

To the sailors watching us board the U.S.S. ORMSBY on the forenoon of December 3d, 1945, we must have appeared to them as three prematurely aged outfits. True we have unit designations - 532d and 750th Field Artillery Battalions, and the 720th Amphibious Tractor Battalion; yet we came from branches far more diversified. Included are all the steps and types of Army Service from the front line infantry to those who had equally important jobs in rear echelons. We had a few things in common - one of those, a memory of being awakened on the lush countryside of a verdant island with these clarion words to start us on our daily tasks: "This is Station WXLH - RADIO OKINAWA - A stone's throw from Tokyo."

Yes, these "rock-happy" men came from far and wide on the island of Okinawa. Some of the lads had left their original units remaining on OKIE, while others had, many moons ago, waved a languid farewell to their buddies as the latter sailed to Korea or Japan. Many had vivid memories of bloody battles - from Skyline Ridge to Motobu Peninsula, from Naha to Buckner Bay, from Nago to Shuri, from Kin to Yonabaru. Their higher echelons had been connected intimately in the struggle to subdue the island - X Army, XXIV Corps, 7th Division, 27th Division, 77th Division, and 96th Division. The two "Joes" - Generals Buckner and Stilwell - had been their leaders; and the former had given his life on the battlefield. Ten months ago there had been little meaning to names such as Yontan, Kadona, Awase, and Machinato, later they represented the bases of our air strength and became, literally, "A stone's throw from Tokyo."

From all over the Ryukyu chain, these men had concentrated on Okinawa for discharge. There are remembrances of Ie Shima, with its countless air raids and the final appearance of the Jap Bettys - this time white with green crosses - on their way to

surrender. Yes, and also, of Ihe ya Shima, Sa-
mami Shima, Turi Shima and all the rest of these
little dots in the Kerama Retto group. And
some still recall the LST journeys to Miyako
and Tokuno, to complete the final surrender
of the Ryukyus. Who will forget the dear old
25th "Apple-Cepple", where, at long last, we
were "processed" and then told to wait? A la
Louis Armstrong, our daily theme song para-
phrased: "Is you is - er is you aint - our ship-
ping?"

What was so unusual about these 1800 "GI
Joes" who boarded the Ormsby on that dark Monday
morning? A glance at their balding pates and
graying temples told the tale. They were the
"over-age" men - 35 to 37 - Finally going home.
Each one had served at least two years; many had
three and even four years of service. They de-
picted a cross section of our Army - be they sel-
ectees, enlistees, national guard, regulars or
reserve corps - all were present. In grade, they
ran from top kick to buck private. In character,
as in any organization, we had "buckers", "brownies"
and "oldbricks", but, generally, right guys. A
great many are bachelor-boys, yet you'll find a
heavy sprinkling of doting fathers among us, who
with the slightest encouragement, will show you
innumerable pictures of the offspring and relate
one fond anecdote after another.

Since V-J day, we've been "sweating out" our
discharge. Okinawa is a wonderful (?) place on which
to lie and "bitch". About 70 miles in length,
and varying in width from 4 to 14 miles, it is a
semi-tropical wilderness of mucky hills and mired
dales. The native villages were "strictly from
hunger" - and so were the "gooks" - be they male
or female. Okinawa may be the land of "unrestrain-
ed" beauty, but we prefer the sight of a trim American

gal clad in a "character foundation", walking down Main Street. To most of us, the geeks never become white enough.

The majority of men were due to leave our little old "rock" sometime in October, but they finally made it in December. In between, we had strictly "Paul Revere" weather - hot by day and cold by night. So much rain fell on Okinawa, that oft we wondered why the is land did not wash away into the sea. We had elemental visitors of all kinds. Who will ever forget that 132 mile an hour typhoon? Neither hide nor hair remained of our luxurious 12-man tents. The last we saw of our woollens and mosquito net had them locked in fond embrace, flying with the speed of a P-51 towards Kadana Airfield. We trust the ATC gave them safe passage Stateside. Recall how magnificently you dined? We shall always have a fond spot for C and K rations, hard tack, Spam and dehydrated eggs - in our garbage cans.

And now, my nautical friends of the Forty-Niner, you can understand why we so gladly descended on your Marble Carpet. True the journey has been rough. A few of us have foregone the opportunity to partake of your elegant repasts - thrice daily; that, my lads, blame on the sea, not your hospitality. We do not care to cast our bread upon the waters.

In over two weeks of travel, your scrivener has come to know a few members of the crew quite well - and he's found them to be "regular fellahs". There's "Moo" Tankley; signalman (but he can't play casino.); "Johanie" Schauble, radioman (commercial artist by trade - - he conceived the masthead of the ship's daily newspaper); "Larry" Fisher radarman (he wants to be a lawyer - crazy, huh?); "Bernie" Goldman, signalman (always has a cheery grin and a happy "good morning"); "Jack" Cook, quartermaster (a Wyoming rancher who loves wide open spaces); and our great little friend, "Jackie" Wagoner, bos'n's mate (who found romance and family in New Zealand). Boys of A.P.A. 49, we salute you. Let's hit that mainland soon, so we all can have a very Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year. After all, it's only a stone's throw----

The U. S. S. ORISBY (APA-49) is a C-2 type hull built by the Moore Dry Dock Company, Oakland, California, for the Maritime Service as the TWILIGHT. She was converted to an APA (Attack Transport) by the Watson Navigation Company, San Francisco, California.

Date of Commissioning 28 June 1943
San Francisco, California

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Length, overall	459' 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Breadth, extreme	63'
Draft, loaded	24'
Gross Tonnage	8432
Speed, maximum	17.0 knots
Complement	381 enlisted men 32 oficers

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The ship is fitted to carry 102 passenger officers, 1770 enlisted troop personnel and 2850 tons of cargo.

***** STAFF *****

Editor-In-Chief) Cover Illustration)	J. R. Schuble
Editor	Harold Feinberg
Art Editors	"Specks" Walker G. C. Hedley
Contributing Staff	Wm. I. Collins Marvin Triesch Gus W. Osato
Chaplains	W. L. Lancey W. W. Gray

SHIP'S HISTORY

ASSAULT LANDINGS

Tarawa, Gilbert Islands 2nd Marine Division	20 November 1943
Kwajalein, Marshall Islands 7th Army Division	31 January 1944
Aitape, New Guinea 24th Army Division	23 April 1944
Guam, Marianas Islands 6th Marine Division	21 July 1944
Peleliu, Palau Islands 1st Marine Division	15 September 1944
Leyte, Philippine Islands 24th Army Division	20 October 1944

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REINFORCEMENT LANDINGS

Bougainville, Solomon Islands 90th Army Division	28 March 1944
Aitape, New Guinea 34th Army Division	3 May 1944
Leyte, Philippine Islands 24th Army Division	14 November 1944

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OCCUPATION LANDINGS

Yokohama, Japan 43rd Army Division	13 September 1945
Tsingtao, China 6th Marine Division	11 October 1945
Haiphong, Indo China To: Takao, Formosa-62nd Chinese Army	2 November 1945

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MAGIC CARPET DUTY

Okinawa, Ruykyu Islands To: Portland, Oregon	3 December 1945 21 December 1945
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"Choppy Weather"

by

"Spooks" Walker

The wind was raging across the decks and whistling vicious tunes in the rigging; waves higher than the biggest haystack I ever saw were charging monotonously at the ship which gaily hurdled each one like a frisky lamb with a belly full of clover.

It was chow time.

Being a landlubber by inclination, choice and fervent desire, I was feebly making my way forward to the messhall in miserable hope of finding something that was regurgitation-proof.

Crawling weakly along the wet deck on my hands and knees I bumped into an obstruction. Summoning all my strength, I bravely raised my head and through my blurred vision made out a young sailor calmly standing erect on the deck, which at the moment was at a sharp 45 degree angle. He was slurping a paper dish of ice cream and munching a candy bar with loud appreciative snacks of his mouth. Twenty minutes later I came out of my shock and backed sadly out of my breakfast. As I settled against the wall (bulkhead, I believe they call it in their quaint jargon) the sailor stuck a cigarette in my mouth and took one himself. Nonchalantly taking a match out of a box, he held it between his thumb and forefinger and flipped it alight. He held it casually to his smoke and drew several comfortable drags, meanwhile handing me the box of matches. Clutching it firmly in both hands I managed to get a match out. But the hurricane was too much for me, for the match, box and cigarette went sailing over the rail.

The sailor was watching me interestedly. "Kinda choppy weather, huh, soldier?" he said pityingly and strolled away sadly shaking his head.

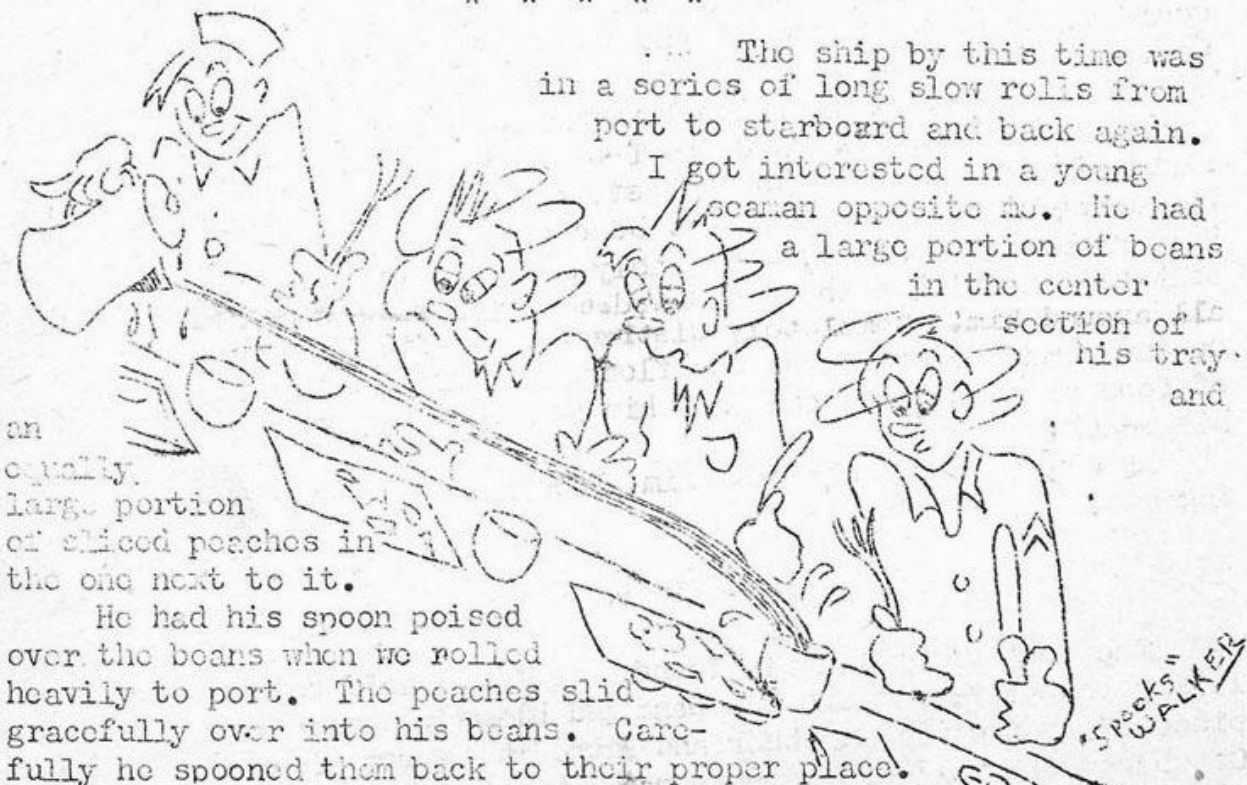
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Sometime later I came to in the messhall sitting at a table with a tray full of what I shall call food.

They told me later it was Swiss steak and very delicious too. But to me it was just an ordeal. So many swallows going down and one fast gulp coming right back up.

My cup was standing empty by my tray and I looked around for the coffee. A sailor three seats away had it and started to pour himself some. The ship gave a violent roll and a thin stream of the steaming "joe" left the nozzle and flowed parallel to the table across the startled gaze of two soldiers directly into my cup without a drop spilling. I was grateful for a moment, but the sailor set the pot down and calmly exchanged his empty cup for my full one. "Pour your own, goldbrick", he said conversationally.

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The ship by this time was in a series of long slow rolls from port to starboard and back again.

I got interested in a young seaman opposite me. He had a large portion of beans in the center section of his tray and

an equally large portion of sliced peaches in the one next to it.

He had his spoon poised over the beans when we rolled heavily to port. The peaches slid gracefully over into his beans. Carefully he spooned them back to their proper place. Then we tipped slowly the other way. Over went the beans to join the peaches. Patiently he herded them back. Again we rolled, and again. I sat there fascinated. His patience was superb.

However he wasn't getting a bite to eat, and he looked very hungry. Finally he seemed to be a lap ahead of the rolls and was about to put a spoonful of beans to his mouth when we felt the warning lurch of another tilt of the ship. Slowly and carefully he returned the beans to their place in the tray and then

carefully scooped the peaches into his beans and meditatively stirred them all together.

As I staggered away from the table he was dreamily spooning the mess into his mouth with a far-away look in his eyes.

* * * * *

A few tables away were a group of soldiers who were in the same helpless state as myself. I found a place among them. We were a sad, discouraged lot. Every time the ship lurched, trays, silverware, food, and all would slide from one end of the table to the other. Then would come a period devoted to reasserting of property. We were all confused. Twice I wound up with three knives and no fork or spoon. And the T-4 next to me ate six slabs of pie and never got a taste of his steak or beans. The corporal at the end of the bench was the worst off. He'd grab for his tray, invariably miss and slide off his seat to land with a thump on the deck while food showered all around him. Completely distracted, he finally gave up and remained seated on the floor, grabbing at morsels of food as they skittered past him and stuffing them in his mouth.

I could distinctly hear him clucking like a scratching hen.

* * * * *

The rest of us finally found a system. We'd hold firmly to our trays with one hand and blindly spear a piece of food with the other and raise it to our lips. Of course the roll of the ship made it impossible to hit our own mouth, but we finally made a meal feeding each other.

Unfortunately for me the sergeant on my right had a loose pair of plates and to keep them from falling out he'd snap at the food. He bit my thumb seven times in a row!

Gathering up all the impediments before me I started out to the scullery but before I got there I was all muddled up again. I tossed two forks and some guy's fatigue hat in the silverware rack, dropped my tray in the cup basket, heaved in the rinse water and fell head first into the garbage can.

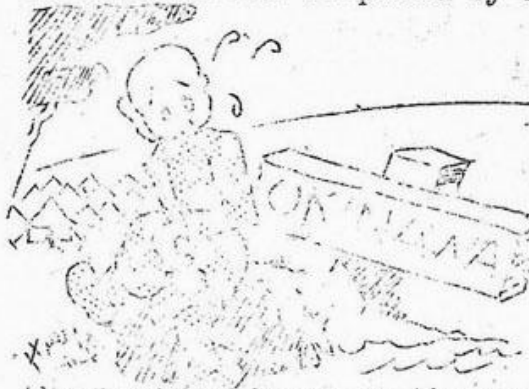
And that young sailor said it was "choppy weather".
Migawd, what an understatement!



"Spook's"
WALKER

THE NATIVE OKINAWAN

(Most of the data contained in this article is based on material from a pamphlet entitled "The Native Okinawan", as written and compiled by Sgt. Verlin M. Norton)



Okinawa Shima

Okinawa is the largest Island in the Ryukyus group. It is 65 miles long (as the bird flies) - or 90 miles in length (as the jeep jumps), 12 miles is conceded to be its width. The isle is bounded by the East China Sea on the west and the Pacific Ocean on the east. Naha Harbor and Buckner Bay are the main ports.

The island has many beaches. Approaching Okinawa Shima (the latter word means "island" in Japanese), you will see that the island is surrounded by well built stone sea walls. Your first impression is that this is a land of many hills. Both the high ground and low lands are covered with a green blanket of grass, dotted with rice paddies and sweet potato patches, that create a wonderful scenic view. At frequent intervals, in the side of Okinawan hills, one discovers a number of caves - both natural and man-made. Some are used as burial crypts and others are said to date back to the time when the ancestors of the Okinawans lived in caves.

Considerable limestone and coral rock abound on Okinawa. All towns and villages have stone walls about them to protect the native habitations, from the heavy typhoons and storms that sweep the island from August through November. The inhabitants live in huts of Japanese style; some are built of wood, covered with a roof of bamboo cane and straw; others are constructed of stone with a roof of tile. All wood and stones are hand cut. The wooden frames are pegged together and the stones are set together with mud. The huts are all built open (no windows or doors) and the domestic animals (horses, goats, cats and dogs) practically live with the native.

The island has two seasons: hot summer-temperature remaining around 100°, and very short mild winter with a temperature around 40°. The nights are often chilly and damp. There is rainfall on Okinawa close to 300 days out of the year.

Okinawan soil is fertilized with "night soil" (human waste) and is said to be an exceedingly rich earth. The principal crops were sugar cane, sweet potatoes, rice, bananas, pineapples, pumpkins and watermelons. These, together with fish and sugar, furnished the chief exports prior to the war.

The Native

The primitive settlers of the Ryukyus, as of Japan proper, were Ainu - a Caucasian people, short, stocky and hairy. Later came an influx of Mongolian Asiatics; diluting the Ainu strain. The Okinawan is small in stature and muscular. Many are very hairy, and are often the proud possessors of thick beards.

There is a distinctive native culture, revealing an almost equal blend of Chinese and Japanese elements. The women wear the pants and do most of the work, though many of the younger generation affected the American style of dress and coiffure, and were partial to lipstick and rouge. Men wear kimones and are mothered and waited on by the women as if they were children. Both sexes wear handmade, funnel-shaped, straw hats. Shoes are noticeable by their absence, though some natives wear wooden shoes (similar to shower clogs) strapped to their feet. The women make all the family's clothing. Each member wears these clothes as long as the clothes are wearable. The average wardrobe consists of one hat or two outfits of body clothing.

If you were to enter a modern Okinawan hut, you would find an open furnace, a bit of china (rice bowls, cups and plates), chop sticks and various crockery. The natives have very little furniture and household items. Not knowing the luxuries of tables and chairs, they sit in a circle on the floor to eat their meals. Their diet is comparatively simple. The principal foods are fish, rice, pumpkin, watermelon, bananas, sweet potatoes and pineapples. One or two of these items a day is the native's idea of a good meal.

Three meals a day are unknown to them. When the mother finds time to prepare them a meal, they eat.

The Okinawan child is breast-fed until he is three years of age. He is the mother's first preoccupation. She works in the fields with the child strapped snugly to her back. When the babe reaches the age of three, he is customarily entrusted to the safe-keeping of the next elder sister. If there is no sister, he becomes the cargo of the next older brother. It was a common sight on Okinawa to see girls so young that they were barely able to toddle, carry on their backs a younger child almost as big as themselves. When the Okinawan youngster is five, he is sufficiently along and emancipated from the mother to be ready for school. He accompanies his older sister who is by now an acceptable substitute for the mother, who, by this time, is generally devoting her attention to the newest addition to the family.

The natives live in groups in small towns and villages. They have a community system of farming and providing their necessities - working and sharing with each other. Women, in particular, are hard workers. They carry heavy loads in baskets on their heads. It is typical to see her toting two pails of water, one tied to each end of a long stick slung across her shoulder, and the baby riding in a sling on her back. She toils hard, in the field tilling the soil, and caring for her family. The men fish, help cultivate the soil, and cart the goods to market. Their means of transportation for the last task is by either home-made boats or use of horses and two-wheel primitive carts. Another characteristic of Okinawan culture is that the natives, in their struggle for preservation, put to some utilitarian use almost everything on the island. Nothing is wasted. Even human waste is used to fertilize the soil of the fields.

The Japanese looked down upon the Okinawan, exploited his island and did little for his welfare. The people were heavily taxed, their rice confiscated to feed Nipponese armies, and many Okinawans, both

men and women, were sent into forced slave labor in Japan and elsewhere. The Okinawans have their own language - similar to Japanese. They also speak Japanese and some of the younger natives can converse in broken English.

His Health

The health of the natives was found to be good. Okinawa was subjected to terrific bombing by air and shelling by batteries from ship and shore. Yet few of the inhabitants developed mental diseases of sufficient severity to warrant institutionalization. As the natives returned from security in the hill caves, they were found to be suffering from malnutrition and infected wounds. These were soon cleared by the surgeons of the armed forces. Skin diseases were universally encountered. Scabies, impetigo and secondary fungus infections were rife. 850 known lepers are confined to a leprosarium on Yaguchi Shima, a small island adjacent to Motebu peninsula. Filariasis infects 25% of the population and 20,000 open cases of tuberculosis are said to exist among the 2,000,000 persons. There were extensive infestations with lice and fleas. And all this happened to a people who, by habit, are physically clean.

Religion

The Okinawans have their own gods. They worship household gods, spirits of ancestors and dead heroes, and Buddha. Natives have stoutly resisted Shintoism (the primitive religion of Japan). Only about 5% of the people adopted it. Although forced, on occasion, into a superficial acceptance of official Shintoism, they have clung secretly to their own "lares and penates" or gods. They do not have the universal Japanese impulse to suicide.

Before the war, a Baptist missionary at Ishikawa had converted many natives to Christianity. He prepared a Bible in Japanese and English. Many of Stephen Foster's songs were sung in Japanese by the Okinawans.

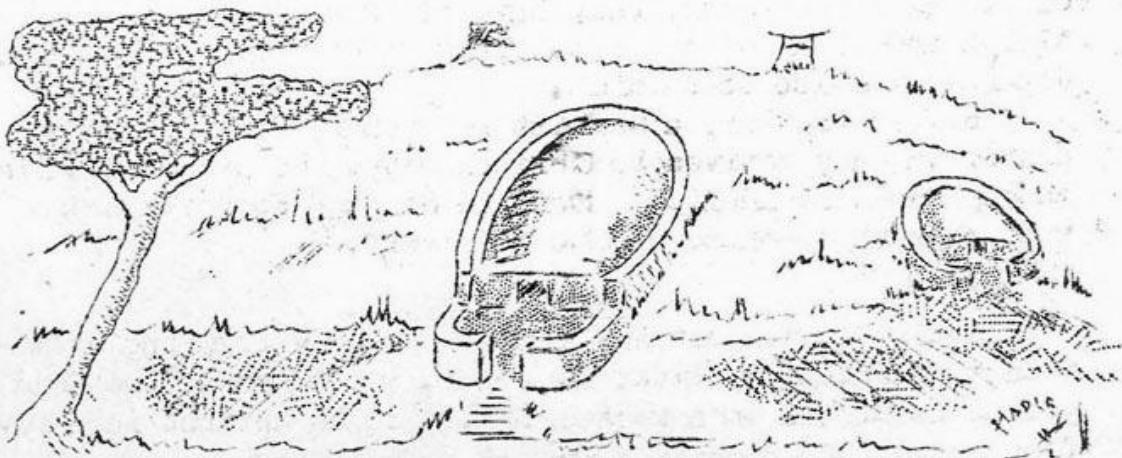
Native Funeral

Native burial rituals differ markedly from the cremation ceremonies practiced in Japan. On Okinawa, the dead person is buried in a wooden box, sitting upright in a five foot grave. A Buddhistic priest officiates.

He gives the deceased a new name, which is written on the reverse, or red, side of a plague. His real name is inscribed on the other, or black-painted, side of the plague. This is done for the purpose of "fouling God." With the new name, the deceased is a new person who will not be held responsible for the misdeeds of the person with the old name.

Water and flowers are placed at the head and foot of the dead man. A Buddhistic ceremony is repeated at intervals of one, three and seven years. At the time of these ceremonies, rice, water and "tofu" (a preparation of soy bean pulp and sea water) are left at the grave to sustain the dead person in his trip to the after-world. After the person has been dead for three years, the bones are disinterred, scrubbed with saki, placed in earthen jars, and deposited in the family crypt.

These crypts are large concrete tombs, built on the slanting side of a hill. They generally cover an area 100 feet square. They are jug-shaped with an opening at the bottom. The center portion of the tomb is raised and rounded to represent a woman's abdomen. From the base extend long gray side walls depicting a woman's legs. Okinawans believe that one returns to the mother's womb after death and thus fashion their burial crypts to represent the mother's womb.



APPRECIATION

It is my wish to take this opportunity to thank the officers, men and YCU-the staff that through splendid cooperation made this souvenir booklet possible. Many shall be parting intimate friendships gained under the trying conditions of warfare. To each and every one of you, who is now going your way to keep the shrine of peace polished, have a glorious Christmas and New Year..

J. L. Schaub
Editor-In-Chief

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MERRY CHRISTMAS
and
HAPPY NEW YEAR
to

The Officers and Men of the USS ORMSBY
and
The Army and Navy "Civilians"
from
THE STAFF

