

LCI (G) 450 - Vaughn Hampton, for his buddy, George Kern (F3/c.)

George Kern USS LCI (G) 450 Memoirs

Transcribed by Vaughn Hampton

Notes from Vaughn Hampton: I will start with the beginning of his log. George's hand-written log starts on 1/19/44 entered into a 4.25"x6.75" lined notebook - George was original ship's company and plank owner as his name is on the Muster log dated 9/26/43 rated as a F3/c.

George's log is probably a more accurate accounting than our 54 years old memories might be... Heh-heh. With that said, lets get with it.

-- Vaughn Hampton

1/19/44 - Dear Folks, - I'm writing this letter in a book form of daily happenings on this trip. We have been on one of the Hawaiian islands for the past four days getting supplies, fuel, ammunition and other things that are necessary. At 3:30 PM we got word to leave at 3:45 left. Just before we sailed, we got some of our back mail. I got your box, Pat, Roys and Clara' s box and opened them as soon as we were underway. Just like having Christmas all over again boy is it swell. Besides your box I got a nice box of candy from Clara and boy you should see the swell box I got from _____. Everything you could think of is in it. As far your box, well there could be no better. I am eating some of the candy and smoking the tobacco they are both swell. It was really worth it to wait all this time for these boxes.

Told you we were under way so you are probably wondering where we are going. Well, the Japs have had possession of the Marshall islands long enough so it is our turn to take them for awhile so somebody has to go and get them I guess we are as good as anybody so we are going with the help of a few others. Scared? No, not yet. I think it will be a lot of fun watching those little yellow men fall. It's a big job but we can handle it. Oh yes, I went to Confession, Mass and Communion the day before I left San Diego and I think that will help too. I will be able to tell you more about it later so until then, so long love, George.

1/20/44, Not much doing today. Got our destination of attack this morning. We are headed for the Marshall Islands and we are expecting it to be a battle.

1/21/44 - Did not get to finish last night because we were called to GQ. One of those dam Jap subs. Don't worry, he won't bother another convoy. Last night they gave us our orders of attack and it seems that we picked one of the hottest spots. As you can see on the map, islands are shaped in sort of a backward 7 shape with a dot in the middle towards the point. We and six other LCI's are to be where the dot is with the rest of the fleet around the outside. All, or most of the action will take place in the V

part of the islands. We do not know just when the zero hour will be but most likely in about 10 days. The boys are beginning to get a little nervous now but their spirits are still high. Tonight they are all up in the mess hall and one of the fellows is playing his accordion. That and the Victrola are the only means of amusements we have. We are expecting to have visitors in the next few days (enemy aircraft) so I will have more to tell you then, so until then, say a prayer for all the boys in this battl Let's hope we all get back alive. Love, George 1/21/44 - Did not get to finish last night because we were called to GQ. One of those dam Jap subs. Don't worry, he won't bother another convoy. Last night they gave us our orders of attack and it seems that we picked one of the hottest spots. As you can see on the map, islands are shaped in sort of a backward 7 shape with a dot in the middle towards the point. We and six other LCI's are to be where the dot is with the rest of the fleet around the outside. All, or most of the action will take place in the V part of the islands. We do not know just when the zero hour will be but most likely in about 10 days. The boys are beginning to get a little nervous now but their spirits are still high. Tonight they are all up in the mess hall and one of the fellows is playing his accordion. That and the Victrola are the only means of amusements we have. We are expecting to have visitors in the next few days (enemy aircraft) so I will have more to tell you then, so until th, say a prayer for all the boys in this battle. Let's hope we all get back alive. Love, George 1/22/44 - There was little or no excitement today. Enemy aircraft was detected early this afternoon but it was several miles away and did not bother us. We got word that they bombed the islands three times today are doing a pretty good job on it. This has been a very pleasant trip so far. The weather is very warm and we have not had any heavy seas. See you tomorrow. Love, George 1/25/44 - I have not written for the last two days because of nothing to write about. There is just about that much today too. Do you remember what happened just one year ago today? I went downtown and said 'I do', not to some blond but to Uncle Sam. Left Detroit one year ago tomorrow. If anybody would have told me then that in one year I would be on my way to the Marshall islands, I would have told them they were crazy, but who knows what will be happening in a year in advance. Sometime within the next ten days we will know what life is all about. Some of us know we might not make the return trip but there is not much said about it. Everybody is trying to be happy and gay but the difference is very noticeable in the way they have it all written down on paper. It comes as though all we have to do is go in and land but it is too big a base to give up that easily. I guess the only way to see how hard it is to take, is to wait for the time to come, so until then, keep the home fires burning we' ll be home beforlong. Love, George 1/28/44

Dear Folks, we passed the international date line last night so there was no '27th' in this month. About 10:00 we had a GQ got our first look at a Jap airplane. They did not come very close have not come back yet and it is about 7: PM now. We are at GQ now some of the boys are singing over the battle phones. They are still happy even though we start the invasion in about three days, if anything exciting happens tonight, I will tell you about it tomorrow night, so until then be good. Love, George -

1/30/44 - Best I had better tell you about our trouble. Last night about 9:00 we had a GQ and were told there were several subs following us. After an hour of waiting, they let us go back to bed. We have not

heard any more about them so I guess they are gone. As you know today is Sunday so we went to church. The boys really prayed for the safe return of us all. You do not know it but our Air Force has been bombing HELL out of the Marshall Islands yesterday today. We were listening to the messages coming from the pilots. They really sounded good. Somebody is catching hell and it is not the Yanks. Oh yes, I almost forgot to tell you.

I will not be able to write tomorrow or the next. Maybe the next day. Not that there won't be anything to write about but you know how it is. We are going to stop in for a short visit to the Marshall Islands tomorrow morning about 7 o'clock. They say the people there don't like visitors but I don't think there is much they can do about it. Well Folks, until we get rid of a few (qte a few) of these little ?????!, I will say so long hope to be able to finish this letter at some future date. Love, George PS -You know, I still don't feel the least bit scared. Maybe it's because we have so much to look forward too. love, George

1/31/44 - Just a word before we go in. It is now just 4 AM and everybody is up. The rockets guns are all manned, loaded ready for action. Last night this morning you could see the large shells the bombs going off in the islands. They really light up the place just like day time. This is all the time I have so wish us luck and say a prayer for all the boys that are going in with us. Love, George

2/4/44 - Dear Folks, "We have fought the enemy and he is ours" The battle of the Marshall Islands is all over except for the wiping up. I will try and give you an account of just what happened. As you know, on the morning of Jan 31 we went in. We laid off the beach of the first island about one half a mile. The air force laid their eggs all over the island. You could see the machine guns hitting and blowing things in the air. After they were finished we went in to about 100 yards off the beach let go with our rockets and all our guns. There was two other LCI's that went in with us. We could see them fall on the beach as we opened fire. It is something that we will never forget.

After about _____ of fire from our ships, the air force came back and started strafing the beach with their .50 cal. machine guns and they got what Japs were left. Then we opened up again. Then after another few minutes, the small boats took the marines in. In less than half an hour they raised a large American flag over the island.

All the time before the small boats went in, the Battleships and Destroyers laid off about two or three miles put 16" shells all over the island. This was the first of the islands to fall into our hands. After the marines landed we backed out and started the same thing all over again on another island. These islands are only about 1200 yd. sq. but there are a lot of them. As you know each island is given a code name so I will use the code name because I do not know the real names of them. The name of this island was "Jacob."

There was a channel between this the next island that we were to go through and attack on the other side. Due to damage done in the first attack our steering gear went bad and we run aground on a coral

reef and were stuck right between our own and the fire from the still occupied islands. Shells were landing all around us there was nothing we could do. Just by plain luck none of them hit us. This happened about 12 o'clock noon.

About 1:30 three small boat loads of marines turned over in the surf. We happened to be close enough to pick them up. We threw them a line and finally brought 52 (one of them was dead) of them aboard. About _____ of them were not able to make the trip or else got caught under their boats and were killed. We stayed there in the middle of this mess for two a half days but the last day the cross fire was just about ended.

The second day was the day they took the two main islands. About 9 o'clock in the morning there was one of the biggest explosions I have ever seen or ever expect to see. (Just to show you how crazy the Japs are.) On Burles Island there used to be a sub & air craft base and they had a large ammunition dump 75 feet below ground full of high explosives.

As I said about 9 o'clock, eight planes passed over us with their load of eggs and just as they got over the dump the Japs blew it up. The explosion was so great that it blew all eight of the planes to pieces. These planes were flying about a mile in the air and we could see them just fall apart. We were about two miles away. The concussion was so bad it just about knocked us over. This will be hard to believe but we got a picture of it to prove it. Dirt and pieces of steel landed on our ship. Those standing (everybody) outside were covered with burnt powder dirt from it.

(Editor's note - During this same interval, there was one occasion when 5 dive bombers went in at a bombing angle and the lead plane dropped his load which struck what seemed like a gas dump because the explosion and fire rose up and engulfed him and the following planes destroying all 5 of them. Being stuck on the reef, we certainly had a front row seat to observe a lot of action) There were very few prisoners taken but there were about 5000 killed on Burles Island alone.

Our boys do not have the time to stop and dig a hole for that many Japs so they're cremating (burning) them There is a large fire on the island now. I will finish this letter later as I'm going to bed for a few hours.

2/15/44 - I have not been sleeping all this time but just never got back to writing again I guess. I have told you what happened during the battle and now for afterwards. Everything went quiet after the battle for about 10 days and then on Feb 10, about 2AM, the Japs made an aerial attack on the islands. There were only four planes and they did not do much damage. Oh yes, we have a swimming party every afternoon. We put a ladder over the side and swim off the ship. It is nice. I have been going fishing every night and am having the time of my life. I do not know what kind of fish I catch but it is fun anyway. I catch about 8 or 10 every night. The only kind of fish that I know what it was , was a small tuna and the rest of them are tropical fish. The boys on the destroyer in front of us caught a large shark

yesterday. Yesterday morning at 8 o'clock we got underway for Pearl Harbor. Believe it or not we are being towed all the way. We have been out a day a half now nothing has happened. So long. PS I have a w things to send home. Also 'Neens' Christmas present but do not know how to get them there. How would you like some Jap money, knives, bayonets other things? Love, George

4/18/44 - Hi Folks, Well here we are again started on another adventure. We don't know just where we are going yet but it is somewhere below the equator. Most likely Guadalcanal. We will know for sure in a few days. We left Pearl Harbor this morning at 8 o'clock. I think all the boys had a pretty good time for themselves in Honolulu. Well by tomorrow we will know more bout this trip will be able to tell you where we are headed so until then, Be good. George.

5/14/44 - Hi Folks, It has been almost a month since I have written you now so I will see if I can make up for lost time. The first thing of any interest that happened on this trip was that we crossed the equator. It may not mean anything to you but it has a very special meaning to all sailors. I think in general speaking you can say that you are not really a sailor until you have crossed it. We had a big party that day. There are three fellows on our ship that have been across before they took over the ship. They had to initiate the rest of the crew. They had the Captain doing dishes, the Eng. officer running the engines, the Exc. officer swabbing decks. They weren't the only ones that got it. I had one red spot on my body that was so sore that I couldn't sit down for a week. A lot of other things went on that I will tell you about when I see you. A few days later we pulled into port in one of the Ellis islands. As you know these islands belong to England. We only stayed there a couple of days. Long enougho get fuel. While we were there some of the natives came out to our ship and sold us beads that they made out of shells. I have some of them down in my locker now and will try send them home as soon as possible.

A week or so later we came into a well known group of islands. Also that are owned by the English. I think they are known to most people as the Solomon Islands. That is where I am now. In this group of islands I have been to several of which Guadalcanal, Florida, (sp) Tologia are the most well known. We have been hanging around here for almost two weeks now . Expect to be here at least another week maybe two. If the people back home could see these islands as we are seeing them now, they would wonder how the boys ever drove the Japs out of here. All there is jungle more jungle. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if there were still Japs up in those hills. I guess Uncle Sam wouldn't either because you can only go so far from camp. Well that's about all for today but if anything happens, which I doubt very much I will write again if not I will wait until we get underway. Love as always, George

June 10-44 - Hi Folks: We have been under way for some time now there are a lot of things that I want to tell you. First off, we left the Solomon Islands on May 30. They did not say just where we were going but we all had a pretty good idea. After we were out for a couple of days they told us that our first stop would be the Marshall Islands. On June the 6th we got there. On the way there we lost two engines but had them fixed by the time we got into port. When we got into port we found that our gear box was shot that we only had one quad to get under way with. We only had two days layover there. They told us we

were on our way to another invasion that we had to have it fixed. Well, we had fully a week's work ahead of us to do in about 60 hours. We started right away. They sent out five men from another ship over to help us. From then on everything became a night mare. We worked 24 hours a day. We each got about 2 hours sleep a night then back to work. Our orders were to sail at two o'clock . June 9 at 12 o'clock we were turning the engines and making last minute adjustments. We made it. The engines are all in good condition now but the men are so worn out they spend all the time in bed except when they are on watch. Yes, I am on watch now. Well, anyway we are under way again headed into another invasion. What invasion? Guam!

Yes it is going to be some fight but I think we are prepared for it or they would not send us. Oh yes, we went along side a LST the first night we were in the Marshalls to get fuel. I was talking to a marine. I asked him if there was anybody from Detroit on that ship. He said he did not think so but there was a fellow in his Co. from there on another ship. I believe he said the PA-3. He said the man's name was Dowell. That's right it is Robert Dowell but I did not get to see him. He is in the same convoy I am but there is so much to do that I have not the time to look him up. Well we are about five days from Guam. Many things can happen in that time so I may have some more exciting things to tell you in the near future. So until then, I will say so long. Love as always, George

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June 16, 44 - Hi Folks: Yesterday started a new period in our lives. I think I told you I would write again as soon as we had a little excitement, well, we have had plenty of it in the last two days. Our convoy has been under constant _____ air attack since early yesterday afternoon. I will try tell you how it all came about. On June 15 we were all setting in the chow hall waiting for chow when the G.Q. rang. Somebody yelled "Here comes the yellow Bastards." We all ran for our stations. My station is below the fantail or after part of the ship I can look out of a hatch see just about everything. As soon as we got outside we could see planes. There were three of them. At first they _____ attacked the Destroyers. We got one of them but the other two got away. They circled made another run at the same time another one came out of the clouds started on our side of the convoy. All this time our boys held their fire. The plane that started on our side headed right at one of the _____ LST's and let go a fish (Torpedo) _____ then turned and headed for us. We were the last ship in the Convoy so he thought he could get us easy. Oh yes, these planes were all torpedo bombers. The nickname for them is "Kate" She has two 7.7 cannons in her nose. Well, as soon as she got in range of us she started to strafe at the same time our boys opened up. I think she was kind of surprised because when she got about 100 yards from our fan-tail, she tried to pull out of it.

Our boys had a magnificent idea. They just kept pumping lead as fast as they could. All at once a big black burst of smoke came from her engine. She came within about 1500 yards of our starboard beam. She hit the water with one wing first, turned summersault, blew up. Everybody just stood there for a couple of seconds. Then I would not have been surprised if you could have heard them back in San Diego. You never saw anything like it. They just seemed to go mad with joy. Officers as well as men. Out of the four planes that attacked our convoy only one of them lived to see his home base again. All of this happened between 5:00-5:15 yesterday, just about the time Dad was getting home from work. Oh yes, I forgot to tell you, not a man was hurt on our ship, in fact he didn't even hit the ship. No other planes got close enough to get shot at so things begin to quiet down.

About 6:30 they secured us and we went back ate. There was a lot of talk. Everybody was tired so we all hit the sack early. I guess it was a good thing we did because they came back again this morning a little before 4 a.m. They did not bother us then but just circled us several times pretty high and left about 5:30. I guess they couldn't see anything because it was still dark. About 6 o'clock we were secured, came in ate tried to get a little more sleep.

About 10:00 a.m., they came back so we had to get up again but the Destroyer got that plane. There only seemed to be the one so they secured us again. It is now 4:45 we are expecting them again very soon. If they come I will write tomorrow tell you all about it. So until later, say a prayer for us. Love, George.

July 17, 44 - Dear Folks: One month one day ago is the last time that I wrote to you. A lot of things have happened since then but I have not had the time to write. I will try sum them all up now. I do not remember the exact days or dates but for about a week after I last wrote things were pretty hot. We were attacked about three or four times a day by Jap aircraft. Mostly in the morning at night

_____sunset, sometimes during the day. For about a week-and- a-half we just circled the island of Saipan while the rest of the boys went in. Our convoy was supposed to go in on Guam. During the fight on Saipan they got ahold of the plans for the fortification of Guam and found there were many more gun emplacements and pill boxes than they expected so they postponed it until a later date and sent us back to the Marshall Islands.

By this time we were just about out of fuel, water and supplies. When we got back we got all the necessary things and some more ammunition which we were also running low on. We stayed here for seven days and had a pretty good time. We had swimming parties every day and a show party every night. We also got to go ashore one morning.

On July 15 at 11:30 we weighed anchor and got under way again to finish the job that we started over a month ago. I am most sure that we will finish it this time or die trying. It is going to be a tough deal . We know we will not all come out alive. From where we stand now things look pretty good but from what went on in the Island of Saipan we know that it is going to be rough. More fellows lost their lives there than you or anybody back home know about. I am sure that those boys felt the same as we do now -- that is that it is better for a few of us to die so the rest of us can live the kind of life that they are used to living.

Well Folks, there are a lot of things that must be done before we go in . We have such a short time, today being the 17th. The 21st is the big day so I guess I had better close. I will try write again before I go in but I am not sure that I will have time, so until we meet again Say a prayer for all the boys that lost their lives in the last invasion and the ones that will die in this one.

July 22, 44 Dear Folks: It has been five days since I wrote you last but nothing happened up until yesterday. It was a very peaceful trip. No air raids _____ and no nothing. You know we invaded _____ Guam yesterday morning. Will try give you a picture of what happened. I got up at 3:AM so I could take a shower and put on old clean clothes before I went on watch at 4:AM. We always do this because of infection if we happen to get hit. A little after 4:00 I went up on top side to see what was going on. The ship was lit up like mid-afternoon with flares dropped from our planes. Also there were many fires on the island caused by bombs. (I had better stop here give you a description of the island of Guam) It is a large island which covers about 125 square miles. There is a line of mountains running the length of it. Start from the outside, there is a sandy beach which is about 50 feet wide and runs most all the way around the island. Then in some places there are 100 or 200 yards of tall palm trees. After the palm trees, for about two or three miles comes some fields and low grass. Then starts the mountains about 2/3 of the way up it just grass underbrush. Near the top there is more trees. (To sum it all up it is very much like Guadalcanal)

Now on with the invasion. From 4:00 until 7:00 all we did was get things ready although most of it was done the day before. About 7:15 we went G.Q. _____ About 7:30 we started in. At 1200 yards from the beach we let go with our 40mm. At 500 yards we let everything go. This included 1000 rockets , three 40mm four 20mm. Brother, we blew "hell" out of that beach. About 30 yards behind us were the first wave of marines. During this time we were receiving as well as giving out. Mortar fire was landing all

around us. About six of them landed just off our fantail. A lot more landed on our sides forward. Lady Luck rode with us again because we were not hit. Not one man is hurt.

We stayed in this position _____ yards off the beach _____ kept up firing until the first wave of marines landed then turned broadside started to strafe the beach down away from the marines. The enemy were firing back on us.

At 10:00 AM we got word that the Stars and Stripes were waving over Guam. Once again the boys were started in. Here, in less than three hours we had made our beachhead and the flag was unfurled over the island. We ran patrol all last night up and down the island to make sure that none of the Japs got away or that they got no replacements but nothing happened.

Today, 22, there is still much fighting going on but time is all we need before it will be secured again in the hands of the U.S. Well folks, this is about as close as I can give as to what happened today. It was a tough fight but I think they are learning not to fool around with the "YANKS." Keep those home fires burning because if things keep going as they are it will not be long until I will be home all together once again. So until later, say a prayer for this thing to be over fast maybe I will be home for Christmas .

Love, George. -

(Early Morn) July 24,44 - Dear Folks: It is now about 1:00 AM on the second night after the invasion of Guam. By this time you probably have heard the most favorable results of what is going on. We heard a broadcast over the radio yesterday they said that everything was advancing well. I wish some of those so called reporters could be out here and see for themselves. We are doing patrol duty. All we do is run back forth from three hundred yards to twenty five yards hundred yards off the beach. We are supposed to stop any counter attacks that starts from this end of the island. It's rather a dark night out, or it would be if it were not for the _____ flares. I went up on top sides before could see tracers over the island.

When we get in to 300 yards the "can" on our starboard lets go with a flare. You can see the marines in there in hand to hand combat. You don' t need glasses to see it either. We can see the Jap troops are moving about. All of a sudden a cruiser or a can will lay a big shell right in the middle of them. Boy, they got the hell out of there in a hurry. It is hard to give you a picture of just what is going on. We are setting here watching it but it just doesn't seem real. Oh yes, Robert Dowell is in there someplace. I do not know what wave he went in on but lets hope it wasn't the first one because a lot of those boys are not going to come back out. Did you ever think of what happens when they invade, what becomes of all the wild life, the birds, even fish.? That's right , they are all killed .

For days after you can see fish floating around. Big one, small ones, pretty ones, plain ones. Come to think about it I have not seen a bird here once we came in. We got word yesterday that one of our ships got hit the day we came in. Six men were killed and sixteen were injured. I knew those fellows Mom. In fact I went to school with one of the fellows that was killed. Well that's war. Well Folks, I guess that's all for tonight. Maybe I will have some news to tell you tomorrow. Love, George.

(Late morning) July 24, 44 -Dear folks: Last night when I wrote there was not very much going on. I told you I would write as soon as something happened. Well, it happened at 9:00A.M. this morning. It is

now 10:45 and everything seems to be back to normal again. I had figured on sleeping until about noon today seeing as there was nothing to do but at 8:30 G.Q. rang and we were off again.

It seems during the night the Japs drove some of our boys back into the sea and that they had complete control of one part of the beach. This all took place in a little cove about 300 yards across. After our boys got out of the way, they sent five LCI's in to break up the counter attack.

We entered this bay and let go with everything we had. Just about the time we let go so did they. They hit three of our ships which caused quite a bit of damage. One got nine 3- inch shells, another got a mortar on the gun deck and then got it on the fantail. Quite a few of the boys were hurt and some were killed but I do not know just how many. I guess Lady Luck was with us again because we did not get hit once. We had several near misses but a miss is as good as a mile.

Several came so close that I could feel the spray of water caused by the explosion. Well anyway, we stopped the counter attack and that is what we were supposed to do. This only lasted about half an hour but I can truthfully say it was the worst fight that I have ever been in, and we have seen quite a few. They are still shooting mortars at us but most of them are not coming very close. I think we will go in again this afternoon or tomorrow but I'm not sure. If we do I sure will try give you the news later.

Love, George. P.S. Three days ago we started with nine LCI' s. We now have four left. George. - (Late Afternoon) July 24 - 44 - Dear Folks, God have mercy on us! We drew another run this afternoon. All we had to do was go into the beach and locate a gun. We went in, located it, but the big boys were going to wait until tomorrow to dispose of it. That was about 5o'clock. At seven o'clock that gun opened up and got one of our LST's. We were setting about 100 yards from the LST when she got hit. They are in getting rid of that gun now. See you tomorrow.

Aug. 4 - 44 - Hi folks: Up until two days ago there was not much to write about since the invasion itself so I did not write anything. On Aug. 2 we got a call to take a CO of marines down to the southern end of the island (Guam). This part of the island was not bothered much by the marines yet except for a few patrols. When we got there, about 3:o'clock in the afternoon, there were no live Japs in the village. We took the boat over the side and went ashore Then we found out why.

The few Japs that were left after their main column left were all killed by the natives. By this time it was getting pretty dark. We knew there were mines on the beach so we stayed on the ship until next day. The next morn I got to go ashore and saw first hand, what a village looks like after the Japs leave it. This is something that cannot be written down or believed by those that read it.

The houses were all burnt down. There was not a thing left in the village. There were several houses left that the natives said the Japs were living in before they killed them. The houses stand about five feet off the ground and have very little or no furniture in them at all. They sleep on the floor, and eat on the floor when they have anything to eat. They are made of grass and have a wood floor. As you know the Japs are small, so when they found a big man that lived there, they would kill him. Several days before we invaded, the Japs made all the natives, men, women & children, dig large holes. After they were finished they told them to get in them. The Americans would not hurt them. After they would get in and all lie down the Japs would throw hand grenades in on them.

We had a native aboard that was in one of those holes. By some miracle or other he did not get killed and escaped after dark. All the people that could escape went back into the hills and lived in the caves. I saw the holes with bodies of the natives that the Japs killed and hope to God that I never see such a sight again.

Another thing that you have probably read or heard a lot about is what happens to the young girls. The only thing I can say is that every thing we hear is true. Girls from 14 years up all have children with Jap blood. Those that have not have been living and hiding in the caves for over a year. It is the most pitiful thing to see a young girl about 16 years old with one or two babies and another on the way.

About 10: o'clock yesterday morning we brought a women with four children aboard to take back to the hospital. The women was 25 years old and her children were 9 - 5 - 2 - 1 years old and there is to be another one in a month or so. The father of the children (of the first two anyway) was on Midway and they do not know if he is alive yet or not. We had the little kids singing for us. The three youngest ones cannot speak English but can speak a little Spanish and one of our fellows speak it so we got along with them just fine. Here is a song that they are singing now and before when they could without getting caught. - "Mr. Sam" "Oh Mr.. Sam, Sam, Sam, my dear Uncle Sam, will you please come back to Guam - our life is in danger so better you must come and kill the Japanese in Guam. Oh Mr. Sam, Sam, Sam, My dear Uncle Sam, If you will please come back to Guam." That folks is a song that the people have been singing since the boys left 2 and 1/2 years ago. We had the little kids singing it for us yesterday.

Another thing, the young native girls on here are very beautiful. They have long black hair and a very nice complexion. They are the most beautiful and nicest people I have seen since I have been away from home. Yesterday about 3 o'clock when we were getting ready to come back to the ship, a "duck" came up and took a native out of it on a litter. He was just brought back from the front lines about 9 miles up. I never saw such a spectacle in my life. A Jap got hold of him, cut him all to ribbons and bashed his head in. His friend that came back with him did not say a word except "Get machine guns, I show you where Japs are." About ten min. later a platoon of marines and a bunch of natives left in the same direction that the natives had just come from. We left shortly after that. I do not know for sure what happened up in the hills but I have a pretty good idea.

We took that native aboard that evening and started back to Agot town. They were all taken to the hospital. We cleaned up last night a little and went to bed. We are anchored just off Agot town now waiting for another call. There are a lot of stories and things that the natives told us that we know are true and a lot more that we saw with our own eyes but it could take weeks to write all of it down. Folks, you probably wouldn't believe it unless you saw it yourself anyway, will write you soon. P.S. I did get a lot of souvenirs from this village.

George Sept 21-44 - Dear Folks: Some time has passed since I wrote you last, over a month, but there was little to write about. First of all we stayed around Guam for quite some time. We had patrol duty several times but that was about all. I did get ashore a few times and got a good look around the place. There was not much left of the towns or villages but you could tell that at one time it was a very

beautiful place. Some day in the not to far future it will be built up and be just as nice as ever. - Sometime around Sept. 5th we left Guam and went to Saipan. This to seemed to be a very beautiful island but is in the same condition as Guam. The fighting here was much different than it was at Guam mainly on account of the natives being Japanese. At Guam, as they took a place they had to fight the civilian population. There are many stories to be told, many of them true but that would just a waste of time because I will tell them to you when I see you. We are still at Saipan now but go back and forth between here and Tinian. That is also a nice island and also in the same condition. Well Folks, that brings me just about up to the present time so I guess I will close. Will write again when something happens or we move to another base. George.

Dec 30-44 - Dear Mom: Again it has been quite some time since I have written you, almost three months. I am now at Guam again but the last time I wrote I was at Saipan so I will start from there. While I was at Saipan we had many air raids but there was only little damage done. They just keep us from getting a full nights sleep. We used to have to get up and lay a smoke screen around the harbor every alarm. About the middle of Oct we got underway and came back to Guam.

We were all glad because we all like this island. We were not here more than two days when we got a call to relieve another ship for patrol duty. This duty was to guard a dynamite barge about 50 yards from a small village at the southern end of the island. This was the best duty I have had since I have been out here.

We had liberty every other day in the village. We each had our own girl friend and everybody treated us swell. Her we drank our first Tuba, (native beer made from coconuts) and had all the bananas we wanted. We got to know the natives well and they gave us everything we wanted. The girls here were very beautiful and would do anything for us. All in all we had one swell time but it did not last long enough. A week later we came back to the harbor and have been here ever since.

As you know Xmas has come and gone again. The only good thing that happened this year was that I did get to midnight mass . Other than that it was just another day. We have not had an air raid since I have been here this last time so lets hope we don't get any. Oh yes, I think we are moving out again pretty soon. Things are beginning to shape up like another invasion so I probably will have more interesting news before long. I have no idea where we are going yet but I will tell you as soon as I find out. So, until next time Happy New Year, say a prayer for all of us. It won't be long before we will all be back home. George.

Jan. 25, 1945 - Hi Folks: Here I am again. I told you I would write as soon as anything happened that would interest you. We got underway this morning about 11:o'clock and are now headed out in another invasion. We have a couple of stops before we hit the beach yet. We are headed for Ulithi now, a small island in the Carolina group. From there I do not know for sure where we are going but will be able to tell you in a few days. We are out to sea once again and it sure feels good. There is nothing of interest going on now but there most likely will be in the near future. As soon as I find out for sure where we are going I will write again and give you all the details but until then I will have to say so long until later. Hope us the best of luck. Hope to see you soon. George.

Feb. 16, 45 Dear Mom: It doesn't seem like such a long time since I wrote you last but a lot of things have happened since then. First of all we got into Ulithi on the 28th of Jan. Here we got supplies and fuel, and had maneuvers for several days. We did not have any time to ourselves there and we left without going ashore. We left there on Feb 5 and went back to Saipan where we had several more days of maneuvers. Then one night, Feb 13th we left there and headed out again. Yes, but this time you know we are headed for Iwo Jima.

That is an island in the Volcano group, but I will be able to tell you more about that later. In just 13 1/2 hours we are going to hit that beach. It may seem funny that we are going in so early but we are not waiting for the invasion force. We are going in to clear the way for them. We are what are known as the demolition squad. There are nine LCI's and a bunch of marine raiders. The invasion force cannot get ashore until we take the mines out and get rid of the big guns. Again I will be able to give you more information about this tomorrow. I have a hundred and one things to do before tomorrow morning so I think I had better close but will tell you all about it as soon as it is over. Again say a prayer for not only me but for all the fellows that are going in with me, Thanks. Love, George. You're damn well right I'm scared. -

Feb. 17, 1945 - D-2 09:30 - We are headed into the beach now. The wagons are really giving them hell. Our planes are dive bombing all over the island. 12:10 We have finished. We have just spent a half hour of hell on earth. Am too nervous to write now but will write tonight if possible. -

D-2 22:00 - I am on watch now. I have had time to calm down a little so I will try and give you an account of what happened. First of all we just fooled around until 10:45 that morning and then we went in. When we got 1200 yards from the beach we openfire with all our guns. Everything went just fine. When we got from 900 to 1000 yards we let go with our rockets, but just before we did all hell broke loose.

My God, I never saw so much enemy fire in all my life. First we got an eight inch shell in the bow then we got another one in the center of the ship then the third one in the bow again then two large mortars hit our well deck and knocked all our rocket launchers off then we got another eight inch shell amidships. That gave us four holes all at least three ft. across.

Then somebody yelled that the #1 compartment was on fire. Just as the fellows started to go up to put the fire out we got another mortar amidships. This hit the first fellow out the door and blew both his hands off and the biggest part of his right shoulder. Two of the fellows picked him up and got him out of the way and the rest went to work on the fire, or tried too. When they picked up the fire hoses, they were all burnt and blown to hell. Here we were with a fire in the same compartment as our ammunition and no water.

We kept it under control until we got new hoses but in the meantime we had taken several more hits and had lost another man. This fellow got it right in the chest. I can't tell you just how many hits we did take because I could never count them. We took several three inch shells and God only knows how much machine gun fire.

Besides losing two men, we lost four of our guns. Those two men was far from the only ones hit but

they were the only ones killed. Altogether I think we had about 15 men hit . Thank God I was not one of them, at least not yet. Eleven LCI's hit the beach this morning and we got the least damage of any of them so you can tell just about what we ran into. One of them did not even come out.

Out of twelve of us that left Guam a few days ago there is only one that is in condition to make another run. I want you to know that this all happened in about a half an hour or less, so you can see how fast things happen. I also want you to know that there were many a Mother's prayer answered today or a lot more of us would not be here to tell about it. It is almost time to go off watch now. I have had a busy day so I think I had better close. Tomorrow will be another long day so I will say so long and say an extra prayer for the boys we lost today. Don't forget me either.

Love, George.

(Editor's note - This was the last entry in 'ol George's log. I must say he did an outstanding recording job. Vaughn Hampton