

4/28/86 This is a copy of my original letter to Mr. Detmer - which I just found in my valuable papers. Apparently I never mailed the original letter to him. The envelope had no address on it - so perhaps I misplaced the letter!

I wrote this
when I was in Borneo

30'
Mark 21 to mark 13

15 Sept 1945

Peggy
Mark

Dear Mr. Detmer,

With the glorious end of the war, I guess one naturally reflects back on his part in the business and I cannot say that I am not guilty of this. I have thought back many times - and just as many times - I've thought of Ed - and the many things that happened - especially after we left Pearl Harbor in October 1944. Perhaps it's because Ed's death was our squadron's only fatality - and it's difficult to understand - Therefore - why - if there was to be one, Fate chose such a fine person. But I think it's mainly because when you're in danger, there is a certain bond that grows between people. I feel as if I knew Ed a thousand times better and I felt as if I were a close friend of his - after - I spent some time in a fox hole with him - and after, for example, the morning of 16 December when he was aboard my boat, and we were strafed by an enemy bomber. Please excuse me, therefore, for taking the liberty to write this, and for - in a way - bringing up this misfortunate and sad subject, but I think that you and Mrs. Detmer, and Ed's brothers would care to know some of the things that happened - those last months - New Censorship regulations allow me to write in detail. I realize that Jack McNally is writing you somewhat similar dope, but Jack was not with us after mid October - and may not have that information.

Ed left Pearl Harbor on 15 October as the Executive officer of Ron 17, and officer-in-charge of 2 boats, the 1st two - in our Squadron to go to "The Area". He had 5 officers and about 50 men under him. We went to Manus Island in the Admiralty group, reaching there about 2 November. En Route [we were loaded aboard a Liberty Ship] - we had a happy time. We worked all morning sanding and painting the bottoms of the boats, and when we arrived they were really boats to be proud of. In the afternoons - we read usually - and before evening chow - Ed always insisted on Calisthenics for all Hands. He "shot the Sun" every noon - practicing his Navigation. We were playing a little bridge in the evenings - but Mostly, I remember sitting on the Boat deck with Ed and Andy Anderson, Charlie Marvel, Bob Keeting and By Kent, talking about everything. Everything was serene. Those evenings were really delightful.

Of course, en route, we went below the Equator and nearly all Hands were initiated into The Shell Back Club. We were blindfolded and paddled from Stern to Stern by the Merchant Seamen. It was a good but very rough initiation-our hair was cut short, but everyone had a good time.

We unloaded at Manus, took on food and water and stores and left for a place called Tana Merah Bay, which is about 30 miles west of Hollandia, New Guinea and Ed rode on the 230 Boat and I was a passenger on the 227. It was a long trip and a very Rough one, and somewhere during the night the boats got separated. The 230 ran low on Fuel (though we on the 227 always claimed that they got lost!). But anyway, they put into Hollandia and joined us the next day at Tana Merah. That was our 1st real glimpse of the wilderness of New Guinea, and the novelty and uniqueness of it was interesting. We left after a couple of days for the large PT Base in the 7th Fleet at the time and got to it, Mios Woendi (about 10 miles E. of Biak) on about 8 November.

*tied in 13 + 16
with Ed Co of boats*

Ed reported to the C.O. of the Base, Commander "Commando" Davis, only to learn that we were supposed to be in Bougainville, Solomons Islands, and the Port Director at Manus had routed us wrong. However 2 other squadrons were going to Leyte in about 12 days, and Ed radioed Com. MTB Rons 7th Fleet requesting permission to "join" the other Rons - ie 13 and 16 - in their push to The Philippines. Permission was granted if our boats could be made ready. So we all worked like beavers and on about 18 November, we went 600 Miles (at 10 Knots!) to Kossol Anchorage in The Northern Palau area. We spent Thanksgiving there and proceeded to Leyte (another 600 miles at 10 kts!) arriving on Nov. 27, we saw our 1st action then, and I'll never forget it. As we passed Southern Samar - proceeding to Tachoban - Leyte, We passed about 5 miles from about 15 combat ships (friendly!) - and at that moment, those ships were attacked by a dozen or so Jap planes. The St. Louis was suicided - and we saw it. However the interesting thing about it was that the Fleet was shooting all they could at the planes, and many of the shells landed near our boats. One landed about 30 feet from the 227 & 230 Boats. There was a low overcast - and at 1st we thought the Japs were bombing us by Radar.

We stayed in Leyte Gulf until 12 December ¹⁰ and we were generally (ie The Area) under air attack about ¹⁰ times daily. On the 12th our 20 PT's joined The Mindoro Convoy - and proceeded down through Surigio Straights - The Mindanao Sea, The Sulu Sea, and up north to Mindoro - Caminiwit Point - on the S.W. tip of The Island. Incidentally our prospect was rough! We were to be within 1/2 hour flying time of The 4 strongest Nip air bases in The Philippines, and our patrol area was The Central Philippines of course, including Manila Bay.

The 12th of Dec. nothing happened of note, we plodded along at 10 kts with the LST's, the LCI's and the escorting cruisers and destroyers. The 13th,

however, we were under air attack frequently and for the 1st time shot our guns at an enemy (plane). That day the Nashville was suicided about 3000 yards away from us. The 14th we were not attacked as I remember. Halsey's force was striking Manila.

The 15th we closed The Mindoro Beachhead before dawn. Two destroyers found a Jap small cargo ship coming into our convoy(!) and sunk it. At Dawn we fired at a Jap float plane sneaking in on the PT's at the stern of the Convoy. It retired. The Landing proceeded, and about 8 AM - about 8 or 10 zeroes (Zekes) suicided us - (ie the convoy). They came in very low, and really all boats got hits on them. They burned before hitting, I believe, but 2 hit their targets, sinking 2 LST's. We stood by to help, and finally took aboard about 60 Soldiers when they abandoned ship, whom we dropped at an LST Hospital ship. We got word we were to patrol that nite - the Exec of Ron 16 to be OTC. Ed was riding on the 227, but changed to the 230 - to make the patrol with us. We thought surely we 'd see something, but we didn't, until we returned to base the next AM. A "Betty" came over us at 0715 - strafed us - hitting a gunner in the knee - and continued on to suicide the LST 605. We got (or at least claim we did!) hits on it. (it wasn't 60 feet away as it passed by) - It caught fire - crashing short of its target. At 0730 Ed and I went on the beach to be interrogated by intelligence. During interrogation 8 Zeros came into suicide. The boats (none hit-though 3 crashed within 50 feet of the 230 boat-The wing of one hitting the boat's gunwale! Ed & I thought the base under attack and hit a foxhole with Harry Bliss (Lt Comdr and a good friend of Ed's). There were dog fights that morning on the base and the base was attacked. We spent about 2 1/2 hours in the worst possible fox hole - and would not move out - in spite of the fact that Big Red ants were crawling over us.

Anyway - the boats were in desperate need for fuel, one boat actually ran out of gas and was being attacked, - and Ed was made Fuel Officer. It was a difficult problem, the fuel barge was in too shallow water but somehow it was cleared up. That night as every night from the 15th until the 1st of January the base and the boats were under "Flare and Bomb" attack by float planes.

The night of the 17th Ed was OTC of our patrol. We went to APO Island (in Mindoro Straights) to land our Army Radar & Radio Team. Later that nite we patrolled the "Perimeter" - Patrol was negative.

The next noon - a "Val" suicided a Boat - sinking it immediately. About 1/2 the crew was "missing". The other half badly wounded and burned. That night, it was, I believe, that a bomb burst on the base, killing 15 men. It fell not more than 60 feet from Ed's hut. I believe that about 21 December Ed took a patrol to Verde Island Passage - Though I was not along - and am not sure.

We were scared - There's no

denying it, and I honestly believe a fellow had a certain right to be scared. our casualties were the highest that PT's have suffered (I understand) with the singular exception of Buckley's original Ron 3.

One Big Nite was 26 Dec. A Navy Patrol Bomber reported a Battleship Cruiser and 6 CANS 90 miles away coming for Mindoro. Another report said transports were 100 miles away coming in. A Guerilla Radio Station off Clark Field reported 6 Paratroop planes were landing and Halsey radioed that a Jap counter landing was planned at our beachhead. I was underway that nite - but I certainly did not envy the boys on the beach. They were mustered - told that each man must hold his ground etc. Poor Ed was ordered to keep liason with the army - and therefore had to be on the 2nd floor of our operations hut, For 2 hours the base was shelled and Ed told me the next morning that he thought those shells were coming right in his window!

A PT Tender was suicided about 2 January - it burned and was beached. Ed was detailed to clear the bodies and salvage food for us. The job was done pronto, of course.

Two men on my boat by D + 3 were really out of their heads from fright. One froze (couldn't fire) his gun, even though we were being suicided! These men I sent to Ed and I can appreciate now that he handled the situation the best way - Though at the time I didn't think so-I personally felt the men lacked "guts". (which may have been true) and that they should be criticized - looked down on, etc. But Ed told them to find a good foxhole and to stay in it, which they did and consequently today are alright , ie. nervously OK. I have thought that if it weren't for Ed's kindness and understanding - there ,they might well still be in the "Psych" ward.

Ed had been due to be relieved for 2 or 3 months as you probably well know. You knew that he was finally relieved "without relief" so to speak-; No officer replacement had come to Mindoro when he left. He left in order to find out where in the world our reliefs were and to expedite their getting to Mindoro- and that's the reason he was flying - something I know he did not want to do. We used to speak of how when our relief came in, we were going to take the slowest ship we could find - back to The States.

I have written much longer than I thought I would Mr. Detmer - and still there's one more point I'd like to make, -which comes to mind when I think of our talk in your office in late March. You mentioned, if I remember correctly that Ed "stuck out his neck" - or sort of "asked for it". This is absolutely true, and that's one of the great things about Ed. He had the "guts" to follow his convictions -ie his deep and sincere feeling that it was his responsibility to take an active hand in the war.

One final word, our group can wear the Philippine Liberation ribbon with one bronze star - and the Pacific ribbon with 2 stars (bronze) - although those who were also at the Marshall invasion are allowed 3 stars on their Pacific ribbon. Our group at Mindoro - I hear from a good source - won the "Navy Unit Citation" - but I have seen no official word on this.

If there is anything I can do, Mr. Detmer, please do not hesitate - of course.

Sincerely,

Edward H. Lockwood
Lt. USNR

15 Sept., 1945
MTB Rou 36
FPO. SF CAL

*fouled anchor - to tea - Pearl before they left
with a few bars*

*Ellis A. Ballard - Ted
Pope, Ballard -*