

**Excerpt from "MY INTRODUCTION TO THE U.S. NAVY"  
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**BACK TO THE MARIANAS - TINIAN**

We got underway again on 13 July (sailors don't like to sail on either Fridays or the 13th, but this is wartime) escorting the USS RAINIER (AE-5) to Saipan. The RAINIER is an ammunition ship. Delmore and I were wondering if she was the same ammo ship we came close to shipping out on when we were on our way to Treasure Island where we boarded the SEDERSTROM.

On the 15th, we were joined by the USS PHILIP (DD-498). We arrived on the 16th, having come around the northern end of Saipan, and then anchored in the transport area. I was on watch when we came around, but was told there were many bodies floating in the water. Apparently, both Japanese military personnel and civilians decided to commit suicide by jumping off the cliffs. I guess it was a gruesome sight. It was reported the Jap military had told the civilians that if they fell into the hands of the U.S. Marines, they would be tortured. Some Jap soldiers believed their own lies. After fueling on the 17th, we were assigned patrol station #14 off Tinian Island. Later we were directed to relieve the USS MANLEY (APD-1), patrolling station #17 off Saipan. (Our Executive Officer, Mr. Shepard, later became the skipper of this old WW I destroyer which had been modified to a fast attack transport.) On the 18th, we received orders to relieve the USS GILMER (APD-10). On the morning of the 19th, we were ordered to cease patrolling and to proceed into the transport area to fuel from the USS LACKAWANNA (AO-40). After refueling, we were ordered to patrol station #20. At 1519, we were relieved by the USS CABANA (DE-260), our having received orders to rendezvous with CTU 52,17,6, a night retirement group.

[20 Jul 44: Underway on night retirement with Task Unit comprised of USS LOUISVILLE (CA-25), USS CLEVELAND (CL-55), USS MONTPELIER (CL-57), USS BIRMINGHAM (CL-62), USS LAKAWANNA (AO-40), USS HALSEY POWELL (DD-492), USS PHILIP (DD-498), USS SIGOURNEY (DD-643), USS BAILEY (DD-492), and USS STOCKHAM (DD-683).

We have no idea what is going on or what they may have in mind for us, but it appears we are jumping around all over the place. Finally, we anchored in the transport area. While here we were visited frequently by Coast Guard crewed landing craft with Marines aboard. They were invited aboard for a good meal and our showers were opened to them. The ship's store was also opened so they could buy cigarettes, toilet articles, etc., but we all gave them cartons of cigarettes. We got overstocked with one particular brand that nobody wanted. If we wanted to buy a carton of our favorite brand, we also had to buy a carton of the unwanted brand. It was better to give them away rather than throw them overboard.

On the 23rd we went back on an ASW patrol, but this time off Tinian Town near the southwest end of Tinian. We heard the invasion of Tinian might take place as early as

the next morning on shore where we were patrolling. If so, we would have a ringside seat. There was always the possibility we might get a chance to fire our main battery other than at targets.

The next morning several transports came into the area inside our patrol station. They were accompanied by several destroyers plus the battleship USS COLORADO (BB-45) and the light cruiser USS CLEVELAND (CL-55). The bombardment of Tinian Town got underway and we actually did have a ringside seat. I spent as much time as I could on the signal bridge. The bombardment lasted over an hour, after which we observed the transports lowering landing craft. We didn't know it at the time, but the transports were a diversionary force intended to trick the Japs into believing the actual initial landing was to take place at or near Tinian Town. At about the same time, the actual landings were taking place at the north end right across the channel from Saipan.

Suddenly, we saw gun flashes on the hills behind Tinian Town and next observed the destroyer USS NORMAN SCOTT (DD-690) being hit on the bridge by a shell from one of the Jap shore batteries. We started to leave our patrol station to assist her, but were ordered back on station. Next, COLORADO was hit near the stern. She had been blasting away at the Jap gun positions, but she apparently hadn't neutralized them all. We heard that the Japs had their guns hidden in caves and were able to roll them out to fire, then pull them back into the caves.

The light cruiser CLEVELAND blasted away at the Jap gun positions. In the action report of the next day it was reported how many rounds of 5" and 6" shells she had fired. Observing this, I couldn't believe either of these type guns could fire so rapidly, almost like machine guns. After CLEVELAND's bombardment, the Jap guns were silent.

The transports then took aboard the landing craft and returned to Saipan. We were assigned a patrol station just west of the channel separating the two islands. We got the ringside seat we had hoped for. We could see the Marines advancing, even with the naked eye. The signalmen had access to a grid map of Tinian. By listening in on the troop's radio frequency, we could follow the progress of the battle. All very exciting!