

The Western Pacific Cruise of USS LERAY WILSON (DE-414), 1957

As remembered by John B. Orzalli Captain USN (ret.)

Matlacha, Florida, January 2005

Forward

In 1957, I was assigned to LERAY WILSON (DE414) as the Operations officer. The USS LERAY WILSON (DE-414) was a John C. Butler Class Destroyer Escort, constructed by Brown Shipyards in Texas in 1944. The ship had been inactivated (mothballed) at the end of WWII, and then returned to duty for the Korean Conflict. Our tour to the Western Pacific included several unique experiences for me. Our homeport was San Diego.

The Ship visited in New Zealand on the way to Japan, and conducted patrols out of Guam in the Bonin/Volcano Groups of Islands, and in the Eastern and Western Caroline Islands. After WWII, the United Nations had assigned to the United States the Trusteeship of the Caroline Islands in the Pacific, a portion of the UN Trust Territories. In addition, the Bonin and Volcano Group of Islands, north of Guam, were still Occupied Territory as result of post WWII negotiations. (Or lack thereof.)

In 1957, the US Navy assigned ships to make patrols in these areas to maintain National interests in the Marianas Islands, the Bonin/Volcano Group, and to provide surveillance and security in support of the Trust Territories Administration in the Caroline Islands. These patrols were scheduled for different Navy vessels, about every 6 months. USS LERAY WILSON (DE-414) was assigned such duty from March to May in 1957. I have often recalled these patrols as a wonderful and unique experience. In November 2003, I was able to obtain copies, from the National Archives, of USS LERAY WILSON (DE414) Deck logs covering the 1957 cruise. Perusing these Logs prompted me to write what follows about that cruise. After all, after 46 years, you need some help to recall the incidents.

Officers in the Wardroom included the following:

- CO- LCDR Victor J Siebert USN
- XO LT Joe J Jackson USN
- OPS LT John B. Orzalli USN
- COMM ENS Earl Kenworthy, USNR
- ENG LTJG Peter J. Hernan USNR
- GUN LTJG Robert P. Hanson USN
- 1st LT ENS Dave A. Titus USNR
- SUPPLY ENS John Dicus SC USNR

Departure-Naval Justice

On January 3, 1957, LERAY WILSON departed from the Fleet Sonar School Pier in San Diego, for Hawaii, in company with USS Spangler (DE 696), USS Currier (DE 700) and USS George (DE 697). The transit was uneventful. En route I was assigned to conduct three Summary Courts Martial. Since a Summary Court Martial required a Lieutenant, and I was the only Lieutenant on board, other than the Executive Officer, I did a lot of them on this trip.

The first case involved an individual who had been AWOL (Absent Without Leave) and returned to the ship in San Diego by the Shore Patrol in Chicago. When I asked the young fellow why he went AWOL, he told me he wanted to go home to kill his father. I next asked him what happened and he explained that his father lived in Wisconsin, and he had gotten as far Chicago when he ran out of money. He then sold his pistol in Chicago, to pay for a room, and then turned himself into the Shore Patrol. Part of his punishment was 2 weeks restriction to the ship. This was not a particularly hard part of the punishment. We were due to stop in Pearl Harbor, then one other place before we got to Auckland, New Zealand. The two-week restriction would allow him to go ashore on one liberty in Auckland.

Another case involved a high spirited sailor, who had been returned to the ship after he had removed a "Keep off the Grass" sign at the Navy Training Center, then tried to run it up the flag pole. His reaction to the Marines who had apprehended him added to his charges. He may have had a drink earlier in the evening. Again, I imposed the two-week restriction as part of the punishment.

The other Summary Court Martial involved two sailors who were charged with gambling on board. A new Ensign, who on his ship security rounds had noted a blanket on the deck in the crew's compartment, had written them up. Several sailors there were throwing dice on the blanket, and there was money on the blanket. The Ensign neglected to collect the dice, money, or blanket. He just left the compartment and submitted a report chit. The story I got on this one was that one of the sailors was going ashore, and was trying to get change for a \$20 bill. The others were just playing a game of dice for fun! Rules of evidence being rules, I rendered a not guilty verdict on this one.

We arrived at Berth 25, Pearl Harbor, on January 9, and after an uneventful stay to refuel and re-provision, three of the original four ships, left early on January 11 for Suva, Fiji. On January 13, we received a change of destination, and were told to proceed to Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands to refuel. The reason for this change was attributed to a lack of fuel for us in Fiji. The story was that a French Cruiser, having refueled there unexpectedly, had taken the fuel we were scheduled to receive.

We arrived at Kwajalein on January 18, and refueled from a Concrete Fuel Barge (Crock) that had been towed to Kwajalein after WWII, from Midway. The fuel in it was well aged, and we found later had a high water content, which caused a problem. We found our fuel consumption was above normal on the trip to New Zealand, and there was concern that we would have to refuel again before we got there. During our 20-hour stay in Kwajalein, we hosted a tour of the Ship by the local school children. The children were not native Marshallese, but dependents of the Army and Contract personnel assigned to Kwajalein.

The 8-day trip from Kwajalein to Auckland was relatively easy except for our concern about enough fuel, and considerable difficulty in continuously receiving the US NAVY Fleet Communications Broadcast. All ships were required to Copy the Broadcast, and make sure they have every message sent. The messages were sequentially numbered each month. If you missed any numbers, you had to send a message to the Naval Communications Station, and ask for repeats of the ones you missed. Normally with 2 or 3 ships in company, all of you would not miss many messages, as we freely shared messages, by Flashing Light, among the ships. Since we knew this was to be a problem on this leg of the voyage, I had obtained suitable wire, and using the rigging usually employed on Holidays in port to Dress Ship (with signal Flags) I had an antenna, which stretched

from the bow to the stern of Leray. While this jury rig was not 100% successful, it worked significantly better to copy the Fleet Broadcast than antennae installed on the other ships.

New Zealand

We entered Auckland Harbor on January 26, a Saturday. I am sure that arriving during a weekday would have been less harrowing, as the whole harbor seemed to be alive with small sailboats. It also seemed that all of them were trying to get close enough to get a good look at the 3 US Destroyer Escorts, or collide with us, I was never sure which. I was the Conning Officer coming into the channel, and just when I thought the Captain would relieve me of the Conn, in order to avoid all the sailboats, he announced he was going below to change his clothes for the arrival ceremonies.

About a lifetime later (maybe 5 minutes), he returned to the bridge, and relieved me of the Conn and moored the Ship. Our Captain was a superb ship handler. The crew of Leray were all very proud of our Captain's abilities in this art, and his cool demeanor in any situation.

After arrival in Auckland, we attended a welcoming reception provided by the New Zealanders, That evening I was informed that the New Zealand government was offering a 4-day tour of Northern Zealand for 4 officers from our group of DEs. I volunteered, and was accepted for this outing.

We were to have our own combination guide/driver. The government car was a big black, 1948, Chrysler. This was obviously a Class Trip. We left Auckland in great spirits, and enjoyed the views of the countryside. Around noon, we stopped in the town of Hamilton, and watched a parade. I don't remember the purpose of the parade, but I do remember seeing, for the first time, Scots in their kilts, playing the bagpipes. The Guide/Driver pulled into a pub before noon and we all had a beer. When it came time to pay, we all hauled out a wallet, but the Guide/Driver said he would pay. He then explained that he had an allowance for this sort of thing, and he would tell us when his allowance was gone. The trip included sightseeing in the Glow Worm Caves, and the thermal activity and the Village in Rotorua. The Guide/Driver explained that while we in VIP status on this trip, we were not VIPs enough to get them to Soap the geyser to make it erupt, like they did for the Queen of England on her last visit. We also went to a large lake for an afternoon of water skiing. There was a group of New Zealand Naval Officer there, who had a picnic for us, where they provided extensive liquid refreshments, and a small amount of food.

Staying at the large resort hotels was really an experience. They were managed in the grand British tradition, with large foyers, and cavernous dining rooms. The tables all had fresh linen for each diner, and I had never seen so much silverware alongside the plates. I asked the Driver/Guide what all the silverware was for, and he told me he did not know. I then asked what would happened if I ran out. Again he admitted he did not know the answer, but suggested I find out. I started picking up forks, using them once, and then putting them across the plate, until I had no clean ones left. In an instant, they brought me some more forks.

On returning to Auckland on the third day, we again stopped in the Pub in Hamilton. When the bill came, the Driver/Guide announced it was our turn, as he had run out.

On to Japan

We left Auckland on January 31, 1957, heading for Japan. The two sailors I sentenced to give one

day of liberty in New Zealand really liked the place. They went AWOL and stayed there. Shortly after departure, we received our January Mess Bills. We were all surprised that it was a credit of about \$5. How could we eat for a month in the Wardroom Mess, and still have \$5 coming to us? We had two Stewards assigned to the Wardroom Mess. Since they also ate out of the Wardroom Mess, their monthly allowance for rations were credited to the Wardroom Mess account. The Stewards had apparently failed to make out the required paperwork, each time they had obtained supplies or cooked food from the Ship's General Mess where the crew ate. Since there were only 8 Officers on board, I guess the Stewards could not be bothered with signing a chit for a bowl of stew or a piece of pie to serve the duty officer. The Captain told us there was no way we were going to have a negative mess bill, and I am sure he also had a leadership lecture in his stateroom for the Supply Officer, who was the Division Officer for the Stewards.

The other thing I recall about the meals we had, after we left New Zealand, was the fact that we ate some rather strange cuts of beef. The beef we bought in New Zealand was only 30 cents a pound, but it came frozen, in what looked like burlap bags. I think it was paper wrapped, but the wrapping was not sealed. If you dumped out a bag of beef, most of the pieces were square, or at least had square cuts. It looked like they just ran the frozen beef sides through a band saw to get them to convenient size. Our cooks did a great job sorting out the square parts.

On February 7, we stopped overnight to refuel at the port of Manus in the Admiralty Islands. The Australian Navy ran the facility. The Australian Naval officers offered to give a sightseeing tour of the area. It was rather primitive. We took a jeep ride through the Bush (probably Mangroves) to observe some large crocodiles. I don't believe this was a hunting trip, but we were well armed. We had a good supply of beer, but did not shoot anything. We began to realize about this time that the officers from other Navies all seemed to like to ply us with some kind of alcoholic beverage. This was probably just a friendly gesture, because we were not permitted, by regulations, to have any spirits while underway, like they did. We left Manus on February 8, and proceeded to Guam in the Marianas Islands, arriving on the 10th for a stay of a couple of days.

Since we had been in Guam on our previous Western Pacific Deployment in 1956, we knew the entertaining things to do there. We checked out a Jeep at the Navy Motor Pool, and drove around the Island. (I returned to Guam in 1977, and drove my rental car around the Island for something to do.) These vehicles were all remnants of WWII, so their mechanical condition was not the best. When your jeep broke down, you got back to Naval Base as best you could, and checked out another jeep, or just went back to the Ship. I am not sure the motor pool ever retrieved the broken down jeeps, as there were lots of them abandoned around the Island. There was not much to see driving around the Island, but we did learn during our previous visit to Guam, in 1956, that everything that looks like a banana is not. Also, we learned quickly that plantains are not too good unless you cook them. Later we found out that there were still Japanese Soldiers in the mountains of Guam at that time, but there was nothing in our wanderings around Guam that so indicated. We left Guam on February 12 enroute Yokosuka, Japan.

Yokosuka

On Arrival in Yokosuka on February 15, the two New Zealand AWOL sailors were waiting for us on the pier. We said hello, and sent them to the Marine Brig. The ship then commenced maintenance availability at the US Navy managed ship repair facility (SRF Yokosuka in Navy Parlance). This

facility had a very large number of Contractor supplied Japanese laborers to work on our ships. They were some of the best shipyard workers I ever dealt with. There seemed to be no repair job they could not do.

We had dry dock availability while there, which did not begin until March 10. It really impressed me, as within 4-6 hours after the dry dock was pumped down, scaffolding was installed around the ship that provided access to the exterior hull for cleaning and maintenance. The scaffolding was constructed completely out of bamboo poles, lashed together with rope. The workers that erected it were amazingly agile and fast at the job. There was no crane to assist them in the scaffold construction.

One of the jobs accomplished was the straightening of one of our propulsion shafts. A large cut was made in the superstructure, over the engine room, to provide access. The shaft was then disconnected, and lifted out to the pier side. The fact that they tipped over their little steam crane in the process did not hold the job up much. Apparently it tipped over quite often.

With the shaft positioned on supports, about 20 Japanese with hammers sat astride it. The foreman positioned himself at one end of the shaft so he could sight down the length of it. He issued the hammer command, and all the workers started hammering on the shaft. After a short period of hammering, the foreman called a halt to the hammering, and sighted down the shaft again. After 15 or 20 sessions of hammering, and a couple of rotations of the shaft, the shaft was declared straightened, and reinstalled in the ship. We never had another problem with the shaft. We came out of Dry Dock on March 14, and had a successful sea trial on March 15.

One of our last projects in Japan was the acquisition of an 8-man inflatable survival raft, from the Naval Aviators in Yokosuka. I can't recall what we used for barter material to get the raft, but it was probably coffee. Coffee was the universal trade goods available to us. Apparently ship's coffee was easier to get than shore station coffee.

Back to Guam

On March 16, we left Yokosuka to return to Guam. ENS. Kenworthy was not with us, having been ordered back to the States to attend Communications School. This meant that, unfortunately, he missed the Island Patrols. I am sure it was unfortunate for him because he missed a great trip, and unfortunate for me as it meant I was the only officer in the Operations Department. The trip to Guam was uneventful. During this voyage, our Captain established some underway standing orders that made life fun and interesting.

We often found glass-fishing floats drifting loose as we transited that area of the Pacific. At least we treated them as if they were all loose. The standing order was that the Officer of the Deck, upon sighting a glass float, was permitted one attempt to recover it. The Boatswain Mate of the Watch (BMOW), using a long handle net to retrieve it, did this. Since the BMOW was standing on the 01 level amidships, and the net handle was not overly long, ship handling had to be pretty good. If you missed the first attempt, standing orders were to sink it with rifle fire. We had a Government Issue 30-06 M1 Garand rifle on the bridge for that purpose. I had also brought along my deer rifle, for the purpose of having some engraving work done on it in Japan, so I usually had it on the bridge when I was on watch. I can remember the Messenger of the Watch, while making Watch wake-up calls,

reminding me to bring my rifle to the bridge. (No, I was not required to stow my deer rifle in the Ship's Armory, it was in the closet in my stateroom.) We arrived in Guam on March 20.

Northern Marianas-Bonin Islands Patrol

The five days in Guam before our first Island patrol was a busy time. We were briefed thoroughly by the Commander Naval Forces Marianas (COMNAVMAR) Staff on what to expect on the patrols. We had one Salty old Civilian who provided some very practical advice. He told us that upon landing on the inhabited Islands, the first thing that would happen would be a welcome ceremony, that involved drinking fresh coconut milk with the chief, mayor, king, or some other titled leader. Since fresh coconut milk can be a strong laxative, he advised drinking a little each day in order to build up a tolerance. We made sure we had a good supply of green drinking nuts to practice on when we left Guam. I had all the coconut milk I wanted for the next couple of months.

His other advice involved how to handle a Japanese Fisherman, should we take one into custody. (How to communicate when they refused to speak English, how to disable their radio, and how they always claimed engine trouble when apprehended.) We were also provided with an 8 man inflatable boat, with about a 5 HP Johnson outboard.

Taking a supply of coffee, we made one more acquisition effort with the coffee drinking Naval Aviators in the local Patrol Squadron. Since we all had 35 mm still cameras, we thought that a supply of film would be in order. The friendly aviators provided 400 feet of 35 mm black and white film. It was packaged in 100-foot rolls for use in their aircraft cameras. They also provided the developing chemicals.

This meant we would have to cut the film to fit our 35mm film canisters, insert it in the used camera film canister, and do our developing. Working in the dark to do this was not too hard. A bigger problem was that ambient temperature on Leray Wilson was always much warmer than recommended for the developing chemicals.

On March 25, we left Guam on our first patrol.

Log entry for the Midwatch on March 26

Steaming independently enroute Guam, M.I. to Aquijan, M.I. in accordance with CTU 131.5.3 confidential message 220436Z MAR 57, course 0590 T (0570 psc), speed 13 kts, (203 rpm)...Ship is darkened...

/s/ G.J. Thum Ltjg, USN

We were steaming at "Darken ship" to sneak up on the bad guys!

At 0732 we launched two rubber rafts to conduct surveillance on Aquijan Island. We only spent 45 minutes to complete the surveillance.

In the afternoon, after some excitement at picking up a ship radar contact, we came upon the USS BANNER (AKL-25). BANNER was also assigned to support the US administration of the

Trusteeship. The commanding Officer on BANNER was authorized to act as a trading vessel for the Natives in our patrol areas. He would pick up copra (dried coconut) on the islands, proceed to Japan, sell the copra to the Japanese buyers, and return the proceeds to the Natives.

The infamous USS PUEBLO (AKL-44) had the same hull as BANNER, before it was converted to an intelligence gatherer.

We detected Farallon de Meinilla Island at 1408. At 1607 we lowered the ships only boat, a 39' Motor Whale Boat, to investigate Anatahan M.I. The stench from drying coconuts, used in the copra production, was overwhelming on Anatahan. While the motor Whaleboat investigated the Island, LERAY WILSON circled the Island, maintaining a distance of 500 to 1000 yards. It only took us about an hour to circle the Island. We retrieved the Motor Whale Boat at 1600 and proceeded on our way.

Wednesday, March 27

00-04 Steaming as before while conducting surveillance in the Northern Marianas, Bonin Volcano Islands In accordance with.....0045 Obtained Radar Contact on Agrihan Island bearing 003⁰ T, 64 Miles.....0231 ...Pagan Island abeam to starboard, 6 miles, c/c.....

/s/ J.B. Orzalli LT. USN

From 0608 until 0740 we repeated the investigation procedure on Agrihan Island that we had done the day before on Aquijan, with the Motor Whale Boat doing close in surveillance, and LERAY WILSON circling the Island.

0925 sighted Asuncion Island, 1035 Commencing approach on possible fishing craft believed sighted near Southwestern tip of Asuncion Island. 1035 possible fishing craft identified as rocky peninsula on Southwestern tip of Asuncion Island. 1109 Radar contact on possible small boat. 1140 Radar contact identified as rock pinnacle. 1157 commenced binocular surveillance while circling Asuncion Island.

1356 Commenced Surveillance of Maug Island. 1502 Anchored in Maug Harbor. In 20 fathoms.

Maug is an active Volcanic Island, and we were anchored in the cone (Caldera). The volcanic cliffs almost encircled the anchorage. We anchored on a very small area of 20-fathom water in the center of the cone. The water was quite deep between this center area and the cliffs. We saw nothing on the Island. I tried fishing, but caught nothing.

1853-Underway.

2000 Radar contact on Farallon de Pajaros Island.

Friday, March 29

00-04 Steaming independently enroute Maug Island to Kita Iwo Jima.
0005. RADAR contact on Kita Iwo Jima ... distance 51 miles.

0449 completed RADAR and visual surveillance of Kita Iwo Jima, and set course for Haha Jima Retto. 1140 Commenced visual surveillance of Haha Jima and adjacent islands.

We tried to land a surveillance party on the southern tip of Haha Jima, using the Motor Whale Boat. The surf and beach gradient defeated us. We then Anchored in Higashisaki Wan in Haha Jima and again sent the Motor Whale Boat off to do underway close in surveillance. Nothing of interest reported.

Saturday March 30

0600 underway from Haha Jima. 0733 Completed surveillance of Haha Jima, and took departure for Chichi Jima. We spend about an hour looking at Chichi Jima, and departed for Mukojima Retto.

1223 Commenced maneuvering to conduct binocular and RADAR surveillance of Tomajima, Mukojima, and Kitanojima.

1313 Surveillance completed, set course..... enroute Nishinojima.

Shortly thereafter, we obtained RADAR contact, and maneuvered to investigate. We closed with a Japanese fishing boat, identified it as the Ryuo Maru, and watched the crew catch tuna. They used long cane poles, and heaved them in great numbers. The boat had some sort of water spray device rigged around it just above the waterline. This agitated the water, and apparently fooled the fish into thinking they were seeing a school of small fish. We watched the fishing for about 20 minutes, and then proceeded in the direction of Nishinojima.

At 1606 we sighted Nishinojima at a distance of 27 miles.

1707 Sighted unidentified fishing craft within 3-mile limit of Nishinojima. Commenced steering course to keep bow pointed at contact while maintaining hot pursuit. 1710 Crew went to General Quarters. 1719 Increased speed to 19 knots, fired one (1) powder charge from 5"/38 gun forward. 1720 Contact dead in water closed on course.....; contact identified as Myotoku Maru #3.

Top speed on LERAY WILSON was claimed by the builder to be 24 knots. It was always my impression that anything over 22 would require manning sweeps. This means that 19 knots was about all we could do on short notice.

I was the CIC officer, and prior to the firing of the powder charge, we were tracking the Myotoku Maru # 3, making up to 12 knots trying to get away from the island. There were several other fishing boats in the area, but they were all outside the 3-mile limit. I have often thought that good old Myotoku Maru #3 was the sacrifice to let the others get away.

1730 Secured General Quarters. 1740 sent investigating party to Myotoku Maru #3: LT. J.B. Orzalli in charge.

I was dressed in a work Khaki uniform (short sleeves), and carrying a 45 Cal. pistol in my holster.

(Sort of a wannabee Clark Gable or Errol Flynn.) I had two other members in the boarding party. One was a Gunners Mate armed with a Thompson 45 cal machine gun; the other was a Radioman, with a portable radio. The seas were running 4-6 feet, so the Motor Whale boat was bobbing around a bit, Myotoku Maru #3 was lolling in the trough. After a little banging, backing and filling, I finally got on board Myotoku Maru #3. The Radioman also made it. The Gunner's mate, and his Thompson, was still in our Motor Whaleboat!

I was little concerned about how the crew of the Myotoku Maru #3 was going to react to my presence, so I just whipped out, and read my script, which said something to the effect that the Myotoku Maru #3 had violated sovereign territory, The Myotoku Maru #3 was in custody, and they were to be escorted back to Saipan.

Of course the Captain on the Myotoku Maru #3 then made every effort to let me know that he did not understand English, and that "motor broke." We communicated with a lot of hand motions, and what is probably best described as "Bar room Japanese." While this form of Japanese may work reasonably well in Yokosuka, it was a marginal resource on a fishing boat off of Nishino Shima. During the non-conversation, our Gunners Mate, with the Thompson 45, got on board the MYOTOKU MARU #3, which bolstered my confidence considerably.

The Captain of the Myotoku Maru #3 kept insisting, "engine broke," and led me to the edge of the engine room access hatch. I could see that the engine had the valve covers removed, and parts strewn about.

Somehow he understood me when I told him if he could not get underway, we would tow the MYOTOKU MARU #3. He then managed to get across to me that there was no suitable place, from which to tow. I pointed at a large wooden king post in the bow area, and he told me that it was not strong enough. I then described to him (with lots of pantomime) how we would put a line around the MYOTOKU MARU #3 like a bridle, and tow that way. He did not agree, and was quite agitated. I reported all this to LERAY WILSON over the radio. They told me to stand-by to take the towing hawser.

About this time the Radioman reported that the radio of Myotoku Maru #3 had been disabled, and the Gunners mate reported that there was about 4 tons of fish on board. (Later updated to 45 tons.)

1820 Scraped fittings with Myotoku Maru #3 while attempting to pass towing hawser to her. Bow of Myotoku Maru #3 gouged piece from #3 life raft approximately 8" x 3" and approximately 3" deep. Damage negligible and no other damage to this ship. Damage to Myotoku Maru #3 unknown.

When the collision occurred, the Captain of Myotoku Maru #3 really became excited. He screamed something down the engine compartment hatch, and sort of danced all over the deck. I could not understand anything he said.

I then heard the engine start, and then the Captain of Myotoku Maru #3 and I discussed sailing in company with Leray Wilson to Saipan.

1828 Myotoku Maru #3 reports engine repaired and capable of 7.2 knots. Towing cancelled and towing hawser returned aboard.

1841 Sent assistance party to Myotoku Maru #3 by whaleboat composed of the following personnel: P.J. HERNAN, LTJG USNR; WHITE, ALLEN A. BT2 USN; EDWARDS, Cletus C., MM2 USN; LONG, Milford R., BM2, USN; SCARBOROUGH, Randal M., QM3, USN; KILLIAN, Thurman, BT3, USN.

1850 Executed Sunset.

1857 motor whaleboat aboard.

In 16 minutes I turned over Myotoku Maru #3 to "Prize master" LTJG Hernan and returned to LERAY WILSON. My return, with the Radioman and Gunners Mate was not logged, and unfortunately their names are lost to me!

Sunday, 31 Mar. 1957

00-04 Steaming independently enroute Nishino Shima to Saipan, M.I. escorting Myotoku Maru #3 maintaining station approximately 1000 yards on the starboard quarter.....

/s/ J.B. Orzalli LT., USN

08-12

0815 Myotoku Maru #3 stopped engines for minor repairs. 0835 maneuvering alongside port side of MYOTOKU MARU #3. Commenced light freight transfer. Sent two bags of provisions to assistance party aboard MYOTOKU MARU #3. 0849 Completed light freight transfer....

0852 Steadied on courseProceeding to Saipan, M.I. with MYOTOKU MARU #3

0911 c/s to 8 knots.

All this transfer business was undertaken to provide logistic support to the "Prize Crew" on the MYOTOKU MARU #3. They wanted some American Food. They said that the Rice and Fish on Myotoku Maru #3 was good, but there was nothing else to eat. This transfer was completed with LERAY WILSON, and Myotoku Maru #3 both underway, making between 7 and 8 knots. This was a standard Navy method, usually referred to as a Highline Transfer. A single line was attached to some higher point on the superstructure of both vessels, and transfer material, or people, were pulled back and forth while suspended from the Highline on a moveable trolley. The Captain of the Myotoku Maru #3 wanted to stop and do a boat transfer, and it took considerable effort to get him to agree to attach a steel cable high on his mast. LERAY WILSON was 306 feet long, and displaced about 1700 tons. Myotoku Maru #3 was about 80 feet long, and displaced less than 100 tons.

20-24 ... 2004 c/s to 5 kts .. to allow Myotoku Maru #3 to regain position.

2015 c/s to 8 kts ...

April 2-3 were uneventful days for the transit, but the radio message traffic was at a very high level. Everything concerning Myotoku Maru #3 was classified, so we had to encrypt and decrypt the messages. LERAY WILSON had no radiomen qualified to handle the encryption and decryption of classified traffic. This required a Crypto Qualified Officer. The "Crypto Shack" was located aft of the main stack, and entry was through a door in the rear of our small Radio Shack. I think the only

ventilation in the Crypto Shack was thought a few louvers in the entry door. The room was hot, both from the ambient temperature, and the forward bulkhead, which was always warmed by the stack gases when we were steaming. LERAY WILSON had only one air-conditioned space, and that was the Captain's Stateroom. He had a small commercial type window unit in a hole cut in one of his bulkheads.

Our mechanical Crypto Machine chose this time to break down. We stretched the security rules enough to permit us to use the wardroom space for encryption, and check decryption, using the back-up manual system. This was all done by the me and the Supply Officer. At this point I really missed having Earl Kenworthy on board. I hoped he was not enjoying school back in the States. Fortunately, the Wardroom was not as hot as the Crypto shack. The manual system was one in which one had to visually identify one vertical line of English text, somewhere among several vertical lines of gibberish. If you had to find the English text, and received a message containing a telegram from the Captain of the Myotoku Maru #3 to Japan, it would be a real challenge. Despite my best efforts to put English text at the beginnings of each line, we sent the same message 4 times, before the shore station finally figured it out. It was this message that the Captain, after the third "cannot break" report from the shore station, took to his stateroom, along with the manual encrypt/decrypt device. On emerging about 30 minutes later, he just looked at me, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "Send it again."

Thursday, 4 April

00-04 Steaming enroute Nishino Shima, Bonin Islands to Saipan. M.I. in accordance with CTU 131.5.3 Msg 220436Z and COMNAVMAR Op-ORDER 204-56. ... Myotoku Maru #3 in company and in custody. Steaming approximately 6-7 miles off the NW coast of Saipan and Tinian, M.I. awaiting daylight to proceed into port.

04-08 ... 0756 Anchored Saipan, M.I....

08-12... 0826 Underway from Saipan harbor after turning custody on Myotoku Maru #3 over to Saipan authorities. Enroute Apra Harbor Guam, M.I....

12-16 ... 153 Moored starboard side to U.S.S. Hanna (DE-449) in Berth Lima one, SRF, Guam M.I....

There were many Dolphin (MAHI MAHI) in the waters between Saipan and Guam. One of our gunners mates, unsuccessfully, sat on top of Mount 1, and tried to shoot one as they leaped out of the water chasing sailfish.

Upon reaching Guam, we had a whole day in Apra Harbor to refuel, and reprovision.

Western Caroline Island Patrol

Saturday, 6 April

1644 Underway in accordance with COMNAVSTA Guam spdltr ser 035 dtd 6 April 1957.

1828 Took station 1000 yards on port beam of USS Hanna (DE-449) ...

No, we were not going to make this Patrol in Company with USS HANNA. It seems to me that during

my Naval Career, I was frequently involved with doing something to satisfy some Naval Intelligence paranoia. In this case, the COMNAVMAR Staff had decided that the reason the Trust Territories patrols did not catch any intruders that were preying on the Natives of the Trust Territories, was because they had spies in Guam, that informed "Them" when we left to go on Patrol. Who were "Them"? We were briefed that the Bad Guys in the Bonin Islands were the Japanese Fishermen and the Bad Guys in the Caroline Islands were the Chinese Nationalist fishermen. I was never sure why the Japanese were the bad guys for fishing, but the Chinese Nationalist reportedly provided beer to the men, slept with the women, caught all the fish, and steamed off with all the seed Trocus shells. Apparently the only ones who objected to this was the Trusteeship Administration.

An effort had been underway by the Trusteeship Administration, to provide the Islands with some economy of their own. In addition to Copra, the other saleable item was the Trocus shells, which were the source of materials to make "pearl" buttons. Trocus to seed the Atoll Lagoons had been provided by the Trusteeship Administrators.

We left Guam in company with USS HANNA just before dark steaming West into the setting sun. Two hours later we parted company with USS HANNA, and proceeded south, to sneak up on the Bad Guys. It was a long trip to the first Atoll we were to survey! Information had been provided that this Island had Chinese Fishermen staying on it!

Monday, 8 April

16-20

1805 Commenced maneuvering on various courses and speeds to enter rainsquall for fresh water wash down....

Fresh water was always in short supply in LERAY WILSON while we were underway. "Water Hours" were quite frequently imposed. Our Captain, soon after we entered the warmer Pacific seas, had established a policy of chasing rainsqualls. When we managed to get into one, we passed the word on the General Announcing System: "All Hands lay topside to take a shower." Some times the rain stopped before we got the soap rinsed off, but at least we got part of a fresh water shower.

Wednesday, 10 April

04-08

...making radar and visual surveillance of Helen's Reef, Western Caroline Islands.

0750 Motor whale boat left ship with 8 man landing party and rubber raft to land on Helen's Reef for Surveillance.

I was in charge of the 8 Man landing party. This Atoll had a lagoon, enclosed by a coral reef, about 13 miles across. There was a very small island in the center of lagoon. As we were crossing the reef in the rubber boat, we found ourselves in a rather large pool on the reef. It was beautiful to look at, until we noted the biggest shark I had ever seen, circling us. I pulled my .45 pistol out and started tracking the shark as he circled us with a big dorsal fin out of the water. Since the shark did not really make any threatening moves towards us, I reasoned that if I shot it, it would probably just make that monster mad. We finally paddled the rubber boat out of the shark pool, across the reef, and then

through about 6 miles of lagoon to the little island in the center.

Sure, we had a small Johnson Outboard to propel the rubber boat, but it seems to me that it only worked 2 out of 3 times when it was called upon. I always seem to be on the 3rd trip.

The Island had only a few palm trees, and a palm thatch open shelter. There were a few empty Chinese beer bottles lying about, but it was pretty obvious there had been no one there for some time.

We took note of the lack of activity, and returned to the Ship. The next stop, at 1355, was at an Island called Tobi. We sent the Motor Whale boat with 14 people ashore there. I tried to unsuccessfully to recall something about Tobi to write about. A quick look at the Ship's log for that day indicates my memory had not failed. The reason I could not remember the Island was because I signed the Log as OOD for the 12-16 watch that day.

Thursday, 11 April

From 0545 until we departed at 0726, we did a visual and RADAR surveillance of Mirer Island (Apparently now called Merir Island). We had obtained a small "ship" Radar contact, just before sunrise, which turned out to be the southern end of the reef.

At 0945, we sent the two rubber boats, with about 16 people, to meet with Natives, and check the conditions on Pulo Anna Island. This Island had no boat landing facilities. The men wore only loincloths, and the women wore grass skirts, Most of the women wore some sort of a cloth halter-top, but not all. The younger women may have worn the top for visitors, as the older women were the ones who went without. By 1120, we had retrieved the boats, and were on our way to Sonsoral Island.

At 1350, we started the surveillance of Sonsoral, and Fana Island. We put 5 men ashore on Sonsoral, and 6 Men ashore on Fana. While they were ashore, we circled the Islands to do a visual surveillance. At 1704, we had recovered all our rubber boats, and departed for Ngulu Island.

Saturday, 13 April

At 0612, we commenced our surveillance of Ngulu Island. At 0644, sent Inflatable boat ashore with 8-man surveillance party . At 0925 we had completed our task at Nglulu, and proceeded towards YAP Island.

At 1455 we sent the Ship's Motor Whale boat ashore, with 25 men, to visit Yap. Yap was a UN Trust Territories Administrative center, and we were to call on the Area Administrator. He met us at the landing, and we went to his house to make our call. He sent one of his assistants with us to look around the Island. The village was deserted. We were shown the Men's Lodge, and The YAP Round Stone "Money." There were however, no people. We were told that the Natives were very shy, and did not expose themselves to strangers. I often wondered if this was the real reason there was no one home in the village. We spent about 3 hours ashore in Yap, and after returning to the LERAY WILSON, we departed on patrol at 1758. Yap had a relatively large abandoned merchant ship that had run aground on the reef.

Saturday, April 14

1321: Commenced surveillance of Soral Island.

I remember this Island as a Coral Atoll with a large encircling reef, and only one area in the southeastern part of the reef, which had vegetation, and inhabitants. At about 1345, we thought it would be a great adventure to put a party ashore on the northeaster side of the reef, and let them walk the reef to the inhabited area to the southeast. (I recall being a little put out about this, as the reef walk was my idea, and the Engineer Officer got to go). LERAY Wilson then proceeded to the southeastern shore, and sent a nine-man party ashore to the inhabited area. While those on board awaited the return of the shore party, and hopefully the walkers on the reef, we had a swim call. At 1707 we retrieved the party from the Inhabited area, and we all wondered where the walkers were. We proceeded back to the northwest and could see the walkers on the reef, frantically waving their shirts and arms. We proceeded towards them, and launched the raft to bring them back the Ship. On their return, we got the rest of the story: The radio did not work, and the reef had so many poisonous sea snakes in residence, that the walkers were afraid to walk anywhere.

Monday 15 April

04-08. Maneuvering on various courses and speeds to anchor off FAIS Island. Anchored in 30 fathoms of water with ninety fathoms of chain...

08-12

0826 Surveillance party consisting of Commanding Officer and Ltjg G.J.Thum, USN, and 12 enlisted men left the ship in MWB and raft to land on Fais, CI.....

12-16

1230 Motor Whale boat returned to the ship with Commanding Officer.....

When the CO came back, several canoes accompanied him, most with outriggers. That day, the residents of FAIS were celebrating the capture of a large sea turtle. The acquisition of so much meat was the basis for a day of celebration. The villagers had escorted the CO back to the ship as part of their celebration. The CO reported that even though he was given the honor of eating the raw turtle with the Chief, he could just not get it down! The CO took a lot of black and white 35mm pictures on his camera of this visit. The dress on FAIS was either loincloth, or grass skirt. One of the pictures was of a well-endowed young lady, holding a baby bottle in front of her breasts. On looking at the photo, the question that came to mind was why did she need that bottle. The answer was that she was the baby sitter!

Those of us who remained on board were given the opportunity to trade with the villagers in the canoes. They had rather crude model outrigger canoes, lovely big sea shells (Trident Trumpets, and Man Eating Clamshells), and glass fishing floats. We had been advised to bring fish hooks and cigarettes for trade goods. Turns out the most valuable barter goods we had were our clothes! I remember getting a lovely outrigger model for a white uniform shirt that was well past its prime. Most of our washable uniform items were that way, as the laundry on Leray Wilson was pretty hard on clothes. There was always plenty of starch to keep things neat. Wash and Wear was not

common in 1957.

Leaving FAIS Island, we did a visual surveillance of MOG MOG, and ULITHI Islands. We also sent a surveillance party ashore on FALAOP Island.

Somewhere in our steaming among the last 3 Islands, the OIC of a Coast Guard LORAN Station met us in a small boat, and we took him on board. We fed him a meal, and he told us interesting stories about the area. We did not go into the Lagoon at Ulithi, to look at that historic WWII US Navy Anchorage.

16-20

...1828 Took departure Ulithi Atol,enroute to GUAM.

Tuesday, 16 April

At 1420 we moored starboard side to Berth "PAPA" in Apra Harbor.

We were In-Port in Guam from April 16, until we got underway again on April 22, During this period, the Captain, XO, Gunnery Officer, and I were flown to Saipan, as witnesses for the "Military Tribunal" that was convened to try the Captain and Fishing Master of MYOTOKU MARU #3. We made the trip on a Navy R4D, (DC6 aircraft). There were litter seats in the plane alongside the cargo area.

The trial was held in a very warm Quonset Hut. Both the Captain and the Fishing Master of MYOTOKU MARU #3 were being tried. Under the organizational rules on MYOTOKU MARU #3, the Fishing Master had complete control and responsibility for the vessel while it was fishing. The Captain was responsible at all other times. At the beginning of the Trial, the Defense Lawyer moved to dismiss the charges of fishing within territorial limits, as such was not defined for the occupied territory in the Volcano Group of Islands. The President of the Tribunal immediately recessed the proceedings and we all went outside while the Court considered the motion. We were outside all of 5 minutes when we were recalled. The President of the Court reconvened the proceedings and announced that by "Long established convention," Territorial Limit was 3 miles. LERAY WILSON Officers testified during the Tribunal. My testimony involved the Ship's CIC records showing the position and movement of the MYOTOKU MARU #3 just prior to apprehension. The MYOTOKU MARU #3 claimed that they were disabled, and could not help being where they were. Our CIC plots did not show this, and further that MYOTOKU MARU #3 had stopped immediately after we fired the powder charge from 5" Mount #1. The MYOTOKU MARU #3 Captain claimed he did not hear the firing of the Powder Charge. Evidently the Court believed us, as the Captain and Fishing Master of MYOTOKU MARU #3 were fined about \$450 each, and lost the income from the 45 tons of tuna that they had caught before we came along.

As we flew back to Guam, we could hear a lot of clicking and scratching noises coming from a couple of large wooden boxes that were just adjacent to our litter seats. We were informed that they contained Coconut Crabs being sent back to the COMNAVMAR Admiral's Mess. These crabs can remove the husk from coconuts to get at the meat. Apparently they could not get a claw in the right position to open the box. We were glad of that.

Eastern Caroline Island Patrol

Monday, 22 April 1957

00-04

Moored Starboard side to Berth P-1, Apra Harbor, Guam

0900-Underway for EAST FAYU Island, Caroline Islands.

Tuesday, 23 April

04-08

0720 SONAR Contact...Maneuvering to close contact. 0728 SONAR contact classified visually as a school of fish.

20-24

...2215 Gained radar contact with Magur and Magererik Islands, Namonuito Island Group, E.C.I... distance 30 miles.

Wednesday, 24 April

0450 sighted East FAYU Island Visually, 8 miles. 0530 commenced radar and visual surveillance of East FAYU Island. ... 0645 Sighted visually NOMWIN Island of the HALL GROUP. 0725 Set anchor and piloting detail...

0818 Passed over shallow portion of entrance reef. 0845 Anchored. (Inside the reef of NOMWIN Island)..0920 Put MWB and assault boat in the water with landing party for NOMWIN Island E.C.I composed of Commanding Officer, Major W.C. Johnson USA, Lt J. B. Orzalli USN, and Ltjg G.J. Thum, USN plus 21 enlisted men.1146 MWB and landing party returned from NOMWIN Island.

I think the Quartermaster of the watch really meant we passed through the entrance channel of the reef, and it was a shallow passage. The Charts we were provided for this trip were the latest the US Navy had, but it often gave me cause for concern when the chart note said that Soundings were from an British Admiralty survey in 1898, and in one case, a note that said in 1944, the position of the Island had been reported 3 miles from the position plotted.

Major Johnson was in the Army Engineer Corps, and a pleasant addition to our Wardroom on this trip. I am not sure how he did it, but he had requested, and received permission from someone in the Command Chain, to be taken along. He was on leave, and it was a vacation and travel experience for him. Of course we had a lot of fun at his expense, since he was an Army Officer, and not familiar with either the Navy organization, or way of doing business. This horseplay was tempered somewhat by the fact that he held the equivalent rank of our Captain and we were all junior to him.

As soon as we got ashore on NOMWIN Island, we went through the proscribed meeting with the Chief, and any number of his aides and assistants for the welcoming ceremony. Following protocol, a young native (maybe 8 to 12 years old) would scamper up a coconut tree to retrieve "drinking nuts," for each of the dignitaries present. The part of this effort that involved getting a drinking hole into the coconut always made me quite apprehensive. The young native would hold a nut in one hand, and whack the top off, to make the drinking hole, using a machete about as long as his arm.

12-16 ...1230 Underway...maneuvering... to leave anchorage and pass through western passage of reef.,. 1525 The Summary Court-Martial, LT J. B. Orzalli USN opened in the case of

Maneuvering on various courses and speed while passing through Northeast Pass. Truck Islands.... 1840 Anchored.. (1000 yards from Moen Island with anchor bearings on peaks on Scheiben Island.).

I do not recall why we decided to anchor in the TRUK anchorages, but it may have been the Captain's desire to visit a historic spot.

Thursday, 25 April

We got underway from Truk at 0615 for NAMA Island. We picked up NAMA Island visually at 1030. We merely hove to, and looked at NAMA before we left for a visit at LAOL Island.

12-16 ...1235 Sighted four small craft off Laol Island, classified as fishing boats. 1237 General Quarters team for Mt. 51 called away..1242 Small craft classified as four small native outrigger canoes near southern reef surrounding Laol Island.. Secured General Quarters Team of Mt. 51. 1245 .. lowering MWB for investigating party consisting of Major W.C. Johnson, USA, LT J.B. Orzalli, USN and 6 enlisted men to proceed to four outrigger canoes. 1341 ...Investigating party reports natives spear fishing on the reef. 1345 Took MWB in tow with sea painter proceeding to western side of Faslop Atoll. 1355 Lying to 1300 yards from western reef of Pis Island, E.C.I. 1400 MWB and rubber raft with landing party composed of Major W.C. Johnson, USA, LT J.B. Orzalli, USN and 13 enlisted men enroute to Pis Island E.C.I and Laol Island E.C.I.. 1405 Commenced swim call.

16-20 ...1700 secured swim call. 1755 recovered MWB and Landing party. ...1830 Took departure Losap Atoll enroute to Namoluk Atoll.

I was busy on April 25. While the canoes were obviously not a threat, I am sure the CO manned Mt 51 in case he need to fire another powder charge to make sure they did not run away. I found that the Outrigger canoes were serviceable craft, but not near as sleek as those seen later on the Polynesian Islands of Kapingamaringi and Nukuoro. The few fish they had were quite small. The Quartermaster logged us going by a lot of Islands, but I have not been able to find a chart with enough detail to reconstruct our track. I am pretty sure that the island we landed on was "LOSAP". This was one of those Islands that reflected the impact of the Dutch, German, English, Japanese and US, influence over the years. As I recall, we met with a King, a Second King, a Mayor, and a Sanitation Engineer. We all drank green coconut milk together. As we left the Island, a very concerned native, who said he needed help, stopped me. It seemed that the last Patrol ship there (which had a Chaplain on board) had left a package of comic books. The package had never been

opened, as the Chaplain had admonished them to "Use them in the School." They did not know which school, Regular, or Sunday, to use them in, and wanted me to tell them. I looked at the package of "Bible Story Comics" and sagely advised them to use them in the Sunday School. The concerned native appeared happy with this advice.

The swim call was just another incident showing the Commanding Officer's concern for morale on the ship. I know it was the CO, and not the XO, because about this time in the trip, it was becoming obvious that the XO was pleasing the CO less and less. Also, while Major Johnson was the Senior Officer on the landing Party, in fact, the Naval Officer with him was in charge. Major Johnson was on a sightseeing trip that was not available to the general public. The UN Trust Territories were "Closed" to visitors at that time.

Friday, 26 April

04-08 ...0646 Maneuvering at various courses and speeds while conducting binocular surveillance of Namoluk Island. 0715... enroute NOMOI Atoll. Group.

08-12 ...1145 Surveillance party, LT J.A. Jackson, USN in charge, left the ship in motor whale boat. Laying to off S.W. entrance to SATAWAN Atoll.....1413 Maneuvering to pick up motor whaleboat....

..1601 Made all preparations for entering Chamisso Harbor E.C.I...1625 Anchored ...in Chamisso Harbor.

Chamisson Harbor was in an Atoll with a shallow, narrow entrance. Other Islands near by that we used for Anchor bearings were Lukunor and Piasa. I am pretty sure it was on LUKUNOR Island that we found the Catholic Priest, and very friendly Natives. We went ashore on arrival, and after the coconut drinking ceremonies, and information exchange; we were invited back for a "show" later in the evening. We were also asked for help in ridding their gardens of rats! We dutifully returned later and were treated to a very pleasant dance and singing production by the local populace. After the show, 4 or 5 of us took our shotgun, and flashlights, and stumbled out into the vegetable patch. I think we were in pumpkins, or squash, vines, using our flashlights trying to locate the rats. I heard some strange noises, and when I shined my light in that direction, I found that the entire field was surrounded by the many of the local populace, who had come to see us kill the rats. We aborted this hunt, and returned to the ship.

Saturday, 27 April 1957

...0701 Underway from Chamisso Harbor, Lukunor Atoll..0717 Cleared main channel, ..Enroute Nukuoro Island....

16-20 ...1600 sighted Nukuoro Islands.. 1655 Commenced circling Nukuoro Islands in a clockwise direction, maintaining 500 to 1000 yards distance, while conducting a visual surveillance of the atoll. 1719... lying to while landing party investigated Nukuoro Island. 1900 Recovered landing party...1936 Took departure Nukuoro Island.

This island was one of the most memorable of the trip. The natives were Polynesian, and their physical appearance is nothing like the other islands we had visited in the Caroline Islands. They

were large people, with a splendid physical appearance. The village we visited was very picturesque, with well maintained thatched dwellings. The pathways were hard packed, and bordered by white rock or seashells. The natives were dressed in Western casual style, but all clothing was exceptionally clean and neat. I wandered around the village with a couple of our landing party, while the Executive Officer, Lt Jackson, attended the arrival meeting, and coconut drinking ceremony. I did this as part of our assignment. I was supposed to look for evidence of any illegal activity by outside interlopers. I did not find any evidence, but this village enchanted me. As I was wandering around, a man and two women approached me on the path. They were my age, 26, or younger. They were talking in their language, and laughing, and watching me intently. All three were well over 6 feet tall, and they seemed to tower over me. The man started to approach me, and I began to get concerned about my well being. While he did not threaten me, he was so much bigger than I, that I was intimidated. I started to draw my 45 cal. pistol. This action produced a lot of laughter from all three natives. Their intent was obviously not malicious. The man next approached me, and placed a beautiful cowry shell headband on my head. By their actions, it was obvious that they were just being friendly, and only wanted to give me a gift. I gave them fishhooks or cigarettes in return, but I surely felt stupid. The natives had a few beautifully made handcrafts for sale or trade. The shell work items, and the outrigger canoe models, were impressive.

Sunset occurred while we were ashore. The boat landing was very small, at the end of a long, and winding channel. It was dark as we backed away from the pier. The rudder of the Motor Whale Boat struck the coral, and knocked the Boat Coxswain overboard. The unfortunate sailor received several coral cuts before we got him back in the boat. He suffered a lot during the rest of the trip from coral poisoning.

Sunday, 28 April

04-08 0724 Sighted Kapingamarangi Islands ...distance 19 miles.

...0815...Maneuvering various courses and speeds to remain 500 to 1000 yards from reef. 0905 Motor Whale boat left the ship with landing party composed of Major W.C. JOHNSON, USA; LT J.A. JACKSON, USN ENS TITUS, USNR, and 16 Enlisted Men. , proceeding through Greenwich Passage to Uern Island. ... 0915 Commenced swim call.

I did not go ashore, but our visit to the KAPINGAMARANGI Islands was interesting, as several Natives came out to the ship to trade handcrafts with us. Again the physical appearance of the Polynesian residents of KAPINGAMARANGI was very impressive. The shell work, and carvings all were well done. They also had a large supply of the Japanese green glass fishing floats. Many had the netting attached. By this point in our Island Surveillance, I could barely get into my stateroom past the fishing floats. Used clothing was the best barter item here also.

12-16 ... Raised Motor Whale Boat, recovered landing party. 1250 Took departure from KAPINGAMARANGI Islands, set course 180, speed 13 knots. 1535 Changed speed to 5 knots; commenced crossing equator ceremony.

KAPINGAMARANGI is about 66 miles from the equator (1.1 degrees North latitude). I took the watch during the ceremony; as I had been initiated as a Shellback in 1949, while serving on board USS SPINGFIELD (CL-66) as a Midshipman during summer cruise. The Polliwogs on board USS LERAY WILSON (DE-414) were duly initiated. Major Johnson remarked later that he thought we

had been kidding him about an initiation, but he knew we were serious when the crew revealed a plywood 4x8 dunking pool they had installed on the 01 deck during our stay in Guam. It had been covered, and guarded since we got underway, to make sure the Polliwogs did not throw it overboard. As Major Johnson was something special, he had received special treatment from the crew during the ceremony. He looked a little wan when I saw him in the Wardroom after the ceremony.

16-20 1619 Commenced maneuvering to investigate sonar contact...1627 Contact classified as fish.

Monday 29 April

00-04 Steaming independently enroute Kapingamarangi Islands to Nagatik Islands...

12-16 ...1300 Exercised crew at general quarters for anti-aircraft burst firing. 1337 Completed firing. Expended 3 rounds 5"/38 illuminating projectile, 10 rounds 5"/38 AAC, and 108 rounds 40 mm AA. ...1425 Summary Court Martial LT J.B. ORZALLI, USN convened this date in the case of....1440 Gained sonar contact .. 1446 Contact evaluated as fish....

Anti aircraft burst firing consisted of firing an illuminating round, which resulted in a magnesium flare descending slowly as it was attached to a parachute. We then fired at the flare. This was strictly a gun firing exercise, as I don't think anyone ever hit a flare. Justice continued to be dispensed on board USS LERAY WILSON (DE-414). I don't recall the offense in this case. I am not sure why the Commanding Officer resorted to so many Summary Courts Martial. A Summary Court could impose slightly more severe punishments than a Non-Judicial (Captain's Mast) procedure. Of course the Summary Court was subject to review by everyone in the Command Chain above the Summary Court Officer.

We also sank a 50 gallon steel drum we found floating adrift on this watch. I am not sure how much of a hazard to navigation the drum presented, but it provided a lot of recreation for the bridge watch.

Tuesday, 29 April

04-08 ... 0715 Lay to 1000 yards off eastern shore of Nagtik Island, lowered MWB and debarked 12 man landing party.

08-12 ... 0910 Surveillance party returned to the ship.

12-16 ... Approached within 1000 yards of southern tip of Ant Islands; commenced steering various courses while circling the Islands in a counter clockwise direction. ...!455 With Patja Island of the Ant Group bearing..... took departure..

16-20 1600 Commenced approach to Ponape Passage... 1649 Anchored... 1829 Commanding Officer left the ship in the motor whale boat with Major W.C. JOHNSON, USA and 15 enlisted men to land on Ponape Island for conference with the Distaff. (The Quartermaster of the Watch must have taken the liberty of abbreviating "District Staff" as "Distaff")

29 April was quite a day for me as the Operations Officer. The excitement occurred as our Combat

Information Center (CIC) attempted to conduct a self observed RADAR ANCHORING EXERCISE during the harbor approach, transit, and anchoring. This was a required exercise to be done quarterly. The exercise involved using the RADAR to plot our position, then make recommendations from CIC to make course, speed, and drop the anchor in the assigned anchorage. The approach to the Ponape Anchorage involves a narrow passage through the reef, and several miles of buoyed channel around the Island to get to the Anchorage. This was an exercise, and as the CIC officer making the recommendations, I was not particularly worried about the ship getting into navigational difficulties. After all, they could see, and all I had was a plotting team, and a very good Radar Operator.

After USS LERAY WILSON (DE-414) anchored, the CIC team gathered up our plotting charts and logs, for submission with the exercise evaluation. I went to the bridge to get the Navigator's plot containing the track, as plotted from visual navigation aids. I asked the leading Quartermaster for the plotting chart, and he said, "We don't have one"! That was a pretty shocking revelation, and I was both appalled that the Navigator had no track, and proud that we had obviously gotten the ship safely to the anchorage. When I went to the Captain later to express my concern, he said, "Yes, I know," and from his expression, I determined it was best I leave the subject alone. We did not submit the exercise as a self-evaluated event.

I had the duty that night we were anchored in Ponape, and part of my duty was to make several tours to the Bridge to visually verify the anchor bearings. Someone had told me that the fishing was good in Ponape Harbor, so I took my fishing pole to the bridge, and started fishing over the side from the bridge (about 30 feet up). I caught 3 or 4 fish, of 2-3 pounds, that looked like red snapper to me. The Captain came back later in the evening, and when I met him, I told him about the fish I had caught. A little later, he was below me on the 01 level, fishing. I don't remember if he caught any fish, but we did have my fresh fish served in the wardroom the next day. Later, someone told us that the fish that lived near the coral reefs could be poisonous, and should not be eaten.

(While not occurring on this trip, this event calls to mind the Captain's problem with Oysters. The Captain loved seafood, but told us he could not eat oysters, as they made him sick. He said he was pretty sure it was oysters, but as a test, we were to put oysters in the soup or other fish dish, and not tell him. That way if he got sick, he would know for sure the cause. We did just that, and he had a miserable couple of days before he felt better.)

The night in Ponape was also made a little more interesting when we had to send over a Shore Patrol Party to find and retrieve a couple of our Sailors. Evidently they had decided that the Natives were too friendly for them not to stay there.

Wednesday, 1 May

04-08... 0511 Underway...from Ponape...0717 maneuvering on various courses and speeds while conducting surveillance of Pakin Atoll....

08-12 ... 0810 Debarked 14 man and 2 officer landing party in MWB and one life raft. 1000 Maneuvering to pick up MWB. 1031 Took departure from Pakin Atoll... 1035 Exercised the crew at general quarters and abandon ship drills. 1111 Secured from drills. 1125 (One seaman, and one Gunners mate seaman) discovered missing from general quarters and abandon ship drills, . believed not to have returned to the ship from Pakin Atoll....1127

Changed course to 106 ...speed 16 knots.

12-16 ...1205 MWB left the ship ... to retrieve two enlisted men from NIKALAU Island. 1237 MWB returned to the ship ...

I cannot explain how the two sailors were left on the Island. There were 16 persons total sent ashore, and the MWB and life raft each had 8 people when they left the ship. Seems like someone would miss one or two out of 8 when they came back. This was the only the second general quarters drill we held in 2 months. We held a daily muster at 0800, which meant that without the general quarters that day, we would may not have discovered the missing men until the next day, or until one of them could not be found to stand his watch! The USS LERAY WILSON (DE-414) Captain was good, and lucky, an unbeatable combination. The two sailors were on the beach, waving their white skivvy shirts frantically, as we returned to Island.

Thursday, 2 May

0008 Commenced steering various courses and speed.... while conducting radar and visual surveillance of Oroluk Atoll.

04-08 (conducted radar and visual surveillance of Minto Reef.)

0811 Exercised crew at ASW general quarters.

16-20 1620 Commenced maneuvering on various courses and speeds to conduct surveillance of Murilo Atoll. 1640 Surveillance party... left the ship in the MWB for Pau Island. 1755 Surveillance party returned to the ship.

This was the last day of our Island Patrol. We left Murilo Atoll and proceeded to Guam, to arrive around noon on May 4.

Guam On

We departed Guam on May 11 enroute Sasebo, Japan. We arrived in Sasebo on May 15 for a few days to load provisions and conduct general upkeep. We were underway again on May 24 to conduct Anti Submarine Warfare training. This training involved around the clock exercises for about 4 days. We exercised at ASW General Quarters for this type of training. General Quarters has All Hands on station. No one is in a bunk. After the first day, which included serving chow on station, the captain decided this was not going to work for 3 more days.

We then shifted from General Quarters to "Condition III" watches. We were supposed to be able to operate standing Condition III watches for as long as were required to do so. Condition III divided the crew into 3 sections, thus some could get some rest. Unfortunately we were so short handed that there was quite a bit of doubling up required to man all the stations. This resulted in many men standing 2 watches out of the 3. In my case I was even luckier. I was the CIC Officer of Section 1, the Officer of the Deck in Section 2, and in charge of the Underwater Battery Plot (UBP) for section 3. Since there were only three of us so assigned, changing watches required a little coordination. I have to admit, that during lulls in the training when we did not have the OOD watch, we managed to catch a little sleep on station.

The most rewarding part of this exercise was having the USS BUGARRA (SS331) send us back one of our practice Hedge Hog ASW weapons. They found it lodged in their sail on surfacing. We had fired 3 practice weapons in an abbreviated pattern instead of the 24-weapon pattern the Hedge Hog launcher could fire. The Hedge Hog was a WWII British Designed ASW weapon installed on all destroyer types. While it looked like a rocket, it was propelled more like a mortar. Each 75-pound device was slipped over one of the 24 steel rods of the launcher. On LeRay Wilson, the launcher was mounted on a 40 MM AA gun hydraulic mount, so it could be trained over a forward 200 degree or so arc. The range was around 300 yard, which was a big improvement over having to drive over the submarine to launch depth charges. We did have the capability to launch 19 depth charges in one pattern. Sometimes during training, and if the submarine would permit, we would use a small hand grenade to simulate depth charge release.

We returned to Sasebo on May 31. Overnight we refueled and took aboard chow. We left June 1 for Hong Kong. This was a pure pleasure trip. We were steaming independently, and could do what we wanted. I recall the XO getting a little upset because we had spent so much time sinking a bunch of floating oil drums in the "Formosa Straits." As a result, the ship got behind on our track. Those of us standing bridge watches were still operating under the "Retrieve or Sink with rifle fire" policy for floating debris. Later, I wondered if those 55-gallon steel drums could have been floats for some fisherman's long line.

We arrived in Hong Kong on June 4, and left on June 10. This was adequate time to get custom tailored clothes made, and spend all our money.

On June 11, while transiting the Formosa Straits, we picked up a sonar contact that was classified as a possible submarine! The US Seventh Fleet had specific instructions for what to do, and how to report in this situation. Unfortunately for me, I could not keep up with the reporting requirement. Reports were required every 30 minutes. I was about 9 reports behind at one time. (I tried everything I knew to "clear traffic." The next month we received an Off frequency violation report for one of the reports, that was received and relayed on by the Coast Guard Station in Alameda, CA.) As a result of our "Unident" message, we were soon joined by 2 Destroyers that were assigned to the ongoing "Formosa Patrol." We all pinged on the contact, and while it sounded like a submarine, we were not sure. It appeared to move some, but we thought could be due to the current. Since the water was only about 150 feet deep, our Captain decided to anchor and ping, to prove once and for all whether the contact was moving. It did not, but I thought that was rather a gutsy move on his part. The next day, we had 2 ASW aircraft fly over, to make a MAD (Magnetic Anomaly Detector) evaluation. The Admiral, back on the Aircraft Carrier, declared our contact a "Wreck" so we left to go our way.

We arrived in Yokosuka on June 15. We left Yokosuka on June 21, on our way to San Diego. We refueled at Midway on June 26, and Pearl Harbor on June 29. We arrived in San Diego on July 7.

I left Leray Wilson about a week later, for my next assignment as a student at the US Naval Post Graduate School, in Monterey California.