

These typed letters were actually written by the chaplain and mimeographed so all hands could send one home. They were slightly altered by T.R. as with Dad Folbe's initiative in a civilized sort of way. Evidently they were retyped by H.M.R. for further distribution. The above written by T.R. 2/4/91 forty six years later after he had "uncensored" them!

Just one month after our coming to Guam, we were told to pack again. We left Guam on the twenty-ninth of January and proceeded to the fleet anchorage at censored where we finally reached the end of the long and weary road to the carrier from which we would fly in combat. I doubt very seriously if there have been many air groups which have been on as many ships in one tour of duty.

We left the anchorage after a couple of days for three days trial run, so we could learn the characteristics of the ship's operation; and also to give ship's company an opportunity to find out about us. I think on the whole, everyone was pleased with the outcome. Upon our return to the anchorage, we started getting everything in readiness for our first operation, which we learned later was to be a part of the first carrier strikes against Tokyo.

A.M.

The sixteenth of February found us at the very gates of the enemy's homeland. The weather was cold and the ceiling so low the seagulls were grounded, but we flew anyhow. There was a fighter sweep over the Tokyo Bay area almost before sun-up. The first strike in which bombers, torpedo planes and fighters participated was against Hachijo Jima, a small island one hundred fifty miles south of Tokyo. There was not much there, but we wanted to be thorough in our destruction. There was one airfield with adjacent buildings and some airplanes on the ground, all of which were properly disposed of. There was no fighter opposition over the island and the anti-aircraft fire was meagre, coming mostly from automatic weapons.

P.M.

Due to the foul weather we were unable to get to the primary target on the afternoon strike, so we hit Hammamatsu Airfield, which is located southwest of Tokyo on Honshu.

2/17

The next day we struck Toyohashi Airfield, which is also on the main island. Everyone was amazed by the fact that no enemy fighters were seen over the target and the anti-aircraft was meagre.

Our next strike was at Chichi Jima in the Bonins, on the eighteenth of February. There was a good bit of heavy and light anti-aircraft fire encountered there but the strike was successful, the bombs being dropped on shipping and ground installations.

2/20-23

We were on hand for the invasion of Iwo Jima, giving the ground forces close air support from the twentieth to the twenty-third of February. All of us got a first hand view of Mount Sarabachi, which is to be on the posters for the sixth war loan. It was not so rough for us in the air, but the Marines had a pretty tough time there on that three by five mile island.

We paid the yellow men another visit on the twenty-fifth. We were going to bomb the business district of downtown Tokyo but again there was a lot of bad weather to contend with. We flew around over the homeland for about an hour without seeing any breaks in the overcast over the target. We finally dropped our bombs on one of Japan's most important sources of food.

3/1 The first of March found us over Okinawa and Miyako, where we attacked shipping. This concluded our first operation and we went back to port. (ULITHI)

3/14

Leaving port on the fourteenth of March, we headed north once more to give the enemy a bad time in his own front yard. We struck Kenoya Airfield on the island of Kyushu on the eighteenth of March. The field is one of the largest on the island. Several hangars and numerous planes were destroyed on the ground. Several others were shot down in the air by the fighters.

V: T.R. took part.