

TOKYO BAY

Dear

Again the historical adage: "The tide of Empire swings over Westward," has been proven. This great Carrier Task Group, having crossed the wide Pacific now lies proudly and confidently at anchor in Tokyo Bay. For nine long months we made front page headlines for you. Now we are enjoying red letter days ourselves traipsing around amid the relics and ruins of this once supposedly invulnerable fortress, of Nippon. We sailed out of Graves End Bay singing 'Tokyo here we come! We sailed up Tokyo Bay singing 'Tokyo here we are!

Tokyo Bay was like a gopher hole in a cloud bank. As we left the open sea and came up the Bay we left the sun behind and went deeper and deeper into a low hanging mist that surrounded us completely and in which we stayed all the time we were in the harbor. Well, one day we did see the sun break thru but never was it strong enough to burn off the low hanging haze and let us see the area or Mt. Fujiyama.

Yokohama is the Port of Tokyo and its skyline is anything but attractive. For the most part you see a low level plain which drifts back from the water line into the island and abruptly stops at what appears to be a sharply sliced sand stone cliff. The water line is a series of burnt out spots and tall smoke stacks. A black vacant space sort of fenced off at either end by tall standpipes. A few square sailed xanopms following the wind along the shore line or hobbing idly while their crews fished the ochre colored waters of the Bay was all the water activity we saw as we scanned the shore.

And then, we hit the beach! What your reactions were, depended a lot on just where you went ashore. If you first stopped ashore at the Naval Base at Yokosuka you saw a typical navy yard...Brooklyn, Bremerton, Charleston. There we saw first hand evidence of what our fighters and bombers had done, where they had hit with their rockets, what they had strafed with their guns. The place was deserted! A ghost yard. All the buildings were closed, the cranes idle, no smoke, no noise, no bustle and bustle, just a creepy sort of activity of imaginary design. You felt as though you were walking among the ghosts of feverishly active Jap workmen. It was eerie, you wanted to keep on walking, looking, going on and on until you found some life. You did too, a big Marine, or a soldier, with a metal field helmet, a bayonet and a very active looking gun, giving you a snappy salute if you were on the right road or menacing you with presented arms if you weren't. You soon forgot the ghosts who weren't there and responded to the power of American fighting men who were.

But, if you first went ashore at Yokohama you walked right into our fleet ashore, a pop-eyed mob of shore-bound sailors. You didn't have to wonder whether you were going because the mob sort of carried you along until you got away from the docks and out onto the streets of the once great seaport city. Then you stopped and took your first look. It was hard to believe that the acres and acres of black, stinking rubble stretching before you had once been the downtown area and residential section of a living city. But five hundred and fifty B-29's passed over Yokohama dropping napalm bombs. Two and a half hours later what lay cold, stark and naked before you now was a living hell of molten glass, asphalt, broken chunks of concrete, twisted metal and wires. "They asked for it." "In the White House they should dictate a peace, eh?" "Not a bad down payment for Pearl Harbor, eh?" were comments by the onlookers as they turned their backs upon the fallen glory of the chesty challenger.

The highways and byways of Japan are noticeably wide and all well paved.