

For Jeff

I

Written 1985

Remembering - Some 40 plus years ago.

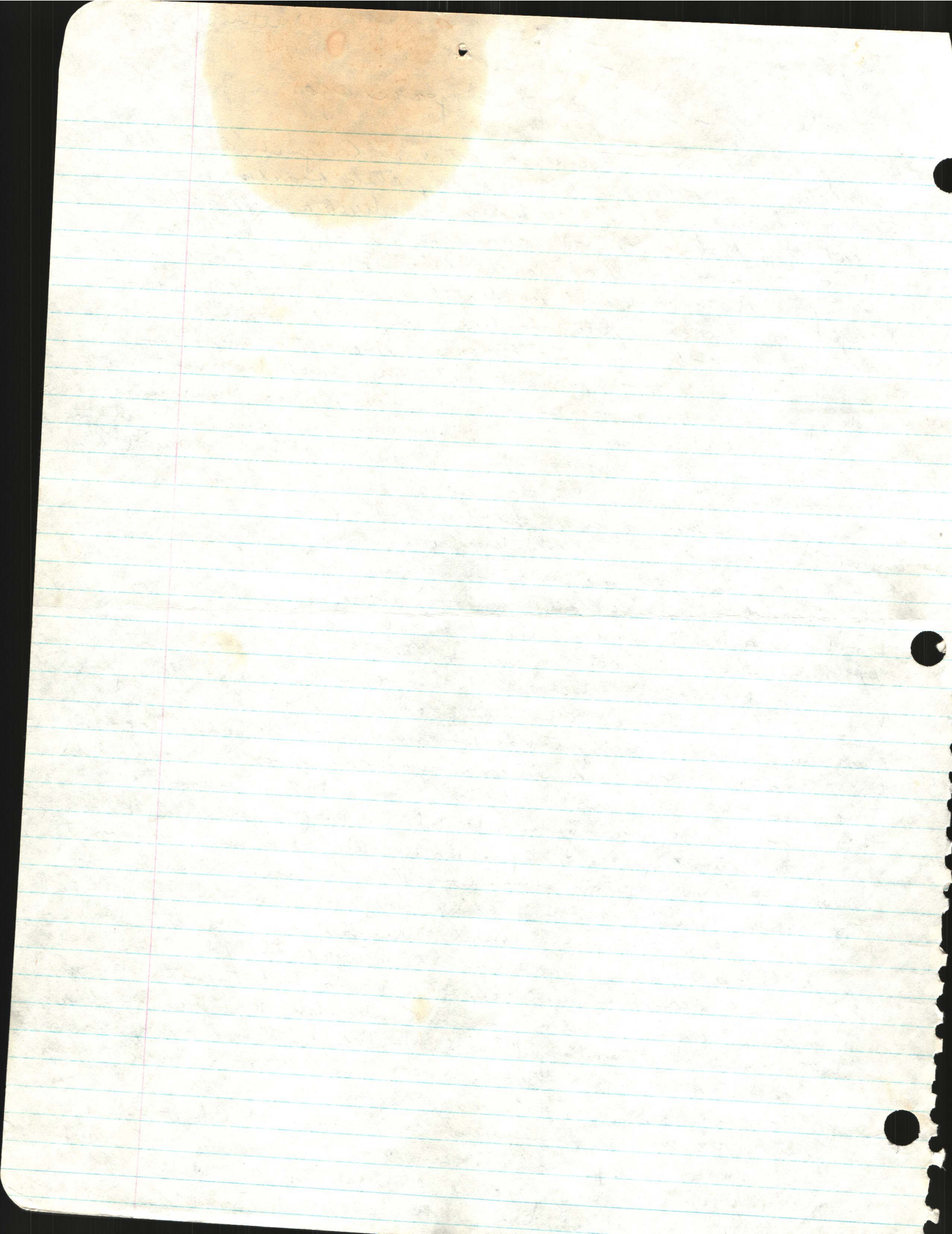
1942 I graduated from Abington Hospital in August and did 12 hr night duty in OB until I took my state boards at the College of Pharmacy in Phila in November. With a stiff neck and my head still reeling from the exams I headed west. Clara and Clarence saw me off at North Phila station and I boarded the Empire Builder bound for Seattle. With my \$80. a month I bought my ticket, ^{at} a green gabardine suit, a red sweater and a rabbit fur coat that would loose hairs in the slightest breeze. It was an uneventful trip. The train slowed down at times and dropped off something to a house in a remote area. The houses on the prairie were few and far between. There were Indians on the plateau in Montana. I met Frank Burk when I was a student nurse & he was in the Army Air Force.

Frank Burk met me in Seattle and had found a room in a boarding house for me near Seattle Gen Hosp where I had a job as an undergraduate. I had thought it would be a big hospital but it was only 100 bed and an old building. The home cooked food was delicious, especially the boysenberry pies and I stayed for six weeks. I learned how to start I.V.s there. One night the supervisor and doctor tried to ~~start~~ restart an I.V. on a comatose patient and couldn't get it going. They hung it up on the pole and left. An intern at Abington had let me stick a vein once but it was strictly taboo for a nurse to do but I looked the situation over and since he was comatose I decided to try and call it luck or fate I hit it the first time. This gave me the courage and helped me prepare for what I would get into down the line. After Seattle here I went to King County or Harbor View Hospital where I worked in Contagious diseases for two weeks. Then I went to Swedish Hospital (similar to Abington) and worked in Allergy until I heard from my state boards.

In the meantime I had checked in with the Red Cross who did nurse recruiting and they sent me to Fort Lawton for my physical, they said I had a functional systolic murmur and was two pounds underweight and I would have to sign a waiver. Undaunted I signed the waiver and within a couple of days I had orders for Camp Adair, Oregon.

Frank gave me an engagement ring and I felt like I had a chain around my neck. A career in the Army and not marriage was my paramount thought.

I arrived at Albany, Oregon very early in the AM and there



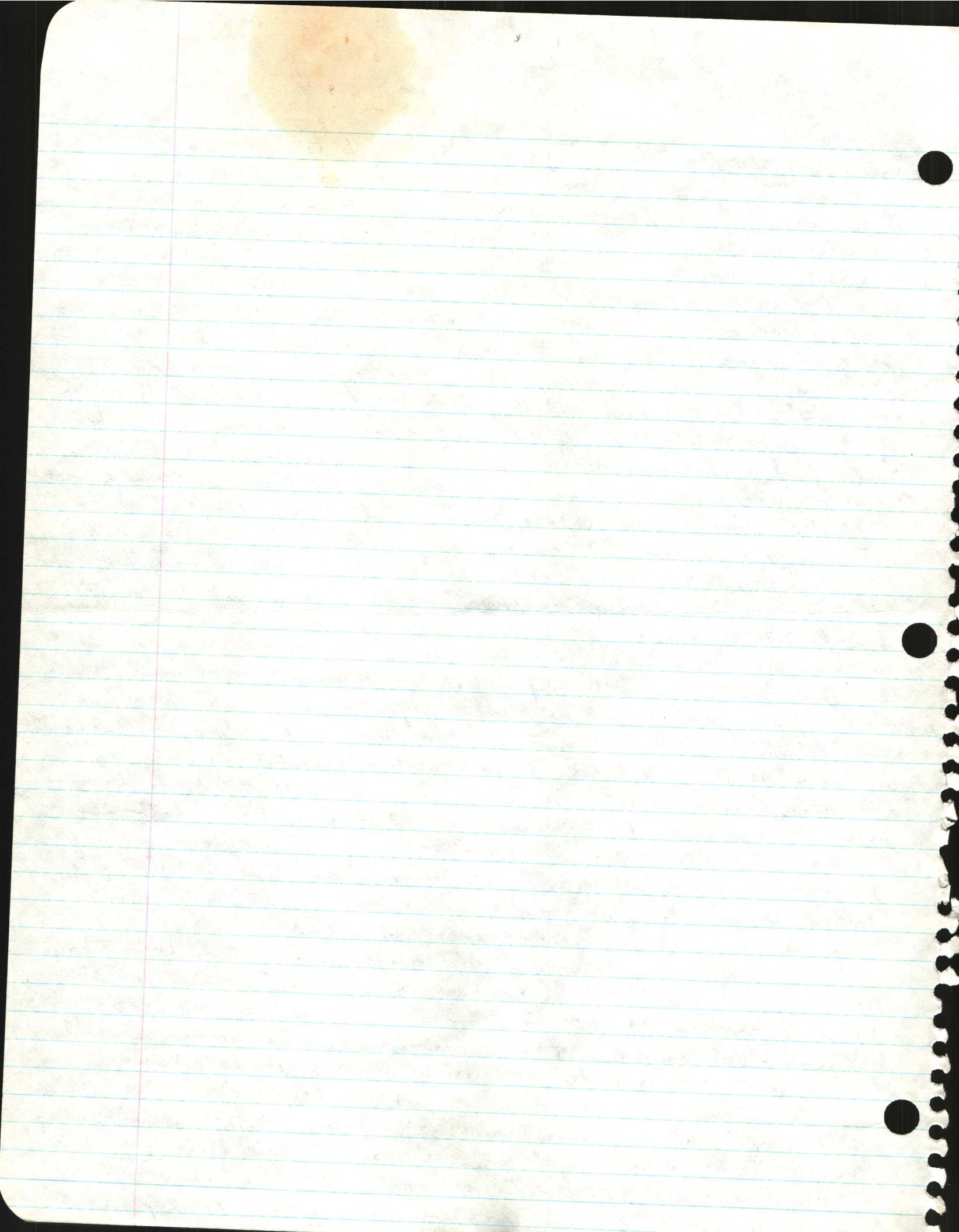
was just the station manager and me. He told me to make my self comfortable and transportation from base would be there about 8 AM. May 3rd was a glorious day with a beautiful sunrises and the rolling hills covered with fruit trees in blossom as I travelled along in the old crackbox ambulance.

I was sworn in and the chief nurse interviewed me and told me I was on limited duty as I was underweight and wouldn't be going overseas right away. She put me on 12 hr night duty on a whole ramp of wards with nothing challenging. Some patients picked some cherries and asked me to make a pie. I made it OK but the juice ran out in the oven. The poor cookman spent hours cleaning it and asked me not to make anymore.

A couple of afternoons a week the doctors and nurses would have a little calisthenics in front of the hospital. Most of the doctors were middle aged and fat and I know we got more than a few laughs.

One afternoon the chief woke me and told me I was leaving that night. I had only been there a short time and I was to hustle to QM to get a footlocker and GI issue. I left with another nurse on a blacked out troop train to board a ship, I thought. We sang all night and we knew we were near water as we heard fog horns and when daylight came we were at the docks. From there instead of getting on a ship we marched in Class A uniform with helmet pistol belt + muscette bag to Camp Stoneman Calif. This was a big big place with miles of 2 story barracks. There I was assigned to the 658th Med Hospital Ship Platoon. 5 nurses handful of cookman doctor + dentist in our group. We spent a couple of weeks with time on our hands and I met Helen Duffy a nurse from Pomack. We came across the US and met in a barracks at Stoneman. I never saw her again.

Finally our day came and we marched a mile or so to the dock and boarded the ^{USS} Wharton (USS Southern Cross in peacetime) the ship carried 10,000 troops - 200 of which were nurses. Excitement and rumors as to our destination were running wild. Patriotic music over the PA system was interrupted by the Captain saying Cast off all lines and we felt the vibrations of the ships motors. The big ship with 10,000 souls slipped quietly out to sea. As we passed under the Golden Gate bridge and the shore line of the US faded, we each had our own ^{thoughts} thoughts. There was one of mixed emotion - thoughts of family and a



touch of homesickness and a great sense of pride for our country. Some one had a record player and kept playing *On the Sunny Side of the Street* & *Yellow Rose of Texas*.

The ground swells were making the ship pitch a little and I had a slight headache but didn't get sea sick. There were six of us to a stateroom and we had a marine guard outside the door.

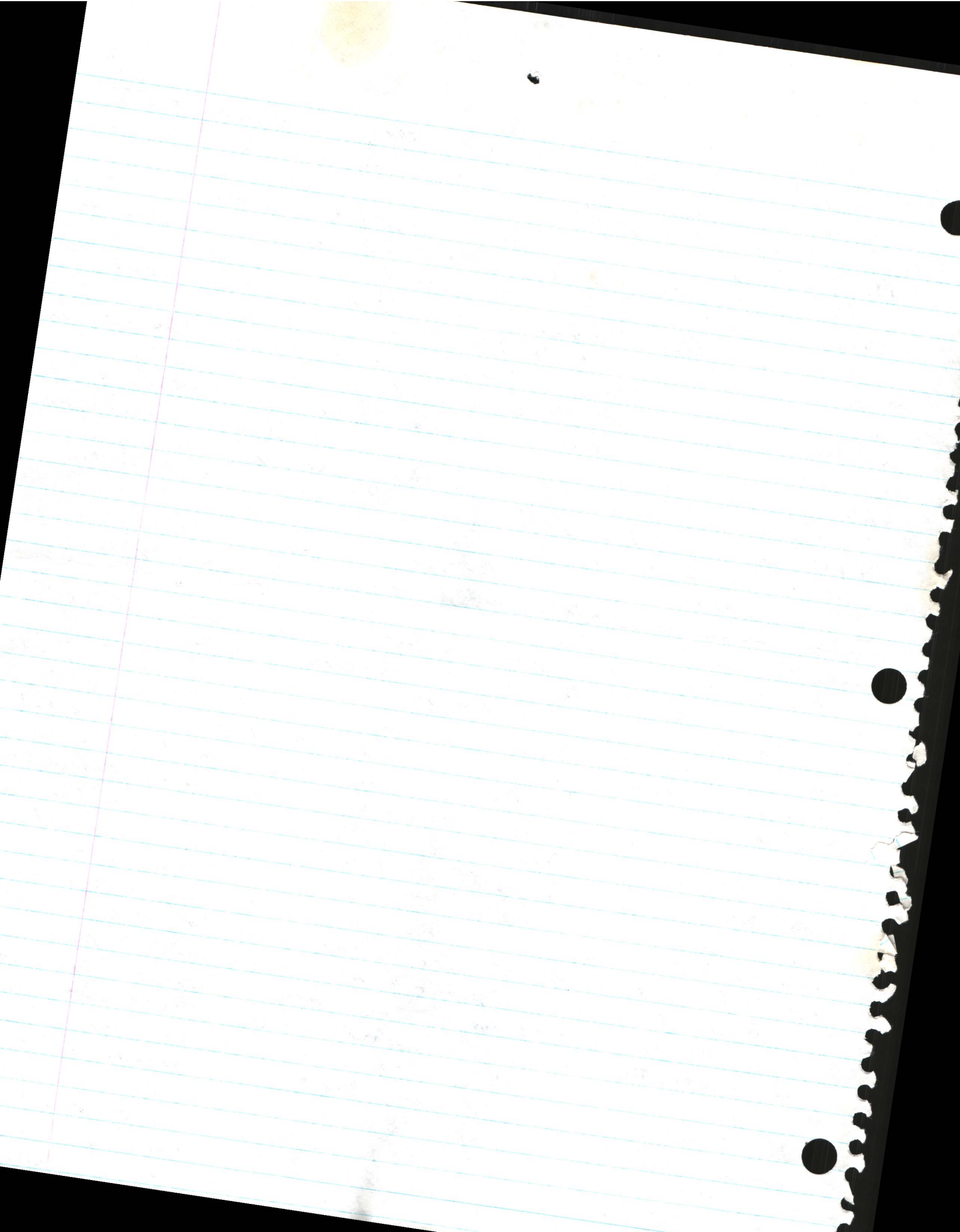
We reached Honolulu and were allowed to send a postcard of Hawaii with our units. Co Fleet Post Office San Francisco and that was all. All mail was censored. Officers were allowed ashore so we went sight seeing, had a few drinks and ate at *Trader Vic's* and back to the ship. As we left the harbor the band was playing and native girls were throwing leis on the water. We saw many reminders of Dec 7 bombing by the Japs and it added a somber note and made us realize the war wasn't too far off.

As we crossed the equator we were told that under normal conditions we pollywags would be initiated by Davy Jones and his royal court and become steel backs. There were too many people aboard so we were given our certificates and I was grateful for that on my next trip across the equator on the Haps.

One late afternoon we were having dinner and a General Quarters alarm came over the PA system. Man your battle stations and everyone hurried to comply. I was assigned to #8 life boat and a lot of others too but some of those men would have stepped on us or knocked us down to get in the boat first. (They had wives and families) Fortunately the all clear came and we nurses went to the ward room and set up for the next setting. In my scrap book is a memo from the Captain thanking us and saying they had picked up submarine contact and telling us to keep our life jackets with us at all times. The smoking lamp was out about 10:00.

We sailed on and on wondering where we would finally land. We had a very impressive church service on the deck one Sunday. The church flag was raised and I don't remember much about the sermon but at the end before the benediction, the Chaplain said he would sing *God Bless America*. 10,000 voices echoed out across the ocean and it was very impressive.

A few days later and 21 days at sea we saw land and were told we were going to disembark in Noumea, New Caledonia. Ship Platoons would be assigned to various hospitals TDY.

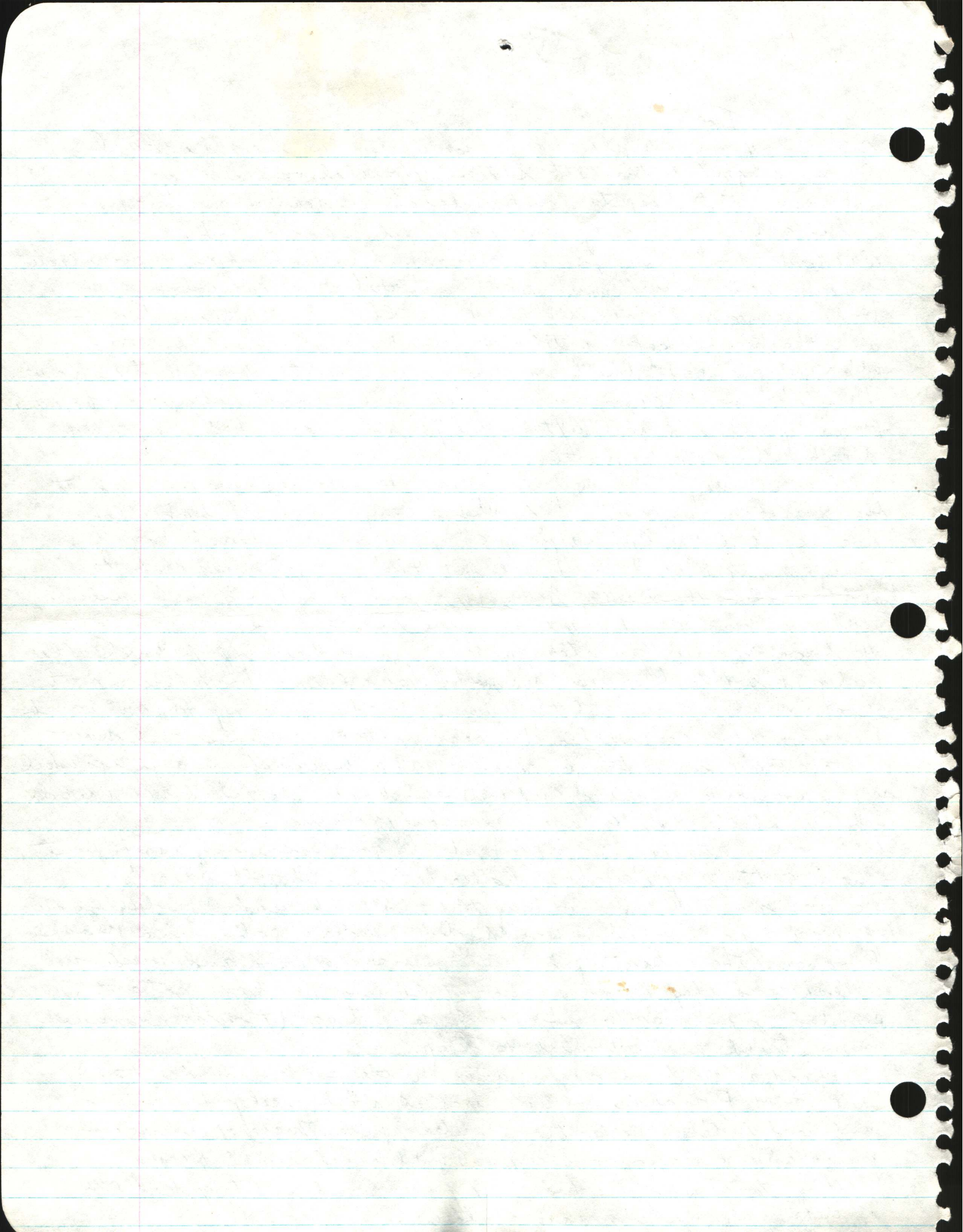


Troops

and many were replacements for units on Guadalcanal. I was assigned to the 27th Station Hospital on the beach. It was a tent hospital on the beach under palm trees. I had a tent of mostly malaria and jungle rot. Atabletic was given for malaria and we took it as a prophylactic measure. It turned your skin a terrible yellow color. For the jungle rot - one week we would use Gentian Violet and the next week Castilani paint. One was red and the other purple ~~and~~ that was the extent of its therapeutic value. Mrs. Roosevelt came in one day and shook everyone's hand. I really admired her. After she left someone asked why they didn't send Rita Hayworth.

I didn't stay here very long and two of us were sent to the 8th Gen inland and not a very nice spot at all. We reported to Cpt Saylor, chief nurse our first day for assignments and bless her heart the old gal was from the old school and strictly G.I. She took one look at Annabelle and me and asked us where we thought we were going. "Go back to your quarters and get your hair off of your collar and put white hose on. We were housed in a warehouse with 50 or so other nurses and the brush + weeds were up to our waists. We wore blue seersucker dresses, white cap + shoes and now white stockings in the bushes. I put a hairnet on and yanked my hair above my ears and we went back. She liked my hair do best. Annabelle had to take a lesson from me. Not being station complement she gave us lousy assignments. I had 5 tents of Psychos, battle fatigue and gold bricks. There was no desk or nothing to work with and I didn't know who was who. Everybody would dive under a cot when a plane flew over. The patients got a few shivers of wood and made me a desk and they found a piece of canvas and one patient painted Japs peeking out around palm trees. (This was however in my trunk that I wanted to keep.

I had a stint at night duty on the prison yards too. I had 2 M. P. guards and was dressed with steel pot netting and looked like I came from outer space. Many of American prisoners were homo or bisexual. I learned much from talking to them. Also had a Jap prison ward but they had one of their own taking care of them.



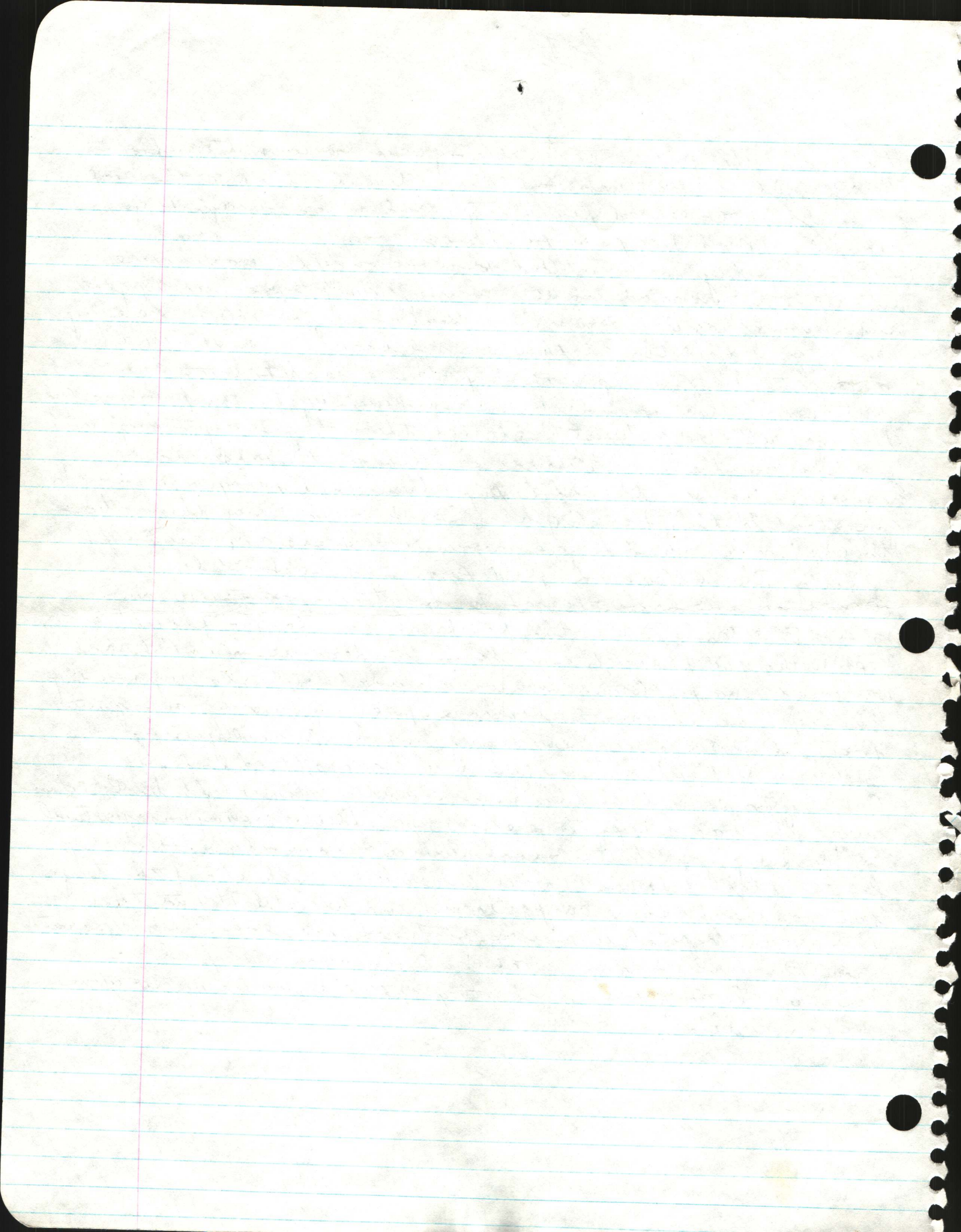
the food at this place was terrible - green liver, mutton from New Zealand, butter that wouldn't melt and stuck in the roof of your mouth - served family style and never enough to go around. I paid 1.00 for a fresh egg once.

One fine day we were told to move out of the warehouse into tents. I waited until I went off duty to pack up my gear and it was gone. All items were hard or impossible to come by and I just had the clothes on my back. The next day a ~~black~~ patient came up with my class A jacket with no buttons. He had found it under a bench. The chief nurse and MPs got all the patients and told them to get my things and put them on the desk. They came with pants brass etc. Embarrassing but thankful to get them back. They were going to give them to the French girls. I got most of my things but the chief nurse had to give me an overseas cap as I left shortly thereafter and glad to go, I might add.

One more incident I forgot to mention. ~~later~~ When I moved to a tent I was the first cat inside the flap. We slept with flash light and knife under our blanket that we used as a pillow. There was a guard outside supposedly but I got awake with someone pulling on my mosquito box and I came up swinging my knife and yelling. It was a patient and I cut him across the hand.

Cpt Sykes seemed a bit more friendly when I left but I am sure she was happy to see me go and the feeling was mutual.

Went by jeep to the dock where I boarded another ship for the Fiji Islands. Don't remember much about the trip but we went ashore on pontoons and reported to the 18th Gen Hospital in Suva on New Years eve. I was separated from the girls I came with and I found myself alone in this little grass shack they called a buri as everyone was on a date. Decided to take a shower and wash my hair and go to bed. There was a board walk down hill to the latrine and showers. The water was cold so I thought I would rinse it with some "battery acid" or powdered lemon crystals. I dried my hair with a towel and crawled in the cot and pulled the mosquito bar around me. A big old frog hopped in the room and feeling lonely I cried. Sometime in the wee hours I got awake and I was alive with big black



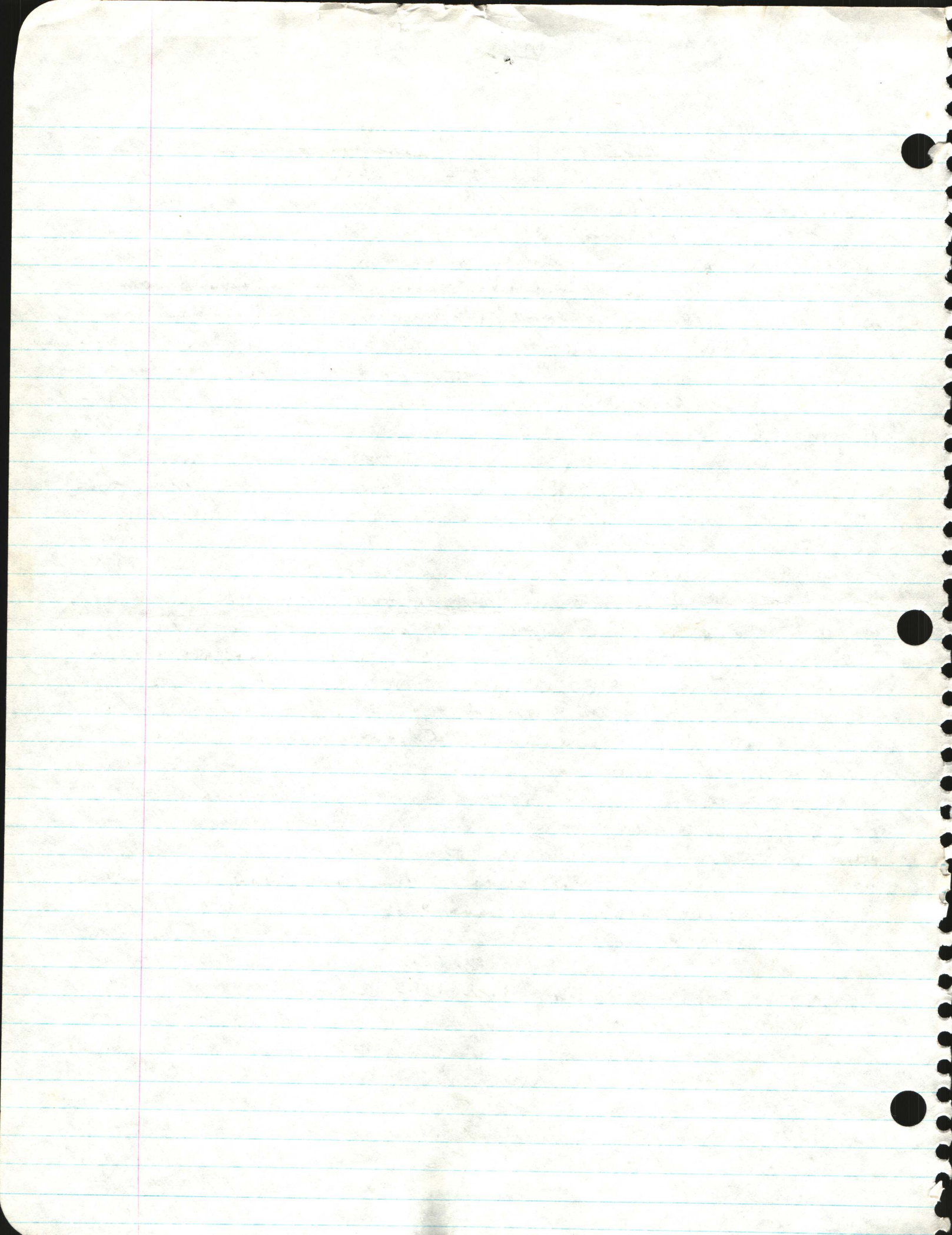
ants that were really having a feast on me. I jumped up and yelled and my roommates took me to the shower and washed, combed + brushed the critters out of my hair. No one wasted time walking to and from the latrine as there were millions of little frogs that jumped at you. These black ants also ate the leather binding around my suitcase. It was a buggy place.

Fiji was a British territory and the hospital was an old English school. We had a lot of Dengue fever here plus Malaria, Shistosomiasis. I dated a Dr Leftwich from Virginia while I was there. We took walks and watched some beautiful sunsets on a point overlooking the bay. Also were invited into a native hut. The man spoke English and he was so black he was purple. We sat on a grass mat on the floor and a baby laid there. He said look - me purple, wife purple, baby white. We chuckled about that later. The Kanacki natives were head hunters some time back. They were purple-black and bleached their hair with some tree root to lighten it. They had orange fuzzy hair that stood straight up and climbed palm trees faster than monkeys.

A group of us were invited to some Chiefs village and every one of the native women touched my hair and made a big time of it. We sat down around a grass mat and I had to sit by the Chief. He had a big pot + dipper in front of him and he took a drink and passed it to me to sip and pass on. It was Kava, their native drink - looked like coffee with a drop of milk but was very bitter. I was the only blonde there and I joked that I was glad to get away with my scalp intact.

The native women that cleaned the lavie saved all the bright paper from Christmas cards. I discarded an old bra and I almost flipped when I saw a native man with it around his waist. They only wore loincloths.

Time came to leave this island paradise and the 658th boarded an old liberty ship the Henry Bergh with 1000 patients ^{savali} ^{physios} and headed for home. The boilers blew up at sea and we sat like ducks for two days on the water. We were running low on food and only had rice and stew twice a day. We drank black coffee ^{no milk} and I lost 10 pounds. It was beastly hot and in the holds we had to climb up several bunks to get to a malaria patient to care for him. We only had a handful of



Corpsmen but we had to bring the patients on deck at times. We all did our best to watch them but 3 Psychos jumped overboard and were lost. One big negro patient by the name of Marsh was in solitary and he ripped the plumbing out of the wall and water was running everywhere. Fortunately one of the nurses gained his confidence and gave him a sodium amytal micky. He was carried off the ship in a straight jacket. It was a bummer of a trip but the next trip this ship made at cracked up off the Coast of Calif (Picture in scrap book) All patients were saved. We all felt the Skipper was nuts.

Happy to be back in the USA - I came home on leave. Margaret who lived with us and took such good care of your mother and me was blind and feeble but I had a nice visit with her and she died a short time later. Mother said she waited for me to come home again.

When I returned to Camp Stoneman I was in a medical personnel pool. I was selected to join the 215th Hospital Ship Complement which was assigned to staff the USS Hope AH 7. The ship was in San Pedro being made ready and we were sent to Camp Anza and later Torrance for basic training. A lawyer was in charge of us and I had a platoon and a big blonde OR nurse from Chicago was the other platoon leader. We did it all in the orange groves of southern Calif - marching drilling debarkation deck obstacle courses etc. Also went swimming in Sherry Pickford pool but we didn't see her. After weeks of toughening we boarded the USS Hope for the Commissioning ceremonies. We lived on the ship ~~at~~ a bit ashore & had an active social life ~~at~~ in the evenings with the Navy. We were soon going on stake down cruises and we never knew when we were leaving for the war. One day ^{Sep 23, 1945} we slipped away leaving our dates on shore and once again seeing the shore line slip from view. It was much better having a home on the ship than being a passenger. The navy manned the ship and they were busy indoctrinating us to Navy lingo - bulkheads ladders, port starboard stern etc. Instead of our army lingo. We got along well though. (over)

There were 2 ~~nurses~~ ^{nurses} and had been ~~superior~~ ^{superior} as at P.B.H. and
Veronica Samuels Oliver for ~~her~~ ^{her} ~~active~~ ^{active} ~~our~~ ^{our} quarters

Five days after setting sail we saw the blue peaks of Diamond Head on the horizon and we arrived in Pearl Harbor for a short stay on our way to the war.

On the journey southwestward we had the traditional shellback ceremony. Since I had my shellback certificate I became a member of King Neptune's court. We had several days of initiation but on the day devoted to the ceremony the Gally Roger was hoisted and King Neptune and court proceeded to make Shellbacks out of Pallywags.

We had fire hoses, molasses, catsup, belt lines, royal barber, royal dentist and finally a dunking in the pool on the fantail. (Pictures in album) Our CO was king of the head. He carried rolls of toilet paper on a rope over his shoulders. A nurse with big hips had to wear a tight red nightgown over a bathing suit and offer the ship's Captain a bed pan on the hour. * → → → → →

○ A week later we dropped anchor at Manus Island in the Admiralty Group, stayed there a day and were off to Kossal Roads north of the Palau's to stand by for the invasion of the Philippines. We stood by and waited.

We had boat races to the bow of the Bountiful, a navy hospital ship but there was no liberty as the only land in sight was Babelthau eight miles away and it was held by the Japanese.

On Nov 5th we finally got underway for the Philippines and our first mission. We were assigned to the 3rd + 7th fleet and on the 7th Nov we pulled into Leyte Gulf receiving 440 patients in a little over 2 hours under fire.

B I had 3 roommates - two N.P nurses from Phila Gen and one from New Hampshire.

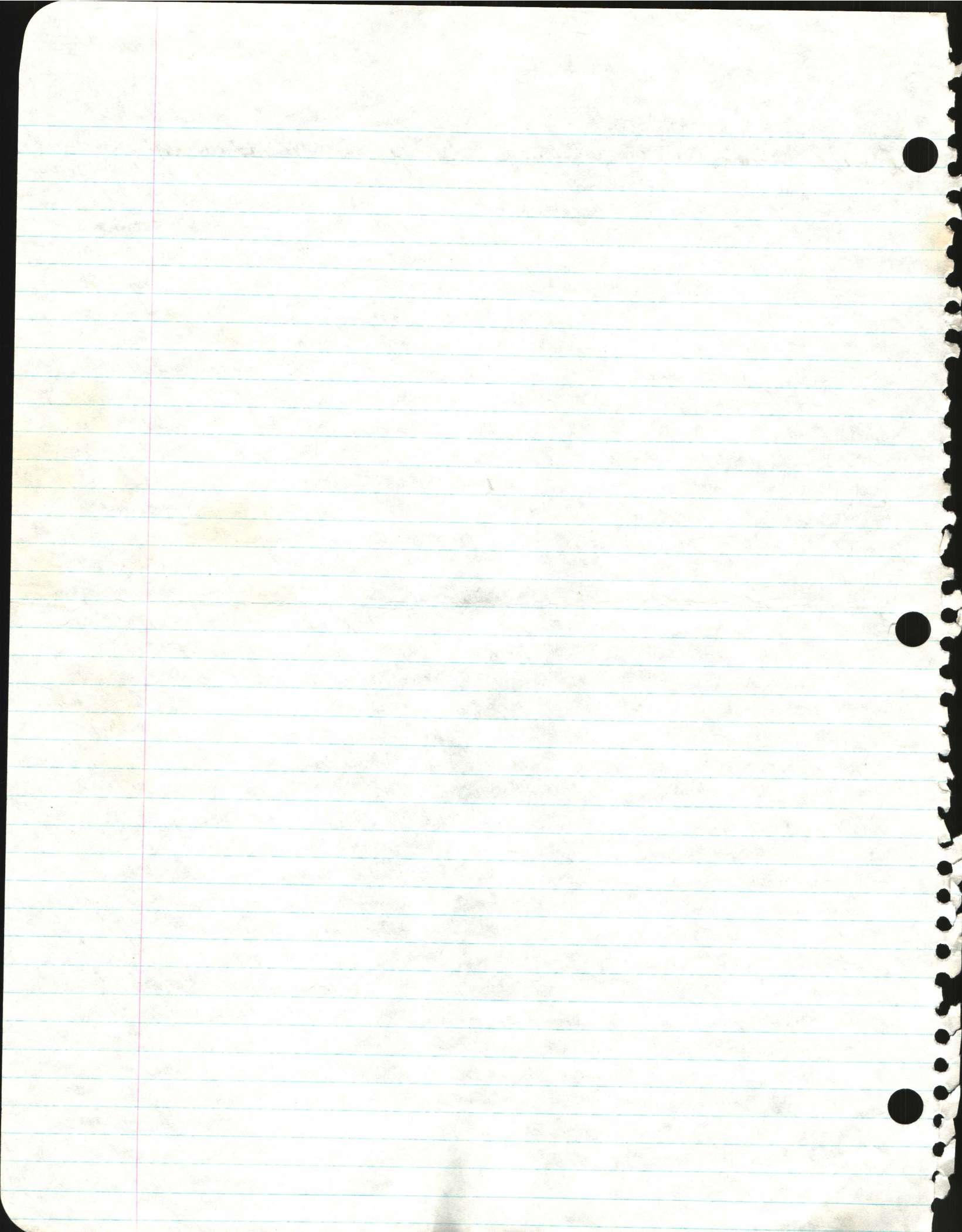
Our quarters were on the top deck and we all got along well together. They were much older than me and had been supervisors. Our chief nurse Cpt Lappe interviewed us and she assigned me to wd 01-2 (abdominal surgery) but we had the most severely injured as we were next to surgery. We folded dressings, played cards knitted and sat on afghans on the deck and looked at the blue ocean and wrote letters wondering when they would be mailed and how much the censor would delete. We also had to censor the enlisted mens mail from time to time.

Dotty Lynch from Conn and I (both 2nd Lt) were assigned ^{day} ^{duty} to 01-2. We had some corporals who were not trained and we had to teach them including starting I.Vs and after piercing a plastic arm they stuck the veins. They got to be quite proficient thank heavens.*

The bed capacity was 702 and we had 37 nurses and I don't know the number of doctors and corporals. Our ward officer was chief of Surgery and when we loaded patients we didn't see him until surgery was completed. We were on our own - starting I.Vs plasma, giving sedation, picking out superficial shrapnel changing dressing etc. When patients came on board their clothes were filthy, torn, and full of lice. We removed the clothes and put a face towel over them. It was too hot for pajamas. We did have air conditioning though. We autoclaved the clothes before sending them to the laundry.

I remember one young soldier by the name of Dunn. His left upper arm was shattered and it was a couple of days old. I decided he needed a shot of gas gangrene antitoxin. It was a big syringe and a big needle and when he saw me coming toward him he called me names and I had to get 2 corporals to hold him down. His temperature shot up to 105° and we sponged him and I don't think I have ever been more frightened. When the doctor arrived he said I did right but the boy lost his arm. (Picture of him in autograph book.) Tough as nails!

Penicillin in aqueous form was new and we had to give injections q 3 hours and we had to mix it ourselves. In addition to abdominal wounds and the odor from them we also had many complete body burns. In those days they were debrided and wrapped like mummies. Each morning we got them up and sat them in a chair to redress them.



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them as their bandages were falling off and wet with drainage. We gave them a shot of whiskey and usually they didn't need sedation as they were 2nd & 3rd degree burns. The smell of the drainage, penicillin odor, and the salt air was indescribable. A Los Angeles correspondent was on the ship doing a story and he came to my ward and said "Let's pass that word 'the smell is to bad'".

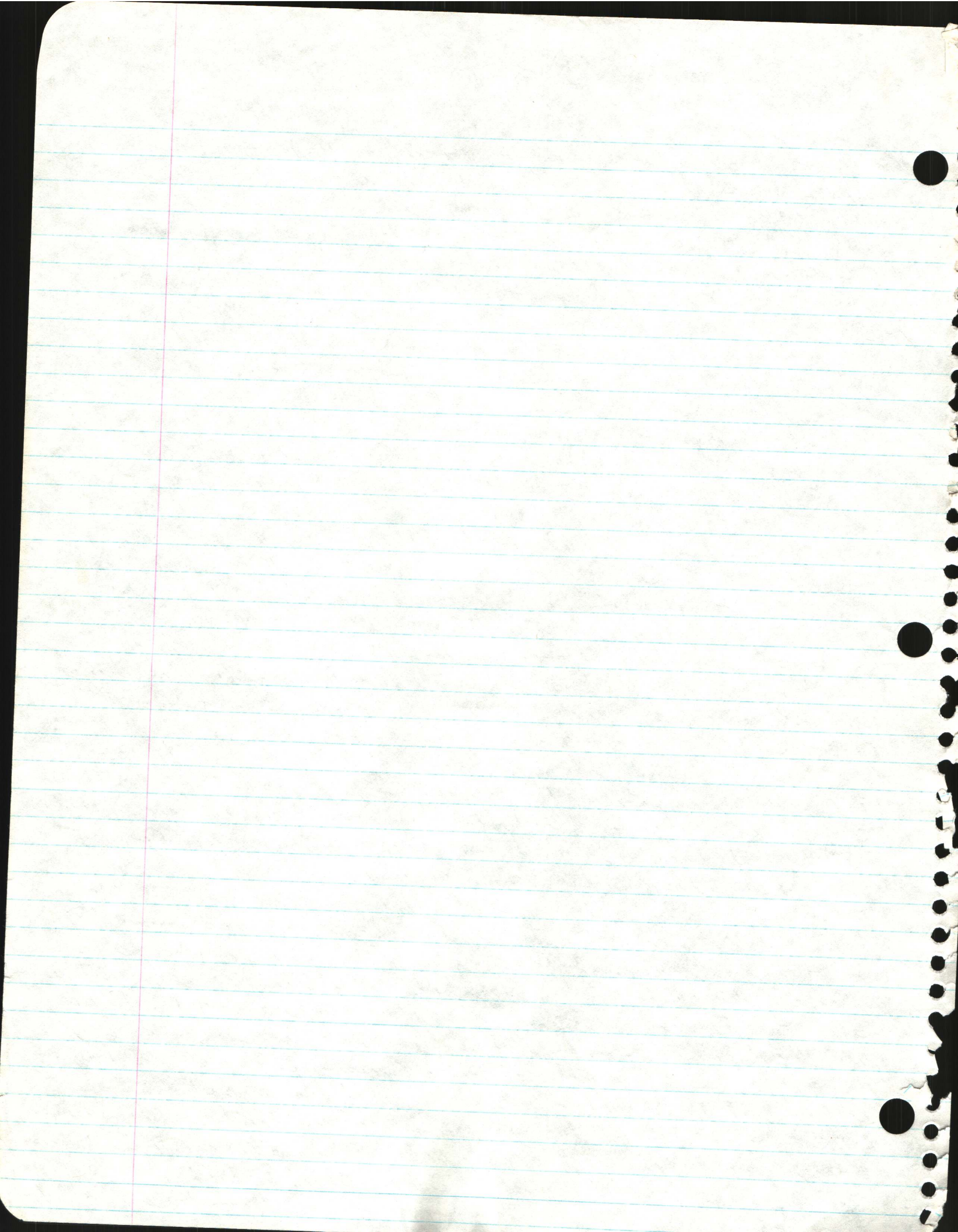
Life aboard the ship was great. The food was good and we had clean living conditions. We sprayed our bunks and ourselves with DDT ^{each day} so we didn't pick up lice from patients. We had to conserve water and were told to lather and rinse off. No luxurious showers and occasionally we had salt water showers. We sometimes had movies on the fantail when we were in the harbor and I sat through the Great Train Robbery 3 times. We sat in the rain many times too.

Mail call was very erratic. We would go several weeks and when it finally caught up to us we were swamped. I remember getting Christmas packages in July. Some of the packages were in bad shape - moldy and wet.

We made 8 runs from the Philippines to Hollandia, Finchhafen, and Manus with casualties. I met up with Frank on one of those trips and we were married in Tacloban and he went one way and I went another. We ships that pass in the night. Caught up in the excitement of war but I really didn't love him and should have known better but everyone lived for the moment as tomorrow and the future were very uncertain.

One Sunday afternoon when the ship was on its way from Hollandia to Leyte, a jam session was going on on the fantail and suddenly out of the sky a Japanese plane appeared and launched an aerial torpedo at the Hope. The torpedo passed about 75 yards aft of the Hope and did not close in for a second attack.

Then, too, the Hope celebrated Christmas in a special way. Early Christmas morning the ship picked up an automatic SOS of a Moe West - the cry of survivors adrift on the endless waste of the Pacific. The ship veered course slightly following the signals which finally grew faint and died. Then at 0200 on the morning of the 26th December two life



lights were sighted in the midst of the vast black Pacific just two hours after Christmas 1944. We picked up four fliers who saw our light on the horizon and it became brighter and brighter and they said Christmas will always have a special meaning to them and the 'Hape' brought its own Christmas present to four fliers whose plane had crashed into the ocean.

Not long thereafter the Hape was the first hospital ship into Luzon and at Subic Bay on Corregidor D-Day she picked up paratrooper casualties from the invasion. We then went north to Lingayen Gulf and evacuated the wounded from Subic, Corregidor and Lingayen to Hollandia.

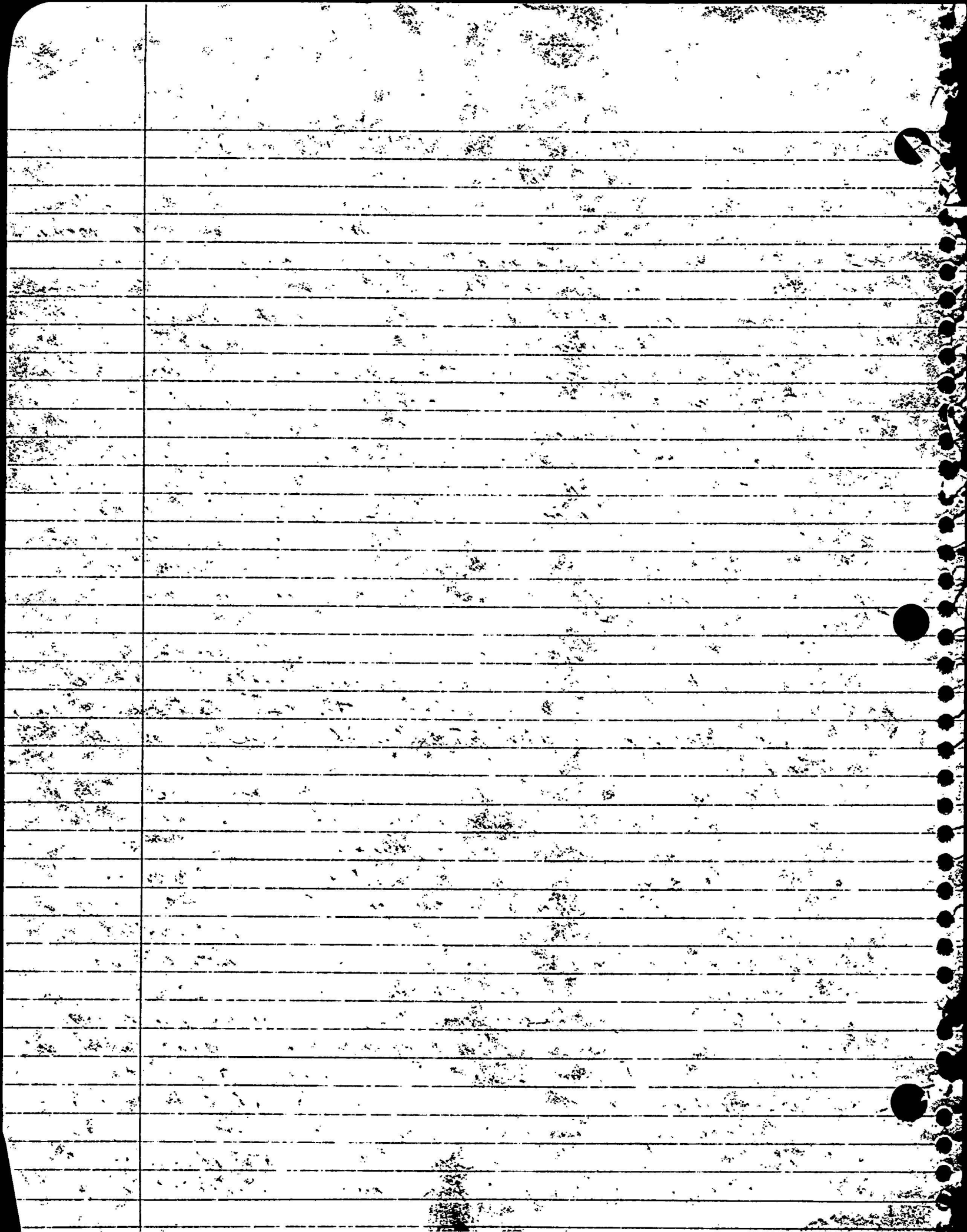
By mid March we received orders for a new destination new missions, and new scenery. On the 30th March we dropped anchor at the fleet anchorage in Ulithi's atoll in the Caroline Islands. There again we waited. There was an officers club there called the "Black Widow". I spent my 34th birthday there with a date from Villanova. In my scrap book are beer chits from the Black Widow.

On the 9th April we were once again off to the battle for Okinawa in the Ryukyus where American troops had landed on the 1st of April. We had picked up the 54th portable surgical hospital with four surgeons and 27 enlisted men to assist our staff.

The ship dropped anchor off this former Japanese territory on Apr 13th D plus 13 and made three trips from Okinawa - two of them to Saipan and one to Guam.

There were long nights under a brilliant bombur moon in the harbor where we were surrounded by battle wagons (cruisers and carriers). All ships were at General quarters and the smoking lamp was out on the Hape. Quite often the ships laid a smoke screen and it was eerie.

Now and then a Jap bogey would get through and make things a little too closely unpleasant. The familiar riveting put-put of ack ack fire, sharpnel raining on the deck and underwater concussions and what seemed like eternity the all clear. I always felt safer on deck with steel pot and life jacket. On occasion my teeth chattered like crazy and I couldn't stop them. That is how I manifested my fear.

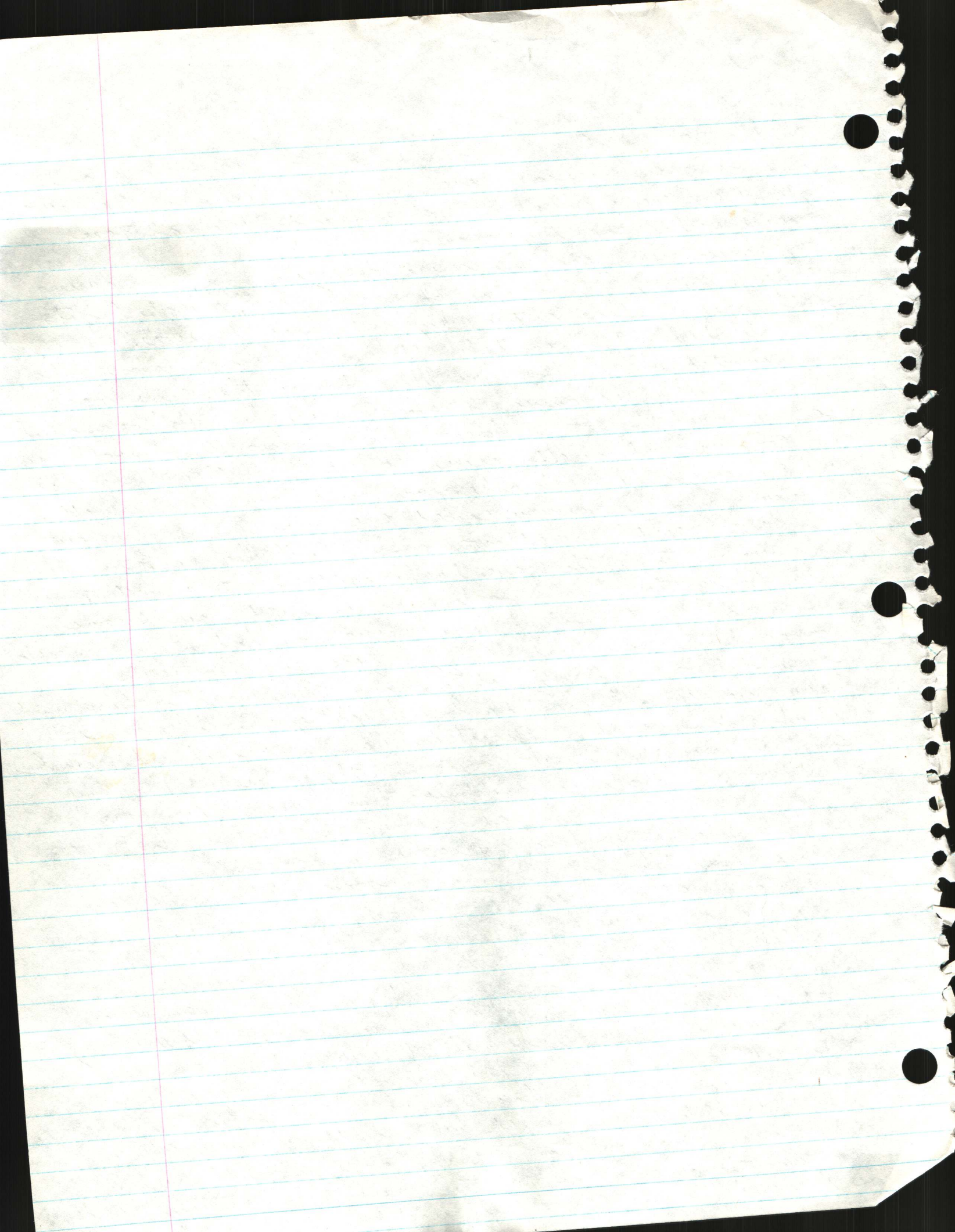


On the 29th April our sister ship the Comfort was hit by a Jap suicide plane just 60 miles from Okinawa where we were anchored. I lost a friend who had gone overseas with me on the Wharton.

The Japanese were becoming more desperate and more daring. We saw many dog fights at night when ^{cross} search lights would trap a plane in the sky and shoot it down. We watched B-29 planes take off on a bombing mission and counted them when they left and when they came back.

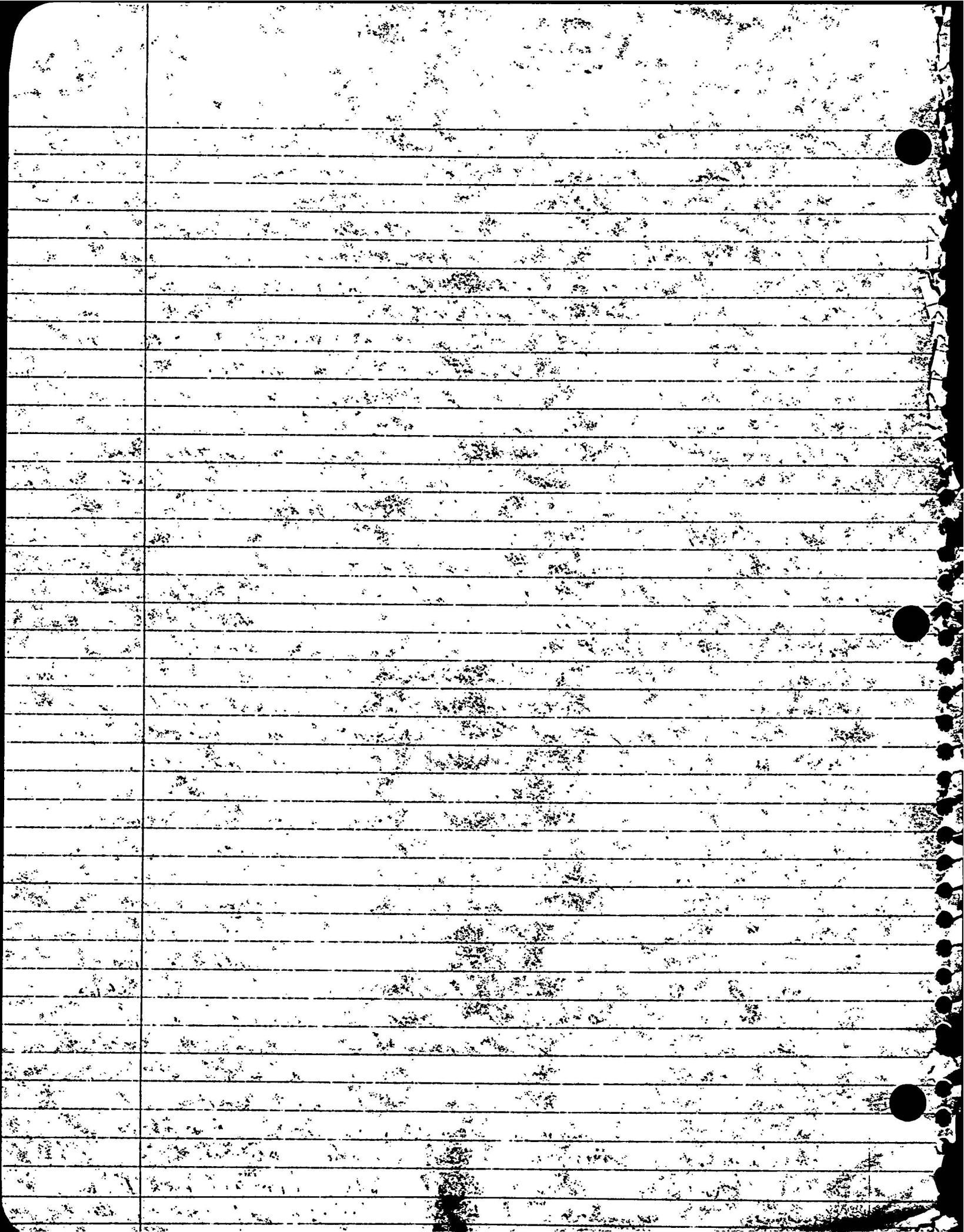
My most frightening experience was the typhoons and we survived ~~through~~ three of them - two in Humboldt Bay off Okinawa and one off Japan. No one was allowed on deck and through the port hole you could look up at a wall of water as high as you could see and you just knew the wave would swallow the ship and the next minute you were on top of the wave looking down into a well of water. Across the storm swept sea you could hear sirens and search lights looking for someone who had been swept overboard. It was hard to try to take care of patients as it was hard to stand up. Not to many of us went to chow and didn't eat I wasn't nauseated. The ship creaked and groaned and sometimes the screw came out of the water and the ship shuddered. It was more frightening than being under fire.

When we were in Guam some officers from LST 1000 invited five of the Hope nurses on a picnic. The chief nurse recruited me as I hadn't been off the ship for a while. Two of my roommates went along too. They picked us up in a LVP and the Captain of the LST decided he would be with me. As always the navy had plenty of food and drink and en route we were having some drinks. I liked the navy Captain and offered him a drink and of course he refused. I threw some of my drinks over the side when the Captain wasn't looking. I didn't like the Captain and thought this would be a dull picnic. All of a sudden the motor of the boat konked out. We sat there on the water and the Captain said we would have to wait until night.



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up some flares. They sent out messages on Morse code before dark but got no response. In the meantime we had drifted out beyond the port nets. Everyone except the coxswain and me got drunk and crawled under canvas and went to sleep. The coxswain and I sat in the gun tub all night. I don't even remember his name but I bet he has the story of sitting in a gun tub all night with an army nurse in the middle of the Pacific. It was about 0500 and a dark hulk seemed to come toward us at a fast speed. I thought that this was the end for all of us. Then seven rounded and spot lights went on and they yelled "my God, there is women on the boat" and they pulled up the Coast Guard and they hauled us aboard and took us back to our ship. The Hops had already pulled up the gang plank and we had to crawl up the Jacobs ladder. Our Captain, CO, chief nurse were on the quarter deck and they hauled us aboard like sacks of potatoes. Our shipmates were hanging over the rails looking at us and making wis cracks. I received a message from the coxswain that the Captain didn't blame him but told him he better not mention it to anyone. The eventful days of Okinawa ended May 16th when the Hope unloaded its last load of patients on Guam and we were then sent back to the Philippines. A little more monotonous but a little more healthy life. Then we carried patients from Manila to the quiet little island of Biak, so called the healthiest island in the Pacific. Then we carried to the British and took a trip to Tarakan off the coast of Borneo. The Hope stood by for the invasion of Balikpapan located down the coast of Borneo. While waiting we visited an Australian tent hospital. The nurses were very friendly and we had a "spot of tea" with them. They had nothing much to work with. Syringes and needles like gold to them and all supplies were at a premium. We weren't needed for the invasion so had 48 hours liberty with one of our



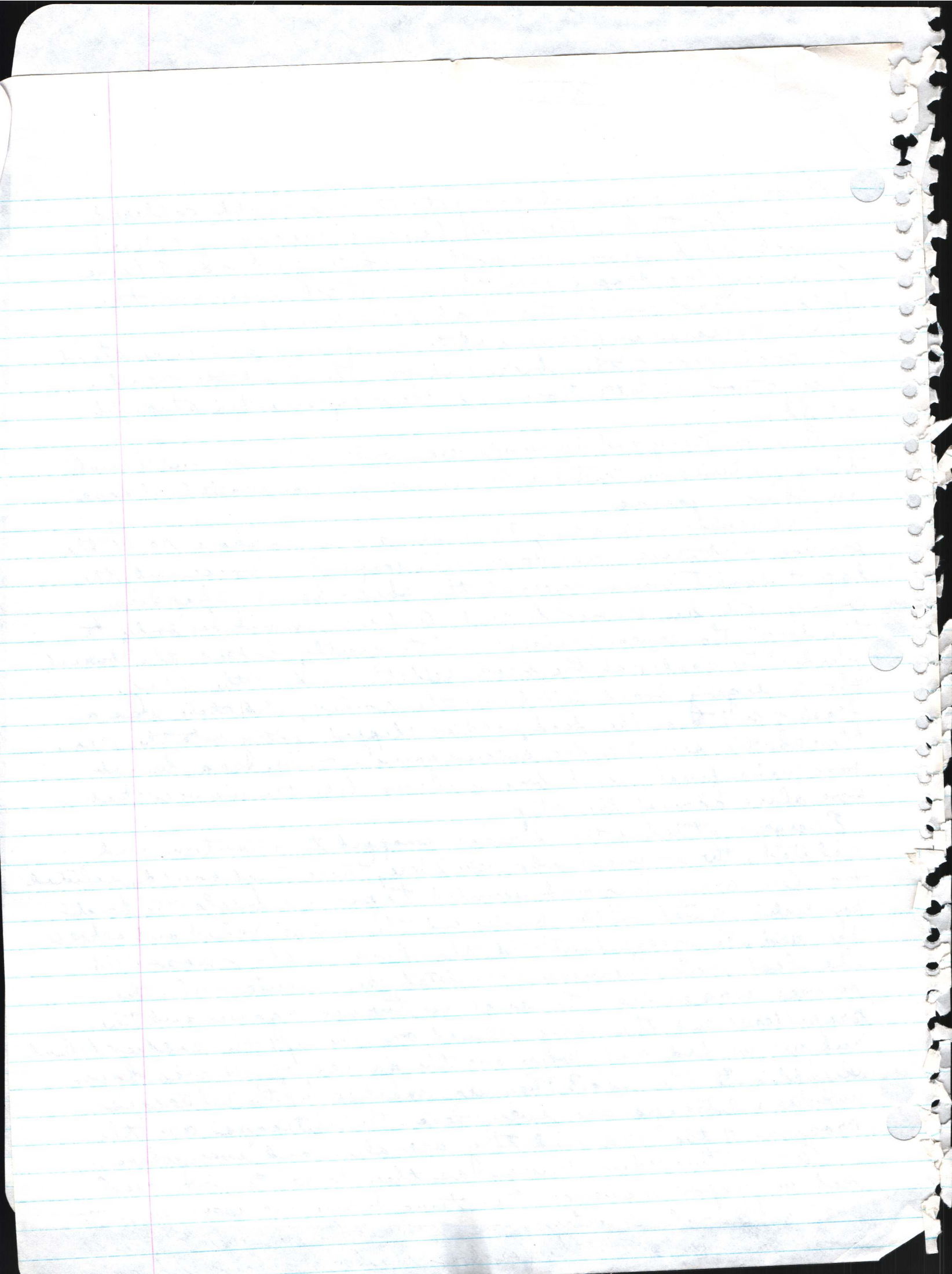
male officers armed with a 45 pistol at his side. We carried ditty bags instead of purses. In them we had a couple of bars of soap and few packs of moldy cigarettes and sometimes tropical chocolate provided by the Red Cross. We used these items for 'barter'. The Philippines were very poor and lived in squalid conditions. Chickens and pigs ran through their huts and the flies filled and smells were unbelievable. Sometimes the natives would travel to our ship in their "bum boats" with a chicken perched on the bow of the boat and try to barter with us. They had tunkets, shells and other junk.

Enlisted men went on liberty here and were given the do's + don'ts and issued condoms. They headed for the first bar and gay alley. They were a sight to behold coming back to the ship. Many laid on the beach drunk and were taken back to the ship in an LVP and hauled aboard in a cargo net. They were taken to sick bay and given a pro and they came up on the quarter deck fighting and falling over each other. They were a bloody mess and their uniforms were beyond repair especially the navy whites.

After three weeks of sitting around and listening to all the scuttlebutt we picked up medical personnel and transported them to Lenggayen Gulf and immediately we left for Manila. En route the familiar peak of Bataan, the rock of Corregidor came into view. On one of our trips we carried POW's from Santo Tomas some of which were nurses. They didn't complain and were grateful to be free. Their eyes and their emaciated bodies told the story that they would hope to forget but forever would be a nightmare to them.

On our trips back from the front with patients we had several deaths en route. A burial at sea might seem repugnant to some but it was a beautiful and impressive farewell to life - This was written by a correspondent aboard the ship on one of our trips. Every military honor and dignity was paid in the brief solemnities and if the family could have been present they would have cherished the moment. Word was passed over the speaker system - "All hands - bury the dead!" The white ship slowed gradually to a stop. The propellers stopped turning and we drifted on the sea.

Command ship in the harbor was sounded. The seven of the sailor was wailing away and on.



ships all around us men were rushing to their battle stations. Over the Haze speakers came the word "Sweepers man your brooms." "Clean sweep down fore and aft!" The Haze rocked and rolled at the underwater concussions and shrapnel rained down on the deck and we were all glad to hear the "All Clear" sounded.

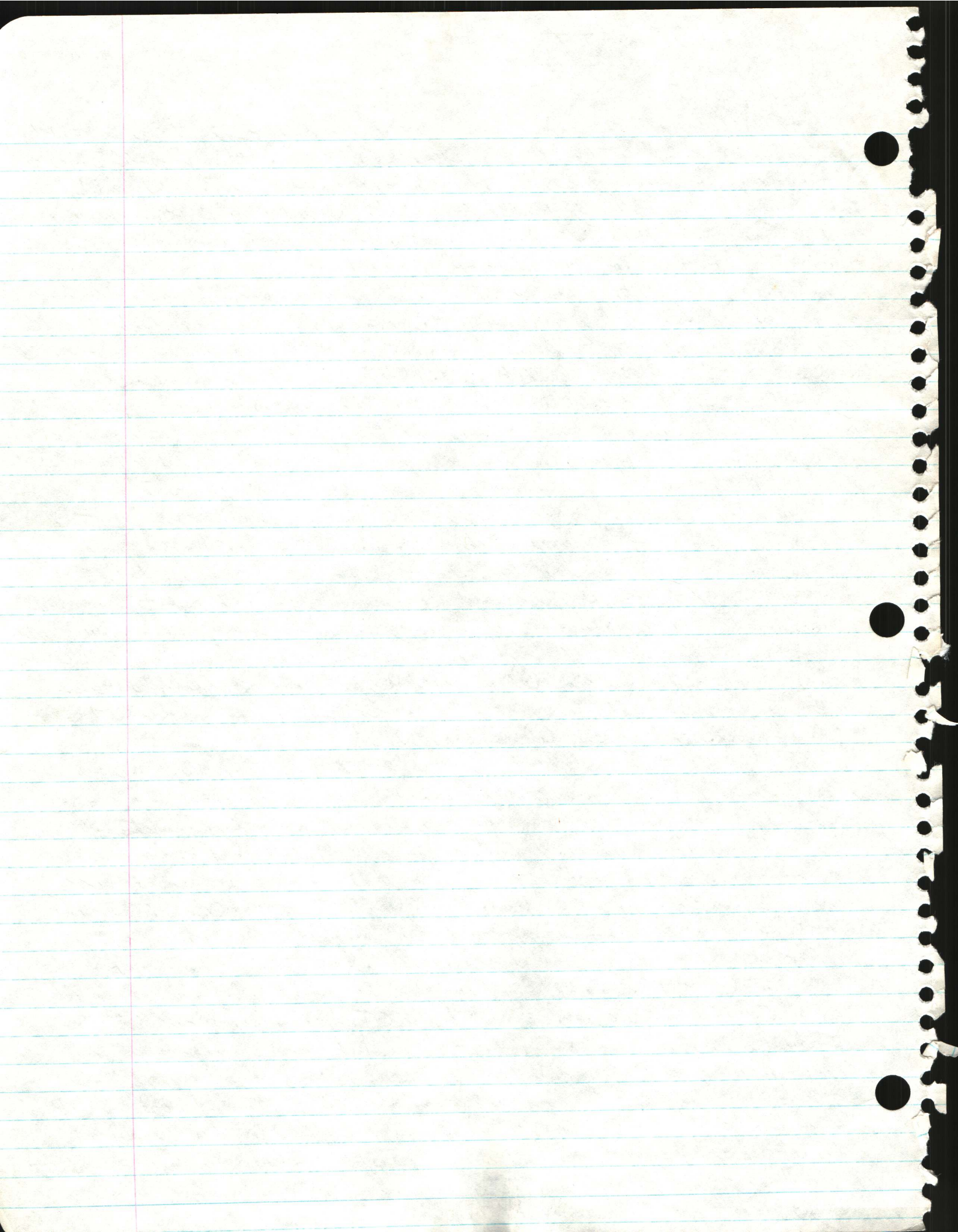
Almost forgot to tell you about our mascots - a dog and a monkey. The dog, Duchess of Lyte, was cute but I didn't think much of the monkey. Early one morning one of the sailors threw him in our porthole and he landed on top of me. I flung him across the cabin and from that time on, everytime he saw me he got agitated and tried to get loose to bit me. He did manage to pick a few fleas off the dog when one of the nurses wasn't carrying him around like a baby.

With the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki we knew the war was coming to an end. Thoughts about the real world and home and what it would be like to go back to civilian life.

We waited and wondered as we looked at the old red clay hills of Okinawa. We finally got underway - north to Japan. We went in with the fleet to Wakayama, Japan. It was a beautiful sight. Ships of all sizes huddled together in close formations all blowing fog horns, and shooting fountains of water from their fire hoses. It was a great celebration!

Again we got to go ashore to sight see and barter or buy souvenirs. As always we had an armed escort. I got a wooden statue of an old man for a bar of soap and a pack of mucky cigarettes. I walked outside and one of the doctors offered me \$100. for it. Still have him. Also got part of a tea set that was hand painted with Japanese people on it. They were very artistic people and I have some souvenirs around me and in the trunk in the attic.

On one of our trips on shore a bad storm came up and we waited on the dock for our whale boat to pick us up and finally a Captain from an LCI said he would take us back to our ship. When they asked for permission to come alongside our Captain would not give permission as the waves were high and was afraid both ships might be damaged. The Captain of the LCI said he didn't have quarters for women and our Captain said you have them - you keep them. The LCI Captain said OK I'm going to a sheltered cove. See you after the storm.



XVIII

We had a great time on this small ship. We had the run of the ship and the Captain had to relinquish his quarters to us. We played cards with the enlisted men, cooked in the galley and we all had a ball. Some time in the night one of the girls put her foot on the deck and something moved. She let out a muffled yip and we discovered the men had blown up some condoms like balloons. ^{+ put them in the port hole} We disposed of them and in the morning we came out and tried to look nonchalant. It was a cute joke and broke up the monotony for them. They were wonderful to us and we didn't think of rank or status. Fate had brought us together for this brief encounter and it was enjoyed by all.

Finally the word that we had all been waiting for - we were going stateside. As the ship left the harbor after 13 months overseas the other ships in the harbor saluted us with sirens, fog horns and water from their fire hoses. We had a homeward bound pendant flying from the mast. A foot of bunting for each person on board (Picture in photo album).

The trip home was uneventful. It was one of mixed emotions - thoughts about the past year and our shipmates who almost seemed like family and the excitement about returning to the real world. As the shore line of the US appeared on the horizon and we passed under the Golden Gate bridge I could not describe the feeling but to say "It was great to be home." The band was playing as we tied up to the dock. Someone yelled down and asked them what they had just played and they said Sentimental Journey. It truly was a Sentimental journey and a very memorable year. And so ends my South Sea island odyssey. I was discharged from the army at Letterman Gen. Hospital and held in the involuntary reserves for six months.

Jeff, it was fun writing this, and I relived it all again as I was writing it for you.

