

Rec'd Oct 26

Ten months has elapsed since our last greetings from the USS REPOSE. The original "sea dogs" have long since departed for other duty stations and now many of their sea worthy replacements are soon to be detached.

Much has happened to the "Angel of the Orient" during this span. Change of Command Ceremonies were held in November, when the ship's Commanding Officer, Captain E. Maher was relieved by Captain Ray Gossom; and in May, when our present skipper Captain James Campbell "took over the helm" from Captain Gossom and again in September when Captain Rudolph Nadbath was relieved as Commanding Officer of the hospital by Captain Herbert Markowitz. April marked a sad farewell to our Chief Nurse Commander Mary Kovacevich, who went to Great Lakes Corps School and we welcomed our new mamason, Commander Lorraine Hankey from Pensacola, Florida. Also, at the crack of dawn on the 10th of April, we sighted our sister ship, the USS SANCTUARY, as she entered Da-Nang Harbor for the first time. AH 17 was indeed a pretty sight and many of us were able to tour her and visit with old acquaintances before we set sail for Subic, after forty nine days "on station".

Travel wise our "ashore time" has been spent at beloved Subic Bay for routine maintenance and repairs. Although not an R and R port, land is land and we have enjoyed our seven to ten day breathers in Manila and beautiful Baguio City. We did visit Hong Kong, December 26 to January 2, and the Hilton Hotel, with its room service and wonderful bathtubs; sightseeing tours, the shopping and the fittings; the Walla Walla boats, candlelight dinners, dancing and a glorious New Year's Eve won't soon be forgotten. Bangkok, Japan, Taiwan and a return to Hong Kong were tentatively scheduled but operational commitments forced their cancellations. Singapore though was a reality. We arrived the 7th of August and berthed alongside the H.M.S. BULWARK and the H.M.S. FEARLESS at the H.M.S. Terror Naval Base. The Royal Navy proved to be more than a perfect host. Several cocktail parties, club luncheons, ship's dinners with authentic Happy Hour refreshments and a boat picnic were accorded us. This, plus the shopping and "bargaining with the local merchants for exotic purchases, the colorful taxi

tours, the "taste like more" Pim'scup, Horse's Neck and Singapore Slings; the gourmet delicacies, the phone call to loved ones at home and, of course, the hotel accommodations, complete with bathtubs, made the next four days a delightful memory. Another highlight of our Singapore visit was our crossing of the Equator on August 6th. All REPOSE "pollywogs" were duly initiated into the Solemn Mysteries of the Ancient Order of the Deep and became worthy, trusted and envied "shellbacks" a truly gory, slimy, crazy and all around fun event. There are now "shellbacks" in the Navy Nurse Corps.

Ship life is confining and yes, even routine to some, however, the call "flight quarters" soon relieves the monotony. Our newspapers are usually a week or so outdated, our coke supply can dwindle and it seems our mail can take forever and a day to reach us. Woe is us you say? No siree!! Guaranteed work takes up many an hour but we do have free time. Song fests, birthday parties, hail and farewell shindigs, tape sessions, visiting celebrities - Martha Raye, Hugh O'Brien, Raymond Burr, Robert Stack; General Greene, Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Walt, Commanding Officer Marine Amphibious Forces - Vietnam and his replacement, General Cushman; Admiral Brown, the Surgeon General of the Navy; our Ambassador to Vietnam, Mr. Ellsworth Bunker, General of the Army Omar Bradley, Admiral Ward when he presented the Navy Commendation Award to the USS REPOSE, our "on camera" appearance when CBS, NBC and movie land people were filming our "home away from home", the St. Patty's Day celebration, the off Broadway spectaculars "Pantail Follies" number one and number two in March and July, the Navy Nurse Corps Anniversary, the beach parties at Repose Beach in Da Nang, the Sunday brunch, the steak fries, the Saturday evening buffet, the bridge tournaments, the showing of home movies, the care packages from CONUS and the radio shack "phone patches" are but some of our log enteries.

However, it isn't all fun and games. We work and we would like to think, work well. Our doctors are just superb and the Lord knows their task isn't an easy one. Likewise our nurses. Crowded ward conditions - peak census of six hundred forty seven patients in May - doesn't hamper their unheralded performance. Our corpsmen also do not have to take a back seat to anyone, as evidenced by the fact that the Operating Room was able to effectively run three rooms during March, when three hundred ninety one procedures were performed and again in May when our figures reached four hundred fourteen. This was accomplished by six technicians and two inexperienced on the job trainees. Needless to say, many long, sleepless and hungry hours were well spent. This together with the team performance of personnel in the Re-

covery Room, Intensive Care Unit, Central Supply, Blood Bank and Lab, plus the not to be forgotten outstanding ward personnel, makes us proud members of AH 16, humorously known in Wes Pac as Attack Hospital 16; since we "kissed an oiler during a refueling operation on June 12 requiring us to go on the serious list and necessitated a "dry dock recuperation period" in Subic Bay.

All in all, we have indeed been fortunate. Our patient turnover has greatly increased but our fatalities have remained at a low level. Our many "chopper touchdowns" have been accident free thanks to the skill of the pilots and the excellence of our ship's line officers. Our supplies can reach an all time low but as of now we've managed to have the right things at the right time. Our morale can falter now and then, somehow forty to fifty five days at sea can get the best of you, but one glimpse of the battle torn young men arriving at Triage banishes all of our discontentments.

In conclusion our performance since January 1967 to us is commendable. We have admitted four thousand eight hundred thirteen patients to our wards, accomplished one thousand nine hundred forty seven surgical procedures including ten open heart operations and one portal caval shunt, landed four thousand six hundred sixty five choppers on our flight deck without incident, and on 29 July our ship was underway within twenty eight minutes enroute to the Gulf of Tonkin to render assistance to the USS FORRESTAL, which was burning and had many seriously injured casualties on board.

Yes, it has been a good ten months. We have all gained professionally from our experience. Most of us have more insight, are more tolerant, more understanding and all should leave our beloved "white bucket" better people. We might add with more sturdy sea legs too, especially after our sick three day encounter with Typhoon Nancy and the other squalls that cross our bow.

In closing accept our apology for the lengthy interval between the Newletters. However, we do hereby promise to be more informative of the latest happenings and events of the number one ship in the U.S. NAVY - the USS REPOSE.