

fire, the bombers making a miserable glide bombing attack on a destroyer escort, all missing except apparently Doug, largely because of obscuring low haze. The torpedo planes made good use of their "fish" and blasted a merchant ship or two to hell. One of them was a tanker and sent clouds of black smoke sky high.

ULITHI

We returned to Ulithi after that and had a really good rest this time. I think I went ashore only once, having got such a poor opinion of Moq Moq the previous time. Instead I just spend more time reading; my greatest source of entertainment the whole time I was aboard ship. Of course there were letters to write too, and after two or more of us chewed the rag for hours on end, especially if such a subject as the pros and cons of religion, marriage, etc., came up. Everyone in the squadron, of course, had particular extra-flying assignments. I was supposed to be Operations Officer, but it wasn't much of a job, what little there was to do being very dull - the filling out of forms and such indicating the number of planes "up" (in flying condition), the number that went on a particular flight

and the house flown, was one of them, and the other was the making out of duty lists - as for officers of the day, for the more senior officers, and security watches for the more junior officers.

KAMAKAZE We had some excitement, however, even at the Anchorage. One evening when we were sitting at the movies we were disturbed by a tremendous explosion on one of the ships just ahead of us, and looking out we could see what looked like the end of one of our carriers. It turned out to be Kamakaze from Yap on the Randolph - <sup>some</sup> damage - not too bad.

KANOYE  
KYUSHU On the way north we had a couple of warm-up practice attacks on towed <sup>spies</sup>, and on March 18 hit Kanoye Airfield, in southern Kyushu, severely damaging some of the hangars and other buildings. As before we carried two 500 lb. general purpose bombs in the bomb-bay and a 250 lb. on each wing, our most usual load, but I was more than annoyed to find that the two in the bomb-bay were still there when we got back to the ship because of my not holding down the release button long enough, as indicated by the fact that they plopped out all right before we went in to land. This was particularly annoying as we had made strapping runs on a ship in the bay after attack-

ing the airfield.

Doug was lost on a strike at Kure, on the Inland Sea, which I missed, perhaps having already been transferred to the Skipper's division. Our next strike was against a small island group west of Okinawa by the name of Kerama Retto, scheduled to be invaded before the big island was. We had orders to soften up around the two possible invasion beaches, and since there was an innocent looking town at each, it wasn't much fun, especially as we made strafing attacks after our bombing runs. There was no AA fire. The next day a Jap convoy was reported north-west of Okinawa, and two bombers well escorted by fighters were ordered to go out and relocate it. Unhappily and very much against my will, I was one of the bomber pilots chosen, which meant I couldn't go on the striking group. What's more, we never found the convoy. Though fortunately the attackers did and sank every ship, including something like three or four small freighters and perhaps the same number of escort patrol craft.

The following day I got in two strikes on the same day for the first time, one against Yontan airfield in Okinawa, the other against rearmen-

KERAMA

RETTO

YONTAN

OKINAWA

AMAMI  
OSHIMA

of some kind (still unknown to us) nearby. We encountered considerable act-act. Two days later we were getting ready to take off for Okinawa again when a radio message reporting many merchant ships ad Amami oshima, the next big island north of Okinawa, was intercepted, which called for an obvious change in plans. Arriving over the island we found nothing but a bunch of small fishing vessels, so small, in fact, that in spite of each pilot making three or four runs dropping a bomb each time, very few were hit. I may have hit one, but rather think I didn't. What stands out more clearly was encountering some disconcertingly accurate anti-aircraft fire from one gun position I could see all too clearly on retiring from the first run. Hearing a thumping and perhaps feeling it a little too, I thought something was wrong with the engine until I spotted bursts of AA fire just below us. Thence forward until we got safely behind a cloud our movements were so erratic that I've nervously called up to ask if everything was all right.

AA

OKINAWA

The next day, March 28, came an easy attack against some hidden coastal defense guns on the southeast coast of Okinawa that had apparently been something of a nuisance to our ships ~~leaving~~ lying