phantom Italian cruisers, knocked down planes flying a few feet over our mainmast, tangled with coastal gunners who knew their business, professionals who landed shells close enough to pit our superstructure with fragments, and give a few lads the Purple Heart.

We fired by day, and returned nightly to Palermo for what was jokingly called a respite. Came the daily pre-dawn flares, bombs and out of the harbor we skedaddle. It was during one of these raids when we were firing every A.A. gun we had, with an ear splitting racket that Coxswain Grainger bellowed out his immortal, "Remember, Chaplain, there are but 140 days to Christmas!" But finally, General Patton bowled into Messina and the Sicilian Campaign was over.

Came the return to Algiers with a few days of rest and recreation; cleaning, repairing and readying. Then on to Mers-el-Kebir and the tiresome wait of those first few days of September.



On the morning of September 5th, we were enroute to another rendezvous to finish some unfinished business. Off Bizerte we knew that our target was Salerno, whose bloody beaches will not soon fade from our memory. War in the actual waging is a pretty confused business unless you're on the inside. We had to do just one job, - keep the Army from being shoved back into the sea whence it had come. So we whipped up and down on the beach, blasting tanks, destroying concentrations of artillery and refusing to let attacking planes drive us out of range.

We were a bit proud of the way we were singled out for special attention. Sometimes the attention was too special as for instance the terrible Saturday forenoon when our sister-ship, the SAVANNAH, received a bull's eye radio-controlled bomb square through her number three turret. A few seconds later we felt our own ship being lifted high then drop back into the water. Another bomb had missed us by a few feet. This was special attention!

They were tense and exciting days at Salerno, but we had our light moments, also. Maybe you recall the name of the lad who got off that priceless remark at an unusually tense moment. I never knew him, but I did hear him. We were on the double to General Quarters, there was a jam-up on the ladder, and when the bugler's General Quarters call had ceased this lad broke the silence by yodelling, "And the next tone of the bugle you hear, will be Gabriel's!"

Perhaps we bore you with the stories of Salerno. Forgive us if we do, but it's something to have been there. No other

battle experience we've been through can touch it for danger and the incredible task our guns performed. This we know that the Army was not shoved back into the sea. But all good things must come to an end and we departed from Salerno with pride in a job well done - finished - period.

Permit me to pass over lightly the next few months -- the drydock at Gibraltar - fraternization with the H.M.S. UGANDA, exploring of the Rock - the Royal Scots piping and dancing - the boxing where we "was robbed" (incidentally the one time our boxing team ever lost a match in three years).

Gibraltar, where our sincerely loved and admired Skipper, Captain Hendren, was relieved of his command due to ill health. It is given to very few men to command such admiration, loyalty and affection. We can never forget so truly gifted a leader. Commander Crosby, our Executive Officer, became Captain pro tem, pending the arrival of our present skipper, Captain Walter Ansel, who arrived soon after we put in at Oran.

In a few days the word was whispered about that the PHILADELPHIA was soon to head back home and for once the scuttlebutt was right. (Personally I got the news from Polk, one of the Steward's Mates, who whispered he had it straight from Hines. Where Hines got it from is a military secret).

Thanksgiving Eve of 1943 and we were again looking at the lights of New York as we sailed up the bay. We had hit the jackpot with six weeks ahead of us, just enough to straddle the holidays comfortably. This time we knew we had deserved a break after that shootingest summer and fall.

January 6, 1944, and we were on our way with a host of new faces, and improvements from stem to stern - too numerous for this brief history. With Captain Ansel as Skipper and Commander Gesen as Executive Officer, with a change in many key positions, we knew we were a much altered ship.

Our old training grounds, the Chesapeake Bay welcomed us for two weeks and we put in some intensive preparations for another Mediterranean campaign. This was one time when all of us felt in our bones that our destiny still lay in the Mediterranean and our bones didn't deceive us.

By the end of January, we had made a swift crossing of the Atlantic, put in once more at Mers-el-Kebir and were ready for action. It came soon enough. The Anzio beachhead needed every bit of help it could get, not to advance, but even to hold its own. The BROOKLYN, together with a British squadron of cruisers, had been on the firing line since "D" Day, 22 January 1944, and we were a welcome relief.

Shore bombardment became the order of the day, as we turned to with fire support whenever it was needed. Air attacks were practically non-existent, but long range German guns did their best to reach us in retaliation. When they fell short salvo after salvo, they turned their attention to smoke-screening destroyers, to doughty minesweepers, to the LST's supplying our beleaguered troops. The Bay of Naples sheltered us at night - the word 'sheltered' being a slight overstatement. What with German flares and bombs, with circling torpedoes and Vesuvius threatening to blow its top, you might question the adequacy of the word sheltered.

For recreation we were able to squeeze in trips through the ruins of Pompeii, to snatch a few hours ashore in battered Naples. It was our very fine fortune to be present when Vesuvius put on display a brand of nature's own pyrotechnics dwarfing mere man-made fire. We were so close to the falling cinders that the ship was blanketed with the fine soft lava dust. We were weeks eliminating the stuff.

Easter was spent in Mers-el-Kebir and we even dared to hold a dance on main deck aft with Oran belles as guests. Perhaps a veil of merciful silence should be drawn over this gay episode. Some say a veil should have been drawn over the belles, too. But it served to break the monotony and give us something to joke about.

Palermo was a mighty welcome break, what with baseball, boxing, a hypnotist who amazed the more gullible and puzzled even the most skeptical. The whole port had improved vastly in its recreational facilities, both for officers and enlisted personnel, and we owe it a vote of thanks for its generous assistance.

Naples was our next port of call with a short stay in the bay while the briefing was in process. Underway daily for the fire support area off Gaeta where the enemy was stubbornly frustrating all attempts at dislodgement. It was near here, off Formia to be exact that we had engaged in an argument with shore batteries two months previous. We came off second best. Those fellows kept walking their shots up on us, and when the shells whistled overhead and splashed to seaward of our only swept channel, we had to pick up our marbles.

On May 23rd, while steaming in company with screening destroyers enroute to firing area off Anzio, we had the bitter misfortune to collide with one of the DD's. It's one of those things we'd rather not talk about - you understand. The material damage to our bow was heavy and we were definitely out of the war for two months.

Crippled and low in spirits, we limped into Malta dockyard - there to remain while the great work of repair went on. Beyond all doubt, if we had to remain in a Mediterranean dockyard, Malta was the place. Both British and Maltese went out of their way to make us feel at home. Jake's Place was revived for the thirsty, Club 41 created, 4th of July field day with much beer for parched throats, the band in constant demand, dances at Rockyvale, Dragonara, Marsa, Regent. Sightseeing and swimming at Ghain Tuffiea, concerts and Ensa shows aboard, the victory over H.M.S. VINDICTIVE with our boxers avenging the "Gib" setback.

On Memorial Day we held Services at Royal Naval Cemetery for the SAVANNAH's dead who were buried there.

And all the time the C & R department was driving itself to finish the bow, working under hot sun and lighting up the Malta night with their welding torches. The momentous 14th of July, when the upper section of our smashed bow was successfully straightened, passed, and we began to look healthy once again.

With the closing days of July, we were waterborne once more, ready for sea, and ready for battle, or we would be once our test firing was completed. This we held for a few days within sight of Malta and on 1 August, we were underway for Palermo. The ship was ready, crew rested, all well with the world.

At Palermo, we spent the day taking on fuel, ammunition, and stores, and noted the concentration of U.S. fighting ships. The TUSCALOOSA, MARBLEHEAD, BROOKLYN, plus other units of the U.S. Fleet. You could hear the wise scuttlebutt at work wherever you listened with the usual what, when, how, where and why.

After that quick visit to Palermo, we again passed through the Straits of Messina enroute to Taranto. There we lay at anchor surrounded by the unmistakable signs of amphibious invasion - BB's fresh from the Normandy invasion, assault transports loaded with troops, cruisers, destroyers, and numberless small craft. We were not left in ignorance for long.

On Friday, 11 August, shortly before getting underway, all hands were assembled main deck aft and thoroughly briefed in the where, when, how, what and why. The campaign was clarified with pointer and map till every last man had a clear picture of what to expect, and where to expect it.

Briefly we were part of a Task Force larger in size than that which had forced the landings in Normandy. Essentially our function was identical with that of previous operations at Safi, Scoglitti, and Salerno. We were to take under fire designated targets, destroy them and proceed to the destruction of targets of opportunity. Our gunfire was to protect and cover landings at St. Tropez and you know the rest of the story. The feeble opposition, the successful landings, the stubbornness of "K-20" that huge naval gun at Toulon, which hampered our naval movements and balked an early opening of the port.

As far as air attacks were concerned, we had none. The one melancholy note in the symphony of success was the grievous loss of Lieutenant Cahill and Aviation Radioman Ryan. Last seen plummeting down in flames on Giens Peninsula, we later discovered the scene of the wrecked plane. Ryan's body was discovered some five weeks later and reverently interred in the cemetery at Toulon. A military funeral service was held at his grave at the very first opportunity. Lieutenant Cahill is still listed as missing. May their gallant souls rest in peace!

No 'Philadelphia Story' would be complete did it not include the Surrender of the Fortress Islands off Marseille. The German garrison defending these islands would surrender to none other than American Forces. Our Skipper with a force of marines from the PHILADELPHIA and AUGUSTA landed in the small harbor of Frioul between the Islands of Ratonneau and Pomegues to receive the surrender of the besieged Germans. Besides these two Islands there was the third - Chateau D'If of Comte de Montecristo fame. The bag of prisoners was in the neighborhood of eight hundred and fifty and with negotiations completed, the first phase of Operation DRAGOON came to an end.

September, 1944, found us at anchor in the Gulf of St. Tropez, buffeted alternately by high Mistral and Marin breezes. In mid September, we steamed into the harbor of Toulon as U. S. Naval representative in the celebration of the return of the French Fleet to its home port. It was a source of pride and satisfaction.

to see a landing force of PHILADELPHIA bluejackets and Marines lead the victory parade through the principal avenue of Toulon with Lieutenant Edwards and Lieutenant Schlichte in command.

The latter days of September were enlivened by the presence of German prisoners captured in nearby waters and brought aboard for interrogation. For the majority of us it was our first look at the enemy. Before that he had been Target "Able" or "Baker" - a part of a gun, tank, plane to be destroyed.

The lion's share of credit for actual September combat goes to our airmen who ranged up and down along the famed Riviera, spying out and spotting targets for our destroyers. Day after day they reported back aboard with a good day's damage done to the enemy. Nor did they have a leisurely moment themselves, as Flak rose up to meet them whenever they got in range.

In the early part of October, Rear Admiral Davidson, U. S. Navy, who had made the PHILADELPHIA his flagship for the better part of three years was detached; not a man but regretted his departure. Combining in himself a democratic fatherliness with unyielding aggressiveness he had been an inspiration to those who served under him.

It was our very good fortune to return to Naples on 11 October, remaining there long enough to make trips to Rome. By truck and carry-all, some of us made the pilgrimage to the Holy City, rubbernecking for an all too brief twenty-two hours. For many it was the high spot of our Mediterranean duty, and came just at the right time - for our tour of duty in these historic waters was coming to a rapid finish.

Soon we were at Oran for a stopover before the long journey home. The rest you must supply yourselves; for the rest is the future. No finer closing to our Mediterranean duty and to this brief history could be chosen than the historic sentence addressed to us by Vice-Admiral Hewitt, Commander Naval Forces, North African Waters, in his farewell message:

"ON YOUR DEPARTURE FROM THIS THEATER I COULD WISH YOU NO GREATER SUCCESSES FOR THE FUTURE THAN TO EQUAL THE OUTSTANDING RECORD ESTABLISHED BY YOU IN THESE WATERS X".

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