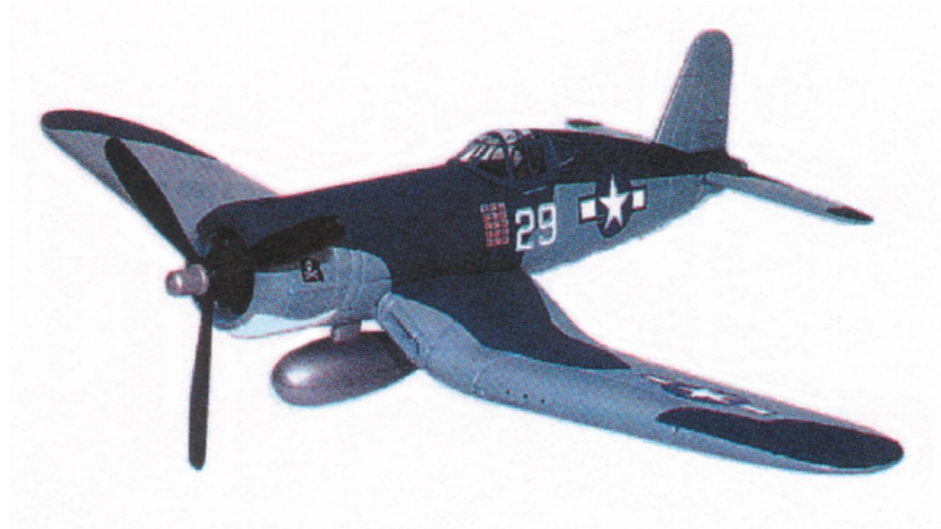


# Wally's War

1942-1947



By:  
Glen H. Wallace

Glen (Wally) Wallace  
7601 Wilshire Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526  
E-Mail:GlenWallace@webtv.net

## HOW THIS STORY CAME ABOUT

During the early years, I kept a daily diary of my Navy activities. This covered the last six months of World War II, when I flew fighters from the aircraft carrier, USS ESSEX.

This old diary lay on my desk for over 50 years when some friends suggested that I make it into a book. Well... I had no desire to write a book about a war fought 56 years ago, which nobody would be interested in reading.

Finally, a little friend, Sheila Davidson, took the diary home and transcribed it on to her computer. She bugged me to provide comments after the entries concerning combat so I gave it a go.

Jack Henzie of California fame, edited it and Tom Kercher did the photos. Web master Patrick Tillery is the one who brought it to life on his web site,  
<http://www.kilroywashere.org>

Then, my little blind friend, Mike Danger, printed it in this format using his computer that talks and a printer that tells him when he is low on ink.

If you are interested in a day by day account of a long ago war in the Pacific, then this is for you.

Best Regards,

Glen Wallace

GLEN HAROLD WALLACE

Born 4 August 1920

In

Corning, Arkansas

Raised on a 40 acre farm in  
Missouri during the Great Depression

Served 30 years in the  
U.S. NAVY

Retired in Pensacola, Florida  
1971

7601 Wilshire Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526  
850-944-1417

[GlenWallace@webtv.net](mailto:GlenWallace@webtv.net)

GLEN HAROLD WALLACE

Born 4 August 1920

In

Corning, Arkansas

Raised on a 40 acre farm in  
Missouri during the Great Depression

Served 30 years in the  
U.S. NAVY

Retired in Pensacola, Florida  
1971

7601 Wilshire Road  
Pensacola, FL 32526  
850-944-1417

[GlenWallace@webtv.net](mailto:GlenWallace@webtv.net)

**1945**



Lieut. (jg) G. H. WALLACE  
BRASELY, MO.

**2001**



## 1942

13 OCTOBER 1942.

**Enlisted in Navy V5 Aviation program.**

*At the time, I was working at the only civilian job I ever had in my whole life. It was in a War Plant where military aircraft parts were made. My job was to push a little cart around loaded with parts for the workers.*

*Well, there was one station where a pretty girl sat at a desk and inspected parts for flaws... I made it a point to keep her well supplied as I had a serious idea of a serious courtship. Her name was Yvonne Genevieve Evans and I finally got a date by letting her drive my 1939 Plymouth.*

*The War was not going well and the Navy was pitching hard for pilots. The recruiters got a bunch of us together and said if we would sign up, we would be assigned to "The Black Hawk Squadron" and stay together for the duration of the war. (That was Recruiter BS 'cause it never happened), so we ditty bopped off for Chicago to sign up, but it turned out that I was under weight... however being a cagey kid, I checked in at a hotel, bought a stalk of bananas and proceeded to bulk up. That did the trick and I raised my right hand and swore to go get killed. That's what the Officer who administered the oath said. He also told me all the horror stories he could think of and finally asked what motivated me to enlist. Well, at that time the aircraft carrier, Lexington had just been sunk and big banners were strung across the streets of Chicago with the not so subtle message of "AVENGE THE LEX." So I told the officer that I wanted to become an Aviator to Avenge the Lex... and it worked!!*

9 NOVEMBER 1942

**Milton, Wisconsin. Flew Piper Cubs and Aeroncas. Bonnie visited me.**

*Although her name was Yvonne, I called her Bonnie and it stuck for the rest of her life. This flight training lasted through Christmas and when she visited we all gathered around an old piano and sang "White Christmas."*

*The airplanes were equipped with skis because the snow and ice was everywhere in that cold Wisconsin area. Back then people got ice from the great lakes and crews would be camped out there sawing out great chunks. This was just too tempting for a recently soloed pilot so I flew down until my skis were on the ice and made a wild run right at the ice cutters...pulling up at the last minute. Of course this resulted in a severe tongue lashing back at the base but nothing else.*

## 1943

7 JANUARY 1943

**Finished training.**

9 JANUARY

**Married in St Louis. Honeymoon trip to Joplin, MO. Left Bonnie there and drove home to pick up orders.**

*We arrived in St Louis and stayed the night with my sister and her husband. Next morning we said we were going to do some sightseeing, but instead we went to the Court House to get married. We told the Clerk that I was headed overseas and we wanted to get married right now.*

*Well, in those days the motto was "Anything for the boys in the service," so a Judge called us into his chambers and performed the ceremony. At the proper moment, he turned to me and said "You may now place the ring on her finger." I told him I didn't have one, to which he replied, "No problem", and took a piece of string out of his desk. I tied it around Bonnie's finger and that was her wedding ring. When we got back to my sister's house, she made us sleep in separate beds again that night. Next day we departed for Joplin.*

*Now, the reason we were so sneaky about the wedding is that the Navy strictly prohibited marriage for Naval Aviation Cadets. The penalty if caught was no more flight training. So when we arrived at Joplin, Bonnie took a bus back to Rockford, Illinois and to work while I visited my parents in Poplar Bluff, Missouri. Left the 1939 Plymouth there and took a bus to Greencastle, Indiana as my orders directed.*

12 JANUARY

**Pre - Pre Flight Training at the University in Greencastle, Indiana. Bonnie visited and lost her job.**

*She lost her job because she just took off without permission to visit her new hubby. The training here consisted of 14 hour days studying trigonometry, calculus and other challenging subjects. Never did figure out how that could help me fly a fighter plane.*

2 FEBRUARY 1943

**Finished Training.**

4 FEBRUARY

**Pre Flight - University Iowa City. IA Bonnie visited three times.**

*Navy Pre Flight training was actually boot camp type stuff... obstacle courses to be run until you dropped... long hikes, sports which included wrestling... and as luck would have it I was paired up with a big hairy guy who tied my tall, skinny bod in knots... long hours of academic study at night... one memory sticks in mind... some smart aleck rubbed stinky cheese on the light bulb so that after a while the whole room smelled awful.*

**3 MAY 1943**

**Finished training.**

**5 MAY**

**Primary flight training... Olathe, Kansas. Flew N2S Stearmans. Bonnie visited.**

*The Navy N2S Stearman was an open cockpit bi-wing trainer and was often called "The Yellow Peril." This was because it was flown by young hot to trot Naval Aviation Cadets with zero flight time. After we soloed we became pretty cocky (and probably dangerous), and tried all kinds of crazy stuff... such as one young daredevil flew just above a moving freight train and then put the wheels down on top of one of the boxcars... when someone reported seeing a navy plane riding on a train, all hell broke loose at the Base. Don't remember if the guy was washed out or not.*

*Once a Kansas Tornado visited and next morning the field was littered with crumpled up airplanes...a big pile over in one corner. We flew 7 days a week and once a month got a "Cinderella Liberty", (be back by midnight), in Kansas City. Since we wore shoulder boards with one star on each and no stripes, we told everybody we were one star Admirals...*

**27 JULY 1943**

**Finished. 7 days leave.**

*Took a bus to Rockford, Illinois to visit Bonnie who was living with her folks. We were wined and dined (read beer and chips), by friends, and her folks had a cook out for us. Back to Olathe, Kansas by bus and packed for travel by train to Corpus Christi, Texas.*

**8 AUGUST 1943**

**Corpus Christi Texas... Basic at Cabaniss Field... Flew SNVs. SNJs for instruments at Mainside... Advanced Training at Kingsville. Bonnie visited. Gave her wedding ring.**

*When we finished primary training in The N2s Yellow peril at Olathe, Kansas we headed for Corpus Christi, Texas... in a "Cattle Car" type train. With all my worldly goods packed in a Navy issue Valpack suit bag, I arrived and with many other cadets, took a bus for Cabainss field. The O in C lined us up and marched us to a spot in front of the barracks.*

*Just as he was about to dismiss us, two SNJs started dog fighting right overhead. We were told to stand at ease and watch cause we would soon be doing that. What a thrill to see those powerful (to us) birds dodging and weaving in a classic dogfight... THEN IT HAPPENED! They collided, head on and started falling in pieces... the Officer quickly called us to attention and marched us to the barracks, and that was our introduction to the finer points of combat flying.*

*For Gunnery training we had a 30-caliber machine gun synchronized to fire through the propeller arc without hitting the blades. Well, sometimes it did hit the blades and we then came back as a "Whistler" cause the hole in the prop blade made a shrill whistling sound.*

*Now, about the wedding ring... as previously noted, Bonnie and I were married in St Louis by a Judge and I tied a string on her finger for the ring... but now I was drawing big pay, \$75 per month plus flight pay for a grand total of \$125. Wow, filthy rich, so I bought her a wedding band with tiny diamond chips in it. Then she took a bus all the way across country to home in Rockford, Illinois.*

21 DECEMBER 1943

**Commissioned and received wings of gold. Orders to Jacksonville, Florida... Spent Christmas night in New Orleans. Arrived Jacksonville 27 December. Flew F4F Wildcats and sent for Bonnie.**

*In those days the trains were not the most reliable form of transportation, but it was all we had. So, it got sidetracked in New Orleans on Christmas Eve. This gave me time to fully explore Bourbon street and all the sights thereon. Bright lights and the first time for his ole Missouri farm boy... What an experience. Come midnight I heard church bells and decided to go in and see what was going on... sat in the back row on the isle and watched the impressive Christmas ceremony... then back to Bourbon street till daylight and almost missed the train.*

*When Bonnie arrived (by bus) in Jacksonville, we rented a one room apartment not far from the base, and just to be safe, we got married again on 27 January 1944. Reason for this was because cadets were not supposed to be married before being commissioned as an officer. They kicked out my roommate just because of that so we wanted to get married again for the Navy.*

*The little Wildcat Fighter was real tricky to handle on the ground due to a very narrow landing gear. On my first take off, the wind got under one wing and tilted me so that I "Ground Looped," that is, drug a wing on the runway. I taxied back to the ramp where the Instructor hopped up on the wing and said to not get out. He was afraid I would lose my nerve, so he told me what the Admiral said... and that was that if we buckled up we could fly one of those suckers into a stone wall and not get hurt. With that I lined 'er up again and got airborne for the first time in a Navy Fighter. Never mind that these very planes had been used by the Marines in combat and had patched bullet holes in them. Once when I was finishing up a flight at 10,000 feet I decided to make a quick let down to the field, soo,... I pointed 'er straight down at full throttle and picked up so much speed that the landing gear sheared off... just one strut holding it on... As I lined up for the runway, the little WAVE in the control tower said, "Sir, your landing is dangling so please land in the grass." So I made a belly flop landing and walked away. Back then if a Fighter Pilot didn't have a few crashes, he was just too cautious.*

*And finally, we were supposed to live in the barracks and not off the base... so at night my buddies would make "Bunk Check" for me while I was with my wife in our little one room apartment.*

## 1944

3 March

**Finished Operational Training**

7 March

**Glenview, Ill. (Chicago) 8 landings aboard USS Sable in F4F**

*The Sable and the Wolverine were two side wheelers converted to little aircraft carriers. They operated in Lake Michigan in sight of Chicago. The Great Lakes Navy they were called and fledgling Naval Aviators had to make 6 arrested landings on one of them to qualify for carrier duty.*

*They were narrow and very short and no room to store aircraft if one had engine trouble. I saw an SNJ hanging by the tail over the side of the ship to be offloaded when they returned to shore.*

*The day for me to do the tail hook bit finally arrived after waiting days for the weather to clear. It was snowing but we went out anyway and did our thing...since there weren't many planes airborne that day, I got to make 8 landings instead of 6. The lake bottom is still littered with Navy planes that didn't make it. In fact there are a couple of them in the Naval Aviation Museum here in Pensacola.*

18 March

**Finished 21 days leave.**

8 April

**Norfolk, VA**

14 April

**Atlantic City, NJ via Washington DC. Joined VF-83 flew Hellcats (F6F) Sent for Bonnie and lived at Northfield, NJ**

*We lived in one room of an old 14 room house... had kitchen and living room privileges. I traveled back and forth to the base in a car pool, and Bonnie and I visited the boardwalk in Atlantic City via a "Toonerville" type trolley. All our worldly goods fit into suitcases then and in the future for several years. I remember we had a "Pool" for the 6 June Normandy landing of troops.. Pilots would ante up a quarter and write a date on the bulletin board. Somebody won it but I don't remember who. Bonnie and the other Wives would take turns cooking dinner and we had a good time flying and socializing. It didn't take much to make young folks happy back then.*

1 July

**Ayer, Mass. Bonnie arrived by auto with other squadron wives and we lived in Ayer. 8 landings aboard USS Mission Bay-1 landing on USS Kassar Bay- 7 landings on USS Prince William.**

*This is where the Air Group came together and learned to operate as a unit, F6F Hellcats, SB2C Helldivers, and TBM Torpedo bombers. We practiced bombing with miniature bombs and dry rocket runs on the tower. Once one of those little iron bombs fell off a plane in the landing pattern and came right through the mess hall roof. Live rocket practice was conducted at Nantucket Island. Once when one of the Hellcats went bad, the pilot rode back to base sitting on the lap of another pilot. A crazy thing to do, but he didn't want to be deserted on that barren island.*

*Bonnie and I lived in one room with kitchen privileges and rode bicycles around the countryside, although she was 5 months pregnant. This is the place where I learned the hard way to be on time! Once the Airgroup was scheduled to fly cover for a simulated landing on New York. The entire Airgroup was involved and I was supposed to take off on schedule, which was 3 O'clock in the morning. In those days metal was scarce so our clock was made of pressed cardboard (except for the gears), and wouldn't you know, it didn't alarm that fateful morning. I suited up, jumped on my bicycle and peddled furiously the mile to the base... just in time to see the last plane take off. Well the CO and the XO took me by the arms and walked me down the hangar while explaining that the only reason to be late was... DEATH, your own personal death. Then they put me "In Hack" that is restricted to the base for a week. Whew!, did that ever make an impression on a young Ensign type.*

1 November

**Finished and Bonnie and I traveled by train to-**

*And on 1 NOVEMBER 1944 we finished training, the whole Airgroup was put on a long train bound for San Diego, Calif. A very pregnant Bonnie boarded it with me to ride as far as St Louis to stay with my Sister. Well, when we arrived there, we both decided to just take a chance and ride on to the West Coast. The squadron pilots called her "Little Mama" and brought her goodies from the dining car.*

7 Nov

**San Diego, Calif. Left Bonnie at San Diego.**

*On 7 NOVEMBER 1944, we arrived at San Diego where I kissed her good bye and left her to have the baby while I went off to war. Long ago and far away...*

10 Nov

**Boarded USS General Langfitt.**

*This was a rusty old tub with very primitive accommodations. For instance the Head, (toilet), was a long metal trough with boards across it at intervals to sit on. Water constantly flowed along and carried out the poo- poo. Well, some smart aleck thought up the bright idea of wadding up a bunch of toilet paper, setting it on fire, and floating it down the trough. As it would pass under a "sitter" it would do a quick scorch job as it moved along. The yells made in quick succession sounded like a steam calliope.*

16 Nov

**Arrived Honolulu, Hawaii.**

2 Dec

**Inter-Island Steamer to Maui - NAS Puunene- Jimmy born Nov. 29,1944 - Sent Bonnie engagement ring**

*Having married her with a string around her finger and a real wedding ring 4 months later, I now went all out and bought her an Engagement ring.*

*At NAS Puunene we Pilots lived in two story barracks and flew F6F Hellcats. We were a wild and wooly bunch who lived to fly. Once four of us procured a Jeep and made a tour of the island. Seeing bunches of coconuts hanging from the trees we decided we needed some and took a run at the tree with the jeep and hit it a hard wallop. All it did was bend the bumper... no coconuts. Since we had been issued 38 cal. side arms, we proceeded to use them to shoot down the stubborn nuts... just made holes in them for the milk to drip out... gave up and went home.*

*Another interesting thing was the squadron that flew the new FM2 Wildcats. A small, noisy plane that was much faster than the old F4F but nothing else to brag about. So, the pilots continually tried to show we Hellcat drivers that they were just as hot as we were. A favorite maneuver of theirs was to do a loop to a landing, "Widow Maker" it was called. This was a real satisfying attention getter until one failed to pull out and augured in just short of the runway.*

*New rule... No more Widow Maker landings.*

15 Dec

**Changed to Corsairs (F4U)**

*One day the Pentagon decided that our Airgroup should have a squadron of Fighter Bombers, F4U Corsairs. Very soon after, there appeared a bunch of Corsairs on the flight line, but who was going to fly them? We found out when the Skipper Selected 6 "Volunteers" to form the new Squadron. I was one of them, and next day we climbed in the cockpit with the Pilots Manual in hand and checked ourselves out. My first flight in this sleek bird was somewhat memorable. After takeoff and admiring how nice she handled, I noticed a red flag sticking up on each wing... Jeeze, I had forgotten to lock the wings down after unfolding them... washer cutting time for sure cause if they folded in flight I would become a falling brick.. Very carefully I made a smooth landing and quickly locked the wings down and roared off into the wild blue...never told anyone about that.*

*Pilots from the other squadrons were selected to complete the new VBF squadron. They had no experience in fighter tactics and as a consequence, we lost many of them.. In order to see over the long nose of the Corsair, we had to adjust the seat to its highest setting, and that's why I kept busting my long skinny back. Finally, the Parachute Riggers made a corset of heavy canvas for me and I laced it tightly around my hips to keep my spine straight. It worked pretty well except when we would have to pull many "G's" recovering from a dive.*

22 Dec

**Made 3 landings on USS Bougainville - 6 landings on CVE Makassar Strait, in a Corsair.**

## 1945

9 JAN 1945

**Wedding Anniversary sent Champagne and flowers to Bonnie.**

27 JAN

### **Hospital**

*Short stay in Sick Bay with bad back. Being 6 ft 2 and weighing 135 pounds invited trouble when doing violent maneuvers in fighters.*

14 FEB

**Sent Bonnie Birthday Present. Went aboard USS Shangrila at Pearl Harbor and made 2 landings in F4U.**

20 FEB

### **Big party- Valley Isle County Club**

*All Pilots were invited to a farewell party as we were going into the war zone next day. Every one got drunk as hooty owls and one of them decided to visit San Francisco... took a jeep and 3 other crazy pilots and headed out. When water was up to their necks and the jeep crapped out, he lifted the hood and tried to dry off the distributor cap - under water. Another bunch of Throttle Jockeys piled into a jeep and headed back to base. Upon arrival they discovered one was missing... he had fallen out unnoticed and they had to drive back along the road until they found him ... sitting in the middle of it. Many of these great guys were killed in action.*

21 FEB

**Left Maui for Pearl Harbor on inter island steamer - Kailulu. Went aboard CVE 16 - USS Nassau and headed for Guam at 1300 Feb 22.**

**4 Found out I made LTJG on March 1. Met Frank Wallace (my cousin) at Depro field and had lunch.**

**MARCH**

**Arrived Naval Air Base at Guam 1609.**

5 MARCH

**MARCH**

**Left**

**8 Guam aboard USS Long Island (what a tub) bound for Ulithi, Island.**

*This was one of first Aircraft Carriers and very primitive... used mostly for transport of planes and personnel.*

9 MARCH

Arrived Ulithi 1215 - Never saw so many ships in all my life. Looks like the entire Pacific Fleet is here.

10 MARCH

Went aboard the USS Essex. (CV9) this is to be our home on forthcoming cruise - Mog Mog Island!!

*Mog Mog Island was the location for Navy R&R area for Fleet personnel when they came in from combat zone. The beer was in olive drab colored cans and not very cold. However, for those of us who hadn't tasted any adult beverage in many days, it was GREAT!!*

11 MARCH

2015 While at the movie a suicide dive-bomber went past the flight deck and crashed into the USS Randolph (CV -15) - GQ (General Quarters) secured at 2110.

14 MARCH

CAG (Commander Air Group) received memo from COMAIRPAC commending Air Group 83 on good work in Hawaiian area. We had a group exercise and really fouled up the works. That's life!

18 MARCH 1945.

Made strike against Kyushu. Lost three pilots, Stevens, Garner and Sigman. (Steve was my division Leader) I shot down two Jap planes... could only claim one... the other a probable. Was attacked by about 25 Hamps over Tomi Taki... Scared! Pappert and Coumbe each flamed a Zeke plus one probable for Pappert. Made two landings aboard Essex in F4U.

*On 18 March, 1945, I was launched from the USS ESSEX (CV-9) in a Corsair F4U along with eleven others. Lt. J.J Stevens led our division of four planes and I was his wingman. The number 3 slot was filled by LtJg Ed Pappert with Vern Coumbe on his wing. Our mission was to bomb and strafe two Airfields on the island of Kyushu, Japan and return to the ship. We were the second group to hit Kyushu and figured the Japs were probably stirred up and waiting for us.*

*We climbed out and leveled off at ten thousand feet. As we approached the beach, I remember suddenly realizing the land we were looking at was Enemy territory and the hairs on the back of my neck raised right up. There was a broken layer of clouds beneath us and just as we crossed the shoreline I saw two planes below heading in the opposite direction. Upon looking closer I identified them as Jap Torpedo Bombers.*

*Since we were on radio silence, I could only wave my hands and signal to Steve, our Leader. I motioned to the left and he nodded OK so we made a diving turn and as I leveled off, one of the Jap Planes was squarely in my sights. A squeeze of the trigger and the six fifty caliber guns literally tore the plane apart. It burst in to flames and headed down as the other one saw what was happening and dived for the water at full throttle and took off like a rabbit.*

*Steve hadn't fired a shot or made a sign as we turned back and rejoined the formation. I studied about that for a while and then the thought came to me that "My God," I have shot down a US Navy TBM. But then I said to myself, "I saw Meat Balls on those planes so they had to be Japs." This was our very first combat flight and we all were wound pretty tight. I also later realized that leaving the formation was a violation of the "Fighter Code" to never leave the group.*

*I don't remember the names of our two target airfields, but when we arrived at the first one, there were no airborne aircraft in sight. We proceeded to bomb and strafe parked planes, hangars and runways with no resistance except Anti Aircraft gunfire from the ground. Then we headed for the second one and gave it the same treatment with the same results. By then we were pretty cocky, seeing as how this business was so easy and fun too. We even opened up; on the radio, (big mistake), and our Leader said "What the hell, lets hit another one on the way back," (another mistake). Tomitaka Airfield wasn't too far off course so we decided to work it over too. What we didn't know was that 20 Zeros, (Hamps & Zekes), were sitting up at twenty thousand feet waiting for us.*

*("Hamp and Zeke" was the US official nickname for the Japanese A6M3 Type 32 Fighter Plane. "Zero" was the unofficial nickname. It was a Single engine, single seat, Japanese Navy fighter, and was considered by many the best fighter plane in the world at the beginning of WWII, until the arrival of the F4U Corsair it outclassed every U.S. Navy aircraft fighting in the Pacific.)*

*We made our approach to the Airfield down a little valley and got rid of all hanging ordnance on the first run -- there was no second run!! As we pulled up the air was suddenly full of Meat Balls (Japs), and a wild dogfight ensued. We were caught off guard and at low altitude.*

*Our standard fighter tactics wouldn't work and it quickly evolved into a wild melee of tail chases... a Zero chasing a Corsair with another Corsair on a Zero's tail etc. While our Leader (Steve), was shooting one, I was busily knocking another one off his tail. As I flamed that one, someone hollered that one was on my tail. Sure enough I saw tracers whizzing by on both sides so I pulled up into a full power, straight up climb until she stalled out and went into a spin. Well, it was a given that one does not intentionally spin a Bent Wing (Corsair), but to me it felt real good until I recovered right back in the middle of the dog fight. That's when I saw Steve's plane smoking and heading out to sea in a shallow dive. I followed to keep the Zeros off his back until he ditched and got out of the plane. I'm not sure how many we got, but Pappert and Coumbe each flamed a Zeke and Pappert also got a Probable.*

*We lost three pilots that day, Stevens, Garner and Sigman. Steve was in the water and swimming around very slowly. Three of us circled him at low altitude with flaps down and each of us threw him a spare life raft, which we all carried. The other two planes finally left but I was reluctant to leave my Flight Leader and kept circling to see if he got one of the rafts, however he didn't even try to get one. I then managed to remove the life raft from my seat parachute and while flying very low and slow, pulled the inflation toggle and threw the raft some distance up-wind from him. It drifted right by him but he didn't attempt to get it.*

*We had been briefed on the location of the Standby Rescue Submarine so I looked it up on the map and noticed that this one's code name was "Pal Joey." Upon approaching the location suddenly saw it on the surface with a big American Flag flying and some of the Crew on deck. I couldn't make Radio contact, so in accordance with prescribed procedures, I lowered the landing gear and flew over in the direction of Lieutenant Stevens. They understood, gave a big wave and headed out on that course, still on the surface! I was impressed by their bravery doing that when so close to enemy shores.*

*By this time it was getting late so I plotted a course to the ship and headed home. They were waiting for me so they could get me aboard and head out of the wind. As I hit the deck, the Bull Horn squawked for me to report to the Bridge and explain what I had been doing. That was my first combat flight and my "Baptism of Fire" so to speak.*

*Next day we did it all over again on another mission and in addition, saw the USS FRANKLIN, CV-13, burning in the water on our way home. This was to be our steady diet for the next five months as the Air Group, (CVG-83), flew 9,982 sorties from the USS ESSEX for 39,500 hours in the air.*

*We destroyed 228 Jap Planes in the air, with 121 Probables and 107 on the ground. We also participated in the sinking or damaging of 265,000 tons of Combat vessels, (including the Battleship Yamato), and 77,000 tons of Merchant shipping. If we appeared to take death lightly, it was because we had to in order to keep from going crazy. When seeing our Shipmates being killed day after day, we tried to build up an immunity to it, sort of a defensive shell. 35 Pilots and 13 Aircrewmembers were lost before we would return to the US of A and go ashore at the Naval Air Station Seattle, Washington on 14 September 1945. "To make the world safe for Democracy."*

*LTJG Glen (Wally) Wallace.*

In 1990, I received the following note from Henry Sakaida, a Japanese Author who sent me a story about the Kamikaze entitled: "THUNDER GODS, The Kamikaze tell their story." Written by Hatsuho Naito, translated by Mayumi Ichikawa and forwarded by James Michener.

Capt. Wallace -

The Japanese side of your air raid! If the information here is accurate, then it appears that you downed UMENO. It also appears that UMENO and possibly TANIMIZU attacked LT. J.J. STEVENS, with Umeno causing Stevens to smoke and Tanimizu then chasing him out to sea.

HENRY SAKAIDA

19 MARCH

Second day of strikes on Kyushu. We damaged a Carrier and Battleship in Kure harbor. I was flying wing on Ham Reidy when he shot down a Mert. Pappert, Coumbe and I now have a new Division Leader. Ship was under attack all day. One Kamakize nicked #2 Elevator guardrail. Danny Gray made water landing. We lost three Bombers and one Torpedo crew. The Wasp, Enterprise, Langley, Intrepid and Franklin hit. The Franklin has been burning all day.

20 MARCH

Flew CAP again today...Chased Bogies all afternoon. Saw our AA shoot down one Mert and one F6F. The Enterprise was hit again.

21 MARCH

Flew CAP. Bogies all over - mostly Bettys and Merts, Murt got a Mert! 42 Bettys, 12 Zekes and 5 Merts shot down by CAP. 281 planes destroyed past 4 days.

22 MARCH.

Jettisoned " Tilly."

( Tilly was the name we gave to a huge motorized crane which could pick up an airplane from the deck and drop it over the side or whatever. It got hit so many times by plane crashes on deck that it was unusable... so we regretfully pushed it over the side. )

23 MARCH

Fighter sweeps on Okinawa... Weather very bad -- solid from 200 to 12000 feet.

*Notes: CAP = Combat Air Patrol*

*Bogies = Enemy Aircraft*

*Betty = Jap Bomber*

*Murt = A squadron pilot*

*Mert = Jap fighter*

*When the weather closed in and ceiling 200 feet, we would let down very low and watch for ships masts...circle, and take a heading to the Essex.. Real hairy flying with so many planes in the air... CV = Carrier. BB = Battleship. CL = Cruiser. DD (or Can) = Destroyer.*

24 MARCH

Fighter sweep... Fired rockets and strafed Yontan Field and nearby town... AA pretty bad.

25 MARCH

Ship refueled... got two letters.

26 MARCH

Strike against Okinawa. Bombed and strafed submarine pens, barracks and warehouses... Two subs sunk. (1000-pound bombs)

27 MARCH

Flew TCAP, (*Target Combat Air Patrol*), over Kerme Shima... Strafed boats... Marcinkoski Made water landing and was picked up by an OS2U. (*Float seaplane*).

28 MARCH

Strike on Minami Daito Jima... Dropped 1000# bomb on AA position. Five planes damaged and lost on flight deck this morning. One plane, two pilots overboard. One Marine killed. Refueled...got 6 letters.

29 MARCH

Searched for the Jap fleet around Kyushu - didn't find it. Kenny King flamed by Zeros. Jap plane made run on ship while I was strapped in plane on flight deck...Bomb near miss on USS Cabot. Ham Reidy shot down a Zeke. We got four

Marine Replacement Pilots. Coumbe and I got checked out on 20 MM deck guns. *(while on standby duty)*

30 MARCH

Strikes on Okinawa. Bombed and strafed more sub pens and PT boats. Gil and Harris on a 325-mile search jumped 5 Japs, shot down two of them. I ran out of targets so dropped my belly tank and strafed that.

31 MARCH

On standby all day... Didn't fly... The Skipper is ailing hardly ever flies anymore. Pappert, Coumbe and I may get a new Division Leader. TT Coleman and Maki each flamed a Jap today... Greek strafed a horse. We lost one Bomber Pilot and two crewmen. (Two planes)

1 APRIL (Love Day)

Strike on Okinawa in support of invading troops. Bombed, fired rockets & strafed. Lahey went down in flames from AA. Torpedo Skipper made a water landing & was picked up by a can. A Jap pilot in an Oscar landed on Yonton Airfield & the Marines shot him when he got out of the plane.

*("Love Day" was the code name for the troops to land on Okinawa.. like D Day when they landed on the beaches in Europe. AA = Anti Aircraft fire. )*

2 APRIL

No strike today - refueled - No mail - Rough Sea! Two typhoons in area.

3 APRIL

Strike day. The air group shot down 17 planes - Gunner Way went in the drink. I manned a 20 mm during condition one.

4 APRIL

Strike on Okinawa. Two direct rocket hits on barracks - strafed gun emplacement & boat houses.

5 APRIL

No strikes - refueled & re-armed - NO mail. According to latest rumor Pappert, Coumbe & I may have a new division leader, Gunner Way. Also we are going back to the F6F squad. along with Ham Reidy's division. Cmdr. Southerland welcomed us back so it may not be all scuttlebutt.

6 APRIL

Strike on Kikai Jima - chased Japs all over. I helped shoot one down! The Airgroup flamed 6 planes today. Lost one Bomber & one F6F ( Berube ) Several DD's were hit by Japs.

*(DD = Destroyer (also called Can which was a nick name because they were as thin skinned as a tin can)*

7 APRIL

We finally found the Jap Fleet - at least part of it. Sunk a Yamato BB- 2 CL - 4 DD's. I flew 5 1/2 hours in an F6F on one hop. The air group shot down 10 planes. Ship under attack by Japs all day. The Hancock hit by a Kamikaze ( 30 killed. ) We lost all four of the Marine Replacement Pilots. One Bomber lost. Pappert, Coumbe & I flew with El Grupo. Had a ringside seat for the whole show. We got direct hits in the Pacific Ocean with 1000 lb Bombs!

*Our Air Group Commander, ( CDR Utter), was coordinator for the attack. We flew on his wing at about 3000 feet while he called the shots...first calling in the F6F and F4U fighters to strafe, then the dive bombers and the torpedo planes. I saw one TBM drop his fish and it headed straight for the Yamato, but a Jap Can got in its way. Blew the Jap Destroyer completely in half. All the ships were firing, and the Yamato tried to hit us with those big 18 inch guns. We could look right down the barrels, and when they fired, it looked like red-hot molten metal coming out of the muzzles. They couldn't get enough elevation to hit us but it was an awesome sight.*

*After all the planes had made their runs and left for home, we were the only four left in the area. Some of the ships were on their side and some were sinking, so our leader had a bright idea... "Lets go in and get a hit on the Yamato before we leave" he said, and we were all for it, so we headed in for the final blow, but since we were the only targets in sight, every ship opened up on us, even those on their side.*

*It was a solid curtain of gunfire and almost certain curtains for us. Then our leader had another brilliant idea, "Lets do a 180 and get the hell out of here." which we were most happy to do. Dropped our bombs and headed for the Ship... landed aboard on fumes as we had been lugging those 1000 pounders for most of the hop.*

8 APRIL

Flew Target Combat Patrol over Okinawa. One attack made on ship by Jap plane - he missed. It seems that Pappert, Coumbe and I are flying for the F6F's & F4U's to. This old ---- has got to come to a focus. Three of the four Marines were picked up!!

*Since we three were qualified in both the Hellcat and Corsair, they didn't hesitate to assign us to fly either plane as needed. This was a real challenge as the two planes had different flying characteristics.*

*I remember the first time I was assigned to fly the F6F after flying the F4U exclusively since coming aboard. One very dark morning I climbed into the cockpit of a Hellcat that was sitting on the catapult... using a flashlight, I started looking the instrument and controls over. The plane handler climbed up on the wing and asked if everything was OK. I said I thought so but would he please point out the bomb arming switch. He looked startled and asked if I had ever flown the plane before. Got it all settled and was catapulted off into the wild black yonder.*

9 APRIL

**No flying today. Re-fueled & took on ammo & new planes. Got 22 letters ( Feb.18 to March 3) Joe Knaus ran out of gas & went into the drink - 4 ½ hours without a belly tank is too much! Reidy's & our division are going to adopt a new insignia - "The Free Lancers" because we are flying for both squadrons.**

*Actually, we called it the Purple Shaft because we never knew what we would be flying from day to day. Carrier operations are not a good place to screw around like that. Strange as it may seem, the Corsair landed easier and "pulled less wire" due to the big flaps, which slowed it down more than the Hellcat.*

10 APRIL

**Strike on Minami Daito Jima. Bombed and strafed AA positions - weather closed in this PM Danny Gray is lost and has no radio. He must be almost out of gas now. (2000)**

*This is a sad little story. Danny Gray was a cheerful little guy and everyone liked him. We could hear him flying overhead in the soup but couldn't help him. He had no radio and had plotted his return to the ships position but had no way of knowing when he was over it. We stood on the flight deck and listened to the sound of his engine as it gradually faded and he disappeared into the dark... to finally exhaust his fuel and land in the sea at night.*

11 APRIL

**Danny has not been found. Hank Graham, our exec. was flamed by AA today. The ship was under attack most of the day. Two planes dived on us. One near miss. It shook us up considerably. Ships A.A. splashed 9 Kamikazes. Don't see how we can take 4 months of this and come out alive.**

*These were trying times. Nobody could relax and the ships crew had to stay at General Quarters (highest state of alert) around the clock. All ships hatches were kept closed and food*

*was sometimes eaten on station.*

*We Pilots felt a sense of relief when we were flying, even though that was also rather stressful. I remember seeing one man suddenly "lose it" and start beating his head against a steel gun mount. There was no relief in sight and the Jap suicide planes just kept coming day and night.*

12 APRIL

Flew combat patrol over Okinawa - bogies all around but we didn't get any. The air group ( F6F's & F4U's ) shot down 13 today. Pappert, Coumbe & I are definitely in the F6F sqd now. At least until the ship gets in more F4U's.

13 APRIL

Flew target cap at Okinawa-searched for downed pilot. I found part of life raft. Coumbe found and exploded a Jap mine.

*We were making one or two combat flights over Okinawa every day, and once we saw a body floating near the beach, knowing the Japs were waiting for a salvage attempt, it was deemed inadvisable to try. So, day after day we would see the body as we flew from the ship to targets on land. Finally, it had disappeared completely. Never did find out who it was.*

14 APRIL

Re-fueled - got two letters & a card from my boy. Flew combat air patrol over ship. Tallyhoed one weather balloon.

15 APRIL

Flew T-cap over Okinawa - no bogies - just routine- Ham Reidy was in a sweep over Kyshu - shot down 2 planes. Clem Wear got one too. Tomorrow we have the same thing!

16 APRIL

Started on sweep over Kyushu - got as far as Amamia O Shima (about ½ way) when the Skipper's plane went bad. We fired rockets & strafed that island & I escorted him back. Pappert & Coube went on & Pap helped shoot down a Zeke. We lost Bouldin, Wear and Tommy Ward. Wear and Ward went into the water & a rescue mission is out now. Bouldin is a P.W. Reidy saw him on the ground beside his plane with some Jap kids around him. I could only get three guns to fire & Ham only one! Our fleet was under attack all day - 8 ships hit - 2 DD's sunk. The Intrepid was hit. One two engine plane

was splashed just now ( 1900 ) Tommy Ward was picked up but Wear couldn't be found. Maybe a sub got him.

17 APRIL

Flew Cap - Fleet under attack most of the day - Our AA splashed three KK"s diving on ships. Rescue mission picked up Clem Wear, near Kyushu & a night fighter who was shot down last night. Two Intrepid pilots shot down a B-25 The Intrepid is going home.

18 APRIL

Re-fueled today - got two letters- One of our bombers spun in during landing - pilot not recovered - tomorrow big day at Okinawa. Ace, ( Lt.Rach ) was killed on take-off this morning. Today we have been in combat one month & have lost 9 pilots in the F4U sqd alone - 17%.

*The Corsair squadron lost more Pilots because most of them had come from non-fighter squadrons. They had not been trained sufficiently in fighter tactics before going into combat, and consequently suffered more casualties.*

19 APRIL

Flew two hops today. The first one was a strike on southern part of Okinawa in support of the big push by ground troops. Bombed & strafed the town of Iwa. We blew it all to hell and set the place on fire... The second hop was a CAP over the BB's shelling the Island. Expecting a big KK attack tomorrow. Clem & Ward are back.

20 APRIL

Strike on Southern Okinawa. Bombed, strafed & fired rockets in the town of Inasomi. Mistook a lot of corngrinders for gun emplacements. Kincaid made 2500<sup>th</sup> landing aboard the Essex. This air group has made over 3000 landings in past 30 days.

21 APRIL

Flew "T-Cap" over ringleader base at Okinawa. The big Jap attack we expected didn't materialize today - probably tomorrow.

22 APRIL

Flew 5 hours air support hop... Fired rockets & strafed,

(2000 rounds) trenches, caves, gun emplacements and enemy tanks near town of Kazamito. 5 Jap planes shot down near task force this afternoon. Last transmission of on Jap pilot just before being shot down was "Banzi." Tomorrow is re-fueling day - looking for lots of mail.

23 APRIL

Re-fueled and re-armed today. Pappert, Coumbe and I went aboard a DD ( via Breeches Buoy ) for transportation to the USS Bougainville. Picked up 3 F4U's... Got 14 letters.

24 APRIL

Didn't fly today! Bad weather - 0 - 0- The first time we have failed to aviate because of weather since we started flying out here.

25 APRIL

Bad weather today but we flew just the same. Target CAP over Cognac Base North of Ie Shima- ceiling 300 ft. Visibility ½ mile.

26APRIL

Bad weather again- got in some instrument flying- bombed & strafed trenches & caves on South Okinawa. Set three buildings on fire - looks rugged over there- saw mid-air collision between two bombers. Pilot & Crewmen bailed out & were rescued.

27 APRIL

Re-fueled- re-armed- Got 4 letters- Nice weather- Everything quiet.

28 APRIL

Flew CAP over Fleet- Lots of Bogies hit Okinawa. The BG ( *Battle Group* ) shot down 29 - we had a night attack- total shot down - 32.

29 APRIL

Under attack during afternoon- The F6F's got 3. Lost one pilot. Heard garbled word on the German surrender. One of our hospital ships was bombed 167 killed, wounded & missing.

30 APRIL

Flew CAP at 25000 feet over base- Routine- no Bogies, no attack. Scuttlebutt has it we are going back to Ulitni the 14th.

1 MAY

Re-fueled today - No mail.

2 MAY

Flew CAP- routine, some friendly planes strafed our own troops on Okinawa - Killed 7 Wounded 17. Bad weather!

3 MAY

Didn't fly - weather very bad- most hops canceled- only CAPS flying. Our room looks like a workshop. Everybody making watchbands etc.

4 MAY

Good weather - the air group shot down 38 Japs today - lost Gibby from our squadron. One DD sunk & a couple damaged by KK's. 207 Japs downed by us since March 18. (46 days) TF58 has downed over 1000 planes since April 1. (34 days)

5 MAY

Flew air support on South Okinawa, fired rockets, bombed & strafed trenches, artillery guns & AA Positions. They are shooting at us more than usual lately - 5 hr hop!

6 MAY

Re-fueled - got 4 letters - rumor that we won't go back to Ulithi until end of the month.

7 MAY

Shipping strike at Amimi - Dropped 1000 pounder & strafed ships in harbor. Dropped incendiaries on town at Kikai. Quite a bit of AA up there & bad weather don't help. Corsair cracked up on deck- pilot hurt.

8 MAY

Bad weather - nobody flew today- sea getting rough. Heard war is over in Europe - doesn't seem to mean much out here - bet everyone back home is getting pie-eyed. Rumor has it we will go to Leyete the last of this month for re-provision.

9 MAY

Crapped out again today- We have been making gadgets in our room. Lost two very good friends today - Smitty was shot down by AA over Amami. Jimmy Tucker was killed last nite when taking off from the Enterprise, which is cruising right behind us. 0300- The Skipper just left- Everyone (Pap, Coumbe & I) D.A.!!

10 MAY

Refueled... got 4 letters.

11 MAY

Flew Close Air Support for Marine troops on Okinawa. My plane shot up by ground fire.

*My plane was hit by AA. Fired rockets and strafed trenches and barracks. Artillery and battleships were laying down a barrage. The whole countryside was flat! We were under attack. We splashed a couple of Japs and other squadrons got more. Bunker Hill was hit by two Kamikaze's and was badly damaged.*

12 May

Flew air support over Okinawa. Had engine failure over front lines. (due to light AA) Made dead-stick landing at Youtan Field.

13 MAY

Slept on the ground and ate K rations. Had a bombing raid by Japs. Checked on getting my plane fixed. Saw all the boys from the Bunker Hill. They were going back to the states.

14 MAY

Went up in the hills of North Okinawa. Saw lots of Natives and burned out stuff. I also checked out some caves. Heard later there were Jap soldiers in the caves. Jap planes raided us about dark. Our AA got one but a suicide plane hit a battleship in the harbor. Found a cot in a Marine tent to sleep on. Dust very bad.

15 MAY

Went up to the front lines. Saw lots of dead Marines and Japs... the stink was awful. Bulldozers were covering up the Japs. Had another bombing raid about 0200. Spent most

of the night in a foxhole.

16 MAY

**It rained all night. No raid by Japs. Saw actual white woman (nurse). Mud knee deep. Saw two planes from the Essex come in. Jumped in a plane and joined up with them. Flew back to the ship. Found out the Enterprise had a bad hit by a Kamikaze and is going home... so is our Skipper.**

*I wore my flight suit all time on the ground, got quite smelly but so did the Marines, so no one noticed. I left word with the Tower to get in touch with me if they saw any Essex planes come in, then I went sight seeing . Found a cave full of drums of Jap gasoline... came back and proudly reported same to Marines in our tent. They scoffed and explained that it was of such low octane it wouldn't burn in our Jeeps. However, they did show me how to cook with it by filling a can with rocks, pouring the Jap gas in and lighting it off. I also found one cave with stacks of ammo boxes. Brought a case back and again the Marines were ahead of me. The cases were full of cone shaped; brass nose fuses for Jap AA guns. I was shown how to unscrew them and burn out the black powder so they could be used as paperweights... brought some back to ship.*

*I was a very Junior Officer and on my first experience with a night bombing raid by Japs, I almost became a dead Junior Officer. The night sky was ablaze with searchlights, tracer fire and bomb explosions. To me it was an exciting fireworks display and I stood and gawked until one of the Marines helped me into a foxhole with his big boondocker boots. The White Woman referred to was a Navy Nurse on a plane there to evacuate the wounded. She was a blonde and wearing a skintight nylon Navy flight suit. Everything came to a halt while she was there and for some reason many, many Marines found a reason to be in the vicinity.*

*After I had joined up with the two Essex planes, it was discovered that I could not raise them on the radio as I didn't know what frequency they were using or the identification call of the day for the ship. So, I just tucked in close and flew wing on them till we arrived in the vicinity of the ship and got the usual burst of AA fire from them. This was not uncommon because everybody on board was so stressed out and trigger-happy they would shoot first and ask questions later. Landed aboard the very clean ship with very clean aircraft in my very muddy plane and dirty flight suit... it sure stood out too.*

17 MAY

**Flew patrol over Amami-dropped firebombs, strafed and fired rockets on boats and AA guns. Set a plane on fire on the ground. AA getting much worse up there.**

*After the Skipper left, we (Pappert, Coumbe and I), had no division leader, so ole Ed Pappert stepped up and said follow me boys, I am the new division leader. This was great as we had been flying together all along and knew each others flight characteristics very well. It also made us a 3 plane division unless someone was assigned to the #4 " Tail end Charlie" position. Once we were flying CAP over the fleet when someone started yelling that there were two midget submarines following one of the ships. Ed came up on the radio and said "Those are paravanes*

*you dummy.” and sure enough they were... small tapered tanks with fins which were towed by a minesweeper to explode floating mines.*

18 MAY

Flew 0500 CAP at 25,000 feet. Made strike on Amami. We lost two torpedo planes. My good friend Boatright was flying one of them. Rest of month will be same-o-same-o according to flight schedule.

19 MAY

No fly - refueled- got lots of letters.

20 MAY

Flew target CAP over Okinawa - no Bogies- Bad weather - Ens. Jones spun in- they buried him at 1830 this evening- he was a F4U pilot.

21 MAY

Had the duty! Bad weather- Rough day! The Japs attacked the ships around Okinawa with 35 planes & several submarines. 25 planes were shot down & some of the subs sunk. Some of our ships were damaged but I don't know if any were sunk. Two Jap DE's & one transport were sunk. Guess we go to Leyte for 10 days on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

22 MAY

No fly - bad weather.

23 MAY

No fly- refueled- No mail. Japs spotted us & we broke off from tankers at noon. Sent strike to Kikai in bad weather- tomorrow we go Jap hunting.

24 MAY

50 Plane sweep on Kyshu ( Japan ) Fired rockets & strafed planes on ground at Ashuri Airfield - Two airborne Zekes splashed - two Pelican planes went down - pilot of one recovered. Got AA blast under my tail and cracked my back again AA pretty thick.

25 MAY

Flew CAP in the worst weather I have ever flown in (4 hrs) Ceiling) 0 to 200 ft. Visibility 0 to 1/4 mile- the Japs attacked Okinawa again - about 40 planes.

26 MAY

No FLY - bad weather - big Jap attack on Okinawa today - we aren't going to Leyte tomorrow. Jap planes landed at Yonton & the crews got out & destroyed some planes before the Marines killed them.

27 MAY

Refueled - got Lots'a mail.

28 MAY

Flew pre-dawn CAP in bad weather. Heard three Japs splashed & someone got shot up by a "Tony" (*Jap Plane*) The Task Force has been changed from 58 to 38 with Mc Kane & Halsey in charge instead of Mitscher & Spruance. I hear they're rough boys. We may go to Leyte soon.

29 MAY

NO fly - we are on the way to Leyte. After 79 days at sea they finally decided to let us have 10 whole days off - anchored off the lovely island of Leyte. We all got Cholera shots & feel like hell. Saw our first movie in three months - it was a stinker.

30 MAY

No fly - standby - ships gunners target practice on drones. Lay on flight deck & got sun burned. I hear Leyte has four "O" Clubs!

31 MAY

No fly- tomorrow nobody fly. SCHEDULED FLIGHT OPERATIONS TOMORROW X, NONE = = = = BIG DAY OFF X (*quoting from the tickertape*)

1 JUNE

Philippine Islands

We dropped the hook at 0927 this morning. I missed winning the Anchor Pool by 4 minutes. Didn't go ashore today - will make it tomorrow - beer (cold) found out we have steamed over 33,000 miles since March 14 ( 2 1/2 months) Coumbe & I

have been fishing from the port-hole - didn't catch anything. The Air Group has flown over 25,000 hrs.

2 JUNE

Went ashore - Tacloban Beach & "O" Club - drank beer all afternoon & went swimming- saw a lot of guys I knew - received 5 packages.

3-4 JUNE

Repeated above treatment

5 JUNE

Same

6 JUNE

Ditto

7 JUNE

A P- 38 crashed into the Randolph - anchored a couple hundred yards from us. I heard the Hornet & Bennington were beat up off Kyushu - Stateside job- ( Halsey trying to make the headlines again by going through typhoon)

*The P-38 was flown by an Air Force Pilot who wanted to show the Navy how to really fly. Well he did put on a good show but lost control at low altitude in a tight turn and spun in hitting the flight deck of the Randolph... wiped out many planes parked thereon and killed himself. We all felt sorry for him as we have done crazy stuff like that many times.*

8 JUNE

Nothing new - Still loading ammo. Went to Macarata & drank beer. Bought some beads from natives.

9-10 JUNE

More beer

11 JUNE

Submarine alarm. The Bennington pulled in today. She is in sad shape.

13 JUNE

More beer- went to town of Tacloban & looked the place over then to San Antonio - caught a boat to the New Mexico & mooched a ride back to our ship. The whole US Fleet is

here now- 8 big carriers and lots of little ones. ( *Cruisers, Cans and Subs* )

14-15-16-17 JUNE

Still loafing around & drinking beer. Saw lots of friends. Expect to shove off about the 28<sup>th</sup>. Rumor has it to be an 18 day cruise but plenty rough. Maybe Tokyo.

18 JUNE

Air Groups 9-12-17-82 are going back to Uncle Sugar. Also the Hornet. We are now Senior.

19 JUNE

We are all set for another cruise - shoving off in the morning.

20 JUNE to 3 JULY

In hospital

4 JULY

Headed for Tokyo! The Ticonderoga went to P.H. ( *Pearl Harbor* )

We lost two pilots (crashed)

9 JULY

Tomorrow we hit Tokyo - looks like bad weather.

10 JULY

We bombed airfields around Tokyo - no one saw a single airborne aircraft - we lost no pilots- 210 sorties- Good weather - three Japs splashed around task force - latest scuttlebutt, we go home the 19<sup>th</sup>

14 JULY

Struck Northern Honshu & Hokkaido - sunk 7 ferry boats & other ships - no bogies over target- one Betty splashed over TF. ( *TF = Task Force* ) The battleships & cruisers shelled towns along the beach all afternoon. Wonder what the Japs think about that! Weather is cold & wet - we lost no pilots!

15 JULY

Same targets - 8 planes hit by AA. All pilots OK.

16 JULY

Re-fueled - tomorrow we hit Tokyo again - going after a Battleship.

18 JULY

Still working on Tokyo - weather bad. Dave Horton was killed and one bomber when in.

20 JULY

I'll never believe scuttlebutt again - we sure as hell didn't go home on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

22 JULY

The ungarbled word - we go home Aug. 28<sup>th</sup> - seven more strike days

24 JULY

Strikes again on Kure Harbor- Northern Kyushu & Southern Honshu. Bombed cruiser. (natori class ) & carrier - airfield & shipping. Coumbe made a water landing after dark in very bad rainsquall. Some landed on other ships - Jeeter shot down a "Mert" today. No pilots lost!

25 JULY

More of the same - Reidy & Comstock shot down a Zeke each. We lost one bomber pilot & one F6F ( Weisner )

28 JULY

Sam Brocato, Huey Batten & W.L. Clark shot down a plane each. Brings our total to 226. We bombed & rocketed cruiser & cans in Kure Harbor - also a hospital ship by mistake. Got rocket hits on carrier at Oita. The 300,000<sup>th</sup> landing was made on the Essex. Lost no pilots.

30 JULY

Hit Tokyo again.

1 AUGUST 1945

We were supposed to hit Korea (310 miles) tomorrow but it

was called off due to typhoons. The ships had AA practice and one of the DDs was hit with a 5 incher!

4 AUGUST.

My birthday -- spent it between Tokyo and Iwo Jima... The Korea deal was on again and is now off again... Everything SNAFU.

*Pappert was a relatively serious type of guy and once while we were reading our mail, he calmly announced that his cousin had become an ace with 5 planes shot down.. Well, Coumbe and I were quite impressed and asked if he was flying in the Navy or Air Force. Pappert said he was flying for the Air Force, THE GERMAN AIR FORCE!! Now since Ed was of German descent, we never doubted him and ask what kind of planes he bagged. Russians, he said which seemed logical. Some time later (much later), he told us that he was just joking and that it wasn't true at all.*

7 AUGUST

Heard of Atomic bomb being dropped on the Japs.

8 AUGUST

Strikes on Japan canceled due to weather. Damn that scuttlebutt... We didn't go home as planned again.

*During a lull in flying, the Skipper would designate some of us for inventory duty. This meant cleaning out the locker and inventorying the personal effects of our buddies who did not come back. It was a sad duty but we didn't mind doing it because we knew it could happen to us at any time.*

9 AUGUST

Strikes on Japan... Coumbe was shot down by AA... Bucky Harris was killed when a 1000-pound bomb exploded on his plane in mid air. One bomber went straight in... No survivors. Huey Batten in an F6F and two torpedo planes ditched and pilots were picked up by a DD. Ship was under attack all day by suicide planes... Several shot down... One DD hit. Same air plan for tomorrow as today... no relief in sight.

10 AUGUST.

More strikes - Coumbe was picked up but Clem Wear spun in and was killed trying to throw him a raft. We hear the Japs want to quit.

11 AUGUST.

No strikes. Typhoon in area... Coumbe is back aboard.

### RESCUE OF LTJG COUMBE

*On 9 August, 1945, Lt(jg) Vern Coumbe dove his F4U for a 500 pound bomb drop on a freighter in the Ominato Naval Base. Upon pulling up, his plane was hit by AA fire in the oil cooler and the engine froze up at once. He ditched the plane 5 miles south of the Jap base, climbed into his raft and awaited developments. After squadron planes departed, he fought to hold his position against a strong west wind thinking that a rescue mission might arrive that afternoon. None did. During the night he napped for 45 minutes and at 0300 when it was getting light, found that he had drifted and was about one mile off the shore of Nakanosawa. He saw a beach and a wooded area, paddled furiously and landed on the beach. He took his raft into the woods and settled down for the night.*

*But first he buried his ring in the sand... said he didn't want the Japs to get it if he was captured. He was half asleep at 0600 when he heard planes approaching. They were F4Us from the Essex led by Lt. Tripp. Coumbe ran down to the beach, fired signal pistol and waved his white scarf. Ens. Jones spotted him and his position was reported back to the ship and to the CAP over the Task Group. Coumbe climbed into his raft and paddled out against a strong wind and held a position 300 yards off shore for 3 hours. When he became too tired he went back ashore.*

*About noon Lt Reidy arrived with three F4Us and one F6F from the Essex, and two OS2U float planes from the USS North Carolina. Lt(jg) Wear flying a F4U was in the process of dropping a raft when he made a very steep turn and crashed in the sea about 400 feet off shore. There was no survivor. Coumbe started swimming out into the bay, (He's a good swimmer), toward the rescue plane. An OS2U piloted by Lt. Jacobs landed and tossed out a line. When Coumbe was within 25 feet of the plane, the Pilot put one foot out on the wing, the other foot on the seat. The plane lunged in the surf and his foot kicked the throttle open causing the plane to go scooting off, knocking him overboard.*

*By this time artillery had opened up from the Jap base, two shells landing within 50 yards of the two men. The scooting plane nicely drew away Naval base gunfire so the second OS2U piloted by Lt(jg) Oliver, could land and pick up the two pilots. The runaway plane was strafed by Lt. Reidy and left sinking.*

*The rescue plane arrived at the North Carolina at 1615 and Coumbe arrived aboard the Essex next morning...nicely suntanned, hale and hearty.*

13 AUGUST.

Strikes on Tokyo - 10 or 12 Japs splashed around the Fleet... Three barrier crashes on deck.

15 AUGUST.

It`s all over!! Our planes were over Tokyo when peace was declared. The CAP shot down 4 Japs this afternoon. We may go home tomorrow... The other ships are in on the occupation. Okinawa was attacked by Japs tonight.

18 AUGUST

We got 10 replacement pilots. Farrell and Weisner came back aboard. It looks like we may be out here a long time yet. They have stopped cannibalizing the ship and are trying to get some of the stuff back... like 2300 pounds of butter. All fouled up!

20 AUGUST.

We are back to cannibalizing the ship... Just heard the bull horn tell a DD alongside that we would see them in Frisco. The Wasp is taking our place here and we are going to task group 38.4... Sounds good.

*Cannibalizing the ship meant giving all our supplies and equipment to ships that were staying. We really didn't need all that stuff back in the good ole US of A...*

22 AUGUST

Had a big exhibition (Group Grope) for moving pictures. We may be in on the occupation of Japan and then again we may go home. Not sure of anything.

24 AUGUST

Guess we don't go home....

25 AUGUST

Patrols over Japan... Threw cigarettes to PWs.. Tokyo is Flat Had the tail of my plane chewed off by Gunner Way`s plane. Seven planes cracked up today. Three pilots in the water... no one hurt... More of same tomorrow.

27 AUGUST

Japs came aboard the Missouri to turn in their swords but

said they wanted them back after the ceremony because "They were used to them". Our ships in Tokyo bay now... Landings start tomorrow... two planes cracked up today.

28 AUGUST.

Flew Atsugi patrol - Saw the airborne troops land. - Flat hatted around... Looked over Yokohama and Tokyo. Saw another PW camp... Tomorrow we refuel and get replacement aircraft. (Cracked up two more today). Even the Captain is grasping at straws... He said, "Tomorrow we take aboard passengers for the States, but it may not mean anything."

30 AUGUST

Took aboard over 400 passengers...only dropped 4 in the drink. Lots of hustle and bustle... We're going home at last. Two more days of operations... we depart on the 3rd.

31 AUGUST.

We really gave the Emperor a buzz job today... Flat hatted over Tokyo and surrounding area for two hours... Snuffy landed at Yokosuki and left his plane there and is now aboard the Yorktown... We may go home tomorrow...

*We were given freedom to fly anyway we liked over Japan to impress the natives. Know we did because when I was flying very low once, they threw rocks at me. We would also put our wheels down on a Jap runway and zip along for the length of it...just for the helluva of it.*

1 SEPTEMBER

Took aboard more passengers... Must have over a thousand now. The Battleship Wisconsin is alongside. We have one "Battle Happy" Commander aboard... He turned on the ship's sprinkler system and flooded us out... We are now on our way to rendezvous with a tanker fleet. We leave for Seattle on the 3rd via the great circle route and the Aleutians.

3 SEPTEMBER.

Started for home this AM. We have another carrier, the San Jacinto, the Battleship Massachusetts, a CVL, the San Diego and two DDs... Our homeward bound pennant was hoisted but broke off and fell into the sea...it was 1538 feet long.

5 SEPTEMBER.

Position 40-08 N. Latitude...156-10 E Longitude Getting cold..  
Rain and wind all day. I guess it is typical Alutian  
weather... The movies are getting worse all the time.

7 SEPTEMBER.

Tomorrow is also Friday 7th. We are now at 47 North  
Latitude. Weather cold. Heard Admiral McCain is dead... Sea  
is very rough.

12 SEPTEMBER.

The only plane left aboard is the English Seafire that  
landed aboard and cracked up. We are 300 miles from  
Seattle. I guess the boys who flew in are making a big  
night of it... One F6F went in on take off but the pilot  
was rescued.

14 SEPTEMBER.

Went aboard an old DD and to NAS Sand Point, Seattle,  
Washington. What a wonderful place this ole US is!!! Called  
wife and heard my baby boy, Jimmy making noises... Ate lots  
of vegetables, drank cold milk and many beers.

15 SEPTEMBER

Went to town. Put in for Regular Navy - probably won't make  
it because of busted back.

18 SEPTEMBER.

Air Group 83 was Decommissioned and I got orders to NAS  
Atlanta for Instrument Flight Instructor School and then to  
San Diego for further assignment. Things are looking very,  
very good!!

22 SEPT

Arrived Chicago, met Bonnie & my boy.

*(Met Bonnie and my boy, Jimmy who is 10 months old with long curly hair... When we sat him in  
a barber chair for his first haircut, Bonnie cried)*

23 SEPT - 28 October

Rockford, Ill. On leave, visited our folks in Ill, St Louis  
and Poplar Bluff, Missouri

29 OCT

**Atlanta, GA. and my leave is over - guess the war was pretty tough on the people back home.**

3 NOV

**Received Air Medals from Capt. Strong also D.F.C.**

*(Received 6 air medals and the Distinguished Flying Cross from Captain Strong, CO of NAS Atlanta.)*

13 NOV

**Atlanta is some town & this is some life. Eat, sleep, & go to town - - Sea Duty was never like this. Instrument flight instruction in SNJ`s** *(SNJ was a single engine, two cockpit trainer. The AF called it the AT-6 Texan.)* **and some ground school.** *(Instrument instruction in SNJ's included spins while on instruments under the hood)*

*(Compared to how much I had been flying in the war, this was considered "little flying," but it was at least one hop per day)*

23 NOV

**Went home for Thanksgiving**

25 DEC

**Home for Christmas**

## 1946

5 JAN 1946

**Left Atlanta - bought a 1937 Packard. (For \$600.)**

10 JAN

**Left for San Diego. (Traveling at 35 MPH)**

14 JAN

**Jimmy sick in Fabens, TX** (*put him in a Clinic for 3 days and we slept and ate there, total cost 33 dollars. Nice folks*)

19 JAN

**Arrived after a nice trip.**

20 JAN

**Left Dan Diego & reported in at NAS Los Alamitos - found a place to live in the Gardeners Cottage on a big estate - looks like nice duty.**

*Six of us were assigned duty of instructing student pilots in instrument flying in SNJs. We got real good at it and when things got boring, would play tricks on the students. A good one was to do a barrel roll and when upside down, hand the controls over to the student. Well, a barrel roll is so smooth one can't tell which side is up when under the hood. (This was a canvas cover on the cockpit so students couldn't see out.) So the poor student would inevitably go into a spin in total confusion. We would then pop the hood and let him see what was happening.*

6 March

**It is nice duty! Scuttlebutt had it we shove off from here July one. I re- applied for regular Navy**

19 March

**Left in an F6F for Chicago - Ferry trip - took 16 days**

21 AUG

**CASU - Moved to San Diego.**

27 AUG

I got orders to AG-98.

30 AUG

Got orders to Anacostia Wash. DC ( 18 nice days in route )

17 SEPT

Arrived at Anacostia Found a two room apartment in DC and started flying twin engine SNB's - Instruct gold braid-

( Instructing Pentagon pilots on instrument flying. Students mostly Commanders and above.)

*One of my students was a Maj. Major, US Marine Corps. Strangely enough he was my flight instructor, then Lt. Major, when I was a Cadet at NAS Olathe, Kansas. A hard nosed SOB he was too... Had no patience and when I would do something real dumb, he would say, "Now put your head between your knees" and then he would whack the control stick back and forth. Since the controls were interconnected, this resulted in a good head whacking. Well now, the situation had changed and I was his instructor. Revenge time I thought, but turned out he was such a nice guy by then I didn't have the heart to work him over.*

20 OCT

Nice duty - piling up 2 engine time - students mostly Comdrs & above. Autumn - first cold weather in 4 years coming up.

## 1947

1 MAY, 1947

Got orders to Atlanta, Ga. In the Active Reserve. 27 day leave, and a new Buick convertible. Spring has sprung and life is good.

*And with a 27 day leave, we sold our war bonds and bought a 1941 Buick convertible, for \$1500.00 Visited Bonnie's and my folks in Missouri and Illinois.*

29 MAY

Arrived at NAS Atlanta, Ga. Bought a new 28 ½ foot trailer for \$2800. Duty looks fair.

*Settled down with my little family and lived happily ever after .*

*As the saying goes, "I was going to make a career of the Navy, but after 30 years I gave it up." I had total support from my wife and we raised two fine boys... one died, and the other one, Jim, married a beautiful girl, Karan, and they live across the road from me and feed me supper every night and try to keep me out of trouble. We buried my wife, Bonnie on our 56<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. At age 82 I am once again a bachelor, hanging in there and going for 110.*

MAY THE ROAD RISE UP TO MEET YOU.  
MAY THE WIND BE ALWAYS AT YOUR BACK  
MAY THE SUN SHINE WARM UPON YOUR FACE,  
THE RAINS FALL SOFT UPON YOUR FIELDS,  
AND UNTIL WE MET AGAIN,  
MAY GOD HOLD YOU IN THE PALM OF HIS HAND.

Glen (Wally) Wallace

A HAPPY LITTLE FAMILY, IN A HAPPY LITTLE TRAILER IN 1947. BATHROOM AND SHOWERS WERE AT THE OTHER END OF THE TRAILER PARK, AND...



ME PROUDLY SHOWING OFF MY LT. (Junior Grade) STRIPES AND LITTLE JIMMY SITTING NEXT TO THAT GOOD LOOKING GAL, (Bonnie) WITH THE NICE LEGS. Long ago and far away...



G.H.Wallace