

UNITED STATES SHIP ABBOT (DD 629)

23 APRIL 1944

Today is the first birthday of the U. S. S. ABBOT, the MIGHTY "A", so let all of us pause for a moment and wish her "Many Happy Returns of this day".

It had been my very fervent wish that when this day arrived we would be fortunate enough to be in some port of call where proper notice could be taken of this date in the form of a Ship's Party to commemorate the occasion.

Unfortunately, such is not to be the case, but I feel deep within me that the MIGHTY "A" is more happy to be spending her birthday in this way in helping to bring the Japs to their knees than she would be in sitting in some port getting barnacles on her bottom while her well-wishers celebrated.

But, lest we bring down the wrath of the Gods upon us, I promise you all that the first birthday of the ABBOT will be celebrated in true fashion, according to the rites of Bacchus, as soon as the opportunity affords. So, until that time when we can all gather together to sing her praises, let us hope that Good Luck and Good Hunting continues for the ABBOT and our loyal shipmates who serve her.

Marshall E. Dornin

MARSHALL E. DORNIN,

Commander, U. S. Navy,

Commanding, U. S. S. ABBOT.

Pleasant Lane,
Pleasantville,
April 23, 19??

USS ABBOT (DD629)
U.S. FLEET.

Dear Shipmate -

It has been a long while since I left you. The war ended but I had already left you. I remember the day especially well because it was your first birthday and I was transferred at sea. April 23, 1944.

Yes, I remember the day I left you so very well. It was a clear day. You were on another assignment with us and there was little action thus far. I stood on your fantail and talked with our shipmates about the many different things that had happened during the past year. It was your first year - and a good many of the fellows remembered very clearly the day you entered the service.

It was not too clear a day. But there was no rain during the hour you held those many stacks of provisions on your decks without protest while your first skipper, Commander Carrol, read his orders to your first group of shipmates. I imagine that in those first evenings you thought you were sadly under-complemented as to personnel. Your sailors were in Boston a good deal more than they were on board.

But you got back at them in May for leaving you, didn't you? Remember the lines of men who were "manning the rail" in a manner of speaking during those first few weeks as you carried us through the many phases of the shakedown-training cruise? Your general quarters alarm seemed to ring in glee during those wee hours in the morning. It was as though you knew that there was actually no danger - it was only a drill. You must have chuckled at our grumbles as we literally crawled out of our "sacks" and manned our battle stations.

You were of many moods - that first year. How proud you were in June when the Admiral inspected you and gave you a high mark. Your training was over! You had done good work and you knew it. The Admiral had barely gotten clear of the ship when your mood changed again and you ran like the devil himself was after us at your top speed for Boston. You were apparently trying to make up for the long hours of watches and the drills. You did make record time. Then again you were left alone a lot. I think though you must have liked the rest. You remember the party - you were there in spirit - it was a good party and it cemented many a lasting friendship. And then June had passed away -

But it was July and you did receive your first real assignment. Gawd but you were cocky. You were not so cocky after you had made a few trips and the ennui of convoy work became nearly unbearable. You did show your shipmates that the "south" waters were not all that Hollywood would have us believe. And the wind went out of your sails, figureatively speaking, when the wild goose chase for the Jerrie submariners came to a negative end. You made the wild chase in August, didn't you?

You lost your first skipper that month of August too. Commander Carrol was relieved by Lieutenant-Commander Dornin. You didn't say much then

but you seemed to approve of the new skipper in September when you headed for the West Coast - you did everything but stand on your masts showing off and you were tickled pink when he made Commander. The typewriters in your ship's office only typed as swiftly when your skipper's and exec's promotion came in. - you were war bound then and you knew it. But before getting us there you showed us the wonders of the Panama Canal and let us barter in the little shops in Panama and Balboa - and you stopped long enough so that we could hoist a few cool ones in Diego.

October was not a pleasant month for you. But out of bad things good things come. You taught so many a lesson that they shall never forget. Perhaps it was in your power to look far ahead and see where you had to sacrifice one thing to save better things. It does happen that way.

November rolled in and you were congenial with everyone but the deck force and the yeomen. I could never understand your grudge. But you did not allow them the recreation the others had. But November was soon out and December rolled in.

You started for Indian Country that month. You gave each Shellback on board a breakfast of Pollywogs and in return you made Shellbacks out of the Pollywogs. I can't say much in here about the things that followed. You and I and our shipmates know of them. I do remember our Exec - Lieutenant Commander Gabbert standing on the fantail and proving himself very adept at mixing serious warnings with light humor during December. I do know that in January you penetrated deeper into the unreserved areas....but during that month you lost your gunnery officer - Lieutenant Ed Tremper. You must have been especially fond of him for you always spoke well of him with your many guns. You seemed to like his relief - Ensign Alexander - for you kept right on speaking well. In February you were shouting your defiance to the enemy, and on occasion the enemy shouted back. How you jumped, remember? And then in March you were looking for a better seat in the big game. In March too your mood changed - it seemed as though you looked rather sadly at the motor-whaleboat carrying our shipmate Lieutenant-Commander Gabbert away from the ship that early March morning...and yet you greeted Lieutenant Baranger, the new exec with great friendliness. And then it was April - and you were engaged in another push - and it was dull - and then - I had a leave.

Yes, it was a busy year for you, that one. You had received a total of 490 men and you had transferred 190. You had advanced 320 men in rating, and 7 men had won commissions as officers while on board your decks. You were a disciplinarian, though. You gave out 24 summary court martials, 15 deck courts and you reduced ten men in rating. You issued one man a special order discharge to go back to his farm and raise food to feed to your shipmates and 10 men were honorably discharged and reenlisted. You had steamed 58, 133 nautical miles in that year.

Sometimes now, over a cup - and especially at the times when I see that deep blue uniform, I wonder what became of all those shipmates we knew together. There were so many - from all over the states - from all walks of life, and you knew us all. You knew the secret of our silent prayers and hidden fear and your bulkheads rang with our many loud curses. You won't forget us. I know that if I should go down to your ship's office right now I would find my name hidden in your files. You have all our names down there.

When I left I was sorry and glad - sorry to be leaving you - but glad for the opportunity of getting to see "the folks back home". You must understand that and forgive the impertinence. They worried a lot in those days. You see, they didn't know your capabilities as well as we all did.

New officers tread your deck now. I think a lot of those officers - the men of higher ratings and those men who climbed up from the lower ratings under your guiding hand. Together everyone was a combination and it was you who taught us the lessons and led us through many a trying hour. You taught us sportsmanship - in the games that we played on your decks and in our every-day dealings with one another. You taught us to dream with the beautiful sunsets viewed from your flying bridge. You taught us the cold reality of facts which must be faced. Yes, you were indeed a good shipmate and a good teacher.

Some people might say it is strange - writing to you - a ship. But you see I have done alright out here on the "outside" and you were, in a lot of ways responsible. I have tried to fashion my actions after your pattern - the surging ahead at high speed when it was needed, changing course and altering the speed when necessary - and occasionally putting affairs in reverse when danger was imminent.

And so I have talked too much now. It is late - but you see today is April the twenty third and maybe I was a little homesick - thinking of you.

Your old

Shipmate.

J. C.