

had this name; one a prize little gunboat, the other, our huge, great flat-top. Both were built on the East Coast. Both came West. Both served their first tour of duty in the Far East. But the memory of that other Bennington is tinged with sorrow. Coming home from the China Station she put into San Diego. There she cleaned up, provisioned, coaled, and was just getting up steam to make San Francisco, when one of her boilers blew up and killed most of her crew. As you come into the Harbor today, high on the cliffs above Ballast Point, you can see a lonely clump of trees. These trees mark the last resting place of those great hearts who nearly a half century ago carried the Flag of Liberty on that first Bennington across the wide Pacific and back again only to meet an unfortunate end in that awful explosion. When you get back to 'Dago' again remember to look across the Harbor. You can't miss the trees and those trees mark the last-looked spot.

It'll sort of skip 'Dago' because we weren't there long anyway. There was a war going on out yonder and they needed this poor Bennington and her brood of fly-birds. Two things stand out, tho; the time: 1-1-45, 1100; and the last five minutes—well off at 1055, last passengers on 1059. 'Member?

And a lot of lads would like to have skipped 2200 miles of what is customarily referred to as the Pacific. As far as they were concerned that name is a misnomer. Maybe it was because their minds and hearts were dead set against the course we were on, that the long, easy swells of the Pacific made their 'bunyas' nothing but peaceful. But despite all, old Diamond Head broke into view on schedule.

Diamond Head, Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, Waikiki, the Cross Roads of the Pacific! Join the Navy and see the world! That's what the posters said! And so we are doing a fair job of living up to it. Hawaii - 2109 miles to Seattle, 1395 miles to Dutch Harbor, 3337 miles to Guam, 1100 miles to Australia, 2390 miles to Tahiti. Well ahead - the Mid Pacific. But you have been given the 'word' about Hawaii. The Hinton Lines, Public Relations, Newarocks, the best word-dribblers in the world have tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to adequately describe the Islands. Suppose I just mention the HIGHLIGHTS.

No one ever mentions the common things - like (1) being the Low-Mid-in-the-Trop. Transportation from Hawaii to Honolulu is like watching Mack Demot or Walt Disney right whip up. It goes like this: an elongated, seven passenger cab pulls up to a landing spot, both doors fly open, loading begins. But FROM THEN ON the Navy's vaunted enlisted man power takes over. And how! The process looks more like a three alarm riot than anything else. Pushing, shoving, twisting, squirming, crawling - the like of which you have never seen. Finally the circle of arms, legs and casual extraneous is complete and the cab moves on. (2) All the "Pirate Merchants" aren't in Panama. Or, if they are then the "Shokara" of Waikiki are part of a "reason racket." Because you do not buy things at Waikiki you 'reason' them. Even a 'catalogue' shirt must be reasoned at a Sek's Fifth Avenue price - if you want it. (3) The famous ukulele isn't Hawaiian, it's Portuguese. (4) The American Hula Hula got it's name from the Islands but...anyway it isn't Hawaiian. The real Hawaiian Hula is a graceful motion of the arms, head and shoulders done while resting on one's knees. Originally it was a sort of animated Totem Pole used by the old Hawaiians to express their legends, pass along their traditions, etc. The only music they knew was the thumping of a shark-skin drum and the melancholy wailing of their own voices. (5) KAMERUWENOI! There is really a name! You see it everywhere in the Islands - and for good reason too. Kamehameha was the King who united the three main islands, Hawaii, Oahu, and Maui-into-one-kingdom. He did things in rather a unique way tho - he pushed his enemies off cliffs. The Mauna Pele, or cliff, was the place. It is a sheer rock precipice a thousand feet high. And it is still an embarrassing spot, especially to unsuspecting sailors of modest mind not acquainted with the usual current of the wind. (6) The famous UPSIDE-DOWN FALLS are here too. Water comes down from the cliff, splashes off into speed and is driven back up in the air again by the terrific up-current to vaporize and disappear. (7) SIGNS. The old King wasn't for being forgotten. His picture is on every sign on the Islands that points out a place of interest. KAPO, you see that around a lot too. It means 'Keep Out' or 'Keep Off'. But once you have seen the Islands you remember not KAPO, but Aloha. For they are truly idyllic. The climate is perfect, the scenery magnificent, a Divine Garden of Floral Beauty. Hawaii welcomes you and says farewell with Aloha. You say Aloha too when you are leaving but you really don't mean farewell. For from then on you long for the day when the Aloha of greeting will come out to you as you return to the Magic Islands.

(The contents of this letter cannot be used for publication).

Sincerely,