

# Inklings by R. Henry A.

As the sun slowly sinks in the West... the kindling sun kaleidoscopes the majestic skies with an azure and crimson glow... the end of a highly successful cruise draws near, for tomorrow we will dock at North Island, San Diego, Calif. We have traveled over 53,000 miles in the past months and have visited many wonderful and interesting ports of call, being very fortunate in visiting Sydney, Australia.

But tops on the list will be our next port... San Diego. For all of us this will be a pleasant and delightful return... but in case the past months have dulled your memory some, I would like to tell you a little about our next port.

Introduction: For sailors who have sailed the seas and seen the sights... tomorrow will hold one of the most outstanding pleasures of all... the return to stateside, the mainland, the good ole U.S.A. The enchantment of the U.S. and its peoples and cities (even though somewhat westernized) offer the traveler a wonderful stay. The chief delight is to be found in the people (often called Yanks, round-eyes or blokes) they are world known for their charm and warm hospitality. A person can not help but be impressed with the beauty of the place, for it is here we find the tallest buildings, the largest cities, and the greatest number of roadside billboards in the world. The American is typically known for his great quantity of wealth and money, his large, fancy car (which is a little better than the Jones' next door) and his outstanding style of dress.

As climate conditions go, we will enter summer, a warm and sunny time of the year equal to Australia's winter and similar to the weather found in the Philippines. San Diego lies on the southern coast of California (the second largest state of the 48). The state is well known for the gold rush of 1849 and



AN OLD PRO - Rear Admiral Fitzhugh Lee, Commander Carrier Division FIVE, drives one over the net in a recent volleyball game.

its capital...Hollywood!

There is no language barrier found here as in Japan, but at times one may have trouble with some of the natives slang. Commonly used are such words as: small, seaming sukoshi; now and dad, known as papasan and moosan; alike, of course same-same; and an okay guy, which we all know as itchi-ban bloke.

The money system may be confusing at first since the buck (slang for dollar) is actually only worth a little more than 50¢. One dollar is equal to 360 Yen, about 9 shillings and close to \$6 Hong Kong. The numerals for the respective values are printed on the bills issued in 1, 2, 5, etc., as well as the confusing coins called: nickles, 5 cents; dimes, 10 cents; two-bits, 25 cents; four-bits, 50 cents and useless, a penny. MPC is illegal, few will take Yen, and shillings are unheard of.

In the line of transportation one of the biggest changes will be the use of left hand driven autos on the right hand side of the road. You will have to take extra care not to be hit by one of these autos, as they are a heavier and larger variety than those you're accustomed to. Very few people walk or ride bicycles... water taxis are hard to find... and rickshaws are unheard of. Make sure you check the price of taxis and trans before riding (cont. on page 8)

## WESTPAC (cont.)

which Vice Admiral Wallace N. Beakley relieved Vice Admiral Stuart H. Ingersoll as Commander U.S. Seventh Fleet. Before leaving Buckner, our Rear Admiral Storrs became Commander of Task Force 77 -- the fast, powerful carrier striking force of the Seventh Fleet, and 'Big Ben' became the focal point of carrier operations for most of the remainder of our Western Pacific cruise.

Commander Carrier Division FIVE, with the assistance of and inspection team from the USS BEN HOWNE RICHARD, conducted and Admin Inspection aboard ship during our stay at Okinawa.

BENN put to sea early in February for Task Force Ops in the Philippine Sea. On February 8 Vice Admiral Beakley, COM-SEVENTHFLT, made the carrier his flagship for a few days to observe Task Force 77 in action.

The operations lasted most of February and after many exhausting days at sea, Mount Fuji and the rice-paddied coast of Japan were welcome sights. The ship docked at Yokosuka on February 28 and during the following two weeks the crew made the most of their favorite Far Eastern liberty port. Many of the officers and men made the trip to Tokyo for a first-hand look at the largest city in the Orient.

During this stay in port Air Task Group 181 was temporarily based ashore. Most of the squadrons and their detachments flew to NAS Atusugi, but one, Fighter Squadron 174, journeyed to Johnson Air Force Base near Tokyo where they joined up with Air Force units participating in the Air Defense Alert Program.

Our ship was also the scene of the Far East premiere of M-G-M's new color film, 'The Wings of Eagles', starring John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara. Japanese film stars, movie makers and press representatives came aboard along with a distinguished group of Japanese and U.S. Military officials to view the film which told the life story of Commander Frank W. 'Spig' Wead, a pioneer U.S. Naval aviator.

BENNINGTON played a major (cont. on page 8)