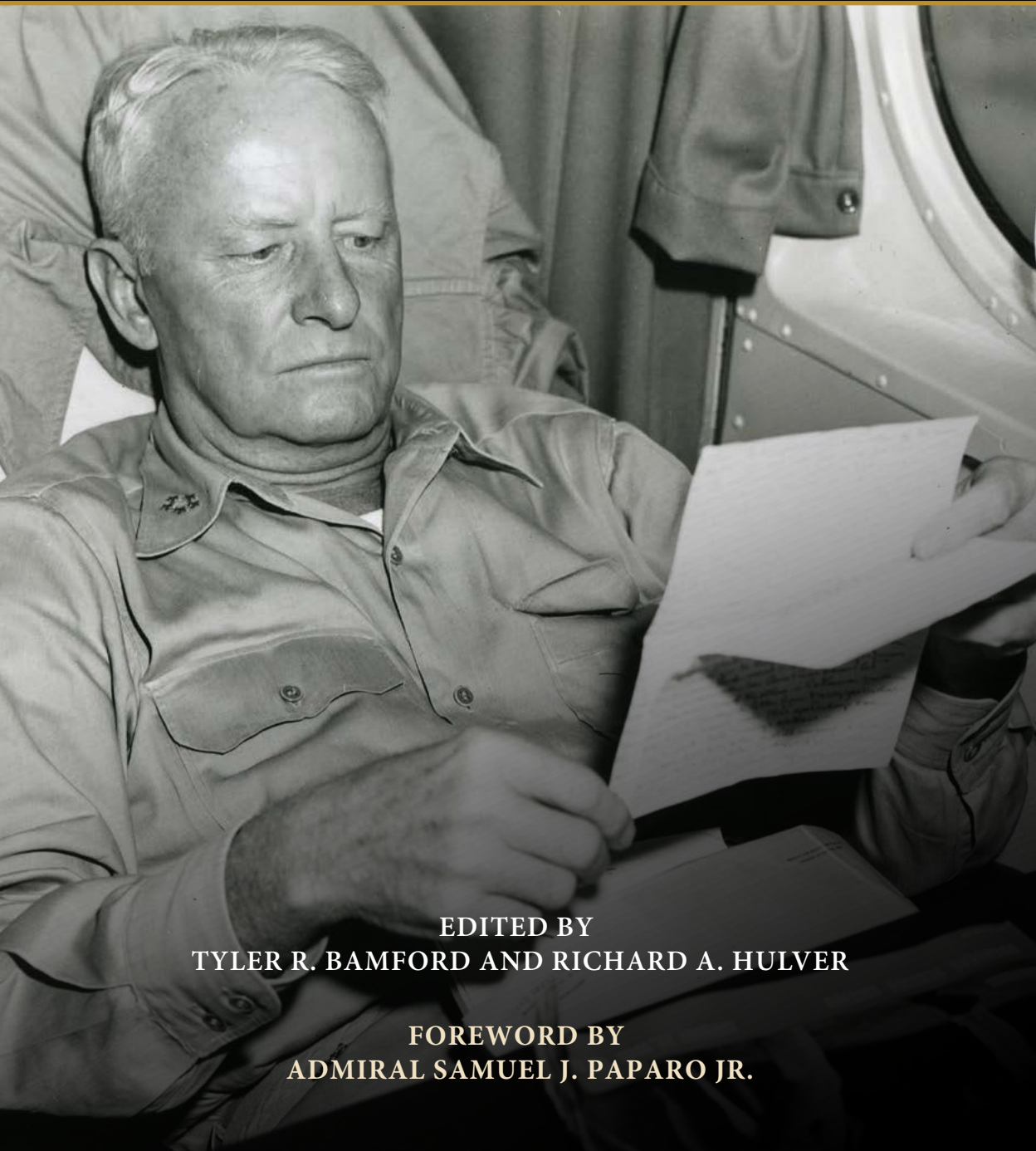


CONTRIBUTIONS TO NAVAL HISTORY NO. 11

Best Beloved

THE WARTIME LETTERS OF FLEET ADMIRAL
CHESTER W. NIMITZ TO HIS WIFE, CATHERINE



EDITED BY
TYLER R. BAMFORD AND RICHARD A. HULVER

FOREWORD BY
ADMIRAL SAMUEL J. PAPARO JR.

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Contents



Illustrations.....	vii
Foreword.....	ix
Preface.....	xi
Editorial Method.....	xv
Introduction.....	xvii
Abbreviations.....	xliii
Chronology.....	xlvii
1941.....	3
1942.....	15
1943.....	49
1944.....	53
1945.....	97
Bibliography.....	197
Index.....	207

Illustrations



1. Nimitz and Catherine in 1913.....	xxi
2. Battleship Row after the Japanese attack.....	6
3. Nimitz’s living quarters in Hawaii.....	14
4. Nimitz relieves Vice Admiral William S. Pye.....	14
5. Nimitz with Lieutenant General Delos C. Emmons and Rear Admiral Milo F. Draemel.....	19
6. Nimitz emerges from a bunker on Midway Atoll.....	25
7. Nimitz presents awards to personnel on Midway Atoll.....	26
8. Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, staff photo.....	30
9. Nimitz confers with South Pacific Area officers.....	37
10. Nimitz and family in Alameda, California.....	46
11. Nimitz congratulates his son.....	47
12. Abandoned tracked landing vehicles (LVTs) on Tarawa.....	52
13. Nimitz is decorated with his family.....	54
14. Nimitz pitching horseshoes.....	71
15. Nimitz and his dog Makalapa, “Mak”.....	79
16. Nimitz with Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, RN.....	82
17. <i>NIMITZ</i> by Lieutenant Commander William F. Draper.....	110
18. The large cruiser <i>Alaska</i> (CB-1).....	128

19. Nimitz's personal plane on Guam.....	144
20. Nimitz and senior officers on Guam.....	145
21. Nimitz and Major General Henry L. Larsen on Guam.....	150
22. Destroyed buildings on Guam.....	160
23. Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal, Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, and Nimitz on Saipan.....	170
24. Nimitz and companions cruise along the Guam coast.....	172
25. Nimitz arrives on Iwo Jima.....	174
26. Nimitz and other officers survey Iwo Jima.....	174
27. Nimitz inspects battle damage on Okinawa.....	184
28. Nimitz signs the surrender document.....	191
29. Diagram of the Japanese surrender ceremony.....	192
30. Nimitz returns to Washington, DC, in October 1945.....	195
31. Nimitz and Catherine upon his retirement from the Navy.....	195

Foreword



History remembers Chester W. Nimitz as the resolute commander who steered the Pacific Fleet to victory over Japan in World War II. But beneath the stoic exterior resided a man deeply connected to his family, yearning for home, and sharing his burdens with the one person he trusted completely: his wife, Catherine.

As the leader of the U.S. Pacific Fleet today, working in the same office where Admiral Nimitz cataloged his thoughts for his wife, I am deeply moved by the personal story revealed through these letters. They unveil the human side of wartime leadership—a leader grappling with daily high-stakes decisions while finding solace and refuge in his family.

For Sailors, family is the harbor in a storm. We serve to protect them, safeguard their freedoms, and ensure their peaceful existence. They are the foundation upon which we build ourselves and the source of our deepest motivations. Our loved ones, whether sharing our dinner table tonight or separated by vast distances, embody our values and shape our character. Their unwavering support is the pillar that sustains us through the stresses of high tempo operations and the uncertainties of deployments and separations.

These truths resonate profoundly when considering Fleet Admiral Nimitz and his wartime relationship with his wife. This book offers a unique window into his life through a remarkable collection: his daily letters to Catherine throughout World War II. Imagine the weight of leading the Pacific Fleet during such a pivotal moment. Despite the immense burden he carried, Admiral Nimitz never allowed the emotional lifeline to his family to weaken.

These never-before-published letters are a testament to the enduring power of family bonds. They remind us that even the strongest leader relies on the unwavering support of their loved ones. In sharing his daily thoughts and experiences with Catherine, Admiral Nimitz offers a glimpse into the human side of wartime

leadership—a story not just of grand strategy and battlefield triumphs, but of the quiet strength found in family and the critical role it plays in weathering unimaginable challenges.

As you read these letters, consider the themes that echo so deeply with the Navy family today. See how Admiral Nimitz, despite the immense responsibility on his shoulders, never lost sight of the importance of connection. May his story serve as a beacon for all Sailors, Marines, Soldiers, Airmen, Guardians, Coast Guardsmen, and their families. Let it be a constant reminder that even in the face of overwhelming duty, the unwavering support of our loved ones remains the cornerstone of our mission and the wellspring of our inner strength.

Admiral Samuel J. Paparo Jr.

Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command

Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, 2021–2024

Preface



As the commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet during World War II, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz commanded the largest naval force in history and orchestrated the Central Pacific campaigns that destroyed the Imperial Japanese Navy. While Nimitz was the theater commander responsible for the decisive U.S. naval victories at Midway and the Philippine Sea, he is less familiar to Americans today than his more outspoken wartime colleagues in the Pacific, Fleet Admiral William F. “Bull” Halsey Jr. and General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, or Nimitz’s counterpart in Europe, General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Nimitz’s aversion to self-promotion led to his more modest wartime profile in the American press, as he consistently eschewed dramatic pronouncements. After retiring as Chief of Naval Operations in 1947, Nimitz declined repeated requests to write his memoirs because he did not want to risk disparaging other officers’ accomplishments. Nimitz also refused to profit from his wartime prominence by accepting lucrative offers to join the boards of private companies or running for public office. It was Nimitz’s firm conviction that it was wrong for him to benefit from his wartime service when so many men and women had sacrificed their lives during the conflict. His lifelong habit of discretion, however, has somewhat obscured his contributions to the Allies’ victory in the Pacific.

The sole exceptions to Nimitz’s unwillingness to record his personal opinions were his letters to his wife, Catherine. Nimitz and Catherine had been married for 28 years when President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered Rear Admiral Nimitz to the U.S. Territory of Hawaii to assume command of the Pacific Fleet after the United States’ entry into World War II. Like many other couples, Nimitz and Catherine did not know how long his assignment would last. As a military family, they were no strangers to long separations, but the duration of Nimitz’s absence and the immense strain placed on him as a theater commander set it apart from all of their previous experiences as a married couple.

During the nearly four years that the Nimitzes spent apart, the pair exchanged hundreds of letters. Admiral Nimitz could relate only vague details of the war's progress to his wife, but the letters were a vital outlet for his worries and stress during the war's darkest days. More often, Nimitz and Catherine discussed their health, friends, family, finances, and future plans in their correspondence. Although only the admiral's letters survive, they offer an intimate snapshot of the Nimitzes' life-long partnership and their vast number of acquaintances scattered around the world. Nimitz often recounted his daily activities and occasionally hinted at the undertaking of major war operations, but his correspondence was also filled with expressions of pride and support for Catherine's own tireless efforts to aid Americans in uniform.

Chester Nimitz never intended for his letters to be read by anyone but Catherine. He destroyed all of the correspondence that she sent to him during the war, and he expected that she would do the same to his missives. Catherine dutifully burned most of her husband's letters that contained sensitive subjects (one of the surviving letters exhibits charred edges), but she preserved hand-copied extracts from approximately 73 of his letters and original pages from about 75 more. Between 1966 and 1982, Catherine and her children entrusted this surviving correspondence to the Naval Historical Center (now the Naval History and Heritage Command) in Washington, DC. These letters provide the best source for understanding the thoughts and motivations of the man most responsible for U.S. victory in the Pacific War and his relationship with his beloved wife. They are a window into the Nimitzes' private life, and it is hoped that their publication in this volume will shed light not only on Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz's wartime experiences but also those of Catherine Nimitz, the Nimitz children, and Admiral Nimitz's fellow service members.

Acknowledgments

This volume is the result of a collaborative effort by historians, archivists, and librarians of the Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) under the leadership of its director, Rear Admiral Samuel J. Cox (Ret.). Richard A. Hulver initially conceived of a volume containing Fleet Admiral Nimitz's correspondence to his wife, transcribed nearly all of the fragile handwritten letters, and began annotating the transcriptions. After Richard left NHHC, Tyler R. Bamford completed annotating the letters and wrote the introduction for the present volume. The editors have incurred many debts over the course of this project and wish to convey their sincere appreciation to those who assisted in its completion. Aside from the editors themselves, no one devoted more time to the project than our supervisor, Charles E. Brodine Jr., who acted as a constant source of guidance and also spent countless hours carefully copyediting the manuscript and suggesting ways to improve the text. Martin R. Waldman, Shawn R. Woodford, Zachary FERENCE, and Joel

M. Hebert assisted in verifying the accuracy of the letter transcriptions. Laura A. Waayers of the NHHHC Archives cataloged, scanned, and pieced together the occasionally fragmentary letters, while Lisa M. Crunk, Jon Roscoe, and Pamela J. Overman located a number of the accompanying images for inclusion in this volume. Librarians Megan L. Casey, Heidrun Perez, Penny S. Weinstein, Emily C. Brown, and Karen R. Johnson helped locate and obtain relevant books, unpublished biographies, and oral histories. Christopher B. Havern offered constructive suggestions for the improvement of the book's front matter. Emily Abdow guided the manuscript through the final publication process and expertly copyedited and proofread the text. In the production stages, the editors further benefited from the talents of Darnell Surles, who designed the front and back covers for the volume, and Jiyoun Han, who crafted the interior design and text layout. Special thanks is owed to Robert J. Cressman, who carefully reviewed and edited the entire manuscript, improving its accuracy and identifying several individuals mentioned in Nimitz's letters. Finally, branch head Gregory D. Bereiter supported this project from its inception and granted its editors the time and resources necessary to see it through to completion.

Any errors within the volume are the sole responsibility of the editors and no fault of those mentioned above who so generously gave their time and expertise.

Editorial Method



The editors of this collection endeavored to present Nimitz's surviving letters with as few interruptions or alterations to the original text as possible, while still rendering their meaning clear to readers. Although there are several extended periods during the war from which none of Admiral Nimitz's letters survive, the editors elected not to insert commentary among the correspondence but rather let the documents stand alone. Instead, the front matter of this volume features a concise biography of Nimitz and a chronology of the major events in his life in order to provide context for his wartime correspondence.

Within the text of Nimitz's letters, the names of ships, aircraft, and publications appear in italics to make their identities clear. The printed letterheads on the original pages have been omitted in order to conserve space with the exception of the first example of each type. All punctuation, spelling, and capitalization has been faithfully reproduced, and all editorial insertions or illegible omissions are indicated by brackets. When known, the editors have supplied the location where each letter was written in bracketed, italicized text. All mistakes within the letters that Nimitz himself corrected, such as crossing out a misspelled word, have been silently omitted. Nimitz commonly made minor errors when spelling individuals' names, but his references are often clear and therefore no action was taken to rectify or indicate the errors. All superscripts and inserted text have been brought down to the line. Nimitz frequently used abbreviations when referring to people, places, and organizations in his letters, and a list of his most commonly used abbreviations can be found in the front of this volume. The meaning of each abbreviation also appears in brackets on the occasion of its first appearance in the text.

The editors have included annotations of all known individuals upon their first mention in the letters, including full name, branch of service, rank at that time, and position. In instances where a person could not be identified, no annotation

has been provided. Additional notes have been added to clarify significant places, events, and objects in order to offer readers the fullest possible context of Admiral Nimitz's words. Although Nimitz regularly used racist epithets to refer to the Japanese people, the editors have chosen not to excise these words in order to present his wartime thoughts and opinions as accurately as possible.

Before Admiral Nimitz's wife and other heirs donated his letters to the Naval Historical Center, they censored a number of the original letters to remove salutations and indications of affection between Nimitz and Catherine. The editors of this volume have recovered much of this obscured text, but have indicated all places where restoration proved impossible. These expressions give evidence of Nimitz and Catherine's steadfast devotion to one another in a marriage that lasted for more than five decades. The formerly redacted sentences, moreover, serve as an important reminder for readers that these letters contain Nimitz's innermost private thoughts and were intended only for Catherine Nimitz's consumption. More than anything else, this correspondence was a critical conduit for Nimitz to maintain the most important relationship of his life.

As noted above, 73 of the letters are not in Fleet Admiral Nimitz's handwriting but rather are excerpts that Catherine carefully copied from the original letters before she burned them. In the process, Catherine deliberately omitted large portions of the text that she did not wish to be made public. The omissions likely include all indications of affection and most of Nimitz's private thoughts on individuals and the war. These letters can be recognized in the text by the absence of salutations. They span the dates 20 December 1941–29 November 1943 and 17 March 1945–7 May 1945. All of the letters are presented here in chronological order with accompanying wartime images.

Introduction



Chester William Nimitz was born on 24 February 1885 in the small town of Fredericksburg, Texas, to parents descended from German immigrants. His father, Chester Bernard Nimitz, died before he was born, and his widowed mother, Anna Henke, married her first husband's youngest brother when Nimitz was five years old.¹ Nimitz enjoyed an active childhood in Kerrville, Texas, and in Fredericksburg, where his paternal grandfather, Charles Henry Nimitz, owned a thriving hotel. Chester Nimitz went to work in the hotel business himself at the age of 15, when he began doing odd jobs after school at the St. Charles Hotel in Kerrville. The hotel often hosted U.S. Army officers from Fort Sam Houston, and in the summer of 1900 Nimitz encountered a pair of smartly uniformed recent graduates of the U.S. Military Academy who stopped at the St. Charles. Impressed by the sophistication and military bearing of these young lieutenants, Nimitz decided that he too wished to become an Army officer.² With few prospects in Texas, Nimitz saw the military as a way to travel and obtain an education, but he was disappointed when he wrote to the War Department in the spring of 1900 and learned that there would be no available vacancies at West Point from his congressional district until 1904.³ He redirected his ambition, however, when the Navy Department informed him that there was an appointment to the United States Naval Academy available by competitive examination.⁴ Seizing on this opportunity, Nimitz began a strict study regimen that resulted in him receiving the best score among prospective applicants in his district.⁵ He subsequently secured an appointment to Annapolis from Representative James Slaydon and enrolled at the Naval Academy in September 1901, even though he had not completed high school.⁶

That same year, the infamous Sampson-Schley controversy—a debate about which admiral was most responsible for the U.S. naval victory at the Battle of Santiago in 1898—culminated in a court of inquiry.⁷ Nimitz observed the negative

publicity that the episode brought upon the Navy and the widespread disagreements it engendered within its ranks. He consequently resolved to never publicly slander a fellow officer.⁸ It was this lifelong commitment to discretion that historian E. B. Potter, Nimitz's preeminent biographer, later claimed prompted the admiral to withhold "censure and all facts on which censure might conceivably be based" from documents he wrote during his lifetime that could become public. The sole exceptions outside of classified reports were the letters that he later wrote to his wife, which she understood were for her eyes alone and therefore took care to burn after she read them.⁹

During Nimitz's time at the academy, he excelled in the study of mathematics, ordnance, mechanics, steam engineering, and Spanish.¹⁰ Outside of his coursework, Nimitz enjoyed competing as a member of the school's crew team. In a letter to his family, he declared that he had won his "right to wear the red 'N'" for rowing on the varsity crew team and had become "an enthusiastic lover of rowing and boat racing."¹¹ Nimitz frequently mailed notes to his grandfather and stepfather back in Texas, informing them about the progress of his studies, the status of his health, and various details of his routine. He became ill on several occasions, and in November 1901 he lamented that he had fallen behind on his schoolwork after being hospitalized with pneumonia for more than a week.¹² In April 1904, Nimitz shared with his stepfather how he became sick yet again after his class was called out with the academy's firefighting apparatus one cold night to subdue a large blaze that had broken out in the town of Annapolis. Nimitz concluded his letter by remarking, "You ought to have seen how muddy and slimy we looked when we came back—and cold. And we had recitations the next day just as if nothing had happened."¹³ While Nimitz's health, especially a recurring trouble with his ear, occasionally made it more difficult to execute his duties, he successfully passed all of his physical exams.¹⁴ Nimitz performed well on his summer training cruises, and he hoped to be assigned to one of the Navy's new battleships or cruisers as his time at Annapolis drew to a close.¹⁵ He graduated from the Naval Academy on 30 January 1905 ranked seventh in overall achievement in a class of 114.¹⁶

Passed Midshipman Nimitz's first assignment after graduation was on board *Ohio* (Battleship No. 12), flagship of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet. Nimitz must have welcomed the news since he had confided to his stepfather just before graduating that he preferred the Asiatic Fleet to any other station.¹⁷ After less than four months of service on board the aged *Baltimore* (Cruiser No. 3), newly commissioned Ensign Nimitz received command of the former Spanish gunboat *Panay* in the Philippines. In July 1907, during a period of heightened tensions between Japan and the United States, the 22-year-old Nimitz was given command of *Decatur* (Destroyer No. 5).¹⁸ In May of the following year, *Decatur* visited the city of Saigon in present-day Vietnam for four days. While Nimitz thoroughly enjoyed the port call, the return

trip almost proved disastrous. According to *Decatur's* young captain, the destroyer ran into a typhoon soon after departing Saigon for Manila and reached its destination only after a 72-hour struggle against the storm. "At times I thought the ship would roll completely over," Nimitz explained to his stepfather, "and at times I thought she would break into [in two]. You could see her bend like a timber plank when these 40 & 50 ft. waves would go under her. And they didn't always go under her, almost half the time they came over the deck as high as your head."¹⁹ Nimitz recounted how the ship nearly lost several people washed overboard and barely had enough coal to make it to Manila after fighting the rough seas. Following three years of duty in the Far East, Nimitz eagerly anticipated returning to the United States when an unanticipated event derailed his plans.

On the night of 7 July 1908, *Decatur* ran aground on a mud bank while entering Batangas harbor in the Philippines. None of the crew were injured, and a passing steamer pulled the destroyer free the following morning.²⁰ Nimitz dutifully reported the incident and was ordered to appear before a court-martial. Owing to his outstanding service record until this point, the court reduced the charges against Nimitz from "culpable inefficiency in the performance of duty" to "neglect of duty" and ordered that he receive only a public reprimand.²¹ Fortunately, the young ensign commanding escaped the ordeal with almost no ill effects to his career. He took away from the experience that even conscientious officers could make mistakes and that they deserved second chances. This conviction became a central tenet of Nimitz's command philosophy, and he later saved the careers of a number of gifted naval officers by showing them leniency.²²

Following Nimitz's return to the United States, he merited promotion to lieutenant and commanded a series of gasoline-powered submarines. He was disappointed at the prospect of serving in the Navy's cramped submarines and would have much preferred duty on battleships, which he saw as more advantageous to his career. Nevertheless, Nimitz threw himself into his new assignment and became one of the Navy's foremost experts on diesel engines.²³ He vigorously campaigned within the Navy in the hope of convincing senior leaders to convert the Navy's submarines to diesel-powered propulsion systems, a change that would reduce the risk of explosion and toxic gasoline fumes. His technical knowledge did not go unnoticed both inside and outside the service, and he once declined an offer to work for a diesel engine manufacturing company and earn the then-enormous sum of \$25,000 per year.²⁴

In November 1911, while overseeing the installation of diesel engines in the submarine *E-1* (Submarine No. 24, formerly *Skipjack*) in Quincy, Massachusetts, Nimitz met 19-year-old Catherine Vance Freeman, the intelligent and engaging daughter of Mary M. Freeman and successful shipbroker Richard R. Freeman.²⁵ The 26-year-old Nimitz first met Catherine during a game of bridge at her

family's home. While naval officers frequently called at the Freemans' house to see Catherine's older sister, Elizabeth, Nimitz was taken with the younger Freeman sister and soon began acting as her escort. The pair initiated a correspondence when Nimitz was at sea and became engaged less than a year later. Several of the couple's friends later declared that Catherine was every bit Nimitz's intellectual equal, and the pair shared many interests and tastes. Lieutenant Nimitz and Catherine were married on 9 April 1913 and sailed for Europe the following month. The Navy had dispatched Nimitz to Germany with orders to observe the latest developments in large marine diesel engines, and the newlyweds took advantage of the opportunity to sightsee in Germany, Denmark, and Sweden.²⁶ By the time the couple journeyed back to the United States in the summer of 1913, Catherine was pregnant with their first child.

Upon returning stateside, Nimitz was assigned to the New York Navy Yard in Brooklyn to oversee the outfitting of *Maumee* (Fuel Ship No. 14) with two 2,600-horsepower diesel engines.²⁷ In the meantime, Catherine gave birth to a daughter named Catherine Vance on 22 February 1914. To avoid confusion between mother and child, the younger Catherine frequently went by the nickname "Kate." The following year, while Nimitz was still completing the installation of *Maumee's* engines, Catherine gave birth to a son named Chester Junior on 17 February 1915. The Nimitzes often called young Chester "Chet" to distinguish him from his father.

When the 14,500-ton *Maumee* was finally completed, Lieutenant Nimitz assumed the role of both its executive officer and chief engineer. He was still serving on board the vessel in Cuban waters when the United States declared war on Germany and entered World War I on 6 April 1917. Europe had been at war since August 1914, but the United States had remained ostensibly neutral while supplying goods and extending loans to all of the belligerent powers. Nimitz's brother-in-law, Richard R. Freeman Jr., became a civilian casualty of World War I when he was killed aboard the British ocean liner RMS *Lusitania* on 7 May 1915 while travelling to Russia to take a job as a mining engineer. The 28-year-old Freeman was one of the 128 Americans who perished aboard the ship after the German submarine *U-20* torpedoed the vessel without warning off the southern coast of Ireland. Out of 1,960 passengers and crew, a total of 1,196 men, women, and children aboard *Lusitania* perished. The ship was sailing from New York to Liverpool, England, and carried more than four million rounds of small-arms ammunition and thousands of artillery shell casings among its cargo.²⁸ It is unknown whether Nimitz expressed any thoughts on the death of his brother-in-law, though prior to World War I, Nimitz was a vocal proponent of the U.S. Navy's development of submarines owing to his extensive service with those vessels. In 1912, Nimitz wrote, "The



Lieutenant Chester W. Nimitz and Catherine Freeman Nimitz shortly after their wedding in April 1913. (Sr. Mary Aquinas Nimitz Collection, National Museum of the Pacific War [NMPW], 2005.661.259m)

steady development of the torpedo together with the gradual improvement in the size, motive power, and speed of submarine craft of the near future will result in a most dangerous offensive weapon, and one which will have a large part in deciding fleet actions.”²⁹

After Germany reinstated its policy of unrestricted submarine warfare against neutral shipping and sent a coded message to Mexico urging it to attack the United States, President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war.³⁰ The small U.S. Army could offer little immediate help to the Allies, but the U.S. Navy made an immediate contribution to the fight against German submarines in the Atlantic. Following U.S. entry into the war, *Maumee* sailed to take up station in the ice-strewn waters off the southern coast of Greenland. In the first three months of the war, Nimitz and *Maumee*’s commander, Lieutenant Commander Henry C. Dinger, successfully performed the Navy’s first wartime underway refueling operations. Despite the rough conditions, *Maumee* refueled 34 U.S. destroyers that were en route to Ireland to perform antisubmarine patrols. The experience later gave the U.S. Navy unprecedented logistical capabilities during the Pacific campaigns in World War II.³¹

In August 1917, the Navy assigned Nimitz as engineering aide to Captain Samuel S. Robison, Commander, Submarine Force, Atlantic Fleet.³² Nimitz assisted Robison in preparing the U.S. Navy’s nascent submarine fleet for deployment to Europe, and together they toured British and French naval bases and submarine construction facilities.³³ The war ended before U.S. submarines could deploy to Europe in force, however, and Nimitz was reassigned to the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations on the Board of Submarine Design. Nimitz subsequently spent a year at sea as the executive officer of *South Carolina* (Battleship No. 26). While Nimitz gained valuable credentials from the experience, he regretted being absent for the birth of his third child, a daughter named Anna, on 13 September 1919. The Nimitzes soon began calling their youngest daughter “Nancy” since she little resembled her namesake, her grandmother Anna Nimitz. Anna continued to go by “Nancy” throughout her life.³⁴ Following duty on *South Carolina*, Nimitz hoped that his next assignment would be in Boston. Instead, he was given his most difficult assignment yet, halfway around the world.

In June 1920, the Navy ordered Commander Nimitz to construct a submarine base at Pearl Harbor using the surplus World War I materials that he could gather from naval bases on the East Coast.³⁵ Armed with a map of Hawaii and instructions that the facility should include a foundry and machine shop, Nimitz and the chief petty officers assigned to assist him set out to requisition the necessary materials. Nimitz soon realized that base commanders were reluctant to declare any materials surplus that they might conceivably need in the future. Forced to desperation, the chief petty officers removed some equipment at night, including

the official car belonging to the commanding officer of one base.³⁶ When Nimitz arrived in Hawaii with his family, he was dismayed to find that the site of the prospective submarine base included little more than overgrown cacti and the immobile old cruiser *Chicago* (CA-14), anchored to provide officer living quarters. Nimitz and his men immediately set to work clearing the land and erecting the necessary structures. One year later, the base was completed and Nimitz became both the base commander and Commander, Submarine Division 14.³⁷ During this period, Nimitz socialized with prominent local businessmen such as Sandy Walker, and he happily renewed these friendships two decades later when he returned to the island.³⁸

At the conclusion of Nimitz's tour of duty in Hawaii, he and his family returned to the East Coast so that he could attend the U.S. Naval War College from June 1922 to June 1923. It was there that Nimitz's classmate Commander Roscoe C. MacFall devised a revolutionary circular formation for the fleet.³⁹ For centuries, ships had sailed and fought in columns to facilitate ease of movement and the concentration of a fleet's broadside firepower. The advent of the aircraft carrier and oceangoing submarine, however, created new threats. MacFall's circular formation protected valuable battleships at the center of the circle from both enemy submarines and aircraft with a ring of cruisers and destroyers. The formation was also surprisingly easy to maneuver and redeploy for battle in a column formation with the approach of an enemy fleet. Following graduation from the Naval War College, Nimitz found himself in the perfect position to introduce this new formation to the fleet.

Shortly after graduating, he reported to the battleship *California* (BB-44) on the West Coast. Nimitz's former World War I boss, the recently promoted Admiral Samuel S. Robison, had used his influence to arrange Nimitz's new assignment. On 30 June 1923, Robison became Commander in Chief, U.S. Battle Fleet, the second-most senior command in the U.S. Navy, and he requested that Nimitz be appointed his assistant chief of staff and tactical officer. In the face of opposition from the senior captains of the fleet, Nimitz persuaded Admiral Robison to experiment with the circular formation. The results proved not only its viability but also its effectiveness in defending capital ships. Nimitz further lobbied for the integration of the Navy's first aircraft carrier, *Langley* (CV-1), into the fleet and successfully demonstrated that the circular formation provided complete protection to the carrier and its escorts even during launching and recovery operations. Many officers remained committed to the primacy of battleships, however, and resisted these new tactics so that the circular formation did not become standard in the fleet until after the attack on Pearl Harbor, when carriers replaced battleships as the Navy's main fleet units. Nevertheless, Nimitz later credited the fleet's experiments in 1924 with "laying the groundwork for the cruising formations that we used in World War II in the carrier air groups and practically every kind of task force that went out."⁴⁰

Between August 1926 and June 1928, Nimitz established a Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) unit at the University of California, Berkeley.⁴¹ The unit was part of a new Navy initiative to broaden the pool of qualified officers that the Navy could call on in the event of a national emergency. The NROTC proved a resounding success at economically training midshipmen. Nimitz recruited so many students during his first year at the university that he had to turn away a number of qualified candidates.⁴² He excelled at teaching despite possessing neither a high school diploma nor a bachelor's degree, and he once again demonstrated his ability to work with individuals from a variety of backgrounds.⁴³ The faculty at the university came to respect Nimitz's opinion and professional experience and even invited him to join a promotions committee and a hiring committee for new faculty. In return, both Chester and Catherine Nimitz enjoyed socializing with the faculty, who provided an interesting change from the Navy officers they usually had as neighbors.⁴⁴

When his time at Berkeley ended, now-Captain Nimitz assumed command of Submarine Division 20 based in San Diego, followed by an assignment maintaining 35 mothballed destroyers laid up in the same city. The change in duties coincided to the day with the birth of his fourth and last child, a daughter named Mary Manson, born on 17 June 1931. The following year, his son Chet enrolled in the U.S. Naval Academy, fulfilling Nimitz's long-held wish. Despite these joyous events, Nimitz found his assignment at the San Diego destroyer base to be one of the most trying of his career because it provided few challenges.

Finally, in October 1933, Nimitz returned to sea as commanding officer of the heavy cruiser *Augusta* (CL-31). As the flagship of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, *Augusta* visited the Philippines, Australia, Japan, China, and the Dutch East Indies (modern-day Indonesia). Under Nimitz's command, *Augusta* reached what one of its former officers called "an absolutely unheard-of level of high morale, high pride, and competence at every level, down to the lowliest mess cook."⁴⁵ Soft spoken and easy going, Nimitz preferred to lead by example rather than exhortation. He trained the crew of *Augusta* so that even junior ensigns got experience handling the ship, and he expected all of his officers to train their subordinates to take over for them if necessary. Nimitz's emphasis on training and discipline quickly paid off. Under his command, *Augusta* won numerous fleet competitions in everything from gunnery to athletics. Catherine, meanwhile, followed her husband to Asia and lived with their daughters in Japan and then Shanghai for a time.⁴⁶

Nimitz next moved his family to Washington, DC, where he served as assistant chief of the Bureau of Navigation. The bureau handled all of the promotions, assignments, and recruiting for the Navy, and Captain Nimitz frequently acted as its head when his boss, Rear Admiral Adolphus Andrews, was away on errands for President Franklin D. Roosevelt.⁴⁷ In this capacity, Nimitz became intimately

familiar with the operations of the Navy Department, though he disdained the political infighting common among officers in the capital and hoped for a return to a sea command. He got his wish in early 1938, when the Navy selected him for promotion to rear admiral. In July, Nimitz reported to San Diego to assume command of Cruiser Division 2. Just prior to departing on their cross-country drive to California, the Nimitzes attended the wedding of their son Chet to Joan Labern on 18 June 1938.

Less than two months after Nimitz began his prestigious new assignment, he suffered a hernia and had to undergo reparative surgery. The time off to recover cost Nimitz his command, but once he returned to duty, he was offered command of the even more desirable Battleship Division 1.⁴⁸ Nimitz broke his flag on board *Arizona* (BB-39) on 17 September 1938. The following January, he briefly became the senior naval officer on the West Coast when most of the fleet took part in Fleet Problem XX in the Caribbean. With *Arizona*, a fleet carrier, a cruiser, several destroyers and auxiliaries, and a tanker under his temporary command, Nimitz conducted exercises designed to improve underway refueling and amphibious landings. The task force and its accompanying Marine Corps detachment learned valuable lessons from the training, such as the unsuitability of non-purpose-built boats for landing troops on a hostile shore.⁴⁹

Nimitz had been in command of Battleship Division 1 for less than a year when he received orders to return to Washington, DC. In July 1937, Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China, and the following March, Germany annexed Austria. The United States condemned Germany's and Japan's acts but refused to sanction the two nations. Instead, Congress passed a series of neutrality acts designed to keep the United States out of any conflict by preventing loans or the sale of arms to belligerents.⁵⁰ Aware that professions of neutrality would do little to ensure the United States' security, Congress also began expanding the Navy as the nation's first line of defense.⁵¹

Upon relinquishing command of Battleship Division 1, Rear Admiral Nimitz arrived in Washington, DC, in June 1939 to become the chief of the Bureau of Navigation.⁵² This critical post gave the 54-year-old rear admiral responsibility for nearly all of the Navy's major training facilities, recruitment, promotions, and assignments less than three months before World War II broke out in Europe.⁵³ Nimitz faced the enormous task of streamlining the Navy's training programs and dramatically increasing the number of sailors in order to crew the new ships scheduled to join the fleet as a result of massive congressional appropriations. The 1940 Two-Ocean Navy Act alone provided for an additional 257 ships and 13,000 aircraft for the Navy.⁵⁴ Although Nimitz preferred a sea command to working in an office, he was an efficient administrator who brought much-needed expertise to the Navy's personnel management during this critical period. He cut through red

tape to expand training facilities and increased the number of appointees to the Naval Academy.⁵⁵ Despite Nimitz's efforts to expand the Navy, he did not address the Navy's systematic racial discrimination. In October 1940, 15 African American sailors serving aboard the light cruiser *Philadelphia* (CL-41) wrote an open letter to the *Pittsburgh Courier* newspaper to expose the racist abuse they had endured and to reveal to potential Black recruits that the only rating available to them in the Navy was mess attendant.⁵⁶ Nimitz responded by summarily issuing the sailors undesirable and bad-conduct discharges. When the admiral granted an interview to the *Courier* in December, he acknowledged that racial discrimination existed within the Navy's ranks but claimed that there was no way to address it and still maintain "ship efficiency."⁵⁷ He subsequently declined to address complaints of racism or expand opportunities for African Americans during his tenure at the Bureau of Navigation.

Nimitz's career up to this point had made him familiar with many of the Navy's senior officers, but he now became well-acquainted with the records of those with whom he had not yet served. President Roosevelt developed a high opinion of Nimitz in his new capacity, and the President leaned heavily on Nimitz's recommendations for promotions and assignments of senior officers during this critical period. In response to the threat that Japan posed to Southeast Asia and the Philippines, Roosevelt had retained the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Hawaiian waters in spring 1940 as a deterrent to further Japanese expansion. The fleet's commander at the time, Admiral James O. Richardson, repeatedly protested the move because he did not believe that the United States should take actions that increased the risk of becoming involved in a war in Asia. Nor did he believe that Hawaii had the necessary facilities to support the fleet on a war footing.⁵⁸ Finally, Roosevelt relieved Richardson and unexpectedly offered Nimitz command of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, a post second only to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO). While honored, Nimitz politely excused himself from accepting the command. He explained that he was too junior for such a high-level assignment and that he was likely to incur a substantial amount of ill will from the 50 more-senior officers over whom he would jump to accept the post.⁵⁹ Instead, Rear Admiral Husband E. Kimmel assumed command of the fleet with the temporary rank of admiral on 1 February 1941.

On Sunday, 7 December 1941, Nimitz was relaxing with his wife, 10-year-old daughter Mary, daughter-in-law Joan, and granddaughter Frances in the apartment that he and Catherine rented on Q Street in Washington, DC. At 1500, the admiral sat down to listen to a radio broadcast of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Almost immediately, a news bulletin interrupted the program. The announcer relayed that Japanese planes had attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor. When Nimitz heard these words, he jumped to his feet and rushed to his

office in the Navy Department building.⁶⁰ As the national press slowly released more details about the attack, it became readily apparent that Admiral Kimmel had lost the confidence of most political leaders and needed to be replaced.

A little more than a week later, on Tuesday, 16 December 1941, Nimitz was working at his desk when Secretary of the Navy William Franklin “Frank” Knox summoned the admiral. Exhausted from working nine days with little sleep, Nimitz trudged over to Knox’s office. When Nimitz arrived, Knox asked the rear admiral how soon he could be ready to travel. Nimitz replied that it depended on where he was going and how long he would be away. Knox answered, “You’re going to take command of the Pacific Fleet, and I think you will be gone a long time.”⁶¹ Nimitz was stunned. President Roosevelt, who had previously served as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy during World War I, personally knew many of the Navy’s top admirals and had handpicked Nimitz for one of the most important naval commands of the war. In choosing Nimitz, Roosevelt passed over dozens of more-senior admirals, including Wilson Brown, William S. Pye, and William F. Halsey Jr. Nimitz’s previous concerns about assuming the post due to his lack of seniority had hardly abated, but the United States was now at war, and he could not question a direct order from the President. That night, as Nimitz packed his things for the trip to Hawaii, he contemplated his mixed feelings at the new assignment. Catherine noticed that he was lost in thought and commented that he must be gratified to have been given command of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Unable to bear the weight of the nation’s secret any longer, Nimitz turned to her and confided, “Darling, the fleet’s at the bottom of the sea. Nobody must know that here, but I’ve got to tell you.”⁶²

When Nimitz made this remark, even he did not yet know the full scope of the tragedy that had befallen the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Many naval leaders were unhappy when Knox publicly announced that the battleship *Arizona* had been sunk and the *Oklahoma* (BB-37) had capsized as a result of the Japanese attack, but only a handful of Americans outside Hawaii knew that two additional battleships, a destroyer, and a minelayer had also been sunk at Pearl Harbor. Nor had the Navy and Army revealed that 2,403 Americans had been killed and an additional 1,178 had been wounded.

Following a series of planning sessions culminating in a conference at the White House, Nimitz and his flag aide, Lieutenant (j.g.) Howell A. “Hal” Lamar, departed Washington, DC, by train dressed in civilian clothes and bound for San Diego.⁶³ Because of the severe damage that the fleet had suffered and the U.S. agreement with Great Britain to defeat Germany first, military leaders were forced to postpone U.S. plans that called for an offensive drive west across the Pacific soon after the outbreak of hostilities.⁶⁴ Instead, Nimitz’s primary goal once he assumed command of the Pacific Fleet was to protect Hawaii, Midway Atoll, and Allied

supply lines to Australia.⁶⁵ In San Diego, Nimitz boarded a military plane on Christmas Eve and apologized to the crew for taking them away from their families right before the holiday.⁶⁶

Upon arriving on Oahu, Nimitz surveyed the damage to the fleet. He concluded that despite the grievous losses suffered in the attack, it could have been far worse if Kimmel had received advance warning and dispatched the fleet to meet the Japanese carriers. In such a scenario, more than 20,000 men might have been lost if the entire fleet had been sunk in deep water.⁶⁷ As it stood, Nimitz knew that most of the damaged ships could be returned to service. In the meantime, the crews from those stricken ships could man the armada of new vessels scheduled to enter service. Yet Nimitz realized that he not only needed to repair the physical damage to the fleet but also had to revive the morale of his predecessor's command staff. Accordingly, Nimitz asked all of Kimmel's staff officers to remain in their roles and help to avenge the attack.⁶⁸

Nimitz's decision to retain his predecessor's staff was typical of his concern for other officers. Throughout his career he faithfully championed subordinates who demonstrated promise, and he made a concerted effort to keep in touch with both officers and enlisted sailors whom he had commanded decades earlier. Nimitz especially prided himself on his ability to recall names and faces.⁶⁹ Consequently, by the time he attained flag rank his professional and personal network was extensive. His wartime correspondence with Catherine, moreover, attests to his connections all over the world through his frequent references to friends and colleagues. Nimitz tried to maintain his familiarity with subordinate officers during World War II by personally welcoming the commanding officers of all newly arrived ships in the Pacific. Eventually, however, the number of new vessels grew too great, a sign of the transformation in the U.S. Navy that Nimitz oversaw in which the Navy expanded to such a size that personal ties no longer existed among a majority of its officers.

When Nimitz formally assumed command of the Pacific Fleet on 31 December 1941, the ceremony took place on the deck of *Grayling* (SS-209).⁷⁰ The choice of a submarine as the venue for the change of command was a nod to Nimitz's earlier service in Pearl Harbor when he constructed the submarine base. In addition, Nimitz's own son was serving as an officer on board the submarine *Sturgeon* (SS-187) in the Philippines when the war broke out and was already on a war patrol when his father became the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.⁷¹ Meanwhile, Catherine Nimitz moved from Washington, DC, to Berkeley, California, to be able to see Nimitz whenever he met Admiral Ernest J. King there for wartime conferences. Catherine also contributed to the war effort by volunteering at the U.S. Naval Hospital at Oakland, California, and giving frequent speeches and radio addresses to support the Red Cross, Navy Relief Society, and war bond drives.⁷²

The initial months of the war were a trying time for Nimitz as he endeavored to defend U.S. supply lines to Australia and conduct limited strikes against Japanese bases in the Marshall and Gilbert Islands. When he faced complaints from U.S. reporters in Hawaii about the lack of news regarding Navy operations, he called them for a conference and bluntly explained that he was not about to let the Japanese navy know how well it was doing in the war. He did, however, relax censorship restrictions and permit several reporters to accompany Navy ships on subsequent raids.⁷³ Famed war correspondent Robert Sherrod wrote that Nimitz “was frequently the despair of his public relations men; it simply was not in him to make sweeping statements or to give out colorful interviews.”⁷⁴

Privately, the normally cheerful admiral confided to his wife that he would be lucky to remain in command for even six months in the face of public demands for action. Fortunately, Nimitz need not have feared the wrath of an impatient public. The initial carrier raids that he organized against the Japanese-held Marshall and Gilbert Islands inflicted damage on numerous Japanese installations while incurring few U.S. casualties. Not only did these raids prompt Japanese leaders to redeploy their carrier forces to the Southwest Pacific and Central Pacific, thereby setting up subsequent decisive clashes, they also boosted American morale in the darkest days of World War II. Nimitz’s fleet then checked the Japanese offensive in the South Pacific on 4–8 May 1942 in the Battle of the Coral Sea.⁷⁵

Nimitz’s biggest gamble of the war came the following month when he assembled three of the four available U.S. carriers in the Pacific to defend against a Japanese attack on Midway Atoll. His primary source of intelligence about Japanese intentions came from the Navy code breakers of Station Hypo led by Commander Joseph J. Rochefort.⁷⁶ Together with Commander Edwin T. Layton, Rochefort decrypted and interpreted Japanese messages indicating the strength and date of the planned offensive. Some officers on Nimitz’s own staff, however, did not trust the accuracy of the information and advised him against dispatching the outnumbered U.S. carriers to Midway. Nimitz’s boss, Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, and CNO Admiral Ernest J. King, pointed to different intelligence sources that cast doubt upon whether Midway was in fact the Japanese target.⁷⁷ King also believed that it was unwise to concentrate the most valuable remaining U.S. ships in one place even if the numerically superior Japanese fleet did intend to seize the island. But Nimitz held firm and ordered the carrier *Yorktown* (CV-5)—damaged at Coral Sea but hastily repaired in the Navy’s dry dock at Pearl Harbor—to join the carriers *Enterprise* (CV-6) and *Hornet* (CV-8) in sailing for Midway. As the two opposing forces sailed toward one another, he could do little but monitor the dispatches of his task group commanders. Nimitz anxiously waited for news as 4 Japanese aircraft carriers, 7 battleships, and 71 escort vessels approached Midway on 2 June.

In the space of just a few minutes beginning at 1022 on the morning of 4 June 1942, U.S. naval aviators sank three Japanese fleet carriers and destroyed 257 enemy aircraft, permanently ending Japanese naval dominance in the Pacific. Because of Rear Admiral Raymond A. Spruance's superior performance in the battle as the commander of Task Force 16, Nimitz selected the former cruiser division commander to serve as his new chief of staff. For the next 14 months, the two men lived in the same house together and became constant companions. Though neither Spruance nor Nimitz left more than passing references about the nature of their relationship, it is evident that Nimitz greatly respected his new chief of staff and heavily relied on Spruance's judgment in the conduct of the war.⁷⁸

The pivotal victory at Midway paved the way for Nimitz to launch the first U.S. offensive of the war against Japanese forces on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands just two months later. The 1st Marine Division landed on the island against light opposition on 7 August 1942, but the campaign quickly became a grueling battle of attrition on land, at sea, and in the skies over the island. U.S. and Australian naval forces struggled to supply the outnumbered U.S. Marines on the island in the face of Japanese attacks. The situation became so grave that Nimitz personally visited the small U.S. beachhead on Guadalcanal in September 1942 to confer with commanders and ask what they needed. In the process, he contracted malaria and had to cope with recurring bouts of the disease throughout the war.⁷⁹ After Nimitz's return from the Southwest Pacific, he made the difficult decision to replace Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley with Vice Admiral William F. Halsey Jr. as Commander, South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, on 17 October 1942.⁸⁰

Following the successful conclusion of the campaign in the Solomons, Nimitz planned and oversaw the U.S. island-hopping strategy in the Central Pacific. U.S. forces first recaptured Attu and Kiska in the Aleutians in mid-1943 before beginning their drive across the Central Pacific in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands. Nimitz and his staff selected which islands U.S. Marines would seize and which Japanese strongholds would be bypassed and neutralized through bombing raids. On 20 November 1943, the 2nd Marine Division assaulted Betio Island in the Tarawa Atoll. Nearly a thousand Marine Corps and Navy personnel were killed in the assault. The great number of casualties incurred in three days on an island encompassing just one square mile provoked a strong backlash on the home front as well as from Army and Marine Corps commanders. General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander, Allied Forces, Southwest Pacific Area, told Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson that he should be given command of the entire Pacific War in order to prevent similar disasters.⁸¹ In the months after the battle ended, Nimitz was especially pained by the letters he received from parents who had lost sons in the battle, and he ordered several doctrinal changes to improve naval fire

support and provide assault troops with enough LVTs (landing vehicles, tracked) to overcome submerged coral reefs.⁸²

In mid-1944, Nimitz implemented a system of rotating fleet commanders in order to maintain the quick tempo of the U.S. advance and confuse the Japanese about the strength of U.S. forces. When Admiral Spruance and his staff commanded an operation, his force was designated Fifth Fleet. The same ships became Third Fleet when Admiral Halsey replaced Spruance for a subsequent operation.⁸³ This rotation gave each command staff a chance to rest and plan for the next operation without providing a respite for the Japanese military.⁸⁴

During the war, Nimitz periodically met with Admiral King in San Francisco or Washington, DC, for discussions about future strategy. Nimitz welcomed these conferences since they gave him a chance to see Catherine, who would either rendezvous with her husband in San Francisco or join him aboard his plane for the last leg of his trip to Washington. En route to one such conference on 30 June 1942, Nimitz's flying boat crashed during its attempt to land in San Francisco Bay. The plane flipped over and sank, killing the copilot, but the rest of the passengers and crew escaped with relatively minor injuries.⁸⁵ Catherine rushed to the hospital and was relieved to find that her husband had suffered only bumps and bruises.

By 1944, the U.S. Navy possessed a significant numerical superiority over the Japanese navy in every category of ship and aircraft, but Nimitz still confronted mounting casualties in his island-hopping campaign, heated interservice rivalries, and persistent strategic debates. The immense losses that U.S. forces suffered during the assault on Tarawa in November 1943 initially prompted Nimitz to reconsider the two-pronged U.S. drive across the Pacific, but Admiral King persuaded him of the necessity of seizing Saipan, Guam, and Tinian in the Marianas Islands in conjunction with the invasion of the Philippines.⁸⁶ During the U.S. attack on Saipan, the Japanese navy finally sortied for another large fleet action against the U.S. Navy. In the Battle of the Philippine Sea, 19–20 June 1944, Admiral Spruance's Fifth Fleet successfully destroyed the bulk of Japan's remaining naval airpower, as well as the Japanese aircraft carrier *Hiyo*.⁸⁷ Nimitz declined to give Spruance additional instructions during the battle, even after officers on Nimitz's staff urged him to order Spruance to launch a preemptive assault on the approaching Japanese fleet.⁸⁸ Although Spruance also wanted to move westward and attack the approaching Japanese force, he decided that it was more important to remain close to the beachhead in order to protect the landing operations. The merits of Nimitz's policy not to interfere became clear after the war when Japanese documents vindicated Spruance's decision to protect the U.S. beachhead.⁸⁹ Unbeknownst to Spruance or Nimitz, Admiral Jisaburō Ozawa had divided Japanese forces to provide a formidable anti-aircraft screen 100 miles in advance of his fleet carriers. Since Spruance did not divide his own carrier aircraft between an offensive strike and the defense

of his own ships, his aviators were able to completely decimate the Japanese attackers as they arrived over the U.S. fleet. Japan lost more than 450 aircraft and pilots in the engagement as well as two fleet carriers, one light carrier, and two oilers to subsequent U.S. air and submarine attacks.⁹⁰

The Battle of the Philippine Sea had hardly ended when Nimitz confronted a serious interservice feud. During the protracted battle for Saipan, Lieutenant General Holland Smith, U.S. Marine Corps, relieved Major General Ralph Smith, commanding general of the U.S. Army's 27th Infantry Division, owing to the unit's slow rate of advance. This outraged Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson Jr., the commander of all Army personnel in the Pacific. He convened a court of inquiry and personally insulted a number of Marine Corps generals during his investigations. Nimitz tried to downplay the controversy for the sake of interservice cooperation but failed. Numerous stateside newspapers published unfounded editorials disparaging the Marine Corps and asserting that Army leaders such as General MacArthur should take command in the Pacific.⁹¹

In July 1944, Nimitz hosted a conference in Hawaii with President Roosevelt and MacArthur. Nimitz and MacArthur presented their divergent visions for future operations in the Pacific to Roosevelt. MacArthur favored an invasion of the Philippines to fulfill his promise to the people of the islands that he would return, but Nimitz pushed for an advance toward Formosa (Taiwan) and the China coast. Roosevelt sided with MacArthur, largely for reasons of American prestige and politics.⁹² Prior to the invasion of the Philippines, Nimitz made what one biographer called "his biggest mistake of the war" when he permitted the invasion of Peleliu to proceed as planned on 15 September 1944 despite receiving intelligence from Admiral Halsey that the invasion might not be necessary. Nimitz nevertheless chose not to cancel the operation because he had promised to provide MacArthur's forces invading Morotai, south of Peleliu, with strategic support and Navy underwater demolition teams had already landed on the island.⁹³ The assault cost the United States in excess of 6,000 casualties, including more than 1,300 dead, but Peleliu yielded few commensurate strategic benefits once it had been secured.

During the subsequent invasion of Leyte, the U.S. invasion fleet nearly met with disaster in the largest and last major naval battle of the war. Prior to the invasion, Nimitz issued orders that stated, "In case opportunity for destruction of major portion of the enemy fleet offer or can be created, such destruction becomes the primary task."⁹⁴ In the Battle of Leyte Gulf on 20 October 1944, Admiral Halsey accordingly pursued the large Japanese carrier force, but in doing so he left U.S. landing forces vulnerable to attack.⁹⁵ In the ensuing fight, elements of the U.S. Seventh Fleet in Leyte Gulf lost two escort carriers, two destroyers, and a destroyer escort to a surprise assault from a powerful Japanese surface force.⁹⁶ Despite the heavy losses suffered by Seventh Fleet, Nimitz defended Halsey's controversial

actions.⁹⁷ The root cause of the mistake may have been the difficulty in communicating among a divided theater command. As a result, the multiple commanders of the invasion fleet answered to two different chains of command. Vice Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, Commander, Seventh Fleet, reported to MacArthur, while Halsey, commander of the U.S. Third Fleet, reported to Nimitz. This arrangement complicated coordination between Kinkaid's and Halsey's respective naval forces.

Nimitz and MacArthur maintained a courteous professional relationship during the war, but MacArthur repeatedly criticized Nimitz and tried to undermine the admiral in order to obtain control over the entire war against Japan.⁹⁸ Unfortunately, any frustrations that Nimitz might have felt and expressed in his letters to Catherine from November 1943 to November 1944 were lost when she destroyed all of his letters from this period. During the war, Nimitz led a force made up of elements from all branches of the U.S. armed services. His experiences with parochial officers such as Richardson and MacArthur, however, influenced the negative opinion he developed about the proposed unification of the services.⁹⁹

In December 1944, Congress passed legislation creating a new five-star rank for the military and authorized the promotion of four officers in both the Army and Navy to the new rank.¹⁰⁰ President Roosevelt promptly elevated King, Nimitz, and William D. Leahy, the chief of staff to the Commander in Chief, to the newly created rank of fleet admiral. Halsey would later become the fourth and final naval officer ever to attain five stars, but King initially hesitated to promote Halsey since he could not also advance the equally deserving Spruance.¹⁰¹ On 19 December 1944, Nimitz took the oath of office for his new rank. The following month, he moved his staff to the island of Guam in order to be closer to the frontlines and to focus more on planning operations instead of routine logistical matters.¹⁰² Nimitz probably hoped that the move would reduce the torrent of political visitors to his headquarters, which he felt obligated to entertain, but it did little to decrease the number of influential guests.

Following the invasion of the Philippines, the Joint Chiefs of Staff made the decision to bypass Formosa and the China coast in favor of assaulting the islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. The latter was less than 550 miles from the Japanese island of Kyushu and could serve as a base for the assault on the Japanese home islands. U.S. forces landed on Iwo Jima on 19 February 1945 and secured the island in five weeks.¹⁰³ On 1 March, Nimitz once again flew to Washington, DC, to confer with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and discuss planning for the invasion of Okinawa and Kyushu. While in the capital, Nimitz and Catherine attended their daughter Kate's hurriedly organized wedding on 9 March 1945. Kate married Commander James Lay, a naval officer who had previously served under Nimitz on *Augusta*.¹⁰⁴

On 1 April, the Allied assault on Okinawa began. As the campaign dragged into June, Nimitz was troubled by the high casualties on the island and at sea, in the latter case from Japanese suicide planes called kamikazes. Nimitz personally witnessed the effectiveness of these attacks, and consequently he hoped that an invasion of Japan proper would not be necessary. A force of Army and Marine Corps divisions finally captured Okinawa after 83 days of fighting on 22 June 1945.¹⁰⁵ After Army Air Force bombers based at Tinian dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Soviet Union invaded Japanese-held Manchuria, Japanese leaders indicated their willingness to surrender to the Allies on 14 August 1945. Despite Nimitz's role in the defeat of the Japanese navy, he was not chosen by President Harry S. Truman to preside over the Japanese surrender in Tokyo Bay. Instead, that honor went to MacArthur, though Nimitz signed the surrender document as the designated representative of the United States.¹⁰⁶

Following the Japanese surrender on board the battleship *Missouri* (BB-63) in Tokyo Bay, MacArthur became the Supreme Allied Commander in charge of overseeing the occupation of Japan. Nimitz, meanwhile, returned to his headquarters on Guam and oversaw the demobilization of much of the Pacific Fleet. In December 1945, Nimitz became CNO after his supporters successfully lobbied Truman on his behalf.¹⁰⁷ During Nimitz's tenure as the Navy's most-senior officer, he endorsed a proposal to construct the world's first nuclear-powered submarine, which ultimately provided a critical nuclear deterrent that continues to this day.¹⁰⁸

Nimitz's five-star rank allowed him to remain on active duty until his death. Still, in December 1947 he completed his tour as the CNO and left active service after 42 years.¹⁰⁹ He and Catherine then returned to California and purchased a home in North Berkeley with a view of the San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The couple had scarcely settled into their new house when the admiral, restless in retirement, accepted a position with the newly established United Nations, first as a plebiscite administrator for Kashmir and then as a roving goodwill ambassador.¹¹⁰ He bore no hatred for the Japanese, his former enemies, and even donated money for the restoration of the famed Japanese pre-dreadnought battleship *Mikasa*.¹¹¹ Never one to seek the limelight or trumpet his own accomplishments, Nimitz steadfastly refused requests to write his memoirs. Fleet Admiral Nimitz died on 20 February 1966, four days before his 81st birthday. Catherine, his wife of nearly 53 years, died on 1 February 1979 at age 86. In summarizing Nimitz's career, historian E. B. Potter wrote that he was "an officer who had wielded enormous power without arrogance or ostentation, a forceful leader who had remained simple, friendly, and approachable while commanding millions of men."¹¹²

Nimitz's unparalleled naval career testified to his steadfast devotion to the Navy and his concern for the welfare of the sailors that he commanded. He believed that what was good for sailors was good for the Navy. Although he declined to write an account of his wartime experiences, it is hoped that the publication of the surviving wartime letters that he exchanged with his "best beloved" Catherine will foster new interest in the career of this eminent leader and strategist, thereby illuminating neglected aspects of the Pacific War and providing an enduring example for modern naval officers to emulate.

NOTES

¹ Elmer B. Potter, *Nimitz* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1976), 27.

² Potter, *Nimitz*, 29.

³ Chester W. Nimitz to Charles H. Nimitz, 26 April 1900, letter 013, Chester W. Nimitz Personal Letters, 1893–1911, National Museum of the Pacific War (NMPW), Fredericksburg, TX, accessed 3 January 2023, <https://digitalarchive.pacificwarmuseum.org/digital/collection/p16769coll4/id/390/rec/13>.

⁴ Chester W. Nimitz to Charles H. Nimitz, 12 April 1900, letter 011, Nimitz Personal Letters, NMPW, accessed 3 January 2023, <https://digitalarchive.pacificwarmuseum.org/digital/collection/p16769coll4/id/474/rec/11>.

⁵ Chester W. Nimitz, *Some Thoughts to Live By: From Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, United States Navy* (Fredericksburg, TX: Admiral Nimitz Foundation, 1971), 3.

⁶ Potter, *Nimitz*, 30.

⁷ Joseph G. Dawson III, "William T. Sampson and Santiago: Blockade, Victory, and Controversy," in *Crucible of Empire: The Spanish-American War and its Aftermath*, ed. James C. Bradford (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1993), 63.

⁸ Nimitz cited the Sampson-Schley controversy as one of his reasons for not censuring Admiral William F. Halsey following the latter's controversial actions at the Battle of Leyte Gulf on 20 October 1944. See Potter, *Nimitz*, 344.

⁹ A handful of these letters survived simply by chance in a forgotten box in the couple's postwar home. See Catherine Freeman Nimitz, "Recollections of the Late Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz as Given by His Widow, Catherine Freeman Nimitz," interview by John T. Mason Jr. on 5 June 1969 in San Francisco (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1970), 17.

¹⁰ Chester W. Nimitz to William Nimitz, n.d., letter 101, Nimitz Personal Letters, NMPW, accessed 3 January 2023, <https://digitalarchive.pacificwarmuseum.org/digital/collection/p16769coll4/id/219/rec/101>; Chester W. Nimitz to William Nimitz, 24 April 1904, letter 093, Nimitz Personal Letters, NMPW, accessed 3 January 2023, <https://digitalarchive.pacificwarmuseum.org/digital/collection/p16769coll4/id/164/rec/>.

¹¹ Chester W. Nimitz, n.d., letter 088, Nimitz Personal Letters, NMPW, accessed 3 January 2023, <https://digitalarchive.pacificwarmuseum.org/digital/collection/p16769coll4/id/289/rec/88>; U.S. Naval Academy, *The Lucky Bag* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Academy, 1905), 76, 168.

¹² Chester W. Nimitz to Charles H. Nimitz, 25 November 1901, letter 036, Nimitz Personal Letters, NMPW, accessed 3 January 2023, <https://digitalarchive.pacificwarmuseum.org/digital/collection/p16769coll4/id/437/rec/2>.

¹³ Chester W. Nimitz to William Nimitz, 24 April 1904, letter 093, Nimitz Personal Letters, NMPW, accessed 3 January 2023, <https://digitalarchive.pacificwarmuseum.org/digital/collection/p16769coll4/id/163/rec/93>.

¹⁴ Chester W. Nimitz to William Nimitz, 16 August 1904, letter 098, Nimitz Personal Letters, NMPW, accessed 3 January 2023, <https://digitalarchive.pacificwarmuseum.org/digital/collection/p16769coll4/id/418/rec/2>.

¹⁵ Chester W. Nimitz to William Nimitz, 26 June 1904, letter 096, Nimitz Personal Letters, NMPW, accessed 3 January 2023, <https://digitalarchive.pacificwarmuseum.org/digital/collection/p16769coll4/id/299/rec/96>.

¹⁶ Potter, *Nimitz*, 55.

¹⁷ Chester W. Nimitz to William Nimitz, December 1904, letter 102, Nimitz Personal Letters, NMPW, accessed 3 January 2023, <https://digitalarchive.pacificwarmuseum.org/digital/collection/p16769coll4/id/146/rec/102>.

¹⁸ “Admiral Chester William Nimitz, U.S. Navy,” 5 May 1942, p. 1, box 596, folder 1, Officer Biographies, Archives Branch (AB), Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC), Washington Navy Yard, DC.

¹⁹ Chester W. Nimitz to William Nimitz, 9 June 1908, letter 132, Nimitz Personal Letters, NMPW, accessed 3 January 2023, <https://digitalarchive.pacificwarmuseum.org/digital/collection/p16769coll4/id/397/rec/132>.

²⁰ Nimitz, *Some Thoughts*, 4.

²¹ “Case of Ensign Chester W. Nimitz, U.S.S. *Denver*, off Cavite, P.I., July 28, 1908,” pp. 1, 29, box 103, Papers of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, 1902–1976, AB, NHHC.

²² See, for example, Stuart S. Murray, “Building the Submarine Base at Pearl Harbor,” in *Submarine Stories: Recollections from the Diesel Boats*, ed. Paul Stillwell (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2007), 41; Potter, *Nimitz*, 21, 86.

²³ The Naval War College invited 27-year-old Lieutenant Nimitz to address its students on the subject of submarines in the spring of 1912. In December of that year, Nimitz published an expanded version of his lecture as an article in the United States Naval Institute’s *Proceedings* outlining the advantages of diesel-powered submarines, their tactical utility, and their current technological limitations. See Chester W. Nimitz, “Military Value and Tactics of Modern Submarines,” *Proceedings*, December 1912, 1193–1211; Potter, *Nimitz*, 117.

²⁴ Nimitz was then earning \$3,456 per year in the Navy. See Potter, *Nimitz*, 125.

²⁵ William Rea Furlong, ed., *Class of 1905: United States Naval Academy* (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Academy, 1930), 353. While commanding *E-1*, Nimitz on one occasion jumped into the frigid waters of Hampton Roads to rescue a sailor who had fallen overboard and was a weak swimmer. Nimitz was awarded the Treasury Department’s Silver Lifesaving Medal in recognition of his action. See Beekman Winthrop to Chester Nimitz, 30 July 1912, box 596, folder 1, Officer Biographies, AB, NHHC.

²⁶ Catherine Freeman Nimitz, “Recollections of the Late Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz as Given by His Widow, Catherine Freeman Nimitz,” 30.

²⁷ Nimitz lost a portion of the ring finger on his left hand during a demonstration of one of the engines in November 1916. See “Nearly Loses Hand in Engine He Built,” *Brooklyn (NY) Daily Eagle*, 20 November 1916, 18.

²⁸ Catherine Freeman Nimitz, “Recollections of the Late Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz as Given by His Widow, Catherine Freeman Nimitz,” 33; Greg King and Penny Wilson, *Lusitania: Triumph, Tragedy, and the End of the Edwardian Age* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2015), xviii, 206, 265, 279; Douglas Carl Peifer, *Choosing War: Presidential Decisions in the Maine, Lusitania, and Panay Incidents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 85.

²⁹ Potter, *Nimitz*, 129.

³⁰ John H. Morrow Jr., *The Great War: An Imperial History* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 226.

³¹ Potter, *Nimitz*, 129.

³² For a brief biography of Rear Admiral Samuel S. Robison, see Navy Biographies Branch, “Admiral Samuel S. Robison United States Navy, Deceased,” 25 April 1957, Modern Biographies Collection, Navy Department Library, NHHC.

³³ Potter, *Nimitz*, 130.

³⁴ Potter, *Nimitz*, 131.

³⁵ Frank A. Driskill and Dede W. Casad, *Chester W. Nimitz: Admiral of the Hills* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 1983), 95.

³⁶ Potter, *Nimitz*, 133.

³⁷ “Admiral Chester William Nimitz, U.S. Navy,” 5 May 1942, p. 2, box 596, folder 1, Officer Biographies, AB, NHHC.

³⁸ Henry Alexander “Sandy” Walker was the president of American Factors, the largest business in Hawaii before World War II. Walker and his wife, Una Craig Walker, first met Nimitz when he was tasked with building the U.S. Navy submarine base at Pearl Harbor in 1920. Nimitz renewed his friendship with the Walkers during World War II and was a frequent weekend guest at their large home in the upper Nuuanu Valley. See Michael A. Lilly, *Nimitz at Ease* (Apache Junction, AZ: Stairway Press, 2019), 7.

³⁹ Potter, *Nimitz*, 138.

⁴⁰ Potter, *Nimitz*, 141.

⁴¹ Furlong, *Class of 1905*, 354.

⁴² Potter, *Nimitz*, 143.

⁴³ The Naval Academy did not grant bachelor’s degrees when Nimitz attended the institution. See Potter, *Nimitz*, 144.

⁴⁴ Potter, *Nimitz*, 144.

⁴⁵ Potter, *Nimitz*, 160.

⁴⁶ Trent Hone, *Mastering the Art of Command: Admiral Chester W. Nimitz and Victory in the Pacific* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2022), 5; Potter, *Nimitz*, 155.

⁴⁷ Potter, *Nimitz*, 162.

⁴⁸ Potter, *Nimitz*, 166.

⁴⁹ Potter, *Nimitz*, 168.

⁵⁰ David Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor: Roosevelt's America and the Origins of the Second World War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 32.

⁵¹ Waldo Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 10.

⁵² President Franklin D. Roosevelt chose Nimitz to serve as the chief of the Bureau of Navigation on the recommendation of Rear Admiral James O. Richardson, who held the position prior to Nimitz. See James O. Richardson, *On the Treadmill to Pearl Harbor: The Memoirs of Admiral James O. Richardson, USN (Retired)*, with George C. Dyer (Washington, DC: Naval History Division, 1973), 7.

⁵³ Potter, *Nimitz*, 169.

⁵⁴ Brayton Harris, *Admiral Nimitz: The Commander of the Pacific Ocean Theater* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 60.

⁵⁵ Potter, *Nimitz*, 170.

⁵⁶ "Used Men as Seagoing Chambermaids, Bell Hops, Dishwashers," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 5 October 1940, 1.

⁵⁷ P. L. Pratts, "Navy Fires Mess Attendants," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 7 December 1940, 4; Richard E. Miller, *The Messman Chronicles: African Americans in the U.S. Navy, 1932–1943* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 130.

⁵⁸ Richardson, *On the Treadmill*, 386.

⁵⁹ Potter, *Nimitz*, 4.

⁶⁰ Potter, *Nimitz*, 6.

⁶¹ Quoted in Potter, *Nimitz*, 9.

⁶² Catherine Freeman Nimitz, "Recollections of the Late Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz as Given by His Widow, Catherine Freeman Nimitz," 23.

⁶³ Hal Arthur Lamar, *I Saw Stars: Some Memories of Commander Hal Lamar, Fleet Admiral Nimitz' Flag Lieutenant, 1941–1945* (Fredericksburg, TX: Admiral Nimitz Foundation, 1975), 2.

⁶⁴ Steven T. Ross, *American War Plans, 1890–1939* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2002), 142.

⁶⁵ Nimitz was notified of his concurrent appointment as Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas, on 3 April 1942 in a message from Admiral Ernest King that also spelled out Nimitz's strategic objectives. See Ernest King to Chester Nimitz, Navy message, 3 April 1942, box 596, folder 1, Officer Biographies, AB, NHHHC.

⁶⁶ Hone, *Mastering the Art of Command*, 15.

⁶⁷ William H. Ewing, *Nimitz: Reflections on Pearl Harbor* (Fredericksburg, TX: Admiral Nimitz Foundation, 1971), 11.

⁶⁸ Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York: Random House, 1985), 147; Hone, *Mastering the Art of Command*, 30.

⁶⁹ Ian Toll, *Pacific Crucible: War at Sea in the Pacific, 1941–1942* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), 158.

⁷⁰ *Grayling* was later sunk in the South China Sea west of Luzon on 9 September 1943. See Robert J. Cressman, *The Official Chronology of the U.S. Navy in World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000), 179.

⁷¹ Chester W. Nimitz Jr., “RADM Chester W. Nimitz, Jr., USN (Ret.),” interview by Evelyn M. Cherpak on 6 November 2001 in Needham, Massachusetts (Washington, DC: Naval Historical Foundation, 2002), 20.

⁷² Potter, *Nimitz*, 115.

⁷³ Potter, *Nimitz*, 36.

⁷⁴ Robert Sherrod, *On to Westward: War in the Central Pacific* (New York: Duel Sloan and Pearce, 1945), 234.

⁷⁵ The United States lost one fleet carrier, *Lexington* (CV-2), a fleet oiler, *Neosho* (AO-23), and one destroyer, *Sims* (DD-409), in the Battle of the Coral Sea, while Japan only lost the small carrier *Shōhō*. U.S. planes also damaged the Japanese fleet carrier *Shōkaku*, and Japanese fliers, in turn, scored a single hit on the flight deck of the carrier *Yorktown* (CV-5). The United States was able to rapidly repair the damaged *Yorktown* in time for it to participate in the subsequent Battle of Midway, but Japan’s damaged fleet carrier, *Shōkaku*, was unable to take part. The Battle of the Coral Sea is generally considered a tactical victory for Japan but a strategic victory for the United States since it caused the Japanese navy to cancel its planned attack on Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. For an account of this battle, see Craig L. Symonds, *The Battle of Midway* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 152.

⁷⁶ Elliot Carlson, *Joe Rochefort’s War: The Odyssey of the Codebreaker Who Outwitted Yamamoto at Midway* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2011), 318. Rochefort and Station Hypo received little recognition for their accomplishment. Even after Nimitz recommended that Rochefort be decorated, Admiral King snubbed the commander by not awarding him the Distinguished Service Medal. See Carlson, *Joe Rochefort’s War*, 444; and Craig L. Symonds, *Nimitz at War: Command Leadership from Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 180.

⁷⁷ Thomas B. Buell, *Master of Sea Power: A Biography of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), 201; Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 100.

⁷⁸ Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 128.

⁷⁹ Richard B. Frank, *Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle* (New York: Random House, 1990), 277; Potter, *Nimitz*, 219.

⁸⁰ Potter, *Nimitz*, 198.

⁸¹ Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 257.

⁸² Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 260, 263. For Nimitz’s reaction to letters from the family members of men killed in the war, see Nimitz to Catherine, 17 March 1945, p. 172.

⁸³ For a summary of Spruance’s wartime commands, see Nimitz to Catherine, 22 July 1942, p. 28, n. 10. See also Thomas B. Buell, *The Quiet Warrior: A Biography of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974).

⁸⁴ Potter, *Nimitz*, 294.

⁸⁵ “Admiral Nimitz Escapes Serious Injury in Plane Crash,” 10 July 1942, box 596, folder 1, Officer Biographies, AB, NHHHC.

⁸⁶ Potter, *Nimitz*, 283.

⁸⁷ Buell, *Quiet Warrior*, 280. U.S. Navy submarines sank two additional Japanese aircraft carriers on 19 June 1944. Japanese losses during the Battle of the Philippine Sea consisted of three aircraft carriers sunk, three aircraft carriers damaged, one fleet tanker scuttled, one oiler scuttled, two destroyers damaged, and one battleship damaged. The Japanese fleet lost 395 carrier planes in the battle, amounting to more than 90 percent of its total aircraft. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 237.

⁸⁸ Nimitz made it a policy not to issue orders to commanders once they had set off on a mission. See Michael A. Palmer, *Command at Sea: Naval Command and Control since the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 262.

⁸⁹ Potter, *Nimitz*, 303.

⁹⁰ Lisle A. Rose, *Power at Sea: The Breaking Storm, 1919–1945* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 403.

⁹¹ Potter, *Nimitz*, 307.

⁹² Mark A. Stoler, *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century* (Boston: Twayne, 1989), 119; Phillips Payson O'Brien, *The Second Most Powerful Man in the World: The Life of Admiral William D. Leahy, Roosevelt's Chief of Staff* (New York: Random House, 2019), 288; Buell, *Master of Sea Power*, 469.

⁹³ Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 320. For Nimitz's account of his visit to Peleliu in May 1945, see Nimitz to Catherine, 5 May 1945, p. 187.

⁹⁴ "CINCPOA Operation Plan No. 8-44," 3, quoted in E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, eds., *Triumph in the Pacific: The Navy's Struggle against Japan* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 112.

⁹⁵ For a recent study of the battle, see Martin R. Waldman, "Calmness, Courage, and Efficiency": *Remembering the Battle of Leyte Gulf* (Washington, DC: NHHHC, 2022).

⁹⁶ Waldo Heinrichs and Marc Gallicchio, *Implacable Foes: War in the Pacific, 1944–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 189; William F. Halsey and J. Bryan III, *Admiral Halsey's Story* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1976), 216; Thomas A. Hughes, *Admiral Bill Halsey: A Naval Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 367.

⁹⁷ Nimitz defended Halsey on other occasions as well. On 18 December 1944 and again on 5 June 1945, Halsey sailed his Third Fleet into typhoons. The first storm sank three destroyers, killed 790 men, and destroyed 186 aircraft. The second typhoon damaged 33 ships and destroyed 142 aircraft. In both instances, Nimitz declined to relieve Halsey of his command. See Potter, *Nimitz*, 349, 376; Hughes, *Admiral Bill Halsey*, 384; and E. B. Potter, *Bull Halsey* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1985), 323, 340. For book treatments of the typhoon on 18 December 1944, see Buckner F. Melton Jr., *Sea Cobra: Admiral Halsey's Task Force and the Great Pacific Typhoon* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2007); and Bob Drury and Tom Clavin, *Halsey's Typhoon: The True Story of a Fighting Admiral, an Epic Storm, and an Untold Rescue* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2007).

⁹⁸ Heinrichs and Gallicchio, *Implacable Foes*, 465.

⁹⁹ Potter, *Nimitz*, 402.

¹⁰⁰ "An Act to Establish the Grade of Fleet Admiral of the United States Navy; to Establish the Grade of General of the Army, and for Other Purposes," Pub. L. No. 78-482, 58 Stat. 802 (1944).

¹⁰¹ Walter R. Borneman, *The Admirals: Nimitz, Halsey, Leahy, and King—The Five-Star Admirals Who Won the War at Sea* (New York: Little, Brown, 2012), 416.

¹⁰² Potter, *Nimitz*, 353.

¹⁰³ For Nimitz's description of his trip to Iwo Jima before the cessation of hostilities on the island, see Nimitz to Catherine, 25 March 1945, p. 173.

¹⁰⁴ Potter, *Nimitz*, 366.

¹⁰⁵ For Nimitz's account of his visit to Okinawa three weeks after the battle had commenced, see Nimitz to Catherine, 24 April 1945, p. 182.

¹⁰⁶ Harris, *Admiral Nimitz*, 169. See also Nimitz to Catherine, 2 September 1945, p. 190.

¹⁰⁷ Potter, *Nimitz*, 407.

¹⁰⁸ Norman Polmar and Thomas B. Allen, *Rickover* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), 139; Marc Wortman, *Admiral Hyman Rickover: Engineer of Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022), 70.

¹⁰⁹ The nine officers elevated to five-star rank during World War II in all branches remained on active duty until their deaths and continued to receive their full salaries, unlike all other retired officers who received retirement pay. See Hughes, *Admiral Bill Halsey*, 401; and Potter, *Nimitz*, 416.

¹¹⁰ Potter, *Nimitz*, 434; Harris, *Admiral Nimitz*, 209.

¹¹¹ Ernest M. Eller, *Swords into Plowshares* (Fredericksburg, TX: Admiral Nimitz Foundation, 1986), 3. *Mikasa* had been the flagship of Admiral Heihachirō Tōgō of the Imperial Japanese Navy during the Russo-Japanese War.

¹¹² Potter, *Nimitz*, 469.

Abbreviations



B.O.Q.	bachelor officer quarters
Bupers	Bureau of Naval Personnel
CBs	construction battalions, “Seabees”
C. in C.	commander in chief
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
C.O.	commanding officer
COMINCH	Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet
CPO	chief petty officer
C W Jr.	Chester W. “Chet” Nimitz Jr.
DD	destroyer
D. M.	Douglas MacArthur
Dr. A	Thomas C. Anderson
EJK	Ernest J. King
E.L.D.	east longitude date
HQ	headquarters

J. O. R.	James O. Richardson
K.T.	cocktail
L.A.	Los Angeles
MacA	Douglas MacArthur
MC	Medical Corps
McM	Charles H. McMorris
N.A.S.	naval air station
N.R.	Naval Reserve
NROTC	Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps
OWI	Office of War Information
P.H.	Pearl Harbor
P.I.	Philippine Islands
PRO	public relations officer
RC	Red Cross
RN	Royal Navy
S.D.	San Diego
S.F.	San Francisco
S.W.	Southwest Pacific
UN	United Nations
USA	U.S. Army
USAAF	U.S. Army Air Forces
USMC	U.S. Marine Corps
USMCR	U.S. Marine Corps Reserve
USN	U.S. Navy

USNR	U.S. Naval Reserve
W.	Washington, DC
WAVES	Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service
WRNS	Women's Royal Naval Service, "Wrens"

Chronology



24 February 1885	Chester W. Nimitz is born in Fredericksburg, Texas
10 December 1898	The Spanish-American War ends with a United States victory
7 September 1901	Nimitz enrolls in the U.S. Naval Academy
30 January 1905	Graduates from the U.S. Naval Academy
23 February 1905	Assigned to <i>Ohio</i> (Battleship No. 12)
5 September 1905	The Russo-Japanese War ends with a Japanese victory
15 September 1906	Nimitz is assigned to <i>Baltimore</i> (Cruiser No. 3)
13 January 1907	Assumes command of the gunboat <i>Panay</i>
31 January 1907	Commissioned as an ensign in the U.S. Navy
7 July 1908	Runs <i>Decatur</i> (Destroyer No. 5) aground in the Philippines
31 January 1910	Promoted to the rank of lieutenant
18 November 1910	Assumes command of <i>Narwhal</i> (Submarine No. 17)
November 1911	Meets Catherine V. Freeman

14 February 1912	Places the submarine <i>E-1</i> (Submarine No. 24), originally named <i>Skipjack</i> , in commission and serves as its first commanding officer
20 March 1912	Rescues a sailor who fell overboard from the monitor <i>Tonopah</i> (Monitor No. 8) for which Nimitz receives the Treasury Department's Silver Life-saving Medal
17 May 1912	Assumes command of the Atlantic Submarine Flotilla
9 April 1913	Marries Catherine Freeman
May 1913	Travels with Catherine to Europe to observe German diesel engine technology
22 February 1914	Catherine Nimitz gives birth to Catherine Vance "Kate" Nimitz
17 February 1915	Catherine Nimitz gives birth to Chester W. "Chet" Nimitz Jr.
23 October 1916	Nimitz becomes executive officer and engineer on <i>Maumee</i> (Fuel Ship No. 14) after overseeing its outfitting
November 1916	Loses a portion of the ring finger on his left hand in an accident aboard <i>Maumee</i>
19 March 1917	Promoted to the rank of lieutenant commander
6 April 1917	The United States enters World War I on the side of the Allies
10 August 1917	Nimitz becomes engineering aide to Commander, Submarine Force, Atlantic Fleet
6 February 1918	Becomes chief of staff to Commander, Submarine Force, Atlantic Fleet
11 November 1918	An armistice goes into effect, ending World War I
6 May 1919	Nimitz becomes executive officer of <i>South Carolina</i> (Battleship No. 26)

13 September 1919	Catherine Nimitz gives birth to Anna “Nancy” Nimitz
7 June 1920	Nimitz is ordered to construct the submarine base at Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Territory of Hawaii
17 July 1920	Assumes command of Submarine Division 14
3 June 1921	Promoted to the rank of commander
June 1922–June 1923	Attends the U.S. Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island
25 June 1923	Becomes assistant chief of staff to Admiral Samuel S. Robison, Commander in Chief, U.S. Battle Fleet, aboard the flagship <i>California</i> (BB-44)
August 1926–June 1928	Organizes the NROTC unit at the University of California, Berkeley, and serves as professor of naval science and tactics
2 June 1927	Promoted to the rank of captain
15 June 1929	Assumes command of Submarine Division 20
17 June 1931	Catherine Nimitz gives birth to Mary Manson Nimitz
Summer 1932	Son Chester W. Nimitz Jr. enrolls in the U.S. Naval Academy
16 October 1933	Nimitz assumes command of the heavy cruiser <i>Augusta</i> (CA-31)
1 June 1935	Becomes assistant to the chief of the Bureau of Navigation
18 June 1938	Son Chester Nimitz Jr. marries Joan Labern
9 July 1938	Nimitz assumes command of Cruiser Division 2
17 September 1938	Assumes command of Battleship Division 1
15 June 1939	Becomes chief of the Bureau of Navigation

7 December 1941	Japanese forces attack U.S. Navy and Army Air Corps units at Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii
31 December 1941	Nimitz assumes command of the U.S. Pacific Fleet
4–8 May 1942	Battle of the Coral Sea
4–6 June 1942	Battle of Midway
30 June 1942	Nimitz survives a plane crash in San Francisco Bay, California
7 August 1942	U.S. forces invade Guadalcanal
30 September 1942	Nimitz visits the island of Guadalcanal while the battle is ongoing
18 October 1942	Replaces Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley with Vice Admiral William F. Halsey Jr. as Commander, South Pacific Area
18 April 1943	Japanese admiral Isoroku Yamamoto is killed when his plane is intercepted by U.S. Army Air Force P-38s off Bougainville
11 May 1943	U.S. Army troops land on Attu, Aleutian Islands
20 November 1943	U.S. forces invade Tarawa
1 January 1944	Nimitz meets with Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Ernest J. King in San Francisco
1–3 February 1944	U.S. forces capture Kwajalein and Majuro Atolls
15 June 1944	U.S. forces invade Saipan
19–20 June 1944	Battle of the Philippine Sea
14 July 1944	Nimitz departs Hawaii on a visit to Kwajalein and Saipan with Admiral Ernest J. King
26 July 1944	President Franklin D. Roosevelt arrives in Hawaii to confer with Nimitz and General Douglas MacArthur

15 September 1944	U.S. forces invade Peleliu
20 October 1944	U.S. forces invade Leyte
23–26 October 1944	Battle of Leyte Gulf
19 December 1944	Nimitz is promoted to the rank of fleet admiral
27 January 1945	Finishes moving his headquarters from Hawaii to Guam
19 February 1945	U.S. forces invade Iwo Jima
9 March 1945	Nimitz’s daughter Catherine marries Commander James T. “Junior” Lay
1 April 1945	U.S. forces invade Okinawa
22 April 1945	Nimitz visits Okinawa and witnesses a kamikaze attack
22 June 1945	Nimitz declares organized Japanese resistance on Okinawa has ceased
16 July 1945	Task Force 37, a British fast carrier task force, joins U.S. Third Fleet
6 August 1945	United States drops an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima
9 August 1945	United States drops an atomic bomb on the city of Nagasaki
14 August 1945	Japan accepts the provisions of the Potsdam Declaration and agrees to surrender to the Allies
2 September 1945	Nimitz signs the Japanese Instrument of Surrender aboard the battleship <i>Missouri</i> (BB-63)
15 December 1945	Becomes Chief of Naval Operations
15 December 1947	Ends his tenure as Chief of Naval Operations

21 March 1949	Nominated by the United Nations (UN) secretary general to serve as UN plebiscite administrator for Kashmir and subsequently becomes a UN goodwill ambassador
20 February 1966	Dies in San Francisco at age 80
1 February 1979	Catherine Nimitz dies at age 86

Best Beloved

1941



20 Dec. 41. On the Santa Fe “Chief.”¹ 4.30 p.m. Saturday—

Here we are westward bound thru western Illinois, through lovely rolling country, nice farms and wide vistas and far off horizons. I have preliminarily read all the data which was furnished me on leaving Washington—some 10 pounds of paper—and my conscience will now permit me to relax.— The weather is mild and the skies almost clear of clouds no snow on ground although some ice from earlier cold snap. [Hal] Lamar² has been a tower of strength and a great source of pleasure and assistance to me and you can tell [John] Shafroth³ and others who conceived the idea of sending him along that it was correct and that I greatly appreciate it.

We stopped at the Department only long enough for me to dash in to see [Harold] Stark⁴ a minute and then the Secretary⁵ and then to the station where we were allowed to get aboard our train at once. I was plumb frazzled out and emotionally torn and worn. Even the Secretary was highly emotional and had difficulty controlling his voice. He had just returned from the N.A. [Naval Academy] where he apparently did a fine job of speaking. Stark wanted to accompany me to the train but realized it would attract attention. Fortunately not a soul I knew was in the station and we got off on time—the first of 5 sections of the Capitol Limited.⁶ Travel was very heavy because of a lot of girl’s schools being turned loose for Christmas.

We had adjoining rooms with open door between which made it safe to carry secret papers. Because we could lock one outer door and the door in between. Lamar produced some Scotch whiskey which he said a friend gave him and we each had two highballs, then dinner and then to a fine sleep. I awoke at seven am really refreshed and feeling that I could cope with the situation. In the diner a man looked around at me fixedly and when he left the car addressed me by name and rank. He was a college professor who had been at Lincoln, Nebraska on 31 October when I addressed the convention of the Association of American

Universities.⁷ (We have just crossed the Mississippi River at Fort Madison and it is a nice looking town) Lamar is thoroughly enjoying this trip. It is his first transcontinental trip since he has been old enough to remember things. My professor friend had the decency not to pursue me further on the train but as we passed through the lounge car on the way from dinner I heard him point me out as “the Admiral.”

We breakfasted on the train just as we reached Chicago Lamar warned me that Mr. [Ralph] Church,⁸ an ex congressman was sitting just behind me in the diner. He had been in the Navy Dept. yesterday to try to get back the N.R. [Naval Reserve] commission which we took away from him last summer.

I had tried for the last week to get a hair cut in Washington—but had no time. I planned to do it in the Chicago Station but there were great crowds of travellers so we took a taxi to the Navy pier in Chicago where I talked with Captain [Rufus] Zogbaum.⁹ I had a quick look at the progress since 28 October when I saw it last.¹⁰ It already has an overflow of 2000 men from Great Lakes Naval Training Station.

Got my hair cut there. Saw the old fat Chief who used to be at the Destroyer Base¹¹ as assistant to Martin and Castle in taking care of the grounds

Borrowed a car to visit Abbot Hall the Naval Reserve Midshipman school¹² and saw Capt. [Benyaurd] Wygant.¹³ Talked to [John] Downes¹⁴ who insisted on coming down to the Santa Fe station in Chicago at 11 to spend an hour with us. He was most cordial and friendly and insisted we have an old fashion K.T. [cocktail] with him which we did.

Our train is now running in two sections and we are in the second section. Had lunch and then spent two hours going over papers that I will further study as time goes on. As I get more sleep and rest things are looking up and I am sure that by the time I reach Pearl Harbor I will be able to meet the requirements of the situation.

¹ An Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway passenger train offering service between Chicago, Illinois, and Los Angeles, California.

² Lieutenant (j.g.) Howell A. “Hal” Lamar, U.S. Naval Reserve (USNR), Nimitz’s flag secretary. Nimitz and Lamar traveled incognito in civilian clothing and used aliases. Nimitz was “Mr. Freeman” and Lamar “Mr. Wainwright.” Once this passenger train delivered Nimitz and Lamar to Los Angeles, Lamar returned to Washington, DC. He joined Nimitz’s staff of the Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC), as his aide in Pearl Harbor in August 1942. For a short collection of anecdotes from Lamar’s wartime service with Nimitz, see Hal Arthur Lamar, *I Saw Stars: Some Memories of Commander Hal Lamar, Fleet Admiral Nimitz’ Flag Lieutenant, 1941–1945* (Fredericksburg, TX: Admiral Nimitz Foundation, 1975).

³ Captain John F. Shafroth Jr., Nimitz’s assistant chief at the Bureau of Navigation from June 1941 to January 1942. Shafroth assumed command of Cruiser Division 3 on 6 January 1942 and in June 1943 became deputy commander, South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force. He remained there until March 1944, when he became inspector general, Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, once again under Nimitz. He became Commander, Battleship Division 8, in December 1944 and led the first heavy gun bombardment of the Japanese mainland on 14 July 1945. See Robert J. Cressman, *The Official Chronology of the U.S. Navy in World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2000), 334.

⁴ Admiral Harold R. Stark was appointed Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) in August 1939. Relieved as CNO in March 1942, Stark was assigned to command U.S. Naval Forces, Europe in April. In October 1943, he was given additional duty as commander of the U.S. Twelfth Fleet. For a treatment of Stark’s World War II career,

see B. Mitchell Simpson, *Admiral Harold R. Stark: Architect of Victory, 1939–1945* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

⁵ Secretary of the Navy William Franklin “Frank” Knox. Republican newspaper owner Frank Knox served as Secretary of the Navy under President Franklin D. Roosevelt from July 1940 until Knox’s death on 28 April 1944. Prior to assuming the post of Secretary of the Navy, Knox fought in Cuba with the First United States Volunteer Cavalry during the Spanish-American War and was an artillery officer with the American Expeditionary Forces in France in World War I.

⁶ A Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company passenger train with service between New York City and Chicago via Union Station in Washington, DC.

⁷ Nimitz delivered a talk on the subject of “American Education and Naval Requirements” at the 43rd annual conference of the Association of American Universities and Colleges on 31 October 1941 at the University of Nebraska. See “Selective Service Director Talks at AAUS Convo,” *Daily Nebraskan*, 23 October 1941, <https://nebnewspapers.unl.edu/lccn/sn96080312/1941-10-23/ed-1/seq-1/>.

⁸ Representative Ralph E. Church (R-IL). A lieutenant commander in the Naval Reserve from 1938 to 1941, Church was also a member of Congress from 3 January 1935 to 3 January 1941 and then again from 3 January 1943 to 21 March 1950.

⁹ Captain Rufus F. Zogbaum Jr. A destroyer captain during World War I, Zogbaum received the Navy Cross for escorting troop convoys to Europe. He commanded the aircraft carriers *Langley* (CV-1) and *Saratoga* (CV-3) before retiring from the Navy with the rank of captain in June 1936. Zogbaum was recalled to active duty in 1941 and retired the following year. For Zogbaum’s autobiography, see Rufus F. Zogbaum, *From Sail to Saratoga: A Naval Autobiography* (Grottaferrata, Rome: Tipografia Italo-Orientale “S. Nilo,” 1961).

¹⁰ The Navy Pier in Chicago operated as a recruitment center and barracks for U.S. Army and Navy personnel during World War I as well as the home of the Naval Auxiliary Reserve School. In the summer of 1941, prior to the United States’ entry into World War II, the U.S. Navy reconverted the pier into a training facility. The Naval Air Training Center trained more than 60,000 American and Allied aircraft technicians by the time the war ended and was home to two converted aircraft carriers on which nearly 18,000 pilots mastered carrier takeoffs and landings. See Douglas Bukowski, *Navy Pier: A Chicago Landmark* (Chicago: Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority, 1996), 37, 41.

¹¹ U.S. Destroyer Base, San Diego, California.

¹² U.S. Naval Reserve Midshipmen’s School, Abbott Hall, Northwestern University.

¹³ Captain Benyaurd B. Wygant, commander of the Naval Reserve Midshipmen’s School, Abbot Hall. Wygant received the Navy Cross for his command of the destroyers *Tucker* (Destroyer No. 57) and *Colhoun* (Destroyer No. 85) during World War I. He retired from the Navy in June 1936 but was recalled to active duty during World War II.

¹⁴ Rear Admiral John Downes Jr., Commandant, 9th Naval District, 1941–1944, and Commander, Naval Training Station Great Lakes.



21 Dec. 41. Sunday P.M.

We are now in New Mexico having spent the forenoon in Colorado. Now overcast and trying to rain but forenoon was brilliant warm sunshine.

Had a fine sleep and awoke much refreshed—but after spending most of to-day reading reports and estimates I find it difficult to keep on cheerful side. Perhaps when I actually arrive and get over the first shock things will be better.

Last night’s paper announced [Ernest J.] King¹ as C in C [Commander in Chief] U.S. [Fleet] and he is apparently displacing Stark insofar as concerns operations.

[Royal R.] Ingersoll² is C. in C. Atlantic [Fleet]. What a grand over all shake up! At any rate I am convinced that there will be more action in the Pacific than elsewhere for many a day to come.

Lamar has continued to be a great comfort.

Hope the weather is favorable to prompt flying departure.

¹ President Roosevelt selected Admiral Ernest J. King, Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, to succeed Admiral Husband E. Kimmel as Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet (COMINCH) (Kimmel was also serving as CINCPAC, the command which Nimitz assumed on 31 December 1941). King assumed his new command on 30 December 1941. Roosevelt subsequently appointed King to serve concurrently as CNO, relieving Admiral Harold R. Stark on 18 March 1942. King held both positions until 15 December 1945. For a biography of King, see Thomas B. Buell, *Master of Sea Power: A Biography of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980).

² Rear Admiral Royal E. Ingersoll, assistant to the CNO, succeeded King as Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, on 1 January 1942. Ingersoll was promoted to vice admiral in January 1942 and admiral in July 1942. In November 1944, he became Commander, Western Sea Frontier, with his headquarters in San Francisco, California. He continued in that role until April 1946 and officially retired on 1 August 1946.



View looking up Battleship Row on 7 December 1941 following the Japanese attack. The burning *Arizona* (BB-39) is in the center. To the left of it are *Tennessee* (BB-43) and the sunken *West Virginia* (BB-48). (NHHHC, NH 97377)



Monday—22 Dec—41
Nearing Barstow Calif — 9am

[letterhead]
Santa Fe
The Chief

Our train is 3 1/2 hours late and is still losing time. Chief cause—a number of troop trains also moving west. The air has turned balmy and out in the desert there is brilliant sunshine— Not a cloud in the sky. Lets pray that this is a good omen for the future and that—Eventually all will be sunshine and peace. The news papers report submarine activities on the West Coast which was to be expected even before now. Their presence may complicate my departure from the Coast because I believe all planes will be out hunting subs. Lamar has been learning cribbage rapidly and I am sure will be able to give Catherine¹ a contest at any time. Last night he insisted on inviting me to dinner—which I declined—but agreed to a game of cribbage for dinner. He was going along at a great rate until near the end he packed the crib for me and I won. He has been a great comfort to me—and has done his best to keep me cheerful. Downes told me Mrs. Leary² had returned to the Coast and was expected in Great Lakes today. Thank God Joan³ & Frances Mary [Nimitz]⁴ got away so early. I hope that most dependents have gone when I arrive. Yesterday—I went to the men's room as we approached a station— While in the toilet—the Porter locked the door on me. The lock is designed to let the person inside open the lock—but this time it wouldn't work & I was locked in. I buzzed the porter bell vigorously for several minutes and finally the porter came & let me out. He was sarcastic about the bell & announced the door could be opened from inside. When he offered later to demonstrate this, I locked him in & he stayed there until I unlocked the door— He was convinced that I had a good cause to be vexed. Lamar was highly amused when I told him about it. Lamar will carry this letter back with him by plane arriving Washington late Tuesday— You should have it by Wednesday 24th Dec. How I wish we could all be together then. Dearest your [redacted] robe is a [redacted] and I can foresee lots of use from it. Today big news should be breaking in Washington but this morning's—*Los. Ang. Times* made no mention of the grand conference in Washington.⁵ I foresee in the future a great curtailment of automobile building in order to produce more defense goods. Therefore an old car should become more valuable some months hence and it is not improbable that it may reach its original cost. Which might give you a good opportunity to dispose of it & use taxies. I would not sell it as long as its value is down— & as long as you need it. I wish you could look out over the desert at the mountains—stark & clear cut—one or two with some snow—but mostly black and bleakly bare. You

would love to sketch in these parts. Am sorry my darling not to have more news— but cooped up in compartments—we can only think. What a relief it will be when we can act also. I know my spirits will go up when I feel that I am being useful again. Hug & kiss each one of the Family for me—including Freckles⁶— How I miss you all! Don't worry about me—once off the train & active everything will be OK. All my hearts devotion—love & kiss to you all and to [redacted]

Ever your own

Chester

May this be a Happy Christmas for you all—

¹ Catherine "Kate" Nimitz, oldest daughter of Admiral Chester Nimitz and Catherine Nimitz.

² Probably Marion Barnes Bryant, wife of Vice Admiral Herbert F. Leary.

³ Joan Labern Nimitz, wife of Lieutenant Chester "Chet" Nimitz Jr. Joan was raised in England and became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1944.

⁴ Frances Mary Nimitz, daughter of Joan Labern Nimitz and Chester "Chet" Nimitz Jr.

⁵ The Arcadia Conference consisted of a series of meetings among President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and their senior diplomatic and military advisers between 22 December 1941 and 14 January 1942. This conference reaffirmed the prewar strategic agreement to defeat Nazi Germany first while adopting a defensive posture in the Pacific. See Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 67.

⁶ The Nimitz family's cocker spaniel.



Naval Air Station— S.D. [San Diego]—
Gunther's quarters—
Monday evening 11 pm
22 Dec '41

Here I am about to go to sleep after a fine letter from you (Encl. Chap. Evans¹ card)—and a hot bath. Honestly—I am much cheered up after leaving the train—which reached LA at 5 pm instead of 1150 am as scheduled. I was met by car and officers and conducted safely to the Naval Air Station S.D.—where a real war regimen is on— everything blacked out although the city lights are on. Found [Ralston] Holmes² (new Comdt who arrived yesterday) [George] Ravenscroft³—Ch [Chief] of Staff—[John] McCain⁴—[Bruce] Canaga⁵—& the Gunthers⁶ all waiting for me. The Boones,⁷ who live next door—came in for a few minutes & were much surprised to see me. Young Charles G.⁸ who stayed up to see me is a fine young boy—. As I had no dinner—Mrs. G. fixed me some sandwiches & milk. It was too late to sail today so we sail tomorrow early pm—which should put me into P.H.

[Pearl Harbor] in time for breakfast—24 DEC—. My train was so late in L.A. [Los Angeles] (due to army troop trains headed west) that I told Lamar to stay in L.A. so he could catch his plane which he would surely miss if he tried to come to S.D. He very reluctantly stayed—thinking he should see me safely into S.D. He is a fine young man— [redacted]

¹ Possibly Captain Sydney K. Evans (retired), fourth chief of chaplains from 15 July 1929 to 22 July 1935.

² Rear Admiral Ralston S. Holmes, Commandant, 11th Naval District, San Diego. Holmes served as director of naval intelligence from 1937 to 1939 and commanded the 11th Naval District from 22 December 1941 until 31 December 1942. He subsequently served as liaison officer between the Navy Department and the National Defense Research Committee at the California Institute of Technology until the end of the war. See "Ralston Holmes, 83, a Retired Admiral," *New York Times*, 6 January 1966.

³ Captain George M. Ravenscroft, chief of staff, 11th Naval District. Ravenscroft served as acting commandant, 11th Naval District, from 31 December 1942 to 30 March 1943.

⁴ Rear Admiral John Sidney "Slew" McCain Sr. served as acting commandant, 11th Naval District, from 9 December 1941 to 22 December 1941. McCain served as a passed midshipman on board the gunboat *Panay* in 1907 under the command of Passed Midshipman Chester Nimitz. McCain, who was designated a naval aviator in 1936, later became Commander, Aircraft, South Pacific and South Pacific Force, from May 1942 to September 1942. He was chief of the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics from September 1942 to July 1943 and became the first Deputy CNO for Air after being elevated to the rank of vice admiral in July 1943. McCain assumed command of the Second Fast Carrier Task Force and Task Group 38.1 in the Pacific in August 1944 and took part in the campaigns to recapture the Philippines. He became Commander, Task Group 38, under Admiral William Halsey in October 1944 and returned to the United States in September 1945. He died suddenly on 6 September 1945. For a biography of McCain, see William F. Trimble, *Admiral John S. McCain and the Triumph of Naval Air Power* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2019).

⁵ Captain Bruce Livingston Canaga, Nimitz's Naval Academy classmate and lifelong friend. Canaga served as district intelligence officer, 11th Naval District, from July 1940 to November 1942. He then transferred to the Bureau of Naval Personnel until March 1944, when he returned to California as commanding officer of the Navy V-12 units in the San Francisco area until June 1945.

⁶ Captain Ernest L. Gunther and his wife, Helen St. Goar Gunther. Gunther received the Navy Cross for his service as commander of the converted yacht *Isabel* (S. P. 521) and the destroyer *Jarvis* (Destroyer No. 38) during World War I. As a lieutenant commander, Gunther had assisted Nimitz in forming the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps unit at the University of California, Berkeley, in the fall of 1926 and remained with the unit for three years. Gunther commanded the aircraft carrier *Yorktown* (CV-5) (June 1939–February 1941) before becoming Commander, Naval Air Station, San Diego, California, in February 1941. Gunther was assigned as Commander, Fleet Air, South Pacific Force (January 1944–February 1945), followed by Commander, Air Force, Pacific Fleet, Subordinate Command, Forward Area (February 1945–May 1946). See Navy Biographies Branch, "Rear Admiral Ernest L. Gunther, USN," 7 April 1948, Modern Biographies Collection, Navy Department Library (NDL), Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC), Washington Navy Yard, DC.

⁷ Probably Commander Joel Thompson Boone and his wife, Helen Elizabeth Boone. Boone was a Medal of Honor recipient in World War I and the senior medical officer at Naval Air Station, San Diego, beginning in late 1940. In April 1945, Boone was promoted to commodore and assigned as fleet medical officer to Commander, Third Fleet, as a member of Admiral William Halsey's staff.

⁸ Charles Frederick Gunther, son of Captain Ernest L. Gunther.



Tuesday 23 Dec—early

[*San Diego*]

[redacted] I was awakened early today by the roar of plane motors warming up for the dawn patrol. Had a good sleep— feel very much ashamed to write you such depressing letters as I wrote from train— forgive me? Will now get some breakfast & join Gunther for an inspection of his defense & alert efforts— Enclosed is a note fastened to papers sent me by Dr. McEntire.¹ Miss Murphy is the Navy Dept. Employee we met at the Union Station in Washington—when we met Joan— More later—

230 pm—

Have just returned from a pleasant luncheon at the Officer's Club on North Island—given by McCain— present Holmes—who arrived the day before I did— Ravenscroft—[Byron] McCandless,² Gunther McCain's aide—Gen Price, USMC,³ the senior Army officer on the Island—Canaga, & several other marines. Spent forenoon in examining Gunther's preparations for any attacks that might be made and for protecting planes.— Also looked over the Family Hospital which is near the officers club & far removed from the industrial part of station. The Hospital is lovely—& fills a real need wish you could see it. Now will close & prepare to get aboard— We sail soon after 4 pm and should arrive P.H. early Wed. am—or about noon Wash. time. Hug & kiss the family for me— Merry X-mas to all— all my love, devotion and kisses to you—my Precious [redacted]

Ever Your Chester—

The Gunthers send love & Xmas greetings

¹ Possibly Rear Admiral Ross T. McIntire, MD. McIntire served as physician to the President of the United States from 1932 to 1946 and as surgeon general of the Navy from 1938 to 1946.

² Commodore Byron McCandless. McCandless assumed command of Destroyer Base, San Diego, in January 1937. Although placed on the retired list in June 1940, he remained on active duty. His post expanded into Repair Base, San Diego, in 1942, and McCandless remained in command until September 1945.

³ Brigadier General Charles F. B. Price, U.S. Marine Corps (USMC). Price assumed command of the Marine Corps Department of the Pacific in February 1941, responsible for the administration, training, and equipment of units on the West Coast, Hawaii and outlying Pacific islands, the Philippines, Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, and northern China. In November 1941, he was given additional duty as commander of the Second Marine Division.



Gunther's House—
(R. Adm. Ernest Gunther—
Air Station 11th Naval Dist.)¹

[*San Diego*]

24 Dec. 41 (3. p.m).

It is a clear and very cool day and the adverse weather which prevented my departing yesterday seems to have disappeared. It looks now as if we would start at 4. p.m. Ernest and Charles have been wonderful to me, as have also the Boones (Dr & Mrs) and J. S. McCain. I greatly regret taking these pilots away—and the crews on Christmas eve but I see no choice on my part.

I only hope I can live up to the high expectations of you and the Pres and the Dept. I will faithfully promise to do my best. I am sorry I could not get out to P.H. before the inspecting board got there.²

¹ Catherine Nimitz likely inserted this text even though it did not appear in the original letter. Captain Ernest L. Gunther was not promoted to rear admiral until 2 March 1943.

² The Roberts Commission, an investigative panel consisting of five men organized under an executive order of President Roosevelt issued on 18 December 1941. This was the first investigation into the Pearl Harbor attack, and the committee's mandate was to determine if there were derelictions of duty or errors of judgment on the part of U.S. Army or U.S. Navy personnel that contributed to the successes of the Imperial Japanese Navy. The commission was named for Owen J. Roberts, a Supreme Court justice who served as the committee's head. Its other members were Admiral William H. Standley, Rear Admiral Joseph M. Reeves, Major General Frank R. McCoy, and Brigadier General Joseph T. McNarney. Their report concluded that "the Japanese attack was a complete surprise to the commanders [Admiral Husband E. Kimmel and Lieutenant General Walter C. Short] and they failed to make suitable dispositions to meet such an attack. Each failed to properly evaluate the seriousness of the situation. These errors of judgment were the effective causes for the success of the attack." See *Attack upon Pearl Harbor by Japanese Armed Forces: Report of the Commission Appointed by the President of the United States to Investigate and Report the Facts Relating to the Attack Made by Japanese Armed Forces upon Pearl Harbor in the Territory of Hawaii on December 7, 1941*, 77th Cong., S. Doc. No. 159 (1942), accessed 9 January 2023, <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/pha/roberts/roberts.html>; see also Gordon W. Prange, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), 603.



[*Oahu*] 26 Dec. 41 Friday.

I arrived safely at 7. a.m. Christmas morning after an uneventful but somewhat chilly trip which for a day or so had my ears ringing from engine roar. Was met by [Patrick] Bellinger,¹ [William] Pye² and some staff officers and installed in the house where [Husband] Kimmel³ had lived and which I am sorry to say, seems to be the only place for me to live—unless I move some one out of the B.O.Q. [bachelor officer quarters] at the Sub Base which does not seem fair. I foresee a terrific lot of work for me to catch on and do my job but will do my best. I shall realize fully that you and the family are with me in spirit as I am with you.

Had Christmas dinner with Pye, Mrs [Anne] Pye⁴ and Kimmel and to bed early but did not get much sleep because of an over active mind.

¹ Rear Admiral Patrick N. L. Bellinger, Commander, Hawaiian Naval Base Air Force (Commander, Patrol Wing 2), from November 1940 to May 1942. Bellinger received the Navy Cross for his role as commanding officer of a seaplane that flew from Newfoundland to the Azores in May 1919. In August 1942, Bellinger was appointed as deputy chief of staff to the COMINCH, which he remained until March 1943. He served as Commander, Air Force, Atlantic Fleet, until 5 October 1943 and retired from the Navy in 1947 with the rank of vice admiral.

² Vice Admiral William S. Pye, acting CINCPAC from 17 to 31 December 1941. In January 1941, Nimitz appointed Pye the Commander, Battle Force (Task Force 1). Pye relinquished command of the battleship force in November 1942 to serve as president of the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.

³ Rear Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, CINCPAC and COMINCH from 1 February 1941 until 17 December 1941. Vice Admiral William Pye succeeded Kimmel as CINCPAC. Kimmel held the accompanying rank of admiral while holding this command. Following Kimmel's relief, he briefly served at Headquarters, 14th Naval District, Pearl Harbor and later at Headquarters, 12th Naval District, San Francisco, California. Kimmel was transferred to the retired list of the Navy at his own request on 1 March 1942. For an assessment of Kimmel's failures prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, see Gordon W. Prange, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981), 733–34.

⁴ Anne Briscoe Pye, wife of Vice Admiral William S. Pye, coauthor of *The Navy Wife* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1942).



[Oahu] 28 Dec. 1941 8.30 pm.

This Sunday has been like all other days here—long hours of work in the office. To me it seems like I am in a treadmill—whirling around actively but not getting any where very fast. However I am slowly getting a grasp of the situation and expect to take over at 10am on 31 Dec. —for better or for worse. While I know I am facing a difficult task—I am not discouraged and will do my best—but every one must be very, very patient because we are confronted with a most difficult period.

[Freeland] Daubin¹ came to visit me for a few minutes. He has the Base (Submarine) and squadron here. Shortly after he left a messenger brought me a package “from the officers and men of the base you helped to build.”² It was a pair of 4 star shoulder marks. So now I am more than well fixed.

This house is brand new 4 bedrooms, 2 baths and one shower bath, servants quarters etc. It is one of a great many built to house the district and base people. Pye Kimmel & Mrs Pye all mess with me. The Pyes and Kimmel live across the street in [Irving] Mayfields³ home. Our offices are most noisy and nerve wracking because of the great activity.

We are blacked out every night and very completely and effectively so with clever ventilating trucks to let in fresh air and (although the windows are screened) mosquitos. Am gradually getting to where I can sleep a little more but it is hard to do as my mind is still very active. Have received lots of letters and telegrams of encouragement from people I can't remember. It is warm here during the day

but the evenings are invariably so cool that I shiver even in a sweater. A blanket is needed at night. Every one wants to help me and most of all Pye and Kimmel—although the latter has his hands full in presenting his case to the Board which is now meeting here.⁴ Pye and Wilson Brown⁵ although very much my seniors are most loyally going to support me as I am sure the others will also. Don't worry about me. I am slowly getting my teeth into this job.

¹ Captain Freeland A. Daubin, Commander, Submarine Squadron 4 and Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, 1941–1942. The two commands were separated in January 1943.

² Nimitz was the first commanding officer of Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor (1919–1922), and oversaw the construction of the base. For more on Nimitz's role in building the submarine base, see p. xxii.

³ Captain Irving H. Mayfield, intelligence officer, 14th Naval District.

⁴ The five members of the Roberts Commission interviewed senior military and civilian leaders in Hawaii from 22 December 1941 until 9 January 1942. The members departed Oahu on 10 January 1942. Prange, *At Dawn We Slept*, 595, 598.

⁵ Vice Admiral Wilson Brown, Commander, Scouting Force, Pacific Fleet (Task Force 3), from February 1941 to July 1942. Brown received the Navy Cross during World War I for his actions as commander of the destroyer *Parker* (Destroyer No. 48). Prior to World War II, Brown was naval aide to Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover as well as commanding officer of the presidential yacht *Mayflower*. He served as superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy from February 1938 to January 1941, and following his service with the Pacific Fleet, he became Commandant, 1st Naval District, Boston, Massachusetts, in July 1942. His final assignment was naval aide to President Roosevelt beginning in February 1943. He retired from active duty in August 1945. See Navy Office of Information, "Vice Admiral Wilson Brown, Jr. United States Navy, Deceased," 16 May 1962, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

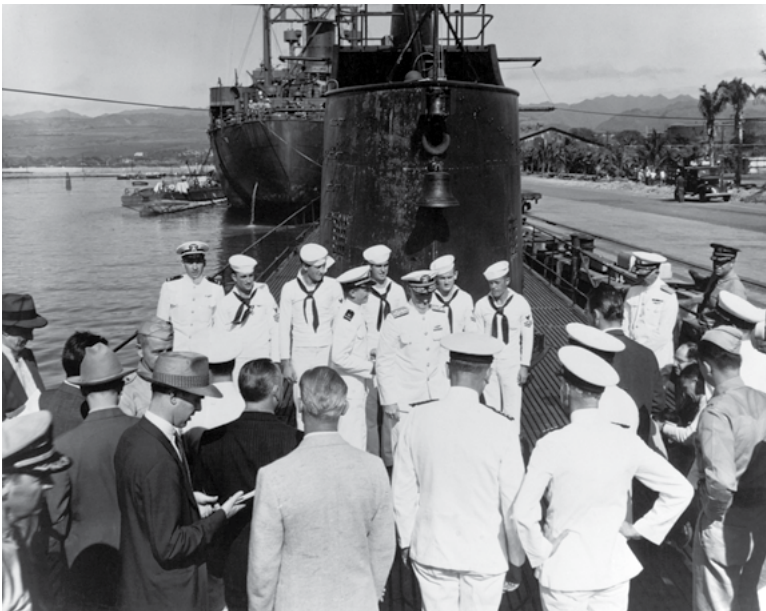


[*Oahu*] 31 Dec. 41

This is just a very hasty note to tell you that at 10. a.m—just 30 minutes from now I will relieve Pye and become C in C. Pacific Fleet. May the good Lord help and advise me and may I have all the support I can get for I will need it!.....I have still not reached the point where I can sleep well because there is so much going on and so much to do. I am well however and full of energy.



Nimitz's living quarters at Makalapa Crater, Oahu, Territory of Hawaii, during World War II. (NHHHC, NH 62937)



Nimitz relieves Vice Admiral William S. Pye as Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, in a change-of-command ceremony on 31 December 1941 on board the submarine *Grayling* (SS-209) at Pearl Harbor. (NHHHC, NH 62023)



1942



[Oahu] 4 Jan. 42. 10 p.m.

I cannot let Sunday go by without a line to you no matter how late or tired I am. My days are long and arduous and I am not sleeping too well at night because there is too much on my mind but be assured I am well and cheerful. The news from abroad (P.I.)¹ [Philippine Islands] is not good and in spite of Russian Successes the rate at which the Nazis are being pushed back is not fast enough.²

My day goes like this—up at 6.30—a little setting up exercise—Breakfast 7.15 alone. Office, lunch at B.O.Q. Office until 6. p.m., then to a blacked out house. Kimmel Pye and Mrs Pye dine with me—then a little cribbage with the guests—(four handed) Then either to bed or to the office for a short time. Hope to sleep better tonight after being up late.

Mrs Pye leaves in a few days. All dependents still here are on notice to leave and are waiting only for transportation. When Mrs Pye leaves [Milo] Draemel³ (my chief of staff and Lt. Comdr. [Ernest] Blake,⁴ my aide will occupy house with me.

There is absolutely no way I can live on board any ship without interfering with that ship's job.

I like Gen. [Delos] Emmons—my Army opposite.⁵

¹ Philippine Islands. Elements of the Japanese Fourteenth Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Masaharu Homma, landed on Batan Island, off the north coast of Luzon Island, on 8 December 1941. Some of Homma's troops invaded northern Luzon itself on 10 December, but the main effort consisted of a landing in Lingayen Gulf on 22 December. They swiftly pushed south against resistance from U.S. and Philippine forces under the overall command of General Douglas MacArthur, Commander, U.S. Army Forces in the Far East. MacArthur declared Manila, the capital of the Philippines, an open city on 26 December. By 4 January, most of MacArthur's forces had withdrawn to the Bataan Peninsula, where they conducted a prolonged defense according to prewar plans.

² Germany invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. Although the German Army inflicted huge losses on the Red Army and reached the outskirts of Moscow by early December, a Soviet counteroffensive that began on 5 December 1941 forced the Wehrmacht to retreat.

³ Rear Admiral Milo F. Draemel, chief of staff, U.S. Pacific Fleet (31 December 1941–June 1942). Draemel formerly served as Commander, Destroyer Force, Pacific Fleet (September 1940–December 1941). Nimitz selected Rear Admiral Raymond Spruance to succeed Draemel as chief of staff, U.S. Pacific Fleet. Draemel subsequently saw duty as Commander, Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet, until August 1942. See Craig L. Symonds, *Nimitz at War: Command Leadership from Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), 22, 128.

⁴ Lieutenant Commander Ernest L. Blake, U.S. Navy (USN), aide and flag lieutenant to CINCPAC.

⁵ Lieutenant General Delos C. Emmons, U.S. Army Air Corps. Emmons replaced Lieutenant General Walter C. Short as Commanding General, U.S. Army Hawaiian Department, and military governor of Hawaii on 17 December 1941. Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson Jr. relieved Emmons in June 1943. Emmons then served as Commanding General, Western Defense Command, U.S. Army, from September 1943 to June 1944 before assuming command of the Alaska Department, U.S. Army, until June 1946.



[Oahu] 9 Jan. 42. Friday. P.H.

My days are very full and I seem to be accomplishing little—but actually I am learning what it is all about and in due time hope to become useful in the job. My routine is very simple—leave the house at 7.30 a.m return 6.30 p.m. Lunch at sbm. [submarine] base. To-day I am going into town to see [William] Standley¹ and [Joseph] Reeves² with the investigating commission. and will then return promptly to my job. Draemel lives with me and our staff medical officer Dr. [Elphege] Jondreau³ will also join us. Tell Dr Swanson⁴ that my anti-cold serum arrived and that I thank him for it. I have not yet taken it as I have been busy and my cold has practically gone. I still have difficulty sleeping enough but hope it will be cured as time goes on and I get more settled. Exercise is a problem which I have not yet solved.

¹ Admiral William H. Standley (retired), formerly CNO, 1933–1937. Recalled to active duty 13 February 1941 to serve on various boards and commissions, including the Roberts Commission. See also Nimitz to Catherine, 24 December 1941, p. 11, n. 2.

² Rear Admiral Joseph M. Reeves (retired), formerly Commander, Battle Force, U.S. Fleet, 1934–1936. Reeves served as a member of the Roberts Commission.

³ Captain Elphege Aldred M. Gendreau, force surgeon, Battle Force (Task Force 1). Gendreau was Nimitz's fleet surgeon and lived in the admiral's residence. He was killed on 21 July 1943 while on an inspection trip for Admiral Nimitz to the South Pacific to gather information for the improvement of medical facilities and treatment of battle casualties. He was embarked on *LST-343* evacuating casualties from Rendova in the Solomon Islands when the ship was attacked by a dive bomber. At Nimitz's behest, a destroyer escort, *Gendreau* (DE-639), was named for the late fleet surgeon.

⁴ Probably Commander Clifford A. Swanson, Medical Corps (MC).



[Oahu] 12 Jan. 42 6. pm. P.H.

Dr. Jondreau and Draemel and I invited [Harold] Train¹ to come across from his house to play four handed cribbage. Jondreau is a beginner and each one of us took him for one game as our partner and so far Draemel is the first to bring about a victory. We usually play about three games of cribbage each evening after dinner. It is 9. p.m. and as I did not sleep too well last night² I will turn in and read "*Oliver Wiswell*" by Kenneth Roberts,³ a story of New England and the revolution.

¹ Captain Harold C. Train, chief of staff to the Commander in Chief, Battle Force (Task Force 1), under Vice Admiral William S. Pye (April–May 1942). Train also served as chief of staff to Vice Admiral Pye while the latter was acting CINCPAC in December 1941. Train became director of naval intelligence on 20 July 1942 and was promoted to rear admiral in August 1942. In September 1943, he assumed command of the 15th Naval District, the Panama Sea Frontier, and the Southeast Pacific Force. See also Navy Office of Information, "Rear Admiral Harold C. Train, United States Navy, Deceased," 18 June 1970, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

² Nimitz's disturbed sleep may have been a result of the news that the aircraft carrier *Saratoga* was torpedoed by the Japanese submarine *I-16* approximately 350 miles southwest of Oahu at 1915 on 11 January 1942. See "Command Summary," 12 January 1942, vol. 1, p. 155, box 1, Series 1: Command Summary & Combined Chiefs of Staff Books, 1941–1945, Papers of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, 1902–1976 (hereafter cited as Nimitz Papers), Archives Branch (AB), NHHC. [Online version available through the American Naval Records Society at <https://ibiblio.org/anrs/graybook.html>].

Nimitz's wartime "Command Summary" is often called the "Graybook" in reference to the color of the wartime bindings of the eight volumes. These volumes were most likely compiled by the Plans Division of Nimitz's staff. They include a daily running estimate of the Pacific War printed on white pages, directives and operational messages printed on green sheets, pink pages detailing Nimitz's secret exchanges with CNO Ernest King and other Allied headquarters, and finally yellow pages labeled "Nimitz Only." John B. Hattendorf, "Saving Nimitz's 'Graybook,'" *Naval History Magazine*, June 2014, 48–51. See also Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 411.

³ Kenneth Roberts, *Oliver Wiswell* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1940).



[Oahu] 18 Jan 42 Sunday

This day is like any other day—same work routine. How nice it would be to plan a hike into the green hills but I dare not leave my post for that long.

Just had a call from Lt. Comdr. [Warren] Magnusson¹ (Congressman from Seattle, on Naval Affairs Committee who came out to join [Howard] Good's² ship, the *New Orl* [Orleans], but they passed each other at sea.

¹ Representative Warren Grant "Maggie" Magnuson (D-WA). A lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve, Magnuson served on board the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* (CV-6), seeing combat before being recalled to Congress later in 1942 by President Roosevelt. First elected to the House of Representatives in 1936, he won election to the Senate in 1944 and served in that body until 1981.

² Captain Howard Harrison Good. Good led the Planning Division of the Bureau of Navigation under Nimitz before the war. He commanded the cruiser *New Orleans* (CA-32) from 22 August 1941 to 18 June 1942.



[Oahu] 22 Jan. 42.

With only a few minutes before we sit down to dinner I can only make a little start on this letter. My days are very much the same—long hours in the office—long discussions etc. Two days ago I sneaked out and played two sets of tennis near the BOQ with Capt. [Arthur C.] Davis¹—my aviation assistant. I felt very strange on the court but won 1st set 6–4 and lost 6–1 second set. Although I enjoyed the games I am afraid tennis will be very infrequent.

The same night Draemel, Dr Jondreau and I had a dinner for six. Our guests Lt. Gen. Emmons, His Chief of Staff Col. [J. Lawton] Collins² and his Intelligence Officer Col. [Kendall] Fielder.³ It was a good get together to talk business and it was pleasant. Now Emmons has invited Draemel and me to breakfast Sunday at 10. a.m. at the Moana⁴ where he entertains a lot of his friends here. It is an odd hour and entirely off my schedule so I do not know how to prepare. Emmons is also military governor of the Islands as was also Gen. [Walter C.] Short,⁵ his predecessor who on the day of the attack closed all bars and stopped the sale of all liquors including beer and wine. It was a good move to prevent local troubles but the citizens are very restive and are working for relaxation of the order to permit some purchases. It does not concern me at all. I can and would prefer to be without liquor but realize that it has its uses.

The evacuation is proceeding slowly but surely but there are many more to go. Rents have gone down. Now to dinner and more later.

¹ Captain Arthur C. Davis. Davis later served as commanding officer of the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* from June to October 1942. He received the Navy Cross for his skillful handling of the ship while under a Japanese attack near the Solomon Islands on 24 August 1942. In September 1944, Davis became chief of staff to Admiral Raymond E. Spruance when the latter commanded the U.S. Fifth Fleet during the Iwo Jima and Okinawa campaigns. Davis retired in 1955 with the rank of admiral.

² Colonel J. Lawton Collins, chief of staff, U.S. Army Hawaiian Department. Lawton later commanded the 25th Infantry Division (May 1942–December 1943), during which time the division took part in the campaign to capture Guadalcanal. Collins was subsequently transferred to the European Theater, where he commanded VII Corps during the invasion of Normandy and subsequent operations in Western Europe. For Collins's autobiography, see Joseph Lawton Collins, *Lightning Joe: An Autobiography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979).

³ Colonel Kendall J. Fielder, chief, Military Intelligence Division, U.S. Army Hawaiian Department. Fielder strongly opposed mass internment of individuals of Japanese descent in Hawaii after U.S. entry into World War II. Instead, Fielder and others suggested the formation of infantry units made up of Japanese American volunteers. The proposal was later adopted, and the Army formed two units comprised of Japanese Americans, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Battalion.

⁴ The Moana Hotel on Waikiki Beach.

⁵ Lieutenant General Walter C. Short, Commanding General, U.S. Army Hawaiian Department, during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Short was subsequently relieved of command and reduced to the rank of major general.



Nimitz (*left*) poses with Lieutenant General Delos C. Emmons (*center*), USA, and Rear Admiral Milo Draemel (*right*), chief of staff to Nimitz. In June 1942, Draemel became Commander, Amphibious Forces, Pacific. (NHHC, NH 62440)



[*Oahu*] 24 Jan. 42.

No clippers have arrived, due to bad weather so there has been no mail to speak of— However we work on the saying that no news is good news. The newspapers report an increasing complexity in world affairs which will probably continue for some time. We hope and pray for the best. Had a pleasant call from [Claude] Bloch¹ last night and for the first time in days a reasonable amount of sleep.

¹ Rear Admiral Claude C. Bloch, Commandant, 14th Naval District (January 1940–April 1942), and former COMINCH (January 1938–January 1940). Bloch received the Navy Cross for his service in command of the troop transport *Plattsburg* (formerly *Harvard*) in World War I.



[Oahu] 25 Jan. 42. Sunday—

Draemel, Blake (my aide) and I attended Gen. Emmons breakfast at the Moana to-day at 10.a.m. About 100 present Army civilians and a few Navy and about half ladies. Frances Andrews Dillingham was there with her husband a fine strapping fellow who is an Army Reserve Officer.¹ It was pleasant. After breakfast called on New Zealand Minister² (a return call) and then inspected some Army business and then back to our den.

¹ Frances Andrews Dillingham, daughter of Vice Admiral Adolphus Andrews and Berenice Platter Andrews. Frances was married to Benjamin Franklin Dillingham II, the scion of a family that owned one of Hawaii's largest companies. Benjamin Dillingham was a lieutenant colonel in the Army during World War II.

² Walter Nash, deputy prime minister of New Zealand and minister to the United States.



[Oahu] 29. Jan. 42 P.H.

I do feel depressed a large part of the time but I always hope for a turn for the better. The news has not been too cheering recently as far as our allies are concerned¹

Secretary [Henry] Stimson's² announcement that I was holding the bag out here forced a press conference on me to-day and I had to duck a lot of tough questions.

The unity of command was placed in the Navy before I reached here.³

Although this has been a bad day for me it has had its compensations. The flag selection list came out to-day and there are some sad people. I am most distressed over Train and Gunther both of whom should have been promoted.

I will turn in hoping to go to sleep. My mind is still in a whirl and I lie awake long hours but perhaps that will end.

¹ Probably a reference to continued Japanese advances in Malaya (present-day Malaysia) in Southeast Asia and the ongoing withdrawal of British troops to Singapore Island. Great Britain began evacuating civilians from Singapore on 29 January 1942. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 72.

² Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson.

³ On 29 January 1941, Stimson told reporters that the Army, Army Air Corps, and Navy had agreed to establish unified commands under a single commanding officer in Hawaii, the Panama Canal Zone, and the Western Caribbean. In response to the news that Lieutenant General Delos C. Emmons was subordinate to Nimitz, the pair held a press conference with reporters in Nimitz's office later the same day. In a prepared statement, Nimitz clarified that the arrangement of a unified command had been established before he arrived in Hawaii on 31 December 1941. "In my opinion and that of General Emmons it is functioning exceedingly well," he declared. "Girding of Pacific Speeded by Nimitz," *New York Times*, 31 January 1942; also see "Command Unified in 4 Combat Areas," *New York Times*, 30 January 1942.



[Oahu] 28. Feb. 42

Your last letter started 23rd Feb. and finished the 24th reached me in just 4 days. My mind was in a turmoil with several difficult problems which appear insolvable but I put them aside for the moment to read your letters and feel much better there by..... At least calmed down for the moment. I sent Drameal out this p.m. to golf as he looked over tired. I felt physically well and fit. Don't worry about my physical condition. It is good.

Am so sorry to see the news that Kimmel and Short are to be court martialled. Standley now says that there was cooperation between the Army & Navy in spite of the Roberts' report....¹

.....As I drove up in the rain I passed [Charles] McMorris² and insisted he have dinner with me tonight. He is coming soon.

....Saw the C. W. [Chester Nimitz] JR's³ Skipper⁴ was given Navy Cross recently which indicates that certainly up to recent date—all was well.

¹ The Roberts Commission completed its investigation on 23 January 1942. Its final report declared that "it was a dereliction of duty on the part of [both Kimmel and Short] not to consult and confer with the other respecting the meaning and intent of the warnings, and the appropriate measures of defense required by the imminence of hostilities." *Attack upon Pearl Harbor by Japanese Armed Forces*; see also Prange, *At Dawn We Slept*, 600.

² Captain Charles Horatio "Soc" McMorris, war plans officer under both Kimmel and Nimitz (February 1941–May 1942). From May to November 1942, McMorris commanded the cruiser *San Francisco* (CA-38), in which capacity he received the Navy Cross for his role in engaging Japanese forces off Savo Island on the night of 11–12 October 1942. In December 1942, McMorris assumed command of Cruiser Task Force 8, which operated in the North Pacific and successfully prevented a Japanese effort to reinforce their garrisons on Kiska and Attu. The following June, McMorris, now a vice admiral, replaced Vice Admiral Raymond A. Spruance as Nimitz's chief of staff when Spruance assumed command of the Fifth Fleet. After the war ended, McMorris became Commander, Fourth Fleet, in February 1946. His final duty was as Commandant, 14th Naval District, Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, and Commander, Hawaiian Sea Frontier. He retired in September 1952. See Navy Biographies Section, "Vice Admiral Charles H. McMorris, U.S. Navy, Deceased," 8 March 1954, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

³ Lieutenant Chester William "Chet" Nimitz Jr., son of Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz. Chester Nimitz Jr. served as the torpedo and gunnery officer and later as the executive officer on the submarine *Sturgeon* (SS-187) from 1939 to 1943. He subsequently served as the executive officer on the submarine *Bluefish* (SS-222) and commanding officer of the submarine *Haddo* (SS-255). He was awarded three Silver Star Medals and the Navy Cross in the course of his wartime service.

⁴ Lieutenant Commander William Leslie Wright, commander of the submarine *Sturgeon*. Wright received the Navy Cross on 27 February 1942 for attacks he conducted on a Japanese warship and tanker in January 1942.



[Oahu] 19. March 42

Your letters of 14 and 15 March made excellent time and were in my hands at 2. p.m. to-day. They helped take the edge off a hard day of pressure—following a night of false alarms last night.....

Yesterday p.m. the Base and Subs gave Daubin a farewell K.T. party at the Bachelor Officers Quarters. I saw Margaret Canaga¹ call there and she sends greetings to you all. Daubin was presented a handsome clock. In his speech of thanks he remarked that he hated to leave and that he felt that people in the States did not know what was what in Pearl Harbor. He mentioned the chorus girl was asked "Who is this Pearl Harbor who is getting attacked so much," and brought down the house. There are still several thousand Navy dependents here inspite of the large numbers already evacuated. It will take several months to get them all back.

Last night we had Withers,² Daubin and D's [Daubin's] relief Capt. [Robert H.] English,³ over for dinner. To-day General Emmons and his Chief of Staff and Bloch and his Chief. of. Staff.⁴ for lunch. Am trying my best to get the heads of the services here together.

¹ Margaret Edwards Canaga, wife of Captain Bruce L. Canaga.

² Rear Admiral Thomas Withers Jr. Withers served as Commander, Submarines, U.S. Pacific Fleet, until replaced by Captain Robert H. English in May 1942.

³ Captain Robert H. English. English reported for duty as Commander, Submarine Squadron 4, on 10 March 1942 and received additional duty as Commander, Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, three days later. English was given command of Submarines, U.S. Pacific Fleet, on 14 May 1942 and promoted to rear admiral on 30 May 1942. He died on 21 January 1943 while a passenger in a Naval Air Transport Service Pan American Martin M-130 flying boat that crashed into a mountain in Mendocino County, California.

⁴ Captain John B. Earle.



[Oahu] 22 March 42.

I am glad you went to Mrs [Annie] Knox's¹ Luncheon. I have not seen any thing [about] K. [Knox] recently so believe he is lying low. Am afraid he is not so keen for me now as he was when I left—but that is only natural. Ever so many people were enthusiastic for me at the start but when things do not move fast enough—they sour on me. I will be lucky to last six months. The public may demand action and results faster than I can produce.

¹ Annie Reid Knox, wife of Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox.



[Oahu] 1. May 1942.

I knew you would enjoy seeing Morgan Watt.¹ He did a splendid job for us and to my mind is one of the best—if not the best engineer in his group. He will go far in the service and I wish I could have him on my staff. He is of greater value in the Dept. where he can influence new designs of ships.

¹ Commander Richard Morgan Watt Jr. Watt was the former chief constructor of the U.S. Navy and joined the Navy Department in Washington, DC, in 1937. In World War I, he had received the Navy Cross for his role as industrial manager at the Norfolk Navy Yard. Prior to World War II, he played a significant role in the design of Navy warships and served with the Bureau of Ships as deputy head of the landing craft section. Watt received the Legion of Merit in 1943 for speeding production of destroyer escorts and a letter of commendation from Nimitz for improving the resistance of U.S. Navy ships to fire and flooding. In 1944, he served as acting vice chairman of the U.S. Maritime Commission and subsequently became director of the Inspection Office of Procurement and Material, Executive Office of the Secretary, Navy Department in March 1945. See Navy Biographies Branch, "Rear Admiral Richard Morgan Watt, Jr., United States Navy, Retired," 1 February 1957, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.



[Oahu] 4 May 42. 8. p.m.

Since my last entry on this letter I have been thousands of miles. I can't tell you where¹.....It was a most interesting trip but some what tiresome because my conveyance lacked comforts although it moved very fast. I took with me Dr. Gendreau, Capt. [Willard] Kitts,² Capt. Davis, and Col. [Omar] Pfeiffer³ U.S.M.C. all on my staff. Left at 6. a.m. from here arr. there 2.30 p.m. Inspected and conferred until midnight by at 4. a.m. and back here at 7.15 p.m last night—very tired but greatly pleased at the high morale & esprit I found among the Marines and Navy men. Delivered some medals and had a most interesting visit at an interesting place. It is a bird sanctuary and there were millions of birds of all kinds albatross, terns, and many other species which I could not identify. The birds are now mating and are so tame you have to push them out of the way when you walk about. The noise was terrific and I was glad to sleep Sat. night in a dug-out some 15 feet underground where it was quiet. Sat. p.m. was clear and calm and the colors in the atoll were gorgeous.

I am beginning to hope the nut who wrote me about May being lucky is right. Have had some good news tonight—hope for more and better news before the month is up. You may read about it in the papers in a few days. Am sorry I cannot elaborate but to-day we have inflicted damage and received little in return. Far removed from here but still it is our fleet.⁴

Capt. James Roosevelt⁵ reported to-day for duty. He is bright and capable and will surely emerge from this war with a good record.

¹ Nimitz and members of his staff flew to Midway Atoll on 2 May 1942 for an informal inspection. They returned to Pearl Harbor the following day.

² Captain Willard A. Kitts III, gunnery officer, CINCPAC staff (January 1941–September 1942). In September 1942, Kitts assumed command of the cruiser *Northampton* (CA-26). The ship was sunk by Japanese torpedoes in the Battle of Tassafaronga on 1 December 1942. Kitts received the Navy Cross for seamanship during the battle that prevented greater loss of life. He retired in June 1951 with the rank of vice admiral. See Navy Office of Information, "Vice Admiral Willard A. Kitts, III, United States Navy, Deceased," 30 November 1964, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

³ Colonel Omar T. Pfeiffer, USMC, fleet marine officer and assistant war plans officer, CINCPAC staff (1941–1943); War Plans Division, Office of COMINCH (1943–1946).

⁴ Nimitz is alluding to reports of action on the first day of the Battle of the Coral Sea (4–8 May 1942). Task Force 17, Rear Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher in command, launched three air strikes totaling 60 planes from the aircraft carrier *Yorktown* (CV-5) against Japanese naval forces under Rear Admiral Kiyohide Shima. *Yorktown* lost three aircraft to enemy fire but their crews survived. Japanese losses from the attack were the destroyer *Kikuzuki*, one minesweeper, and two auxiliary minesweepers sunk, four ships damaged, and four seaplanes destroyed.

⁵ Captain James Roosevelt, USMC, oldest son of President Roosevelt, served as executive officer of the Second Marine Raider Battalion (under Lieutenant Colonel Evans Carlson). On 31 March 1942, Admiral King suggested that Nimitz summon Carlson to Hawaii for a conference on the use of the battalion in commando-type operations. The battalion arrived in Hawaii on 17 May. Nimitz directed two companies of this unit to reinforce the defenses at Midway Atoll, where they arrived on 25 May.



[Oahu] 31. May 42.

This afternoon [Lloyd] Wiltse¹ [Vincent] Murphy² English and I went to Barbers Pt. [Point] where there is a swimming beach for our officers and men.³ Also a sort of picnic camping area with fire places for cooking—shade trees algaroba⁴ etc. It was well patronized to-day and we enjoyed a dip although the water was shallow some ways out and full of sand in suspension. It was lovely and cool and all in all it relaxed our various strains.

I expect the next few days to be full and long so will bank up some rest.

Another day has gone and it has been an interesting and busy one. Some day the story of our activities will be written and it will be interesting—but not for now.

To-day J. W. Lewis⁵ came in to see me. He is on sea duty and seems very happy.

Comdr. [Ralph] Oftsie⁶ joined to-day—to relieve Davis who will go to sea in a few days. My staff will gradually change from those I found to those I chose. [Preston] Mercer⁷ will be my flag-secretary before many weeks. He has been doing fine work at sea. Other changes are in the making during the summer.

¹ Captain Lloyd J. Wiltse, USN, assistant chief of staff (for administration), CINCPAC (April 1942–August 1943). In September 1943, Wiltse assumed command of Cruiser Division 11 and transferred to command Cruiser Division 10 in August 1944. He received the Navy Cross for demonstrating extraordinary heroism while leading a task group that recovered two damaged cruisers in October 1944. See Navy Biographies Branch, “Vice Admiral Lloyd J. Wiltse, U.S. Navy, Retired,” 4 April 1957, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

² Commander Vincent R. Murphy, USN, assistant war plans officer, CINCPAC (February 1941–July 1942). Murphy commanded the battleship *Alabama* (BB-60) from August 1944 to January 1945 and received the Bronze Star Medal with “V” device for his actions in raids on Japanese positions. Murphy was designated director of naval history, Office of the Secretary of the Navy, from November 1945 to June 1946. See Naval History Division, “Vice Admiral Vincent Raphael Murphy, United States Navy,” 1 December 1950, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

³ This area is now called “Nimitz Beach.” See Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 112.

⁴ Algaroba (Genus *Prosopis*) is a mesquite flowering tree and plant species native to the Mediterranean, which has spread throughout the world. In many places it is considered invasive.

⁵ Captain John W. Lewis, USN, formerly chief of staff and aide to Commandant, 14th Naval District (Rear Admiral Claude C. Bloch).

⁶ Commander Ralph A. Ofstie, USN. A naval aviator, Ofstie joined Nimitz's CINCPAC staff as aviation officer after serving as an assistant naval attaché in the U.S. embassy in London. Promoted to captain, he assumed command of the aircraft carrier *Essex* (CV-9) on 6 November 1943. Following advancement to rear admiral, Ofstie took over Carrier Division 26 in August 1944 and Carrier Division 23 in January 1945. In April 1945, he became chief of staff, Commander Aircraft, Atlantic Fleet.

⁷ Commander Preston V. Mercer, USN. Mercer had served as Nimitz's aide and flag secretary when the admiral was Commander, Cruiser Division 2, and later Commander, Battleship Division 1, from September 1938 to June 1939. Mercer then commanded the destroyer *Lamson* (DD-367) in the South Pacific before once again becoming flag secretary and aide to Nimitz in June 1942. In August 1943, Mercer was elevated to Nimitz's assistant chief of staff for administration. See Navy Biographies Section, "Rear Admiral Preston V. Mercer, U.S. Navy, Retired," 4 January 1955, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.



[*Oahu*] 2 June 42 9. p.m.

Another busy day and one of anxious waiting for something to develop—and for which we are better prepared than ever before.



Nimitz emerges from a bunker on Sand Island at Midway Atoll while on an inspection trip before the Battle of Midway in May 1942. (NHHC, NH 62674)



During Nimitz's visit to Midway Atoll on 2 May 1942, the admiral awards the Navy Cross to Captain James L. Neefus, USMC. (NHHC, NH 62745)



[Oahu] 11 July 42 Saturday

Have been exceedingly busy at desk work and when not there have been visiting with the General and at the hospital where poor Murphy is doing as well as possible under very difficult and uncomfortable conditions. He is in a cast from his breast to his upper legs and must constantly remain in one position. With it all he is very cheerful. As soon as he can be moved comfortably he will be sent to a States hospital where it is not so warm. His relief Comdr. [William] Callaghan¹ (brother of Dan)² is already here and on the job. I am very sorry to have Murphy leave.

I hope the news items regarding my crash on June 30th did not disturb you when they were published yesterday.³ It is not a new accident but the same old ducking with delayed release.

¹ Commander William McCombe Callaghan served in the office of the CNO from September 1941 until July 1942. That July, he joined the CINCPAC staff as a logistics plans officer, and in September, he was promoted to captain. In May 1944, he became commanding officer of *Missouri* (BB-63) until May 1945, when he returned to the CINCPAC staff. In July 1945, he became the assistant CNO for transportation.

² Rear Admiral Daniel Judson Callaghan was killed on 13 November 1942 aboard his flagship *San Francisco* during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal. As Commander, Task Group 67.4, Rear Admiral Callaghan was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

³ On 30 June 1942, Nimitz and several members of his staff, including Commander Preston Mercer and Captain Lynde McCormick, flew to San Francisco so that Nimitz could confer with Admiral King. When the Sikorsky flying boat carrying Nimitz and his staff attempted to land in San Francisco Bay, it hit a piece of floating debris and violently capsized. Nimitz escaped without injury, but the plane's copilot, Lieutenant Thomas Morton Roscoe, USNR, was killed and Captain McCormick suffered a head wound and two cracked vertebrae. Catherine was on hand to meet her husband in San Francisco. Nimitz might be referring to a report of the crash in the *New York Times* on 10 July 1942. See "Admiral Nimitz Escapes Serious Injury in Plane Crash," 10 July 1942, box 596, folder 1, Officer Biographies, AB, NHHC.



[Oahu] 22. July 42

Just as I was about to start this letter my phone rang to tell me that a town in Maui was being shelled—probably by a submarine.¹ A moment before that the phone rang to give me a radio message, from Renville,² that originated with various civic groups to say that “We to day joined Texas in honoring you” So you see the Japs decided to give me a salute also.

To-day Comdr. [Eliot] Bryant³ who was in the big submarines when I had the division in S.D. came thru from the far S.W. [Southwest Pacific] to Mare Island. He is tall and blond and had been with the subs out there. He came in to tell me how well C.W. Jr was doing and how highly he was regarded by everyone—particularly his skipper who by the way is being relieved to come home for a rest. The skippers take the heavy strains and I suppose Wright needs a rest. The new C.O. [commanding officer]⁴ is from the [submarine] Tender and Bryant says he is a fine man whose name I can only guess at.

Tomorrow noon it is my turn to have the weekly luncheon for Emmons, [David] Bagley⁵ and our Chiefs of Staff. I have six additional guests, Maj. Gen. [Millard] Harmon⁶ U.S.A. [Army], [George] Kenny⁷ U.S.A. Brig. Gen. Turning U.S.A. Maj. Gen. [Charles] Hall,⁸ [Lynde] McCormick⁹ and Ofstie—a total of 12 including [Raymond] Spruance¹⁰ and myself.

¹ False reports like this one were common in the first year of the war in the Pacific. A Japanese submarine shelled the harbor of Kahului, Maui, on 15 December 1941 and another Japanese submarine sank the USAT *Royal T. Frank* about 30 miles north of the island of Hawaii's Upolu Point on 28 January 1942. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 64; and Colleen Uechi, “In Wake of Pearl Harbor, Maui Braced for an Attack,” *Maui (HI) News*, 7 December 2019.

² Possibly Renville, Minnesota.

³ Commander Eliot H. Bryant was awarded the Navy Distinguished Service Medal for exceptionally meritorious service as operations officer, Submarines, Asiatic Fleet, from 7 December 1941 to May 1942.

⁴ Lieutenant Commander Herman A. Piecentkowski relieved Lieutenant Commander William L. Wright as commander of the submarine *Sturgeon* on 13 August 1942 at Albany, Western Australia.

⁵ Vice Admiral David Worth Bagley, Commandant, 14th Naval District, and Commander, Hawaiian Sea Frontier, with headquarters at Pearl Harbor (November 1944–July 1945).

⁶ Major General Millard F. Harmon, commanding general of U.S. Army Forces in the South Pacific Area. Harmon was in transit with the forward echelon of his headquarters, through Hawaii from the United States en route to Nouméa, New Caledonia, in preparation for the invasion of Guadalcanal.

⁷ Major General George C. Kenney, U.S. Army (USA). Kenney was en route from the United States to Australia to take command of Fifth Air Force and Allied Air Forces, Southwest Pacific Area, under General Douglas MacArthur.

⁸ Major General Charles P. Hall, Commanding General, 93rd Infantry Division (August 1941–October 1942). Hall shortly thereafter became Commanding General, XI Corps (October 1942–March 1946).

⁹ Captain Lynde D. McCormick, war plans officer for the Pacific Fleet (April 1942–January 1943). McCormick went on to serve as assistant CNO for logistic plans and chairman of the Joint Logistics Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In March 1945, he became Commander, Battleship Division 3. Following the war, Vice Admiral McCormick was named deputy CINCPAC in December 1945 and subsequently Vice CNO in November 1949. Upon the sudden death of Admiral Forrest Sherman in July 1951, McCormick became acting CNO. President Harry S. Truman nominated McCormick to serve as Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, in August 1951, and he was appointed Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in January 1952. His final service was as president of the Naval War College. See Biographies Branch, "Admiral Lynde D. McCormick, U.S. Navy, Deceased," 2 December 1958, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

¹⁰ Rear Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, chief of staff to the CINCPAC beginning June 1942. Spruance became deputy CINCPAC in September 1943. Spruance had previously commanded Task Force 16 during the Battle of Midway and later led the U.S. Fifth Fleet during the campaigns to capture the Gilberts, the Marshalls, the Marianas, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. His command also defeated the Japanese navy in June 1944 at the Battle of the Philippine Sea. For more on Spruance's career, see Thomas B. Buell, *The Quiet Warrior: A Biography of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974).



[Oahu] 23 July 42.

Spruance and Lt. [Edward] Spruance Jr.¹ and I walked about seven miles this afternoon through the hills back of Aiea and it was lovely. Every turn of the road gave us a marvelous view of the harbor and the ocean. Young S. [Spruance] moves tomorrow for the S.W. to join C. W. Jr. That is he is going to his ship in the same area but he will miss C. W. Jr who may be out or on his way back.

Our alarm last night turned out to be false as no Jap sub was in the vicinity. It was our own forces (Army) holding target practice. My luncheon for the Army to-day was a great success. I have just invited Wiltse and Geo. Murray² to breakfast with me at seven tomorrow morning and I plan to give them smoked Alaska cod or salmon as I have both. [William] Calhoun³ has a friend in S.F. [San Francisco] who keeps him supplied and C. [Calhoun] remembers to send some to me.

I have just learned that our son returned to base on 21 July having had a good spell of hunting and a good bag.⁴

¹ Lieutenant Edward Dean Spruance, son of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance. Edward Spruance later commanded the submarine *Lionfish* (SS-298).

² Captain George D. Murray, previously commanding officer of the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* from 21 March 1941 to 30 June 1942, during which time the ship participated in raids on the Marshall and Gilbert Islands, the Doolittle Raid, and the Battle of Midway. Murray received the Navy Cross for his handling of *Enterprise* in February 1942 while under Japanese air attack. He received command of Carrier Task Force 17 with the aircraft carrier *Hornet* (CV-8) as his flagship in July 1942. Murray was then ordered back to the United States to become chief, Air Intermediate Training Command, Pensacola, Florida. Vice Admiral Murray returned to the Pacific as Commander, Air Force, Pacific Fleet, in August 1944. See Navy Office of Information, "Admiral George Dominic Murray, United States Navy, Deceased," 12 March 1971, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

³ Vice Admiral William L. Calhoun, Commander, Service Force, Pacific Fleet (February 1942–March 1945).

⁴ Nimitz is referring here to the submarine *Sturgeon*'s fourth war patrol. On this patrol, the submarine sank the Japanese transport *Montevideo Maru* about 65 miles west of Cape Bojeador, Luzon. It was not learned until after the war that the ship was carrying approximately 1,050 Allied prisoners, most of them Australian, from New Britain to Hainan Island, off southern China. All of the prisoners on board died when *Sturgeon* torpedoed the ship, making it the worst maritime disaster in Australian history. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 106.



[Oahu] 24 July 42.

Blake and I went down town and returned a long over-due call on Mayor [Lester] Petrie¹ of Honolulu who came here years ago from San Francisco. He is a very pleasant man and I like him. The new Governor [Ingram] Stainbeck² just appointed says he will try to restore many civil functions now the Jap menace has been so greatly reduced. I foresee clashes between him and the Military Governor.³ It seems that Mr [Harold] Ickes⁴ is determined to recall Military Government and restore civil government as soon as he can do so. I am afraid that I shall have to take a stand on the side of the Military Government if I am asked about it. At least until the war is over—because our danger though lessened, is ever with us so long as the Japs still have a powerful fleet with six, or more, carriers.

¹ Lester Petrie, mayor of Honolulu from 1941 to 1947.

² Ingram M. Stainback, governor of the Hawaiian Islands, 1942–1951. Stainback continuously protested martial law in the Territory of Hawaii, which lasted from December 1941 to October 1944 and resulted in the unlawful imprisonment of more than 2,000 U.S. citizens and residents of Japanese descent.

³ Lieutenant General Delos C. Emmons, U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF).

⁴ Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes. Ickes managed some 30,000 employees and oversaw the governments of Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and other U.S. possessions. He was a staunch advocate for the preservation of natural resources and served as secretary of the interior from 1933 until he resigned in February 1946.



[Oahu] 25 July 42

My dinner guests Lt. [John] Roeginck,¹ Lt. [Arthur] Benedict² and Lt. [James] Bassett U.S.N.R.³ have just left. The first two are Japanese language officers—very pleasant and very competent in their work. Bassett is a Los Angeles newspaper man enrolled for Public Relations, and is assistant to [William] Waldo Drake.⁴ I enclose a copy of my staff⁵ which is changing somewhat at present, to give the old timers a chance for sea duty on combatant ships

¹ Lieutenant John G. Roenigk, Japanese-language officer, Fleet Radio Unit, Pacific. Owing to the fact that Roenigk lived in the same house as Nimitz's flag lieutenant, Lieutenant Hal Arthur Lamar, Roenigk came to know Nimitz quite well and later attested that he treated Roenigk, Lamar, and their roommate "as his own sons." Roenigk remembered Nimitz as willing to chat with anyone regardless of rank on his many walks in the countryside around Makalapa, the hill atop which Nimitz's headquarters was built. When Roenigk recorded his memories of Nimitz in 1989, he recalled, "Admiral Nimitz was extremely interested in our work at FruPac. He seemed to want to learn more about it and our methods, which were quite complicated. He would wander alone into our building, which was just across the road, when he had an hour of leisure." According to Roenigk, "[Nimitz] would stand behind each one of us and watch closely, as we worked on various and different systems. He didn't wish to disturb any one of us; however, I found it convenient to explain very briefly just what and how I was trying to solve the puzzle. He insisted we remain seated and continue to work, while he surveyed and observed." John Roenigk, "Reminiscences of the Naval Career of Captain John Roenigk, USN (Ret.)," 1989, pp. 55–56, box 12, folder 12, U.S. Naval War College Archives, Newport, RI, https://www.usnwcarchives.org/repositories/2/archival_objects/40158.

² Lieutenant Arthur Benedict, Japanese-language officer, Fleet Radio Unit, Pacific.

³ Lieutenant James Bassett, USNR, CINCPAC assistant public relations officer, who drew on his experiences for his novel *Harm's Way* (1962).

⁴ Lieutenant Commander William Waldo Drake, USNR, CINCPAC public relations officer.

⁵ Copy not found.



Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, staff photo from 1942. *First row, left to right:* Captain Roscoe F. Good, Captain William M. Callaghan, Colonel Omar T. Pfeiffer (USMC), Captain Lloyd J. Wiltse, Captain Thomas J. Keliher Jr., Rear Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Captain Elphege A. M. Gendreau (MC), Captain Lynde D. McCormick, Captain James M. Steele, Captain Ralph A. Ofstie, and Captain John R. Redman. Commander Edwin T. Layton stands behind Captain Wiltse. (NHHC, NH 58420)



[Oahu] 10 August 42

My guests have just gone home. Air Commodore [Robert] Goddard R.A.F.¹ head of the New Zealand Air Force came in to-day to see me and I arranged a dinner for him tonight—to meet various officers. Besides my mess—Spruance, Gendreau and myself, I had Goddard, [Aubrey] Fitch,² Bagley, [Marc] Mitscher,³ Oftsie (my aviation aide) General [Howard] Davidson USA aircorps⁴ and Gen. [Willis] Hale—USA aircorps,⁵ Col. Larkin U.S.M.C aviator,⁶ and Gen. Pickett USM.C.⁷ Goddard is a very agreeable youngish chap and everyone seemed to like him. I know he enjoyed himself. We drank a cocktail toast to our marines in the Solomons—who despite losses have done magnificently. I can sleep better tonight than I could for several nights past although I am well aware we are not out of the woods yet. However we have made a start and gotten a toe hold and from now on will be in constant battle.⁸

¹ Air Commodore Robert Victor Goddard, Royal Air Force, chief of the Air Staff in New Zealand.

² Rear Admiral Aubrey W. “Jake” Fitch, formerly Commander, Task Group 17.5, during the Battle of the Coral Sea. Fitch’s flagship, *Lexington* (CV-2), was sunk during the battle on 8 May 1942. Fitch continued to serve as Commander Air Task Force, Pacific, until September 1942, when he became Commander, Aircraft, South Pacific Force. Fitch returned to Washington, DC, in August 1944, when he reported for duty as Deputy CNO for Air. In August of the following year, he became the first airman to head the Naval Academy.

³ Rear Admiral Marc A. “Pete” Mitscher, Commander, Patrol Wing 2 (July 1942–December 1942). Mitscher was designated naval aviator no. 33 in June 1916 and had commanded the aircraft carrier *Hornet* from October 1941 through July 1942. He served as Commander Fleet Air, Nouméa, from December 1942 to April 1943, followed by Commander Air, Solomon Islands, from April 1943 to August 1943. In March 1944, Mitscher assumed command of the 1st Carrier Task Force and Task Force 58. He received the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, and two Navy Crosses for his command of the task force during its operations against Japanese-held islands in the Central Pacific, against the Japanese fleet at the Battle of Leyte Gulf and Battle of the Philippine Sea, and in support of the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. In July 1945, Mitscher returned to Washington, DC, to become Deputy CNO for Air. He died of complications from a heart attack on 3 February 1947 while serving as Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet. See Navy Office of Information, “Admiral Marc Andrew Mitscher, U.S. Navy, Deceased,” 23 January 1964, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

⁴ Brigadier General Howard Calhoun Davidson, USAAF, Commanding General, VII Fighter Command.

⁵ Major General Willis H. Hale, USAAF, Commanding General, Seventh Air Force. Hale subsequently served as Commanding General for Air, Forward Areas, Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, followed by deputy commander for operations for the Army Air Forces in the Pacific Ocean Areas beginning in January 1945. Hale then became Commanding General, Army Air Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas, and deputy commanding general, Twentieth Air Force. He received the Navy Cross for leading elements of the Seventh Air Force on missions against Nauru Island and Tarawa Atoll in April 1943.

⁶ Colonel Claude A. Larkin, USMC, senior U.S. Marine Corps naval aviator in the Pacific. Larkin commanded Marine Aircraft Group 21 on Oahu during the Japanese attack on Hawaii on 7 December 1941.

⁷ Brigadier General Harry K. Pickett, USMC, 14th Naval District marine officer.

⁸ The U.S. 1st Marine Division landed on the Japanese-held island of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Island chain on 7 August 1942. The invasion was codenamed Operation Watchtower.



[Oahu] August 15th 1942 Saturday

Lamar has just arrived and is in my outer office understudying Blake's job as aide and flag lieutenant. He looks very well and I am very happy to have him with me. He appears to be happy to come. We are in the midst of a hot spell—unusually hot and muggy weather—about like Washington. Blake, Lamar and Lt. [James] Clark¹ U.S.N.R. (a new staff member) will dine with me tomorrow—Sunday night. Tonight Pye [Thomas] Anderson² and [William] Munroe³ will have dinner with us. Pye looks very well as do also the other two. Pye has even taken on weight. They will be with me quite awhile. This forenoon a lot of us witnessed a demonstration of fire fighting in a "fire school" which we have established out here, in which reserve officers, forming the faculty, are from big city fire departments. It was a most impressive and thought provoking demonstration, and should be part of the education of all high school children.

Last night I attended a birthday supper for Mrs Lowell Dillingham,⁴ whose husband is a son of Walter Dillingham⁵ and who is in charge of building airfields on some of our islands. Young Lowell⁶ appeared just before we sat down to dinner—at small card tables, much to the delight of his young wife. The supper was in Walter Dillingham's home on Diamond Head and there were about fifty guests including Gen. Emmons and myself. Lowell had been absent in the distant island some two or three months so that was a real thrill for the couple. I'll bet they blessed the blackout regulations which required most people to clear out about 8. p.m.

¹ Lieutenant (j.g.) James H. Clark, USNR, assistant to aviation officer, CINCPAC staff.

² Captain Thomas C. Anderson, fleet surgeon, Pacific Fleet.

³ Rear Admiral William R. Munroe, former commander of Battleship Division 3. He was appointed commander of the 7th Naval District in April 1943 and later served as Commander, South Atlantic Force, from November 1944 until August 1945.

⁴ Harriet Barbour married Lowell Smith Dillingham in 1936.

⁵ Walter F. Dillingham, founder of Hawaiian Dredging Company, which built port facilities throughout Hawaii, including Pearl Harbor for the U.S. government.

⁶ Lowell Smith Dillingham, a Harvard University graduate, businessman, and scion of a wealthy family.



[Oahu] August 16. 1942. Sunday.

Although it has been a very busy day and filled with some anxiety—there were bright spots in it. About 10.30 I took Black,¹ Lamar, Mercer and Spruance to the Kailua beach for a picnic lunch and a swim—which was most agreeable.

The road goes over the Pali which Lamar enjoyed, down thru Kailua village to the beach homes where we—the Navy—have rented a beach home. Four bedrooms, furnished, for use of naval officers of Flag or Captain rank who need to get away from their ship after a long and punishing cruise. The house belongs to Mr. Cyril Damon² and is lovely nothing stylish but ideally comfortable. Although we have had the place for nearly two months it has no tenants because I can get no officers to go out there when they come in tired. They—the tired officers want to stay in town. I've had offers from dozens of wealthy families in town to take in young or old officers for rest but so far few, if any, have wanted to take advantage of such offers. We had to hurry back to the office by 2. pm.—to change to white to attend memorial services for officers and men who lost their lives when the *Sims* (destroyer)³ was sunk by plane bombs at Coral Sea and the destroyer *Hammann*⁴ sunk by sub torpedo at Midway. The services were held in a D.D. [destroyer] and were impressive though simple.

Blake and Lamar came home with me to pitch horseshoes with Dr. Gendreau and me. Lamar and I beat 2 out of 3.

¹ Possibly Lieutenant Commander Francis L. Black, USN, aerological and personnel officer, CINCPAC staff.

² Cyril F. Damon Sr., a Honolulu businessman.

³ Japanese aircraft sank the destroyer *Sims* (DD-409) on 7 May 1942 during the Battle of the Coral Sea.

⁴ The destroyer *Hammann* (DD-412) was sunk by the Japanese submarine *I-168* on 6 June 1942 while attempting to aid the damaged aircraft carrier *Yorktown* (CV-5) during the Battle of Midway.



[Oahu] 13 Sept. 42 6.30 a.m.

Yesterday was a very busy day until about 3.30 p.m. when Lamar Oftsie and I went to the Walter Dillinghams for some Tennis—a swim in the pool and supper. We took along young Bill Halsey¹ an Ensign in the Supply Corps reserve—who had just arrived and who is living temporarily in Dr Gendreau's room while the latter is on an inspection trip. The reunion between young Bill and his father at the D's [Dillingham's] pleased the latter very much. The Tennis was poor but the swim and surroundings lovely—After supper I did a few card stunts then back to quarters and office where I remained until 11.30 p.m. reading dispatches.

¹ Ensign William Frederick Halsey III, son of Vice Admiral William Frederick "Bull" Halsey Jr.



[Oahu] 14 Sept. 42

Have just seen the Sept. 14 copy of “*Time*”—which is pretty good as it is only 14 Sept. now. Under Army and Navy it contains an excellent article on Bill Calhoun who has done, and is doing, a perfectly grand job for the fleet.¹

¹ See “Navy: Calhoun of Serfor,” *Time*, 14 September 1942, 55.



[Oahu] 15. Sept. 42.

I believe the enclosed clipping of [Nicholas] Van Bergen¹ being decorated will please you as much as it did me. It comes from the last issue of “*Our Navy*.”² We did some decorating ourselves this forenoon unfortunately just as our ceremony started it began to rain and we all got very wet. The Chief Petty Officer³ who got the Medal of Honor was a fine looking young man, and his wife, who was fortunate enough to be present to see him decorated was also a nice looking person. Things are moving very rapidly now—and as usual—there is bad news mixed with the good. But we are not down hearted and we are determined to win. I see by tonights paper that the news re [John] Towers⁴ and McCain is published and that I am to have a new air advisor. Never mind. We will get along fine.

¹ Lieutenant Commander Nicholas B. Van Bergen was gunnery officer of the cruiser *Marblehead* (CL-12) when Japanese planes bombed the ship during the Battle of the Java Sea. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox personally presented Van Bergen with the Distinguished Service Medal for his actions during the battle. Van Bergen later commanded the destroyer *Monaghan* (DD-354) during the Battle of Midway. His ship helped protect the damaged aircraft carrier *Yorktown* (CV-5) from Japanese submarines before the vessel sank. Van Bergen was subsequently awarded the Navy Cross. Nimitz is referring to a photograph of Van Bergen being decorated that appeared in the 1 September 1942 issue of *Our Navy*. See “Marblehead Hero Decorated,” *Our Navy*, 1 September 1942, 39.

² *Our Navy* was a U.S. Navy publication issued twice a month that contained stories about naval history and current news items. The magazine was first published in 1897 and reduced its publication frequency to once per month beginning in January 1960.

³ Chief Aviation Ordnanceman John W. Finn received the Medal of Honor from Admiral Nimitz on 15 September 1942. Finn raced to the hangars at Naval Air Station, Kaneohe Bay, on the morning of 7 December 1941 and manned a .50-caliber machine gun to defend against attacking Japanese planes. He continued to man his vulnerable position despite being wounded multiple times until ordered to seek medical attention.

⁴ Vice Admiral John H. Towers. Towers became Commander, Air Forces, Pacific Fleet, on 6 October 1942. Towers was naval aviator no. 3 and had been assistant chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics when Nimitz led the Bureau of Navigation. He became chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics on 1 June 1939. Towers had previously clashed with Nimitz over the former’s efforts to get more aviators into command billets. To accommodate Towers’s transfer to the Pacific, Admiral King moved McCain from his position as Commander, Aircraft, South Pacific, under Vice Admiral Robert Ghormley to replace Towers as the chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics. For more on Towers’s career, see Clark G. Reynolds, *Admiral John H. Towers: The Struggle for Naval Supremacy* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1991).



[Oahu] 16. Sept. 42.

To-days mail has been unusually good in bringing me letters—among them one from Mr [Ralph] Bard¹ (who flatters me by asking for my photo) Dudley Knox,² the Navy historian who praises my strategy and winds up his letter with the doubtful (for me) line “To follow this up by the Tulagi offensive again despite exterior lines, even more confirms the Nelson “Tough” He means of course “Touch,” but his reference to exterior lines might be interpreted as being critical—because one is not supposed to be successful that way.³ All these letters will go into the big envelope to be read by us when public opinion has passed me by—past glory to live on—so to speak.⁴

Halsey⁵ and son have gone to their jobs. Emmons is back. I am sure he likes me and the staff. He was out promptly and gave me a picture of what he saw and did.

¹ Ralph Austin Bard, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 24 February 1941–24 June 1944. He then became Undersecretary of the Navy, 24 June 1944–30 June 1945.

² Captain Dudley W. Knox. Knox was an 1896 graduate of the Naval Academy and received the Navy Cross for his service on the staff of Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Operating in European Waters, during World War I. Captain Knox was transferred to the retired list of the Navy in October 1921 but remained on active duty. Prior to World War II, Knox served as curator for the Navy Department and officer in charge, Office of Naval Records and Library, Navy Department. He was a prolific author whose works included a history of the U.S. Navy and two multivolume series of edited volumes containing naval documents of the Barbary Wars and Quasi-War with France. Knox was a friend of President Franklin Roosevelt, and upon the outbreak of World War II, Knox assumed the additional role of deputy director of naval history. See Dudley W. Knox, *The Naval Genius of George Washington* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1932); and Dudley W. Knox, *A History of the United States Navy* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1936).

³ Exterior lines of operations refer to military movements in which two forces converge on an enemy from different directions.

⁴ Most of Nimitz’s personal correspondence from World War II is held by the Archives Branch, NHHHC. The letter Nimitz references here written by Dudley Knox could not be located by the editors.

⁵ Vice Admiral Halsey relinquished command of Task Force 16 in May 1942 in order to travel to Virginia to recuperate from a severe case of dermatitis. When he returned to Hawaii in September 1942, he once again assumed command from Vice Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher of the task force built around the aircraft carrier *Enterprise*.



[Oahu] 20 Sept. 42

Pye has just come by to say “Au Revoir. He is leaving this p.m. by air and will probably phone on his way thru S.F. I am now rid of my cold and sore throat. I had to cancel an acceptance yesterday to play Tennis at the Walkers.¹ I spent the afternoon and evening in cleaning up my desk work—lying in the sun—and in listening to symphonic music with Spruance. He likes music as much as I do. To-day Halsey,

Spruance, Lamar and I are lunching with Geo and Eva Sumner²—after which we—our party—go to the Kailua beach for a swim and then back to my quarters where Halsey and [Herbert] Leary³ will dine with Spruance and me. Leary will then be asked to tell us all about the far S.W. situation—which he has not had a chance to do. I expect to take Oftsie, Pfeiffer, Callaghan [John] Redman⁴ and Lamar on my inspecting trip S.W. next week. Lamar is excited beyond words. He is making good here and is well liked by all hands. Leary has relieved Pye. Lots is happening both good and bad—but that must be expected.

Am busy on my preparations to visit [Robert] Ghormley.⁵

¹ Henry Alexander “Sandy” Walker, president of American Factors, the largest business in Hawaii before World War II. Sandy Walker was a wealthy Hawaiian businessman from an old Hawaiian family and served as the food control director in the Territory of Hawaii during the war. Walker and his wife, Una Craig Walker, first met Nimitz when he was tasked with building the U.S. Navy submarine base at Pearl Harbor in 1920. The Walkers owned a large home in the upper Nuuanu Valley where Nimitz was a frequent guest on Saturday evenings during the war. Sandy and Una had three children, Virginia “Ginger,” Henry “Hanko,” and Ann.

² George Wilson Sumner and Eva Elise Helene Focke Sumner. George Sumner was a successful businessman and former U.S. Navy submarine officer. He frequently welcomed Navy officers to his home during the war. See “Evanita Sumner Midkiff” *Honolulu Star Advertiser*, 3 March 2011, <https://obits.staradvertiser.com/2011/03/03/evanita-sumner-midkiff/>.

³ Vice Admiral Herbert F. Leary served as Commander, Naval Forces, Southwest Pacific, until 11 September 1942. Leary then replaced Vice Admiral William Pye as Commander, Task Force 1, which was comprised of the old battleships of the Pacific Fleet.

⁴ Captain John R. Redman, communications officer, CINCPAC (October 1942–January 1945). Redman later served as assistant chief of staff for communications to CINCPAC and assumed command of the battleship *Massachusetts* (BB-59) on 2 May 1945. Nimitz became very angry when he discovered that Redman was sending messages on Nimitz’s personal radio net in a code that Nimitz did not have while plotting to undermine other members of Nimitz’s staff. See Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 180; Navy Biographies Branch, “Vice Admiral John R. Redman United States Navy, Retired,” 10 October 1957, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHHC; and Elliot Carlson, *Joe Rochefort’s War: The Odyssey of the Codebreaker Who Outwitted Yamamoto at Midway* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2011), 217–21.

⁵ Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley, Commander, South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force. On 25 September 1942, Nimitz and members of his staff departed Hawaii to visit the South Pacific Area. They arrived at Nouméa, New Caledonia, on 28 September after a stop on Canton Island. After conferring with Admiral Ghormley and other senior leaders in the theater, Nimitz visited Guadalcanal to view the condition of the beachhead there.



Admiral Nimitz confers with South Pacific Area officers, possibly on board *Argonne* (AG-31) at Nouméa, New Caledonia, on 28 September 1942. *Left to right*: Major General Richard K. Sutherland, USA, chief of staff to General Douglas MacArthur; Nimitz; Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley, Commander, South Pacific Force; and Major General Millard F. Harmon, USAAF, Commanding General, U.S. Army Forces, South Pacific Area. (NHHC, NH 58423)



[*Oahu*] 23 Sept. 42. 6.30 a.m. Wed.

I look straight eastward and toward the mountains which are still dark and black with the early morning sun deep behind them. As the sun peeps over them the ridges and hills will be a vivid green. I propose to have a sea bath before the end of the day. It will be my last chance for real exercise until I return about 3 Oct. I will be flying & conferring & inspecting at all other times. I also expect to award some medals down S.W.

So far in the Solomons we having been holding our own but harder days are ahead and there will be critical losses and struggles but we must face this period with grim determination and courage.



[Palmyra Island] 25 Sept. 42. Friday—

Here we are in the tiny atoll¹ where Mrs [Idelle] Meng² spent the first year of her honeymoon. Do you remember the letter I sent you about the woman who had been stranded here one year about 1921? We arrived yesterday about 2.30 p.m. & should now be well along but one of our engines had a burned out bearing and we were delayed one day to change planes. Our delay gave us a chance to talk to McCain here. He is on his way north and is accompanied by [Leigh] Noyes³ and Col. [Melvin] Maas.⁴

I gave a short talk in the little club to the officers here—a fine bunch with high morale.

¹ Palmyra Island, a coral atoll comprised of several islets located approximately 1,060 miles south of Hawaii. The U.S. Navy assumed control of the atoll in August 1941 in order to construct a naval air station and dredge a ship channel that enabled ships to enter the previously unnavigable West Lagoon.

² William Meng, a retired British army colonel; his wife, Idelle Meng; and his associate Edwin Benner Jr. lived on Palmyra Island from October 1920 to December 1921 in order to investigate the atoll's commercial potential. The U.S. Navy ship *Eagle No. 40* (PE-40) evacuated the Texas-born Idelle Meng, who was in poor health, and brought her to Honolulu, Hawaii, in October 1921. Her husband and his associate joined her in Hawaii a few months later. Idelle later joined the U.S. Women's Air Corps in 1944. See "Mengs Short of Food on Palmyra," *The Garden Island* (Lihue, HI), 4 October 1921.

³ Rear Admiral Leigh Noyes, USN. Nimitz assigned Noyes to command Task Force 18, which included the aircraft carrier *Wasp* (CV-7), in June 1942. After a Japanese submarine torpedoed and sank *Wasp* on 15 September 1942, Nimitz reassigned Noyes as Commander, Air Force, Pacific Fleet (September 1942–October 1942). In December 1942, Noyes reported as senior member of the Pacific Coast Section, Board of Inspection and Survey, with headquarters in San Francisco. He became president of the Board of Inspection and Survey at its headquarters in Washington, DC, in March 1945 and remained there until his retirement the following year. See Navy Office of Information, "Vice Admiral Leigh Noyes, U.S. Navy, Deceased," 27 March 1961, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

⁴ Colonel Melvin Joseph Maas, United States Marine Corps Reserve (USMCR), a Republican representative from Minnesota who held office from 1927 to 1945. He was unsuccessful in his bid for reelection in 1944 to the Seventy-Ninth Congress and served in the South Pacific as a colonel in the USMCR from 1942 to 1945 while still in office.



[Oahu] 14 Oct. 42.

Up early this morning to see our friends, Spruance and Calhoun off on their trip to the S.W. Am afraid that abnormal activity in that area will curtail their visit—and I don't mind saying that I am uneasy and worrisome over our situation which is not at all to my liking.¹

Towers arrived to-day as a Vice Admiral and will take hold promptly. He seems to be cheerful and ready for work—of which there will be a great deal.

To-night Dr Gendreau and I entertained at dinner four of his doctor friends all Captains—[William] Chambers² [Joseph] McMullin,³ [Lewis] Jordan⁴ and Ryan. After dinner we turned out the lights—opened the windows to cool off the house

and listened to the Symphony Hour—which made us all—for an hour—forget most of our troubles and worries. After that I returned to my headquarters to read dispatches and now at nearly midnight am ready for bed

¹ Nimitz is referring here to the precarious position of the exhausted U.S. Marines on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. Following the loss of *Wasp* to the Japanese submarine *I-19* on 15 September 1942, the U.S. Navy had just one operational aircraft carrier in the Pacific for several weeks. While the U.S. 164th Infantry Regiment reached Guadalcanal on 13 October, Japanese bombers raided the island's airfield in back-to-back raids that evening that destroyed 12 U.S. aircraft and 5,000 gallons of gasoline. The Japanese also continued to reinforce their own troops on the island. See Richard B. Frank, *Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle* (New York: Random House, 1990), 313–14; and Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 119.

² Probably Captain William Chambers, MC, director medical officer, 14th Naval District, Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii.

³ Captain Joseph J. A. McMullin, MC.

⁴ Probably Captain Lewis G. Jordan, MC, a member of the staff of the Commander Service Force, Pacific Fleet.



[Oahu] 17 Oct. 42.

The Dillingham's dinner for Gov. and Mrs [Cecile] Stainback¹ was also very pleasant. I would have enjoyed it more if my mind had not wandered too frequently to the Solomons. I went back to my headquarters and read dispatches until 11. p.m. The news was better and I came back to a reasonably good sleep.

To-day I have replaced Ghormely with Halsey.² It was a sore mental struggle and the decision was not reached until after hours of an anguished consideration. Reason (private) Ghormely was too immersed in detail and not sufficiently bold and aggressive at the right times. I feel better now that it has been done. I am very fond of G. [Ghormley] and hope I have not made a life enemy. I believe not. The interests of the nation transcends private interests

¹ Cecile White Stainback, wife of Ingram M. Stainback, governor of Hawaii (1942–1951).

² Nimitz's visit to Nouméa in the South Pacific only increased his doubts about Admiral Ghormley's ability to prosecute the Guadalcanal campaign at its most crucial stage. Nimitz did not take the decision to remove an officer lightly, and he believed in giving officers multiple chances if they failed to meet expectations. After much deliberation, however, Nimitz consulted his staff and decided to replace Vice Admiral Ghormley with Vice Admiral William Halsey Jr. See Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 176–77.



[Oahu] 19 Oct. 42

The newscasts are usually one or two days after the event. So far we are holding our own and while there is still a great threat with forces greater than ours we are by no means downcast but, on the contrary, are full of fight. The marines, ground troops and the Army, Navy and Marine Aviators are doing splendid work. There are now a considerable number of Army troops with the Marines.

Dr. Gendreau and I plus two more of the staff went to the hospital for our annual physical exam. My health and physical condition is still good enough to carry me thru another year—the doctors announced and complimented me on my fitness. One added that I could lose ten pounds and be better off. Next year when I am fifty eight I will be put up against a much longer exam—electric cardiographs etc but that has no fears for me. To-day I received a three page personal and chatty letter from Col. [William Franklin] Knox¹ who told me about the Brazilian trip he has just made. He and Mrs K. [Knox] have rented a house in Chevy Chase² as they are tired of hotel living. He wound up his letter saying “All of us here are very proud of the way you are handling your job.”³ Which is good news. Perhaps I can last out the year. I have my speech set for 21 Oct. when Dr [Gregg] Sinclair⁴ becomes President of the U. of Hawaii.⁵ I hope the universities of the country will not be too hard on me for my suggestions.

¹ Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox. Knox held a commission as a colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve.

² Chevy Chase, Maryland.

³ In a typed three-page letter, Knox wrote to Nimitz, “The last two or three weeks have shown a considerable improvement, in my judgment, in Allied prospects.” Knox also confided, “I am awfully glad that you went down to the Southwest area yourself to look things over there.” Frank Knox to Chester Nimitz, 13 October 1942, box 102, folder: “Secretary of Navy Correspondence (Knox and Forrestal),” Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHC.

⁴ Gregg Manners Sinclair, PhD, the president of the University of Hawaii from 1942 to 1955.

⁵ Nimitz delivered a speech at the inauguration of Dr. Gregg M. Sinclair as president of the University of Hawaii on 21 October 1942. Nimitz’s prepared remarks explained how universities could contribute to the nation’s postwar defense establishment, which Nimitz predicted would be larger than its prewar military. He advocated mandatory courses in mathematics and the sciences as well as “a close study of our country’s history. But not the sugar-coated sectional version we have all seen from time to time. Only by understanding our past mistakes can we avoid similar pitfalls in the future. What is needed is the unvarnished record of our efforts, our deficiencies and our failures.” Chester Nimitz, “Universities and the War Effort,” 21 October 1942, box 72, Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHC.



[Oahu] 21 Oct. 42

This has been a long day—starting with my usual morning reading of dispatches and conferences. Then down town to the stadium to see the demonstration of dogs that were trained for military service. This was truly interesting. There were dogs of all kinds which had been presented to the Army. A famous trainer named

[Elliot] Humphries¹ (I think) was brought over from the States for the job. The idea is that a soldier on patrol duty will be accompanied by his dog—who will ferret out skulkers or an enemy in hiding. He will seize him and hold him until his master comes up.

At 3.20 p.m. Wiltsie, Lamar and I left for the University of Hawaii for the inauguration exercises. Gen Emmons had a bad cold and Brig. Gen. [Thomas] Green² represented him. My address seemed to please—at least a number of people came up to compliment me—principally mathematics teachers.

Ghormely is coming back with Spruance and will be here in three or four days. It will be a tough time for G. and probably for me also but we both must face it. I shall ask him to stay in my spare room but assume he will want to return to Wash. at an early date.

¹ Elliot S. Humphrey, a famed animal breeder who trained the first guide dogs for the blind in the United States.

² Brigadier General Thomas H. Green, USA, executive officer to the military governor of the Hawaiian Islands.



[Oahu] 22 Oct. 42

I do not know how long things will be threatening in the Solomons put at present there appears to be a very strong force gathered in the northern part and ready to start work. The next week or so will be very critical and I pray that what we have been able to assemble will hold them off.¹

¹ Nimitz's "Command Summary" recorded on 22 October 1942 that "a search plane reported sighting an enemy task force about 350 miles NE of MALAITA about 10 in the morning (local)." The log added, "The RABAUL and SHORTLANDS areas continued to be well filled with Jap ships, most of which were auxiliaries. The combined total in those areas was 93 vessels. From all indications the enemy seems about ready to start his long expected all out attack on GUADALCANAL. The next three or four days are critical." None of the Navy's task forces were in a position to intercept the Japanese force, which was believed to include at least one aircraft carrier. Nimitz noted that only American aircraft and submarines would be available to offer resistance against any Japanese attack. The "Command Summary" entry concluded, "If our guess is correct they can throw more ships, planes, and troops into the vital area than we can. And this situation will continue for the next few weeks. Having inferior forces we must count heavily on attrition, but losing no chance to come to grips with the enemy under the principle of calculated risk." "Command Summary," 22 October 1942, vol. 2, pp. 1100–1101, box 2, Series 1: Command Summary & Combined Chiefs of Staff Books, 1941–1945, Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHHC.



[*Oahu*] 23 Oct.

So far to-day 4.30 p.m. (about 1.50 p.m in Guadalcanal) no news from the south but I feel that between now and the end of Oct. we will be put to the supreme test and by that time we will know the answers. It makes me feel restless and wide awake waiting for news at this great distance. I shall be glad to see Spruance tomorrow afternoon and also Ghormely although he may not be so glad to see me.

10.30 p.m. Have just returned from my office—no late news everything apparently quiet. G. and I had a fine dinner at Bagley's—Ham black eyed peas and succotash. Very fattening but very good.



[*Oahu*] 24 Oct 42 10.30. p.m.

To-day—our Saturday 24 Oct—Halsey's Sunday 25 Oct—will be a memorable day. It is the start of the big long—expected push and we are as nearly ready as it is humanly possible to be. Our only regret—bad weather and heavy rains have made our field at Guadalcanal a quagmire. To-night and tomorrow will be critical in our history—and Pray God they will be successful for us. Ghormely and Spruance returned this afternoon Spruance reported a most interesting visit but both were tired, hungry and much in need of baths which they had missed for several days while on our island staging points. Unfortunately to-days newspaper carried the news release (from Washington) of Halsey's taking over the job and the paper and G. arrived almost simultaneously in my office in the afternoon. However G. is taking it in fine style and his fine manner has saved me much embarrassment.



[*Oahu*] 25 Oct. 42. Sunday.

This has been a clear hot Sunday, with just enough breeze to dry the perspiration. A wonderful day for a swim but Spruance and I are at our posts waiting for news from the S.W. The weather there is not so nice. Rain and low visibility makes everything uncertain. We have done considerable damage but not enough to be decisive¹ The main actors are still looking for each other and we may get news any minute. We pray for the best. Ghormely left at 2. p.m. and while he was not too cheerful am sure no one could have borne the disappointment better. What a tough break to have the matter announced on the day he arrived here—just in time to see it in the evening paper yesterday and this mornings paper. Fortunately the article was gentle in each case and as no catastrophe occurred while he was there it will die down soon.

I doubt the wisdom of Hart's *Sat Eve. Post*² articles now just when we have established such fine relations with the Army.

¹ The Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands, 26 October 1942. American losses totaled one aircraft carrier sunk, *Hornet*; one aircraft carrier damaged, *Enterprise*; one battleship damaged, *South Dakota* (BB-57); and one destroyer sunk, *Porter* (DD-356). The Imperial Japanese Navy suffered two aircraft carriers, one cruiser, and one destroyer damaged and 99 planes lost. While technically a victory for Japanese forces, the heavy damage inflicted by Rear Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid's Task Force 16 and Rear Admiral George D. Murray's Task Force 17 bought time to reinforce the Guadalcanal beachhead.

² Probably a reference to Admiral Thomas C. Hart's article titled "What Our Navy Learned in the Pacific" in the *Saturday Evening Post* on 26 September 1942. The article criticized U.S. Army Air Corps fighter planes for failing to defend U.S. ships at Pearl Harbor and stop the Japanese invasion of the Philippines. Hart was serving as the commander in chief of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the Philippines. He retired in July 1942 but was recalled to active duty in August 1942. For more on Hart's career, see James Leutze, *A Different Kind of Victory: A Biography of Admiral Thomas C. Hart* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1981).



[Oahu] 27 Oct. 42. 10.30 p.m. Navy Day—

To-day has been a full one—not particularly exciting but full of visits—Navy Day broadcasts—a luncheon etc. A British Admiral Dennis Boyd.¹ To-night I had Towers [Forrest] Sherman² and [Dewitt] Ramsay³ and Adm. Boyd R.N. to dinner. Dr G. [Gendreau] and I acted as hosts Spruance being away dining with [William] Furlong.⁴ It was interesting but I was relieved when they left so I could go down and read dispatches. Things in the Solomons seem to have quieted down a bit and I do believe we have staved them off again—for a while any way.

Leigh Noyes is going back to the coast for the Pacific Coast Board of Inspection and Survey. He will probably hate me for it but I did not pick the job. McMorris will be an Admiral soon.

Tonights paper gives the Japs claims for 26th Oct (their time) battle—which is far from the truth. I wish we had as many carriers as they claim to have sunk.

¹ Rear Admiral Denis William Boyd, Royal Navy (RN), commander of aircraft carriers in the Eastern Fleet.

² Probably Captain Forrest P. Sherman, USN, chief of staff to Commander, Air Force, Pacific Fleet. Sherman had previously served as a member of the Joint Strategic Committee in the headquarters of the COMINCH and was commanding officer of the aircraft carrier *Wasp* when that ship was sunk in the Solomon Islands area on 15 September 1942. Sherman received the Navy Cross for his command of *Wasp* and subsequently was designated chief of staff to Commander, Air Force, Pacific Fleet, from September 1942 to November 1943, when he became Nimitz's deputy chief of staff. Sherman served as CINCPAC deputy chief of staff until September 1945, and in that position he played a significant role in preparing the plans and coordinating the campaigns in the Gilberts, the Marshalls, the Marianas, the western Carolines, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. In October 1945, Sherman was named commander of Carrier Division 1, followed by Deputy CNO in December that same year. In January 1948, he became Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Mediterranean (later Sixth Task Fleet). When Sherman was named CNO on 2 November 1949, he was the youngest man to hold the post up to that point. Admiral Sherman died suddenly in Italy on 22 July 1951. See Navy Biographies Section, "Admiral Forrest Percival Sherman, U.S. Navy, Deceased," 24 August 1951, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

³ Captain DeWitt C. Ramsey, USN. Ramsey joined Nimitz's staff on 27 October 1942, after previously commanding the aircraft carrier *Saratoga* (May 1942–October 1942). Under Ramsey's command, *Saratoga* participated in the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Guadalcanal campaign. Ramsey was awarded the Navy Cross for his leadership of *Saratoga* during the invasions of Guadalcanal and Tulagi, which included actions against Japanese aircraft carriers on 24 August. Ramsey remained on Nimitz's staff until November 1942, when he assumed command of the task force built around *Saratoga*. Ramsey later served as chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics in the Navy Department (August 1943–June 1945). Following the end of World War II, he became chief of staff to Commander, Fifth Fleet, followed by Vice CNO. He served as Commander in Chief, Pacific and U.S. Pacific Fleet, until April 1948 and retired with the rank of admiral in May 1949. See Navy Biographies Branch, "Admiral DeWitt Clinton Ramsey, U.S. Navy, Retired," 29 March 1957, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

⁴ Rear Admiral William Rhea Furlong, USN, Commandant, Pearl Harbor Navy Yard (December 1941–August 1945). Furlong oversaw the repair and salvage of ships damaged during the attack on Pearl Harbor. He received the Legion of Merit for his success in this effort. See Navy Biographies Section, "Rear Admiral William Rea Furlong, United States Navy, Retired," 23 August 1951, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.



[Oahu] 29 Oct. 42. Thurs.

As the afternoon approached yesterday, I saw a chance to get some exercise and recreation. Spruance, Mercer Lamar and I went for a swim, then dinner, and back to the office to work. Now Capt. [Harry Lanier] Turner¹ (Pan Am. Pilot) is coming by to lunch with me to-day. Yesterday [Henry] Chase² another Pan Am Pilot lunched with us. He is on his way to the S.W. and will see C. W. Jr in a few days. Chase—as you may remember, was one of the first R.O.T.C students I enrolled³ and almost threw out because he was totally oblivious to discipline. The only thing that saved him was his brilliant engineering mind. I am glad I helped conserve him for the Navy. He is still in the Naval Reserve but has not been called because his present service is of greater value.

No change in the S.W. except that we have again held them off—at some cost to us but greater cost to them.⁴ For how long before the next attempt? I don't know but we will endeavor to be ready for them again next time.

¹ Captain Harry Lanier Turner, Pan American Airways pilot. Pan American Airways conveyed cargo and personnel on behalf of the Naval Air Transport Service during World War II. Prior to the war, Pan American Airways had constructed facilities at Midway Atoll, Guam, Wake Island, Manila, and Hong Kong. The company began the first regular transpacific commercial flights in November 1935.

² Captain Henry Joseph Chase, USNR, Pan American Airways pilot.

³ For Nimitz's role in establishing the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) program at the University of California, Berkeley, see p. xxiv.

⁴ Nimitz's "Command Summary" for 28 October–29 October 1942 lists no significant actions. Instead, this is probably a reference to the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands on 26 October 1942. "Command Summary," 28–29 October 1942, vol. 2, pp. 1108–9, box 2, Series 1: Command Summary & Combined Chiefs of Staff Books, 1941–1945, Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHC.



[Oahu] 30 Oct. 42. 3.45. A.M.

Note the time this letter is being written. I awoke bright and early and having had a fine sleep feel like chatting with you.

Capt. Turner arrived at noon to lunch with me. Spruance Wiltsie, [Thomas] Keliher,¹ McCormick and Gendreau all like Turner and agree that he is an interesting guest who knows how to talk.

I am not so busy as I am mentally churned up. My imagination is very vivid and I realize my helplessness so far away. No one knows better than I do the difficulties that confront Halsey and [Alexander A.] Vandegrift² and the superiority enjoyed at present by the Japs. I am so aware of what might happen that it keeps me very much preoccupied. Our forces are doing grand work with less strength than our opponents and if matters continue until next summer we hope to see our strength considerably built up. I had a very fine letter from Knox—a personal letter—in which he expressed great approval of the change.³

¹ Captain Thomas J. Keliher, USN, operations officer on the staff of CINCPAC (June 1942–March 1944). Keliher commanded Destroyer Squadron 3 of the Pacific Fleet when the United States entered World War II, and three of the destroyers under his command were sunk in the attack on Pearl Harbor. In March 1944, Keliher assumed command of *Indiana* (BB-58). The battleship took part in the Marianas campaign in June and August 1944 followed by raids upon Truk Lagoon, Ponape Island, the Palaus, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. After the end of the war, Keliher became Commander, Service Division 12, on the West Coast, and he retired in June 1949 with the rank of rear admiral. See Navy Biographies Section, “Rear Admiral Thomas Joseph Keliher, Jr., United States Navy, Deceased,” 24 February 1953, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

² Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift, USMC, Commanding General, 1st Marine Division. For his service as commanding general of the 1st Marine Division on Guadalcanal from 7 August 1942 to 9 December 1942, Vandegrift was awarded the Navy Cross and Medal of Honor. In July 1943, he assumed command of the I Amphibious Corps. He was subsequently named 18th Commandant of the Marine Corps and promoted to lieutenant general on 1 January 1944.

³ A reference to Nimitz’s decision to replace Vice Admiral Ghormley with Vice Admiral William Halsey Jr. as Commander, South Pacific Area. See William Franklin Knox to Chester Nimitz, 24 October 1942, box 102, folder: “Secretary of Navy Correspondence (Knox and Forrestal),” Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHC.



[Oahu] 31 Oct. 42

Yesterday afternoon Spruance and I filled our car with Lamar [Tom] Hill¹ Gendreau and [Ernest] Eller² and went to the beach house for a walk on the beach and a swim. G. wore a blister on his bare foot but otherwise enjoyed the health trip.

Down S.W. things are going about as expected. We have losses but so do the Japs—and we will hold what we have until the Navy is built up to the point where we can steam roller the enemy. That will be 1943—Summer—we hope.

¹ Captain Tom B. Hill, USN, fleet gunnery officer, CINCPAC staff (October 1942–August 1945). Hill was the gunnery officer aboard the battleship *North Carolina* (BB-55) during the Battle of the Eastern Solomons on 24

August 1942. He was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" device for his direction of the ship's antiaircraft fire during the battle, which contributed to the destruction of a number of Japanese aircraft. He was present with Nimitz at the Japanese surrender ceremony in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945. For Hill's work as fleet gunnery officer, he received the Legion of Merit. The citation noted that he was instrumental in establishing combat information centers aboard ships of the fleet as well as in creating the Navy's underwater demolition teams, the predecessor of the Navy SEALs (sea, air, land [teams]). In May 1946, Hill assumed command of the battleship *Missouri*, and the following year he became deputy director of atomic defense in the Office of the CNO. Hill also served as superintendent of the Naval Gun Factory (later renamed the Washington Navy Yard) before his retirement at the rank of vice admiral in April 1955. See Navy Biographies Section, "Vice Admiral Tom B. Hill, U. S. Navy, Retired," 15 February 1955, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

² Commander Ernest M. Eller, USN. Eller served as assistant gunnery officer and training officer on the CINCPAC staff (May 1942–April 1945). Eller received the Legion of Merit for his contributions in this role, which included "analyzing war reports and developing, expanding and supervising all types of training, particularly anti-aircraft, anti-submarine, amphibious and shore bombardment." His work led to the development of improved methods and new weapons, and his supervision of the fleet's ammunition supply contributed to the force's combat readiness. Eller subsequently commanded the attack transport *Clay* (APA-39). From 1956 to 1970, Eller served as director of naval history and curator in the Office of the CNO. Navy Office of Information, "Rear Admiral Ernest M. Eller, United States Navy, Retired," 5 March 1970, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC. The Papers of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, 1902–1972, held by the Archives Branch, NHHC, contain extensive correspondence between Eller and Nimitz.



Left to right: Admiral Nimitz, Mary Nimitz, Catherine Nimitz, Vice Admiral John W. Greenslade, and Rear Admiral William K. Harrill at Naval Air Station, Alameda, California, on 9 December 1942. (NHHC, NH 62446)



Admiral Nimitz congratulates his son, Lieutenant Chester W. Nimitz Jr., after the latter received the Silver Star Medal on 28 January 1943. (NHHC, NH 58557)



1943



[Oahu] 29 Jan. 43

To-day I had about forty people in to lunch for my guests¹ and all hands enjoyed themselves very much—particularly the press representatives who told me the tours food does not compare. After luncheon which was a buffet affair we learned that the conditions were not favorable for the departure of the party so they are here until tomorrow afternoon when they will try again. Col. Knox expressed the desire to go to the beach to relax. I took his party there and had a swim—Left them there and returned in another car with Spruance and Shafroth. [Robert] Theobald² stayed out at the beach with the party which returned at 6.30 p.m. Theobald is going back with Col. K.

I must turn in now as I was up part of last night (bad news)³ and up early this morning and I am quite weary. Another twenty-four hours should see me very nearly caught up on paper work. That is the penalty of long absences.

¹ Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox was present. Knox had landed in Hawaii on the first leg of an inspection tour of the South Pacific on 12 January 1943. See Elmer B. Potter, *Nimitz* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1976), 214.

² Rear Admiral Robert A. Theobald, USN, previously Commander, North Pacific Force (Task Force 8). The strained command relations between Theobald and both General Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr., USA, and General William O. Butler, USAAF, prompted Nimitz to relieve Theobald. He instead became commandant of the 1st Naval District and the Boston Navy Yard in January 1943. See Potter, *Nimitz*, 187, 211. See also Navy Biographies Branch, "Rear Admiral Robert A. Theobald, U.S. Navy, Deceased," 6 June 1957, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

³ Nimitz is likely referring to the Battle of Rennell Island, 29–30 January 1943. During this engagement, Japanese land-based aircraft attacked Task Force 18. The heavy cruiser *Chicago* (CA-29) sank 30 miles east of Rennell Island on 30 January, and the destroyer *La Vallette* (DD-448) was heavily damaged. See "Command Summary," 28–29 January 1943, vol. 3, pp. 1353–54, box 3, Series 1: Command Summary & Combined Chiefs of Staff Books, 1941–1945, Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHC.



[Oahu] 7. May 43.

Had a very busy day with usual conferences and the medal ceremony at Hickam Field which was impressive and inspiring. Received a call from an attractive Capt—[Cecil] Mansugh¹ R.N. whose ship came in to-day— which call I must return tomorrow. Buffet lunch with Gen. Hale U.S.A Aircorp on whom I pinned Navy Cross. Long conference this p.m. until 5. p.m. when Spruance and I tossed horseshoes with Dunn² and [Wesley] Hague.³ While we were pitching horseshoes, in our swimming trunks, Capt. [Lachlan] MacKintosh,⁴ RN came along to say adieu and to give me two interesting pictures taken on his ship.

The news from Africa, tonight, is grand—with Tunis and Bizerte in our hands and with only a remnant of Axis Troops still holding out.⁵ I feel that my guess of May 15th is not a bad one. I sent Gen. [Dwight] Eisenhower⁶ a message of congratulations from the Pacific Ocean Areas.

¹ Captain Cecil Aubrey Lawson Mansergh, RN, commanding officer of light cruiser HMNZS *Leander*.

² Possibly Captain Joseph Brantley Dunn, USN. Dunn assumed command of the escort carrier *Bogue* (ACV-9) in July 1943.

³ Captain Wesley M. Hague, USN, senior assistant fleet maintenance officer, Pacific Fleet.

⁴ Captain Lachlan Donald Mackintosh, RN, commanding officer of the aircraft carrier HMS *Victorious*.

⁵ On 7 May 1943, British forces captured Tunis and American forces captured Bizerte in North Africa. More than 250,000 Axis soldiers in Tunisia surrendered on 13 May 1943.

⁶ General Dwight D. Eisenhower, USA, Commanding General, European Theater.



[Oahu] 8. May 1943.

This forenoon I, accompanied by Lamar, returned the call of the Captain of the visiting N.Z. [New Zealand] ship—Capt Mansugh R.N., who was very pleasant. His ship looks very much like the *Dispatch*¹ which visited San Diego with Adm. [Reginald] Drax² on board. He had the guard and band for me, and his crew in whites lined up at their quarters. A fine looking lot of New Zealanders with a sprinkling of full blooded maori's³—Many of the men wore beards which made them look more mature than they really were. Worked hard on papers all day until 4.15 when Spruance, Gendreau and I walked up the Aiea Hill to the Hospital for much needed exercise. We showered and bathed and shifted into whites in Capt. McMullins' quarters, and attended a reception at the nurses quarters to celebrate the opening of their recreation rooms.

¹ HMS *Despatch*, a *Danae*-class light cruiser, launched in 1919 and commissioned in 1922.

² Admiral Sir Reginald Aylmer Ranfurly Plunkett-Ernle-Erle-Drax, RN.

³ A reference to the Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand.



29. Nov. 43

If all goes well I should be back in my headquarters by 9. a.m. tomorrow after a most interesting trip. With me are Gen. [Robert] Richardson¹ and Col. [Kenneth] Powell² of the Army and from my staff—R. Adm. Sherman, Capt Redman, Vice Adm. [John] Newton,³ Lt Col [James] Jones⁴ U.S.M.C and Lamar. We have been on Tarawa where our Second Marine Div. under Maj. Gen. Julian Price Smith⁵ covered itself with glory. Our losses were very heavy and will be announced in due time but the morale of the troops was very high after the battle and inspite of their heavy losses.⁶ I have never seen such a desolated spot as Tarawa. Gen. Richardson who saw the battlefields in France last war says it reminded him of the Ypres field over which the battle raged back and forth for weeks. Not a coconut tree, of thousands, was left whole. The Japs had prepared a magnificent defense and fought to the last man, except that a few wounded or dazed Japs were taken. The stench was terrific from bodies yet unburied even though our troops were working hard to bury the dead. I was relieved when we left the place for a neighboring island in the atoll—to eat our supper and to sleep. Even there we could get occasional whiffs when the wind shifted. But enough of that. We are all working hard to consolidate our gains and to prepare for the attacks which we know are inevitable.

cont.

With the Lords help we will not only hold on to what we have got but will use the new places to attack the Japs when we get the fields ready for planes.

¹ Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson Jr., Commanding General, U.S. Army Hawaiian Department, and military governor of Hawaii since June 1943.

² Possibly Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth R. Powell, deputy commander, 15th Fighter Group.

³ Vice Admiral John H. Newton. From October 1943 to February 1944, Newton served as deputy CINCPAC.

⁴ Possibly Lieutenant Colonel James L. Jones Sr., USMC, G-2 (intelligence officer) for Amphibious Corps, Pacific Fleet (October–December 1943).

⁵ Major General Julian Constable Smith, USMC, Commanding General, 2nd Marine Division.

⁶ Total losses in Operation Galvanic, the invasion of Tarawa, were 997 marines and 30 sailors killed, 88 marines missing, and 2,233 marines and 59 sailors wounded. Nineteen percent of all marines involved in the assault became casualties. For a recent analysis of Operation Galvanic, see S. Matthew Cheser and Nicholas Roland, *Galvanic: Beyond the Reef—Tarawa and the Gilberts*, November 1943 (Washington, DC: NHHC, 2020).



Abandoned tracked landing vehicles (LVTs) on Tarawa following the U.S. invasion on 20 November 1943. (NHHC, S-487.14)



1944



[Oahu] 11 pm Monday—

27 Nov 44.

[letterhead]

COMMANDER IN CHIEF
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
AND PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS

Best Beloved:—

It is late but I cannot turn in before this short note—to tell you of our safe arrival here— after four wonderful days with you and Mary [Nimitz].¹ We had a smooth and uneventful ride back and landed at 7¹⁵pm. Towers, Spruance, McMorris—Anderson—Lamar—Calhoun and several others were on hand to meet us. It was much colder this time than on previous trips and Mrs. Bakers lap robe was very welcome cover for the knees of Sherman—Murray & myself. It is now over the foot of my bed—as it is a very cool night. Your thin orange colored blanket usually suffices. Also tell Mrs. Baker my feet are luxuriating in the warm soft slippers she gave me. I found a very nice letter from [Joseph] Grew² awaiting me—which will go with my collection. The Grews plan to have Catherine and Nancy [Nimitz]³ to a meal in their house. After dinner we took our usual walk—which I greatly needed—& then stopped at the office for an hour of dispatches. The news is “mixed.” From now on we can expect to receive scratches whenever we get close enough to wallop the Japs hard.⁴ I shall refrain from opening my Christmas packages until Christmas—but I want to thank you & Mary & the children from the bottom of my heart. I do hope and pray that Mary is rid of her swollen jaw & with no more discomfort. Be sure

to send that other letter over to the girl at the Convent.⁵ Now, Sweetheart mine—I shall turn in & sleep. I did so enjoy our stay together & I pray the days will pass rapidly until I can come again & and may the war end soon—so we can be together constantly.⁶ All my hearts devotion is yours and my arms are around you.

Ever your devoted Chester

¹ Mary Manson Nimitz, age 13, youngest daughter of Admiral Chester Nimitz and Catherine Nimitz, a student and boarder at Dominican Convent Lower School in San Rafael, California.

² Joseph C. Grew, a career Foreign Service officer who served as ambassador to Japan from 1932 until 8 December 1941. The Japanese government interned Grew along with the rest of the U.S. embassy staff when the war began. Grew was repatriated in July 1942. He became a special assistant to Secretary of State Cordell Hull until promoted to direct the State Department's Division of Far Eastern Affairs in 1944.

³ Anna "Nancy" Nimitz, age 25, third child of Chester and Catherine Nimitz. Anna lived with her older sister, Catherine "Kate" Nimitz, in Washington, DC, during the war.

⁴ Nimitz is probably referring here to the damage kamikazes inflicted on the carriers *Essex*, *Intrepid* (CV-11), *Hancock* (CV-19), and *Cabot* (CVL-28) when planes of Task Group 38.2 and Task Group 38.3 attacked Japanese shipping off central Luzon on 25 November 1944. American planes sank a Japanese heavy cruiser, coast defense ship, army cargo ship, and three landing ships while damaging several other vessels. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 277; and "Command Summary," 27–28 November 1944, vol. 5, pp. 2154–55, box 5, Series 1: Command Summary & Combined Chiefs of Staff Books, 1941–1945, Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHC.

⁵ That is, Mary Manson Nimitz.

⁶ Nimitz was able to see Catherine while he was in San Francisco with members of his staff for a secret conference with CNO Admiral Ernest J. King from 29 September to 2 October 1944 to advocate for the invasion of Okinawa instead of Formosa (present-day Taiwan). Nimitz returned to Hawaii by 3 October 1944. See Potter, *Nimitz*, 326–27.



Admiral Nimitz receives his second Distinguished Service Medal from Admiral Ernest J. King in San Francisco, California, on 7 May 1944. *Left to right*: Catherine F. Nimitz, King, Nimitz, Admiral William F. Halsey Jr., and Mary Nimitz. (National Archives and Records Administration [NARA], 80-G-45472)



[Oahu] 28 Nov 1944—Tuesday
night

Darling:—

This has been a very long and busy day which commenced at 630 am with my usual walk with Dr. A. [Anderson] and Spruance—and is now at 11 pm about to end. Joe Richardson¹ arrived shortly after 8 this morning with a rather large group—and he plans to leave my quarters at 530 am, which means he & I arrive at 445 am— It has been interesting for both of us— He spent some time looking at the various changes—& then gave a number of us a talk on the several proposals to reorganize the War & Navy Depts after the war. He will return about 10 Dec for a four day stay with me. I have spent the entire day catching up on mail & dispatches I missed during my absence. Am enclosing some interesting items for you. We received an announcement of Burns Spore's wedding to a Helen May Nelson in Cambridge Mass.² Also received your two letters of Sunday, 19th Nov which forwarded Mary's of 15 Nov with her splendid marks. I hope & pray Mary's face has healed, or is on the way to healing. What a nice letter Mary now writes! I enjoyed the clippings about the 6th War Loan.³ Also—my Sweetheart I have finally received the photographs of you & I adore them. They are wonderful and are mounted on my wall. Thanks a million! I hope that your injured foot is now entirely well. I also hope that by now your troubles with the Red Cross are subsiding. In any case—don't hesitate to assert yourself & speak your mind to Dr. [Arthur] Deering⁴—not only about the Red Cross—but about any other matters that affect your N.R. [Navy Relief] work.⁵ Now my Darling, I must turn in & get some sleep—for tomorrow will be another long day. All my hearts devotion to you & Mary. Keep well & cheerful both of you. My arms are around you and my lips are on yours. Ever your own
Chester

[redacted]

¹ Admiral James O. Richardson (retired), former COMINCH (January 1940–February 1941), on active service with the Navy Relief Society.

² Lieutenant Burns W. Spore married Helen Nelson on 29 October 1944.

³ Catherine Nimitz made numerous public speeches to support the sale of war bonds during World War II.

⁴ Captain Arthur H. Dearing, MC, USN, Commander, U.S. Naval Hospital, Oakland, California. This naval family hospital was constructed during World War II and was commonly known as "Oak Knoll." Dr. Dearing commanded the hospital from January 1944 until January 1947.

⁵ During World War II, Catherine Nimitz helped to establish and supervise Oak Knoll.



[Oahu] 10 pm Wednesday—

29 Nov 44.

[letterhead]

COMMANDER IN CHIEF
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET

My Darling:—

We are at the end of another long day which commenced at 430 this morning—when I got up to breakfast with J. O. R. [James O. Richardson] and see him off. He is a very interesting visitor and I enjoyed him. His demeanor is severe and grouchy but he is very pleasant when you get to know him. Yesterday afternoon he & I played horseshoes against Calhoun and Anderson & won 3 out of 5 games—although J. O. R. says he has not had horse shoes in his hands for 30 years. He will be back for a four or five day stay in about a week. The month of December will be full of visitors for me—and of several nationalities. I will be glad when that month is over. There will be few days when my guest room is unoccupied. I spent several hours this afternoon getting caught up on my mail & reading of banked up reports—and now feel that I am about up to date again. Am anxiously awaiting news of Marys—infection— which I hope and pray is cured by now. What a nice time we had together on my last visit to the coast. And how nice it would be to repeat that every other week! We are somewhat slowed down in Leyte owing to heavy rains which have slowed our airfield work—and which gives the Japs a chance to assemble more air strength to attack us. The news continues mixed—which is not unexpected.¹ We now know the Japs will put up a tough fight to hold the P.I.—and that we will not move rapidly until the rainy season ends some time in Dec. There have been some remarkable stories come out of this war and I read one today—written by the senior surviving officer of the USS *Johnson*²—one of the destroyers sunk by the Japs on 25 Oct (East Longitude date). I shall try to have it published. Now, Sweetheart mine, I must turn in before I fall asleep at my desk. Keep cheerful & well— Your husband adores you.

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Nimitz is likely referring here to reports he received that stated U.S. planes sank 13 Japanese vessels attempting to bring reinforcements to Leyte. News of Japanese suicide attacks on U.S. ships also continued to reach Nimitz on an almost daily basis. These air attacks on U.S. ships were of particular concern to Nimitz. Kamikazes damaged the battleship *Maryland* (BB-46) and the destroyers *Saufley* (DD-465) and *Aulick* (DD-569) on 29 November 1944. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 277; and “Command Summary,” 28–29 November 1944, vol. 5, pp. 2154–55, box 5, Series 1: Command Summary & Combined Chiefs of Staff Books, 1941–1945, Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHC.

² *Johnston* (DD-557), a destroyer assigned to the Seventh Fleet's Escort Task Unit 77.4, "Taffy 3." On 25 October 1944, in the Battle off Samar, Taffy 3 came under assault by a superior Japanese force during the U.S. invasion of Leyte. Commander Ernest E. Evans ordered his ship to attack a Japanese cruiser, battleship, and several destroyers in order to protect the vulnerable American escort carriers. Although Japanese fire eventually sank *Johnston*, the American destroyer succeeded in helping to repel the enemy. For more on this action, see James D. Hornfischer, *The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors: The Extraordinary World War II Story of the U.S. Navy's Finest Hour* (New York: Bantam Books, 2004).



[*Oahu*] Thursday afternoon—

30 Nov 44.

Darling Mine:—

Although there is still a chance that a late mail will bring me a letter from you and Mary today, it begins to look as if I must wait until tomorrow to hear from you. You and Mary are constantly in my mind, and while I do not worry about Mary's infection, I will be greatly relieved when I hear that it has been cured and she is back in school. Tell Mary that J. O. R. will deliver the book on shells to Commodore [Vernon] Grant¹ today—which is quick work. I know that he will be pleased to have the book—although it is quite certain that in his new job he will have little time to hunt shells. The Japs occasionally send him a few "shells"—but not the kind he and Mary like to collect. Today—among a large number of callers, A Mr. [Frank] Gaines² from Berkeley appeared and we had an interesting talk about his future duties—which are with UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration]—the relief agency headed by ex Governor [Herbert] Lehman³ of N.Y. He seems to be a very pleasant man, and I am supposed to remember him—but I am ashamed to say that I do not. I remember vaguely your telling me something about him. I hope that by now the Hospital authorities have extended to you the same privileges to clubs—messes—etc that they extend to others not directly in the Navy. Ingersoll was going to handle it thru Edgar—Wood⁴—and without giving offense to Deering—and also without embarrassment to you. Please let me know how this matter turns out. When I left Berkeley the other day I took with me the old travelling clock which Bingham & Koch gave you as a wedding present & which I had installed in a wooden case later. I found it in the drawer with my shoes. You will be pleased to hear that one of our expert watch repair men in the C.B.'s⁵ has put it in fine shape and it is now—before me—keeping accurate time. The repair man said the clock movement is in fine condition & will give many years service. My mess has been invited to the Walkers tonight to eat a Thanksgiving Dinner—although the W.'s [Walkers] had some people in on the 23^d. We have accepted—and will call on the new British Consul enroute— Mr O'Dwyer—from S.F. has repeatedly asked me in for a drink. On my usual dinner night some Sunday, probably 10 December,

I plan to ask the two Wave⁶ officers, Lt Comdr [Eleanor] Rigby⁷ and Lt [Winifred] Quick⁸—to meet the Walkers & some of McMorris' friends. The first contingent of Waves is expected to arrive very soon and I am going to ask various Honolulu people to maintain a friendly interest in the officers, at least. I have finally caught up with my papers sufficiently to take more exercise—which I need badly to keep me feeling fit. Have cut out lunches until my weight gets back to 180—which is a good weight for me. Do not worry about my dieting because Dr. A. keeps a close check on my condition. So much of my work must be done at my desk & this is very confining. Now My Sweetheart—I will get this into the mail in the hope it will reach you by Saturday. I hope and pray it finds you well & Mary entirely over her trouble. All my hearts devotion to you both—my arms are around you—My Darling Keep Cheerful—Ever your own

Chester.

¹ Commodore Vernon F. Grant, USN, Atoll Commander, Majuro, Arno, and Aur Atolls; Island Commander and Commanding Officer, Naval Air Bases, Majuro.

² Dr. Frank S. Gaines, mayor of Berkeley, California, from 1939 to 1943. Gaines was later named chief, United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, Philippine Mission.

³ Herbert H. Lehman, Democratic governor of New York from 1933 to 1942.

⁴ Rear Admiral Edgar L. Woods, MC, USN, inspector of Medical Department activities, West Coast, March 1942–September 1945.

⁵ United States naval construction battalions, colloquially known as the CBs or “Seabees.”

⁶ The U.S. Navy established a corps of female members called Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) on 30 July 1942. Nimitz initially opposed the employment of female Navy personnel in Hawaii during World War II but later changed his position and supported their assignment to Hawaii. While the law establishing the WAVES prevented them from being stationed outside the continental United States, Congress passed a revised law that was signed on 27 September 1944 that allowed WAVES to volunteer for service in Hawaii, Alaska, Panama, and the Caribbean. The first unit of WAVES arrived in Hawaii in January 1945.

On 30 July 1944, Nimitz issued a statement marking the second anniversary of the creation of the WAVES. It read in part: “Although history [*sic*] thus records that women have had an influence upon Navies, it is only recently that women have had an influence within Navies, and are serving in naval shore establishments in the many capacities where their talents and skills can be used. In many naval activities maintained by the Pacific Fleet along the west coast, WAVES are busily doing jobs which help substantially in the prosecution of our war against Japan. To them will be owed a part of the credit for our eventual victory. In their two years as an integral part of the Navy, the WAVES have demonstrated keen ability, loyalty, and devotion to duty. We are proud of them.” Chester Nimitz, “WAVES,” 30 July 1944, box 72, Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHHC. For Nimitz's views on women in the military, see Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 235–36, 345, 357.

⁷ Lieutenant Commander Eleanor Rigby, director of Women Accepted for Military Service in the 14th Naval District.

⁸ Lieutenant Winifred Quick Collins, a former personnel manager with the Brunswick Drug Company in Los Angeles. Collins was commissioned with the rank of ensign on 28 August 1942, one month after the establishment of the WAVES. Collins became one of the first nonmedical female officers to serve outside the continental United States when she became district personnel officer in Hawaii in late 1944. She served as personnel director of the 12th Naval District from 1953 to 1956 followed by chief of naval personnel for women. When Collins retired with the rank of captain in August 1962, she was the most-senior woman in the Navy.



[Oahu] 230 pm Sunday afternoon

3 Dec 44.

Best Beloved.—

I have just now received and read with great relief your letter of 29 Nov telling me that Mary is now definitely on the mend—following the opening and draining of her carbuncle. If recovery has been on the schedule you expected, she should be back in the Convent today. I am so relieved to hear that the doctor plans a program of medicine which might help Mary in the future. Your 28 Nov. letter was waiting for me this morning at 930 when [Marion] Eppley¹—Lamar & I returned for Muliwai with the Walkers last night. The weather was not good and there was much mud and rain which did not help me in a slight cold and sore throat I had picked up from the several running around my HQ. My cold & throat trouble is well under control and is no cause for worry at all. Was in fact a help, in a way, because it enabled me to inform the Kennedy's² I could not possibly come to their wedding anniversary party tonight—and it has kept many callers out of my office today, thus letting me make much progress on my work. We took a short walk on the beach yesterday, late, & I found 4 glass balls³—two of which I gave Eppley. This morning—a short walk by Mr. Walker netted three more balls for Eppley who is very pleased to have them. We had charcoal cooked island steaks—good—but not as good as George Bakers—& then a long sleep. Eppley is a very interesting person and I like him more & more as I learn to know him better. I brought up the thought that you & I discussed on my last visit, that Nancy might be a suitable technical worker in his laboratory and he was immediately, greatly interested. I told him of N's plan for college & he asked if—possibly she would like to work a period in his laboratory for him—before taking her year in college, the idea being that it might direct her mind to subjects on which she had been working. I do not know if any thing will come of it—but you can prepare Nancy—for the proposal. If she is at Columbia—she can, at least, visit the laboratory some time & see if it interests her. I do not even know where the lab is located—but will try to learn more about it. Am so glad you have another nurse & an ex Navy nurse at that. Am sorry your dependent wards are so crowded & hope you can find more space. How many can be accommodated now & what is ultimate goal? Am glad you are going to talk for war bonds at Pacific Grove on 7 Dec—for I will be doing the same at the Navy Yard P.H. & my speech is not as good as yours, by a long shot.⁴ And at 5 pm today I am going to officially dedicate an officers swimming pool in the Makalapa Area & name it "Towers Pool"—because he was the driving force behind the idea—and the pool, 40 X 100, is a much needed exercise & recreational facility for the 500 to

600 young officers in this immediate area. There will be timed swimming races and some exhibitions by Honolulu star swimmers. While I know you cannot fill all dates—there are certain ones to whom you can tell your Navy Relief needs—which might be of great help to you. I have several other short addresses to read in the near future. I believe Lorena Thompson⁵ will see her best bel⁶ very soon—if he is not already there. My “Tommie” the name of my Filipino boy—has just—within the hour, came down with appendicitis & has been rushed to the Aiea Hospital. He had not looked well for a long time. I hope you & Mary enjoyed the Symphony Friday & that the weather was good. I shall luxuriate in a real quiet Sunday evening tonight—with only McMorris and Anderson & we shall play Brahms #2 & 3.⁷ I have not yet opened the Christmas package—Dearest Mine—I shall hold off for a few more days at least. I enjoyed the clippings, photo of you at lunch—etc. How bitter Pierre Murleux must feel towards the Germans. I do not think that the coming peace will be a “soft” one. There are too many people on hand to see that it is made plenty tough. That is the result of a long war. The soldier’s poem by [Joseph] Stilwell⁸ was splendid. I agree with you that the Nimitz family has done well in bond buying. You are a splendid manager and I am more than proud of you. Will be glad to send [Chih Tsin] Feng⁹ a photo if you send me his initials. I will write a “thank you” letter to [Robert] Sproul¹⁰ for his picture. Am sorry to hear about McCrayer’s decline [redacted]. I enjoyed so much reading Catherines buoyant letter & hope you are right about the miniature class rings. Her letter still refers to a nose ring which may be the slang expression for the miniature class rings. What a good time our children had together on Thanksgiving. Cheer up—[redacted]—We may be together as a family before we know it. The war is somewhat “slowed down” at this moment, Ill admit—but in one way or another—we are hitting the Japs hard—almost daily. Now [redacted]. I must read dispatches & then dedicate the pool. I shall speak warmly of Col Knox and his physical fitness programs¹¹ All my hearts devotion—love & Kisses are Ever your own

Chester

¹ Captain Marion Eppley, USNR, chief of censorship for the Pacific Fleet. Eppley was a chemist who had founded Eppley Laboratory in Newport, Rhode Island. His firm specialized in the manufacture of standard cells.

² Stanley C. Kennedy Sr. and Martha Davenport Kennedy. Kennedy was a naval aviator during World War I and subsequently founded Hawaiian Airlines. His son, Stanley Kennedy Jr., served on the battleship *North Carolina* during World War II and later trained as a member of an underwater demolition team. Martha Kennedy and her daughter, Patricia Scott Kennedy, volunteered with the Red Cross.

³ Hollow blown-glass balls filled with air used to keep fishing nets, longlines, and drop lines afloat. Japanese fishermen employed them in great numbers in the early twentieth century until they were replaced by floats made from alternate materials.

⁴ See Nimitz to Catherine, 7 December 1944, p. 67.

⁵ Lorena Thompson, wife of Captain E. M. “Tommy” Thompson, USN. Captain Thompson had previously served under Nimitz as a lieutenant on the heavy cruiser *Augusta* (CA-31). See Potter, *Nimitz*, 156–57.

⁶ Shorthand for “best beloved,” a term of endearment that Chester Nimitz used to refer to his wife, Catherine.

⁷ Symphonies nos. 2 and 3 by Johannes Brahms, a nineteenth-century German composer, pianist, and conductor.

⁸ General Joseph W. “Vinegar Joe” Stilwell, former commanding general of all U.S. Army forces in China, Burma, and India. President Roosevelt recalled Stilwell from China in October 1944. In January 1945, General George Marshall assigned Stilwell to command Army Ground Forces, responsible for training Army ground units in the United States. Stilwell had a notoriously acerbic personality and wrote scathing comments and poetry about a number of individuals during the war. For a collection of Stilwell’s wartime writings, see Joseph W. Stilwell, *The Stilwell Papers*, ed. Theodore H. White (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1948).

⁹ Chih Tsin Feng, Chinese consul general in San Francisco.

¹⁰ Robert G. Sproul, president of the University of California, Berkeley, from 1930 to 1952.

¹¹ Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox died on 28 April 1944. He advocated physical education in public schools and stressed physical training and fitness routines in the Navy.



[Oahu] 430 pm Monday

4 Dec '44.

Darling Mine,

Your 30 Nov letter has just arrived with the cheering information of Mary’s recovery from the carbuncle. I am so pleased and relieved to hear of her improvement and I hope the toxoid injections will clear up the boils. I hope you enjoy your drive down the Coast to Pacific Grove—but I wish you would invite some one to ride with you—say Lorena Thompson or someone you like. It is always wise to have a companion. What a selfish person Mrs. Coleman was. I can not understand why she thought [redacted] should adopt her son. This bears out the stories of neglect [redacted] when that child was an infant in [redacted]. I share your pleasure in the news that [Frederick] Hook¹ has been elected to the Society of Surgeons. What a great honor that is—not only to him but to the Navy. Speaking of honors—I have just learned that Fordham [University] has awarded me the Honorary LLD;² and that I’ve been elected an Honorary member of the Bohemian Club.³ Arch Bishop Spellman⁴ will make the Fordham L.L.D. award here—or, if he cant come, the local Bishop—[James] Sweeney⁵—will do so. The appointment of Grew⁶ as Undersecretary of State—please all of us here & I have just written him my congratulations. Am glad also—to see [Archibald] MacLeish⁷ in the post of an Asst Secretary of State. It begins to look as if real ability and merit rather than political power is going to receive its reward during the coming 4 years. Perhaps we will get a new Sec. of Labor.⁸ My cold has advanced to the wet nose—& laryngitis stage—but I am being well cared for & so far have had no fever. I keep very quiet in my office & turn in promptly at my quarters. Tonight, dinner—I am having Frank Jack Fletcher⁹ (—just arrived for a four day visit and my house guest) & Emmons with his Ch.

Of Staff Gen. [Robert] Bathorst¹⁰—and Ernest Gunther at dinner. All have come long distances from different directions for real business meetings & all look fine. Ernest Gunther sends you his best wishes. In a couple of weeks I may be able to let him visit the coast for a few. I do hope you see Admiral [John] McDonald¹¹ and that you find him in good health. Last night—Anderson and I dined alone & had Cesar Franck's D' minor—Symphony¹² for my dinner music—so you see my Precious—we do lots of things alike now my Darling. I must read dispatches & then go up to meet my guests. Am glad I got out of going to the Kennedy's Anniversary dinner last night—as it was too big—100 guests. All my hearts devotion is yours—Keep well & cheerful my arms are around you and my lips on yours—
Ever your own Chester

¹ Captain Frederick R. Hook, MD.

² Doctor of laws.

³ A private, exclusive all-male club based in San Francisco founded in 1872.

⁴ Francis J. Spellman, Roman Catholic archbishop of New York from 1939 to 1967. He became a cardinal in 1946.

⁵ James J. Sweeney, the first Roman Catholic bishop of Honolulu from 1941 until his death in 1968.

⁶ Joseph Grew served as undersecretary of state from 20 December 1944 until 15 August 1945.

⁷ Archibald MacLeish, previously the assistant director of the Office of War Information (OWI) from June 1942 to January 1943 and librarian of Congress from 1939 to 1944. MacLeish was named the assistant secretary of state for public and cultural relations in 1944. He was a renowned poet and Pulitzer Prize winner.

⁸ Frances Perkins served as secretary of labor from 3 March 1933 to 30 June 1945.

⁹ Vice Admiral Frank Jack Fletcher, Commander, Alaskan Sea Frontier, and Commander, North Pacific Force (April 1944–December 1945). Previously, Fletcher was task force commander during the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway. Fletcher was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the battle of Veracruz in April 1914 and received the Navy Cross for his command of the destroyer *Benham* (Destroyer No. 49) in World War I. For more on Fletcher's World War II career, see John B. Lundstrom, *Black Shoe Carrier Admiral: Frank Jack Fletcher at Coral Sea, Midway, and Guadalcanal* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2006).

¹⁰ Brigadier General Robert Marks Bathurst, USA, chief of staff, Alaska Department.

¹¹ Vice Admiral John Daniel McDonald (retired), navigation officer of the battleship *Ohio* (Battleship No. 12) from October 1904 through January 1907 while it was the flagship of the Commander in Chief, Asiatic Fleet. Nimitz joined *Ohio* as a warrant officer on 23 February 1905 after graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy the month prior. He was on board for *Ohio*'s cruise to the Far East and was detached on 15 September 1906.

¹² The only symphony of Belgian-born César-Hubert-Auguste Franck, nineteenth-century composer, music teacher, and organist.



[*Oahu*] Tuesday afternoon—

5 Dec 44—

Best Beloved—:

I am spending the afternoon in my bed in my quarters in a heroic attempt to get rid of my cold and laryngitis before the 7th—when I have to make a War Bond address at the Navy Yard.¹ I inhale benzoin² and steam from a fancy electric gadget that Dr. A. has found in his dispensary. Already I am feeling better and by tomorrow. Also J. O. R. returns on the 7th—and on the following day 15 members of Congress come for a visit. I shall have a luncheon for them on the 9th and in the meantime—show them everything we have around here. They will remain only a few days. Shortly after that I will have more visitors—foreigners—and they will stay until nearly Christmas. What a way to carry on a war! Can you blame me for trying to speed up my forward headquarters?—which, by the way, should be ready in the latter part of January.³ When the war ends in Europe—I am afraid there will be even more visitors. The people aboard ship are lucky in that they are hard to visit. We are having a windy day with many rain showers and it looks as if the rainy season was about to start. My staff dinner last night for Emmons, Fletcher, Gunther, Gen Bathurst and a civilian doctor Kittelle from Dr. Leahys clinic—was pleasant and interesting— I could truly say my guests came from opposite poles. More later—after I sign the official mail—which is just arriving & Later—5 pm—Your fine letter of 1 Dec arrived along with my dispatches and I am delighted to hear that Mary is doing so well. The symphony sounds wonderful and I am so glad you and Mary could go together. What kindly people the Scushenners are! I have just had sent up to my house the “good” records they sent out recently to be played for my mess before they go to the various service music recreation rooms. They look very interesting. Yes—I have the Kalinnikov #1 Symphony⁴ and think you will like it. I suppose the Sailor—Conway—who thought he met me in San Angelo—really met one of the several Nimitz men in that town. You will learn a great deal about operations if you see films or watch them work. It must be interesting—and I imagine one soon gets over the squeamish part. Am glad to hear that Deering has given you this privilege [rest of letter missing]

¹ See Nimitz to Catherine, 7 December 1944, p. 67.

² Benzoin is the sap from trees in the genus *Styrax*. It was once prescribed to treat hoarseness and other respiratory conditions.

³ Admiral Nimitz established an advanced headquarters on Guam in order to be closer to the combat area and to focus more on planning combat operations. He left his deputy, Admiral Towers, in Hawaii to focus on administration and logistics. Nimitz and his small staff moved to Guam on 27 January 1945. See Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 360. See also Nimitz to Catherine, 28 January 1945, p. 141.

⁴ The first two symphonies by Vasily Sergeyevich Kalinnikov, a nineteenth-century Russian composer.



[undated letter fragment]

[Oahu]

club and officers mess—now—by all means make use of both and take some of your friends and visitors to lunch. It will be better for you to eat your luncheon with others than to lunch alone. No—I have not talked over the radio since my return here. The Scushenners must have heard a transcription—possibly the Thanksgiving day job. Drew Pearson¹—in his column of last night in the *Star Bulletin*² tries to stir up trouble between MacArthur & me where none exists. That column must have been published on the mainland several days ago. What a troublemaker he is! Apparently many people like to read such rubbish. The news that I am trying to cure my cold in bed spreads rapidly. Flowers & fruit from the Walkers—Book & candy from Calhoun— Fortunately, my cold is so far improved that I will be back on the job tomorrow. I think I got it from Calhoun. I hope and pray you have a an [sic] interesting and safe trip to Pacific Grove—a place which I remember very well. Hope you see some of the country & meet some of the old residents who can tell you about living conditions. I would love nothing more—than being at the Forest Hotel with you. I will send a photo to Mrs. Armsby³—and also to Mr. Feng if you send me the latter's initials & address. Now, my Darling I will get this letter in the mail hoping it can still get out tonight. All my hearts devotion. Keep well & cheerful. Do not worry about me—I will be up tomorrow—or else be killed by kindness of the many friends here.

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Drew Pearson, author of the nationally syndicated column Merry-Go-Round. Pearson was well known for breaking sensational stories, such as the incident in which General George S. Patton Jr. slapped a soldier suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Yet Pearson also developed a reputation as a sensationalist muckraker for sometimes publishing unsubstantiated claims and rumors in his column. See Donald A. Ritchie, *The Columnist: Leaks, Lies, and Libel in Drew Pearson's Washington* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 4.

² A daily newspaper based in Honolulu, founded by the merger of the *Evening Bulletin* and *Honolulu Star* newspapers in 1912.

³ Probably Leonora Wood Armsby.



[Oahu] Noon—Wednesday—

6 Dec 44.

Darling Mine:—

My cold is so much better today that I went to my work as usual this morning and stayed until 10³⁰ am when I returned to my quarters to avoid meeting callers and talking too much. Tomorrow will be a very busy day—a big Catholic military mass at Beach Recreation Center at the Navy Yard about 10:15—and a War Bond Rally at 12:15—at which I make an address— Then on the next morning—the 8th—fifteen members (15) of the House Naval Affairs Committee will arrive for several days' stay before proceeding onward towards the war. A Captain Ramsay,¹ USN will accompany them as tour director. Housing is so scarce in Honolulu—that I am dividing the party among the various quarters—in the Yard and at Makalapa. The Congress woman from Maine—Mrs. Margaret Smith,² will go to a hotel in town—& my guest will be the chairman of the special committee—Mr. [James] Heffernan³ from N.Y. Am glad to note that Maas is not the chairman. It is a real imposition in our crowded Stations in the Pacific to have such a large delegation come—but we will do our best. On Saturday the 9th, I will give the entire party a day at sea on a carrier—and a luncheon to which I will invite J. O. R. & Fletcher & several others. The carriers cabin mess will prepare everything & I will allot them a sum from my entertainment fund to cover costs. Maas will stay with Towers. My house will be really crowded then—with Heffernan—J. O. R. & Fletcher—all here at same time. McM. [McMorris] & Anderson will temporarily double up. Bailey & Furlong will give the party tours of the Island & the Yard. I have finally read carefully the China Magazine you sent me—and I have an uneasy feeling that the authors of the sketches about the various Chinamen suppressed or eliminated all the unfavorable material. I also have the uneasy feeling that we have been backing the wrong group in China,⁴ or perhaps—backing that group too much to the exclusion of the so called Communists—who—I am positive—bear no resemblance to the original Russian Communists whose chief aim was world revolution. Well, we will know before this war is over which are the better & I regret that while in Berkeley recently—I did not seek out Stilwell for a talk. Am sure he could give me the most valuable kind of information. Have sent a photo to Mrs Arnsby addressed “Chairman. S.F. Symphony Orchestra Assn—which, I hope, will reach her. Will rest in my room until 2 pm and then go back to my desk at HQ for important conferences—where I listen. More later. 5⁰⁰ pm—Your letter of 2 December came just as I was about to return to my quarters—to “rest my voice.” I am doing very well in getting rid of my laryngitis but am provoked to know that it can be just as bad in this mild climate as it is in a colder climate. I will be glad to meet Miss Kay Kieffer if she comes out my way. I find that I have again given offense to Gen. R. [Richardson] by interfering with Army matters, so I suppose that I will have to go

thru a long harangue again. This time it is about housing in Honolulu—where the civilians allege are residing service men who have official quarters on military and naval reservations thereby depriving civilians of urgently needed housing. I have ordered that if navy & marine personnel is, in fact, scoring double quarters—they must give the civilian quarters up—and I have directed the Army to take similar steps— It is interfering, Ill admit but the housing shortage is so severe that we must do everything we can to conserve space and to reduce demands on shipping for lumber and on manpower for building. Am afraid I can never live entirely at peace with the General so I might as well have it out now. Am sorry to burden you with such details but—it means a lot to get it off my mind. Am glad Mary feels so well. You make no mention of her infection so I assume it is well on the mend. Last night Dr A. & I had dinner alone as Fletcher & McM. were dining elsewhere. We played some of Miss Scushenners records—including “Petrouschka” by Stravinsky⁵ I must say I did not like it much. I will pass it along rapidly to the sailors. A book of Gilbert & Sullivan⁶—was, however—splendid. I wish I could hear your speech, [redacted]. Now—I have some more dispatches to read & then back to quarters, [redacted]. I would indeed love to be sitting in front of the fire with you & Mary—and Freckles & Victory.⁷ Keep well & cheerful—

All my hearts devotion is always yours

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Probably Captain Donald J. Ramsey. Ramsey previously commanded the destroyer *Hughes* (DD-410) during the battles of Guadalcanal, Midway, and the Santa Cruz Islands. Ramsey received the Navy Cross for maneuvering his destroyer to aid damaged ships during the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands on 26 October 1942.

² Representative Margaret Chase Smith (R-ME), a member of the House Naval Affairs Committee that toured bases in the South Pacific in the winter of 1944. Smith represented Maine in the House of Representatives from 1940 to 1949 and in the Senate from 1949 to 1973. Smith was the first woman elected to both houses of Congress.

³ Representative James J. Heffernan (D-NY), a member of the House Naval Affairs Committee. Heffernan represented New York in the House of Representatives from 1941 to 1953.

⁴ The United States supported the nationalist Kuomintang government in China led by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. After the recall of General Stilwell from China in October 1944, a number of American media outlets began to openly criticize Chiang’s corrupt and undemocratic government. See, for example, Brooks Atkinson, “Long Schism Seen,” *New York Times*, 31 October 1944.

⁵ Igor Stravinsky, a contemporary Russian composer.

⁶ Dramatist W. S. Gilbert and composer Arthur Sullivan collaborated on more than a dozen comic operas in the late nineteenth century.

⁷ Victory was the name of the Nimitz family’s cat. It was also sometimes called “Vicky.”



[Oahu] 5 pm Thursday

7 Dec 44

Darling of my Heart:—

Your Dec 3 letter has just arrived and, as usual, it is the bright spot in a very busy day— that promises also to be a very long day—because word has just arrived that my congressional visitors will arrive about 10³⁰ tonight. The party has shrunk to ten congressman (one of whom is Mrs. Smith of Maine) and their tour director, Captain Donald Ramsay—USN. There are complaints about the lady congressman because the party is arriving one day earlier than expected and the hotel reservation will not be available until tomorrow. What to do with her is still a problem—but I think it will be solved by having the seven Wave officers—Mrs Rigby—(Lt Comdr) take her for the night. Those who dropped out include Magnuson (which I regret) and Maas (which pleases me). The other three I did not know. Mr. Heffernan—the chairman—will be my house guest. You can imagine my walls bulging with J. O. R., Fletcher & now Mr. Heffernan. Fortunately—Sunday—Should see all of them on their way except possibly JoR [James O. Richardson]. Just this instant—I am told my larger British party will be here over Christmas—which is too much—as the Congressmen will again be with me on 22d or 23d. So will ask my British friends to delay their visit until after X mas. The Japs are not the worst of my troubles—[redacted]. In your letter you mention Mr. DREW—as a possible Under Sec of State. I know you mean GREW—, but it made me smile to think of DREW PEARSON as Under Sec State. Am so glad Mary is safely back in the Convent—and I hope her absence does not put too much of a study load on her. Mr Feng is indeed a thoughtful and generous person to send Mary a Borean¹ doll. When you send me his initials I shall send him a photograph properly inscribed. My Speech went off in fine style and will no doubt be printed in the U.S.—but any way—I will enclose a news clipping of it in tomorrow's mail.² You must have acquired your sore throat at the identical moment I did. I hope yours was not as bad as mine and that you were spared laryngitis. However—my troubles are nearly over—with only a vestige of huskiness left. The last three days have been very wet which did not help. The Catholic Mass at the Navy Yard was most impressive & there were at least 5000 service men with many civilians in attendance. Gen R. was there—& as yet he has not opened up on me for interfering with his housing in town. Now, my Precious, I must get this note [in] the mail & then read dispatches. Big things are expected to happen far west today.³ I pray all goes well. Keep cheerful & happy. Your husband adores you [redacted] Ever your own

Chester

¹ Likely Bereans, a protestant Christian group.

² In Nimitz's speech to civilian workers at the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard on the third anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, he emphasized that all six Japanese carriers that participated in the 1941 raid had been sunk. He then extolled the accomplishments of what he called the United States' "ghost fleet," its ships that had been severely damaged or sunk in the course of the war but raised and sent back into action by the shipyard workers. Nimitz declared, "Most of this ghost fleet, which our enemy said was sunk or damaged beyond hope of repair, is today haunting our enemy in a most un-ghostlike fashion – Thanks again to your sweat and toil!" "War Bond Rally Pearl Harbor Navy Yard," 7 December 1944, box 72, folder: "Speeches War Bond Rally, Pearl Harbor Navy Yard," Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHC.

³ On 8 December 1944, American carrier planes bombed the Japanese-held island of Iwo Jima.



[Oahu] 11 pm Friday

8 Dec 44

Best Beloved—

I am near the end of a very long and very busy day but am going to have a short chat [redacted] before retiring. I have had my Naval Affairs Sub Committee in my hands besides several important conferences.¹ And tonight I had at my table Mr. Heffernan—Chairman of the Committee & Mrs. Margaret Smith, the Congresswoman from Maine—who is a charming person. I also had Mrs. Rigby—the senior Wave who is acting as an aide to Mrs. Smith—Also Jo. Richardson and Jack Fletcher so you see my hands have been full. Tomorrow I will take the Congressional party aboard a carrier & give them lunch—and a sight they will never forget—a carrier working planes at sea. Your splendid speech arrived today as well as your lovely letter of Dec 4—which sounded cheerful though very busy. So many people have read and praised your war bond address and I have had it copied & saved copies for you. Am sure you will make a great success with it— and I wish I might have been present to hear it. I also enjoyed Catherine's letter. Don't you wish we could be present when the girls go to the Grews? Am sure they will enjoy it. What pitiable cases you have to handle. I hope J. O. R. stops by to see you when he goes to the Coast next week. I greatly enjoyed Joan's letter also. What a grand time they all had at the Cape. C W Jr.—reports in to day—and I know the next year will fly by for him. We hope to have the war much further along by the end of his year. A friend of Bids—a Col Howard—Ex Army—came in to see me today. He is out here in charge of a group of scientists. Also today I received a letter from Mr. Geo. Baker expressing enthusiasm over my talk with the unions in S.F. Says it had a good effect. Now [redacted]—I really must get some sleep. I must get up early to read dispatches before I take my visitors to sea. Sunday will be full of work—so no swim or exercise this week. Keep well & cheerful Your husband adores you—Ever your own

Chester

¹ On 8 December 1944, the Joint Chiefs of Staff Special Committee charged with studying the reorganization of the nation's defense institutions interviewed Nimitz to record his opinions about service unification.

Nimitz told the committee that he favored a "single civilian secretary of armed forces, with a complete elimination of civilian secretaries for the Army, for the Navy, and for the Air Force." Based on Nimitz's experience obtaining directives from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he felt that it would be better to have "a single commander of armed forces" who possessed the "authority and responsibility for issuing a directive." "Testimony of Fleet Admiral C. Nimitz, U.S.N. before the Joint Chiefs of Staff Special Committee for Reorganization of National Defense, Pearl Harbor—8 December 1944," p. 2, box 128, folder 5: A1/2-1/6 JCS 749/12 (S&C), CNO: Organizational Research and Policy Division (OP-23) Records (AR/638), AB, NHHC.



[Oahu] 930 pm Saturday,

9 Dec 44

Best Beloved—

I am reaching the end of a very long (up at 530 am) but very satisfactory day. I got up early to read dispatches and by 830 am had my Congressional visitors enroute to the carrier in which they spent the day with me—at sea for gunnery & plane exercises of all sorts. Back at my office at 630 pm just long enough to sign mail & then dinner with Mr. Heffernan & Fletcher as my guests. Fletcher left at 730 pm for the airport to sail for the Coast & Heffernan left at 745 to attend a meeting of defense workers from his state—New York. The Congressional party leaves at 8 am tomorrow—but will be back with me for a couple of days just before X mas. They had a grand time today—but if they are as weary as I am, they will sleep hard tonight. They are all pleasant people. Tip the girls off that Mr. & Mrs. Heffernan¹ & their daughter²—Nancy's age—will call them some time at the Library—& if Nancy goes to Columbia—the Heffernan daughter a medical student—or rather—pre med. will look her up. By the way—When does Nancy plan to enter College? No mail from you today which is not unexpected as you were away on your Pacific Grove journey—which, I hope, was pleasant for you. The enclosed clippings on 5 star rank is interesting.³ I do not understand the pay increase because my present pay and allowances is \$12951— made up as follows:

Pay—(base)	8000—	Allotments (all for indef periods)	
10% for sea	800—	(a) Riggs National Bank	500.00
Rental allowance	1440—	(b) First National Trust & Savings Bank—San Diego	170.00
Subsistence	511—	(c) Veterans Ba—Govt. Ins.	<u>20.90</u>
4 Star allow	<u>—2200—</u>	Total allot per mo.	690.90
Total	12951—	“ cash ” ”	<u>388.35 (\$194 each pay day)</u>
or 1079.25	per mo	Monthly pay—	1079.25

If the money allowance for 5 Stars is made 5000—instead of 2200—There will be an annual increase of \$2800 which is probably what is meant. Then—if I am lucky enough to get 5 Stars we will have an increase of 2800 annually or \$233.33 per month. If we are lucky—you can plan further investments in War bonds—or a lot somewhere—for our future home. My Precious Treasure—I will turn in & get a much needed rest— How I wish I could hold you closely in my arms. Keep well & cheerful—, All my hearts devotion is Yours—Always—Ever Your

Chester

¹Stella M. Waters Heffernan.

²Patricia Heffernan, daughter of James J. Heffernan and Stella M. Heffernan.

³On 14 December 1944, Congress passed a law authorizing the temporary creation of a five-star rank for both the Army and Navy. Accordingly, President Roosevelt appointed Admirals Nimitz, William Leahy, and Ernest King as fleet admirals, and the Senate confirmed their appointments on 15 December 1944. Following the war, Congress made the promotions of all those who received five-star rank permanent and authorized these men to receive their \$15,750 annual salaries until their deaths. See Thomas A. Hughes, *Admiral Bill Halsey: A Naval Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 401.



[Oahu] 430 PM Sunday

10 Dec 44

Darling Mine:—

For a brief few hours today I have enjoyed a reduction in numbers of visitors. Fletcher left last night. My Congressional party left this morning & J. O. Richardson leaves tomorrow. Now I will have three (3) days respite before the next big shots come along—but from then on to the end of the year I will be visited to death. I hurried back to my desk from the airport this morning & worked with Brahms 3d Symphony playing from 945 to 1015 and it was gorgeous. I will play it again tonight for my dinner guests—the two Wave officers—Mrs Rigby & Lt Quick & the Walkers—& the rest of the mess. I like that symphony more each time I hear it. Just an hour ago I received your nice letter of 6 Dec written from the Forest Hills Hotel in Pacific Grove. I am so glad you had a change of scene and that the trip down was so pleasant. I hope the rest of your stay & return was equally so. I wish you would stay long enough to have a good look around to see if you would like a home in the Monterey Area. It sounds attractive. I am also very pleased that you saw Big John McDonald. I would love to see him when I come again to Berkeley. I will never forget his helping and guiding hand when I was a midshipman on the *Ohio*. I distinctly remember going thru double bottoms for him.¹ Am glad you had company down on that ride— I believe Dalton, Ga., is the name of the place where one of my Sailor horseshoe competitors came from—the one in the picture taken at

“Nimitz Recreation Camp.” I will now await your letter telling about your speech & meeting the people in Pacific Grove. If it is an artist’s paradise—I suggest you look further into that area. Yesterday I received a little wooden carving of a Schnauzer—standing on a base—the whole about 4” high and beautifully done. The base has a little silver plate with engraving MAKALALA. The last “L” should be a “P”—but I can get that corrected. The sender, as you will note from the enclosed letter, is in Oakland. Could he be related to Prof. B.? I have made an appreciative reply. Today I received a beautiful Texas flag about 4’ x 6’ from the “Sons of the Republic of Texas. It is made of heavy silk. What shall we do with these things? Be sure to warn the girls in Washington that—some time in the New Year—Congressman Heffernan of New York will get in touch with them & will want them to meet his wife & daughter—Nancy’s age. He reminds me so much of Mr. Welch, our fine old Brooklyn landlord—who was so accommodating. Now my Precious Treasure, I will go back to my work. I still have mail & dispatches to handle before going up to dinner. All my thoughts are with you & I am looking forward eagerly to our next visit, whenever that may be—Keep well & cheerful—Ever your devoted

Chester

¹ Nimitz is most likely referring to the space between the inner and outer skin of a vessel, usually extending from bilge to bilge and for nearly the whole length of a vessel fore and aft, which is subdivided into water- or oil-tight compartments. The 1919 publication *Lectures on Modern Seamanship* explained that “the double bottoms have air pipes to make it possible to run liquids in and out and to ventilate them. They have manholes with secure coverings through which men can be sent in to inspect and clean them, or treat them with cement wash. The air in them is very dead and care should be taken to test it by letting down an open flame, if safe, before a man is sent in.” From February 1905 to September 1906, Passed Midshipman Nimitz served aboard the battleship *Ohio* and probably had to inspect these compartments by going through the manholes. Department of Seamanship, Officers’ Material School, Naval Auxiliary Reserve, Pelham Bay Park, *Lectures on Modern Seamanship* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1919), 58.



Nimitz pitches horse-shoes at a picnic for the enlisted men under his command at Nimitz Beach, Oahu, Hawaii. (NHHC NH 58032)



[Oahu] Monday noon

11 Dec 44.

Best Beloved:

I have just returned from the Sub Base—where I presented medals on board a submarine to a group of officers and men. That is one aspect of this duty that I always enjoy. It always gives me a great thrill and uplift. How I wish you could attend all these affairs. Have shifted back from white to khaki and am waiting for my messmates to assemble for lunch. This morning as I walked to my HQ I met George Bauernschmidt¹—who had just arrived for another spell of temporary duty before returning to Washington. He will dine with me tonight. My little dinner last night was pleasant & the Wave officers & the Walkers thoroughly enjoyed meeting. Another guest was one of my staff—Lt Smith from Texas—who is my legal officer. He is very competent and very agreeable—& is a classmate in College of Gov. Coke Stevenson² of Texas. He has also served one term in the Texas State legislature. My foreign guests will soon be here—for a four day visit before Xmas, instead of after that date as I had suggested. There is a possibility that they will overlap the return of the Congressional Committee—in which case we will indeed be crowded. This morning I received an interesting looking book from Osa Johnson,³ the exploring woman “with the compliments of the author.” When I start my move westward, I shall send back to you many of my books here—before they are dissipated by bor-
rowers. More later— My messmates are waiting for lunch. Later

6pm It has been a very long day and I am ready to rest—although I must now go up to my broadcasting booth and record a two minute broadcast to the Japanese people for the O.W.I.⁴ [Office of War Information] Your Dec 5 letter arrived this afternoon, a day after your letter of the 6th and I greatly enjoyed reading it— Although I am distressed about the Thanksgiving dinner here—Darling Mine—it was really not a Thanks giving Dinner—as the W’s [Walkers] had had their Thanksgiving dinner the previous week. I will do all in my power to avoid giving you worry and pain. I have just been informed that J. O. R.’s departure has been delayed 24 hours—so he is still with me. Tonights paper carries the announcement of the British Pacific Fleet under Admiral [Bruce] Fraser.⁵ It will soon be a topic of discussion here & it has many headaches—principally connected with Supply. Now—Darling—I must get to this broadcast. Am sorry to be so uninteresting—but have been conferring most of the day & there is no news. I love your heart, face and body and long to be with you. My arms are around you and my lips are on yours.

Ever Your own
Chester

¹ Captain George W. Bauernschmidt, subsequently commander of the naval supply depot on Guam.

² Coke R. Stevenson, Democratic governor of Texas, 1939–1941.

³ Osa Johnson, American writer, filmmaker, and author who, together with her husband, made a series of successful films about their travels to Africa and the South Seas.

⁴ President Franklin Roosevelt created the OWI by executive order on 13 June 1942 for the purpose of disseminating news and information about the progress of the war effort, war policies, and aims of the U.S. government.

⁵ Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, Commander, British Pacific Fleet. Fraser established his headquarters in Sydney, Australia, on 10 December 1944. He arrived in Hawaii to confer with Nimitz on 16 December. The British Pacific Fleet consisted of 4 fleet carriers, 2 battleships, 5 cruisers, and 15 destroyers, plus various support vessels. Nimitz was concerned, however, about the British inability to operate for extended periods far from supply facilities. See Potter, *Nimitz*, 348.



[Oahu] Tuesday afternoon,

12 Dec 44.

Darling Mine—

The day is simply not long enough these times to do all the things I have to do and still get a bit of exercise—so it usually ends in me not getting a proper work out. Last night I left my desk just in time to reach the quarters before George Bauernschmidt arrived—and we had an enjoyable dinner. George enjoyed Admiral Richardson who is always an interesting talker. I was so sleepy by ten pm—I could hardly be polite. I played some cribbage with J. O. R. at which he won \$120 from me—much to his delight. He is scheduled to leave this late afternoon. I say “scheduled”—because the weather between here & the Coast is not too good and he may again delay. My next important guest—a civilian high in the highest circles at Wash. was due tonight but delayed until tomorrow. The papers announce the passage of the 5 star bill & its being sent to the White House for signature. Also, a dispatch from R. E. Byrd¹ to me—tells me the same thing. Why should he feel it necessary to do this? The papers also announce my plan to move to Guam—which is a matter we have been trying to keep reasonably quiet. Also—there is another would be writer of my life waiting outside—now—to come in for an interview. His name is Leif Erickson²—whose name I have seen before as a new writer. I wish they would find other things to do. No mail from you yet—but the afternoon is only half over—so there is still hope today. I am sending Helen Hess³ a small grass bag for Xmas & Lamar is enclosing with it a scarf. J. O. R. will take it east. More later. 5 pm—Mr Erickson, who, by the way, is a very nice looking young man—has come

and gone, and I have just handled the afternoon mail, & to my regret have found no letter from you. Better luck tomorrow—and in any case—I hope & pray you are well & happy—I imagine you are exceedingly busy—as I am also. I hardly have time to eat these days—and perhaps it would be better if I refrained from eating—because I weigh 188 pounds. I asked Mr. Erickson to refrain from trivialities if he felt he must write. The enclosed picture has just been handed to me. Do you recognize the gentleman? Try before you look at the name on the back— That was a happy and successful day for me when he did his stuff on Wallaston.⁴ I don't know whether he works in the Philadelphia Canteen,⁵ or whether he just happened to be standing there. Now—my Sweetheart I must see J O R to the plane— will try to write a longer letter tomorrow— I love & adore you Darling Mine—& miss you terribly. Keep Cheerful—for my arms are around you.

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, confidential advisor to the CNO. Byrd was a renowned arctic explorer and naval aviator who was recalled to active duty upon U.S. entry into World War II. He initially served as a consultant with the War Department advising on the development of cold-climate clothing for military personnel from June 1941 to March 1942. Subsequently, he undertook various missions to the European and Pacific Theaters during the war, including serving on a board tasked with inspecting advanced bases in the South Pacific Area. See Navy Office of Information, "Rear Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd, Jr., United States Navy, Deceased," 30 August 1963, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

² Wendell S. "Leif" Erickson, war correspondent with the Associated Press. Nimitz rejected numerous requests from authors for assistance in writing his biography during and after World War II.

³ Helen M. Hess, administrative assistant to the chief of naval personnel, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Department of the Navy. Hess had been in this position when Nimitz commanded the Bureau of Navigation (redesignated the Bureau of Naval Personnel in 1942) and remained there through the end of the war.

⁴ Wollaston, a neighborhood in Quincy, Massachusetts.

⁵ Probably the Philadelphia Stage Door Canteen, a wartime recreation center that provided free live entertainment for service members. Multiple canteens existed in major cities across the country. See Cathy K. Urwin, "The Original Stage Door Canteen," National WWII Museum, accessed 20 November 2023, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/original-stage-door-canteen>.



[Oahu] Wednesday afternoon,

13 Dec 44.

Best Beloved:—

For the moment I have no visitors—but only for the moment. Last night at ten pm—while reading dispatches, I received word that Donald Nelson¹ would arrive in twenty minutes—which was contrary to information received earlier in the day. By a mad scramble—Lamar got to the airport in time—only to find that the

plane was delayed until 11 pm. As it was a cool—clear starlit night we filled in the time by walking and in signing dozens of short snorter bills² for army files. Nelson finally arrived and I took him back to my quarters as my guest. He had made a lightning trip from Chunking³ where he had been the Friday before. He had with him several civilians among whom was Mr. [Arthur] Sulzberger,⁴ owner, or rather publisher of the *N.Y. Times*—and now in a high Red Cross capacity. I had room only for Donald Nelson & sent the others to the Moana Hotel. As Nelson was tired—he turned in at once—but from ten am today until noon he gave a select few of my associates a most interesting and valuable close up of the China situation. He is a most able man, and it is easy to see why he is in high places and in the confidence of the President. He had lunch with us & departed immediately thereafter for Washington—where he will be tomorrow night. We had some things of interest to tell him in return for his contributions to us. Your splendid letter of 8 Dec from Hollister⁵ arrived, as did also an envelope with Catherine's letter & the clippings. All was hugely enjoyed, and I almost rejoice you had such a stopover—because it gave you new people to talk to, and showed you a part of the country you might never have seen before. I enclose copies of the letters I wrote to Culner & White. Am so glad your trip came off so well & that your address was well received. There was never any doubt about the address. Thanks a million—Darling—for the pictures [James R.] Fife⁶ handed me this morning— I think they are splendid & I love them and the subject. Am glad Mary is so well and happy. Thanks also, Darling Mine for the congratulations on the Five Stars—but I must await official word before I can believe that this is so. The extra pay can go into Nancys education and it will give me great pleasure to think we can do this for her. Now Sweetheart mine—I must get back on to my papers & dispatches which have been banking up. There never seems to be enough time to rest or exercise these days—although I will try horseshoes for a few minutes with Calhoun before darkness arrives. My lips are on yours and my arms are around you. Ever your

Chester

¹ Donald Marr Nelson, chairman of the War Production Board (1942–1944), formerly the U.S. Office of Production Management.

² Before and during World War II, when air travel was still a relative novelty, it was common for aircrew and passengers to sign dollar bills called “short snorters” for one another to commemorate their trip. As individuals gathered more signatures, they would tape additional bills together. Military personnel especially valued the signatures of prominent leaders like Admiral Nimitz. See Mark D. Van Ells, “An Amazing Collection: American GIs and Their Souvenirs of World War II,” in *War and Memorials: The Second World War and Beyond*, ed. Frank Jacob and Kenneth Pearl (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2019), 116.

³ Chongqing, the provisional capital of Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist government in China during World War II.

⁴ Arthur Hays Sulzberger, publisher of the *New York Times* from 1935 to 1961.

⁵ A city in San Benito County, California.

⁶ Rear Admiral James R. Fife Jr., planner on the staff of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, COMINCH. Fife served as chief of staff to the Commander, Submarines, Asiatic Fleet, from December 1941 to July 1942. He subsequently commanded Submarine Squadron 2 until December 1942, when he became Commander, Task Force 42. From March to November 1944, Fife served as assistant planner on the staff of COMINCH. His final wartime assignment was as Commander, Submarines, Southwest Pacific. Fife later served as Deputy CNO from August 1951 to March 1953. Fife was advanced to the rank of admiral upon his retirement in August 1955. See Navy Biographies Branch, "Admiral James Fife, Jr., U.S. Navy, Retired," 14 November 1957, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.



[Oahu] Thursday noon,

14 Dec 44.

Darling Mine:

I have just received your letter of Dec 9 and am surprised to hear that the last letter you had from me was dated Dec 1 and received Dec 6. I cannot account for this lapse in mail service unless, due to bad weather which is prevalent this time of year, the mail was removed from planes & sent on ships. Fife and [Charles] Lockwood¹ are lunching with me in a very few minutes, and I will repeat to him your congratulations on his promotion—in case Smith failed to do so. Fife departs tomorrow—headed for his new billet—in which I believe he will do better than [Ralph] Christie.² Best Beloved if I am given Admiral of the Fleet Rank—please be assured that you will be the only woman who will share that rank with me—and who will have the rank emblem or marker—whatever form it takes. And I shall see that you get this device (whatever it turns out to be) as early as I can get it made. Also [redacted]. I am sorry you found your office in such a mess and confused state. I still believe your only solution is to get a competent—commissioned Wave who has intelligence as a permanent assistant. Here are my guests—Fife & Lockwood—more later. 4pm

Now that news has leaked out about my advanced H.Q. in Guam, I will make an official release of it by the time you get this letter—also about Donald Nelson's visit, which—though short—was tremendously important. The war is beginning to move again as you will be reading in the papers and hearing on the radio—before this reaches you. I hope and pray that our losses will keep low. Last night it was so cool that I used both the yellow blankets you gave me & the lap robe from the AWVS³ [American Women's Voluntary Services] which I brought back. There is a very high wind blowing straight from the NE—& bringing down lots of cold air. I unwrapped the brown paper from the packages you gave me for Christmas—but will refrain from opening my individual gifts until the 25th. I can see that among other nice things from my Best Bel—I have an album of records. Thanks a million—[redacted] Also thanks to Freckles & Vicky for their packages. I will write Mary & Catherine and Nancy and thank them for their Christmas thoughts. I wish

I could have helped you with the Christmas shopping for the Family, but that must be postponed until I am ordered ashore—and then I will really help. I have fancy razor straps & a gadget for strapping Gillette blades for each of my messmates, McM & Anderson. This afternoon at 530 I am to appear at the home of the Catholic Bishop of Honolulu—Rev. Sweeny—to be invested with the honorary degree of LLD from Fordham University of N.Y. I believe [there are] only a few Catholic Admirals—including Sandy Short—[John] Gaffney⁴—they are to be witnesses. Where will you put all these hoods? Incidentally—I will wear a borrowed hood today and the real one will be sent to 2914 Forest Ave—where you can save space by packing all in the same box. It was just like Eller to leave a nice book for you. I have that same book autographed by Mrs. Freer. [redacted]. I share with you the pleasant thought that Junior Lay⁵ might become another son—and I hope he will not be kept out west too long before he has a breathing spell. I am about to have an interesting caller, Mr. Walter White, Secretary of the Society for the Advancement of the Colored Race.⁶ As I do not know how long he will be here—I will close this letter now—in the hope it will leave in this evenings plane. Bye bye until tomorrow—[redacted]. Keep Cheerful & well & do not over work at the Hospital. [redacted] I liked the clipping about Pearl Harbor and think the writer has the best answer of all—as to responsibility.

¹ Vice Admiral Charles A. Lockwood, Commander, Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet. Lockwood arrived in Hawaii on 14 February 1943 to assume command of the Pacific Submarine Force after Rear Admiral Robert H. English was killed in a plane crash on 21 January 1943. Much of the Submarine Force's success during World War II can be attributed to Lockwood's leadership and his persistence in resolving design defects with U.S. torpedoes. Lockwood and Nimitz also became close friends during the war and are buried beside one another in Golden Gate Cemetery in San Bruno, California. See Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 210–12, 409–10.

² Rear Admiral Ralph Waldo Christie. Fife replaced Christie as Commander, Submarines, Southwest Pacific, in December 1944.

³ The American Women's Voluntary Services (AWVS) was an all-volunteer organization established to provide material aid and assistance to the U.S. armed forces during World War II. Alice Throckmorton McLean founded the organization in 1940 after visiting England and observing the work of the Women's Voluntary Services in supporting that nation's war effort. Despite American neutrality, the organization counted 18,000 members by December 1941. By the end of the war, the AWVS had more than 325,000 women in its ranks. It sold more than \$1 billion worth of war bonds and stamps during the war and trained its members as ambulance drivers, automobile mechanics, switchboard operators, fire watchers, and disaster aid workers in addition to a number of other specialties. See *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Alice Throckmorton McLean," accessed 21 October 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alice-Throckmorton-McLean>.

⁴ Rear Admiral John Jerome Gaffney, supply officer of the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard and district supply officer, 14th Naval District.

⁵ Commander James T. "Junior" Lay. Lay began corresponding with Nimitz's oldest daughter, Catherine, after they met in 1934. He served aboard the heavy cruiser *Louisville* (CA-28) and on the staff of Amphibious Group 3 during World War II. Lay proposed to Catherine Nimitz in early 1945, and the couple married on 9 March 1945.

⁶ Walter Francis White, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from 1931 to 1955.



[Oahu] Friday afternoon,

15 Dec 44.

Best Beloved—

Your letters of 10 and 11 December have just arrived and have been greatly enjoyed—as also have been the many enclosures, pictures, Catherine’s letter, the [Esson] Gale’s¹ letter etc. Darling— You are the one who must take care not to over do in your work at the hospital which now—sounds quite hectic to me. My cold is practically gone and if the rainy weather leaves us, will disappear completely in a short time. Commander [Robert] Bourne,² USNR, of my staff is leaving in a very short time for the Coast and will take with him three parcels—which I am asking Captain Boone³ to deliver to you—. He will also take this letter if I can get it finished in time and with no interruptions. One parcel—the box—contains your old traveling clock—refurbished and keeping excellent time and with luminous dial. (Write me if it arrives in good order). The box also contains the little wooden “Makalapa” which I want you to have—as I have the real Makalapa here.⁴ The envelope contains the usual lot of trivial letters (with some good ones) and some Xmas cards for Mary. The mailing tube contains my 4 star commission—“for temporary duty”—and my diploma and citations for the LLD from Fordham. The citation was the personal work of President [Robert] Gannon⁵ of Fordham and I like it. The ribbon in the tube came from the diploma—and it is for Mary. I now expect to be away from my HQ from the 21st to the 29th and if all goes well—will have my Christmas with Halsey—in the midst of the far western ocean.⁶ I will open my packages here on 20 Dec—the last day of Admiral Fraser’s (RN) visit. He comes with a party of 11 and as the Congressional party returns on 19th—& will overlap—you can imagine how crowded we will be. My thoughts will be with you constantly and I will be with you in spirit always. Do not worry about my trip. It is necessary and I will be in the Safest of hands. Here is Bourne—so I must get this ready for him. Will write a better letter tomorrow. All my hearts devotion is yours Darling—[redacted] Keep well & happy [redacted] Ever your own

Chester

P.S. The newspaper will tell you about the various things—advanced headquarters (which I will look over to note progress), Admiral Fraser’s visit—Admiral of Fleet appointment (which you fully share with me) Congressional visitors—Donald Nelson’s visit—and last but not least—the WAR—which is going well.

¹ Esson M. Gale, PhD, professor of political science at the University of Michigan. Gale, an expert on China, was formerly chairman of the Department of Far Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, from 1928 to 1932, during which time Nimitz established the NROTC program there. See "Esson M. Gale, 79, Expert on Far East," *New York Times*, 16 May 1964.

² Commander Robert C. Bourne, USNR.

³ Possibly Commodore Walter F. Boone, commander of naval air bases in the 12th Naval District and Commander, Naval Air Station Alameda, California.

⁴ Nimitz's dark-brown pet schnauzer Makalapa, often called "Mak." The dog had a generally unpleasant disposition toward everyone except Nimitz. Makalapa was named after the area where Nimitz had his headquarters overlooking Pearl Harbor.

⁵ Reverend Robert Ignatius Gannon, president of Fordham University from 1936 to 1949.

⁶ For Nimitz's account of his visit with Halsey over Christmas 1944, see Nimitz to Catherine, 24 December 1944, p. 87.



Nimitz poses with his dog Makalapa, "Mak," circa 1944. (NHHC, NH 62950)



[Oahu] 4 pm Saturday—

16 Dec 44.

Darling Mine—

This very busy week is about to end in a climax of activity. The British are coming—twelve strong—and are due at 8 pm—so we must wait that long for our dinner. All plans for their reception are complete—even to having the local Waves care for the two WRENS¹ [Women's Royal Naval Service] with the party. I understand Fraser is a bachelor, which may account for the Wrens. The party includes two stewards or valets and 8000 lbs of baggage. This sounds like a long visit—but it must end on the evening of the 19th—as Sherman & I will depart early on the 20th to visit the Pacific Fleet—or at least the major parts of it. We confer three days—17, 18 and 19 Dec and that ought to be long enough. I will have Fraser as my guest and will give a luncheon tomorrow for him—as per enclosed guest list. Will use larger place cards with small photographs of naval action scenes posted on them. Have placed a sample card in the next envelope of Miscellany which will be forwarded to you when it is full. Captain [Charles] Wheeler²—the U.S. Naval liaison officer attached to Frasers—staff—preceded him here—& will give a cocktail—supper party for Fraser in Moanalua Gardens at the home of Lt Comdr Sam Damon³—USNR. The five royal naval officers on my staff will give Fraser a stag KT party at their quarters one evening of the stay. So far as I am concerned—it is strictly business and I will make them work all day, each day. I look forward with pleasure to their visit and anticipate no difficulties. The plan to house & entertain the Congressional party is also complete & they arrive before the British leave—so it will mean doubling up. There is absolutely no hotel space in town—except for an occasional individual. You should send Eller's note to my headquarters—as he is only away on temporary duty. This letter also contains our mid Dec check for \$19400 which you can use as you see fit. My next check at end of Dec—I will bank out here to keep my account bolstered up to a safe level. Have sent an autographed photo to Mr. C.T. Feng and in the slow mail in a separate envelope are three copies of my 7 Dec address—which I am glad you & the Scushenners like. Today I received a cheerful letter from Dora intimating that the business venture is at least not causing them worry—as she did not complain. Will put her letter in the Misc Envelope. I am awaiting a delegation which includes the Secretary for the Advancement of the Colored Race (Mr White— and he is a pure white man⁴—& a pleasant and clever one too) and the Captain of a naval auxiliary whose crew is made up of a large number of colored men—14% to be exact—and they serve in all branches—not only in messman branch. From what I hear—everything is going well which pleases me—as I believe this is the way we will have to solve the negro problem.⁵ Later. They have come and gone—and I was pleased to hear the C.O., Comdr [Francis] Kiley⁶— tell how well everything was going on board and how

little trouble there has been. This letter is now being repeatedly interrupted so I must bring it to a conclusion. Your nice letter of 12 Dec arrived this noon and was greatly enjoyed. I hope you have been able to straighten up the mess you found in your office and that you have competent help. Do not hesitate to write Randall Jacobs⁷—and tell him—that, in as much as your work is entirely for the morale of the naval personnel—you would appreciate his sending you a competent and intelligent Wave officer and a Wave-stenographer who can do things. If Nancy is really interested in the Eppley job in lab—I suggest she write him in my care and offer to try it now or when she has had a term at Columbia. At any rate—she can find out all about it by an exchange of letters. I am over my cold—but I believe I have some sinus infection as I got a discharge into my throat—which is irritating. Don't worry—if I can spend a bit more time in the sun, I can throw that off. In fact, I am alright. My party of Britishers is now due at 7²⁰ pm. Bye bye until tomorrow—Keep cheerful & happy—All my hearts devotion—hugs & kisses are yours—

Ever your

Chester

Tell me if the old travelling clock is keeping good time?

¹ The Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS), the name given to women serving in the United Kingdom's Royal Navy. Popularly known as the "Wrens."

² Captain Charles J. Wheeler, naval liaison officer with the British Pacific Fleet (October 1944–September 1945). Wheeler oversaw the outfitting of the cruiser *Mobile* (CL-63) and assumed command of that vessel upon its commissioning on 24 March 1943. *Mobile* participated in the bombardment of Wake Island and the invasion of Tarawa Atoll in the Gilbert Islands. Subsequently, the cruiser escorted the carrier task force that struck Kwajalein and Wotje in the Marshall Islands in December 1943 and returned to the islands in January as part of the invasion force. See Navy Biographies Branch, "Rear Admiral Charles Julian Wheeler, United States Navy, Retired," 21 October 1949, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHHC.

³ Lieutenant Commander Samuel R. Damon, USNR.

⁴ Walter White, secretary of the NAACP, identified as a Black man despite Nimitz's remarks about the lightness of White's complexion. White wrote an account of meeting Nimitz in his autobiography in which he claimed that Nimitz defended his stance on advocating for segregation in the peacetime Navy but supported more integration aboard ships during the war. See Walter White, *A Man Called White: The Autobiography of Walter White* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 272–73.

⁵ African Americans have a long tradition of service in the U.S. Navy, and approximately one-quarter of the U.S. Navy's enlisted force during the Civil War was Black. The Navy was essentially an integrated force throughout the nineteenth century, although no Black men were allowed to become officers. As the Navy transitioned to steel ships, it began recruiting men with no background in naval service to crew the fleet. As a result, the Navy increasingly restricted the jobs available to African Americans until 1932, when barely one-half of 1 percent of Navy personnel were Black. In 1933, the Navy began recruiting African Americans to serve as messmen but did not allow Black sailors to serve in other ratings, thereby barring them from promotion to the rank of petty officer. In the face of public pressure, President Franklin Roosevelt urged Secretary Knox to provide greater opportunities for Black sailors. The Navy finally began allowing African Americans to enlist in general-service ratings on 1 June 1942. When personnel shortfalls compelled the Navy to accept draftees in February 1943, the sea service had no choice but to enlist Black sailors, which increased their demographic to approximately 10 percent of all sailors. The Navy responded by assigning most of these men to stevedore, ammunition-handling, construction, and maintenance companies. This segregation mirrored policies in other branches of the military, and American

society as a whole, where African Americans could not go to school, eat, or even sit near white Americans in many places. Aboard Navy warships, African American sailors serving as stewards shared equally in the dangers of combat and were frequently assigned to gun crews as their battle stations. Gradually, the Navy assigned more African Americans in general ratings to the crews of combat vessels, and two ships were manned by almost entirely Black crews, the destroyer escort *Mason* (DE-529) and the submarine chaser *PC-1264*. The Navy finally commissioned the first 13 African American naval officers in March 1944. See Paul Stillwell, ed., *The Golden Thirteen: Recollections of the First Black Naval Officers* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1993), xv–xxiv; and Dan C. Goldberg, *The Golden Thirteen: How Black Men Won the Right to Wear Navy Gold* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2020). For Nimitz's views on race, see Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 235.

⁶ Commander Francis M. Kiley, USNR, commanding officer of the cargo ship *Spica* (AK-16). *Spica* made four round-trip voyages from the West Coast to Hawaii between January 1944 and March 1945.

⁷ Vice Admiral Randall Jacobs, chief of naval personnel from December 1941 to September 1945.



Nimitz with Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, RN, Commander, British Pacific Fleet. (NHHC, NH 58519)



[Oahu] 11 pm Sunday night

17 Dec 44

Darling Mine—

This has been a very long and busy day—but also a very satisfactory one. Busy as a bird dog all forenoon on my routine affairs—and all afternoon in conference with Admiral Fraser and some of his group—everything clicked smoothly and amicably. We will have two more days like it and then on the 20th—both teams rest

and on the 21st we all depart on our various missions. Fraser back to Ceylon¹—& I (with Sherman & Lamar to see Halsey & D. M. [Douglas MacArthur]² & then Halsey again—with my return here by the 29th or 30th. Christmas with Halsey. Am taking him a Christmas tree from Puget Sound & some wreaths that came from the same place and some tree ornaments. We knocked off our work at 5:30 pm & went to the quarters of the 5 British officers on my staff where we had cocktails & then back to my quarters where we had a good dinner with Brahms #3, Smetana—*Moldau*³ and “*Peter & the Wolf*”⁴—Fraser enjoyed the music as much as I did. Then the usual walk—ending up at my HQ for dispatches & now here. I know I am going to get along splendidly with the British Pacific Fleet, and I can see he is tremendously impressed by the ability and industry of my staff. No exercise today & no prospect of any until the end of the month—but I am getting rid of my cold—or rather sinus—which is what brought on my sore throat. Your letter of the 13th was a godsend & I loved it and the letters from Mary—Catherine & Nancy—and particularly Nancy’s sketch which Fraser also enjoyed. My luncheon today for the 41 people was good & as it has been a cool & sunshiny day—everything looked fine to the British visitors—as it should. Am glad you have a better Wave, but if she does not pan out—try another. I learned today the Congressional party returns on 19th. Your days at the Hospital are as busy as mine & without the efficient help I enjoy. I wish you had better help. Am sorry to hear about the Bond situation in S.F. & California generally [redacted]—I’ll tell you now what I want for my birthday—make it one dozen pairs of the elastic top ankle sox in tan color—such as you got from Brooks Brothers but make them size 12 instead of 11 1/2. The latter size will do if you cant get 12—but they shrink so much. I enjoyed the Hollister—paper describing your visit there & will save it for you. Now Precious Mine—I will close & get some sleep preparatory to another long day tomorrow. I am with you in spirit my arms are around you and my lips on yours—Keep Cheerful

Ever your devoted

Chester

I have plenty of coffee when you need another can.

¹ Modern-day Sri Lanka.

² General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area.

³ The second of six symphonic poems known collectively as *Má vlast* (My fatherland) by nineteenth-century Czech composer Bedřich Smetana. In Czech, this work is titled *Vltava* after the longest river in the Czech Republic. In English, it is known by its German name, *The Moldau*.

⁴ A symphonic suite for orchestra and narrator composed by Sergei Sergeyevich Prokofiev for the Moscow Children’s Theater, where it premiered on 2 May 1936.



[Oahu] 12:30 am. Tuesday

19 Dec 44

Darling Mine:—

This is quite the longest day I've had in many months—and I am almost too weary to write a coherent letter. My conferences with the visitors have posed a lot of questions which have taken time, and my routine work could not be neglected. You can rejoice with me in the enclosed dispatch and can take equal pride and share in the work done by the two of us—you and I—over the years—to bring about this result. You will note that I am to be a “Fleet Admiral”—and not an “Admiral of the Fleet”—& that further information will follow. Late today I received a dispatch from the British Admiralty telling me that “the British Chiefs of Staff send me their warmest congratulations on my promotion to Fleet Admiral & best wishes for the future.” I am already getting many letters and Xmas cards from both acquaintances and strangers containing Congratulations—so I suppose my friends Lamar and Adams¹ will be hardworked to answer all these well wishers. I am sending you and Mary at the first opportunity a box of assorted stuffed fruits sent to me by the Liberty Fig and Date Co. of Chicago—It is one of three such boxes sent so you can enjoy the confections in the knowledge that my messmates and I are enjoying the same kind. If they are as good as some I received a few weeks ago—I know you & Mary will enjoy them. At 530 pm, I introduced Fraser to the horseshoe game. When he & I teamed up to play Calhoun & Anderson we were beaten but the British Admiral enjoyed it. He did well inspite of its being his first experience. Furlong came along to invite the British party to a basket ball game—which was accepted. Furlong stayed for dinner and then took the party away—which gave me a chance to return to my office for three hours work. The Congressmen return at 3pm today for a three day stay. No mail from you today. Now my Darling Nights night & sweet Dreams—all my love & devotion is yours always—Ever your Chester

¹ Possibly Chief Yeoman Gerald Cully Adams, who served on Nimitz's staff from 1942 to 1946.



[Oahu] 11 pm Tuesday—

19 Dec 44

Darling:

I feel that I am getting to bed fairly early tonight compared with last night—when it was long after midnight. I brought my guest—Admiral Fraser, back from Wheeler's supper party at 10 pm—along with Lamar and Lt [Vernon] Merry¹—Fraser's aide—reaching my quarters about 10~~15~~ pm. I then went to my HQ to read dispatches and then came back for a chat with Fraser before we turned in. Our conferences are finished—but F [Fraser] wants to stay until late on the 21st—which is alright with me—but McM & Anderson must look out for him on the 21st as I will depart early that morning. The Congressional party returned this afternoon & Mr Heffernan is again in my house. The Congressmen have had a long hard journey and were glad to be left alone tonight so they could get rested. Tomorrow all the party will lunch with me & my regular luncheon group. Fraser will lunch with Lockwood. I was delighted to receive your letter of the 15th today—but sorry to see you are working so hard and such long hours at the hospital. I am pleased to know you will make a transcription for release in Australia on Christmas Eve. I may possibly hear that broadcast from a tiny island in the far Western Pacific if it is that waved. I executed my acceptance of my new rank of "Fleet Admiral"—today and my name goes on the books for pay purposes this date. Although I do not yet know the details—I think my increase will be 2800—per year—all of which will be sent to you. I will look into the allotment problem although I hate to change mine now because so many mistakes are being made. However it comes, you can plan on receiving all of it. Gunther left this pm for the Coast taking with him a box of candied fruit for you & Mary from me—& a tin of coffee for the girls in Washington. Now, Best Beloved I will turn in. Nights night—I pray that you keep well & happy

Ever Your devoted

Chester

I received a lovely Xmas card from the Dominican Convent today.

¹ Lieutenant Vernon Merry, RN, flag lieutenant to Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, commander in chief of the British Pacific Fleet.



[Oahu] Wednesday

20 Dec 44

Best Beloved:

A Merry Christmas to you and to Mary! This is my Christmas letter to you both, and it is my Christmas Day out in the Pacific, as I will be far to the westward on the 25th. So, this morning I opened my gift packages from you, and to say I am tremendously pleased, is putting it mildly. I love the Beethoven Concerto in D minor¹ and look forward to playing it over and over again. I can hardly wait for the day to end so I can put it on the machine. Thanks a million—My Sweetheart! I also loved Mary's beautiful calendar and the sox—which came at the right time—as my tan sox have almost gone. In a previous letter I indicated what I would like for my birthday—some more tan sox—size 12. That still holds—the size 11 1/2 is satisfactory until near the end when the sox begin to shrink. However—by that time they are nearly worn out anyway. I do not need any more black or white sox—until many months have passed—as I will wear them seldom when I move forward next month. The nail clippers were just what I wanted & could not get out here. Thanks Darling Also thank Freckles & Vicky for the fragrant soap which will remind me of the pine forests. Catherine's & Nancy's gift was the Offenbach—"Gaité Parisienne"² music which I remember with much pleasure. The Congressional Committee will lunch with me in about thirty minutes. They attended my morning conference and following that—each member addressed the conference for a few minutes & gave his impressions—Congresswoman Smith—also. I told her it was now her privilege and duty to broadcast to the women of America her impressions (highly favorable) of the way their sons and daughters are being cared for out in the Pacific. I hope you can meet her when she reaches the Coast. If she comes to Oak Knoll—please try to meet her & the other Committee members. Ernest Gunther did not get away yesterday on account of engine trouble—but plans to leave this evening—so I plan to have him take along a can of coffee for you. I know you have enough for the present—but when I leave here it will be difficult for me to send coffee—so you can store it now Darling Mine & Darling Mary—Bye bye until I can again write. This will be the last letter until I head East again & there will be a 10 day gap—All my hearts devotion—love & kisses—are yours—Ever your

Chester

¹ A concerto for violin and orchestra by renowned German composer Ludwig van Beethoven that premiered in Vienna on 23 December 1806.

² *Gaité Parisienne*, a 1938 ballet choreographed by Léonide Massine to music by nineteenth-century German-born French composer Jacques Offenbach.



[Guam] 11 30 pm Sunday—East time—

24 Dec 44.

Best Beloved:—

I joined Halsey at 2pm today and have been going steadily ever since. So I am quite ready for bed. I saw many friends—including Mercer, [Oliver O.] Kessing¹ and many others—and tomorrow at luncheon Halsey will ask all the flag officers over so—I will have a chance to see and talk to all of them. We did take an hour off this afternoon to go to one of the islands in the atoll for a swim. I looked for shells but found only coarse sharp coral. I spotted what I thought was a turtle egg—only to find it was a ping pong ball that had drifted to the shore. When we landed yesterday at my advanced HQ island I found a mail going out at once—which accounts for my abrupt rush to get your letter mailed. We jeeped² from 1 pm to 6 pm—and saw many things of interest. I was tremendously surprised and pleased to find so much development work since my last visit there last August. Had a fine rest in the house of the Island Governor³ & up early this morning to do more jeeping until 12 noon—during which time I inspected my new HQ.—which will soon be ready for occupancy—in fact we are already sending advance parties to make things ready for us. My quarters will be very nice & will have a magnificent view over the harbor and ocean from a height of several hundred feet. It will be much warmer & rainier but it will be much closer to the war—and will give me increased opportunities to visit the various forces. I had an enjoyable dinner with Halsey & his staff—some 30 at the table—and they are all in high spirits which they have every right to be. They have been going steadily for four months but show no signs of weariness. I will be here all day tomorrow & will then continue my journey—on the 26th—returning here on the 28th. I will have lots to talk about with you when I next see you—which I hope will be in January before I go to my new HQ. I miss you Darling & hope & pray that yours and Mary's Christmas will be a happy one inspite of our wide separation. The war in Europe does not look like it will end early but we never know—Perhaps the recent reverse suffered there will move our people at home into buying War Bonds.⁴ Good night, my sweetheart & God keep you safe—you & Mary—All my hearts devotion is ever yours

Chester

¹ Commodore Oliver O. "Scrappy" Kessing, commander of the U.S. Navy base at Ulithi Atoll. Kessing served for a time as Nimitz's executive officer when Nimitz commanded the heavy cruiser *Augusta*.

² Slang term indicating that Nimitz travelled around the island in a small four-wheel-drive U.S. military vehicle known as a jeep.

³ Lieutenant General Henry Louis Larsen, USMC, military governor of Guam (August 1944–May 1946).

⁴ Nimitz is likely referring to the counteroffensive that the German Army launched against U.S. forces in Belgium on 16 December 1944. The ensuing Battle of the Bulge was among the costliest battles in U.S. Army

history. More than 75,000 American soldiers had been killed, wounded, or captured when the attack ended. See Peter Caddick-Adams, *Snow & Steel: The Battle of the Bulge, 1944–45* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 635.



[near Ulithi Atoll] Early Tuesday—

26 Dec 44

Best Beloved:

This is your Christmas Day, and I hope it has been a happy one for you and Mary. You are constantly in my thoughts—[redacted] I am still with Halsey but expect to depart in a very few minutes on another journey that will end in mid-afternoon when I will join D. M. for a couple of days visit. Yesterday was a very long and full day & inspecting various atoll activities—principally recreation facilities for our officers & men. At noon—every flag officer present came on board for a buffet lunch and I had a chance to see them all and talk with them. All look in fine health & spirits. Many asked about you and sent their regards. In the afternoon—I conferred until 4pm when Halsey & I & Lamar went ashore for a swim. We used Kessing's house ashore to dress & undress. The water was pleasantly warm but the beach was very bad—full of sharp coral and sharp gravel. Also the current was so strong as to be dangerous to any but strong swimmers. I saw literally thousands of young men—officers & sailors ashore at the Recreation Island. They had been cooped up aboard hot ships for weeks and some for months without setting forth ashore. Santa Claus—, looking very hot in his suit & beard—met us at the landing—& welcomed us to the All day Christmas party just beginning. The Island¹ was very attractive (for one day) and covered with coconut palm trees for shade. All natives had been removed to a distant island. Kessing, who has charge of this development & is atoll Commander, told me that when “the Fleets in”—as many as 15000 men are on shore at one time—and that since the place was established, no less than 300000 had visited the place—some of these were, of course, repeaters. Now My Darling—I must get ready to leave. Keep well & cheerful—I love you more than words can tell—& hope it may be possible for you [redacted] January. All my hearts devotion is yours [redacted]

Chester

¹ Mogmog Island, Ulithi Atoll. The U.S. Navy created large recreation facilities on the island for sailors.



[Leyte] 27 Dec 44 (Your 26th)

Darling Mine:

Am now at the Western end of my long journey having arrived here at 2 pm yesterday. Was met by [Thomas] Kinkaid¹ & D. M. and greeted most cordially. Spent afternoon in conferences. After a 6 pm dinner—or rather while we were still at table a small air raid developed—which was promptly driven off with no reported damage. This morning at 9—the various flag officers in the area are coming to call— At 10—I will call on President [Sergio] Osmeña²—and this afternoon D M [Douglas MacArthur] is going to take me for a short drive around the immediate vicinity. The night was full of noise. I thought about the time we spent a night at Norlina—at the junction of two railroads. That is the way the trucks roared by my windows last night. Also—the town seems to be full of cocks crowing at all hours. However—I got plenty of sleep and am ready for the days work. Will spend the night here and start the long return journey tomorrow morning. More later. 28th—6pm—Just rejoined Halsey after an uneventful trip back thus far— Yesterday—more conferences—a call on Pres. Osmeña—and in the afternoon a long (in time) drive thru pouring rain & deep mud to see various Army officers I wanted to see. Also saw [James] Kauffman.³ Then dinner and early turn in. It rained all night, so much so that my heart bled for the poor troops out in the mud in tents with no floors. I shall have lots to tell you when I see you next—about my trip. Saw Kinkaid & [Arthur] Struble⁴—& [Frank] Wagner⁵ (another flag officer). I have just bathed and put on my last clean clothes—but am having laundry done in time for me to leave after breakfast. I hope and pray that all goes well with you & Mary. I enclose a new Filipino peso for each of you—These bills are actually worth \$.50 each in our money. Keep well & cheerful—[redacted]

¹ Vice Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, Commander, U.S. Seventh Fleet (November 1943–November 1945). Kinkaid assumed command of Cruiser Division 6 after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and was subsequently cruiser division task force commander of Task Force 11 in the Battle of the Coral Sea. Kinkaid led Cruiser Group 16.2 in the Battle of Midway as part of Task Force 16 under Rear Admiral Raymond Spruance and then commanded Task Force 61 in the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands. He became Commander, North Pacific Fleet, in January 1943 and remained in that posting until the conclusion of the Aleutians campaign. In November 1943, Kinkaid was designated Commander, U.S. Seventh Fleet. He was promoted to the rank of admiral on 3 April 1945. For a biography of Kinkaid, see Gerald E. Wheeler, *Kinkaid of the Seventh Fleet: A Biography of Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid, U.S. Navy* (Washington, DC: Naval Historical Center, 1995).

² Sergio Osmeña Sr., president of the Philippines from 1 August 1944 to 28 May 1946. He ascended to this office from the vice presidency upon the death of President Manuel L. Quezon.

³ Vice Admiral James L. Kauffman, Commander, Philippine Sea Frontier, with headquarters in Leyte Gulf (November 1944–August 1945). Kauffman was awarded the Navy Cross for his service in command of the destroyer *Jenkins* (Destroyer No. 42) during World War I. From February to December 1943, Kauffman served as the senior member of the Allied Anti-Submarine Board. In January 1944, he became Commander, Destroyers, Pacific Fleet, and Commander, Cruisers, Pacific Fleet, posts that he held until October 1944. See also Navy Biographies Branch, "Vice Admiral James Lawrence Kauffman, United States Navy, Retired," 1 May 1949, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

⁴ Rear Admiral Arthur Dewey Struble, Commander, Amphibious Group 9, VII Amphibious Force.

⁵ Rear Admiral Frank D. Wagner, Commander, Aircraft, Seventh Fleet.



[near Kwajalein] 30 Dec 44 (Your 29 Dec)

4 pm

[redacted]

We are now well along on our return journey—and should be back at my HQ in Pearl [Harbor] by noon tomorrow. In just an hour we should land in Kwajalein where we will pause for 1 1/2 hours for gas and dinner with the Comdr of the Marshalls—Gilberts area, Rear Admiral [Harold] Sallada.¹ We got underway at 6 this morning in a beautiful, clear moonlight sky—and have had a very smooth journey. I passed the time reading reports—and in between time—“Mrs. Miniver”—a delightfully written book—a series of articles by Jan Struther.² If you have not read it—please do so—because it will please you—I am sure. As good as the play was—the book is better. Spent the night at Saipan on a ship—after an afternoon of jeep riding over the island. Like Guam, the development so far is amazing—and pleasing. Although it was bright moonlight with a full moon & perfect flying weather—the Japs did not raid the place—although they had done so on 25 & 26 DEC—East long. dates. The war news from Europe looks more encouraging—and I hope the Germans have been stopped. Perhaps that set back will make us all more determined to finish the war properly. Am afraid our losses in men & materiel were heavy. Am also afraid it will mean a reduction of shipping into the Pacific—where we need it so much. Our Pacific War goes on by halts and jerks but ever—forward. The other day I received the following radio from London “British Prime Minister to Admiral Nimitz x Your well deserved promotion to the rank of Fleet Admiral has given us all deep satisfaction. x Every Congratulation x.” During my absence—all such messages are promptly answered by McMorris who is familiar with my usual type of reply. It was nice of the old boy—to send me a message. I shall be swamped with mail when I return but—so far as letters from you are concerned—I will love them. Have been able to keep up pretty well on my dispatches during the trip so that much is up to date. More later. 8am Saturday West Longitude.

Good morning—My [redacted]:—Yesterday instead of having dinner ashore with Sallada—we took a quick walk around his island while our plane gassed—& then took off again. Our pilot—Lt Comdr Pearson (in the *Blue Goose*)³ was anxious to get away before dusk on acct of our heavy gas load. We were quite willing to go also. Do you remember the gun smith— Mr. Davis—at Hinckley, Ill.? Well his son—now a Lieut—Comdr. Is in charge of the NATS (Naval Air Transport Ser-

vice) in the Kwajelein Atoll & He introduced himself although I remembered him well. His father died 2 yrs ago. His mother still lives in Hinkley in same house—although she spent last winter with the son & his family in Berkeley—where Lt. Comdr Davis still lives & where he plans to make his permanent home & where he will move & exhibit that wonderful gun collection. Now for some breakfast & then shortly after—land in Pearl—where I shall have letters from you awaiting me. I forsee a busy week end—& particularly so if S. S. Robison⁴ is there—although I have arranged with Furlong to take him at such times as I am too busy. Am tired of plane riding and need to exercise—Bye bye [redacted] until tomorrow—keep cheerfull & well & don't work too hard—I have given interviews at Guam—& Saipan—so you could keep track of part of my movements. How I wish I could land in Berkeley this morning— All [redacted]

Chester

¹ Rear Admiral Harold B. Sallada, Commander, Carrier Division 6.

² Jan Struther, pen name of Joyce Anstruther, author of the 1939 novel *Mrs. Miniver* about an English housewife's experiences during World War II. The character was widely credited with inspiring sympathy for Great Britain in the United States. The film adaptation of *Mrs. Miniver* was released to wide acclaim in the United States in 1942 and won six Academy Awards, including one for outstanding motion picture.

³ *Blue Goose* was the name given to one of Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz's flag planes, a Consolidated PB2Y Coronado.

⁴ Probably Rear Admiral Samuel Shelburne Robison (retired). Nimitz served as Robison's chief of staff while the latter was Commander in Chief, U.S. Battle Fleet, from June 1923 until June 1925. Robison served as superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy from June 1928 until his retirement in June 1931. Robison died in Glendale, California, on 20 November 1952. See also Navy Biographies Branch, "Admiral Samuel S. Robison, United States Navy, Deceased," 25 April 1957, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.



[Oahu] Sunday—(Trying to get back to normal routine)

31 Dec 44.

Best Beloved:—

We landed safely at 1030 yesterday—and at 1130, after a bath—shave and clean clothes, I was back at my desk where I stayed until 430 pm. What a harvest of wonderful letters from you were waiting for me! Yours of 16, 18, 19, (2 of 19th), 20, 21, 22, 25, 26 & 27 Dec with the five enclosed letters from our daughters & Joan. Also two letters from Mary. All of these I read with the keenest pleasure—and above all I enjoyed your perfectly splendid broadcast addresses—which show the hardwork you put into them & which cannot be beat by any professional writers. No wonder your services are in demand when you turn out such splendid work. I am immensely proud of you and have had your addresses copied & will enclose several copies in the next "miscellaneous" envelope. You sound terrifically busy—too busy—for any

one person to be. I also keep very busy but I have a tremendous force of assistants to help me, while you have practically no help. I am sure your efforts for the servicemen and for the visiting friends of Mary were greatly appreciated, and I am also sure Mary had a wonderful Christmas. I am so happy that we got her a good viola and that her teacher thinks so well of her prospects in music. I have met Mrs. Montague Cooke¹ but do not know her at all well—but now—I will have a conversational topic—Mr. Jacobinoff²—if I ever see her again. I hope the several letters I wrote you during my trip—reach you in good time. I am very aware how unsatisfactory those letters are—but there is so much that cannot be said—that when I mail letters from places other than my own HQ—they are necessarily lacking in news. There will be so much to talk about when I can be with you again. I have not broached the subject with E.J.K.³ [Ernest J. King] but will do so in a day or so—& will suggest a conference, either before I leave here—(about 25 Jan is present guess) or shortly after I get settled in my advanced HQ. I am so happy for Catherine & I join in the hope that Junior will soon be back in Washington—although it seems to me the only way this can be brought about is for R. Ad. [George] Hussey⁴ Chief of Bureau of Ordnance, to get him detached. It looks as if his present Boss—[Theodore] Wilkinson⁵—will be very much occupied with real work for the next month or so.⁶ Elizabeth's⁷ letter indicates that our children—particularly Chester & Fran, had a marvelous time on the cape, and that Elizabeth herself got great pleasure out of the visits. Cheer up—My Precious—we will all be together—before too long—for our Christmas gatherings & then perhaps we will have more grandchildren to help make Christmas what it should be. I found an immense lot of personal mail, including numerous Xmas cards, congratulatory letters, etc which I must work over in the coming days. About 330 pm yesterday I received a message from Jacobs asking that I send McMorris to Washington for temporary duty because his wife was so critically ill that they, in Washington, thought McM should be at her bedside if he could be spared. I sent him along at once—& he took with him a tin of coffee for our daughters and a tin for Helen Hess—who sent me a 4 star belt buckle for Xmas. Am distressed over Mrs. McM's⁸ illness and hope she will pull through. [Ernest] Small's⁹ death—though not unexpected—was a distinct shock to all of us who knew him and his splendid qualities. Darling—the little nail file is just what I wanted & needed—Thank you! Am so glad you have a competent Wave and hope you can hold her. I enjoyed your descriptions of Xmas in the wards and the work you are doing. I will forward to you for delivery in a day or so—a photo for Dr Margaret Chung.¹⁰ What a fine character she must be! I love my gifts from you—& until the records must be packed, will enjoy them here. You may rest assured they will be even more enjoyed at my new H.Q. where there will be fewer distractions. McM. gave me an album of records which I have not yet had time to open, & the other members of my mess—also donated a book of records—not yet opened. In my next letter I will list the

various gifts that have come my way from people all over the U.S. including the President—who sent a handsome leather suit case—which is locked—& the key nowhere to be found. It is filled with something heavy—, liquor I suspect—& perhaps my old friend “Spuds” Murphey¹¹—a C.P.O. [chief petty officer] retired & a friend of the President—has it as he brought it out. At 5 pm yesterday I pushed away from my desk & with Lamar & Dr Anderson, went to Muliwai, where the Walkers had invited us for swimming, supper & breakfast. I had my first real exercise for days—walked—swam & looked for Jap fisherman balls but found none. We returned to my HQ at 9 am today refreshed and rested. Major Rice¹²—and Peter Faye¹³ (Sallie Faye’s uncle) were also there. The Walkers & Peter Faye are to have supper with me tonight—on their way back to town—as will also Capt Callaghan of the *Missouri* & Marion Eppley. I have 6 wild ducks—just received from Ad. [Hugo] Osterhaus¹⁴—which will be our entre. I just walked up to my quarters with Sherman—at lunch time—not to eat lunch—but to deliver your note to Ramirez—who was greatly pleased to hear from you. For breakfast this morning I ate scrambled eggs, smoked fish, toast & coffee which was enough for both breakfast and lunch. I now weigh 186 pounds and plan to diet back to 180 & At my new HQ—my establishment is at an elevation of 850 feet and there are many walking trails so I will easily keep my weight down. Also it is much hotter than Oahu & that will also help. I am sending to you by mail today a small package which contains two nice 5 star pins for you— Also a small bar with 4 stars on it—for Mary. The 4 star bar came from my chain tie clasp and the 5 star pins you will wear are the exact size of the 5 star device which replaced the 4 star bar on my tie clasp. The two 5—star pins are the only ones I will have made and are for you exclusively. I hope you will wear them constantly and take pride in the thought that without your help I would never have reached that eminence in the Navy. Calhoun’s expert C. B. [“Seabee”] made these for me. Calhoun gave me a nice purse or billfold, a tie clasp—and a 5 star belt buckle—all in bright duralumin plated ware. (Bill fold is leather). I hope and pray you are over your laryngitis. It is a miserable—wearing down ailment. While at my house just now—I opened the record album packages and find that Dr A. gave me Acts 3 & 4—*La Boheme*—by Puccini¹⁵—and that McM—had presented a part of *Aida* and Strauss’ *Don Juan*.¹⁶ What a lot of fine music we will have when you & I can finally have a house. I hope & pray that it will be soon & that it will be the Naval Observatory house.¹⁷ I am willing to finish my naval career in Wash. (after we defeat the Japs) because I want to devote my final years on the active list in holding on to our gains in the Pacific, and seeing that they are properly developed for use. How nice of you to take the young ensign to the symphony. And so glad you are doing these things for our young officers & for the men. I have just learned that the leather suit case I previously mentioned is from C. B. M. [Chief Boatswain’s Mate] P. L. (Spuds) Murphey—USN retired who was with me at the Sub

Base Pearl Harbor 1920–22 & who is now a most successful business man in Honolulu. He runs a flourishing laundry & a similarly prosperous tailoring business. He came back on active duty for a while, but was sent back to inactive duty because of his age. Although I have not yet received the Key—I learn that the suitcase has many bottles of Scotch, and which came in the name of CLAUNCH¹⁸ who—as you may remember was a CPO (yeoman) in the Navy & attached to the Presidents party on the *Indianapolis* when C W Jr. was there.¹⁹ Am not sure whether Claunch or the President sent the Scotch but will learn some day. Am glad you liked Zasu Pitts.²⁰ I always enjoyed her acting. Am glad Margaret Canagas cold is [redacted]. Am so happy you saw the *Missouri* & I shall enjoy hearing Callaghan tell about your visit tonight. She is a magnificent ship & I hope will be in the finish—if the subs leave enough targets afloat for the battleships to hit. The subs as usual, are doing a grand job. Am glad C W Jr has the job he wanted hope they get their big house. Please do suggest to Smith that Schelling drive for me when I come instead of Anselmo—who is not a good driver. Am glad you had such a nice dinner with the Marshalls. The Fordham hood—or collar—will be sent to you direct and I am not sure what the colors will be. Makalapa will go by plane to Guam—with me. He will be useful at night if any of the few remaining Japs start prowling around my area. Just a week or so ago Maj. Gen'l [Henry] Larsen USMC—the Military Governor—caught such a Jap straggler attending his movies. The Jap explained that he liked movies & hence his attendance. When asked how he got food during the many weeks he said that either before or after the movies he would raid the iceboxes from the officers mess! He seemed perfectly harmless [redacted]. The tableaux must have been wonderful.²¹ I wish I could have been with you to see the show. Am so glad Mary is over her boil trouble. Do you think the infection in the blood stream has been licked? If not—ask the doctors for “preventative” medicine. Hope the old travelling clock does not go back on me. For a week or more here it kept excellent time. My correct title is

C. W. N,

Fleet Admiral, USN

Am glad you went to & enjoyed the Treasure Island show & that Mary went also. What a pity Heifetz²² is so disagreeable. Will open Ryerson's present this afternoon when I go up after work. How nice of the Fengs to send the jade ornament. [redacted]. Will be delighted to meet the new Mrs. Sibley when I come. Do not work too hard over answering notes & cards & gifts— take a long time to do it. I have oodles of it to do but will spread it over several days. At least 6 people sent me the Lawrence article about MacA's [Douglas MacArthur's] communiques.²³ I have

no complaint about them. The Navy always gets its just due—eventually & more so if anyone tries to submerge it.

I have every confidence in your ability to handle our stocks. Do as you think best & get Dean Witter Co.²⁴ to advise you on the whole list. There will sometime be another recession—perhaps not as bad as 1929 but definitely a downward trend. Now I have run thru all your letters again, and be assured that I enjoyed them thoroughly. Just 3 years ago today I took over this command & with the help of many people—definitely including yourself—things have gone well. We have tough jobs ahead of us, but with proper planning & preparation—we will move ahead—sometimes with bigger losses—& some times with less. But definitely—always closer to the Japs and closer to final victory. When that will be, I do not know—but hope it will definitely end before 1946 ends—As you say in your address—a miracle can happen & it may end sooner. I hope and pray the New Year will be a happy one for you & the children and that all of you keep good health. We will, all of us, put our shoulders to the wheel & finish the job as soon as we can. I hope & believe the war in Europe will again go ahead successfully inspite of the present reverses. Perhaps they will be blessings in disguise. Now my Darling—I will close this—over long letter & get to my job. So enjoyed this chat with you. [redacted] & all my hearts devotion—love & kisses to you—

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Probably Eliza Lefferts Cooke, wife of Charles Montague Cooke Jr., who was curator of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum and a specialist in the study of mollusks.

² Probably Sascha Jacobinoff, a renowned violinist who toured in Europe and the United States.

³ Admiral Ernest J. King, COMINCH and CNO.

⁴ Rear Admiral George F. Hussey Jr., chief of the Bureau of Ordnance.

⁵ Vice Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinson, Commander, III Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet (August 1944–September 1945). Wilkinson received the Medal of Honor for his actions in the battle of Veracruz on 21–22 April 1914 while serving aboard the battleship *Florida* (BB-30). Wilkinson commanded the battleship *Mississippi* (BB-41) until September 1941, when he became director of naval intelligence in the Navy Department. Following that assignment, he reported as Commander, Battleship Division 2, Pacific Fleet, in August 1942. Wilkinson next served as deputy commander, South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, before assuming command of the III Amphibious Force, South Pacific Force. In this role, Wilkinson was responsible for leading the forces that captured Peleliu, Angaur, and Ulithi Atoll and established a beachhead on Leyte in the Philippines. See Navy Biographies Branch, "Vice Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinson, U.S. Navy, Deceased," 4 April 1962, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

⁶ Nimitz is most likely referencing the amphibious invasion in the Lingayen Gulf on 9 January 1945, in which Wilkinson commanded the Southern Attack Force.

⁷ Elizabeth Freeman, sister of Catherine Freeman Nimitz.

⁸ Elizabeth M. Case McMorris.

⁹ Rear Admiral Ernest G. Small. Small received the Navy Cross for his heroism as commander of the cruiser *Salt Lake City* (CA-25) during a night action off Guadalcanal against a force of Japanese cruisers, destroyers, and

seaplane carriers on 11–12 October 1942. He then joined Nimitz’s staff as war plans officer from January 1943 to August 1943. Small commanded Cruiser Division 5 until August 1944. He died in New York on 27 December 1944. See Naval Records and History, “Rear Admiral Ernest G. Small, United States Navy, Deceased,” 24 June 1952, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHHC.

¹⁰ Dr. Margaret Chung, the first-known Chinese American woman to become a physician in the United States. Chung graduated from medical school at the University of Southern California and founded one of the first Western medical clinics in San Francisco’s Chinatown. She used her extensive influence to support the Allied war effort and lobbied for the creation of the WAVES. See Nina Chhita, “Overlooked No More: Margaret Chung, Doctor Who Was ‘Different from Others,’” *New York Times*, 19 September 2023.

¹¹ Chief Quartermaster Pink L. “Spud” Murphy. Murphy retired from the Navy prior to World War II but was recalled to active service in 1942.

¹² Possibly Philip L. Rice. Rice was the son of a successful Hawaiian businessman and politician and served as a captain in the U.S. Army in World War I. After the war, he practiced law and ran unsuccessfully as a Republican for territorial delegate to Congress. When the United States entered World War II, Rice helped establish the provisional police of Kauai and served as the administrator for the Office of Price Administration on Kauai. In 1943, he became a judge on the circuit court of Kauai. See “Territorial Chief Justice Rice Dies,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 14 January 1974.

¹³ Probably Hans Peter Faye III, son of a successful sugar company owner in Hawaii.

¹⁴ Rear Admiral Hugo Wilson Osterhaus. Osterhaus received the Navy Cross for his service in command of *Wheeling* (Gunboat No. 14) performing antisubmarine patrols during World War I. Although Osterhaus was placed on the retired list in 1935, he was recalled to active duty to oversee the conversion of Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay into a training and distribution center during World War II. At the time of his retirement in October 1945, Osterhaus was president of the district court martial board. See “Osterhaus Retires Again,” *New York Times*, 14 October 1945.

¹⁵ Giacomo Puccini, an Italian composer who promoted operatic realism. His work *La bohème*, a four-act opera based on Henri Murger’s *Scènes de la vie de bohème* (*Scenes of Bohemian Life*), premiered in Turin, Italy, on 1 February 1896.

¹⁶ A symphonic tone poem written by German composer Richard Strauss for orchestra that premiered in Weimar, Germany, on 11 November 1889.

¹⁷ Nimitz is referring to what was then the CNO’s residence at Number One Observatory Circle, located at the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington, DC. The residence was the home of the CNO from 1928 until 1974, when it became the home of the Vice President of the United States. See Gail S. Cleere, *The House on Observatory Hill: Home of the Vice President of the United States* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1989), 39, 43.

¹⁸ Chief Petty Officer Charles Claunch (retired), a White House usher.

¹⁹ On 18 November 1936, President Roosevelt embarked on a so-called good-neighbor visit to South America aboard the heavy cruiser *Indianapolis* (CA-35). During the voyage, the ship called at the cities of Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and Port of Spain.

²⁰ Zasu Pitts, a popular movie actress and comedienne whose career spanned 1915 to 1963.

²¹ The Christmas tableaux presented every Christmas at the Dominican Convent Upper School, San Rafael.

²² Probably noted Russian American violinist Jascha Heifetz.

²³ Many newspapers dated 22 December 1944 ran a piece with a headline of “Communiques Criticised” written by *New York Sun* columnist David Lawrence. The article asserted that MacArthur’s communiques entirely left out the Navy’s contributions in the Philippines: “MacArthur’s communiques created an unfavorable impression in Washington. There has been no substantial account of what the Navy did in the remarkable exploit at Mindoro, the communique being devoted almost wholly to the details of scattered operations on land.” This quote was taken from the *Canberra Times* of 22 December 1944.

²⁴ Dean Witter & Company, a retail brokerage firm founded in 1924 and based in San Francisco.

1945



[Oahu] 900 pm Monday—

1 January '45.

Darling Mine:—

My New Year day was spent in hard work until 4 pm when I witnessed a Navy Motion picture called "*Fighting Lady*"¹—which is a technicolor film made on various ships, principally carriers—and shows real fighting afloat—It will soon be released to the public—and if you get the chance—by all means see it. Ask your moving picture official at Oak Knoll to get it early for the Hospital and to notify you when it is there, so that you can attend. It should be a "must" for all good Americans. At 10:15 am I had a 45 minute press conference for about 60 correspondents—including two women correspondents.² I dictated innumerable replies to congratulatory letters & acknowledged various gifts Then at 530 pm Calhoun & I relaxed for an hour by playing horseshoes. Biggs³ came along & played a game with me. Then Capt. Em. Thompson⁴ came along—& accepted my invitation to supper, thereby keeping me from supping alone. I enjoyed his visit, particularly when he told me about seeing you about 10 days ago when he was in Calif with Lorena. He had a scotch highball & remarked how hard it was to get whiskey. I presented him with a bottle of the many that were sent me this Xmas by various people. I received your 28 Dec letter at 5 pm and enjoyed it greatly—but was sorry to hear that Mary was in bed with a fever. Hope she got over it in time to resume her studies at the Convent. Hope your laryngitis is now well. You have done well by the war bond purchases—and I am sure you will continue to buy Bonds. I received our Dec end—pay check of \$195— today and will bank it to bolster my account in the Bank of Hawaii. The paymaster has not yet commenced to credit my acc't with the increased pay which I think is 2800 per year or 233—per month. You can count on receiving at least the next three pay checks—which I hope will include the extra pay—calculated

from 19 Dec—, the date of my new appointment—then perhaps about the end of Feb—I will need to bank another check. I was pleased to read the OWI letter to you from Mr. Slade. My dinner last night was simple but good and the wild ducks were astonishingly tender & good. Callaghan brought me a picture of you and him on his ship, which I asked him to autograph—& which is on its way to you by regular mail. Also on the way to you today by regular mail is a small “*Art and the Maoris*”⁵ pamphlet from the Trevithick’s which I am sure you will enjoy as the pictures are by famous artists. The pictures are good enough to frame. With the pamphlet I enclosed a photograph for Madam Chung. I had gifts unopened until last night—gifts from Honolulu people—& had placed gifts for Eppley & Callaghan (boxes of fresh dates) & the Walkers (a box of candy) under the tree. Francis Brown⁶ & Winona Love⁷ sent me a dozen Hawaiian plates & the Cyril Damons an attractive ball shaped lacquer bowl—both of which will be on their way to you. The wooden plates are for our wooden set—& the lacquer bowl is for Mary, unless you would like it. Mrs. Walker gave me a handsome colored print of a Hawaiian on a Surf Board. Mr. W. gave me a glass pitcher for mixing martinis—, the Sumners sent me 5 nice handkerchiefs (one from each member of the family). The glass pitcher & the handkerchiefs were taken back to have 5 stars put thereon. The Walkers maid & her husband, Island Japs, gave me two sleeping coats, one silk & one cotton. They too are being taken back to embroider on 5 stars. The maid—Matsuko is a skillful seamstress & sews well. Various other families sent potted poinsettias—both red & yellow—which are a great addition to our messroom. Books—from Miss Tenney⁸ & her companion, home made jellies & marmalades from other Honoluluans. A stuffed seabird is coming from Mr. Geo Munro⁹—age 70, a naturalist who has sought my help from time to time. A cheddar cheese from Ryerson—Fruit cakes from several families, a “Navy Year Book” from the Germantown Holts, and three albums of records from Mary Scushenner

(a) Mozart Symphony #34 in C Major¹⁰

(b) Brahms trio #1 in B major¹¹—and

(c) Franz Schuberts Trio #1.¹²

The first—I like very much—& then (b) & (c), I will have to get accustomed to as they are very much like chamber music—I think it is disgraceful for me to accept all these things from so many people—but I console myself in the thought that my gifts are shared by many. Now my Darling I will turn in. Keep well & happy and do not over work—I miss you more than words can tell. My arms are around you and my lips are on yours. Ever your devoted

Chester

¹ *The Fighting Lady* (1944), a documentary film produced by the U.S. Navy that follows the experiences of men aboard the aircraft carrier *Yorktown* (CV-10). Commander Edward J. Steichen, USNR, directed the film, which was narrated by Lieutenant Robert Taylor, USNR. The picture was awarded an Oscar for Best Documentary Feature at the 17th Academy Awards.

² Nimitz and his chief of staff, Rear Admiral Forrest Sherman, held a press conference together on New Year's Day 1945. The following day, the *New York Times* reported that Nimitz had shared during the conference that he now believed it would eventually be necessary to invade Japan in order to force that nation to capitulate. He further declared that a landing on the China coast was still one of his objectives. When a correspondent asked whether Nimitz would "welcome the entry of Russia in the Pacific conflict, on our side," Nimitz responded that he certainly would. "And I am glad you added that last part," Nimitz noted. George Horne, "Nimitz Promises Blockade of Japan," *New York Times*, 2 January 1945.

³ Probably Captain Burton Beecher Biggs, logistics officer on the staff of Commander, Fifth Fleet.

⁴ Captain E. M. "Tommy" Thompson.

⁵ C. F. Goldie and Allen Porter, *Art and the Māori: A Set of Colour Plates by the Famous New Zealand Artist C. F. Goldie, with Descriptions by Allen Porter* (Auckland, NZ: E. Allan Brooker, 1943).

⁶ Francis Hyde I'i Brown, a member of a wealthy Hawaiian family, an accomplished golfer, and a senator in the territorial legislature.

⁷ Winona Love, noted hula dancer and actress. She was a romantic partner of Francis Hyde I'i Brown.

⁸ Wilhelmina Tenney, daughter of Edward D. Tenney, former president of Castle & Cooke Ltd.

⁹ George C. Munro, naturalist and author of *Birds of Hawaii* (Honolulu, HI: Tongg, 1944).

¹⁰ A three-movement symphony written by the renowned eighteenth-century Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in 1780.

¹¹ A four-movement work scored for piano, violin, and cello composed in 1854 and revised by Johannes Brahms in 1889.

¹² A four-movement work scored for piano, violin, and cello written by Franz Schubert, an early nineteenth-century Austrian composer.



[Oahu] Midafternoon—Tuesday—

2 Jan 45

[redacted]:

I have actually reached the stage in my paperwork that I see daylight ahead and can take time now to write you. My new public Relations officer, Capt [Harold] Miller¹ USN (aviator) left this afternoon for Wash. on business—and he is bringing you our wooden plates, a lacquer Jar—and my commission as Fleet Admiral USN, which at some time I suggest you frame as it is the highest rank I will ever attain in the Navy. Miller has purchased a house in Berkeley on Vincente St—which he has never seen—but which is occupied by his wife. Both Miller & Mrs. Miller² are successful writers and people pay for their work— so they should be interesting. If Mrs. Miller is even partially as nice as Capt Miller, I believe you will enjoy meeting her. Tonight after dinner, I shall work hard at packing such effects as I take forward. They will go by ship before this week ends. I plan to keep my room at 37 Makalapa

and to retain there all my pictures and some of my clothes—so I can use it as a stepping stone back and forth between Calif. & the new HQ. I believe I will definitely need some winter clothes out forward—because I may be in cold climates this fall. The enclosed letter from Mrs. Herschel (have answered it for you & me) will be of interest to you. I always liked the Herschels and I believe they liked us because she wrote me of his death, do you remember? Save the stamps for Mary. I have talked to our disbursing officer, and learn that he has not yet received from Bu S&A [Bureau of Supplies and Accounts] the proper instructions for paying the increased money allowance I am supposed to receive as a Fleet Admiral. He agrees with me—however—in the belief that my overall increase will be \$2800—or 233 per mo—as much pay as we were receiving when Catherine was born. I hope you will use at least part of the increase—When I can send it to you—on yourself—you certainly deserve to do anything you can to ease your personal labor around the house. The rest of my house at 37 Makalapa will be used by the principal members of my staff who go forward & by several, headed by Commodore [Bernard] Austin,³ who will, for the present, remain here & will occupy the space. I will instruct Austin that—should anything happen to me—to send my gear to you. Don't be alarmed—Darling Mine—I will do nothing rash or foolish & I don't expect anything to happen to me—except to return happily to my family when the war is over. The operations starting today should make the Japs lose interest in my new HQ area because of the greater activity nearer their tender spots.⁴ Would like to believe our situation in Europe is improving—but in any event we shall continue to push hard in the Pacific. Have callers coming now so will close. Have also run out of news—except [redacted] that I am devoted to you—which may not be news to you. Keep well & cheerful & do not over work. Hope Mary is over her illness. All my hearts devotion is Yours—always

Ever your

Chester

¹ Captain Harold B. Miller, USN, public relations officer on the staff of the CINCPAC (September 1944–April 1945). From March 1942 until November 1943, Miller organized and led the Training Literature Section, Training Division, Bureau of Aeronautics. A qualified naval aviator, Miller next served as naval attaché for air in London, England, before Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal assigned Miller to be Nimitz's public relations officer. Miller dramatically expanded CINCPAC's public relations office and improved relations between the office and the press. Miller's success at quickly clearing and then transmitting news materials likely contributed to an improved public image of the Navy in the Pacific. Accordingly, Forrestal appointed Miller to be director of public relations for the Navy in Washington, DC. When Miller received an accompanying promotion to the rank of rear admiral in April 1945, the 42 year old was the youngest to ever hold that rank. Miller later served as director of the Bureau of Naval Information before retiring in June 1946. The Archives Branch, NHHC, holds Miller's private papers. See also Navy Office of Information, "Rear Admiral Harold B. Miller, U.S. Navy, Retired," 19 March 1958, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

² Jean Dupont married Harold B. Miller in 1928, and the couple had one daughter. Dupont and Miller coauthored the three books of the Bob Wakefield series about a fictional naval aviator in the 1930s. Miller also wrote the book *Navy Wings*, a history of naval aviation. The couple later divorced, and Miller remarried in June 1946. See David K. Vaughan, *Flying Adventures: Juvenile Aviation Series Books in America, 1909–1964* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland, 2023), 218–20.

³ Commodore Bernard Lige Austin, assistant chief of staff for administration to the CINCPAC (June 1944–October 1945). Austin commanded Destroyer Division 46 from May 1943 to November 1943. In that capacity, he was awarded the Navy Cross for heroism in a night engagement against the Japanese on 1–2 November in the Solomon Islands. He received a Gold Star in lieu of a second Navy Cross for heroism in another night engagement against the Japanese on 24–25 November 1943 off Bougainville Island. See Navy Office of Information, “Vice Admiral Bernard L. Austin, United States Navy, Retired,” 11 March 1969, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

⁴ On 2 January 1945, American naval forces began assembling at sea for the invasion of Luzon, the largest and most populous island in the Philippines.



[Oahu] 5 pm Wednesday

3 January '45

Best Beloved:

Sherman, [James] Carter,¹ Anderson, Lamar and I have just returned from a short trial run of a new boat I have acquired for the use of my staff and myself at my advanced HQ. It is a fifteen ton Chris Craft,² about 45' long, 21 knots speed, beautifully appointed with 4 bunks, a small cabin and galley, two engines, & fully equipped for deep sea fishing. It is, as C. W. Jr would describe it—“a honey,” and it will be named on both bow and stern—“CATHERINE”—for my sweetheart. As soon as I can do so I will have it photographed—both in color & regular—and send you copies. As a barge—I will use a small, fast landing type boat—nicely finished inside and out. My standard barge is too large, and not sufficiently seaworthy for use out there. The “Catherine” will be loaded on a big ship just as soon as I can get the name painted on and the boat photographed. I am in the midst of packing—and as usual after 3 years,—am faced with the necessity of throwing away excess accumulations—which I find hard to do. Have learned that on my blue uniforms I will simply add another 1/2 inch stripe on each sleeve, so that there will be one wide and four narrow stripes & a star on each sleeve. Will you please have my service coat in the closet altered. Canaga can tell you where—or better still—send it to the Alameda Naval Air Station tailor shop. If the lace does not look good—I think we can afford new lace although I know it will be expensive. I will be content with only an additional strip of lace—about the same as the present lace, if lace is scarce. Your 29 Dec letter arrived last night as Dr A. & I were supping on a piece of salmon which some one in Puget Sound sent us. You would have liked it & I wish you & Mary could have been there. I do hope Mary is long since recovered from her stomach ailment or flu, or whatever she had. Your rearranged living room

sounds attractive and I fervently hope I can see it before moving west. Yes Fraser is [Anthony] Miers³ boss—although Miers at the present moment, is working under Christie or Fife—if the latter has taken over. Speaking of concerts—Anderson & I played records constantly from 6pm until 10 pm except for around an hour when we walked & read dispatches. Anderson loves music as much as I do—and I believe in time I might get to like Chamber music. I am practically finished up with my letters for gifts etc—but Adams has carried the load. He can write them as well, or better than I can. I wish your Wave could help you with your letters. Speaking of the Kieffers, when you see the “*Fighting Lady*” movie—you will see our old friend Dixie Kieffer,⁴ who, I suppose, is not related to the Berkeley Kieffers. I think you will like Mr. Honeywell as he is much nicer than Mrs H. Our war in the Pacific moves along in fits & starts and at the present time we are at a “start.” Our subs—of course—work along day and night—day in and day out—never easing the pressure on the Japs for one moment. They are continuing their fine work and are turning in fine bags right along. I had lunch today with Lockwood & John Brown⁵—to meet three very successful Sub skippers who have just recently returned from patrol, and all had thrilling tales. Also present, was Lieut [Charles] Styer,⁶ son of our old friend C W Styer.⁷ You remember the young Styer boy in Coronado? & how timid he appeared then. I believe he had just been thru an auto accident at that time. Now he is a fine—sturdy young man. His father is now in command of Atlantic Submarines and has his HQ at the Sub Base New London. I hope to receive a letter from you before the day ends—& to hear that both you & Mary are well. [Allen] Quynn,⁸ Calhoun’s Ch. Of Staff—left for Washington today & carried with him a package of stuffed fruit—for the girls—such as you had. Keep well—Dearest Mine—& do not over do—All my hearts devotion love & Kisses are yours—Ever your own—

Chester

¹ Commodore James B. Carter, assistant chief for operations on the staff of the CINCPAC.

² Chris-Craft Boats, a company famous for its manufacture of wooden recreational boats. During World War II, Chris-Craft built small boats for the U.S. Navy.

³ Commander Anthony Cecil Chapel Miers, RN, Commander, 8th Submarine Flotilla, attached to the U.S. Seventh Fleet (1943–1944). Miers was awarded the Victoria Cross while in command of the submarine HMS *Torbay* for conducting a successful raid on the enemy-held Corfu harbor on 5 March 1942. For a biography of Miers, see Brian Izzard, *Gamp VC: The Wartime Story of Maverick Submarine Commander Anthony Miers* (Somerset, UK: Haynes, 2009).

⁴ Captain Dixie Kiefer, commanding officer of the aircraft carrier *Ticonderoga* (CV-14), formerly executive officer of the carrier *Yorktown* (CV-5) during the battles of Midway and Coral Sea and recipient of the Navy Cross.

⁵ Rear Admiral John Herbert “Babe” Brown Jr., Commander, Training Command, Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet (November 1943–April 1945). Brown previously served as commanding officer of Submarine Squadron 4 from July 1942 to November 1943. In May 1945, he assumed command of Cruiser Division 1. Brown retired in 1954 with the rank of vice admiral. See “John H. Brown Jr., Admiral, Is Dead,” *New York Times*, 12 June 1963.

⁶ Lieutenant Charles Wilkes Styer Jr., USN, executive officer of the submarine *Tilefish* (SS-307) (March 1944–April 1945). Styer was the son of Rear Admiral Charles Wilkes Styer.

⁷ Rear Admiral Charles Wilkes Styer, USN, Commander, Submarine Force, Atlantic Fleet (November 1944–January 1946). Styer served as Commander, Submarine Squadron 10, from August 1942 to August 1943, during which time his command was credited with sinking more than one million tons of Japanese shipping. In January 1944, Styer became commander of the Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut, where he remained until November 1944. Styer was a descendant of Rear Admiral Charles Wilkes, USN, who, as a lieutenant, commanded the U.S. Exploring Expedition of 1838–1842 (also known as the Wilkes Expedition). See Navy Biographies Branch, “Rear Admiral Charles Wilkes Styer, United States Navy, Retired,” 10 December 1948, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

⁸ Commodore Allen George Quynn, USN, deputy commander, Service Force, Pacific Fleet (January 1944–October 1945). Quynn previously served as chief of staff to Commander, Service Force, Pacific Fleet (May 1941–February 1943), and as assistant director, Logistic Plans Division, Navy Department (February 1943–October 1943). He retired with the rank of rear admiral in June 1949. See Navy Biographies Branch, “Rear Admiral Allen George Quynn, U.S. Navy, Retired,” 1 July 1950, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.



[Oahu] Thursday afternoon

4 January 45

Best Beloved:—

I have just received—and greatly enjoyed—your two letters dated 31 Dec, one containing letters from Chaplain Gibbons, and from Mrs. Lang—although it is signed only “Margaret.” Our minds must have met at tea time—where in the last two days because—just yesterday I wrote¹ asking that you take my service coat to the tailor shop, N.A.S. [Naval Air Station] Alameda where I am sure the new lace can be put on. I think we can afford new lace for that coat. Also, in a recent letter, perhaps yesterday—I stated that you would find Mr. Honeywell a very pleasant man to meet—and in your letter today you tell me just that same thing. I am delighted and greatly relieved to hear that Mary is again entirely well. Will you please send me by ordinary mail one of the smaller pictures of Mary—(by Constant)² for my advanced HQ. The one I have at 37 Makalapa is too large to travel with and is in a heavy frame. I will take forward with me the lovely pictures of you in the frame you sent, plus some of the smaller size and a few of each of the children. As I told you before, I plan to leave at 37 Makalapa all of the other pictures I have on the walls—because there are many of them—battle scenes—painting & the like. When you feel in the painting mood—you can do me a landscape for the new place. I find that Gibbons ship is in the harbor—and I hope he comes up to see me. I hate to send for him—just to come to call. I wish you would urge various friends & others who have seen you lately to call at my office any day between 11 & 12—at Pearl—and at any hour in the advanced place—where I hope to have much more time for that kind of business. I am having a small picture made of my new collar device (with me inside the shirt, of course)—so you can see how it looks. Today between 11 & 12 I received

no less than 40 callers—and to my horror, I found that 30 of them were reporting for duty on my joint staff—mostly young civil engineers for the logistic section—where large numbers of officers are required. Am glad you mended the Kava bowl. It is a very old one that has actually been used for the purpose of making Kava.³ Perhaps you can mend the crack across the bowl by some form of wood fiber—so you can put water in it. We have, indeed, much to be thankful for in the events of the past year. I hope and believe the end of 1945 will find us very very much nearer our goal—the complete defeat of Japan—than appears possible at the moment. I will do my best to bring that about. Dearest and Best You have more than done your share in helping to bring about the very favorable situations which we now see in the Pacific. My great concern is that you do not over do personally—and that you get adequate help in your office. I think the S.F. mayors wife⁴ made a mistake & set a bad example in her tirade against OPA [Office of Price Administration]. Am sorry to hear about Ray Spear's⁵ deteriorations. Lots of trouble has visited that family. I am so glad you met Pharmacist Spicer. Mary will enjoy meeting another Conchologist.⁶ I shall be delighted to have the recording of you and Freckles and I shall play it many times. I am getting a new radio with player attachment at my new HQ—from Bupers [Bureau of Naval Personnel]—the kind that goes to recreation centers. I can well imagine the homesickness of the Island girls away from home, and I am sure their families should let them come. The Thurstons have just bought a new house & believe that was what they were waiting for before having Diane return. The housing situation out here is deplorable with no relief in sight—because relief can come only with large lumber shipments and imported labor—and there is not enough for either for war purposes. I would like to turn Mary to on my desk and room—for I have been trying to pack and am shocked at the junk and papers I have accumulated in 3 years. My big wooden box is now ready to go onboard on the 6th and the rest of my gear will go in my bags or on coat hangers when I go out by plane about 25th. Am having my overcoat & 3 blue coats converted so that I can visit the China coast in cold weather. Just where that first place is on the China Coast cannot even be breathed—but I hope to be there in time,⁷ Now my Darling—I will close. Tonight Lamar & I are dining in town with Mr. and Mrs Ward & the latter is a USO [United Service Organization] worker and took Lady Mitchell⁸ in charge while the Mitchells were General Richardson's guests. The Wards came to luncheon with me—and are very pleasant. I wrote EJK yesterday suggesting an early conference with preference for the Coast. Hope he agrees—and that it takes place about the 16th or 17th. Keep cheerful & well—All my hearts devotion is Yours always—Ever your Chester

¹ See preceding letter.

² Probably Lieutenant Commander Maurice Constant, USNR, a prominent photographer who worked for the Bureau of Naval Personnel as a military photographer during both World War II and the Korean War.

³ Kava bowls are traditionally handcrafted wooden vessels used primarily by residents of Fiji or Samoa to serve and drink a liquid made from the roots of kava plants as part of religious, cultural, and community rituals.

⁴ Helen Abbott, wife of San Francisco mayor Roger Lapham.

⁵ Rear Admiral Raymond Spear, USN, former chief of the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts.

⁶ A collector of mollusk shells.

⁷ U.S. military leaders had intended to invade Taiwan and mainland China since American entry into the war, but in early 1945 they discarded these plans in favor of invading Iwo Jima and Okinawa as more direct routes to conquering the Japanese home islands. See Mark A. Stoler, *George C. Marshall: Soldier-Statesman of the American Century* (Boston: Twayne, 1989), 119; and Phillips Payson O'Brien, *The Second Most Powerful Man in the World: The Life of Admiral William D. Leahy, Roosevelt's Chief of Staff* (New York: Random House, 2019), 288.

⁸ Margery Tyrwhitt-Drake, wife of Sir Philip Euen Mitchell, governor of Kenya, 12 December 1944–June 1952.



[Oahu] Friday Evening

5 January '45

Darling Mine:—

The daylight hours of this long and active day are drawing to a close here—but far to the westward—where I picture frenzied activity, it is still forenoon.¹ It is D. M's party but I have a great stake and interest in its success—as many of my ships are involved. I hope—pray and believe all will go well, although I know we will take some losses. My day's activities included some 40 callers between 11 and 12, and the signing of at least 190 citations—which I have just finished. Far from having writers cramp—I am in the writing mood. The dinner last night was good but not too exciting. Present were Generals [Simon] Buckner² and [Millard] Harmon,³ the Walkers, Mrs Walter Dillingham Sr & Mrs. Walter Dillingham Jr, Major King—(Ex British) and a Mrs Emerson—whose son is a Brig. Gen'l—U.S. Army. I find that Mr Ward is a retired banker from N.Y. We were back early and I put in an hour at my HQ, reading dispatches, and still got to bed before 10.30 pm. Capt Turner (Pan am.) came in to see me before lunch—for a chat. I have another envelope full of miscellaneous letters, Xmas cards etc.—to send you but was afraid to trust Turner with the job. Included in the envelope will be some new pictures taken during my New Year press conference⁴—Which I think you will like. I have also had prepared some pictures in my new rank (so far only in khaki—working shirt) which I will send out on request—in the same manner as I have in the past. Included in my callers this forenoon—was a Navy nurse from Bumed [Bureau of Medicine and Surgery]—Wash—Lt (?) who was sent out in the interest of publicity for Navy nurses. It seems the Bumed is having great difficulty recruiting nurses & feel that they must have some publicity from nurses nearer the fighting to stimulate applications. Tomor-

row, Saturday afternoon—instead of getting a chance for a swim, I have to go to the Queens Hospital,⁵ to put in a short appearance at a luau which is being held to raise money for the Hospital. I had turned the bid down—until I heard that many tickets had been sold on the basis of my being there. I am willing to help the hospital & sacrifice my swim. I will also go to Mrs. Richard Cooke at 430 pm to attend the wedding of her last and youngest daughter—Pat⁶ to some service man—Navy—I believe. She now has 3 daughters married to naval officers and she has a Naval officer son who is at the Sub Base. If I cannot swim I shall seek recreation in a short session of poker after the wedding. No mail so far today—from you—but still have hopes. Will close now & take a short walk for exercise before dinner. No news from McMorris. All my hearts devotion to you always and forever—Keep well and cheerful— Ever your own

Chester

¹ A reference to the Allied campaign to liberate the Philippines and launch simultaneous air strikes on Formosa. Numerous kamikaze attacks hit Lingayen Gulf-bound forces on 4–5 January 1945, and the Third Fleet began preinvasion strikes against enemy installations on Luzon on 6 January. See Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 358–59; and Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 286.

² Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr., USA, Commanding General, Tenth Army (September 1944–June 1945). Buckner was previously Commanding General, Alaska Defense Command, from August 1940 to June 1944. He commanded the Tenth Army during the invasion of Okinawa and was killed in action there on 18 June 1945.

³ Lieutenant General Millard F. Harmon, USAAF, Commander, Army Air Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas, and deputy commander of the Twentieth Air Force. Harmon's plane went missing in March 1945 over the Pacific Ocean and was never found.

⁴ On the topic of this news conference, see also Nimitz to Catherine, 1 January 1945, p. 97.

⁵ The Queen's Hospital, founded in 1859 and located in Honolulu.

⁶ Patricia Cooke, daughter of Richard A. Cooke, married Lieutenant (j.g.) John Robert Peacock on 6 January 1945 at her widowed mother's home. See "Peacock-Cooke Wedding in Garden Setting," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 13 January 1945.



[Oahu] Saturday afternoon—

6 January 45

Dearest Mine:—

As I sit at my office desk writing you the Artist—Lt Cmdr [Albert] Murray¹—is working at his easel on a painting of me. He had made a number of small sketches which he has finally transferred to his canvas as a painting. He pleases me in that I do not have to pose, but can keep right on with my work—whatever it may be. I hope it turns out better than [William] Draper's² painting. Murray's painting of Secretary [Cordell] Hull³ was splendid. Your letters of 1 and 2 January

arrived today, the first this morning and the second—and also the letters from Joan, Catherine and Mary just a few moments ago. Needless to say they were greatly enjoyed— all of them—particularly yours—although I am sorry to hear you are so overworked and tired. You must ease up. I pray that Mrs. Snell will be more helpful than Mrs. McCullough—. Apparently your N.R. [Naval Reserve] nurse, Mrs. Marley is competent and helpful—but not in your office work. You must get additional help—competent and sympathetic help. To get back to the portrait being painted with me in khaki shirt—at my desk—when it is finished I shall ask for photographs & will send you or have sent to you (if I am not here) several copies. I believe the painting goes to the Navy Dept. Am so glad all our children had such a fine Christmas—and hope we will be together for the next Christmas season. As you said in your address—“Miracles have happened,” I agree with you that SSR and his Farragut School⁴ needs training in loyalty to the U.S. I hope the spies⁵ get the death sentence. I have seen Paul Smith out here. He is a friend and protégé of [Arthur] Hepburns⁶—was in the USNR [U.S. Naval Reserve] as a Lt Comdr, resigned—enlisted in the USMC R [U.S. Marine Corps Reserve] and is now a Commissioned officer—due for duty in my Public Relations Section. Am glad Doughty is at last cared for. I could not have helped him if his boss said he needed his services. Am glad Frannie⁷ did not suffer any bad reaction from the mumps and her exposure to icy weather & snow. What a queer person Mrs. Robinson must be to rent her house to our children & not be frank about her sales plans! If Latter’s duck is as good as those sent by Osterhaus to me—you will enjoy it. I still have a dozen ducks in my ice box—which were sent by my ex NROTC [Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps] friend Lt Archer.⁸ Catherine’s ring must be a beauty and I am pleased she is so happy. Junior is in the midst of big doings out west—of which the papers will inform you in due time. Things seem to be going well out there but we are taking some losses & plenty of damage.⁹ I can think of no message for your Red Cross meeting except to wish them success in their efforts to care for our service men. I have no doubt there are many poor & incompetent & selfish Red Cross workers, both paid and unpaid—but fortunately those kind never come to my attention. In fact—all Red Cross agencies out here bust themselves trying to do everything they think I want and need. Today I sent along your can of coffee and a set of table doilies & runner & napkins which were given me last July and which I put on a shelf in my closet & forgot about until I started packing. I think you will like the set and the letter which is in the same package. Hope they reach you safely. Dr and Mrs [Lloyd] Reynolds¹⁰ (USNR) sent me a small box from Blums containing Almondettes or Coffeeteens¹¹—or something like that—and it is going out to my new HQ for use there. Mrs. R. says she looks forward to meeting you. You will find her very pleasant. I also received an interesting looking book “Peary”¹² by Dr. William H. Hobbs¹³ (author)—Dr Esson Gale’s friend. He has also sent me some pamphlets written by

him on the structure & geology of the Pacific Islands which I will find interesting and useful. I have at least a dozen books—all new—Which I will read—or try to read—at my new HQ. Am glad you joined the University Music Club. Am sure you will enjoy it. I have two albums of music—(records) not yet opened but on their way further west. One from Cmdr [Leonard] Miscall,¹⁴ the C.B. officer who was so generous with records before—& one is from Henry Walker¹⁵ (Ensign USNR). I do not know what either contains—but hope for no duplications. Now Precious mine I must read dispatches—& then make a transcription for the “Poor Richard Club ??”¹⁶ dinner in honor of Bob Hope,¹⁷ then to Queen’s Hospital to help the money raising program—then to the Cooke girl wedding—& then, I hope—an hour or so of poker at the Walkers. I must be back at my HQ by ten pm because I am most anxious to see promptly the news that will start coming back about that time. Keep well & cheerful—but do not overtire yourself. I need you & I want you well and strong. Perhaps in a day or so I can send news of our next conference¹⁸—All my hearts devotion is Yours—always

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Lieutenant Commander Albert Ketcham Murray, USNR, Navy combat artist. Murray was a graduate of the College of Fine Arts, Syracuse University. A well-respected portrait painter prior to World War II, Murray received a commission as a lieutenant with the Combat Arts Section and executed paintings of combat scenes he witnessed in Europe. Murray also completed portraits of many prominent naval officers during the conflict, including Nimitz, Admiral Ernest J. King, Admiral William D. Leahy, and Vice Admiral Forrest P. Sherman. Murray’s work is represented in the collections of the National Portrait Gallery, the National Gallery of Art, and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Murray later recalled in his oral history that he and Nimitz became good friends. For Murray’s recollections of Nimitz and his family, see Albert K. Murray, “The Reminiscences of Commander Albert K. Murray, U.S. Naval Reserve (Retired),” interview by John T. Mason Jr. on 29 September 1980, 1 December 1980, 12 January 1981, and 28 July 1988 in New York City (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1994), 74–79, 108–10.

² Lieutenant Commander William Franklin Draper, USNR, Navy combat artist. Draper trained as an artist at Pomfret School in Connecticut followed by Harvard University, the National Academy of Design in New York, and the Cape Art School in Massachusetts. Draper was commissioned as a lieutenant (j.g.) in the Naval Reserve in June 1942 and spent five months executing oil paintings of military scenes and engagements in the Aleutian Islands. Subsequently, he covered amphibious assaults on Bougainville and Hollandia and air strikes on Palau and Truk. He also painted numerous portraits of naval officers during the war, including Nimitz, Admiral William F. Halsey, and Rear Admiral J. R. Beardall. The portrait Nimitz references here is reproduced in this volume.

³ Cordell Hull, U.S. secretary of state from 1933 to 1944.

⁴ Possibly a reference to the Admiral Farragut Academy, which had campuses in Pine Beach, New Jersey, and St. Petersburg, Florida. The academy is a private college-preparatory school founded in 1933. Nimitz gave an address to the graduating class of the Admiral Farragut Academy on 1 June 1940. See Chester Nimitz, “Address at Admiral Farragut Academy,” 1 June 1940, box 72, Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHC.

⁵ Possibly a reference to German saboteurs Erich Gimpel and William Curtis Colepaugh, who came ashore in Maine via a German submarine in November 1944. Colepaugh was an American citizen who attended the Admiral Farragut Academy in New Jersey and previously spent four months in the U.S. Navy in 1942. During World War II, he defected to Germany and claimed to have been recruited by the elite Nazi SS to train in espionage. Colepaugh and Gimpel were apprehended in December 1944, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation

publicly announced their capture in January 1945. President Harry Truman later commuted Colepaugh's death sentence to life in prison, but the U.S. government executed several other German spies before the war ended. See "2 German Agents, Landed by U-Boat, Seized Here by FBI," *New York Times*, 2 January 1945.

⁶ Admiral Arthur Japy Hepburn (retired), chairman of the General Board of the Navy (August 1942–December 1945). Hepburn previously served as director of the Office of Public Relations, Navy Department, from May 1941 to October 1942. He continued to serve on active duty as chairman of the General Board of the Navy after his official retirement on 1 November 1941. See Navy Biographies Branch, "Admiral Arthur Japy Hepburn, United States Navy, Retired," 15 February 1962, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHHC.

⁷ Frances Mary Nimitz.

⁸ Possibly Lieutenant (j.g.) James W. Archer, USNR.

⁹ Nimitz is alluding to the ongoing campaign to liberate the Philippines. His future son-in-law Commander James Lay was then serving on the staff of Vice Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinson, Commander, III Amphibious Force. Wilkinson's Southern Attack Force established the U.S. beachhead in the Lingayen Gulf on the island of Luzon on 9 January 1945. En route to Lingayen Gulf, the attack force endured six days of air attacks from Japanese kamikazes and conventional aircraft beginning during its passage through the Surigao Strait in daylight on 3 January. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 285–86.

¹⁰ Captain Lloyd R. Reynolds, USNR, and his wife.

¹¹ Blum's Coffeteens, a hard candy made in San Francisco.

¹² William Herbert Hobbs, *Peary* (New York: Macmillan, 1936). A 500-page biography of famed U.S. Navy explorer Rear Admiral Robert Edwin Peary, who died in 1920. Peary made six expeditions to Greenland, three of which were part of his effort to reach the North Pole. On his third and final attempt, he purportedly reached the North Pole on 6 April 1909.

¹³ William Herbert Hobbs, PhD, a geologist who led four expeditions to Greenland, and a former professor at the University of Michigan. Hobbs wrote several books about geology and polar exploration as well as biographies of General Leonard Wood and Admiral Peary. Hobbs served with the Office of Strategic Services during World War II.

¹⁴ Commander Leonard Miscall, USNR, Commander, 11th Construction Regiment. See also "Ithacan Leads Men Building 'Road That Couldn't Be Built,'" *Ithacan (NY) Journal*, 24 February 1944.

¹⁵ Ensign Henry Alexander "Hanko" Walker Jr., USNR, son of Henry Alexander "Sandy" Walker and Una Craig. Nimitz helped secure Henry a reserve commission despite his nearsightedness and, upon the completion of his training, facilitated his assignment to the battleship *Missouri*. For Walker's recollections of Nimitz on the occasion of the surrender ceremony aboard *Missouri*, see Henry A. Walker Jr., "Interview with Henry Alexander Walker, Jr.," interview by Alice Sinesky on 6 November 1986 in Honolulu, HI (Honolulu, HI: Watumull Foundation, 1987), 12.

¹⁶ The Poor Richard Club was a private club in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, whose members primarily belonged to the advertising industry. The club bestowed an annual Gold Medal of Achievement upon individuals that often included celebrities and politicians.

¹⁷ Bob Hope, stage name of Leslie Townes Hope, famed British American comedian and actor. He received the Poor Richard Club's Gold Medal of Achievement from the club's president, Graham Patterson, at its annual dinner on 17 January 1945. Hope was recognized for his "notable deeds at the war fronts and in the training camps." The dinner featured a broadcast from Nimitz in which he declared that "the fighting spirit could not be maintained without the qualities instilled by the people of the entertainment industry." "Bob Hope Honored," *New York Times*, 18 January 1945.

¹⁸ The conference that Nimitz desired took place in Washington, DC, during the first two weeks of March 1945. Nimitz departed Guam on 1 March 1945 with Rear Admiral Forrest Sherman and Commander Hal Lamar. When Nimitz made a stop in San Francisco, his wife, Catherine, joined him for the trip to Washington. The main purpose of the visit was a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, President Roosevelt, and Secretary Forrestal in order to discuss plans for the invasion of Okinawa and future operations. Nimitz also spent time with his family during the trip. Nimitz's daughter Catherine and her fiancé, Commander James Lay, decided to get married the

week that Nimitz was in Washington. The wedding took place in Nimitz's Fairfax Hotel apartment at 1700 on 9 March. Nimitz and his wife departed for the West Coast the following day, and Nimitz returned with his party to Guam on 15 March. Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 370.



NIMITZ by Lieutenant Commander William F. Draper. (NHHC, Navy Art Collection, 88-189-be)



[Oahu] Sunday afternoon—

7 January '45

Darling Mine:

Again, as I write to you—Lt Cmdr Murray, the artist is sitting in front of my desk working on his painting—which I think will be quite good.¹ He has given me, to send to you, the pencil sketch from which he outlined his painting. I think you will like it—as I did. It has been a long, busy day but it was helped this morning by the usual Sunday am concert of symphony music over the radio. I particularly enjoyed Brahms 2d Symphony in D Major. Today I saw a dispatch in which Kinkaid had awarded the Navy Cross to C W Jr²—and he may already have it, for all I know. Am tremendously proud of him—as I know you are also. The enclosed letter from Junior Lay sounds cheerful. Please send it along to Catherine. I also enclose copies of the transcriptions I made yesterday for the Poor Richard Club and hope you will get a smile out of the closing comment on Hope.³ Truth & honesty compels me to acknowledge that the script is the work of my favorite speech writer—Lt [Vernon] Lyons,⁴ USNR—a fellow Texan and an experienced newspaper man. In about ten days you will receive another envelope of miscellaneous letters, pictures, etc—some of which may interest you. You will also find some smooth written copies of your recent War Bond broadcast & the Australian broadcast. The luau menu is enclosed. I ate nothing but a few tastes of the delicious Royal Hawaiian—red salt which is very course grained. I sat between the Hospital Manager—Mr. Olsen and Mrs. Stainback—wife of the governor. Was called on for a short speech to the 450 or more assembled there—before dashing off to the Cooke girls wedding, which was held on the lovely lawn of Mrs C's residence. Saw Mrs. [Eliza] Montague Cooke & her husband⁵ there and discussed Jacobinoff with Mrs. C. who sings his praises loudly. Then for fish chowder at the Walkers—with Lamar, Furlong,—Anderson & Dr. & Mrs [Guy] Milnor⁶—local physician. I was tremendously lucky in the 1 1/2 hours of poker & with 10¢ chips—(2 chips limit) I won \$2100—winning both high and low—in two large pots. Back at office at 1030 pm to read dispatches & in bed by 11 pm. At 5 pm today the Walkers and Major Rice (I think the Rices will be remarried)—Anderson—Lamar and I are going out in the "*Catherine*" for a short spin out to the harbor entrance—then back into smooth water for a picnic supper & then back by dark. I have much office work to do tonight & will speed my guests along soon after we return. How I wish you could be here to go on your boat! No mail from yesterday—but will expect some tomorrow. Keep well and cheerful Darling Mine. I still hope for a "conference" about the 17th.⁷ Pray with me & perhaps it will happen—

All my heart devotion is Yours—Always—Chester

¹ On the combat artist Lieutenant Commander Albert Murray, see also Nimitz to Catherine, 6 January 1945, p. 106.

² Lieutenant Commander Chester W. Nimitz Jr., USN, was awarded the Navy Cross on 24 December 1944 “for distinguishing himself by extraordinary heroism in action against the enemy as Commanding Officer of the United States Submarine HADDO on the Seventh War Patrol of that vessel in enemy controlled waters during the period 8 August 1944 to 5 October 1944.” On those patrols, *Haddo* was credited with sinking two Japanese destroyers and a large armed escort vessel, damaging a third destroyer, and sinking two cargo vessels and a transport. Chester Nimitz Jr. also received three Silver Star Medals for his actions aboard the submarines *Sturgeon* and *Bluefish* during the war. Admiral Nimitz witnessed the ceremony in which Chester Nimitz Jr. received one of the Silver Star Medals on 28 January 1943. See Chester W. Nimitz, Jr., “RADM Chester W. Nimitz, Jr., USN (RET.),” interview by Evelyn M. Cherpak on 6 November 2001 in Newport, RI (Washington, DC: Naval Historical Foundation, 2002), 3.

³ On Nimitz’s address to the Poor Richard Club, see also Nimitz to Catherine, 6 January 1945, p. 108.

⁴ Lieutenant Vernon F. Lyon, USNR, assistant press officer, CINCPAC staff.

⁵ Eliza Lefferts Cooke was married to Charles Montague Cooke Jr., scion of a wealthy Hawaiian family and a noted expert on mollusks.

⁶ Dr. Guy C. Milnor, a noted obstetrician, and his wife, Nell Poersel Milnor.

⁷ For more on this conference, see Nimitz to Catherine, 6 January 1945, p. 108; p. 109, n. 18.



[Oahu] Monday afternoon—

8 January ’45

Best Beloved:—

As you will note from the enclosed reply to Junior—this is an important date far west of us—and Junior is in the thick of it.¹ Our prayers and thoughts are with him and his many fellow Americans out there. Before this letter reaches you—the radio & press will explain the day’s significance.² Also—before you get this you will receive a box of flowers from your Best Bel—. Our old friend Glenn Davis³ (now Rear Ad) will deliver them to Marshall Smith⁴ tomorrow forenoon. Frank Atherton⁵ phoned me that he wanted to give me some orchids so here they are. I know you are not enthusiastic over orchids—but am sure you can use them to good advantage with your friends and some of your patients. A Christmas card has just come in from Austria with the following address on the envelope—“FULL REAL ADMIRAL MRS. NIMITZ.” So you see that you are promoted by Austria. Our picnic supper on the “*Catherine*” was pleasant—and fortunately the water just outside the entrance channel was smooth, because the “*Catherine*”—although very sea worthy—is also very lively. As it was—our steward—Ramirez—who served our sandwiches—was nearly seasick from the motion caused by passing ships. I took along—Lt. Cmdr Murray, USNR—the artist—who greatly enjoyed it. I am still hopeful that today’s mail will bring me a letter from you. Just as I placed yesterday’s letter in the mail for you—a large fat envelope from arrived—but contained no let-

ter—only Esson Gale’s story. I have just sent Gale a dispatch telling him there were no objections to his story—which our censors say is excellent. I have not yet had a chance to read it. Am having dinner tonight with General Buckner at Schofield [Barracks]—a long ride—but I feel that I must be courteous to one of my senior Army officers—particularly as he asked me to set the day. On Wednesday forenoon, I am to have my annual physical exam—which has no terrors for me—as I feel that I am in good health. A little soft—perhaps—from lack of exercise—but otherwise OK.— More later—Must do some papers & dispatches. 500 pm Am afraid I will not have a letter from you today as it is now approaching the time for last mail to have arrived. Not much news today—but by 930 pm when I return from Buckner’s dinner—I hope to commence receiving real news. Keep well—Precious Mine & do not over work. I need you too much to have you sick or overtired. All my love, Kisses & devotion are yours—always—Ever your

Chester

¹ Commander James T. “Junior” Lay, USN, Nimitz’s future son-in-law and a staff member of Vice Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinson, Commander, III Amphibious Force. Lay was likely then aboard Wilkinson’s flagship, the amphibious force flagship *Mount Olympus* (AGC-8), during the invasion of Luzon at Lingayen Gulf on 9 January 1945.

² American soldiers began landing on the island of Luzon, the largest island in the Philippines, as part of Operation Mike on 9 January 1945.

³ Rear Admiral Glenn B. Davis, USN, decorated former commander of Battleship Division 8. Previously, Davis commanded the battleship *Washington* (BB-56) during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal on 15 November 1942 and received the Navy Cross for sinking the Japanese battleship *Kirishima* in that action. He was scheduled to return to the United States in late 1944, but after Admiral William Halsey sailed his fleet into Typhoon Cobra, Nimitz appointed Davis to the three-man court of inquiry that recommended Halsey be court-martialed. Fleet Admiral Ernest King declined to subject the popular Halsey to a public trial. See Buell, *Master of Sea Power*, 492; Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 132; and William G. Blair, “Adm. Glenn Davis, War Hero,” *New York Times*, 14 September 1984.

⁴ Lieutenant Marshall Smith, former aide to Vice Admiral John Greenslade, Commander, Western Sea Frontier, from 1942–1944.

⁵ Frank C. Atherton, Honolulu business executive and philanthropist.



[Oahu] Tuesday afternoon—

9 January ’45

Darling Mine:

The receipt at noon today of your Jan 3 letter (6 days travel) greatly relieved my mind, because I feared you had become ill. In case you ever do become seriously ill (which I pray will not happen) please have Marshall Smith or [Royal] Ingersoll¹ send me a dispatch at once. I would love to see Mary in her new outfit. The coat etc sound very attractive and I am glad Mary is pleased. You will never regret aiding or

sponsoring the Navy Wives Club²—and I am sure those women & their husbands appreciate your interest. The little things I have been able to do from time to time for enlisted men have been returned to me many thousand fold. It is a constant satisfaction to me to see among our officers many of my enlisted men of former years. One—Capt M. R. Tawes,³ USNR (Canaga knows him well) has just come & gone After a pleasant call. He was on the *Ohio* with me and is now the captain of a fine new transport. You will find increasing pleasure and satisfaction over the years—in the good will you have built up among the men and families you are now helping. You can probably get some help—and at least some data—from the District P.R.O. (public relations officer) for the preparation of your new talks for returning Veterans. I returned at 9³⁰ pm last night from a rather dull dinner at Schofield with Buckner—& spent an hour in my HQ waiting for news from Lingayen Gulf (Luzon)—which never came.⁴ Today I heard that MacA & the President are to address⁵ the country—D M. from his beachhead & FDR⁶ from Washington—but we were unable to hear the broadcast here. I will expect it to be rebroadcast tonight. Also last night I read Esson Gale's article on China and found it as interesting as you did. Plans have been put into motion that I hope will result in big things by the end of the week. If we are as successful as I plan & hope for—it will have a decided effect in the time to defeat the Japs.⁷ I am sending you by regular mail two copies of a magazine (in French) with Eisenhower's picture on the cover & mine in color on page 9—Am also putting in the next "Misc" Envelope several copies of four new pictures in my new rank for you to distribute as you see fit. Received a nice letter from C W Jr—which I enclose. He sounds happy and busy. Tomorrow is Lamar's birthday—and I am giving him the pencil tie clasp which [Mouney] Pfefferkorn⁸ sent me—which by the way had worn down to brass and was broken. I have had it repaired & replated and it solves for me a very difficult problem of presents—which I never have time to buy. I had worn it a year—and Lamar had always admired it—and I am sure Pfefferkorn will not mind. If ever you see clasps like that in the ships service stores at Alameda or Oak Knoll Hospital—& if they are not too expensive—I will buy a half dozen or so—for use as birthday presents for principal members of my staff. Now Precious Mine, must get to work again. I am so relieved to have received your letters. Keep well & don't over work—Ever your devoted
Chester

¹ Admiral Royal Ingersoll, USN, Commander, Western Sea Frontier, since November 1944 and former Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet (January 1942–November 1944).

² Navy Wives Club of America (NWCA), a nonprofit organization founded on 3 June 1936 to serve the spouses of enlisted Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard service members. The stated purpose of the organization is to unite all sea service enlisted spouses through friendship, assistance, and welfare for their families and communities. Its motto is "They also serve, who stay and wait."

³ Captain Montford R. Tawes, USNR, commanding officer of the transport *Admiral R. E. Coontz* (AP-122) from November 1944 to March 1946.

⁴ The Allied landing on Luzon in Lingayen Gulf on 9 January 1945 encountered light resistance ashore, but the invasion fleet suffered repeated attacks from Japanese kamikazes and assault demolition boats. The battleship *Mississippi*, the light cruiser *Columbia* (CL-56), the destroyer escort *Hodges* (DE-231), and the Australian heavy cruiser HMAS *Australia* were all damaged by kamikazes while assault demolition boats damaged a transport and two tank landing ships (LSTs). Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 287.

⁵ MacArthur officially announced the Allied landing on Luzon around noon on 9 January, according to the *New York Times*. Nimitz issued communiques of his own on 9 and 10 January that described the damage inflicted on Japanese forces by the Navy. See “Formosa Battered by Carriers, B-29s,” *New York Times*, 10 January 1945.

⁶ President Roosevelt, who served in office from March 1933 until his death on 12 April 1945.

⁷ Possibly a reference to raids conducted by Task Force 38 on Japanese shipping and installations along the China coast. Task Force 38 entered the South China Sea on 9 January 1945 and attacked installations at Hong Kong and Hainan Island on 16 January. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 289.

⁸ Mouney Pfefferkorn, a retired chief yeoman in the U.S. Navy. Pfefferkorn immigrated to the United States from Austria and served in the Navy from 1902 to 1906. He then worked for First National Bank in San Diego for 50 years, retiring as vice president of the bank’s foreign investments division in 1956. Pfefferkorn actively supported the Navy’s presence in San Diego and campaigned for the creation of North Island Navy Base in Coronado, California. See Amanda Hughes, “Guide to the Mouney Pfefferkorn Papers MS 261,” Online Archive of California, accessed 6 March 2023, https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c86d5tsn/entire_text/.



[Oahu] Wednesday

10 January 45

Best Beloved:—

I hope you were as thrilled over MacA’s communique announcing landings in Luzon as I was.¹ It was particularly pleasing to hear that we suffered only minor losses over the beaches—which is usually the toughest part of the initial assault. I hope and believe the Island can be over run in a reasonably short time, and as soon as our ships can use Manila Bay—they can operate towards the China Coast to cut the shipping lanes to the Netherlands East Indies—where the Japs look for the bulk of their oil. Before the end of the week I look for big news from our own fleet activities in the far west. The Lord is truly on our side when he stages a damaging Earth quake on Dec 7—Pearl Harbor Anniversary Day.² We hope and believe that quake caused real damage. You would be surprised to hear how frequently people write me to drop block busters from planes into Fujiyama³ to start an irruption [*sic*]. When we get close enough—we might try it as a scientific experiment but for the present we have better targets. An officer of Bupers going to the coast tonight will take along the Artist—Murray’s working sketch & leave it with Marshall Smith or Boone—to deliver to you. I hope you like it. He seems to draw easier than Draper.⁴ I will also send along a small envelope of more cards—pictures & letters. Among the pictures are two showing the view from my new HQ—which I think you will

like. Do not let them be published. I also enclose a number of the new pictures of my new rank for you to distribute as you like. I will autograph one for Canaga when I come. Incidentally—there is no news yet about a conference—but I still hope for it about 17 or 18 January. Now to work—more later. 5 pm—What a day! My “senile”—physical examination took two hours and I am pronounced in excellent physical condition. What took so long was a cardiograph reading of my heart—something I had never had before—but which is now a compulsory part of every flag officer’s physical examination. Everything is OK & you can think of your best bet as being good for at least another year. There must be something haywire with our mail service—as your last letter took 6 days & there is no mail from you today. Neither have I heard from McMorris who has now been away 10 days. Hope Mrs. McM is not too ill. Now my Precious—bye bye until tomorrow. All my love Kisses and devotion are yours. Keep Cheerful & well. Ever your own

Chester

¹ See preceding letter.

² A reference to the Tonakai earthquake, which occurred on 7 December 1944 off the coast of Wakayama Prefecture, Japan. The resulting tsunami killed more than 1,200 people. See “Disastrous Quake in Central Japan,” *New York Times*, 8 December 1944.

³ Mount Fuji, an active stratovolcano and the highest mountain in Japan. It is located about 62 miles southwest of Tokyo.

⁴ For other mentions of the combat artists Lieutenant Commander Albert K. Murray and Lieutenant Commander William F. Draper, see Nimitz to Catherine, 6 January 1945, p. 106; and Nimitz to Catherine, 7 January 1945, p. 111.



[Oahu] Thursday—

11 Jan 45

Darling Mine:—

The enclosed clipping from last night’s *Star Bulletin* is particularly pleasing to me because I have gone far out of my way in order to produce good relations and to cooperate with D. M. So far it looks as if the Luzon invasion is doing alright and I see no reason why it will not be successful—as D. M. has large numbers of troops at his disposal. I now look forward to early release of the ships and troops I have loaned him—so I can go ahead with my operations. I wish I could sit in on a Jap high Command Conference—without being caught. I’ll wager the Japanese admirals and generals are very unhappy about the future. More later. Last night the Walker’s gave Lamar a surprise birthday dinner—and had present four lovely young Honolulu girls—all of whom gave him some little trinket. It was a profitable birthday for Hal as he made quite a haul. Anderson & I were also invited. Lamar

was tremendously pleased with the pencil—tie clasp—which is now ever so much handsomer than when I first received it. At noon today I received your most welcome letters of 4 and 5 January—and am glad to know you are well—although tremendously busy. Am glad your new assistants are proving up so well & I look to the time when you can spend more time at home in doing the things you like—painting—for instance. The Canaga family look well and happy in the news photo of the launching. I enclose two copies of a propaganda leaflet our planes drop on Japanese troops. Its appearance as money is supposed to induce the Japs, at least, to pick up the leaflets. Enclosed also is a translation of the writing. Please send one to Mary in your next letter. How nice of the Spicers to take her to the Museum. Incidentally—when I met Mr. & Mrs. Montague Cooke at Pat Cooke’s wedding last Saturday, I mentioned Mary’s hobby & that Spicer was taking her to the Museum. Mr. Cooke—said he knew Spicer well—& that S. “was one of his boys”. Apparently Mr. Cooke is also a shell specialist. Ask Spicer about him. I envy you the cold weather & hope to experience some of it before going to my next base—where it is much warmer than here. Mak [Makalapa] will make a good watch dog—and my sentries (already out there) are good and all are armed. Am glad the old clock is really keeping good time & I knew you would like the radium front. Am afraid there is too much radium to make the figures easily seen. The C.B.’s can do anything. Don’t you like to hear [William] Ewing?¹ He and his wife are delightful—and I am sure you will meet them some day. He is my favorite radio commentator—not just because he is friendly to me—but because he is accurate and free from extravagant statements. At 524 pm today I am to make a 3 minute talk on *March of Time* [radio] Program²—which I hope you can hear. It should be 754 pm in Berkeley when I start. With my speech writer, Lyons, now returned from the west, I do not mind doing these things. I shall await with great interest your letter describing your visit to the real estate division that has so captured Marshall Smith’s enthusiasm. I am sure that any land in the Bay area that has not been tremendously boomed in value—will be a good investment—so if you see lots that attract you buy them—if only as an investment. The Bay Area will continue to grow for many years—and land will become more & more dear. The local disbursing officer has not yet received instructions from the Bureau of S & A [Supplies and Accounts]—as how to pay me in the increased rank—but the additional pay will arrive eventually (\$23300 per mo) & will be sent to you. Now my Precious—I’ll get back to work—Keep well & Cheerful. All my hearts devotion is yours & I miss you—oh so much—Ever your own

Chester

¹ William H. Ewing, radio commentator and reporter for the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*.

²The *March of Time* radio newsreel debuted on 6 March 1931 on CBS Radio and was sponsored by Time Inc. The series offered dramatized accounts and reenactments of the news. In 1942, the program became a regular news broadcast based on reports from *Time* correspondents. The program was discontinued in 1945. Nimitz spoke on the program several times during the war. For a transcript of his remarks on the program on 24 August 1944 about the progress of the Pacific War, see Navy Department, "Memorandum to the Press," 24 August 1944, box 596, folder 1, Officer Biographies, NHHC.



[*Oahu*] noon Friday—

12 January '45

Dearest Mine:—

During a slight lull in the days business I can tell you how much I enjoyed your letter of 7 January Which has just arrived. The site you describe in Marin County¹ sounds most attractive, and I am willing to accept your judgement now—without waiting to see it myself—provided it completely pleases you—and provided there will be an ample water supply available for anything we wish to plant. I suggest you, at least, go through all the preliminary moves of meeting the owner—discussing terms of purchase, taxes, access to highways etc etc. Also possible building costs etc. For years to come our Navy will maintain a great fleet in the Pacific Ocean and it is likely that our Children will gravitate in that direction. In any event—we can always sell property that is so desirable and so close to S.F. if we found we could not live there. It sounds very interesting and Exciting to me—and if you could be happy there—I am sure I could also. Marshall Smith would be a fine neighbor. I will keep in mind what you say about future duty for him, and if a place turns up—will get in touch with Ingersoll & Smith. Am pleased to hear that Mary returns to the Convent so happily but am sorry she has another boil. Can not the doctors kill the infection with penicillin or some of the new sulpha drugs? Please keep after the Oak Knoll doctors in this matter. I hate to think of her being subject to re curring boils. Bill Moore² has been in my vicinity for some days and planned to call this forenoon but his ship was ordered out suddenly on a job. He will be back in a week or so and plans to see me then. Just as I was about to go to the broadcasting booth yesterday evening to participate in the *March of Time* program I received a flash report that our carrier aircraft were attacking the Japs on the French Indo China Coast. I included that information in my broadcast as just news³—and I hope you heard it. I will probably be panned by the radio nets that did not have the benefit of that item but—after all—my responsibility is to the people and not to the various networks. I am terribly disappointed that our activities on the French Indo China Coast did not net us more combatant Enemy Ships & I had hoped to find all there were in the South China Sea—and to hear they were destroyed—So we could get ahead with other plans. However—we did find several fat convoys—& our force sank at

least 25 ships & knocked down a number of planes—all of which was reported in our communique this morning.³ More later. Must handle mail. 4:30 pm—Who do you suppose has just called on me—! Ensign Sidney Sargent. He looks active & spry and is a communication officer under instructions. He will wind up in true amphibious staff communication organization in future operations & will have plenty of hard work. I don't remember what he looked like before—but imagine he has benefitted by his Navy Experience—Which included a 3 months communications course at Harvard. He sends you his best wishes. Young [Charles] Kirkpatrick⁴ (Cmdr). Who was King's aide—just called. He is a splendid officer and a “doer.” He is now C.O. of a destroyer-minesweeper. I get great pleasure from seeing so many of the C.O.'s each day—and never begrudge the time it takes to talk with them. Darling I have just re read your letter and have become infected with Smith's and your enthusiasm over the land you visited. We would of course like to own the entire knoll—all 2 1/2 acres—One thing certain about real estate is that it will always be there and even if it shrinks in value—it will shrink in size. If it should develop that I cannot come for a conference in January—(which I hope will not be the case)—do not hesitate to ask Mr Dougherty for terms & buy it. Am enclosing an item for our 1944 income tax deduction—for “mess bill in 1944” or “meals away from home”—which you can claim for me. It will not reduce the tax much—but it is a legitimate deduction & may result in a \$25—savings. Now, Dearest and Best, I will close—having run out of news. Keep cheerful & by all means take it easy & do more things you like—such as painting—All my love—Kisses and devotion are Yours—

Ever your own

Chester

I still have hope that the next 48 hours will find us the Jap navy to the west of the P. I.⁵

¹ Marin County, California, a county in Northern California, located across the Golden Gate Strait from San Francisco.

² Commander William B. Moore, USN, commanding officer of the destroyer *Terry* (DD-513) from November 1944 to September 1945. *Terry* completed an overhaul at Mare Island Naval Shipyard in December 1944 and was in the vicinity of Hawaii conducting training exercises from 24 December 1944 until 28 January 1945. In January 1945, the ship departed Hawaii to take part in the invasion of Iwo Jima. During the invasion, *Terry* suffered a direct hit from a shore battery that killed 12 sailors aboard and wounded 18. See “USS *Terry* – War History,” World War II Diaries, Other Operational Records and Histories, Records of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Record Group 38, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/77671717>.

³ Nimitz is referring here to Admiral Halsey's Task Force 38, which entered the South China Sea on 9 January to conduct raids on Japanese shipping, the French Indochina coast (present-day Vietnam), Formosa, and the coast of China. Nimitz had hoped Halsey's ships would locate and sink two Japanese hybrid battleship-carriers, but Task Force 38 failed to locate them. On 12 January, Halsey reported sinking 25 Japanese ships and destroying 45 aircraft. See Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 358; and “Command Summary,” 11 January 1945, vol. 6, p. 2508, box 6, Series 1: Command Summary & Combined Chiefs of Staff Books, 1941–1945, Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHC.

⁴ Commander Charles C. Kirkpatrick, commanding officer of the light minelayer *Shea* (DM-30) from October 1944 to July 1945. Kirkpatrick previously served as commanding officer of the submarine *Triton* (SS-201) (March 1942–February 1943) and aide and flag lieutenant to Admiral Ernest J. King (February 1943–June 1944). For Kirkpatrick's actions while in command of *Triton*, he received the Navy Cross, Gold Star in lieu of a second Navy Cross, and Gold Star in lieu of a third Navy Cross for sinking a total of 10 Japanese merchant ships, 1 tanker, 2 warships, and 1 submarine. Kirkpatrick also received the Army Distinguished Service Cross, the Legion of Merit, and the Silver Star Medal. Prior to Rear Admiral Kirkpatrick's retirement in June 1964, he served as superintendent, U.S. Naval Academy. See Navy Office of Information, "Rear Admiral Charles Cochran Kirkpatrick, United States Navy, Retired," 2 July 1964, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

⁵ A reference to Halsey's Task Force 38, which entered the South China Sea on 9 January 1945 in order to raid Japanese shipping and installations on the China and French Indochina coast. Task Force 38 departed the South China Sea on 20 January.



[Oahu] Saturday afternoon—

13 Jan 45—

Best Beloved—

What a haul of mail I received this forenoon! Your letters of 8 and 9 January with the many enclosures. All were greatly enjoyed—you may be sure of that. The letter from Burnsweig,¹ Rm 1c [radioman first class] was fine and I am saving it for you. All our children sound busy and happy—which is as it should be. To help meet Nancy's Expenses I will send you in my 16 January letter a check for \$40400 which is the usual half month pay check plus the back pay on my extra money allowance to mid January. You can now count on the pay checks—being about \$31000 each time instead of about \$19400, and only occasionally will I hold one back to keep my local account at a safe level. When I move forward I will, of course, keep a local Checking account in Oahu—as the banking facilities at my advanced HQ will be non existent for some time to come. Had I known that a message to the Red Cross in your locality would save you work I would have cheerfully sent one—but I had gathered from your letters that you had little enthusiasm for that Organization in your vicinity—so I decided to send no message. If you still want it & there is time—have Marshall Smith send me a dispatch. Incidentally whenever such messages are wanted & are useful—have Ingersoll or Smith send me the word and I will be happy to help. Am glad you met Eller who is a favorite of mine. He is an excellent naval officer—and also an excellent writer and author. He has more than once won the U.S. Naval Institute prize for best articles. Thank you—[redacted] for having the service uniform fixed. I have had 2 service coats and one overcoat fixed here at the Sub Base, so can appear in uniform from now on. Hope Boone's relief will be as capable and obliging as he is himself. Also hope he enjoys his can of coffee. Have heard from McMorris—that Mrs. McM is better—and that he will soon return. You are wise in not letting Mrs. McC. come back as an assistant—&

don't worry about their displeasure. Nothing that Dr McC can do will be any more than what he has already done according to your description of his [redacted] & performance of duty. I am glad you liked the orchids. Mr. Atherton is always so generous & offers them to me—when ever they are in bloom. So also does Wilhelmina Tenney—and there is a professional rivalry between those two as to who has the best orchids. I shall see Mr. A. [Atherton] Monday evening and thank him personally. I am to address the Honolulu Social Science Group (all elderly business men who have elected me an honorary member) at Walter Dillingham's house Tuesday evening at 730 on a naval subject which I have decided will be Progress of the Pacific War—. I can do that with very little preparation as it is constantly on my mind. I am anxiously awaiting news of further developments in the far west, but do not expect much for a couple of days because there is another typhoon working its way across the South China Sea & that will definitely interfere. I always get my first information about MacA's operations ashore from the newspapers—and from all I can see—things are still progressing satisfactorily. I hope & pray our losses will be small—because I fear our European losses are large. I see from the papers that the Japanese Joint Chiefs of Staff or—whatever corresponds to that organization—has been holding long meetings—Again I would like to eavesdrop on that conference.² It should be interesting. Today I was informed that my name was in King George's³ Honors List for the following—"Honorary Knight Grand Cross of the Bath (Military)"⁴—Whatever that means. From the other names on the list—Spruance, [Richmond Kelly] Turner⁵—Hill—Holland Smith,⁶ & Julian Smith—I realize that it was Sir Philip Mitchell's recommendation that did it—for the liberation of the British Islands in the Pacific. I wonder what—if any—prerequisites there will be. Ask the Fishers what it all means. You will probably have the news from the papers before you get this. Am going to have a swim both today & early tomorrow at Muliwai—my first in two weeks. Anderson—Lamar & I will leave here about 5pm & return early tomorrow morning. My contribution to Sandy Walkers steak supper will be an apple pie baked by Ramirez—whose pies are excellent. Now my Precious—I must get back to mail & dispatches. Keep well & Cheerful—All my hearts devotion love & Kisses—are yours

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Possibly Radioman First Class Lewis Burnsweig, USN. Burnsweig was serving aboard the cargo ship *Calamares* (AF-18) in August 1945.

² On 13 January 1945, the *New York Times* reported that a German broadcast announced that "all members of the Japanese General Staff, including those now in battle zones, had been summoned to confer tomorrow with the Premier, Gen. Kuniaki Koiso." "3 Convoys Pictured in Luzon Landings," *New York Times*, 13 January 1945.

³ George VI, king of the United Kingdom.

⁴ Knights Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Military Division, the highest class in the British order of knighthood. The order was established by King George I in 1725 and awarded for military service or civilian merit. Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser invested Nimitz with the order on 10 August 1945 aboard the British battleship HMS *Duke of York*. For coverage of the event, see "Britain Is Doubling Pacific Navy Force," *New York Times*, 14 August 1945.

⁵ Vice Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, USN, Commander, Amphibious Forces, Pacific (April 1944–November 1945). Turner previously served as director of the War Plans Division in the Office of the CNO from October 1940 to February 1942. From December 1941 to June 1942, Turner had additional duty as assistant chief of staff to COMINCH. On 18 July 1942, Turner became Commander, Amphibious Force, South Pacific Force. In August 1943, he was designated Commander, V Amphibious Force, Pacific, and the following April was elevated to the position of Commander, Amphibious Forces, Pacific. Turner received the Navy Cross for heroism during the initial U.S. invasion of the islands of Guadalcanal, Florida, Tulagi, Gavutu, and Tanambogo on 7 August 1942. Turner was involved in most Allied landings in the Pacific during World War II. For a recent study of his role in formulating war plans, see Shawn Woodford, Timothy Francis, and Peter Luebke, *Richmond Kelly Turner: Planning the Pacific War* (Washington, DC: NHHC, 2021). See also Navy Office of Information, "Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, United States Navy, Deceased," 27 February 1961, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

⁶ Lieutenant General Holland McTyeire "Howlin' Mad" Smith, USMC, Commander, Task Force 56, in the Battle of Iwo Jima. In June 1941, Smith helped create the Amphibious Force, Atlantic Fleet, which provided initial training in amphibious warfare to the 1st Marine Division, the 1st Infantry Division, and the 9th Infantry Division. Beginning in August 1942, he assumed command of the Amphibious Corps, Pacific Fleet, later the V Amphibious Corps. In this capacity, Smith oversaw the amphibious training of the 2nd Marine Division, 3rd Marine Division, and 7th Infantry Division. Smith then played an important role in planning the invasions of Tarawa and the Gilbert Islands. He was named Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, in August 1944 and also commanded Task Force 56 during the Battle of Iwo Jima. See Navy Biographies Branch, "General Holland M. Smith, USMC (Retired)," 25 July 1955, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.



[*Oahu*] Sunday

14 January '45

Sweetheart Mine:—

Your fine letter of 10 January was waiting for me at 930 this morning when I returned from an overnight stay at Muliwai—where I got evening and morning swims & walks and a good nights sleep—though no sun baths. I also picked up four more Jap fisherman balls & now have six to add to your collection. Major Rice and Peter Faye were also there—in addition to my two aides—Anderson & Lamar. We had fish chowder & an outdoor cooked steak. Peter Faye's wife—lives in Berkeley just below the Claremont Hotel & may call on you. Today at 5 pm Calhoun's staff are giving a cocktail party for him in one of our B.O.Q.s and I am going for a few minutes as I am devoted to Bill Calhoun—than whom—there is no more loyal and hardworking & efficient officer. He will soon relieve John Henry Newton¹ as Comdr. South Pacific Force & Area & he is broken hearted at the thought of leaving my vicinity. He has just been in to show me a beautiful belt buckle with a silver leaf on it (Comdr rank) which he is sending C. W. Jr for his birthday. He got

the idea from a similar belt buckle I am sending C W Jr for his birthday—but mine has on it a gold submarine device. Both buckles are suitably engraved and I am sure C W Jr will love wearing them. I liked the letter from Jennings to you—and am saving it for you. You are due to get many such letters—Dearest—for the help you are giving to so many people—and you deserve their gratitude. If you will send me the names of any of your OPD² nurses that will be in my vicinity—who you would like invited to my mess for a meal, I shall be happy to have them. I will, of course, ask the chief nurse of the hospital at the same time—as has been the case on the few occasions I've had nurses at my table. My new HQ. are far removed from the hospitals—but the roads will be good and I can always provide the transportation. The "*Catherine*" is hauled out on the ways to have her name printed on properly—and some time tomorrow or the next day she will be photographed & I will send you both large & small pictures of her. I have accumulated fishing tackle etc and need only to find fish out there. Horra—already there—says fish are scarce—but also added that he had had little time to look for good places. I hope I will not be too busy for an occasional fishing trip. The boat will be made available to senior officers to use—and I hope she will be in constant use as a recreational facility. My regular barge will be left here. The boat you saw on Callaghan's ship will be used as a barge when I can be aboard of her—which will be seldom—until the war has progressed much further than at present. We are still looking for our targets in the far west—but up to the moment they remain hidden.³ You ask what I would like for my birthday—some more of those tan short socks—size 12—and any little souvenir of you—a new picture perhaps—or whatever you like—also an assortment of flower seeds that you think might grow in the tropics. What I would like most of all would be to be with you on 24 Feb or to have you with me on that and all succeeding days. That would be tops—and it will be something we can look forward to. I share your high opinion of the Ide's⁴ and hope he stays in the Navy. He is an excellent officer. Am glad you gave her an orchid sprig. Am glad you will have your car back soon and I hope it will now be reliable. Am sorry for the young submarine officer who has T.B. [tuberculosis] Give him my best wishes for a complete recovery. That can happen because it has happened before. I am so pleased to hear that Mrs. Snell is such an efficient assistant. You did well to reject Mrs. McCs offer to help. No news yet of a conference but there is still hope. Tomorrow I have another big shot⁵ (civilian) from the Navy Dept—with a delegation of six coming out for a two day stay with me. He has been out here before—So my next two days will be well taken up. Now—Dearest Mine—I must do some paper work & dispatches. All my hearts devotion to you—I hope & pray I will see you in the next two weeks—I hope to hold you in my arms—close.

Keep cheerful & well—

Ever your own Chester

The artist—Murray—is in front of me—painting as I work.

¹ Rear Admiral John H. Newton, USN, Commander, South Pacific Area, 16 June 1944–March 1945.

² Possibly outpatient department.

³ Nimitz is referring to Admiral William Halsey's Task Force 38 (part of the Third Fleet), which raided Japanese shipping and installations in the South China Sea from 9 January to 20 January 1945. On 14 January, CINCPAC's "Command Summary" recorded that the Third Fleet had encountered "bad weather, which probably prevented extensive damage to shipping concentrations which have been reported in the target area the past few days." It additionally noted, "A strike is scheduled by Task Force 38 on Hong Kong on the 16th and also a sweep of Hainan is likewise scheduled the same day." "Command Summary," 14 January 1945, vol. 6, p. 2513, box 6, Series 1: Command Summary & Combined Chiefs of Staff Books, 1941–1945, Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHC.

⁴ Probably Lieutenant Commander John Jay Ide, USNR.

⁵ Nimitz is referring to Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air Artemus Lamb Gates. See Nimitz to Catherine, 16 January 1945, below.



[Oahu] Tuesday—

16 January '45

Darling Mine:—

I could not write yesterday because my time was completely taken up with normal work and the visiting delegation from Washington—and my address before the social science group at Walter Dillingham's last night. Mr. G's¹ [Artemus Gates's] party includes Jake Fitch—and about four others—and at my luncheon for Mr. G. yesterday—I had a total of 26 top ranking officers of all services. G. & Fitch are my house guests until they leave which will be soon. I learn from F. [Fitch] that there is a probability that the next conference² will be in Wash—In which case I would ask for and expect to get authority for you to accompany me in my plane—which is the same size as the one we used last March to cross the country. Also—that if a conference is held—it will probably be before the end of the month. So—Darling Mine—get your winter clothes ready and have a bag partially packed so you can move rapidly when & if the chance comes. It would be nice to see the girls before Nancy leaves—or if she has gone—you could take a quick trip to N.Y. and maybe I could go too. Yesterday I received your Jan 6 letter—postmarked 7 Jan in Berkeley—but it did not arrive here until 15 Jan. I learned in that letter about Mary's new siege of boils. Am sorry she must go thru that trial again—& hope you can get the doctors to try penicillin or some of the other drugs to kill the infection. I share your view regarding Sen. [Wallace] White³ and his ideas about peace. He is not a helpful citizen when he is willing to accept anything less than absolute surrender. Young Ike Kidd⁴ came by to call yesterday but I was too occupied in conferences

with G. & his party & could not see him. He will be back in a few days. G. & his party are inspecting—by air—the various Near by Islands today and will return in the late afternoon— Then I am going to accompany him—G. to dinner with General Harmon—the Army Air Force Comdr in my Area. From there—G & his party will depart the area. The “*Catherine*” has been photographed and I should have the pictures in a day or so. I am anxious to have you see your boat—for she is a beauty. Later—Your January 11 letter has just arrived—although you dated it “June 11.—which is making time fly really quite rapidly!! Also the recording has finally arrived, and I can hardly wait for the end of the day so I can go to my quarters to play it. Will give you a report on it in my next letter. Now that Mary is no longer interested in X Mas cards I’ll toss out lots I have received recently unless the card contains something interesting or amusing. Have just received from the Prime Minister at London “Pray accept my warmest congratulations on the honor conferred upon you by the King. With all best wishes for continued victories. Winston Churchill”—to which Admiral [James] Somerville⁵ RN [Royal Navy]—in Wash—added his heartiest congratulations. Lamar will address you here after as “Lady Catherine”—and you may expect to receive mail under that title from time to time—and unless I miss my guess—our Washington daughter will so address you. Captain [Desmond] Tufnell⁶—RN—on my staff—was quick to inform me—you were now “Lady Catherine.” Thanks a million Darling—for having the coat fixed. Hope I can come soon to wear it for you. My card plate was easily changed & I enclose a sample card—& when I come—will have a package of new cards for you. In the mean time—if we’re to use my cards just write “Fleet”—in front of the “Admiral.” Am sorry you will lose your new wave so soon—and hope the conception does not take place as promptly as the young couple expects. That is one reason I am with holding my approval to the employment of Waves in my H.Q. in Pearl or at any of the Fleet activities as distinguished from the District activities. Our clerical help must be dependable and ready to move from place to place on short notice & I know I could not count on that kind of reliability with waves.⁷ I have just been handed a sample sheet of new stationary by Lamar—so will continue my letter on that sheet to show you how it looks. The news from P. I. continues very good—suspiciously so. Some of my friends think the Japs are setting a trap—but I believe their lack of resistance is due to surprise, paralyzed rail & road communications due to bombing and guerilla activities, and probably also—to the fact that there may not be as many Japs on Luzon as we thought.⁸ Perhaps—some of the reinforcements sent to Leyte came from Luzon. Whatever it is—I hope & pray MacA reaches Manila & the Bay quickly & thereby relieves me of the necessity of keeping so many ships out there. I want to get along in my next move. The Japs have lost very heavily in precious shipping in the last week and the end is not yet. How glad I am to be on the other side! Am glad you will have your car back soon. Will hold this letter open

so I can enclose my big pay check—which has not yet reached my office. Am most happy to be able to send it. Bye bye Precious Mine—until tomorrow. Keep well & cheerful—All my love kisses & devotion go to you—my Lady Catherine—Ever your own Chester

[redacted]

\$404 00 Enclosed.

¹ Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air Artemus Lamb Gates. He became Undersecretary of the Navy on 3 July 1945.

² On this conference, see also Nimitz to Catherine, 6 January 1945, p. 109, n. 18.

³ Senator Wallace H. White Jr. (R-ME), in office 1931–1949.

⁴ Lieutenant Isaac C. Kidd Jr., USN, a 1942 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. Kidd previously served as a gunnery officer aboard a destroyer in the Allied invasions of Sicily and mainland Italy before transferring to the Pacific. Following the war, Kidd rose to the rank of admiral and served as Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, and supreme commander of NATO forces in the Atlantic. He was the son of Rear Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, Commander, Battleship Division 1. Rear Admiral Kidd's flagship was the battleship *Arizona* (BB-39), and he was the highest-ranking casualty of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Rear Admiral Kidd was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. See Wolfgang Saxon, "Isaac C. Kidd Jr., 79, Admiral and Expert on Maritime Law," *New York Times*, 4 July 1999.

⁵ Admiral Sir James Fownes Somerville, RN, head of the British naval delegation in Washington, DC.

⁶ Captain Desmond Nevill Cooper Tufnell, RN, British naval intelligence liaison officer, CINCPAC staff.

⁷ According to Nimitz's biographer Craig Symonds, Nimitz "believed that the presence of women in uniform was a distraction, and he banned WAVES from his headquarters and even from the Hawaiian Islands." While Catherine Nimitz supported the WAVES serving in the United States, she too is reported to have "feared that their presence in Hawaii would create a volatile social environment" and result in more instances of extramarital sex. Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 236.

⁸ The U.S. Sixth Army doubled the size of its beachhead on Luzon between 11 January and 17 January 1945. General Tomoyuki Yamashita did not launch major Japanese counteroffensives against the beachhead but rather conducted only local counterattacks while he moved supplies north to the Shobu Group's redoubt. His forces continued to hold out until the official Japanese surrender announcement in August 1945. See Robert Ross Smith, *The War in the Pacific: Triumph in the Philippines*, United States Army in World War II (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1963), 112.



[Oahu] Noon Wednesday

17 January '45

Darling Mine:

Do you remember P. K. Fischler¹—who was one of my BuNav [Bureau of Navigation] officers? He is now a captain and is here with a beautiful new ship which I am going to look over in the course of the afternoon.² He sends you his best wishes. Mr. G. and his visiting delegation got away last night after Harmon's dinner and I am now free to use my time for my local business. All these visitors are very considerate and very pleasant, but it does take time to look after them—particularly

if they are V.I.P.s. Also their presence forces me to eat lunch which I neither need nor want, and costs me my sunbath which I usually take during luncheon—back of my quarters. Darling I love your special recording of you—Mary and Freckles and have played the record over & over again. Please send me others when you have the opportunity. I love your message to me—most of all. Mak was present in the messroom this morning when Dr A & I played it—and from being a bored dog—he became intensely interested. If it can be done—I’ll have a snapshot made of Mak listening to Freckles vocal efforts. I have seen the pictures of the “*Catherine*” & have ordered a full set which I hope I can personally place in your hands soon—although—as yet—no peep from EJK about a conference. Am sure, however, he is waiting for the western naval picture to clarify (as I am also) before he sets a date. Although we did not find the naval targets we sought in the South China Sea—the Japs are poorer by about 200000 tons of merchant shipping by reason of Halsey’s visit³—and the Japs can ill afford to lose those ships. MacA’s operation in Luzon seems to be going ahead rapidly and smoothly. I hope it continues that way because that means—my own operations can go ahead sooner—or rather—without delays. More later—must work a bit. 2:30 pm—Your splendid letters of 12 and 14 January with the interesting and amusing enclosures from Admiral [Charles] Little,⁴ [Charles] Bittering,⁵ Mary and Nancy—have just arrived and have been greatly enjoyed. Murray—the artist—sitting in front of me and enjoyed Nancy’s letters and also Bittering’s—He does not know Bittering but has heard about him. You can tell Mary that I am definitely interested in the Hill Top and will want to see it when I next come to California (may it be soon!). Am sure to receive a note from Little about the G.C.B. [Knights Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath] award made by the King recently—so will wait for that before answering or rather acknowledging his congratulations. Col. [Alva] Englehart’s⁶ brother⁷—out here—is going on a very important mission for me in a few days—although I have not yet met him enough times to place him as the Berkeley Engleharts brother. I think even less of Lind than Englehart does—and am delighted he is not in my area. Thank you—Precious Mine—for having the coat refurbished. I think the girls’ jingle about my new star—Excellent. Your Jan 14 letter took only 3 days—Am glad you are having an occasional brilliant day—and I hope you can soon start a daily sun bath. There was not much sun here today—but I got a few minutes of good hot tanning. It relaxes and rests me—as I know it will you also—if you can find the time & the sun. The outpatient Dept—should have a place for both male & female patients to sunbathe, & I hope you will suggest the preparations of such places to Deering, and when they are prepared—use them during the luncheon hour. Now My Darling I must hustle this into the mail and go visit the beautiful ship that Fischler commands—Keep well and cheerful & pray with me—that the conference materializes soon.

All my love – kisses & devotion are yours

Ever your Chester

¹ Captain Peter Kalsch Fischler, USN, commanding officer of the cruiser *Alaska* (CB-1) from June 1944 to January 1945. Fischler previously served on the COMINCH staff (August 1942–February 1944). Fischler assumed command of Battleship Division 5 in January 1945, and his force provided fire support during the invasion of Iwo Jima from February to March 1945. Fischler reported for duty as assistant chief of staff for logistics on the CINCPAC staff in June 1945. See Navy Biographies Branch, “Rear Admiral Peter Kalsch Fischler, United States Navy, Deceased,” 25 July 1950, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

² Captain Fischler assumed command of the large cruiser *Alaska* after its commissioning at the Philadelphia Navy Yard on 17 June 1944. The ship arrived in Pearl Harbor on 13 January 1945. Fischler was promoted to rear admiral shortly thereafter and was relieved by Captain Kenneth Noble on 27 January. *Alaska* was laid down 10 days after the attack on Pearl Harbor and was the lead ship in a class of 30,000-ton cruisers. It was the first of those cruisers to join the fleet.

³ See also Nimitz to Catherine, 12 January 1945, p. 119, n. 3.

⁴ Admiral Sir Charles James Colebrooke Little, GCB GBE (Knight Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire), a senior officer in the British Royal Navy who had previously served as head of the British Admiralty Delegation in Washington, DC. In 1942, he became the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth.

⁵ Charles Bittinger, an artist who played a central role in the development of naval camouflage as a member of the U.S. Navy’s Camouflage Section during World War I.

⁶ Colonel Alva F. Englehart, Coast Artillery Corps, USA, professor of military science and tactics at the University of California, Berkeley, from 5 July 1944 until his death from a heart attack on 15 April 1945.

⁷ Brigadier General Francis A. Englehart, USA, ordnance officer, U.S. Army Forces, Middle Pacific.



The large cruiser *Alaska* (CB-1) pictured on 13 November 1944. (NHHC, NH 97126)



[Oahu] Thursday—afternoon—

18 January '45

Best Beloved—

At last you are going to have a look at the “*Catherine*.”—At least in a picture. I wish you could be with me at Guam to enjoy her. Perhaps—after the war the Department will let me ship her to whatever place I am assigned to duty. She would be a delight on the Potomac—and if I am given EJK’s job I’ll do just that.¹ I have many more pictures—showing interior arrangements etc—that will be placed in the “Miscellaneous” Envelope for you. Whichever copies you want enlarged—let me know. Christie called on me today on his way to his new job & left me the enclosed note which will interest you particularly his comment about our son. Am also enclosing a copy of a message I am sending to the Bohemian Club (on request—of course) which you may enjoy reading. Received today from Admiral R. E. Byrd—USN (ret) a card of season’s greetings and a pair of 5 star collar ornaments—which is very thoughtful and generous of him. Canaga sent me an amusing book of Peter Arno’s drawings called “*Man in the Shower*”²—Also received a third copy of Vol III of *Lee’s Lieutenants*³—one from an unknown sender & two (by mistake) from a young reserve officer Lt Jg Keech—who was formerly on my staff as a communicator. I gave one copy to the Walkers for Xmas. Also received a fine letter from Mary—illustrated but not dated. It came from the Convent and informed me (as she did you) that she could find the area of a trapezium. She draws and writes beautifully. No mail from you today and probably none until tomorrow—as the late planes mail will not be distributed until tomorrow morning. No word yet from EJK—but there is still hope. Received a nice letter from Boone thanking me for coffee & telling me about the new lace on the service coat. He expects to join me in the near future—he says. D. M.’s operations are going along—splendidly in the P. I. but mine are temporarily stalled. Any way—my gang can afford to take a few days rest from their strenuous activities. As with the copies of Vol III of *Lee’s Lieutenants*—I am also very long on wild ducks. So much so that I have distributed ducks all over Honolulu—to the many people who have entertained me. What with Archer, Osterhaus—& Calhoun who received an excess & divided with me, I have had my fill of wild ducks and can easily do without until the next season. Now my Precious—I will close for lack of news and also because I must do some work for the Gov’t. Keep cheerful & well. I miss you more than I can tell in a letter—and hope & pray that I see you very soon. All my love & kisses to you—Ever your own.

Chester

Hope you like the pictures of the “*Catherine*”.

¹ The *Catherine* was shipped to Washington, DC, when Nimitz succeeded Fleet Admiral Ernest King as CNO on 15 December 1945.

² Peter Arno, *Man in the Shower* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1944). Peter Arno, born Curtis Arnoux Peters, was a cartoonist known for his satirical drawings published in the *New Yorker* magazine. He eventually published four cartoon books, including *Man in the Shower*.

³ Douglas Southall Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command*, vol. 3, *Gettysburg to Appomattox* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944).



[Oahu] Friday—

19 January '45

Darling Mine—

I've thought of another item which I would like to have you put into my birthday box along with tan sox and flower seeds—a sewing kit—not too elaborate or large, but with a pair of good scissors (if you can get them)—some assorted needles—and some strong thread in 3 colors—black—white and tan. I usually have plenty of buttons off old clothes—so they present no problem. No word yet from EJK—but there still is hope. I note from Churchill's speech¹ yesterday that a meeting of the big 3, Roosevelt—Churchill & Stalin² is in the offing—and I suppose EJK will go to that & I am anxious to confer with him before such a meeting takes place. 3:30pm. Am dressed in my "Guam" costume which consists of garrison cap (small fore & aft cloth cap) with rank markings, regular khaki shirt but no tie, khaki shorts & khaki belt, long hose (Boy Scout—cotton) and rough tan hiking shoes—all ready to take a two hour walk to Aiea Hospital and return—with Furlong—who will then stay for supper with me at 37 Makalapa. It will be my first really long walk in months and I look forward to it with pleasure & anticipation. Although it is up hill—it is a cool partly cloudy day & it should not be too warm. How I wish you could make the walk with me! I have a hunch that I will hear from EJK about a conference either tonight or tomorrow night. Feel it so strongly that I am sending Lamar out to examine our new plane which is the same as the Secretary's³—which took us to Washington in March '44. Your fine letter of Jan 15 arrived at noon and I enjoyed reading it & your speech—in which I think you were very generous. The Red Cross group I know about here is the Surgical Dressings group which numbers about 4000 women of all nationalities on Oahu—& who work conscientiously at the job—day in & day out. For 4 1/2 years they have been turning out one half million bandages each month—and now on request from the Army and Navy they will endeavor to turn out one million dressings per month. Their places look like factories and—where the Services turn in the rolls of gauze & receive in return—at once—an equivalent number of dressings. None of the workers are paid. Am

sure your address was appreciated and perhaps they will try to live up to your high praise. That is the basis on which I some times make out officers fitness reports & with success. I show an officer his report—in which I indicate my high opinion & then tell him I expect him to live up to it. Bill Moore called at 11 today along with a lot of other Captains—including a Royal Canadian Navy—C.O. Bill Moore looks brown & husky and is in fine spirits. He has a destroyer. Am glad you have your car back & I hope the work was well done. I shall be interested in hearing about the result. Truitt's story is amusing. Is it Chaplain [Razzie] Truitt⁴—who was out here with me? There is another Captain Truitt—a line officer—who also served in the Pacific recently. I cannot place the Captain Campbell, USN you mention as writing a script on me. I think he should be discouraged and told to refer the matter to me—and I would kill it. I am fed up with writers of biographies. The war in Luzon continues suspiciously well & apparently the Jap strength has not yet been located.⁵ It might be that the Japs transferred part of Luzon troops to Leyte where at least 63000 were counted dead on the Island—and many thousands were reported drowned when their transports were sunk en route to Leyte.⁶ It would be fine if MacA could be in Manila by the end of January. Am sure another Cabinet crisis & shift is in the making in Tokyo—but I cant see what they will do to improve the situation. Our Third Fleet will be on them again before you get this letter. I believe they have left only 1 3/4 million tons of operable shipping out of 8 1/4 million tons at their peak. Dearest Mine—the Japs cant be licked too soon to suit me—for that will mean a change in my job and our being together again. Keep cheerful and well & hope with me that the conference comes off this month.—All my hearts devotion, love and kisses are yours.

Ever your Chester

¹ Possibly a reference to Prime Minister Winston Churchill's address to the House of Commons on 18 January 1945 in which he began, "I gathered that it was the desire of the House that there should be further discussion of the war and foreign situations and policies at this time, before any new important international conferences take place." Winston Churchill, "War Situation and Foreign Policy" (speech, 18 January 1945), UK Parliament, accessed 14 February 2023, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1945/jan/18/war-situation-and-foreign-policy#S5CV0407P0_19450118_HOC_333.

² President Franklin Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Premier Joseph Stalin met on 4–11 February 1945 at Yalta on the Black Sea to discuss the postwar organization of Europe. For a study of the Yalta Conference, see Serhii Plokhyy, *Yalta: The Price of Peace* (New York: Viking, 2010).

³ Probably a reference to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox. Nimitz and members of his staff flew to Washington, DC, on 2 March 1944 for a conference with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Knox died on 28 April 1944. See Potter, *Nimitz*, 287.

⁴ Chaplain Razzie Washington Truitt, USN, formerly fleet chaplain in the Pacific Ocean Areas on the staff of Fleet Admiral Nimitz. Truitt held the rank of captain.

⁵ Nimitz is referring to the relatively light resistance encountered by the Sixth Army on Luzon. See Nimitz to Catherine, 16 January 1945, p. 126, n. 8.

⁶ One historian has estimated that no fewer than 50,000 Japanese soldiers died on Leyte and asserted that these soldiers could have far more productively defended the more valuable island of Luzon. See John C. McManus, *Island Infernos: The US Army's Pacific War Odyssey, 1944* (New York: Random House, 2021), 541.



[Oahu] Saturday afternoon,

20 January 45

Darling Mine:—

Your letter of 16 January—with Mary's of 13 January has just come and both have been read with the keenest pleasure. First of all—let me assure you that I already weigh ten pounds less than when the waves & Congressional party pictures were taken—and that I never eat lunches unless required to do so by reason of entertaining visiting delegations. My opportunities for exercise will improve after I reach my new HQ & where it will be much warmer. My weight now is 183 stripped and I predict it will go to 175 shortly after I get settled further west. McMorris returned this morning and I was delighted to see him, and to hear that Mrs. McM—, though still ill and in bed at home, is definitely improving. From what he told me about Washington (Navy Dept) affairs—and because I am still without word from EJK, I must now conclude that our conference will not take place until after the Big Three meeting. I am terribly disappointed—but believe that only a miracle will make it possible in the immediate future. EJK knew I was to start my move westward about the 25 of Jan and here it is already the 20th of January.¹ I don't know when or where the Big Three will meet, but hope it will be soon.² I can still come to conferences on very short notice from my new HQ. Mary draws and writes very well indeed—and she seems happy in her school. McMorris brought me a thank you (in X mas bag) note from Helen Hess and a pair of 5 star collar devices which she calls “breast” pins—. She is very scornful of the design & thinks they should have been arranged in a straight line. She had been promoted one more step—which pleased her, although her pay increase was only one hundred dollars annually. She enclosed a letter from Wainwright in North Carolina—where he is kept reasonably busy making addresses—even one from a church pulpit. As McMorris was walking down the street in S.F. yesterday afternoon he met Ensign Henry Walker—who had just arrived from his Communication Schooling in Boston—enroute to a ship in the Pacific. McMorris brought him out in the *Blue Goose*—our flag plane, much to Henry's delight—as he would have had to wait for a ship. Callaghan had asked for Henry on his ship³ & as Henry stood high in his class, that is probably where he will go. There will be a happy reunion in the Walker Family tonight at Muliwai where we have been asked to go but at the moment the prospects are not good due to work & a dentist's appointment. Recently I damaged

one of my dentures & on examination the dentist advised new fillings that would “open my bite” and reduce the wear on my few remaining teeth. It will be a good thing to have finished before going further west. Many people have given me plants and seedlings of various fruit and nut trees, which have been sent out by ship to start our new gardens. Perhaps C W Jr will pick fruit and Macadamia nuts out there—but I am sure I will not do so. Yesterday afternoon R. A. John Brown sent me 8 pieces of smoked Alaska cod—which I served at breakfast this morning to my regular mess plus Brown—Lockwood & [Merrill] Comstock⁴ who live together across the street with me. It was very good—but not as good as when you cooked it. Perhaps it needs more par boiling than Sapal gave it. Am glad your car is now in fine shape. The repair bill is not excessive if they did the job right. Among my callers this morning was Kemp Christian⁵ who has recently arrived as C.O. of a ship. He says his family is fine & he sends you his best wishes. I think your idea of a two story Monterey house on the Knoll is fine. Sketch out your ideas & talk to an architect. Now my Darling—I must handle mail & read dispatches. More action is on in the far west by our carrier planes—right now.⁶ All my hearts devotion is yours & I still hope to see you soon—lets pray for that miracle. Keep well & not too busy.

Ever your own Chester

¹ Nimitz is referring to his plan to move from Oahu, Hawaii, to his advance headquarters on Guam, which he completed on 27 January 1945.

² On the Yalta Conference, see also Nimitz to Catherine, 19 January 1945, p. 131, n. 2.

³ The battleship *Missouri*. *Missouri* was commissioned on 11 June 1944 and participated in the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Japanese delegates signed the formal surrender documents that ended World War II aboard *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945. See also Nimitz to Catherine, 2 September 1945, p. 190.

⁴ Commodore Merrill Comstock, USN, chief of staff and aide to Commander, Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet (November 1943–July 1945). Comstock subsequently served as Commander, Training Command, Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, beginning in July 1945. See Navy Biographies Branch, “Commodore Merrill Comstock, U.S. Navy, Retired,” 20 July 1950, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

⁵ Captain Kemp Catlett Christian, USN, commanding officer of the battleship *New York* (BB-34). Christian assumed command of *New York* in June 1943. See Navy Biographies Branch, “Rear Admiral Kemp Catlett Christian, U.S. Navy,” 7 February 1945, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

⁶ A reference to Halsey’s Task Force 38, which conducted raids on Japanese installations on Formosa on 21 January 1945. Nimitz’s “Command Summary” recorded that Task Force 38 claimed 43 Japanese aircraft shot down and 97 destroyed on the ground in addition to two Japanese ships severely damaged. See “Command Summary,” 21 January 1945, vol. 6, p. 2522, box 6, Series 1: Command Summary & Combined Chiefs of Staff Books, 1941–1945, Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHC.



[Oahu] Sunday afternoon.

21 January '45

Darling Mine:—

The mail service in Berkeley will bear inspection because I've just now on the 21st received your January 7 letter and the envelope was post marked "Berkeley January 18." It is of course possible that your letter was written on the 17th and dated the 7th by mistake, particularly as you describe a very long and tough day which started with the troubles of the Fredericksburg woman, Mrs. Hudson. What a lot of experience you have acquired and how restful our lives can be after the war—& particularly after retirement. If we go to Washington to finish out my active years—our war training will stand us in good stead to meet the hectic conditions that will undoubtedly exist there during the retrenchment and shrinking down period. But there will be compensations and I look forward to many restful—soul satisfying days spent on the Observatory Hill with all our family around us. About 5pm yesterday Anderson—Lamar & I got away from the HQ and arrived at Muliwai in time to have a good swim and supper—and an hour of poker, the entire winnings of which were donated to 8 day old Mary Higuchi—the newly arrived daughter of the caretaker. We had a look at the baby early this morning—before we left—& presented her with 1875, just enough to buy a 25 [dollar]—war bond. This is our last visit to Muliwai, for I see no prospect of setting up headquarters here again until the end of the war & then I hope to be in Washington. The W's [Walkers] including Henry and his close friend Lt. [Maynard] Haselquist,¹ S.C. [Supply Corps] USNR—will have dinner with us tonight—as our last exchange of hospitalities. Henry lost 25 pounds at his school & is much too thin now. Failing to receive word from EJK for a conference by today. I am now reluctantly and regretfully accepting the idea that our next conference must come after the Big Three meeting—and that it will be in Feb or early March. I now plan to depart for my new HQ on 25 January and to start business out there on the evening of 26th.² Our mess boys & cook & steward start on the 24th so as to be ready for us when we arrive. I will have daily dental appointments until departure to get a new set of dentures made that will check the wear of my front teeth. Am glad you found Dr. Lipschentz interesting and sane. I have no doubt but that you are as good a psychiatrist or psychologist as he is. Am also glad your Red Cross director at Oak Knoll is an improvement over her predecessor. I have just taken action to break up some big time gambling among some of the officers—mostly reserves, in this area. It was brought to light by the forging of checks totaling \$1800—against the account of Lt Oswald Jacoby³—the leader & poker expert—who is a naval reserve officer on my intelligence section. When he tried to make the local bank make good—the bank called in the F.B.I.—which uncovered the fact that a big game had been recurring—attended by all services—where individuals won or lost as much as \$4000—in a single evening and staked

as much as \$700—on a single throw of the dice. I am having five of these gamblers courtmartialled—4 reserve & 1 regular naval officer & Jacoby—the leader expert is one of the five. They will hate me but as is usual in such high stake games—troubles—forgery—bad blood etc result, and are bad for our military effort. Everyone knows I do not object to gambling for small stakes for amusement or entertainment either by enlisted men or officers. I also discovered recently that quite a number of men—mostly CBs, were taking jobs for hire in town and were working—in all sorts of places—some for as many as 8 hours out of each 24—6 days a week. I stopped all of that on the theory that if they did that—they could not possibly do their duty to the government. Besides—their liberty hours are for the purpose of relaxation and rest and doing their shopping etc & not for more work. So you see—Darling—I have minor problems besides Japs. Now I must get busy again with my papers and dispatches. You will be reading about more strikes against the enemy in a day or so.⁴ Keep well & cheerful & do not lose your sense of humor—I love & adore you & need you more than I can tell in a letter. All my hearts devotion is yours—

Ever your

Chester

¹ Lieutenant Maynard B. Hasselquist, USNR.

² Nimitz actually departed Oahu for his new headquarters on Guam on the night of 26 January and arrived the following morning. See Nimitz to Catherine, 27 January 1945, p. 140.

³ Lieutenant Oswald Jacoby, USNR. A gifted mathematician, Jacoby served as an intelligence officer during both World War II and the Korean War. Jacoby was a renowned poker and bridge player and wrote numerous books on poker, bridge, backgammon, and canasta. Jacoby became the second bridge life master of the American Contract Bridge League in 1936 and wrote more than 10,000 syndicated bridge columns after World War II. See Alan Truscott, "Oswald Jacoby: A Final Tribute to the Master," *New York Times*, 15 July 1984.

⁴ Likely a reference to Task Force 38 and its raids on Japanese-held Formosa on 21 January 1945. See also Nimitz to Catherine, 22 January 1945, p. 137, n. 5.



[Oahu] Monday noon

22 January '45

Darling Mine—

Your 18 January letter has just arrived and I am distressed to hear that you have had an attack of intestinal flu—but am happy to hear that you are on the mend. You should take more time off to relax and rest in the sun. Nothing is so restful and healing as a good sun bath—and I attribute whatever good health I now enjoy—in a large measure—to the midday sun bath I usually take in place of lunch. Am glad you were brutally frank with Capt. Campbell's article or script and I am still puzzled as to his identity and reasons for writing me up. Please ask him who he is

& why he is doing this—if you get the chance. I had taken full account of the inauguration¹ in connection with the conference & had offered to go to Washington, which—if approved—would have given me a chance to ask for authority to have you go with me. Am sure both [James] Forrestal² & King would have approved you going. Well—Better luck next time. It is now too late to reach King—even if I went to Washington as I hear he is going soon—on a journey.³ Perhaps when he returns—we can do that trip. In a birthday note to Elizabeth—I have inquired about airfields on the Cape—large enough for 4 motor land planes.⁴ Perhaps when we do go East for a conference, I can take two extra days & we can fly to the Cape. That would be exciting & interesting. Callers are coming—more later. I have just released the news of Halsey's strike on Formosa on our 20 Jan, in which he destroyed a fair number of Jap planes & some shipping—although we are still without details of the shipping attacks.⁵ I can imagine the state of mind of the Japanese high command and am glad my position is easier than theirs. MacA—continues to advance in Luzon—practically with no resistance, and that mystery can be explained only if the Japs sent large numbers of troops from Luzon to Leyte in an endeavor to hold that place. The capture of Farloe gives him a good airfield which will be of great help—in over running the rest of Luzon. Am happy over MacA's success in more ways than one. It should help us get back the forces we loaned him. I hope now that he reaches Manila Bay—if not the city, by the end of January. We have not escaped unscathed in Halsey's last attack—having some ships damaged—but so far—none sunk. My staff is moving west daily by sections and I will leave here about the time you get this letter. I will keep about half of my uniforms here—so I can make quick trips to the Coast without carrying too much luggage—all over the Pacific. Also—as I believe I wrote you—I will leave all my pictures—and the beautiful National Geographic Map Case at 37 Makalapa from which place it will be easier to ship them back to the U.S. for our duty station after the war. Ernest Gunther is now here, ready to return to his job. He will have dinner with me tonight—and I will give him the last of the wild ducks in my ice box—as I know he likes ducks. Now my Precious—I will close & do some more work— Rest more and keep well & cheerful—I need you too much to have you work yourself down to the point where every germ finds you receptive— Do rest more.

All my hearts devotion—love and kisses are yours—always

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Possibly a reference to President Roosevelt's fourth inauguration on 20 January 1945.

² Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal. Forrestal became Secretary of the Navy following the death of Frank Knox on 28 April 1944. Forrestal previously worked as a bond salesman with the investment-banking house Dillon, Read & Company from 1916 to 1940 and briefly served as a naval aviator during World War I. In

August 1940, President Roosevelt nominated Forrestal to serve in the newly created position of Undersecretary of the Navy. Forrestal then served as Secretary of the Navy from 19 May 1944 until 1947 when President Truman selected him to become the nation's first Secretary of Defense (September 1947–March 1949). For Forrestal's edited diary, see Walter Millis, ed., *The Forrestal Diaries* (New York: Viking Press, 1951).

³ CNO Admiral King arrived in Malta via plane on 29 January 1945 to attend the Yalta Conference. See Buell, *Master of Sea Power*, 480.

⁴ Likely a reference to Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Catherine Nimitz grew up in the town of Wellfleet, which is on the Cape Cod peninsula. Her sister Elizabeth remained a resident of Wellfleet.

⁵ In support of the U.S. invasion of Luzon, Admiral William Halsey's Task Force 38 entered the South China Sea on 9 January 1945 to conduct raids on Japanese shipping and airfields in the area. Task Force 38 attacked Japanese shipping off French Indochina and made two raids on the Japanese-held island of Formosa before departing the South China Sea on 20 January. The raids destroyed 615 Japanese aircraft and sank 300,000 tons of Japanese shipping. American losses consisted of 201 aircraft. See J. D. Brown, *Carrier Operations in World War II*, ed. David Hobbs (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2009), 278; and Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 289.



[Oahu] Tuesday afternoon,

23 January '45

Darling Mine—

What with numerous callers, papers and dispatches this afternoon I've had a hard time getting a chance to read your splendid letter of 19 January which arrived an hour ago. Am glad the Red Cross made proper acknowledgement of your effort on their behalf. As Capt [Thomas] Hill¹ of my staff was just leaving for temporary duty on the Coast—I popped the R.C. [Red Cross] letter into my "Miscellaneous" envelope of letters & pictures and gave it to him to give to Marshall Smith for delivery to you. There will be the usual lot of trivial things that you can throw away—but you will find a few items you will want to keep. Among my afternoon callers was Lt. Ike Kidd²—who is gunnery officer of a destroyer. He sends you and Mary his best. I now predict with considerable assurance that I will see you about 1 March—which is close enough to my birthday for you to hold the gifts I have asked you to get for me. Also am quite sure that it will be a repetition of last March's trip (except for rough air and bad weather—I hope) and that you will go with me in my new plane. It may even include a quick visit to the Cape if Elizabeth tells me there is a suitable landing field. Marion Eppley has just been in to tell me he has written Nancy—suggesting a visit to Newport "for consultation." Isn't that nice of him. The more I see of him the better I like him—not only for his many genuine acts to me and my family, but because of his great value to me & the Navy. I now have a new set of "store" teeth—which will save my front teeth from too rapid wear. Although it is only my second day of wearing them, they are quite comfortable and will be completely fitted and adjusted before I leave for my new HQ day after tomorrow. There are plenty of good dentists in my new area. Captain Tufnell RN—tells mem-

bers of my staff that my “G.C.B.” (which is abbreviation for Knight Grand Cross of the Bath) is the highest, and only honor of that rank to be given to any American during this war. It is not the highest rank in the Order—but only Britishers are eligible for the ultra ranks according to my understanding. All the others on the list (Americans I mean) with me had lower honors. Spruance is a “Knight Commander of the Bath” etc. Am also told that MacA. who has previously been honored—has a lower rank. Are we puffed up! Am sure Mr. Witter’s³ advice is correct about the stocks. We own so little Transamerica⁴ that it matters little whether we sell now or later. Tell Mr. Witter that Mrs. McMorris is definitely on the mend but that her recovery will be slow. About buying land, you do as you think best. Wherever you are will be OK with me. Probably the East Bay area will be less foggy & closer to the friends and attractions of the University.⁵ If the East Bay people are so anxious to have us in that area—perhaps they will help us get a suitable site at a fair price. You might toss out that idea. Am glad you donated generously to the Berkeley War Chest. Your description of the lunch at the Club in S.F. was interesting. You were quite right in putting those complaining women in their places. Mrs. Tucker will be a good candidate for the conundrum—“If a corset cover covers a corset, What does a corset cover?” Answer—“A Naval Base, two canteens and a recreation Center.” Tell her I sent it to her in one of my more serious moments, and that I am joining you ruining the morals of the old ladies. I note that you are going to acquire a new job at N.A.S. Alameda. If you could be a general supervisor at both places, and if you could get competent & sympathetic assistance at both places, the new set up would have its advantages. At least you could introduce understanding & humane service at Alameda. Now, my Darling, I must hustle this into the mail—& get back to dispatches. Keep cheerful & do not take on too much work. Am terribly disappointed over the postponement of the Conference—but am sure it will now take place as I have outlined it above.

I adore you—Darling—& send you all my love & Kisses—

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Captain Thomas R. Hill, USN.

² Lieutenant Isaac C. Kidd Jr., USN, served as gunnery officer aboard the destroyer *Cowie* (DD-632) from October 1944 until September 1945, when he became the ship’s executive officer. See Naval History Division, “Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, Jr., United States Navy,” 23 August 1974, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

³ A reference to either Dean G. Witter or his cousin Jean Witter, cofounders of the large West Coast retail brokerage firm Dean Witter & Company.

⁴ Transamerica Corporation, a publicly traded insurance and financial services company that was incorporated in 1928. Nimitz likely owned stock in the company.

⁵ The University of California, Berkeley.



[Oahu] Wednesday Evening.

24 January '45.

Best Beloved—

Although this has been an exceedingly busy day, I have very little news. Furthermore there was no mail from you today so I cannot carry on our usual two chat. This, however, you and daughter Catherine will be glad to hear. Junior Lay's boss, Wilkinson, leaves for Washington soon for some temporary duty and leave, and at my suggestion he will ask that some of his staff, including Junior, have some temporary duty in W. [Washington] as soon as they arrive on the Coast. My guess is that Junior will spend Catherine's birthday in W. and may well arrive there sooner. I told Wilkinson it would be unsafe for him to walk around W. unguarded if Catherine heard he was there and with no plan for Junior to be there also. Wilkinson was pleased to have the suggestion. Also Mercer is getting a new command—same as his last one, but with newer & better ships.¹ W. [Wilkinson] plans to call you on the phone when he passes thru S.F. and will call Catherine promptly when he arrives in W. I am now finished with my dental work and my dentures are quite comfortable. It is a relief to be free from dental appointments. Tonight—McMorris—Anderson—Lamar and I are having farewell dinner at the Walkers with an hour or so of poker afterwards. Young Henry Walker was to have been included in the farewell but his orders to a ship required him to start moving this morning. I have never seen a young officer so radiantly happy as was Ens. H [Henry] A Walker Jr. USNR—when he called to say good bye. He worked hard at Harvard and stood near the top of a class of many hundreds—Also lost 20 pounds in his efforts. My house servants left at noon today for the new HQ and will be ready for us when we arrive there our 26th—their 27th. In the meantime we lean on the neighbors—Walkers tonight and at 39 Makalapa (Austin) tomorrow. Gen. Harmon gave me two pheasants for our early supper at 39 Makalapa tomorrow—following which we depart. Will write again from here tomorrow—and thenceforth from the new H.Q. which will mean a gap of a few days before you get my first letter from the new place. Am tremendously pleased to be moving forward & closer to the war. Keep well, Darling Mine—& Cheerful. All my love, kisses and devotion are yours and I ache to hold you in my arms—

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Captain Preston Mercer, USN, commanded Destroyer Squadron 1 from August 1944 to 30 January 1945. Two destroyers in his squadron, *Monaghan* and *Hull* (DD-350), sank in a typhoon on 18 December

1944. Mercer subsequently became Commander, Destroyer Squadron 54, with additional duty as Commander, Destroyer Division 107, until August 1945. See Bob Drury and Tom Clavin, *Halsey's Typhoon: The True Story of a Fighting Admiral, an Epic Storm, and an Untold Rescue* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2007), 124; and Navy Biographies Section, "Rear Admiral Preston V. Mercer, U.S. Navy, Retired," 4 January 1955, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC. For additional information on Mercer's wartime service, see Nimitz to Catherine, 31 May 1942, p. 25, n. 7.



At 9000 feet—forenoon—[en route to Guam]

27 January 45—East long [longitude] date

Best Beloved:—

Here we are sailing westward in perfect flying weather—and due at my new HQ at noon their time. Our wheels left the ground at 830 pm last night at Oahu and we landed on a field—in the dark—at 630 this morning—having had a perfect flight—and having set the clocks back 2 1/2 hours. We could have kept going and made the entire flight—non-stop—with plenty of gas to spare—but wanted to have breakfast with the atoll commander, whose island is just 4 1/2 hours from my new HQ. We walked—breakfasted—& walked again while we took on gas. I've never experienced more perfect flying conditions. Not a single bump—so far—and we are only a short distance from the end of the trip. The plane is exactly like the R5D¹—SecNav [Secretary of the Navy] plane we used last March, but of a later model. The interior arrangements are better & more comfortable. You will love it when I pick you up, about the end of Feb—& take you to the East Coast. The pilot is Lieut. Caldwell—USNR—and he has with him two pilots—besides a navigator—pilot—There are 3 enlisted men in the crew. We cruise at 190 miles thru the air—and at the moment—have 22 knots wind with us—which gives a ground speed of 212 knots. We can cover lots of distance in a short time at that speed. There is a nice cabin just abaft the gas tank compartment—(which has no gas smell)—and in the cabin is a table seating 4, a single—curtained off bunk (which I used) and two more bunks, one over the other. Also a very nice toilet which is larger than the one in the Sec Nav plane. Aaft the cabin and separated from it by a bulkhead is a large passenger compt—which has one bunk and 16 comfortable, reclining type chairs—we plan to install four bunks in this compt—making a total of 7 bunks for passengers— plus 12 chairs. Forward of the gas tank Compt are two bunks for the pilots. In the after end of the passenger Compt is a nice galley—just as in the Sec-Nav plane. The upholstery is salmon pink and so far the plane is called "*The Pink Lady*". I am to receive two more such planes in my flag plane pool & they are said to be improvements on the *Pink Lady*—in arrangement & comfort. I already have two seaplanes in the flag pool, and "*Blue Goose*"—and the "*Gray Goose*"—so called from the color of their upholstery. The reason for so many planes in my flag pool is that

I furnish planes for all the various flag officers to get around the Pacific Ocean—and frequently have to furnish planes for VIPs who are visiting the area—such as Congressional Committees— of which there will be an ever increasing number,— and Editors, journalists and the like. When the war in Europe ends—(and it now looks as though it will be over this summer) there will be a great increase in visitors and would be helpers to the Pacific. However—I do not mind this—and it is what SecNav wants—so we will aid him to “sell the Navy” to the VIPs—although I still insist that the best way to sell the Navy is by winning important victories over the Japs. This mornings press news at our breakfast stop informed us that MacA now has the Clark Airfield Area which is an important gain & which will enable him to park his very large airforce in Luzon and quickly knock out Jap resistance. Mr Gates and his party will meet at my new HQ shortly after I arrive there—but understand they will remain only a short time. This pleases me as we need a short period to shakedown before visitors come in numbers. Dearest & Best—I hope this letter finds you well and happy and rested. You are ever in my thoughts and I am happiest when I know you are well and happy. This letter will be put in the mail promptly on my arrival—in the hope that the gap in receiving letters at your end will be as short as possible. Hug & kiss Mary for me when you see her—I adore you Entirely—my Sweetheart

Ever your own

Chester

¹ The Douglas R5D Skymaster was the U.S. Navy’s version of the U.S. Army Air Force C-54 four-engine transport plane.



[*Guam*] Sunday forenoon—E.L.D. [east longitude date]

28 January '45.

Darling Mine—

Here I sit in solitary state in my new Advanced HQ office— almost settled— but surrounded by CBs [“Seabees”]—hammering, sawing—bulldozing dirt etc. The HQ is still under construction but enough is finished for me & a large part of my staff to start functioning at once. All the officers and men are delighted to be this far advanced—and they are greatly pleased with their new housing and the surroundings. The view—both from the H.Q. Administration Bldgs—and from the Quarters—is superb. We are up almost 850’ above sea level and the air is cool and pleasant. We landed yesterday at noon and Mr. G. [Gates] & party landed on another field a few minutes later. After a tour of the Island, Mr. G. and Fitch— came to my quarters to spend the night. G. in McMorris’s room (he comes 1 Feb)

and F. in our guest room. My regular mess—in my house, now consists of McM., Sherman, Carter, Brig Gen. [Harold] Mandell,¹ USA, Anderson and Lamar—who runs the mess. Last night—at our first meal I had as guests—Mr. G., Fitch, Maj. Gen Larsen USMC (Island Comdr) and [John] Hoover²—and it was a good meal in spite of the fact that our mess boys had only occupied the house the afternoon before. My room is very comfortable & it was cool enough last night to sleep under the light orange blanket you gave me. There are many little odds & ends to be fixed up—but they are minor—and we are exceedingly comfortable and pleased with our new surroundings. Mak came out with the boys & behaved well—sleeping most of the time. He is very shy & timid with all the hammering still going on around the house—but will soon be over that. In a day or so I will send you a sketch of the house (floor plan)—which is all on one floor. The grounds are all rough & muddy after rains last night—but time will cure that. I can be with Spruance in his 5th Fleet flagship³ in 3 hours time. He has now taken over the load. Am headed for the dentist in a few minutes for a minor adjustment on my new teeth. More later. 2pm. My dental work was done by the 11th Naval Hospital—about 6 miles from here and dentures are now very comfortable. At the hospital I met Capt Flower, Med Corps—the Exec—who reminded me that he & Mrs F. came back from China with us on *President Lincoln*. I remembered him but could not call his name. At four pm Sherman—Anderson & I are going out for a walk—as we are very much in need of exercise. Tonight I can unpack my records & try out the radio Victrola I found in my house—a Magnavox. I am going to get great enjoyment out of those records— principally yours and the daughters. This island is relatively free of flies and so far I've seen no mosquitoes. Fresh water will be a problem, however, as there are so many people on the Island and we are entering on the dry season. It does shower occasionally but not enough to create a run off or to raise the water table. How I wish you could be with me to explore some of the new roads & old trails. I know you would love it. The views on our level are a challenge to those who like to paint—and except on the roads, the country is a bright green. For lunch today we had a salad— island grown lettuce & radishes with hearts of palms stalks— eaten like celery. There are many coconut trees being cut down to make way for developments and most people here have tired of heart of palm. Now my Precious—I shall place this in the mail for you. Give me a check on how long it takes. It brings with it a sweet love for my Sweetheart who I miss more than words can tell.

Keep well & happy—

Ever your own

Chester.

¹ Brigadier General Harold C. Mandell, USA, assistant chief, Plans Section, CINCPAC.

² Vice Admiral John H. Hoover, USN, Commander, Central Pacific Forward Area. Hoover became Commander, Aircraft, Central Pacific Force, in September 1943 and transferred to command of the Forward Area, Central Pacific Force, in April 1944. In June 1945, he was designated Commander, Marianas, and the following month was elevated to deputy commander in chief, Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas. Hoover received the Navy Cross for his service as commanding officer of the destroyer *Cushing* (DD-376), which conducted anti-submarine patrols from Queenstown, Ireland, during World War I. See Navy Office of Information, "Admiral John Howard Hoover, United States Navy, Retired," 23 May 1968, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

³ The heavy cruiser *Indianapolis*. *Indianapolis* served as Admiral Spruance's flagship until it was struck by a kamikaze on 31 March 1945 off Okinawa. Following extensive repairs, the ship delivered the first atomic bomb, later dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, to Tinian. The Japanese submarine *I-58* sank *Indianapolis* with two torpedoes on 30 July 1945. For a recent study of the vessel's loss, see Richard A. Hulver and Peter C. Luebke, eds., *A Grave Misfortune: The USS Indianapolis Tragedy* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2018).



[Guam] Monday—E.L.D.

29 Jan 45

Dearest & Best—

Yesterday afternoon Sherman—Anderson and I started out blithely with an armed orderly to take a two hour walk, and were promptly stymied by very heavy rain showers. Because our orderly was dressed in his best clothes—we took his pistol and continued our walk—and let the orderly return. As it turned out we needed no pistols—but rather—traffic control police to keep us from being run down by the heavy traffic of trucks and jeeps along the route. We were soaked to the skin and our shoes were full of water but we enjoyed the exercise & the rain & wind was very warm. Dry clothes & a bath at 6.30 pm made us feel fine & ready for the good dinner the steward had prepared. We had an unexpected guest, R. Ad. J. W. Reeves¹—who arrived from the west—to call—just as we were sitting down— He remained until 8 pm—when he continued his eastward journey by plane. I can see that there will be very few days when guests of one kind or another will not be with us. However, it is always a pleasure and a very valuable contact with the Fleet for me and my staff. In a few minutes I expect [Jesse] Oldendorff² & his staff—who are going back for a rest from their participation in the Philippine campaign—where they have done a grand job—particularly in the Battle of Surigao Strait.³ They will probably stay with me tonight—although we have the *Gray Goose* standing by to speed them eastward if they are in a hurry to move along. Please consult your income tax expert on my Navy salary (\$8800) being exempt so long as I base in Guam. It seems that the law says that officers and men serving in Guam are exempt from income tax for the period in Guam—which for me—started 27 January, E.L.D. (East Longitude Date). While I do not desire to evade income taxes of any kind, neither do I want to pay tax when the law specifically makes an exemption. The Naval District Office (Marshall South) can locate the law if the expert in the Bank hasn't it

immediately available. The low pressure front which made the rain yesterday afternoon is moving on and it is now sunny & dry. If time permits, Dr A and I will have a long walk before supper. It helps bring down the weight, besides giving us easy exercise. Now My Precious,—I'll close for lack of news & also to catch the plane which is nearly due to leave. All my love & kisses to you—and Mary—Keep well & cheerful. By tomorrow I should be getting mail from you regularly again.

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Rear Admiral John W. Reeves Jr., USN, head of the Naval Air Transport Service and formerly Commander, Western Carolines Sub Area.

² Vice Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf, USN, Commander, Battleship Squadron 1 and Battleship Division 2. Oldendorf received the Navy Cross for his actions as Commander, Support Force, in the Battle of Surigao Strait. For Oldendorf's role in the Battle of Surigao Strait, see Martin R. Waldman, "*Calmness, Courage, and Efficiency*": *Remembering the Battle of Leyte Gulf* (Washington, DC: NHHHC, 2022), 33–46; and Navy Office of Information, "Admiral Jesse Barrett Oldendorf, United States Navy, Retired," 15 January 1964, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHHC.

³ Battle of Surigao Strait, a naval clash in the Battle of Leyte Gulf in which American and Australian warships fought a night engagement with heavy surface units of the Imperial Japanese Navy on 24 October 1944. The battle was a resounding Allied victory with Japanese forces losing two battleships and three destroyers.



Nimitz's personal plane, a Douglas R5D Skymaster nicknamed the *Pink Lady*, on Guam, 29 January 1945. (NHHHC, NH 62589)



Fleet Admiral Nimitz and senior officers at Guam on 29 January 1945. *Left to right:* Vice Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf, Brigadier General H. C. Mandell (USA), Captain T. C. Anderson (MC), Rear Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, Major General Henry L. Larsen (USMC), Nimitz, and Vice Admiral John H. Hoover. *Kneeling left to right,* an unidentified commander and Commander Hal A. Lamar (USNR). (NHHHC, NH 62588)



[Guam] Tuesday—30 January '45

Dearest & Best:—

It commenced raining last night before midnight and has rained steadily until now (3pm)—and it is still raining hard. Our house is filled with moist air and every thing not sealed up is damp and soggy. We will have need of the heating units which are to be installed in our closets—to keep our shoes & clothing from mildewing. Our guests Oldendorf—[Richard] Bates¹ (the one who entertained us once in Washington) and Fabrian left early this morning in the rain. Bates asked if he could call you on the phone from S.F. & I told him Marshall Smith would furnish the number. Tonight I will have as dinner guests—Commodore Vernon Grant (who sent so many shells to Mary) and Col [Lewis] Hohn²—USMC—who is the officer in charge of our advance headquarters housing—living & general administration. A sort of hotel keeper, as it were—for the officers & men of the staff. Last night, I also had as a guest Mr. Brown—an acquaintance & assistant of Ryerson's. Brown is the Federal Economic Administrations representative in charge of farm-

ing & food production on the Island. He is an enthusiastic and successful farmer & keeps us supplied with fresh grown vegetables. There are about a dozen more officers of various services I will have at my table—who are close around me. And there is hardly a day that some visitor does not arrive. Yesterday afternoon it was cool, clear and pleasant & Dr A & I took a 6 mile walk before dinner. By the time you see me in early March or late Feb—I should hope to be down to 175 stripped which is about right. Am disappointed that the afternoons rain prevents our walking. No mail from you as yet—but I expect the letters to start coming—perhaps tonight & certainly by tomorrow. Will witness some exercises tomorrow—& on the next day, receive calls from neighboring Island Governors. Expect to see Spruance in a few days. I hope and pray that you keep well & happy & do not overwork. I miss you so—my Darling & count the days when I can see you. Not over one month—I hope. Hug & kiss Mary for me when you see her. Will you (as usual) send Catherine a gift a check from both of us? I will write her in time to reach her by 22 Feb. I am with you in spirit—Sweetheart [redacted] my arms are around you & my lips on yours—
Ever your own—

Chester

Not much news out here—yet.

¹ Commodore Richard W. Bates, USN, chief of staff and aide, Commander, Battleship Division 2 (December 1944–May 1945). As Vice Admiral Jesse Oldendorf's chief of staff, Bates took part in the invasion of Luzon in the Philippines in January 1945 and the invasion of Okinawa in April of that same year. Bates received the Navy Cross for his role in preparing plans, encouraging staff members, and advising his commanding officer while serving as chief of staff of the Bombardment, Fire Support and Associated Groups of the Seventh Fleet during the Battle of Leyte Gulf. See Navy Office of Information, "Rear Admiral Richard Waller Bates, U.S. Navy, Retired," 19 February 1951, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

² Colonel Lewis H. Hohn, USMC.



[Guam] Wednesday—E.L.D.

31 Jan 45.

[redacted]

Today was our first "mail day" at our new HQ and I was fortunate enough to receive your splendid letters of 22 & 23 January along with Catherine's of 16 January. I had just finished writing Catherine a birthday letter in which I said I hoped Junior would be with her by 22 Feb. I loved your letters—Sweetheart mine—and wish the conference had come off in January. However—I think we can now count definitely on Early March—with an excellent prospect of both of us going East in my plane. As it would be only a few days absence—you might want to take

Mary—but that can be decided later. How nice of Spicer to include her in the minutes of the Conchological Club. Both Mr. & Mrs. Montague Cooke spoke very highly of Spicer. Speaking of shells, there arrived today from Honolulu—the most beautiful shell necklace of tiny shells— I’ve ever seen. It was sent to me by Mrs. Wayne Pflueger¹—a great friend of Halseys—Who says the shells were picked up by the people of NIHAU²—where the Jap aviator³ was forced down. Mrs Pflueger—thought that Mary would like the shells—& I can already predict she will love them. There are eleven strings in the necklace and the shells have a delicate purple color. I will bring them when I come. I think you will do well to adopt Mrs. Gowdy’s philosophy regarding other people’s troubles. Help them all you can but do not let them get you down. Am sorry you are having trouble such your contagious cases. Perhaps, if Deering asks for it, the BU M&S. [Bureau of Medicine and Surgery] will add a ward at Oak Knoll. The “*Catherine*” has not yet arrived—but is expected soon. Incidentally, McMorris comes today—unless he is weathered out— It rained all last night and this forenoon—but now at 3pm—the sun is trying hard to come out. Yesterday afternoon—Dr A, Lamar & I took a walk in the rain. It was uphill & downhill—but not too muddy—as we were on hard coral roads. We came in soaking wet. I had Col Hohn, USMC & Commo. Grant in for dinner & we enjoyed their company. Tonight I am having Capt [William] Hiltabidle⁴ C.E.C. [Civil Engineer Corps], USN & Comd [Clarence] Smallwood⁵ CEC—USNR—(In charge of CB’s here) as my guests—plus Rear Ad. [Arthur] Davis⁶ Spruance’s Ch. Of Staff—who just flew in for the afternoon and evening. Also if it is not too wet under foot we will try another walk. I hope you killed Campbell’s script completely. The Norfolk Navy Yard situation sounds bad—but does not surprise me. Am afraid—that attitude extends to many places in the country. The condition I witnessed at Oahu was just the opposite. CB’s were trying to work all day on their Navy jobs & then work elsewhere for hire. I stopped all of it. Tell the Fishers it is not a KCB⁷—I’m getting but a GCB,⁸ the next higher order. Spruance is a KCB. Mrs. Snell sounds very attractive and I hope she continues to help you. It is fortunate that she is at home at Oak Knoll. I look forward to meeting both Dr & Mrs Snell. I thought that George Bauernschmidt went to MacA’s area—and am surprised to hear he is in Penn. If you see or talk to Mrs. Fansdale, thank her for her birthday gift & tell her I will thank her in due time. Am glad Betty’s child arrived safely. Freckles would love the walks here but he would get fearfully muddy. Mak has not yet been with me as there is much fast traffic on the roads. Now Dearest Mine, I will do a little work for the Govt, & then take a walk. Keep well & cheerful—we will be together before before long. I have you constantly on my mind—& last night I placed your pictures & those of the children most prominently in my room—where I can see you—no matter where I look—

All my hearts devotion is yours—always—

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Mary Lucas Pflueger, a wealthy landowner and wife of Wayne Pflueger, assistant treasurer of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association.

² Niihau Island, the westernmost main island in Hawaii.

³ Naval Aviation Pilot First Class Shigenori Nishikaichi, from the Japanese carrier *Hiryū*, crash-landed his Mitsubishi A6M2 Type 0 carrier fighter on the privately owned island of Niihau after attacking targets in southeastern Oahu on 7 December 1941. The islanders initially knew nothing of the attack on Pearl Harbor. With the aid of a friendly Japanese laborer, the pilot terrorized and intimidated the inhabitants, shooting one of the islanders who, despite his wounds, killed Nishikaichi on 13 December. The episode figured prominently in the American media.

⁴ Captain William O. Hiltabidle Jr., U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps, commander of the 5th Naval Construction Brigade and island engineer for Guam.

⁵ Commander Clarence C. Smallwood, USNR, U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps.

⁶ Rear Admiral Arthur C. Davis, USN, chief of staff, U.S. Fifth Fleet (September 1944–July 1945). While in command of the carrier *Enterprise*, Davis received the Navy Cross for skillfully maneuvering the vessel in action against Japanese planes near the Solomon Islands on 24 August 1942. Davis became Commander, Carrier Division 5, in July 1945.

⁷ Knight Commander, the second-highest rank of knighthood within the Most Honourable Order of the Bath.

⁸ Knight Grand Cross, the highest rank of knighthood within the Most Honourable Order of the Bath.



[Guam] Thursday E.L.D.

1 Feb '45

[redacted]—

At last the warm front that has been drenching us with heavy rain (3" in the last four days) has moved on and we are having true sunshine—which—with the [breeze] is drying up the roads and trails. The humidity was so great that we had to install high candle power lights in our closets to prevent the mildew which was just commencing. The rain stopped yesterday afternoon in time to permit Anderson—Lamar & me to take a six mile walk which carried us up to the top of Mt. TENJO—. You have a photo of me & Maj Gen'l Larsen USMC—taken on Mt Tenjo—about 10 August 44—standing by a Japanese monument. The monument is now gone—a souvenir perhaps—in some marine's possession, but the survey mark is there & says [illegible] feet Elevation. We drove out in a jeep to get clear of the highway traffic. Lamar had to carry the pistol in case we met Japs—he being, not only the youngest & junior—but the best shot. This afternoon we will explore a new road—and this time take Mak—because it is no longer so muddy. Mak is now lying quietly under my desk. No mail from you today but that is not unexpected as it will take some

days for this mail schedule to settle down. Today at luncheon I had as my guests Maj. Gen. [Sanderford] Jarman¹ U.S.A. and Brig. Gen. [Frederick] Kimble² USA Air Corps—governors of two adjacent islands. Hoover also lunched with us. I sent each away with a bottle of scotch (of which I have had [illegible] presented to me) and two pairs of [illegible] received from some concern in [illegible] containing several dozen horse shoes. McMorris—arrived today instead of yesterday—and is now settling down. Canaga sent me an amusing little book called “*Dear Sir*”³—which has many smiles in it. Tonight I am having as my dinner guests the Comdr 49th CB, Comdr [Marshall] Barnett,⁴ USNR and the Comdr 94th CB, Comdr [Harald] Olmstead⁵ USNR, who have done the work—(and are continuing to construct) of building my new HQ. I am working thru the list of Important People in the various Islands. Today is the first pay day on the new station and I enclose for you our 31 Jan. check which totals \$312.00. The next check—mid Feb—I will bank in my Hawaii Bank to bolster my account—but you can [illegible] least the next 4 or 5 checks [illegible] I again have to bolster my account. I do not want to keep too much money in the Bank of Hawaii—[illegible] need to find out my new & [illegible] of expenses—out here. Tomorrow I will take a number of my staff & in a very short trip—2 1/2 hours—visit Spruance for two days. His Ch. of Staff—Davis—left this morning. I expect Forrestal out here before long—also [illegible] large Congressional Committee. In fact—I expect a regular procession of visitors from now on. A little guest cottage next to mine—will soon be completed & we can take care of visitors comfortably. The war news on all fronts continues very good and I look hopefully for a German collapse in the not too distant future. Now my Precious—I will turn to on my work—for the Govt. Keep cheerful & happy—Your husband loves you more than the written word can describe. I shall hope to [redacted] you an early dawn—[redacted]—

Ever your devoted

Chester

¹ Major General Sanderford Jarman, USA, Commanding General, Saipan Island.

² Brigadier General Frederick V. H. Kimble, USAAF, Commanding General, Tinian Island.

³ Juliet Lowell, *Dear Sir* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1944).

⁴ Commander Marshall D. Barnett, USNR, Commander, 49th Construction Battalion.

⁵ Commander Harald Omsted, USNR, Commander, 94th Construction Battalion.



Nimitz and Guam Island Commander Major General Henry L. Larsen, USMC, stand by a Japanese monument on Guam, 11 August 1944. (NHHC, NH 62425)



[Guam] Friday—noon—

2 Feb 45

Best Beloved:—

This is just a brief note to say that in a few hours I will be with Spruance for a brief visit of two nights and one day, and that I expect to return to my new H.Q Sunday pm—4 Feb. This ability to pick up staff members & visit important places

in a very few hours is the principal advantage of moving westward. It is most important to be able to talk face to face with the lads who are doing the real fighting. No mail yesterday from you, nor today up to now although I suspect letters will arrive here this afternoon. Yesterday afternoon—Anderson—Lamar—and I—, accompanied by Mak, explored a road leading from our cliff homes down to the plain below. It was rather a steep descent (625' to sea level rather than the 850' which I had been told before) and we walked down to the beach where Mak waded out and lay down in the cool salt water. The sun was out bright & hot and we shed much perspiration on the climb back— Arrived at quarters—just in time for a bath before I greeted my guests—Comdrs Barnett and Olmsted of the 49th and 94th CBs [Construction Battalions]. Both are very interesting talkers. Barnett was an aviator in the USNR—in World War I and one of his sons is missing since last October—from one of our big Carriers—where he was a torpedo plane pilot.¹ Olmsted is 6'—5"— Norwegian—& very thin. He loved the music we played for him on the radio. Rachmaninoff No 2 Concerto² (which everyone likes) and Lily Pons³—*Daughter of the Regiment*.⁴ I find that I now have about 30 albums—a list of which I will send you in a future letter. The list is now being typed but will not be ready for this letter. Now, My Sweetheart, I must have some lunch—& be on my way. Keep cheerful & happy for your husband who loves you—Oh so much. I shall write a line from Spruance's ship—& mail it there—so you can see how long that takes— Hug & kiss Mary for me & give Freckles a [redacted] in heat would be too much for him here. All my hearts devotion is yours—Always—Ever your own

Chester

¹ Lieutenant (j.g.) Marshall D. Barnett Jr., a pilot aboard the aircraft carrier *Franklin* (CV-13). Barnett was killed in action while attacking a Japanese ship during the Battle of Leyte Gulf on 24 October 1944.

² Piano Concerto no. 2. A work for piano and orchestra by Sergei Vasilyevich Rachmaninoff, a Russian composer active in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

³ Alice "Lily" Joséphine Pons, a French American opera singer and actress.

⁴ A comic opera in two acts by Italian composer Gaetano Donizetti known by its French title *La fille du régiment*.



[Guam] 830 pm Sunday—E.L.D.

4 Feb '45—

Best Beloved:—

My staff party and I returned to my new HQ at 430 this afternoon after a pleasant visit with Spruance & his fifth fleet. Sherman—Lamar and I stayed with Spruance on his ship—while the rest of my party—Mandell (Brig. Gen USA),

Eller—Miller, [Harold] Krick,¹ Anderson and some P.R.O. [Public Relations Office] photographers lived on Callaghan's ship.² All the flag officers—some twenty—came aboard to see me, and I saw many old friends. [Francis] Whiting³—Shafroth, [Willis] Lee,⁴ Mitscher—Wiltse, Fischler, [Morton] Deyo⁵—[Alexander] Sharp⁶—[William] Blandy⁷—Frederick Sherman⁸—[Arthur] Radford⁹—and many whom you don't know—were present. All were in fine health & spirits and those who know you sent best wishes. All are looking forward to the next moves with enthusiasm—and before the month is ended, we will be hearing big news. I walked with Spruance—on his ship and on the Islands of the Atoll¹⁰ where he is located (only 2 1/2 hours from here) & had a chance to have a very satisfactory exchange of ideas with him. This morning—at 6 I went fishing with his flag captain—[Charles] McVay¹¹ & Lamar and we caught 5 fish. McVay caught 1 and I got 4. Enough for lunch for about 30 people. We left Spruance's ship at 1 pm & the airfield at 2 pm. Again the "*Pink Lady*"¹² behaved perfectly and set us down gently after a very comfortable trip. Just as I left Friday—I received your fine letters of 25 and 26 January plus Nancy's of 23 Jan. and Catherine's of 23 Jan. Also received a letter from CW Jr. of 25 Jan—which will be enclosed for your amusement. Nancy sounds happy & comfortable in her new home. I hope she can visit Eppley's Laboratory at Newport during her stay in N.Y. Isn't it nice she can visit Wellfleet¹³ so handily. Am sure Catherine is in much better spirits by now—she must have heard from Junior—as to his plans. Her troubles with cats could be solved if she could shoot an air gun as accurately as Nancy. Its nice to think our children are so fond of each other—and us. Catherine is fortunate to have so agreeable a companion as Liz.¹⁴ I hope Allen Freeman comes out here. I shall be happy to see him. By now all your car trouble should be finished. You have had more than your share. Am sorry to hear about the accident to the Honeywell child. I will bring along a 5 star pin for Catherine & Nancy when I come. Junior will probably get there before I do. Perhaps he will still be there when we come. I speak confidently of that visit—because I really—truly think we will go—& I know—I should visit Washington. The conditions for building on the "Knoll" sound very restrictive. Perhaps we need more room in the country where we can do as we please. My friend, Jack Towers, is still trying to introduce Waves into my P.H. headquarters—but I will not let him do so.¹⁵ Please express my sympathy to the Fengs—& my hope that Mr. Feng recovers quickly & completely. Tomorrow I will spend the better part of the day with one of our Marine Divisions on a combat training problem which should be interesting. Will bring the Cmdg General, Maj. Gen. [Graves] Erskine¹⁶, USMC & his Ch. Of Staff¹⁷—back to have dinner with me. I enjoy being out here where I can spend so much more time with ships and troops. Today I found waiting for me 5 pounds of that smoked & dried sausage we used to enjoy so much. Uncle August Hawke sent it & I served some tonight with highballs. All hands greatly enjoyed it. Now my

Darling—I will go to the HQ (17 minute walk) & do a little work to catch up. Keep well & cheerful. I love you more than letters can tell. In less than a month I hope to prove it to you—

Ever your devoted

Chester

¹ Captain Harold D. Krick Sr., USN, member, Operations Division, CINCPAC.

² The battleship *Missouri*.

³ Rear Admiral Francis E. M. Whiting, USN, Commander, Cruiser Division 14 (August 1944–May 1945). Whiting had served under Nimitz aboard the cruiser *Augusta* as the ship's first lieutenant and damage control officer. He commanded Destroyer Division 8 from September 1938 until May 1940 and then commanded the battleship *Massachusetts* from May to December 1942. On 15 May 1945, Whiting was designated Island Commander, Saipan. He retired from active duty in August 1947. See Navy Biographies Branch, "Vice Admiral Francis Eliot Maynard Whiting, United States Navy, Retired," 25 July 1950, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

⁴ Vice Admiral Willis A. Lee Jr., USN, Commander, Battleship Squadron 2. Lee died suddenly on 25 August 1945 off Portland, Maine, while still in command of Battleship Squadron 2. See Navy Office of Information, "Vice Admiral Willis A. Lee, U.S. Navy, Deceased," 7 November 1961, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

⁵ Rear Admiral Morton L. Deyo, USN, Commander, Cruiser Division 13 (November 1944–November 1945). Deyo's command participated in strikes on Luzon and Formosa and the invasions of Leyte, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for his command of the Gunfire and Covering Force during the amphibious assault on Okinawa. Deyo retired with the rank of vice admiral in August 1949. See Navy Biographies Branch, "Vice Admiral Morton L. Deyo, U.S. Navy, Retired," 31 July 1956, Modern Biographies Collection, NHHC.

⁶ Rear Admiral Alexander Sharp Jr., USN, Commander, Minecraft, Pacific Fleet (October 1944–September 1945). Sharp served as Commander, Battleships, Atlantic Fleet, from April to August 1942 before assuming command of Service Force, Atlantic Fleet. He retired with the rank of vice admiral in September 1946. See Navy Biographies Branch, "Vice Admiral Alexander Sharp, Jr., U.S. Navy, Retired," 9 December 1949, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

⁷ Rear Admiral William H. P. Blandy, USN, Commander, Group 1, Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet. Blandy assumed command of Cruisers, Pacific Fleet, with additional duty as Commander, Destroyers, Pacific Fleet, in July 1945. Four months later, he became Deputy CNO (Special Weapons), and he oversaw two atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll in July 1946 involving approximately 42,000 personnel and 230 vessels. Blandy then served as Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, until he retired from active duty with the rank of admiral in February 1950. See Navy Office of Information, "Admiral William Henry Purnell Blandy, United States Navy, Deceased," 8 April 1964, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

⁸ Rear Admiral Frederick C. Sherman, USN, Commander, Task Group 58.3 (February 1945–June 1945). During World War I, Sherman received the Navy Cross for his actions as commander of the submarine *O-7* (SS-68) conducting antisubmarine patrols. Sherman commanded the aircraft carrier *Lexington* beginning in June 1940 and received a Gold Star in lieu of a second Navy Cross for his handling of the ship while under air attack near Bougainville on 20 February 1942. Sherman was still in command of *Lexington* when it was damaged by Japanese air attacks and sank on 8 May 1942 during the Battle of the Coral Sea. After serving as assistant chief of staff to the COMINCH and CNO, Admiral Ernest J. King, Sherman returned to the Pacific in October 1942 and assumed command of Carrier Task Force 16 in November 1942. Sherman received a Gold Star in lieu of a third Navy Cross for his command of Carrier Division 2 during raids on Tinian and Guam in February 1944. Following Sherman's successful leadership of Task Group 58.3 in the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944 and his prevention of Japanese reinforcements from reaching Leyte on 11 November 1943, Sherman was awarded two Gold Stars in lieu of a second and third Distinguished Service Medal. In July 1945, Sherman became Commander, 1st Carrier Task Force. He retired in March 1947 with the rank of vice admiral. See Navy Biographies Branch,

"Admiral Frederick C. Sherman, United States Navy, Deceased," 6 August 1957, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

⁹ Rear Admiral Arthur W. Radford, USN, Commander, Carrier Division 6 (November 1944–August 1945). Radford was designated naval aviator no. 2896 in November 1920 and served in the Bureau of Aeronautics from December 1941 to April 1943. He then commanded Carrier Division 2 from April 1943 to July 1943. Shortly after the end of the war, he became Deputy CNO (Air) from January 1946 to February 1947 followed by service as Vice CNO from January 1948 to April 1949. He was appointed the second chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff beginning in June 1953 and was the first admiral to hold that office. He retired with the rank of admiral in August 1957. See Navy Biographies Branch, "Admiral Arthur W. Radford, United States Navy, Retired," 12 September 1957, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

¹⁰ Fleet anchorage at Ulithi Atoll.

¹¹ Captain Charles B. McVay III, USN, commanding officer, *Indianapolis* (18 November 1944–30 July 1945). McVay served as executive officer aboard the light cruiser *Cleveland* (CL-55) from that ship's commissioning on 15 June 1942 until 2 April 1943. During that time, *Cleveland* participated in the invasion of North Africa in November 1942 and escorted transport groups bound for Guadalcanal in January 1943. McVay received the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action against Japanese forces in the Solomon Islands on the night of 5 March 1943. He then served as chairman of the Joint Intelligence Staff in the Office of the Vice CNO (May 1943–October 1944) until assuming command of the heavy cruiser *Indianapolis*. *Indianapolis* participated in the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa and often served as Admiral Spruance's flagship. On 31 March 1945, the ship was heavily damaged by a kamikaze and returned to Mare Island, California, for repairs. On 16 July 1945, the cruiser departed San Francisco for Tinian in order to deliver components of the first atomic bomb for deployment. Following this mission, the ship was sunk by the Japanese submarine *I-58* on the night of 30 July 1945. During the attack and in the days that followed, 880 sailors perished out of a total crew of 1,196. McVay was subsequently acquitted in court-martial proceedings for the loss of his ship. He retired with the rank of rear admiral in June 1949. For an account of the disaster, see Hulver and Luebke, *A Grave Misfortune*. See also Navy Biographies Section, "Rear Admiral Charles Butler McVay, III, United States Navy, Retired," 13 July 1954, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

¹² The name of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz's private plane, a Douglas R5D.

¹³ Wellfleet, Massachusetts, childhood home of Catherine Nimitz.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Freeman, sister of Catherine Nimitz.

¹⁵ For Nimitz's objections to WAVES serving in Pearl Harbor, see also Nimitz to Catherine, 16 January 1945, p. 125; and Nimitz to Catherine, 7 February 1945, p. 157. Nimitz regularly found it challenging to get along with Vice Admiral John Towers. See Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 357.

¹⁶ Major General Graves B. Erskine, USMC, Commanding General, 3rd Marine Division.

¹⁷ Colonel Robert E. Hogaboom, USMC, chief of staff, 3rd Marine Division.



[Guam] Monday Evening ELD

5 Feb '45

Best Beloved:—

There is little news today except to tell you that I love you dearly and miss you very very much—but perhaps you already are aware of that. I have just returned to my desk after a long day in the country with one of our best Marine divisions. It was a most interesting and satisfying day for all of us who attended the Exercises and inspected the division camp. As it was clear and sunny—and as I wore an over-

seas cap and shorts, my knees and my face—particularly my nose—feels hot and burned. The air was dry and delightful, as we were several hundred feet elevation constantly. We lunched with Maj. Gen Erskine, USMC—& his staff—which included young Adolphus Andrews Jr¹—as his personal aide. Young Andrews looks splendidly—and according to his boss—he performs as well as he looks. He is at least 6'4" tall & is very slender. The camp is in a beautiful part of the Island which was not damaged by the assault and it looks out over the ocean from a considerable Elevation. There are so many interesting things to do on this island outside my immediate job that time will never hang heavy on my hands. In fact—I can see that I will lack time to do all the things that can be done. Tonight I am having as dinner guests—Maj. Gen. Erskine & his Ch. Of Staff—Col Hogaboom, USMC, R. Ad. [William] Farber,² Mr. Robb Sherwood³ (the playwright) who will be in my mess for a few days. He was in OWI for a while but I do not know what is his present mission, except that he comes out under very high auspices. Tomorrow two visiting bishops and the local bishop, a Spaniard are coming to call on me & I can see that as the days go on—my visitors will become more and more numerous. I expect to have a “host” organization perfected soon which can take care of such matters and relieve me of details, but VIPs will always take more of my time. Now My Precious I will put in a few bits for the Government & then go back to my quarters to wash off dust & apply cold cream where most needed— Keep cheerful & happy. I'll be counting the days and hours of Feb—until I can start East— All my hearts devotion is yours—truly and always— Ever your own

Chester

No mail to day.

¹ Captain Adolphus Andrews Jr., USMC, son of Vice Admiral Adolphus Andrews, USN.

² Rear Admiral William Sims Farber, USN, Sub-CNO.

³ Robert E. Sherwood, director of the Overseas Branch of the OWI (1941–1944). Sherwood left Harvard University to serve with the British Army in France before the United States entered World War I. He then became a successful playwright during the interwar period, and many of his works emphasized the futility of war. He was a speechwriter and advisor to President Roosevelt before becoming director of the Overseas Branch of the OWI in 1941. After the war, Sherwood wrote the screenplay for *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), the first film to win eight Academy Awards, and published the book *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948).



6 Feb 1945

Darling mine—

Your letter of 29 January has just arrived together with your envelope containing letters from Mrs. Norman T. Kirk¹ and Mrs. Barnet Rover. First of all let me tell you that I greatly enjoyed your letter and I can well understand your feeling of satisfaction in becoming an important integral part of the Hospital. Your work is very important to our enlisted men and young officers, and I doubt if anyone has given the job such sympathetic and intelligent service as you have. Don't hesitate to stand out for what you think is right and for what you need to make the job 100% successful. Deering, Richardson, and Jacobs are the men who can, perhaps, help most. I greatly enjoyed Chester's letter and Fran's drawing of the clown which I am saving in the Misc. Envelope. Fran shows more talent than most children her age. I hope the weather becomes less severe. Mr. [Francis] Drake²—A *Reader's Digest* writer who lunched with me today—lives in Stonington and says he knows well the house our Children occupy. Drake and a *Collier's* writer named [Walter] Davenport³ lunched with me. Mr. Robert E. Sherwood is still with me but leaves tomorrow. As for the letters from Mrs Kirk & Mrs. Rover—both Lamar and I had the same reactions—that of disapproval of the majority policy of taking on a huge financial commitment with so little cash to pay. Lamar suggests you join those who resigned, and I am so inclined also, but you can very properly state to Mrs. Kirk, that although you are opposed to such a heavy obligation (as I assume you are), you, as an Honorary Member or Sponsor—have no share in the Executive Management—nor any responsibility for its actions—& that your high opinion of Service Nurses—impels you to remain an Honorary Sponsor etc etc. I think it is a foolish move the majority are contemplating and I doubt if any owner in his right mind—would sell under those conditions. Now my Darling—I will read dispatches and then play horseshoes with Lamar—for the first time out here. My sunburn has subsided and I do not expect to peel. Keep well & Happy— My [redacted] I love & adore you

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Probably Anne Duryea, wife of Major General Norman T. Kirk, surgeon general of the U.S. Army.

² Francis Vivian Drake, author and writer on military subjects for *Reader's Digest* and a resident of Stonington, Connecticut. Drake served in the Royal Air Force during World War I and became a full-time writer of articles, books, and novels in 1929. During World War II, he worked as a consultant for the U.S. Army Air Forces. See "Francis Vivian Drake, 76, Dies; A Writer on Military Subjects," *New York Times*, 7 July 1971.

³ Walter Davenport, reporter for *Collier's* magazine. Davenport served as a captain with the U.S. Army's 111th Infantry Regiment in France during World War I. He worked as both an associate editor and political reporter during his 21-year tenure at *Collier's*. He was named editor in 1946 but returned to reporting in 1948. See "Walter Davenport, Ex-Editor of *Collier's* and *Liberty*, Dies," *New York Times*, 11 December 1971.



[Guam] Wednesday afternoon,

7 Feb 1945.

Best Beloved:—

From noon until two pm today—Sherman, Lamar and I inspected a recreational area at one of the few beaches on this island, and had a swim in lieu of lunch. Also selected a site for a Cincpac & Staff bath house. Although the swim was very refreshing, it will not be worth the 25 minute trip each way over very dusty roads. I shall seek my recreation and exercise in walks and horse shoes near my quarters. Lamar & I played yesterday evening before dinner, using the court at my quarters the first time. Although the court is not in good playable condition, the view over the ocean is superb and we got some exercise. No outside guests for dinner last night—although Mr. Sherwood was still with us. He had spent the day touring the Island and was weary & sunburned & willing to sit. He left this forenoon—and for the moment—we have only our regular mess of Seven (Lamar, Anderson—McMorris & myself—Sherman—Carter and Mandell.) Tonight McMorris—Sherman and I are having supper with Hoover whose HQ are about 15 minutes away by jeep. Your letter of 28 Jan with letters from Eliz. & Paul Hammond¹ has just arrived and has been greatly enjoyed. Elizabeth is brave to have so many guests in such cold weather—but perhaps the guests can help her do the necessary work. She sounds cheerful & willing to have the children come. Hope no accidents occur on the icy roads. I cannot understand why Paul Hammond is going on inactive duty. I thought for a while he would be appointed Asst SecNav—but now a Mr. [Herman] Hensel² has been appointed. Then again I heard he might take Bard's place when the latter steps out of the picture. I had heard that Mr. Bard had proclaimed himself for [Thomas] Dewey³ in the Elections—which probably did not please the President—if it was true. Perhaps—Hammond will yet be a Secretary of some kind—under Forrestal. Hammond's letter was amusing. Am sorry the mails were messed up. I understand that bad weather on the coast caused delays & mix ups in air mail. By now you should be receiving my letters regularly. While I am glad you are going thru the amputation wards at Mare Island—I can say I don't envy you. I always find it difficult to go thru those wards—because there is so little one can say to cheer up those cases. My friend Jack Towers is still working to get the Waves into my HQ at Pearl & into the fleet Commands ashore. It will be in vain because—I have come to the same conclusion you have. Many of them—& perhaps most of them do splendid jobs but there are many attendant problems, particularly as regards housing arrangements. When barracks are rearranged for Waves—only about 2/3 as many Waves can be accommodated in the same building provided

for men.⁴ The “*Catherine*” is now here—& has been unloaded but so far I have not had a chance to fish. However—that will come soon, I hope. Now—Sweetheart mine—will turn to on dispatches & then play some horseshoes with Anderson. I love you—Precious—& want you to Keep well & happy— Do not over do. All my love, kisses and devotion are yours—Always—

Ever your Chester.

¹ Commodore Paul L. Hammond, USNR, a private equity manager and famous amateur yachtsman, served with the U.S. Navy in both world wars. He volunteered as an assistant naval attaché in the U.S. embassy in London from May 1941 to June 1942.

² Herman Struve Hensel, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Materiel Procurement (30 January 1945–28 February 1946). Hensel had previously served as the first chief of the Navy’s legal division for procurement since 1940. He became Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs in 1952. See Glenn Fowler, “H. Struve Hensel is Dead at 89; Ex-Assistant Secretary of Defense,” *New York Times*, 30 May 1991.

³ Thomas E. Dewey was the Republican Party presidential candidate in 1944. President Roosevelt defeated Dewey in the general election.

⁴ For Nimitz’s thoughts on WAVES serving in Hawaii, see also Nimitz to Catherine, 16 January 1945, p. 125; and Nimitz to Catherine, 4 February 1945, p. 152.



[Guam] Thursday

8 Feb 45—

Darling Mine:—

Hoover’s dinner last night—to the senior flag and general officers of the Navy—Army and Marine Corps was very pleasant. He also has a superb site for his HQ which is considerably smaller than mine—and is housed in Quonset Huts¹—except for Hoover’s own house which is a one floor L shaped building on a bluff 150 feet above the coral plain below. This island is full of beautiful building sites—which heretofore were never used because there were no roads and no water and electricity in the areas. Now, however, roads go everywhere and power and water can easily follow. The CBs have made this development possible.² Heretofore the towns and villages were on the low plains where it was hot and more or less uncomfortable. Now the villages are being relocated in more desirable areas—although there are plans to rebuild the main city which was built of stone and mortar and which is largely destroyed. This rebuilding must await the time when shipping can be spared from the war effort. I doubt—however—that the natives will flock back into the low town after being in the pleasanter & higher elevations. There is still a considerable number of Japanese soldiers in the Island and they [are] killed or captured in appreciable numbers each week. It is practically impossible to starve them out because there is so much accessible food on the island—corn patches, taro patches—wild papaya—etc available to them. The Island commander sends

out previously captured Japs to go thru suspected areas—jungles etc alone to contact Japs still at large & induce them to surrender, and that scheme has been fairly successful recently. The presence of these roving Japs keeps us from taking walking trips to many desirable spots although only a few of our men have been shot at recently. You may rest assured that we only walk in areas where lots of our men are working—for I have no desire to stumble on a Jap & get a grenade or bullet. Our weather holds fine & we are getting ready to start our own garden— Some unknown benefactor in California has just sent me a large number of fine—healthy citrus plants 4 feet high—orange—lemon and grape fruit, and we brought out many fine plants of papaya—macadamia nut—and mango. Later I now have on my staff a member of the State Dept—recommended by Mr. Grew— He arrived today & will be in my mess—A Mr. [James] Penfeld.³ He is about 40—and appears to be pleasant. Time will determine whether he will be useful. At luncheon today we had two guests—R. Ad. [Richard] Laning⁴ (who did your knee operation in the San Diego Hosp (Mercy) and Bishop [Thomas] Wade⁵ (Catholic) who has spent 21 years in the North Solomon Islands. Both were very interesting—particularly the Bishop who is an American from New England—Rhode Is., I believe. Laning is a traveling inspector for the Bu M. & S. [Bureau of Medicine and Surgery] & will spend the night with us. Also will accompany Anderson, Lamar, and me on a two hour hike in a few minutes. I am doing my best to keep a steady schedule of exercise, and expect to be below 180 lbs in a day or so. Will try to stabilize at 175—which should be a good weight. I had asked Bishop Wade for a special talk on priests in these islands. It is my hope and belief that from now on—only native or American priests serve here—and I hope that our American Catholics will fix it up that way. Some-where—possibly in Spain is a Spanish bishop named [Miguel] Olano⁶ who spent 23 years here before the war and who never bothered to learn the English language— At least, it is said he understood English only when he wanted to—and of course he was not a U.S. citizen. The young native priest I met two days ago is very pleasant and highly intelligent—& was educated in the Philippines. The war there seems to be going on well—although it is reported the Japs are trying to burn parts of the city. Hope they spare the A & N Club⁷ but bet that will be one of the first to burn, as well as the Manila Hotel & any other buildings that might be useful to Americans. Hope the Big Three settle their business soon and that Ernest Jesus⁸ [King] sends for me by the end of the month— Now My Precious—I hope you have not been bored by all this misc. information— I adore you—my Sweetheart and count the days until I can hold you in my arms.

Keep well & cheerful—

All my hearts devotion is yours—Always

Ever your Chester

¹ Temporary prefabricated structures made of corrugated galvanized steel.

² For a contemporary official history of the Navy's base construction in World War II, see U.S. Department of the Navy, Bureau of Yards and Docks, *Building the Navy's Bases in World War II: History of the Bureau of Yards and Docks and the Civil Engineer Corps, 1940–1946*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947).

³ James K. Penfield, State Department career Foreign Service officer who served as a political adviser to Nimitz.

⁴ Rear Admiral Richard H. Laning, MC, USN.

⁵ Thomas James Wade of Providence, Rhode Island, vicar apostolic of the northern Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and titular bishop of the titular see of Barbalissus, appointments he held from 3 July 1930 to 14 June 1960.

⁶ Bishop Miguel Angel Urteaga Olano, the last Spanish bishop of Guam. Olano was a Capuchin priest who ministered in Guam beginning in 1919. He traveled to Berkeley, California, to improve his English and wrote his published memoir in English. He also learned the Chamorro language in order to better minister to the residents on Guam. On the orders of the U.S. Navy, American priests started replacing Spanish priests in Guam beginning in 1939. After Japanese forces captured Guam, Olano was interned in Japan from January 1942 to 1943. In March 1945, Olano returned to Guam, where he met Nimitz. The U.S. military succeeded in pressuring the Catholic Church to force Olano to resign and leave Guam in October 1945.

⁷ The Army and Navy Club of Manila, a social club established in 1898 exclusively for Americans. Nimitz likely visited the club during his service in the Philippines before World War I. The club's building adjacent to Manila Bay survived the war and is now a luxury hotel.

⁸ A reference to CNO Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King.



Buildings destroyed by the U.S. Navy's heavy preinvasion bombardment at Agana (present-day Hagåtña), Guam, pictured in July 1944. The largest structure was formerly the best-equipped school on Guam. (NARA, USMC 94045)



[Guam] Friday—

9 Feb '45.

Dearest & Best—:—

Another day without mail—but there is still chance of hearing from you today. This morning's news from the Big Three indicates they are busy at their jobs—which I hope will be finished in a week or so.¹ I don't believe our President can afford to be outside the Country too long at a stretch. The war news continues good both in Europe and the Pacific although the tempo is easing down somewhat. Yesterday afternoon—Drs. Laning and Anderson and Lamar and I jeeped out to the starting point of a dirt road & had a fine walk of two hours up to the top of Mt Tenjo. This—our second walk there, seemed easier and shorter than the first time, which is usually the case. We are being hardened slowly by our frequent walks. Our new mess member—Mr Penfield, of the State Dept, seems to be an agreeable and interesting person. He knows Esson Gale quite well. Today, for the first time—Sherman and I took a sun bath—of 30 minutes in our tiny patio. Although the days are mostly sunny now—it is usually cloudy in the middle of the day. The “*Catherine*” is in port but has not yet been unloaded from the ship that brought her out. We are waiting for the completion of a small boat house which will house four boats, the *Catherine*, a barge & two “Skimmers” small, flat—fast harbor boats. If the state of the war permits—we will try fishing Sunday afternoon—11th—using the barge if the *Catherine* is not ready to go. So far reports of fishing here abouts are not Encouraging—but perhaps we can change the luck. Another—correspondent “Sherrod of *Time*”² will try his hand at writing me up for a future issue of *Time* which will carry my picture on front cover. The part I've seen so far is accurate and brief. The picture and article may never appear as future events will decide its importance. I hope you are keeping well & not overworking. I need you—well and happy and I pray that I may hold you in my arms by the month's end. Not much news today & I apologize for this uninteresting letter. I miss you terribly. All my hearts devotion to you—always—

Ever Your own

Chester

¹ A reference to the Yalta Conference, 4–11 February 1945.

² Robert Sherrod, war correspondent for *Time* and *Life* magazines and author of several books about the war. Nimitz appeared on the cover of the 26 February 1945 issue of *Time* magazine and had previously appeared on the covers of the 6 March 1944 and 10 July 1944 issues of *Life* magazine.



[Guam] Saturday ELD

10 Feb 45

Darling Mine—:—

Your fine letter of 31 Jan arrived last night—as I had hoped and was greatly enjoyed. It took 8 days in coming—which I think will be cut to a week on the average. Mary's letter of 25 Jan is splendid and I am greatly pleased to note the improvement from letter to letter in her style and writing. She seems definitely happy which is as it should be. Her use of the "carriage" to emphasize posture is excellent. Am sure you were not missed at the Ingersoll's "40" year party. While I like him—I can well bear the thought of being separated from him. Have never been enthusiastic about Mrs I. [Ingersoll]¹ Class functions have long since ceased to interest me—and I go more for old shipmates regardless of classes. Quentin Reynolds²—the war correspondent, recently visited my area & came away with enthusiastic impressions—as I have learned from copies of his letters to the Washington P.R.O.s. He was a very pleasant person—from the little I saw of him. I agree with you that most psychologists and other "ists" of that variety are usually impractical dreamers or nuts. Your speech must have been a ray of sunshine in that valley of gloom. I would like to believe that Germany would fold up by 24 Feb but am not optimistic about that early date. Believe, however, it will happen before Summer. Enjoyed the clipping about the Navy Wives Club. In the late afternoon yesterday Lamar and I played horse shoes against Dr. Anderson and Dr. Laning—who will be here until tomorrow. We defeated them easily—but none of us was brilliant on the new court & Lamar & Laning are very very bad. Air raid alarm last night, third since I've been here—All have been friendly planes but it has been good practice. Am engaged in making up some feather lures for fishing—which I hope to start tomorrow—Sunday—afternoon. Have invited to dinner tonight—Lt Gen. Harmon & his Chief of Staff, Col. [James] Andersen,³ and have asked them to come early enough (5 pm) to play horseshoes against Anderson and me. Am sending you under separate cover a letter from John Hancock Life Insurance Company—which calls attention to certain matters that may be of interest. After you have read it—please discuss it with the bank & get their advice, and when I come about 1 March (I hope I hope) I will do whatever is necessary if changes are in order. Now my Precious Bye bye until tomorrow—Keep well & Cheerful—All my hearts devotion, love and Kisses are yours.

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Louise van Harlingen Ingersoll, wife of Admiral Royal E. Ingersoll, USN, Commander, Western Sea Frontier, since November 1944.

² Quentin Reynolds, war correspondent, associate editor of *Collier's*, and author of 25 books.

³ Colonel James Roy Andersen, USAAF, chief of staff, Army Air Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas. Andersen was accompanying Major General Millard F. Harmon when their plane was lost in March 1945 over the Pacific Ocean.



[Guam] Sunday noon ELD

11 Feb 1945

Darling Mine:—

Although it is Sunday by the calendar there is no Sabbath calm in my vicinity. Bulldozers, road rollers, trucks and scrapers are very active in front of my building, and hammering and other signs & noises of CB progress are all around me. Immediately after lunch I will take off with Lamar, Adams—Anderson & the orderly to try out the fishing around this island. Expect to return by 530 pm as I have no desire to be out after dark. Today is an important day in the Japanese Calendar. It is “KIGENSETSU” or “Empire Day” and it celebrates the 2605th year since the founding of the Japanese Empire. That is quite a long record. We have alerted all hands to the probability that our Enemy may try something special on this day in order to retrieve their dwindling prestige and morale. As announced in this morning’s communique—we sent fighters up to Iwo Jima yesterday in the hopes of catching planes there and we were successful in knocking out most of what was there & So we hope we have prevented their celebrating Empire Day by burning down my new HQ building—which is entirely of wood. Gunther has just called on me—and will now serve in my immediate vicinity. Have invited him & Commodore Grant to have dinner with me tonight. Gunther is an ardent fisherman and he will be interested in our afternoon’s experience. If excellence of tackle will do the trick we should be lucky because we have been beautifully outfitted with all sorts of gear and I have made some fancy feather lures. Dr. Laning has departed and for the moment my guest room is empty—but it will not be for long. Anderson & I won our horse shoe match yesterday afternoon against Harmon and his Chief of Staff—also named Anderson. We had a pleasant dinner—with pot roast as the principal dish—and heart of coconut palm stalks to take the place of celery. One good thing about having dinner guests here is that they go home even earlier than in Oahu. Although there is no curfew & no black out (because work continues 24 hours per day) guests usually leave by 830 pm which suits us perfectly. The Offenbach—*Gaité Parisienne* & the Rachmaninoff # 2 Concerto furnished us fine music. No mail so far today but I hope for a letter when I return tonight. Bye bye until tomorrow my

Sweetheart. Keep well & happy. All my hearts devotion is yours

Always

Ever your own

Chester.



[Guam] Monday—E.L.D.

12 Feb 45—

Dearest & Best:—

During this pause in the forenoon work—I will start this Chat with my Best Bel. It is overcast and windy and very cool—more so than usual. Perhaps our period of sunshine is about to end. Rain in moderate amounts will be welcome because we have planted many new shrubs and seeds and fruit trees and it is a big chore to keep them moist. My fishing expedition yesterday netted us nothing but a view of a part of the island from a very rough sea. It was so rough as to make it very uncomfortable, and no one of the party got a strike. I thought I had one—but when we got the boat stopped and I had reeled in my line, I found I had hooked a large piece of bacon rind. I hope to try it again this afternoon on the other side of the island where there is a lee and where it is reported there are fish. I got back in time yesterday to put in an hours work at my desk before dinner. Gunther & Grant were our guests. Today I expect Dr. [Frank] Lahey¹ of the Lahey Clinic in Boston to arrive and spend a couple of days on the Island. I will invite him as my guest. I have a radio receiver in my office back of my desk—on which I can receive Radio Tokyo as clearly as you can the Bay Area Stations. It is interesting to listen to “Tokyo Merry Go Round of the News”—and to note how absolutely different it is from our news in all respects except for the fighting in China—Where the Jap news is fairly accurate because they can report good news. More later. 530 pm. Dr. Lahey did not arrive today because of delay due to weather. After luncheon—Sherman—Lamar & I—with two marine orderlies who wanted a boat ride—tried our luck fishing on the South side of the Island. We have just returned—having had a nice smooth ride along the striking cliffs—but experienced no “Striking” fish. No pun intended. The scenery was beautiful and it was a nice cool afternoon with occasional sun. The place looked fine for fish from our standpoint—but apparently the fish think differently. We cruised thru AGAT bay where our Marines made their landings last year and saw at least twenty rusty landing boats and amphibious tanks that were wrecked by Jap artillery as they approached the beaches. No mail from you to day but expect several letters tomorrow. Captain [Robert] Armour²—R.N., C.O. of a

British Escort Carrier—will dine with me tonight. He is serving temporarily in my fleet. Now my Dearest—I will get this into the mail & then work on my dispatches. I love you tremendously & long to demonstrate it at close range. Keep well and happy—for your husband who misses you—Oh so much

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Dr. Frank H. Lahey, pioneer of surgery techniques, founder of the Lahey Clinic, and past president of several organizations including the American Medical Association. During World War II, President Roosevelt appointed Dr. Lahey to a special commission to evaluate medical standards in the military.

² Captain Robert Syme Denholm Armour, RN, commanding officer of the British escort carrier HMS *Rajah*.



[Guam] Tuesday—E.L.D.

13 Feb 45—

Darling Mine:—

Our friend, Dr. Lahey, arrived at one a.m. this morning and was met by Dr. Anderson and brought to our house. Dr. Lahey is a most interesting and agreeable visitor and all my mess enjoy him. His principal interest is in fresh blood and how it is handled out here. I did not know that it had to be used in two weeks or less—although it some times keeps for three weeks. This means that there is a constant flow of blood across the Pacific by plane—with special cooling and handling arrangements at each stop. Our dinner guest last night, Capt. Armour, R.N., an aviator, was excellent company—and besides, he insisted on bringing up a bottle of very fine old Scotch Whiskey for my mess. I reciprocated by giving him five pounds of unroasted Kona Coffee—which his steward can handle on board. I also gave him a few shells for his 9 year old daughter in Portsmouth—Eng. The news we get from the East Coast indicates they have recently had a severe snow storm. I hope our children were not involved in it. The reports indicated 17 inches of snow in Boston. No mail as yet this forenoon—but that is not unusual. A plane is down somewhere east of us—presumably a mail and passenger plane. Hope none of my recent letters to you are in it. More later. 6 pm. About 4 pm I was greatly rewarded by receiving your letters of 31 Jan and Feb 1 & 2—& Nancy's letter of 29 Jan. I loved all of them and was so happy to note what a good time Nancy was having on the Cape—in spite of icy weather. I assume you turned down the invitation of the Texas Society for an address—and I am glad of it. You must not let yourself in for too many speeches when you have to prepare them yourself. I suggest you refer each such request to the Public Relations officer of the District and ask him for advice. If he suggests

doing it—then tell him to send over a PRO so you can tell him about what should be said, & let him prepare the address for your approval. Now—I have a suggestion for your overflow of dependent cases that the state of California can not and should not, be responsible for. Write a letter (dictate it to your Wave) to J. O. Richardson and describe the situation. Tell him if he considers Navy Relief should handle such cases, the Navy Relief should arrange with the State for the overflow or build up its own institutions, or restrict the relief to wives or children. Invite him to come out to survey the situation himself or send a competent representative out. It will cost more, and we should not expect the State to bear the cost. I do not envy you the visit to the Mare Island hospital—but I am glad you went. I am particularly glad to hear of the high morale of the men who have lost arms or legs.¹ I have heard about the splendid work there in artificial limbs and I suppose some day, I should go for a visit. As I said before, I have seen these men on their way back to the Coast & it is very heart wrenching. Am so glad you enjoyed Tisdale's luncheon & improved your opinion of Owens. I am sorry to hear that Dickom has turned sour, but am not surprised. Darling Mine your letters have been splendid & I have never felt they were badly written. Am afraid you get too tired. When you feel that way—turn in & sleep & do not try to write. I wish I could not only smell your stew—but could sit down with you & enjoy it. Perhaps in three weeks we can do this. Radio Tokyo & the San Francisco short wave stations tell me the Big Three Conference is finished—so I hope for news soon. Regarding the Marine Corps pay system, I suggest you write to Lt. Gen. A. A. Vandegrift, USMC, Comdt Marine Corps—Wash DC. the same thing you wrote me & do not pull your punches, and I'll bet he does something about it. You have nothing to lose & everything to gain. Do not know off hand who "Growlers" C.O.² was but will find out & let you know—or am sure Marshall Smith can consult his "Pacific Fleet Organization" & let you know. Call him & if he cannot tell you—I will send it along. My stable of planes is not for my exclusive use—but is intended for the many flag officers in the Pacific & their staffs & for distinguished visitors. I wish we had some of your rain now. It has become very dusty & it has not rained for 12 days. Otherwise the weather is ideal. Do not send any of the Feng candy out here. I still have candy given me by Calhoun. We can enjoy it when I come—or better still—take it to the Hospital where more people can enjoy it. Am glad you are going to play poker. Wish I could be there. My poker is finished until I can get back to you or to Oahu where it is not all naval officers. Now my Precious Bye bye until tomorrow—I love you more than words can tell. Keep cheerful—

Ever your devoted

Chester

¹ For another mention of Catherine's visit to the amputation wards at Mare Island Hospital, see Nimitz to Catherine, 7 February 1945, p. 157.

² Commander Thomas B. Oakley Jr., commanding officer of the submarine *Growler* (SS-215) when the vessel was lost with all hands while attacking a Japanese convoy on 8 November 1944. See also Nimitz to Catherine, 14 February 1945, below.



[Guam] P.M.—Wednesday—Valentine Day—

14 Feb 1945

To My Valentine:—

Your letter of 7 Feb—rec'd this morning informs me that you have a bad cold—which I hope you have long since defeated. A note from Marshall Smith, also just received, tells me that on 11 Feb you were waxing floors & that Mary was at home—which indicates to me that your cold is better. Please—Darling Mine When you have a cold or are very tired—stay at home and rest until the cold is gone. Your work will be better if you are well. Am sorry you continue to have minor troubles with the car. The enclosed note from Mrs. Lia Brook arrived today along with a Christmas card that is in the next Misc. Envelope. Marshall Smith's note also said you & Mary had gone to the rec skating championship and had stayed very late—which also meant to me that your cold was over or better. Last night at dinner—Dr. Lahey and I had a long talk on the subject of enlisted men's dependents and the hospitalization thereof. Apparently it is a hot subject in Washington and the Surgeon General¹ has it very much on his mind. Dr. Lahey will visit Oak Knoll on his return to the U.S., and will definitely discuss this matter with you, and get your views. It seems to me that with the increasing number of veterans—without a corresponding increase in hospital facilities, the rights to hospitalization of dependents will have to be restricted to wives and children of personnel—otherwise the ones who really need it & rate it—will suffer. The name of the C.O. lost on the *Growler* is Comdr. T. B. Oakley Jr.—I did not know him. My mess has just received from V. Ad. & Mrs. A. W. Fitch—two dozen handsome but inexpensive liqueur glasses (forwarded by Marshall Smith's note.) & When Fitch was out here recently with Gates I served them some fine old 1811 cognac in the bottom of water glasses and remarked for Mr. G's benefit—, that we could use some liqueur glasses if some rich friend heard of our need. The Fitch's came thru handsomely— Mr. G—walked away with a pair of fancy colored swim trunks I had loaned him. Thus is life. Yesterday, a group of submarine men strayed away from their recuperation camp on the other side of the island, and in spite of many warnings, seven of them were ambushed by a party of about 30 Japs—who killed 5 and wounded the other two.² I do all my walking on the main roads, along which many trucks & autos are in constant sight. Tomorrow—I am going to another Island in the *Pink Lady* to meet Mr. F. & party and to see Kelly Turner. I will have about 10 in my party—& expect to be back at my

HQ by 630 pm. Dr. Lahey & Dr. Anderson will go with me. Now—my Precious I must read dispatches and work on papers. Then Lamar, Mr. Penfield & I will take Mak for a walk down the hill to the sea shore before dinner. The walk down will be easy— The uphill pull, 625', will be warm, but good exercise. Hope to hear soon about coming East. Keep well & cheerful & hope with me that the word will come in time to see you about the 28th— Hug & kiss Mary for me. All my hearts devotion—love & Kisses are yours always.

Ever your own

Chester.

¹ Likely a reference to the surgeon general of the U.S. Navy, Rear Admiral Ross T. McIntire, who also served as personal physician to President Roosevelt from 1932 to 1945.

² On the dangers of Japanese soldiers still on Guam, see also Nimitz to Catherine, 8 February 1945, p. 159.



[Guam] In Quarters #4, 10 pm Thursday—ELD

15 Feb 45.

Best Beloved:—

This has been a very long and full day—but also a very satisfactory one. We left my new HQ at 10 am and arrived at Saipan at 1130 where we were met by the Island Comdr—Maj. Gen Jarman USA, and many others—including Holland Smith—Kelly Turner, Harry Hill¹ & Maj Gen. [Thomas] Watson² USMC—who commands the 2d-Marine Division. Jarman gave us a nice lunch at his hilltop quarters (850' up) and then we went down to meet Mr. Forrestal who arrived with his party at 2 pm. R. Ad. [Louis] Denfeld,³ who was with him—brought out a package from Catherine which contained a nice letter of 8 Feb (enclosed) and my birthday present from Catherine & Nancy (Beethoven's Sonata #9 in A Major for violin & Piano)⁴—which I know I am going to enjoy immensely. The same package also contained a birthday card from Helen Hess and a red seal record⁵ “Handels Organ Concerto in G Minor—Allegro & Adagio).⁶ What a lot of wonderful music we are accumulating! Please add this to the list I sent you. Please pardon the pencil—my pen went dry and there's no ink nearer than my HQ—a mile away. The [William] Blackney⁷ Catherine mentions was with the House Naval Affairs Committee that visited me. Jarman took us on a 2 1/2 hour tour of his island and we all marveled at the wonderful progress since our last visit. I saw F [Forrestal]—safely into his boat for Turner's flagship⁸—at 430 & then returned to the field & boarded the *Pink Lady* which brought us safely back in time to be in my quarters at 630 pm. As we were alternately in dust and showers during our tour—a good bath was very

welcome. There were 12 in my party including Dr Anderson & Dr Lahey—Sherman—Lamar—Miller—my yeoman, Adams, and a marine orderly—Paulus. The two latter I brought along for the ride & they loved it. To top off my satisfactory day I found awaiting me your letter of 8 Feb—which I loved. You have no reason to worry about your hair or your looks—both of which are eminently satisfactory and pleasing to me. I thought the style of hair do you had during my last visit was lovely. F. tells me EJK returns to W. [Washington] on 17th so I expect a call soon. F. says by all means I can bring you & Mary along in my plane. My own operations will keep me here at least until about 27th, by which time I would expect to be able to leave with no worries here. I look forward to that visit and count the hours [redacted]. I will cheer you up at once— & I know you will cheer me up. Am glad you had the visitors from Berkeley & Richmond but hope you entertained them at the Hospital—where some one else would get the lunch. We have had considerable rain during the last 24 hours—which was welcome to log the dust & to water the many plants we have set out. Now, [redacted] it is late & I must turn in. Tomorrow—our 16th—your 15th is a big day for Pacific Fleet⁹ as you will soon learn— Nighty night my, Sweetheart. I love & adore you [redacted].

Ever your devoted

Chester

¹ Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill, USN, Commander, Amphibious Group 2, V Amphibious Force (September 1943–April 1945). As commander of Amphibious Group 2, Hill participated in the capture of Tarawa along with other islands in the Gilberts, Marshalls, and Marianas. His command subsequently took part in the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. During the Okinawa campaign, Hill became Commander, V Amphibious Force, and retained that billet until the island was secured at the end of June 1945. In June 1946, Hill became the first commandant of the National War College. Prior to his retirement, he also served as superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy until August 1952. See Navy Office of Information, “Admiral Harry W. Hill, U.S. Navy, Retired,” 24 January 1966, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

² Major General Thomas E. Watson, USMC, Commanding General, 2nd Marine Division.

³ Rear Admiral Louis E. Denfeld, USN, assistant chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel (January 1942–March 1945). Denfeld subsequently commanded Battleship Division 9 from March to September 1945. In October 1945, Denfeld became chief of the Bureau of Naval Personnel and Deputy CNO (Personnel). He succeeded Nimitz as CNO on 15 December 1947. He retired from the Navy in March 1950 with the rank of admiral. See Navy Office of Information, “Admiral Louis Emil Denfeld, U.S. Navy, Retired,” 20 December 1967, Modern Biographies Collection, NDL, NHHC.

⁴ A sonata for piano and violin composed by Beethoven in 1803 and dedicated to violinist Rodolphe Kreutzer, for which reason it is known as the *Kreutzer* Sonata.

⁵ A label of RCA Victor Records specifically for classical music.

⁶ A work by George Frideric Handel, a prominent eighteenth-century German-born British composer.

⁷ Representative William W. Blackney (R-MI), a member of the House Committee on Naval Affairs. Blackney served in Congress from 1935 to 1937 and again from 1939 to 1953.

⁸ *Eldorado* (AGC-11).

⁹ On 16 and 17 February 1945, carrier aircraft from Task Force 58 under the command of Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher conducted attacks on military targets in and around Tokyo. The 16 aircraft carriers of Task Force 58 took up station just 60 miles off the coast of Japan. The goal of the attacks was to eliminate the Japanese military's ability to interfere with the forthcoming invasion of Iwo Jima on 19 February 1945. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 294.



Left to right: Secretary of the Navy James Forrester, Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, and Fleet Admiral Nimitz having a discussion on Saipan, circa 1945. (NHHHC, NH 62421)



[Guam] Friday afternoon,

16 Feb '45

[redacted]

This is a great day for the Pacific Fleet—the first day of powerful carrier aircraft strikes in the Tokyo area—A day all of us in the Pacific Fleet have been waiting for and planning for so many months, years in fact. This morning we released the news of the attack—but it will be a day or so before we will be able to publish results—as it takes a long time to get the stories from the pilots, and then to reconcile all the conflicting claims. By now the Japs will know how our people felt at Pearl Harbor—that is, the Japanese public. Dr. Lahey left this forenoon having

thoroughly enjoyed his stay with us. My mess is unanimous in its approval of him as a mess-mate. He promises to look you up at Oak Knoll and I hope he finds you in your office and that you talk your problems over with him. He is very close to the Surgeon General¹—who in turn is very close to the President. McIntire may be able to find a solution to the many difficulties that confront the state and the Naval Hospital. Your fine letter of 9th Feb has just arrived and sounded so happy. How I wish I could have been with you & Mary. Her report card is splendid & is being saved in the Misc. Envelope. Congratulate her for me now and I will write her soon. How wonderful that she likes the school so much. Margaret Canaga's poem "1905" also arrived today and was greatly enjoyed. I did not know there was a poet in the Canaga family. I assume it was Mrs. C & not young Margaret who wrote it. Does Marshall Smith say whether the owners of the Knoll property (Dougherty) will attempt to enforce their views on purchasers?

Indeed I remember that snowy winter in N. E. [New England] when I tried to learn to skate. That was a very happy winter for me & all others since have been happy—Knowing that if I could not be with you all the time—you would be waiting for me when I could come. Have written Helen Hess & Catherine & Nancy about their birthday presents and also Bertha Riley who sent pecans from Fredericksburg. I am receiving birthday cards from people I dont know—some whom have the same B.D. [birthday]—all very friendly. Gene Tunney² is coming to see me this afternoon. He is out on his usual business of physical fitness—in which he & I are in complete accord. The more I see of him the better I like him. Now Darling, I am going to do my paper work & dispatches. No more news. By tomorrow night I should have plenty of news. Keep well & cheerful & please rest enough to rid yourself of that cold. I need you well—In fact I need you all the time.

All my hearts devotion is yours always—

Ever your own

Chester

¹ Rear Admiral Ross T. McIntire, USN, surgeon general of the U.S. Navy (1938–1946).

² Commander James Joseph "Gene" Tunney, USNR, the heavyweight boxing champion from 1926 to 1928 and a marine during World War I. Tunney accepted a commission in the Naval Reserve upon U.S. entry into World War II in order to set up a physical fitness program for naval personnel.



[Guam] 17 March. 45.

Everything is again calm and serene in my household out here and my mess is down to our regular 8. My two guests from the Hawaiian Islands left this morning having had a most interesting 1 1/2 days on the Island. Both had sent me many shrubs and fruit trees and they left thoroughly indoctrinated they would send more. I took them and Robt. E. Sherwood (playwright) out in one of our smaller boats for a ride around the harbor.

I am delighted with the news Iwo has finally been conquered and I hope that I will not get too many letters cursing me because of heavy casualties.¹ I am receiving two or three letters a day signed "A Marine Mother" and calling me all sorts of names. I am just as distressed as can be over the casualties but don't see how I could have reduced them.

¹ The U.S. invasion of Iwo Jima began on 19 February 1945, and the island was declared secure on 16 March. More than 6,800 Americans died during the battle, including 5,931 marines.



Nimitz and companions cruise along the Guam coast, circa 1945. *Left to right:* Robert E. Sherwood, Nimitz, Sandy Walker, and Walter Dillingham. (NHHHC, NH 62923)



[Guam] 21 March 45

I spent most of yesterday in my bunk in an effort to get rid of my cold. I can report the cold has definitely broken and I am on the mend. The weather here is very uncertain and it rains on the slightest provocation which is fine for the plants but not good for anything else. We received a preliminary report from Spruance early this morning telling about his attacks on Kyushu and in the Inland Sea.¹ This was released promptly to the press and you know doubt heard it over the radio. I wonder what goes on in the minds of the Japs now that their combatant ships are not safe in the Inland Sea. It would not surprise me at all if these ships left the Inland Sea for the greater security of the Sea of Japan.

¹ A reference to Task Force 58's raids on shipping and airfields on Kyushu on 18–19 March 1945. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 303; Potter, *Nimitz*, 371–72; and "Command Summary," 20 March 1945, vol. 6, p. 2576, box 6, Series 1: Command Summary & Combined Chiefs of Staff Books, 1941–1945, Nimitz Papers, AB, NHHHC.



[Guam] 25 March 45. Sunday.

Early yesterday morning—6. a.m.—to be exact—I set out in the *Pink Lady* for Iwo Jima where we arrived at 10. a.m. I had with me McMorris, Carter, Mandell and about a dozen others of my staff. We had a most interesting visit and toured that tiny island until 2. p.m. when we took off to return to my advance headquarters where we arrived at 4.30 p.m.—just in time for a much needed bath and dinner. Some fighting was still going on in a small gorge or ravine at the N.W. end where a pocketful of Japs—estimated to number 200 or more were putting up a final last gasp resistance rather than surrender. By now they are all dead or sealed up in caves where death will come soon. Iwo must be seen to appreciate the character of the terrain and the defenses and the volcanic dust. We all looked like coal heavers within a few minutes after starting. The entire island is a thermal region with steam coming from the ground at numerous points. There are some hot water wells—sulphur of course and brackish but very hot and fresh enough for bathing with soap. They are very popular with the men. There was some vegetation and a few trees before the attack but now there is nothing growing. It was a clear sunny day and the temperature there was almost 70° which was delightful. In the years to come when water has been found and when the island is covered with vegetation—it may become a health resort. The trip there helped my cold which is nearly gone—but I was too weary last night to do anything but read dispatches after dinner and then sleep. H. T. Smith¹ Rear Adm whom you know spent the night with us and left to-day. He is my Fleet Maintenance Officer and took [Charles] Dunn's² place.

¹ Rear Admiral Harold T. Smith, USN, fleet maintenance officer, Pacific Fleet, May 1944 to September 1945.

² Rear Admiral Charles A. Dunn, USN, former fleet maintenance officer, Pacific Fleet, April 1942 to May 1944.



Nimitz and party arrive on Iwo Jima. (NARA, 80-G-329988)



Nimitz and other officers survey Iwo Jima from the top of Mount Suribachi. Photo by Thomas E. Gilham, 31st Naval Construction Battalion. (NHHC, NH 62564)



[Guam] 3 April 45 Tuesday afternoon.

My visitors are slowly moving on. Also departing to-day are Lt. Gen. [Albert Wedemeyer]¹ and staff who arrived yesterday from Washington. Spent the night with me, and moved on to the far westward. In the offing is a party of 12 Labor leaders who will be accompanied by Marshall Smith and an Army officer. I expect them to arrive about the 5th and to be with me about three days. Although it will mean extra work I welcome this group in the belief that if we show them what our men are up against it will help the Navy and Marines. I shall do my best by the Labor leaders and of course I look forward with great pleasure to having Smith spend a few days with me. Following that group almost immediately will be another sub committee of the House Naval Affairs Committee—headed by Mr [Patrick] Drewry² whom I like very much. He always treated me with the greatest courtesy. With him will be Lyndon Johnson³ of Texas, [Michael] Bradley⁴ of Penn., [Edouard] Izac⁵ of Calif., [James] Mott⁶ of Oregon, [George] Bates⁷ of Mass. and [William] Cole⁸ of N.Y.—all men I know. They are coming out to look at Pacific Bases. Both of these groups will be housed in our quarters, on cots etc and will be in my mess—though fortunately not at the same time. These visits do take my time—but as I think they will help the Navy we will—do our best for them.⁹ The Okinawa operation is going along splendidly and with light losses so far.¹⁰ We all pray it will continue to go as it has.

I have not received the news yet that I am expecting from Wash. But the Lt. Gen. [Wedemeyer] who has just passed thru and who I like very much gave me news as to the reasons for delay. He relieved Stillwell—not so long ago and is a splendid officer.

¹ Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer, USA, Commanding General, United States Forces, China Theater, and chief of staff to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

² Representative Patrick H. Drewry (D-VA), ranking member of the House Naval Affairs Committee. Drewry served in Congress from 1920 to 1947.

³ Representative Lyndon B. Johnson (D-TX), member of the House of Representatives and later the youngest Senate minority leader in history, Vice President under John F. Kennedy, and President from 1963 to 1969.

⁴ Representative Michael J. Bradley (D-PA), member of the House of Representatives from 1937 to 1947.

⁵ Representative Edouard V. Izac (D-CA), member of the House of Representatives from 1937 to 1947. Izac had received the Medal of Honor for his heroism during World War I as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy.

⁶ Representative James W. Mott (R-OR), member of the House of Representatives from 1933 until his death in November 1945.

⁷ Representative George J. Bates (R-MA), member of the House of Representatives from 1937 until his death in November 1949.

⁸ Representative William S. Cole (R-NY), member of the House of Representatives from 1935 to 1957.

⁹ On the topic of political visitors to Nimitz's headquarters, see also Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 376–77; and Potter, *Nimitz*, 383.

¹⁰ The U.S. invasion of the Japanese island of Okinawa began on 1 April 1945. Japanese resistance on the island ceased on 22 June. Total casualties for U.S. forces included 12,520 killed and more than 36,600 wounded. More U.S. Navy sailors died from kamikaze attacks at Okinawa than did soldiers or marines in ground combat on the island. See Stephen L. Moore, *Rain of Steel: Mitscher's Task Force 58, Ugaki's Thunder Gods, and the Kamikaze War off Okinawa* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2020), 357.



[Guam] 4 April 45

Lamar and I took a short walk in one of the very lush and muddy valleys close by and got a real work out before we were able to climb out to the hard ground. We were almost soaked thru with perspiration from the up hill–down hill nature of the country—which however was beautifully green and luxuriant in plants. Late this afternoon we will take another walk—taking Jeb (Capt. G. V. Stewart)¹ who particularly asked for a walk.

Our war news continues good and we are very thankful our casualties are so light.— — —. Hope to hear that Germany collapses soon so we can get the war effort concentrated in the Pacific. Am still awaiting the “word” from Washington and hope it will be here in a day or so. Gen. Wedemeyer indicated it might be that way.

¹ Captain George V. Stewart, USN, general inspector of the Bureau of Naval Personnel from October 1940 to 2 September 1945. Stewart graduated from the Naval Academy with Nimitz in 1905.



[Guam] 5 April 45.

It is always restful to me when the people around me are cheerful and happy.

The storms that have brought us so much rain and cloudiness are moving farther away and we see more of the sun. Unless the war gets particularly acute this afternoon I shall go out in the good ship “*Catherine*” with Jeb, Lamar and Anderson to see if we can hook a fish. As there is a nice cabin where we can change our clothes we will take along bathing trunks and sun bath while we fish. This afternoon will be my last chance at an outing for at least ten days—if our visitors come as expected. The Labor Leaders arrive tomorrow in time for lunch and will be with me three days.

The SecNav¹ is hell bent on having me publish a Pacific Fleet Magazine or newspaper (daily) and I do not want to undertake that—even though I have a good P.R.O section to do the job. The work of distribution etc is just too much when we are trying to run a war and besides we get daily press and radio and plenty of

magazines. Of course not every area is so well served with papers and magazines as we are but I would rather increase deliveries of “*Time*” and “*Newsweek*” rather than to compete with them. The SecNav is sending out a Mr. [Edwin] Palmer Hoyt² of the Portland [remainder of letter missing]

¹ Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal (May 1944–September 1947). Forrestal served as the first Secretary of Defense from September 1947 to March 1949.

² Edwin Palmer Hoyt, editor and publisher of the *Oregonian* newspaper. Hoyt worked at the *Oregonian* beginning in 1926 and became the paper’s publisher in 1938. He staunchly opposed appeasing the Axis powers before the United States entered World War II. He served as director of the domestic branch of the OWI for six months in 1943 before returning to the *Oregonian*. From 1946 to 1971, Hoyt was the editor and publisher of the *Denver Post*. Following his retirement, he wrote more than two dozen books about military history. See Thomas W. Ennis, “Palmer Hoyt, 82, Dies in Denver; Ex-editor and Publisher of *Post*,” *New York Times*, 27 June 1979. Nimitz met with Hoyt on 10 April 1945. See Nimitz to Catherine, 10 April 1945, p. 179.



[Guam] 6. April 45.

I met Marshall Smith and party at the airport and saw that they were all properly cared for in the various quarters. I had a luncheon for them all and have Mr Crow (the oldest) in my spare room. They were anxious that there be no one of them considered more important than any other and declined to say who was their spokesman or chairman. Therefore I took the oldest as my house guest and that seemed O.K. to the rest. They are all pleasant and very intelligent me[n] and I am sure that the trip will do both them and the services a lot of good. They came out in a new R5D plane that is intended to join my “stable” of planes. I have laid out a very interesting program for them. They will also visit MacA.

Incidentally I have finally received the long awaited “word” from Wash.¹ And it is just about what I had suggested so I have no cause for complaint and neither should anyone else, except perhaps the Hearst papers have objections.² Now we can go ahead with our planning without further ado. Much is left to me and my pal³ to settle by talk—but I think we can do this all right and keep all hands satisfied.

Tomorrow I am to broadcast the Army Day⁴ message in the Pacific.

A WAC [Women’s Army Corps] Captain—Miss Woodin had dinner in our quarters last night as Commodore Carter’s guest. She was Gen. Harmon’s office manager and comes from Sacramento.

Every thing is going better than expected and we heard last night the entire Koiso Cabinet had quit.⁵

¹ On 3 April 1945, the Joint Chiefs of Staff decided that in the planned invasion of Japan, General Douglas MacArthur would command nearly all U.S. Army forces in the Pacific and Nimitz would retain command of all naval forces in the theater. Under the new arrangement, Nimitz gained control of the Seventh Fleet but had to relinquish all Army and Army Air Forces units under his control. MacArthur sent his chief of staff, Major

General Richard K. Sutherland, and Lieutenant General George C. Kenney to Guam to negotiate the transition, which MacArthur wanted to take place as soon as possible. Nimitz sought a more orderly transition. Sutherland expressed MacArthur's view that the joint command arrangements under which the war had been conducted up to this point were unsatisfactory from the beginning. See Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 391.

² William Randolph Hearst was a prominent news media publisher and critic of President Roosevelt before and during World War II. Hearst owned newspapers in a number of major U.S. cities, and these outlets frequently criticized the Roosevelt administration and its prosecution of the war.

³ Likely a sarcastic reference to General of the Army Douglas MacArthur.

⁴ Observed every 6 April to commemorate U.S. entry into World War I and promote national defense.

⁵ Prime Minister Kuniaki Koiso and his cabinet resigned on 5 April 1945 following the U.S. invasion of Okinawa. Koiso was a Japanese army general who had previously commanded Japanese soldiers in China and served as the governor-general of Korea. Koiso was tried as a war criminal following Japan's surrender and died in prison while serving a life sentence. See Richard B. Frank, *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (New York: Random House, 1999), 91.



[Guam] 8. April '45

Was'nt it grand news I released last night about the *Yamato* and five other Jap ships which included one or two cruisers and the rest destroyers.¹ What a grand way to celebrate Army Day!! Some sent their greetings with fine words and flowers but Mitscher says it with torpedos, bombs and rockets. We are hopeful of getting the few destroyers that escaped (damaged) to-day. What a shock for the new Cabinet and piled onto the loss of ships was the loss of many planes and pilots and punishing attacks from our B. 29's which are doing a splendid job. Of course we did not escape unscathed but our damage is as nothing compared with the Japs. We have plenty left to carry on the war while they are very short.

My Labor Leaders are off to Iwo to-day returning in time for dinner. Tomorrow they leave but their places will be taken by other visitors—a string of them. French correspondents, trade magazine publishers, newspaper publishers etc: I am resigned to such visits and have organized my P.R.O. section to handle them. The important ones I take in my spare room and other flag quarters. I find my visitors interesting but I never have time to be alone with my own mess.

¹ The battleship *Yamato*, with a displacement of 65,000 tons, was tied for the largest battleship ever built. The Imperial Japanese Navy sent *Yamato*, the light cruiser *Yahagi*, and eight destroyers on a suicide mission to attack the U.S. invasion fleet off Okinawa on 6 April 1945. Nearly 400 U.S. carrier aircraft intercepted the force 300 miles from Okinawa and sank *Yamato*, *Yahagi*, and three of the accompanying destroyers. More than 4,000 Japanese sailors perished. American losses totaled 12 airmen. See Cressman, *Official Chronology*, 310.



[Guam] 9. April 45.

The rapid progress of the war in both hemispheres to date and what we hope to accomplish before the end of the winter of 1945–46 together. There are a number of complications in connection with the new command set-up but if everyone is patient we can work everything out amicably. Spruance, Mitscher, Turner and Buckner are doing splendid work in Okinawa and vicinity and I'll wager the new Cabinet at Tokyo feels lots worse than I did on 25 Dec. 41 when I arrived at P.H. to take over the Fleet. Just as Sherman, Anderson (now a Commodore Med. Corps) and I started from my H.Q. for a walk mail arrived.

My Labor Leaders have been turned over to Gen. [Curtis] Lemay¹ who commands the B29 of 21st Bomber Command. They are most appreciative of the friendly reception they have had here and I am confident the visit will help all of us.

¹ Major General Curtis E. LeMay, USAAF, Commander, XXI Bomber Command. LeMay had led the China-based XX Bomber Command until January 1945, when he replaced Brigadier General Haywood S. Hansell Jr. as commander of XXI Bomber Command, based in the Marianas. In response to severe difficulties bombing accurately from high altitudes, LeMay adopted new tactics for his B-29 bombers whereby they flew at low altitudes at night and used incendiary bombs to start firestorms in flammable Japanese cities. The attacks destroyed most of Japan's urban areas. See Barrett Tillman, *LeMay* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 60.



[Guam] 10 April 45.

My day is a full one what with routine works and visitors. I had three French correspondents and a Mr Hoyt (friend of Forrestals) who is the publisher of the newspaper "Portland *Oregonian*" in for lunch along with Capt. Fitzhugh Lee¹ who will soon relieve Capt Miller as my P.R.O. Miller will then go to the Navy Dept for P.R.O. duties. He has done splendidly here and I will hate to loose him but I know his presence in W. [Washington] will be a help to us. Yesterday afternoon Sherman Austin, Anderson and I went for a short walk toward Mt. Tenjo and got thoroughly soaked in a heavy rain. We got back in time to go to Hoover's for dinner. Present were Commodore [John] Magruder,² Hoover's Chief of Staff, Murray Archie Allen and members of Hoovers staff and my staff— We left early so we could read dispatches and they I was glad to turn in—as it had been a very long day as indeed all my days are now. Our war is at a lull for a short time now and there is not much news—but business will surely pick up. I must do more work in preparation for important conference. —and also I need a walk before dinner.

¹ Captain Fitzhugh Lee, USN, previously commanding officer of the escort carrier *Manila Bay* (CVE-61).

² Commodore John H. Magruder Jr., USN, deputy commander, Forward Areas, Central Pacific.



[Guam] 11 April 45 Forenoon—Wed—E.L.D.

There were 96 (citrus) trees sent instead of 26, and all are doing beautifully so far around the 7 houses built for the senior members of my Staff. I hope they will continue to grow.

The Dillinghams, Walkers, Endmans, L'Changes, Francis Brown and many others have sent many shrubs and trees and seeds among which are figs, pomelo, papaya, orange mango poinciana, monkey pod gardenia, macadamia nuts, golden shower pink shower etc etc all of which seem to be doing well so far. Your holly tree has new leaves beautifully colored red coming out at the top and my Sea Bee garden expert (from University of Pennsylvania Agric. College) tells me the tuberous begonias you gave me are breaking thru the pots he devised for them. He knows about their need for acid soil and will do something about it before they come up to my little patio where they will hang under the eaves. Mr Navilets bulbs are being put in the patio. The Walkers sent out orchid slips of the little pink orchid you liked best called "Miss Joaquin" which the steward has put into dry cocoanut husks and tree trunks and which I hope will grow. We are planting hundreds of sprouted coconuts through out the H.Q. area, and also young bread fruit trees (they have lovely leaves, large, dark green and glossy, in an attempt to restore the growth that was scraped off in the construction. So you see I have interests, other than war, to relieve the pressure occasionally.

Yesterday afternoon my walk was cancelled because of a sudden influx of business that needed immediate attention and I got away only at 6.30 in time for a bath and dinner.

Mak is lying under my desk panting nervously and from the heat. I am going to make another try at a walk late this p.m. and if possible take him to the seashore for a try at the water. He is still very shy and suspicious but very gentle with those he knows and he simply turns himself inside out for his special friend Sapal who apparently reciprocates his feelings. It is amusing to watch them together.



[Guam] 12 April 45. Thursday forenoon. E.L.D.

I had a fine walk yesterday afternoon with Lamar and Anderson and Mak. We walked down to the sea level and persuaded Mak to go out into the sea, which he was glad to do after I had removed my shoes and stockings and lead the way. He actually swam for the first time in his life, and enjoyed it, as the temperature was high and his coat thick. I can look forward to no such walk this afternoon because of very very important conferences which will start then and last for several days.

The enclosed clipping has just been handed me. The Surgeon General business will plague MacA. in the future. More and more publishers and newsmen are

passing thru and all make a special effort to see me. I find them all interesting but time consuming.

Last night I was awaked by pistol shooting near by and found that one of our sentries had heard noises in the bushes and had opened up with his pistol. I think he was a new sentry. At any rate walking around at night has its exciting moments and Sapal always keeps Mak tied securely after dark.



[Guam] 13 April 45—

The news of F.D.R.'s death reached me at eight this morning and I for one feel a deep sense of personal loss.¹ Whether or not we liked all the things he did, and stood for—he was always for a strong Navy and was always most cordial and friendly to me. I have just sent a message of sympathy to Mrs [Eleanor] Roosevelt² as coming from all of us in the Pacific Ocean Areas. I can well imagine the mental chaos around Washington at the moment and foresee many attempts to change our national policies. [Harry] Truman³ faces a most stupendous task and I hope and pray that he will be well advised and guided.

Yesterday I was kept busy until very late but Gen. Leary and I found time for a short walk before dinner. Last night our new Commodore (Anderson) gave a dinner to celebrate his promotion⁴ and included among his guests two attractive nurses from the Fleet Hospital⁵—Ensign Craven and Salzman and two senior WAC. officers on the island—Capts Hoffman and Woodin. Our band made up an orchestra of four pieces and played for us. The musicians are all friends of Catherine's and know her well. Mr Hoyt of the Portland "*Oregonian*," Vice Adm [George] Murray were also present and it was a pleasant occasion. According to Island Commander's rule all nurses and Wacs have to be back in their quarters by 10 p.m. so our party broke up at nine. I think the early curfew is splendid. Later. A sudden rush of business stopped my writing until mid afternoon and it now looks as if I will have plenty to do for the next three days—in conferences with the agents of my neighbor.⁵

¹ President Roosevelt died suddenly of a cerebral hemorrhage at the Little White House, his personal retreat, on 12 April 1945 in Warm Springs, Georgia.

² First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. The First Lady visited Hawaii on 19–23 September 1943 and dined with Nimitz during her visit.

³ Vice President Harry S. Truman assumed the presidency upon Roosevelt's death.

⁴ See Nimitz to Catherine, 9 April 1945, p. 179.

⁵ Following a decree by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 3 April 1945, General Douglas MacArthur assumed command over nearly all U.S. Army ground forces and air forces in the Pacific except the Twentieth Air Force for the planned invasion of Japan. MacArthur's chief of staff, Lieutenant General Richard K. Sutherland, flew to meet with

Nimitz on Guam and outline MacArthur's plans for the transition. Nimitz suggested that his own unified command structure should continue in inactive Pacific areas to avoid great confusion and that he would transfer U.S. Army units to MacArthur as they were withdrawn from active operations. Nimitz also offered to give MacArthur control of Okinawa as a staging base for the invasion of Japan. Nimitz, however, flatly refused to abolish his unified theater command. Sutherland departed Guam on 16 April. See Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 391–92. See also Nimitz to Catherine, 6 April 1945, p. 177, n. 1.



[Guam] 16 April 45

I have had a very tough day commencing with the departure early this morning of my friends from the far west. I do not believe either side convinced the other but at least my side so far has lost nothing and the other side knows we are tough and no push—overs. More conferences must follow—I am sure of that—and perhaps we can make progress then. This morning another conference started with a visiting group from Washington and they are mad with me because I will not permit them to go to Okinawa.¹ Things are very active up there now and I am not willing to have my agents there interfered with—even by a visit from myself—Although God knows I would like nothing better than to go up for a visit I realize I have a more important job to do than just visiting battle areas.

¹ Nimitz initially rejected a request from Marine Corps Commandant General Alexander Vandegrift to visit Okinawa while combat operations on the island were in progress. Nimitz likely feared that other senior officers would make similar requests and that Vandegrift, who outranked General Simon Buckner, the U.S. Army commander on the island, would cause disputes between Marine Corps and Army officers.



[*flying toward Guam*] 24 April 45.

Backtracking toward my Advance H.Q. at a chilly 9000' altitude. We expect to land about 4 pm. after a very interesting and pleasant two day visit with Spruance in Okinawa. I lived with him on board his flagship¹ and spent my daylight hours travelling around that part of the island in our possession. I saw and talked with many people including Turner, Buckner, Maj. Gen. [John] Hodge² Comdg 24th Corps U.S.A. and Maj. Gen. [Roy] Geiger³ comdg. 3rd Amphibious Corps U.S.M.C also talked with Maj. Gen. [Francis] Mulcahy,⁴ [Pedro] De Valle⁵ and [Lemuel] Shepherd⁶—all Marine Corps.⁷ The island is really lovely and the climate ideal. The people—Okinawans—are not hostile. In fact I saw only very old and the very young as the Japs have forced all the able bodied males and females to accompany them to the south end of the island to perform labor. We now have 3/4 of the island—all the northern part—and the Japs some 50,000 are concentrated in the south where they are heavily entrenched and fortified. The Army part of our force has so far worked against the south—which the Marine Corps quickly cleaned out the northern 3/4

of the island. To finish the job will be tough but it can and must be done. The Japs send down planes, almost daily from Kyushu to attack our ships, but as they come in driblets instead of large massed attacks the damage to us has been slight and their losses very heavy.⁸ One such attack of about 80 planes came in last Sunday just as we were about to have dinner. They were divided into small groups and on that occasion no planes reached the anchorage where we were. Some 53 were shot down by our planes or gun fire from screening ships and we in the visiting group were deprived of the excitement of seeing falling Jap planes. Ashore also we have been deprived of the opportunity of seeing the fighting as the Japs are cleverly dug in and never expose themselves. All our officers and men are in good spirits and confident.

At one of the civilian internee camps I was shown about by a very pleasant young Lt. Comdr U.S.N.R. who promptly asked me about C. W. Jr and when I had been in Wellfleet last. It was Charles E. Fraser who is well known to Elizabeth (Miss Freeman—Fraser's former teacher) and C. W. Jr. His job was the care of an internee camp with thousands of old and young Okinawans. He seems to enjoy his work and likes the Okinawans—who very highly approve of him as is evidenced by their smiles and apparent pleasure when they see him. Fraser says the Okinawans admit they are getting more to eat now than they did under the Japs and aside from their not being allowed to live in their homes which are inside our lines, they are not unhappy. What an experience for Fraser to head an Okinawan community! And what a lot he will have to talk about when he returns to Wellfleet. The Okinawans do not like to be called Japs but say they are Okinawa-jin meaning Okinawa people.

This morning at 7.40 at the airfield in an old Jap barracks I gave a brief press interview to about 60 news and magazine writers.

I foresee a busy week following my return to G. [Guam] First of all I will have to give the large groups of Guam correspondents an interview tomorrow forenoon and then on three successive days, I will deliver Purple Heart medals to wounded in three widely separated Naval Hospitals. Also I expect to find waiting for me my Deputy and several other VIPs. Then finally I will have to catch up on the accumulated mail and dispatches—although in the latter class I was able to keep up pretty well from Spruances dispatch files. 4.30p.m. Back safely at my H.Q.

¹ The battleship *New Mexico* (BB-40).

² Major General John R. Hodge, USA, Commander, XXIV Corps.

³ Major General Roy S. Geiger, USMC, Commander, III Amphibious Corps.

⁴ Major General Francis P. Mulcahy, USMC, Commander, Tactical Air Force, Tenth Army.

⁵ Major General Pedro A. del Valle, USMC, Commanding General, 1st Marine Division.

⁶ Major General Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr., USMC, Commanding General, 6th Marine Division.

⁷ In a break with his normal practice of not visiting active combat areas, Nimitz travelled to Okinawa with Marine Corps Commandant General Alexander A. Vandegrift in order to observe the progress of the campaign. The advance of U.S. Army units under Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner had stalled in the face of an elaborate Japanese defensive network near Shuri Castle, and Nimitz urged Buckner to break the stalemate so that U.S. Navy ships could withdraw and avoid further losses from heavy kamikaze attacks. See Symonds, *Nimitz at War*, 382–83; and Potter, *Nimitz*, 374–75.

⁸ For accounts of kamikaze attacks off Okinawa, see Moore, *Rain of Steel*; and John F. Wukovits, *Hell from the Heavens: The Epic Story of the USS Laffey and World War II's Greatest Kamikaze Attack* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2015).



Nimitz inspects battle damage on Okinawa in the spring of 1945. (NHHC, NH 58063)



[Guam] 26 April 45.

Yesterday was a day of great pressure and activity from early morning until midnight—due to the arrival of many VIP's and conferences with them that lasted until midnight. My friend Bill H [Halsey] with several staff officers arrived in early afternoon and R¹ with his staff returned from the far west in the late afternoon. So I spent some time meeting planes. This morning at 4. a.m. I saw Bill off on a short journey and in a few minutes I will see R. and his group off to the east. I will not however go to the fields. My deputy and his assistant leave early tomorrow. I have another group coming from the west (Kincaid et al) this p.m. By the weekend I should be clear of all of them and back to normal routine for a while.

From the way things look in Europe that Axis partner will very soon be crushed and then we can turn full blast on Japan. Kincaid and [Robert] Glover² and their aids arrive in an hour or so and then we will go into another series of conferences. Believe me—the directive of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to separate the Army and Navy certainly requires a lot of work and talk to unscramble the closely knit teams.³ My friend R. will be unhappy and Mac A. [MacArthur] will probably not like some of the stands I am taking If my disconnected or incoherent remember that I am under great pressure these days—that does not originate with the Japs.

¹ Likely Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson Jr., USA, commanding general of the Hawaiian Department, military governor of Hawaii, and commanding general of all U.S. Army forces in the Pacific Ocean Areas.

² Rear Admiral Robert O. Glover, USN, Commander, Service Force, Seventh Fleet.

³ A reference to the decision by the Joint Chiefs on 3 April 1945 that in the planned invasion of Japan, General MacArthur would command nearly all U.S. Army forces in the Pacific and Nimitz would retain command of all naval forces in the theater. This required Nimitz to transfer control of the substantial number of Army units under his command to MacArthur. See also Nimitz to Catherine, 6 April 1945, p. 177, and Nimitz to Catherine, 13 April 1945, p. 181.



[Guam] 27 April 45. Early morning

A full moon hanging low over Apra Harbor to the westward. It is also very hot and muggy and promises to become more so as the day advances. The last 24 hours has been just that way, and it seems that our winter season of about 80° F. average is over. I find that when I have VIPs or naval officers visiting me my day periods are taken up in office routine and conferences. All these conferences are brought about be reason of the new command set-up in the Pacific and the unscrambling of services is not so easy or simple. As soon as I can get set up for planning the big work ahead—my job will get easier.

Later The day has lived up to its early promise and it is very, very warm and strangely enough with no breeze. It is a weather breeder in our area where typhoons are born and this morning Capt. Davis our meteorologist says a typhoon can develop. Lots of controversial arguments to-day and more to come. A bright spot is a prospective walk to Mt Tenjo in the late afternoon mostly the usual ones but with some new ones.



[Guam] 1. May 45. 6.15. a.m.

There are heavy clouds in the N.E. horizon—and our weather man has promised heavy showers to-day which we will need for all the plants we have recently put into the grounds. While in Okinawa recently I admired the lovely pine trees which are shaped like the Monterey pines—only much larger. I asked Gen. Buckner to get me a few small ones for trial in my H.Q area. He sent me thirty—three and they are all planted. If they will come up (and who knows without trial?) they will be a fine addition here some thirty years hence. I have learned that small seeds will not do well.

I note from the papers that Walter Lippman¹ and my friend Bill Ewing, of Honolulu are covering the S. F. conference² and I have read their first articles (26 April) which are interesting. I hope and pray that the conference accomplishes something useful and constructive. I would hate to think that our grandchildren would have to go through this war again. The conference being open to the press is a good thing even though it may irritate our people to observe the machinations of the visiting delegations.

Yesterday afternoon I had a fine walk to Mt. Tenjo with Sherman, Lamar and two newsmen—Mr Ralph D. Paine³ managing editor of *Fortune* and Mr [Rufus] Woodward⁴ of the *New York Herald—Tribune*. Both are from New England. Paine from N.H. and Woodward from Mass. I now have two who will base in my quarters for a week or so but will be present for few meals as my P.R.O. section has made an extensive program that will keep them busy. They are Mark Ethridge⁵ publisher of the *Louisville Courier* and Mr Walter McCarty⁶ publisher of the *Indianapolis News*—both special friends and guests of Forrestal. Other publishers in pairs are scheduled to follow these—continuing, perhaps, until the war is over. Have not yet seen Ethridge or McCarty but expect them momentarily. No doubt they will be interesting men and that will repay us amply for the time they take.

¹ Walter Lippmann, prominent journalist, author, and liberal internationalist whose columns were syndicated in more than 250 American newspapers.

² Between 25 and 26 April 1945, delegates from 50 nations met in San Francisco for the United Nations Conference on International Organization. The attendees agreed upon the Charter of the United Nations, which provided for the establishment of the International Court of Justice.

³ Ralph D. Paine Jr., managing editor of *Fortune* magazine.

⁴ Rufus Stanley Woodward, correspondent and sports editor for the *New York Herald Tribune*.

⁵ Mark F. Ethridge, manager of the *Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal* and the *Louisville (KY) Times* and a long-time critic of racial discrimination.

⁶ C. Walter McCarty, editor of the *Indianapolis (IN) News*.



[near Yap] 5 May. 45—

As I write this letter we are flying at 18000 ft. Eastward with the island of Yap in sight on the port hand. It is a fine clear day and we have had a very interesting 3 hrs. on Pelelieu where we landed at 10.15. a.m. and left at 1.45. p.m. It is my first visit to this small island at the south end of the Palau Group—although it was been in our possession—for many months¹—Rear Adm. [Elliott] Buckmaster² gave us an interesting tour and a good lunch. Commodore [Earl] Stone³ (Redman's relief) and Anderson are with me—as well as Mr Penfield (State Dept.) Captains Hill, [Philip] Coffin⁴ and Cooper, Comdr. Lamar and Lt. Col. Viot,⁵ U.S.A.—all on my staff. We left Guam at 6.a.m. and expect to be back there at 7.30. p.m. Henceforth my attentions will be directed northward toward Japan rather than to the westward.....

My picnic for the War Correspondents yesterday afternoon was a great success—particularly as there was plenty of beer and sandwiches. At least 90 people attended—of which 51 were correspondents and the rest members of my staff and guests from other organizations. There was swimming—although the tide could have been higher (commentary C. F. Nimitz—time and tide wait for no man not even one with five stars!)⁶ We had a section of our band out as our orchestra. Although stripped to the waist (it was very hot) they played beautifully. The scars of the battle on Pelelieu have almost disappeared—due to the rapid growing foliage—principally vines. Tree stumps are covered with heavy vine growth and vegetation is covering every place not used for traffic. A very beautiful Chapel has been built out of coral stone—at the cemetery where some 1300 of our men lie. (about 1000 marines and about 300 soldiers.)

We did not go to Anguar on account of our limited stay—but we did fly over it on our departure—and then flew up the east side of the archipelago to the extreme north end where we use a large anchorage area—called Kossol Roads. Between our holding in the north and south there are about 30,000 Japs—Who are helpless because they have no boats to use in attacking our forces. Some months ago while [Rear Admiral John] Reeves was still in command—two boat loads of Japs came down to Pelilieu and made a landing—but all the Japs—some 70 or 80 were killed or captured. Our planes fly over their possessions almost daily and drop bombs and to hunt out boats, barges, etc. The Japs are reported to be running low on food but they still seem to have plenty of anti—aircraft ammunition which they shoot at our planes. They have had so much practice they have become very accurate.

¹ U.S. forces assaulted the island of Pelelieu on 15 September 1944. The island was declared secure on 27 November 1944 after a protracted and costly struggle. The United States lost 1,544 men killed and 6,834 men wounded in the battle. For the official operational history of the battle, see Frank O. Hough, *The Assault on Pelelieu* (Washington, DC: Historical Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1950). For a marine mortarman's memoir of the fighting at Pelelieu, see Eugene B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed: At Pelelieu and Okinawa* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1981).

² Rear Admiral Elliott Buckmaster, USN, Commander, Western Carolines Operating Area.

³ Commodore Earl E. Stone, USN, assistant chief of staff for communications on the staff of CINCPAC.

⁴ Captain Philip R. Coffin, USN, member of the planning section on the staff of CINCPAC.

⁵ Lieutenant Colonel V. H. Viot, USA, assistant operations officer for troops on the staff of CINCPAC.

⁶ Catherine Nimitz, the letter's recipient, likely inserted this comment after World War II while transcribing the text from her husband's original wartime letter.



[Guam] 6 May 45

As we approached Guam on our return last night from Peleliu our pilot had reports of the heavy rain and the possibility of the field being closed in but he made it at 6.35 pm having opened the throttle wide for the last two hours. McMorris and Sherman were there to meet me and we got back for a late dinner.

I expect to see Junior J. T. Lay. this day and hope he and his boss will have dinner with me. Their stay will be short as W. [Wilkinson] and his assistants are visiting Spruance and Turner for a few days before returning to Oahu where they have a lot of planning to do.

Also waiting for me were some seeds from Furlong at P. H. A large number of eucalyptus seeds (3 kinds) which should do well here. The three kinds were "Paper Bark" "Swamp Mahogany" and "Iron Bark." There is also a cigar box full of algeroba seeds and a cigar box full of monkey pod seeds. As the doctor and I go walking in a few minutes we will drop seeds along the roads like Johnny Appleseed.

Noon. Had a very busy forenoon with war news, visitors, etc. While we are continuing to take damage from suicide planes at Okinawa I believe the situation there will improve radically in about a week when the tide is expected to turn strongly in our direction. Also by that time I hope the apparent deadlock and stalemate on shore will be broken and the Japs much nearer defeat. So far their efforts to counter attack have only resulted in heavy losses for them. By the time you get this letter I look for much improvement on the situation which is not bad now. There will be no trouble about our leading normal lives—particularly after retirement. (!!! 1962 When's that C.F.N.¹) Names in the. news to-day are forgotten tomorrow which suits me fine.

¹ This note was probably inserted in 1962 as a joke by Catherine Freeman Nimitz in reference to the busy social schedule that the Nimitzes maintained in retirement.



[Guam] 7 May 45.

The day has dawned hot and still—unlike yesterday morning when it was blowing great guns. An incipient typhoon is working up and passing to the south of us. The coming typhoon season will show how our houses and plants will stand strong winds.

My three publisher guests Ethridge, McCarty, and Ridder,¹ who pop in and out while they tour the surrounding areas have turned out to be most interesting and agreeable. If the others (and there promises to be a steady stream of them) turn out to be as nice as these, we will be fortunate and they will be very welcome. I hope that Mr Freeman (Douglas Southall)² author of “*R. E. Lee*” etc will be one of the visitors.

Early this afternoon I will visit Kinkaid who is on his way home for a brief leave and who will spend the night with me. He will give me much valuable dope on my friend D. M. who has sent me the most cordial invitation to come to Manila to see how the Japs wrecked things. I definitely plan to visit Manila but not for sight seeing. My business will be strictly official and will be in connection with our joint planning for the future. This forenoon Wilkinson and party, including our son—in—law will pass thru enroute to see Spruance and Turner and they will stay with me long enough for a bath and a short conference. The British want to pay me another visit and this time I have a hunch it is for the purpose of presenting the G.C.B. Award. Now if E. J. K says he is coming too with his gang my month of May will set a record of some kind. More later

Junior has come and gone and I did not get to see him. They were met at the field by McMorris and they left almost immediately in another plane. McM. says Junior was cheerful and happy. As Wilkinson and his party will return in a few days and will stop here for at least one day I will see our son—in—law then. Red Whiting³ has just come in to see me. Have asked him to dinner along with Major General Larsen U.S.M.C. Island Commander of Guam. Whiting will command one of the Islands.

—Most of the news is being made in Europe at the moment and my operations are temporarily in the doldrums—

¹ Probably Joseph E. Ridder, chairman of Ridder Publications, which owned a number of newspapers across the United States.

² Author Douglas S. Freeman received the 1935 Pulitzer Prize for Biography for *R. E. Lee*, his four-volume biography of General Robert E. Lee.

³ Probably Rear Admiral Francis E. M. Whiting, USN, who became U.S. Navy commander at Saipan.



Sunday 2 Sept '45.

Best Beloved:—¹

The big moment is over and the Japs have signed the formal terms of surrender. Everything clicked on a minute, by minute schedule and the ceremony started at Exactly 9 am Tokyo Time. The Press came off in a transport destroyer before Eight am—followed by another destroyer carrying all the guests except the Supreme Comdr's private party—which came alongside (as did all the destroyers) at 830. I don't see how I can describe this scene—or why I attempt it, because there present at least 200 correspondents who have by now written, and broad-cast thousands of words of description—which—even as I write at 1130am—is either being read or heard by you and all our children—wherever they may be. Many of our officers from the ships still at sea were present—they having flown in by planes. Among these was Shafroth who particularly asked that I include in this letter his best wishes to you and Mary. Fortunately the bad weather of the past two days passed on and we were blessed with dry though overcast skies. Last night—I was tremendously pleased (and surprised) to receive your fine letters of 23 and 24 Aug with enclosures—which were brought up from Guam by one of our officers who brought up important mail. This is rapid time—Your 24 Aug letter—written on my 25 Aug was only 7 days from Berkeley to Tokyo Bay. Now must close. All my heart's devotion. Love and kisses to my Sweetheart.

Ever yours,

Chester²

[letter continued on main deck diagram]

Every turret top—every point of vantage was occupied by newsmen—cameramen—including local Jap papers—and officers and men of the ship who could get a foothold. When it came my turn to sign—I'll confess to nervous excitement—but I did sign in the correct places—(one signer did not).³ First copy signed with the Woo gift pen, and second copy signed with my old green Parker pen.⁴

¹ Nimitz wrote this letter on the back of his hand-annotated diagram of attendees' placement on the battleship *Missouri*'s main deck during the Japanese surrender. Catherine Nimitz read this entire letter aloud during an oral history interview. See Catherine Freeman Nimitz, "Recollections of the Late Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz as Given by His Widow, Catherine Freeman Nimitz," interview by John T. Mason Jr. on 5 June 1969 in San Francisco (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1970), 18.

² Redacted in the letter but read by Catherine Nimitz.

³ The Canadian representative at the surrender ceremony, Colonel Lawrence Moore Cosgrave, signed the Japanese copy of the surrender document on the incorrect line. Each subsequent representative then signed on the next available line, creating temporary confusion.

⁴Y. C. Woo, a prominent businessman and director of the Bank of Canton in San Francisco, lived next door to the Nimitzes' wartime home in Berkeley, California. Catherine Nimitz became close with Woo's wife, Eching, and in June 1945, Y. C. Woo gifted Admiral Nimitz with a new gold-capped Parker 51 pen. After signing one copy of the Instrument of Surrender with the pen, Nimitz had it engraved and gave it back to Y. C. Woo. Today, that pen resides in the collection of the Nanjing Museum in the People's Republic of China. The other pen that Nimitz used at the ceremony was one that he had owned for several years. Nimitz saved this pen as a souvenir. It is now in the collection of the U.S. Naval Academy Museum.



Nimitz signs the Instrument of Surrender as the United States representative on board *Missouri* (BB-63) on 2 September 1945. Standing directly behind him *left to right*: General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Admiral William F. Halsey Jr., and Rear Admiral Forrest Sherman. (NARA, 80-G-701293)



1130 pm Monday, ELD—Guam HQ

3 Sept 45

Best Beloved:—

This announces my safe return to my Guam HQ after a pleasant trip back from Tokyo Bay. We took off at 7 am Tokyo time—and after circling twice over Tokyo city low enough to see plainly the terrific damage done by our bombers, we headed for Saipan where we landed in our seaplanes about 4:30 pm. Thence to Guam by land plane—and back at my quarters by 6:45 pm. My party grew to 19 by the time we left Tokyo—there being a number of officers seeking transportation back. One was a young Marine Lt. named [William] Harris¹ whose father is Maj. Gen. Field Harris,² USMC. Young Harris was captured on Bataan and released by the Navy from a Tokyo prison about 4 days ago—very thin and having been very badly treated. He was about the happiest young man I ever saw—and he expects to meet his father here in a day or so. Also brought back two publishers, [Julius] Adler³—of *N.Y. Times* and [John] Knight⁴ of *Chicago Daily News*—both of whom I like very much. It was from this party that Mr. Cowles⁵ dropped out. We found Sherman's relief, R. Ad. [Malcolm] Schoeffel⁶ here & I will let Sherman go in a couple of weeks,—I have just now returned from the office where I found your fine letters of 26 & 27 Aug—with Mary's attractive black print and [John] Greenslades⁷ letter. I think Mary is very clever—don't you? After reading Greenslade's letter I looked for and read the Morley poem which I had never seen—although I had the magazine. Darling—the instant I get word about my future movements I'll send you the word—and if it means Washington duty—I'll send "School all right." I hope to hear some word by 10 or 12 Sept. I like your new writing paper and I am very pleased that the nurses & the Wave have been so thoughtful. They as every one else—who knows you—like you immensely—and I love you immensely. Hope Mrs. Stockwell improves at the Sanatorium. Why does she not have Mrs. Wyke leave? Am so glad you had the Mauro's in—I am so fond of both. What thoughtful people the Woos are—and how pleased I am that I can give them back their pen which I used for signing one copy of the Surrender Articles— It is already packed in a box with a card. I plan to bring it in person when I come. Many people asked what I would do with the pen—and I told them I would give it to a Chinese friend. The other copy—signed with my old green pen you had repaired will remain in our family. I also have a special gift for C W Jr—a fine pair of binoculars from the Jap store house at Yokosaka Navy Yard. Yesterday after lunch I took my staff ashore for 4 hours of sightseeing toward Kamakura & the Emperor's summer palace. It was most interesting—how the people acted towards us—all children friendly, grown

ups—some smiled—most acted as if we did not exist—but no one made the slightest hostile gesture. The Emperor is their god & he said “stop fighting” & they did. So far the retention of the Emperor has served us well. While I was away Wilkinson came onboard to call & left word with my duty officer that he thought Junior would be released in about a month—Which I assume is early Oct—in which case he should be with Catherine by the end of Oct at the latest. You can tell her this in your next letter. What a lot of company we will have on the Hill! Dearest—I am interested to hear about your hospital party and I would dearly love to be there but this party is for you by people who love you—and it is better that you receive it all yourself. Now Darling—I am very weary & must turn—in— Keep well—Precious and God Bless you & keep you safe. All my hearts devotion is yours always—Ever your own

Chester

4 Sept—am

I enclose end of Aug—pay check [redacted]

¹ First Lieutenant William Frederick “Bill” Harris, USMC. Japanese forces captured Harris in May 1942 in the Philippines. He escaped and fought with guerrillas in the Philippines but was recaptured and survived multiple instances of brutal torture. He was chosen to represent prisoners of war at the Japanese surrender ceremony. See Laura Hillenbrand, *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* (New York: Random House, 2010), 394.

² Major General Field Harris, USMC, former chief of staff, Aircraft, Guadalcanal.

³ Major General Julius Ochs Adler, USA. Adler served as assistant division commander of the 6th Infantry Division in the New Guinea campaign until June 1944. He was then placed on inactive status after a serious illness. He returned to his peacetime role as general manager of the *New York Times* and president of the *Chattanooga Times*.

⁴ John S. Knight, owner of the *Chicago Daily News* and other newspapers, such as the *Miami Herald* and *Detroit Free Press*.

⁵ Probably Gardner Cowles Jr., whose father, Gardner Cowles Sr., owned a number of newspapers in Des Moines, Iowa. The younger Cowles served as the assistant director of the OWI during World War II.

⁶ Rear Admiral Malcolm F. Schoeffel, USN. Schoeffel relieved Rear Admiral Forrest P. Sherman as deputy chief of staff to the CINCPAC.

⁷ Vice Admiral John W. Greenslade, USN, resources coordinator on the staff of Commander, Western Sea Frontier.



Nimitz returns triumphant to Washington, DC, in October 1945, after the end of World War II. Seated in front of Nimitz to his right is Rear Admiral Forrest Sherman. Seated in front of Nimitz to his left are an unidentified civilian and Commander Hal A. Lamar, USNR, Nimitz's aide. (NHHC, NH 58261)



Nimitz and Catherine at a party honoring his retirement from the U.S. Navy in December 1947. (NHHC, NH 62110)



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Index



Page numbers in italics indicate illustrations.

- Abbott, Helen, 104, 105n4
Adams, Gerald C. (USN sailor), 84, 84n1, 102, 163, 169
Adler, Julius O. (USA officer), 193, 194n3
Admiral Farragut Academy, 107, 108n4, 108n5
aircraft carriers, xxiii, xxv, 65, 68, 69, 97
 See also individual aircraft carriers
Alaska (USN cruiser), 126, 128n2, 128
Aleutians campaign, xxx
American Red Cross (ARC), xxviii, 55, 60n2, 75, 107, 120, 130, 134, 137
American Women's Voluntary Services (AWVS), 76, 77n3
Andersen, James R. (USAAF officer), 162, 163n3
Anderson, Thomas C. (fleet surgeon), 32, 32n2, 53, 55, 58, 60, 62, 63, 65–66, 77, 84, 85, 93, 101–2, 111, 116, 121, 122, 127, 134, 139, 142, 143–44, 145, 146, 147, 148, 151, 152, 157–58, 159, 161, 162, 163, 165, 168, 169, 176, 179, 180, 181, 187
Andrews, Adolphus (USN officer), xxiv, 20n1
Andrews, Adolphus, Jr. (USMC officer), 155, 155n1
Andrews, Berenice P., 20n1
Annapolis. *See* U.S. Naval Academy
Arcadia Conference, 7, 8n5
Archer, James W. (USNR officer), 107, 109n8, 129
Arizona (USN battleship), xxv, xxvii, 6
Armour, Robert S. D. (RN officer), 164, 165, 165n2
Armsby, Leonora Wood, 64, 64n3, 65
Army and Navy Club of Manila, 159, 160n7
Arno, Peter (cartoonist), 129, 130n2
Asiatic Fleet, xviii, xxiv, 62n11
Association of American Universities and Colleges, 3, 5n7
Atherton, Frank C. (businessman), 112, 113n5, 121
Attu Island, xxx
 See also Aleutians campaign
Augusta (USN cruiser), xxiv, xxxiii, 60n5, 87n1, 153n3
Austin, Bernard L. (USN officer), 100, 101n3, 179
Australia, xxiv, xxviii–xxix, 29n4, 85, 111

B-29 Superfortress bomber, 178, 179, 179n1
Bagley, David W. (USN officer), 27, 27n5, 31, 42
Baker, George, 59, 68
Baltimore (USN cruiser), xviii
Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, 3, 5n6
Barbers Point, Hawaii, 24
Barbour, Harriet, 32, 32n4, 105
Bard, Ralph A. (U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Navy), 35, 35n1, 157
Barnett, Marshall D. (USNR officer), 149, 149n4, 151
Barnett, Marshall D., Jr. (USN officer), 151, 151n1
Bassett, James (USNR officer), 30, 30n3
Bates, George J. (congressman), 175, 175n7
Bates, Richard W. (USN officer), 145, 146n1

Bathurst, Robert M. (USA officer), 62, 62n10, 63
 battleships, Nimitz and, xxv
 Bauernschmidt, George W. (USN officer), 72,
 73, 73n1, 147
 Beethoven, Ludwig van (composer), 86, 86n1,
 168, 169n4
 Bellinger, Patrick N. L. (USN officer), 11, 12n1
 Benedict, Arthur (USN officer), 30, 30n2
 Benner, Edwin, Jr. (businessman), 38n2
 Berkeley, California, xxiv, xxviii, xxxiv, 57,
 58n2, 65, 70, 99, 124, 134, 138, 190, 191n4
 Betio Island. *See* Tarawa
 Biggs, Burton B. (USN officer), 97, 99n3
 Bittinger, Charles (USNR artist), 127, 128n5
 Black, Francis L. (USN officer), 32, 33n1
 Blackney, William W. (congressman), 168, 169n7
 Blake, Ernest L. (USN officer), 15, 16n4, 20, 29,
 32, 33
 Blandy, William H. P. (USN officer), 152, 153n7
 Bloch, Claude C. (USN officer), 19, 19n1, 22
Blue Goose (plane), 90, 91n3, 132, 140
 Bohemian Club, 61, 62n3, 129
 Boone, Helen Elizabeth, 8, 9n7, 11
 Boone, Joel Thompson (USN officer), 8, 9n7, 11
 Boone, Walter F. (USN officer), 78, 79n3, 115,
 120, 129
 Bourne, Robert C. (USNR officer), 78, 79n2
 Boyd, Denis W. (RN officer), 43, 43n1
 Bradley, Michael J. (congressman), 175, 175n4
 Brahms, Johannes (composer), 60, 61n7, 70, 83,
 98, 99n11, 111
 British Pacific Fleet, 72, 73n5, 82, 82–83, 84, 85
 Brook, Lia, 167
 Brown, Francis H. l'i, 98, 99n6, 180
 Brown, John H., Jr. (USN officer), 102, 102n5, 133
 Brown, Wilson (USN officer), xxvii, 13, 13n5
 Bryant, Eliot H. (USN officer), 27, 27n3
 Bryant, Marion Barnes, 7, 8n2
 Buckmaster, Elliott (USN officer), 187, 188n2
 Buckner, Simon Bolivar, Jr. (USA officer), 49n2,
 105, 106n2, 182, 182n1, 186
 Nimitz, dinner with, 113, 114
 Okinawa, advance on, 179, 184n7
 Bulge, Battle of the, 87, 87n4, 90, 100
 Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS), 74n3,
 104, 169n3
 Bureau of Navigation (BuNav), xxiv, xxv–xxvi,
 xxxviiiin52, 4n3, 17n2, 34n4, 74n3
 Burnsweig, Lewis (USN sailor), 120, 121n1
 Butler, William O. (USAAF officer), 49n2
 Byrd, Richard E. (USN officer), 73, 74n1, 129
 Calhoun, William L. (USN officer), 28, 29n3, 34,
 38, 53, 56, 64, 75, 84, 93, 97, 102, 122, 129, 166
California (USN battleship), xxiii
 Callaghan, Daniel J. (USN officer), 26, 26n2
 Callaghan, William M. (USN officer), 26, 26n1,
 30, 36, 93–94, 98, 123, 132, 152
 Canaga, Bruce L. (USN officer), 8, 9n5, 10, 101,
 114, 116, 117, 129, 149
 Canaga, Margaret E., 22, 22n1, 94, 171
 Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 68, 92, 136, 137,
 137n4, 165
 Capitol Limited (train), 3, 5n6
 Carlson, Evans (USMC officer), 24n3
 Carter, James B. (USN officer), 101, 102n1, 142,
 157, 173, 177
Catherine (boat), 101, 111, 112, 123, 125, 127,
 129, 130n1, 147, 158, 161, 176
 Central Pacific drive, xxxi
 Chambers, William (USN officer), 38, 39n2
 Chase, Henry J. (pilot), 44, 44n2
 Chiang Kai-shek (Chinese leader), 66n4
Chicago (USN cruiser, CA-14), xxiii
Chicago (USN cruiser, CA-29), 49n3
 Chicago, Illinois, 4, 5n10
Chicago Daily News (newspaper), 193, 194n4
 China, xxiv, 65, 66n4, 75, 114, 115n7, 142, 164
 invasion plans, xxxii–xxxiii, 99n2, 104,
 105n7
 Chris-Craft Boats, 101, 102n2
 Christian, Kemp C. (USN officer), 133, 133n5
 Christie, Ralph W. (USN officer), 76, 77n2,
 102, 129
 Christmas, 10, 11–12, 53, 60, 67, 76–77, 78, 83,
 86, 87, 88, 92, 107
 Chung, Margaret (physician), 92, 96n10, 98
 Church, Ralph E. (congressman), 4, 5n8
 Churchill, Winston S. (British prime minister),
 90, 125, 130, 131n1
 Clark, James H. (USNR officer), 32, 32n1
 Claunch, Charles (USN sailor), 94, 96n18

Coffin, Philip R. (USN officer), 187, 188n4
 Cole, William S. (congressman), 175, 175n8
 Colepaugh, William C. (spy), 108n5
Colhoun (USN destroyer), 5n13
 Collins, J. Lawton (USA officer), 18, 18n2, 22
 Collins, Winifred Quick (USN officer), 58, 58n8, 70, 72
 Command Summary (Nimitz wartime document), 17n2, 41n1
 communism, 65
 Comstock, Merrill (USN officer), 133, 133n4
 Constant, Maurice (USNR officer), 103, 105n2
 construction battalions. *See* Seabees
 Cooke, Charles Montague, Jr. (museum curator), 95n1, 111, 112n5, 117, 147
 Cooke, Eliza L., 92, 95n1, 111, 112n5, 117, 147
 Cooke, Patricia, 106, 106n6, 108, 111, 117
 Cooke, Richard A., 106
 Coral Sea, Battle of, xxxixn75, 23, 24n4, 33
 Cosgrave, Lawrence M., 190, 191n3
 Cowles, Gardner, Jr. (assistant director of OWI), 193, 194n5
 cribbage, 7, 15, 17, 73

 Damon, Cyril F., Sr. (businessman), 33, 33n2, 98
 Damon, Samuel R. (USNR officer), 80, 81n3
 Daubin, Freeland A. (USN officer), 12, 13n1, 22
 Davenport, Walter (reporter), 156, 156n3
 Davidson, Howard C. (USAAF officer), 31, 31n4
 Davis, Arthur C. (USN officer), 18, 18n1, 23, 24, 147, 148n6, 149
 Davis, Glenn B. (USN officer), 112, 113n3
 Dean Witter & Company, 95, 96n24
 Dearing, Arthur H. (USN officer), 55, 55n4, 57
Decatur (USN destroyer), xviii–xix
 Denfeld, Louis E. (USN officer), 168
Despatch (RN cruiser), 50, 50n1
 Destroyer Base, San Diego, 4, 5n11, 10n2
 destroyers, Nimitz and, xviii–xix, xxiv
 Dewey, Thomas E. (U.S. presidential candidate), 157, 158n3
 Deyo, Morton L. (USN officer), 152, 153n5
 Dillingham, Benjamin F., II (USA officer), 20, 20n1
 Dillingham, Frances A., 20, 20n1, 105
 Dillingham, Lowell S. (businessman), 32, 32n6
 Dillingham, Walter F. (businessman), 32, 32n5, 33, 39, 121, 124, 172, 179
 Dinger, Henry C. (USN officer), xxii
 Dominican Convent Lower School, 54, 54n1, 59, 67, 85, 96n21, 97, 118, 129
 Downes, John, Jr. (USN officer), 4, 5n14, 7
 Draemel, Milo F. (USN officer), 15, 16, 16n3, 17, 18, 19, 20
 Drake, Francis V. (author), 156, 156n2
 Drake, William Waldo (USNR officer), 30, 30n4
 Draper, William F. (USNR artist), 106, 108n2, 110, 115
 Drax, Reginald (RN officer), 50, 50n2
 Drewry, Patrick H. (congressman), 175, 175n2
 Dunn, Charles A. (USN officer), 173, 174n2
 Dunn, Joseph B. (USN officer), 50, 50n2
 Dupont, Jean (author), 99, 101n2
 Duryea, Anne, 156, 156n1

 Earle, John B. (USN officer), 22, 22n4
 Eisenhower, Dwight D. (USA officer), 50, 50n6, 114
 Eller, Ernest M. (USN officer), 45, 46n2, 77, 80, 120, 152
 Emmons, Delos C. (USAAF officer), 18, 20, 29, 29n3, 41, 61, 63
 Nimitz and, 15, 16n5, 19, 20n3, 22, 27, 35
 Englehart, Alva F. (USA officer), 127, 128n6
 Englehart, Francis A. (USA officer), 127, 128n7
 English, Robert H. (USN officer), 22, 22n3, 24
Enterprise (USN carrier), xxix, 29n2
 Eppley, Marion (USNR officer), 59, 60n1, 93, 98, 137, 152
 Erickson, Wendell S. (war correspondent), 73–74, 74n2
 Erskine, Graves B. (USMC officer), 152, 154n16, 155
Essex (USN carrier), 54n4
 Ethridge, Mark F. (publisher), 186, 186n5, 189
 Evans, Ernest E. (USN officer), 57n2
 Evans, Sydney K. (USN chaplain), 8, 9n1
 Ewing, William H. (reporter), 117, 117n1, 186

 Farber, William S. (USN officer), 155, 155n2
 Faye, Hans Peter, III, 93, 96n13, 122
 Feng Chih Tsin (Chinese consul general), 60,

Feng Chih Tsing (*continued*)
61n9, 64, 67, 80, 94, 152, 166

Fielder, Kendall J. (USA officer), 18, 18n3

Fife, James R., Jr. (USN officer), 75, 76, 76n6, 102

Fifth Fleet, xxxi, 142, 151

Fighting Lady (film), 97, 99n1, 102

Finn, John W. (USN sailor), 34, 34n3

Fischler, Peter K. (USN officer), 126–27, 128n1, 128n2, 152

Fitch, Aubrey W. “Jake” (USN officer), 31, 31n2, 124, 141–42, 167

fleet admiral (rank), xxxiii, xxxiv, xlin109, 69, 70n3, 73, 75–76, 78, 84, 90, 99

Fletcher, Frank Jack (USN officer), 61, 62n9, 63, 65–66, 67, 68, 69, 70

Fordham University, 61, 77, 78, 94

Formosa (Taiwan), xxxii–xxxiii, 136

Forrestal, James V. (U.S. Undersecretary and Secretary of the Navy), 100n1, 109n18, 136, 136n2, 141, 149, 157, 167, 168–69, 170, 176–77, 179, 186

Franck, Cesar (composer), 62, 62n12

Fraser, Bruce (RN officer), 72, 73n5, 78, 80, 82, 82–83, 84, 85, 102, 122n4

Fraser, Charles E. (USN officer), 183

Freckles (dog), 8, 8n6, 66, 76, 86, 104, 127, 147, 151

Fredericksburg, Texas, xvii

Freeman, Allen, 152

Freeman, Douglas S. (author), 129, 130n3, 189, 189n2

Freeman, Elizabeth (sister-in-law), xx, 92, 95n7, 136, 137, 152, 154n14, 183

Freeman, Mary M. (mother-in-law), xix

Freeman, Richard R. (father-in-law), xix

Freeman, Richard R., Jr. (brother-in-law), xx

French Indochina (Vietnam), xviii, 118, 119n3

Furlong, William R. (USN officer), 43, 44n4, 65, 84, 91, 130

Gaffney, John J. (USN officer), 77, 77n4

Gaines, Frank S. (mayor of Berkeley, California), 57, 58n2

Gale, Esson M. (professor), 78, 79n1, 107, 113, 114, 161

Galvanic, 51n6, 52
See also Tarawa

Gannon, Robert I. (president, Fordham University), 78, 79n5

Gates, Artemus L. (U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air), 123, 124, 124n5, 125, 126, 126n1, 141–42, 167

Geiger, Roy S. (USMC officer), 182, 183n3

Gendreau, Elphege Aldred M. (USN officer), 16, 16n3, 17, 18, 23, 30, 31, 33, 38, 40, 43, 45, 50

George VI (king), 121, 121n3, 125, 127

Germany, xx, xxv, 149, 162, 176, 185

Ghormley, Robert L. (USN officer), 36, 36n5, 37, 42
relieved of command, xxx, 39, 41, 42, 45, 45n3

Gilbert, W. S. (dramatist), 66, 66n6

Gilbert Islands, xxix–xxx, 90
See also Tarawa

Gimpel, Erich (spy), 108n5

Glover, Robert O. (USN officer), 185, 185n2

Goddard, Robert V. (Royal New Zealand Air Force officer), 31, 31n1

Good, Howard H. (USN officer), 17, 17n2

Grant, Vernon F. (USN officer), 57, 58n1, 145, 147, 163, 164

Gray Goose (plane), 140, 143

Graybook. *See* Command Summary

Grayling (USN submarine), xxxviiiin70, 14

Green, Thomas H. (USA officer), 41, 41n2

Greenslade, John W. (USN officer), 46, 193

Grew, Joseph C. (former ambassador to Japan), 53, 54n2, 61, 62n6, 67, 68, 159

Growler (USN submarine), 166, 167, 167n2

Guadalcanal campaign, 31, 31n8, 38, 39n1, 40, 41, 42, 45

Guam, xxxi, 150, 160
Japanese soldiers on, 94, 158–59, 167
Nimitz on, 87, 91, 141–42, 143, 148, 155, 157

Gunther, Charles F., 8, 9n8

Gunther, Ernest L. (USN officer), 8, 9n6, 10, 11, 11n1, 20, 62, 63, 85, 86, 136, 163, 164

Gunther, Helen St. Goar, 8, 9n6

Haddo (USN submarine), 112n2

Hague, Wesley M. (USN officer), 50, 50n2

Hale, Willis H. (USAAF officer), 31, 31n5, 50

Hall, Charles P. (USA officer), 27, 28n8

Halsey, William F, III (USN officer), 33, 33n1, 35
Halsey, William F. "Bull," Jr. (USN officer),
xxvii, xxxi, 33, 35–36, 35n5, 42, 54, 83, 87,
88, 89, 127, 136, 137n5, 147, 184
Guadalcanal, leadership in, xxx, 45
Leyte Gulf, leadership in, xxxii–xxxiii
Typhoon Cobra (first), xln97, 113n3
Typhoon Connie (second), xln97
Hammann (USN destroyer), 33, 33n4
Hammond, Elizabeth, 157
Hammond, Paul L. (USNR officer), 157, 158n1
Handel, George Frideric (composer), 168, 169n6
Harmon, Millard F. (USAAF officer), 27, 28n6,
37, 105, 106n3, 125, 126, 139, 162, 163, 177
Harris, Field (USMC officer), 193, 194n2
Harris, William F. (USMC officer), 193, 194n1
Hart, Thomas C. (USN officer), 43, 43n2
Hasselquist, Maynard B. (USNR officer), 134,
135n1
Hawke, August, 152
Hearst, William R. (newspaper owner), 177,
178n2
Heffernan, James J. (congressman), 65, 66n3,
67, 68, 69, 71, 85
Heffernan, Patricia, 69, 70n2, 71
Heffernan, Stella M. Waters, 69, 70n1, 71
Heifetz, Jascha (musician), 94, 96n22
Hensel, Herman S. (U.S. Assistant Secretary of
the Navy), 157, 158n2
Hepburn, Arthur J. (USN officer), 107, 109n6
Hess, Helen M., 73, 74n3, 92, 132, 168, 171
Hill, Harry W. (USN officer), 168, 169n1
Hill, Thomas R. (USN officer), 137, 138n1
Hill, Tom B. (USN officer), 45, 45n1, 121, 187
Hiltabidle, William O., Jr. (USN officer), 147,
148n4
Hirohito (emperor of Japan), 194
Hobbs, William H. (author), 107, 109n13
Hodge, John R. (USA officer), 182, 183n2
Hogaboom, Robert E. (USMC officer), 152,
154n17, 155
Hohn, Lewis H. (USMC officer), 145, 146n2, 147
Holmes, Ralston S. (USN officer), 8, 9n2, 10
Hook, Frederick R. (USN officer), 61, 62n1
Hoover, John H. (USN officer), 142, 143n2,
145, 149, 157, 158, 179
Hope, Bob (comedian), 108, 109n17, 111
Hornet (USN carrier), xxix
Hoyt, Edwin P. (newspaper editor), 177, 177n2,
179, 181
Hull, Cordell (U.S. secretary of state), 106, 108n3
Humphrey, Elliot S. (dog trainer), 41, 41n1
Hussey, George F., Jr. (USN officer), 92, 95n4
Hypo. *See* Station Hypo
Ickes, Harold (U.S. secretary of the interior),
29, 29n4
Ide, John J. (USNR officer), 123, 124n4
Illinois, 3
Indianapolis (USN cruiser), 94, 96n19, 143n3,
154n11
Ingersoll, Louise van H., 162, 163n1
Ingersoll, Royal R. (USN officer), 6, 6n2, 57,
113, 114n1, 118, 120, 162
Intrepid (USN carrier), 54n4
Iwo Jima, 67, 68n2, 163, 178
Battle of, 172
Nimitz visit to, 173, 174
Izac, Edouard V. (congressman), 175, 175n5
Jacobinoff, Sascha (musician), 92, 95n2, 111
Jacobs, Randall (USN officer), 81, 82n7, 92
Jacoby, Oswald (USNR officer), 134–35, 135n3
Jarman, Sanderford (USA officer), 149, 149n1, 168
Johnson, Lyndon B. (congressman), 175, 175n3
Johnson, Osa (author), 72, 73n3
Johnston (USN destroyer), 56, 57n2
Joint Chiefs of Staff, xxxiii, 109n18, 185, 185n3
Jones, James L. (USMC officer), 51, 51n4
Jordan, Lewis G. (USN officer), 38, 39n4
Kalinnikov, Vasily S. (composer), 63, 63n4
kamikaze (Japanese suicide tactic), 53, 54n4,
56n1, 106n1, 109n9, 115n4, 143n3
Okinawa, use at, xxxiv, 183, 184n7, 188
Kashmir, xxxiv
Kauffman, James L. (USN officer), 89, 89n3
Keliher, Thomas J. (USN officer), 30, 45, 45n1
Kennedy, Martha D., 59, 60n2, 62
Kennedy, Patricia S., 60n2
Kennedy, Stanley C., Jr. (USN officer), 60n2
Kennedy, Stanley C., Sr. (USN officer), 59,

Kennedy, Stanley C., Sr. (*continued*)
60n2, 62

Kenney, George C. (USAAF officer), 27, 28n7

Kessing, Oliver O. (USN officer), 87, 87n1, 88

Kidd, Isaac C. (USN officer), 126n4

Kidd, Isaac C., Jr. (USN officer), 124, 126n4,
137, 138n2

Kiefer, Dixie (USN officer), 102, 102n4

Kieffer, Kay, 65

Kiley, Francis M. (USNR officer), 80, 82n6

Kimble, Frederick V. H. (USAAF officer), 149,
149n2

Kimmel, Husband E. (USN officer), xxvi–xxvii,
11–13, 11n2, 12n3, 15, 21

King, Ernest J. (USN officer), xxxixn76, 54,
113n3, 127, 129, 130, 132, 136, 137n3, 159,
169, 189

Battle of Midway, concerns about, xxix

Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet (COM-
INCH), promotion to, 5, 6n1

Nimitz, meetings with, xxxi, 92, 95n3, 104,
108, 109n18, 111, 115, 124, 134

Kinkaid, Thomas C. (USN officer), 43n1, 89,
89n1, 111, 184–85, 189

Aleutians campaign, leadership in, 89n1

Seventh Fleet, command of, xxxiii

Kirishima (Japanese battleship), 113n3

Kirk, Norman T. (USA officer), 156, 156n1

Kirkpatrick, Charles C. (USN officer), 119, 120n4

Kiska Island, xxx

See also Aleutians campaign

Kitts, Willard A., III (USN officer), 23, 23n2

Knight, John S. (newspaper owner), 193, 194n4

Knight Commander (award), 138, 147, 148n7

Knights Grand Cross (award), 121, 122n4, 125,
127, 138, 147, 148n8, 189

Knox, Annie R., 22, 22n1

Knox, Dudley W. (USN officer), 35, 35n2

Knox, William Franklin “Frank” (U.S. Secre-
tary of the Navy), 5n5, 22, 40, 40n1, 40n3,
45, 60, 130, 131n3

death of, 61n11, 136n2

Nimitz, meeting with, xxvii, 3, 49, 49n1

Koiso, Kuniaki (Japanese prime minister), 177,
178n5

Krick, Harold D., Sr. (USN officer), 152, 153n1

Kwajalein Atoll, 91

Nimitz visit to, 90

Kyushu, xxxiii, 173, 173n1, 183

Labern, Joan (wife of Chester Nimitz Jr.), 7,
8n3, 91, 107

Lahey, Frank H. (physician), 164, 165, 165n1,
167–68, 169, 170

Lamar, Howell A. “Hal” (USNR officer), xxvii,
3–4, 4n2, 6, 7, 32–33, 36, 41, 44, 45, 50, 51,
53, 59, 73, 74, 83, 84, 88, 93, 101, 104, 111,
114, 116, 121, 122, 125, 130, 134, 139, 142,
145, 148, 151, 152, 156, 157, 159, 161, 162,
163, 164, 168–69, 176, 180, 186, 187

West Coast, visit to, 9, 109n18

Lang, Margaret, 103

Langley (USN carrier), xxiii

Laning, Richard H. (USN officer), 159, 160n4,
161, 162, 163

Lapham, Roger (mayor of San Francisco), 105n4

Larkin, Claude A. (USMC officer), 31, 31n6

Larsen, Henry L. (USMC officer), 87n3, 94,
142, 145, 148, 150, 189

Lawrence, David (journalist), 94, 96n23

Lay, James T. “Junior” (USN officer), xxxiii,
77, 77n5, 92, 107, 109n9, 109n18, 111, 112,
113n1, 139, 146, 152, 188, 189, 194

Layton, Edwin T. (USN officer), xxix, 30

Leahy, William D. (USN officer), xxxiii

Leary, Herbert F. (USN officer), 8n2, 36, 36n3,
181

Lee, Fitzhugh (USN officer), 179, 179n1

Lee, Willis A. (USN officer), 152n 153n4

Lehman, Herbert H. (governor of New York),
57, 58n3

Lemay, Curtis E. (USAAF officer), 179, 179n1

Lewis, John W. (USN officer), 24, 25n5

Lexington (USN carrier), xxxixn75, 31n2

Leyte Gulf, Battle of, xxxii–xxxiii, xxxvn8,
57n2, 144n3

Lippmann, Walter (journalist), 186, 186n1

Little, Charles J. C. (RN officer), 127, 128n4

Lockwood, Charles A. (USN officer), 76, 77n1,
85, 102, 133

Los Angeles, California, 9

Love, Winona, 98, 99n7

Lowell, Juliet (author), 149n3
Lusitania (ocean liner), xx
Luzon, 101n4, 106n1, 109n9, 113n2, 114, 115,
115n4, 116, 125, 126n8, 127, 131, 132n6,
136, 141
Lyon, Vernon F. (USNR officer), 111, 112n4, 117
Maas, Melvin J. (USMCR officer), 38, 38n4,
65, 67
MacArthur, Douglas (USA officer), xxx, xxxii–
xxxiii, 15n1, 37, 83, 105, 114, 115, 115n5, 116,
125, 127, 129, 131, 136, 138, 141, 180
relations with Nimitz, xxxiii, 64, 88, 89, 94,
121, 177, 177n1, 179, 181, 181n5, 182, 185,
185n3, 189
MacFall, Roscoe C. (USN officer), xxiii
Mackintosh, Lachlan D. (RN officer), 50, 50n4
MacLeish, Archibald (U.S. assistant secretary
of state), 61, 62n7
Magnuson, Warren G. (congressman), 17, 17n1
Magruder, John H., Jr. (USN officer), 179, 179n2
Makalapa “Mak” (dog), 71, 78, 79n4, 79, 94,
117, 127, 142, 148, 151, 168, 180–81
Mandell, Harold C. (USA officer), 142, 142n1,
145, 151, 157, 173
Manila, Philippines, 115, 125, 136, 159, 189
Mansergh, Cecil A. L. (RN officer), 50, 50n1
Māori, 50, 50n3
Mare Island Naval Hospital, 157, 166
Mariana Islands, xxxi
See also Guam
marines (U.S.), xxx, 152, 154, 164
Marshall Islands, xxix, 90
Mason (USN destroyer escort), 81n5
Maumee (USN oiler), xx
Mayfield, Irving H. (USN officer), 12, 13n3
McCain, John S. “Slew” (USN officer), 8, 9n4,
10, 11, 34, 34n4, 38
McCandless, Byron (USN officer), 10, 10n2
McCarty, C. Walter (newspaper editor), 186,
186n6, 189
McCormick, Lynde D. (USN officer), 27, 27n3,
28n9, 30, 45
McCoy, Frank R. (USA officer), 11n2
McDonald, John D. (USN officer), 62, 62n11, 70
McIntire, Ross T. (USN officer), 10, 10n1, 167,
McIntire, Ross T. (*continued*)
168n1, 171
McMorris, Charles H. (USN officer), 21, 21n2,
43, 53, 58, 60, 65–66, 77, 85, 90, 92–93, 116,
120, 132, 139, 141–42, 147, 149, 157, 173,
188, 189
McMorris, Elizabeth M. Case, 92, 95n8, 120,
132, 138
McMullin, Joseph J. A. (USN officer), 38, 39n3, 50
McNarney, Joseph T. (USAAF officer), 11n2
McVay, Charles B., III (USN officer), 152, 154n11
Meng, Idelle, 38, 38n2
Meng, William (businessman), 38, 38n2
Mercer, Preston V. (USN officer), 15n7, 24,
25n7, 27n3, 32, 44, 87, 139, 139n1
Merry, Vernon (RN officer), 85, 85n1
Midway, Battle of, xxix–xxx, 25
Midway Atoll, xxix, 23, 25, 26
Miers, Anthony C. C. (RN officer), 102, 102n3
Mikasa (Japanese battleship), xxxiv, xlin11
Miller, Harold B. (USN officer), 99, 100n1, 152,
169, 179
Milnor, Guy C. (physician), 111, 112n6
Milnor, Nell P., 111, 112n6
Miscall, Leonard (USNR officer), 108, 109n14
Mississippi River, 4
Missouri (USN battleship), xxxiv, 93–94,
109n15, 132, 133n3, 152, 153n2, 191, 192
Mitchell, Philip E., 121
Mitscher, Marc “Pete” (USN officer), 31, 31n3,
152, 178, 179
Moana Hotel, 18, 18n4, 20, 75
Mogmog Island. *See* Ulithi
Moore, William B. (USN officer), 118, 119n2, 131
Mott, James W. (congressman), 175, 175n6
Mozart, Wolfgang (composer), 98, 99n10
Mulcahy, Francis P. (USMC officer), 182, 183n4
Muliwai (Walker family home), 59, 93, 121,
122, 132, 134
Munro, George C. (author), 98, 99n9
Munroe, William R. (USN officer), 32, 32n3
Murphy, Pink L. “Spuds” (USN sailor), 93–94,
96n11
Murphy, Vincent R. (USN officer), 24, 24n2, 26
Murray, Albert K. (USNR artist), 106, 108n1,
111, 112, 115, 124, 127

- Murray, George D. (USN officer), 28, 29n2, 53, 179, 181
- Nash, Walter (deputy prime minister of New Zealand), 20, 20n1
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), 77, 77n6, 80, 81n4
- Naval Air Station (NAS)
Alameda, 101, 103, 114, 138
San Diego, 8
- naval construction battalions. *See* Seabees
- Naval Observatory, 93, 96n17, 134
- Naval Reserve Midshipman's School, Abbott Hall, 4, 5n12
- Naval Training Station Great Lakes, 4, 5n14
- Naval War College, xxiii, xxxvin23
- Navy Pier (Chicago), 4, 5n10
- Navy Relief Society, xxviii, 55, 60, 166
- Navy Wives Club of America, 114, 114n2, 162
- Neefus, James L. (USMC officer), 26
- Nelson, Donald M. (chairman of the War Production Board), 74–75, 76, 78
- Nelson, Helen M., 55, 55n2
- Neosho* (USN oiler), xxxixn75
- New Caledonia, 36n5
- New Mexico* (USN battleship), 182, 183n1
- New Orleans* (USN cruiser), 17
- Newton, John H. (USN officer), 51, 51n3, 122, 124n1
- Niihau (Hawaiian island), 147, 148n2
- Nimitz, Anna Henke (mother), xvii
- Nimitz, Anna "Nancy" (daughter), xxii, 53, 54n3, 59, 69, 75, 76, 83, 85, 86, 120, 124, 127, 137, 152, 165, 168, 171
- Nimitz, Catherine "Kate" (daughter), xx, xxxiii, 7, 8n1, 53, 60, 68, 69, 75, 76, 78, 83, 85, 86, 92, 107, 109n18, 111, 127, 139, 146, 152, 168, 171, 194
- Nimitz, Catherine V. (wife), xix–xx, *xxi*, xxiv, xxvi, 137n4
death of, xxxiv
health of, 55, 67, 93, 97, 135, 167
speeches, 55n3, 59, 66, 68, 75, 85, 91, 107, 111, 114, 130–31, 165–66
volunteer work, xxviii, 57, 59, 63, 77, 78, 93,
- Nimitz, Catherine V. (*continued*)
volunteer work (*continued*)
104, 117, 122, 137–38, 147, 156, 157, 166, 194, 56, 124, 130, 137
wartime meetings with husband, 46, 54n6, 54, 56, 124, 130, 137
- WAVES
views on, 126n7
work with, 76, 83, 92, 102, 125, 166, 193
- Nimitz, Charles Henry (grandfather), xvii
- Nimitz, Chester Bernard (father), xvii
- Nimitz, Chester "Chet," Jr. (son), xx, xxiv–xxv, 21, 21n3, 27, 28, 44, 47, 68, 92, 94, 101, 114, 122–23, 133, 152, 156, 183, 193
Navy Cross awarded to, 111, 112n2
- Nimitz, Chester W.
alcohol, attitude towards, 3, 18, 83
biographers, attitude towards, 73–74, 74n2, 131, 135, 147
calculated risk," principle of, 41n1
circular formation, support for, xxiii
command philosophy of, xix, xxviii, xxxi, xln88, 131
concern for casualties, xxx, 172
daily routine of, 15, 16
dental issues, 132–33, 137, 139, 142
dignitaries, hosting of, 63, 65, 67, 69, 70, 72, 75, 80, 83, 84, 85, 86, 123, 124–25, 126–27, 141–42, 155, 168, 175, 178, 179, 182, 183, 184, 185
discretion of, xviii
exercise regimen, 16, 18, 28, 37, 44, 58, 68, 73, 83, 113, 132, 142, 151, 159, 161, 168, 176
fear of dismissal, xxix, 22, 40
finances of, xxxvi, xln109, 7, 60, 69, 80, 85, 95, 97, 100, 117–20, 126, 138, 143, 149, 162
health of, xviii, xxv, xxx, 16, 21, 35, 40, 59, 61, 63, 64, 65, 67, 78, 83, 113, 116, 135, 173
Hirohito, views on, 194
history, views on, 40n5
housing shortage, 18, 22, 65–66, 80, 104
Japanese, views on, xxxiv, 115, 170, 182, 193–194
military government and, 29
Muliwai, visits to, 59, 93, 121, 122, 132, 134
music, appreciation of, xxvi, 35, 39, 60, 62,

- Nimitz, Chester W. (*continued*)
- music, appreciation of (*continued*)
 - 63, 83, 92–93, 102, 111, 142, 151, 163
 - naval aviation, experience with, xxiii, xxv
 - organized labor, discussions with, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179
 - pets, 8, 8n6, 66, 66n7, 71, 76, 78, 79n4, 79, 86, 94, 104, 117, 127, 142, 147, 148, 151, 152, 168, 180, 181
 - plants, cultivation of, 123, 133, 159, 172, 180, 186, 188
 - poker and, 106, 108, 111, 134–35, 139, 166
 - postwar plans, 70, 71, 117, 118–19, 127, 129, 133, 134, 138, 152, 193
 - press, relationship with, xxix, 20, 97, 99n2, 105, 117, 118, 118n2, 161, 162, 178, 183, 186, 187, 189
 - psychologists, opinion of, 134, 162
 - race, views on, xxvi, 80, 81n4
 - recreation, 18, 33, 50, 56, 71, 84, 97, 106, 122, 156, 157, 162, 163, 164
 - sense of humor, 112, 125, 138
 - sleep deprivation of, 15, 16, 19, 20, 39, 85
 - unification, views on, xxxiii, 68n1
 - unity of command, experience with, xxxiii, 20, 20n3
 - visitors to headquarters, xxxiii
 - WAVES, views on, 58, 58n6, 83, 125, 126n7, 152, 157
 - weight, relationship with, 40, 58, 74, 93, 132, 144, 146, 159
- Chronology:**
- childhood in Texas, xvii
 - Naval Academy, time at, xviii, xxxviii43
 - Decatur* (USN destroyer), command of, xviii–xix
 - court-martial, xix
 - submarines, service with, xix, xxii
 - rescue of sailor, xxxvin25
 - marriage to Catherine V. Freeman, xx
 - diesel engines, work on, xix–xx, xxxvi
 - finger, loss of, xxxviii27
 - World War I, service in, xxii
 - South Carolina* (USN battleship), service on, xxii
 - submarine base, building of, xxii–xxiii, 12, 13n2, 93
 - Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC), creation of, xxiv, 44
 - Destroyer Base, San Diego, time at, xxiv
 - Augusta* (USN cruiser), command of, xxiv, xxxiii, 60n5, 87n1, 153n3
 - Bureau of Navigation, time at, xxiv–xxv
 - Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC), promotion to, xxvii, 13, 14
 - Battle of Coral Sea, xxix
 - Battle of Midway, xxix, 25, 26
 - plane crash, injury in, xxxi, 27n3
 - Guadalcanal, xxx, 31, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 45
 - Aleutians campaign, xxx
 - Central Pacific drive, xxx–xxxii
 - Tarawa, xxx, 51, 51n6, 52
 - MacArthur on Leyte, visit to, 89
 - Kwajalein, 90–91
 - Joint Chiefs, meetings with, xxxiii
 - Franklin D. Roosevelt in Hawaii, meeting with, xxxii
 - Leyte Gulf, xxxii–xxxiii, xxxvn8
 - fleet admiral, promotion to, xxxiii, 70n3, 84, 85, 90, 99
 - headquarters relocation to Guam, xxxiii, 63, 63n3, 73, 76, 78, 93, 99, 100, 123, 134, 135n2, 136, 137, 139, 140
 - Okinawa, visit to, 182, 182n1, 184n7, 184
 - Peleliu, visit to, 187
 - surrender of Japan, role in, xxxiv, 190, 191, 192
 - Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), time as, xxxiv, 130n1
 - United Nations (UN), work with, xxxiv, 186
 - retirement, xxxiv, 188
 - death of, xxxiv
- Nimitz, Frances M. (granddaughter), xxvi, 7, 8n4, 92, 107, 109n7, 156
- Nimitz, Mary M. (daughter), xxiv, xxvi, 46, 53–54, 54n1, 54n5, 54, 55, 56, 57–58, 59–60, 61, 63, 66, 67, 75, 76, 78, 83–88, 91–94, 97–98, 100, 101–2, 103–4, 107, 113, 117, 125, 127, 129, 132, 137, 141, 144, 145–46, 147, 151, 162, 167, 169, 171, 190, 193

- Nimitz, Mary M. (*continued*)
 health of, 56, 57, 61, 94, 118, 124
- Nimitz, William (stepfather), xviii–xix
- Nimitz Beach, 24, 24n3
- North African campaign, 50, 50n5
- Nouméa. *See* New Caledonia
- Noyes, Leigh (USN officer), 38, 38n3, 43
- nuclear submarines, xxxiv
- Oak Knoll (U.S. Naval Hospital, Oakland), x–viii, 55n4, 86, 97, 114, 118, 134, 147, 167, 171
- Oakley, Thomas B., Jr. (USN officer), 166, 167, 167n2
- Offenbach, Jacques (composer), 86, 86n2, 163
- Office of War Information (OWI), 62n7, 72, 73n4, 98, 155
- Ofstie, Ralph A. (USN officer), 24, 25n6, 27, 30, 31, 33, 36
- Ohio (USN battleship), xviii, 62n11, 70, 71n1, 114
- Okinawa, xxxiii
 Battle of, xxxiv, 175, 176, 176n10, 179, 182–83
 Nimitz visit to, 184
- Oklahoma (USN battleship), xxvii
- Olano, Miguel Ange Urteaga (Catholic bishop), 159, 160n6
- Oldendorf, Jesse B. (USN officer), 143, 144n2, 145, 145
- Omsted, Harald (USNR officer), 149, 149n5, 151
- Osmeña, Sergio, Sr. (president of the Philippines), 89, 89n2
- Osterhaus, Hugo Wilson (USN officer), 93, 96n14, 107, 129
- Ozawa, Jisaburō (Japanese officer), xxxi
- Paine, Ralph D., Jr. (magazine editor), 186, 186n3
- Palmyra Island, 38, 38n1
- Pan American Airways, 44, 44n1
- Panay (USN gunboat), xviii
- Peacock, John R. (USN officer), 106n6
- Pearl Harbor, attack on, xxvi–xxvii, 5, 6, 11n2, 148n3, 170
- Pearson, Drew (journalist), 64, 64n1, 67
- Peleliu, xxxii, 95n5, 187, 187n1
- Penfield, James K. (Foreign Service officer),
- Penfield, James K. (*continued*)
 159, 160n3, 161, 168, 187
- Perkins, Frances (U.S. secretary of labor), 61, 62n8
- Petrie, Lester (mayor of Honolulu), 29, 29n1
- Pfefferkorn, Mouney (businessman), 114, 115n8
- Pfeiffer, Omar T. (USMC officer), 23, 24n3, 30, 36
- Pflueger, Mary Lucas, 147, 148n1
- Pflueger, Wayne (businessman), 148n1
- Philadelphia* (USN cruiser), xxvi
- Philippine Sea, Battle of, xxxi–xxxii, xxxixn87
- Philippines, xxiv, 56, 105, 107, 109n9, 113n2, 114, 115n4, 125, 127, 129, 131, 136, 159
 Japanese invasion of, 15, 15n1
See also Leyte Gulf
- Pickett, Harry K. (USMC officer), 31, 31n7
- Pieczentkowski, Herman A. (USN officer), 27, 27n4
- Pink Lady* (plane), 140, 144, 152, 167, 168, 173
- Pitts, Zasu (actress), 94, 96n20
- Pons, Alice “Lily” (singer), 151, 151n3
- Poor Richard Club, 108, 109n16, 111
- Port Moresby (New Guinea), xxxixn75
- Potter, Elmer B. (historian), xviii
- Powell, Kenneth R. (USAAF officer), 51, 51n2
- Price, Charles F. B. (USMC officer), 10, 10n3, 11
- Puccini, Giacomo (composer), 93, 96n15
- Pye, Anne Briscoe (author), 12, 12n4, 15
- Pye, William S. (USN officer), xxvii, 11–13, 12n2, 14, 15, 32, 35–36
- Queen’s Hospital, 106, 106n5, 108
- Quick, Winifred. *See* Collins, Winifred
- Quonset Hut, 158, 160n1
- Quynn, Allen G. (USN officer), 102, 103n8
- Rachmaninoff, Sergei Vasilyevich (composer), 151, 151n2
- Radford, Arthur W. (USN officer), 152, 154n9
- Ramsey, Dewitt C. (USN officer), 43, 44n3
- Ramsey, Donald J. (USN officer), 65, 66n1, 67
- Ravenscroft, George M. (USN officer), 8, 9n3, 10
- Red Cross (RC). *See* American Red Cross (ARC)
- Redman, John R. (USN officer), xxxixn76, 30,

Redman, John R. (*continued*)
 36, 36n4, 51, 187

Reeves, John W., Jr. (USN officer), 143, 144n1, 187

Reeves, Joseph M. (USN officer), 11n2, 16, 16n2

Rennell Island, Battle of, 49, 49n3

Reynolds, Lloyd R. (USNR officer), 107, 109n10

Reynolds, Quentin (war correspondent), 162, 163n2

Rice, Philip L. (judge), 93, 96n12, 111, 122

Richardson, James O. (USN officer), xxvi, xxxviii52, 55, 55n1, 56, 57, 63, 65, 67, 68, 70, 72, 73–74, 166

Richardson, Robert C., Jr. (USA officer), xxxii, 51, 51n1, 65–66, 67, 104, 184

Ridder, Joseph E. (publisher), 189, 189n1

Rigby, Eleanor (USN officer), 58, 58n7, 67, 68, 70, 72

Riley, Bertha, 171

Roberts, Kenneth (author), 17, 17n3

Roberts, Owen J. (Supreme Court justice), 11n2

Roberts Commission, 11, 11n2, 13, 13n4, 16, 21, 21n1

Robison, Samuel S. (USN officer), xxiii, 91, 91n4

Rochefort, Joseph J. (USN officer), xxix

Roenigk, John G. (USN officer), 30, 30n1

Roosevelt, Eleanor (U.S. First Lady), 181, 181n2

Roosevelt, Franklin D. (U.S. President), xxiv, xxvi–xxvii, xxxviii52, 6n1, 73n4, 75, 81n5, 93–94, 96n19, 114, 115n6, 130, 136, 136n1, 171
 death of, 181, 181n1
 Nimitz, meetings with, xxvii, xxxii, 109n18

Roosevelt, James (USMC officer), 23, 24n5

Roscoe, Thomas M. (USNR officer), 27n3

Saipan, xxxi, 91
 invasion of, xxxii
 Nimitz on, 168, 193

Sallada, Harold B. (USN officer), 90, 91n1

Samar, Battle of, 57n2

Sampson-Schley controversy, xvii

San Diego, California, xxiv, xxvii–xxviii

San Francisco, California, xxxi, xxxiv, 27n3, 54n6

Santa Cruz Islands, Battle of, 42, 43, 43n1, 44

Santa Fe Chief (train), 3, 4n1

Santiago, Battle of, xvii

Saratoga (USN carrier), 17n2, 44n3

Sargent, Sidney (USN officer), 119

Schoeffel, Malcolm F. (USN officer), 193, 194n6

Schubert, Franz (composer), 98, 99n12

Seabees, 57, 58n5, 93, 117, 135, 141, 147, 149, 158, 163, 180

Seventh Fleet, xxxiii

Shafroth, John F. (USN officer), 3, 4n3, 49, 152, 190

Sharp, Alexander, Jr. (USN officer), 152, 153n6

Shepherd, Lemuel C., Jr. (USMC officer), 182, 183n6

Sherman, Forrest P. (USN officer), 43, 43n2, 51, 53, 80, 83, 93, 99n2, 101, 109n18, 142, 143, 145, 151, 157, 161, 164, 169, 179, 186, 188, 193

Sherman, Frederick C. (USN officer), 152, 153n8

Sherrod, Robert (war correspondent), xxix, 161, 161n2

Sherwood, Robert E. (playwright), 155, 155n3, 156, 157, 172

Shōhō (Japanese carrier), xxxixn75

Shōkaku (Japanese carrier), xxxixn75

Short, Walter C. (USA officer), 11n2, 18, 18n5, 21

short snorter, 75, 75n2

Sims (USN destroyer), xxxixn75, 33, 33n3

Sinclair, Gregg M. (president, University of Hawaii), 40, 40n4

Slaydon, James (congressman), xvii

Small, Ernest G. (USN officer), 92, 95n9

Smallwood, Clarence C. (USNR officer), 147, 148n5

Smetana, Bedřich (composer), 83, 83n3

Smith, Harold T. (USN officer), 173, 174n1

Smith, Holland M. (USMC officer), xxxii, 121, 122n6, 168

Smith, Julian C. (USMC officer), 51, 51n5, 121

Smith, Margaret Chase (congresswoman), 65, 66n2, 67, 68, 86

Smith, Marshall (USN officer), 112, 113, 113n4, 115, 117, 118–19, 120, 137, 145, 166, 167, 171, 175, 177

Smith, Paul, 107

Smith, Ralph (USA officer), xxxii

Smith vs. Smith controversy, xxxii

Solomon Islands, 37

Somerville, James F. (RN officer), 125, 126n5

South Dakota (USN battleship), 190

souvenirs, 89, 117, 148, 191n4, 193

Soviet Union, German invasion of, 15, 15n2

Spanish-American War, xvii

Spear, Raymond (USN officer), 104, 105n5

Spellman, Francis J. (Catholic bishop), 61, 62n4

Spore, Burns W. (USN officer), 55, 55n2

Sproul, Robert G. (president, University of California, Berkeley), 60, 61n10

Spruance, Edward D. (USN officer), 28, 28n1

Spruance, Raymond A. (USN officer), xxx–xxxii, 27, 28, 28n10, 30, 31, 32, 35–36, 38, 42–45, 49–50, 53, 55, 138, 142, 146–47, 149–52, 173, 179, 182–83, 188–89

Stainback, Cecile W., 39, 39n1, 111

Stainback, Ingram M. (Hawaii governor), 29, 29n2, 39

Stalin, Joseph (Soviet premier), 130, 131n2

Standley, William H. (USN officer), 11n2, 16, 16n1, 21

Star Bulletin (newspaper), 64, 64n2, 116

Stark, Harold R. “Betty” (USN officer), 3, 4n4, 5

Station Hypo, xxxixn76

Stevenson, Coke R. (governor of Texas), 72, 73n2

Stewart, George V. (USN officer), 176, 176n1

Stilwell, Joseph W. (USA officer), 60, 61n8, 65, 175

Stimson, Henry L. (U.S. Secretary of War), xxx, 20, 20n2, 20n3

Stone, Earl E. (USN officer), 187, 188n3

Strauss, Richard (composer), 93, 96n16

Stravinski, Igor (composer), 66, 66n5

Struble, Arthur D. (USN officer), 89, 90n4

Struther, Jan (author), 90, 91n2

Sturgeon (USN submarine), 27n4, 29n4, 112n2

Styer, Charles W. (USN officer), 102, 103n7

Styer, Charles W. Jr. (USN officer), 102, 103n6

submarines, Nimitz and, xxxviii, 94, 102

Sullivan, Arthur (composer), 66, 66n6

Sulzberger, Arthur H. (publisher), 75, 75n4

Sumner, Eva E., 36, 36n2, 98

Sumner, George W. (businessman), 36, 36n2, 98

Surigao Strait, Battle of, 143, 144n3

Sutherland, Richard K. (USA officer), 37, 177n1, 181n5

Swanson, Clifford A. (USN officer), 16, 16n4

Sweeney, James J. (Catholic bishop), 61, 62n5, 77

Taiwan. *See* Formosa

Tarawa, Battle of, 52

Task Force 38, 114, 115n7, 118–19, 119n3, 120n5, 123, 124n3, 127, 133, 133n6, 135, 137n5

Task Force 58, 169, 170n1, 173, 173n1

Tawes, Montford R. (USNR officer), 114, 115n3

Tenney, Wilhelmina, 98, 99n8, 121

Theobald, Robert A. (USN officer), 49, 49n2

Third Fleet, xxxi, 131

Thompson, E. M. (USN officer), 97, 99n4

Thompson, Lorena, 60, 60n5, 61, 97

Tinian Island, xxxi, xxxiv, 149

Tokyo, 170, 170n1, 190, 193

Tonakai earthquake, 115, 116n2

torpedoes (U.S.), xxii, 77n1

Towers, John H. (USN officer), 34, 34n4, 43, 53, 59, 63n3, 65, 152, 157, 184

Train, Harold C. (USN officer), 17, 17n1, 20

Truitt, Razzie Washington (USN chaplain), 131, 131n4

Truman, Harry S. (U.S. President), xxxiv, 181, 181n3

Tufnell, Desmond N. C. (RN officer), 125, 126n6, 137

Tulagi Island, 35

Tunney, James “Gene” (USNR officer), 171, 171n2

Turner, Harry L. (pilot), 44, 44n1, 45, 105

Turner, Richmond Kelly (USN officer), 121, 122n5, 167, 168, 170, 179, 182, 188, 189

Two-Ocean Navy Act (1940), xxv

Tyrwhitt-Drake, Margery, 104, 105n8

Ulithi Atoll, 88, 88n1, 95n5, 152, 154n10
 University of California, Berkeley, 138, 138n5
 U.S. Military Academy, xvii
 U.S. Naval Academy, xvii, xxiv
 U.S. Naval Hospital, Oakland. *See* Oak Knoll

Valle, Pedro A. del (USMC officer), 182, 183n5
 Van Bergen, Nicholas B. (USN officer), 34, 34n1
 Vandergrift, Alexander A. (USMC officer), 45, 45n2, 166, 182n1
 Victory “Vicky” (cat), 66, 66n7, 76, 86
 Vietnam. *See* French Indochina
 Viot, V. H. (USA officer), 187, 188n5

WAC (Women’s Army Corps), 177, 181
 Wade, Thomas J. (Catholic bishop), 159, 160n5
 Wagner, Frank D. (USN officer), 89, 90n5
 Walker, Ann, 36n1
 Walker, Henry A. “Hanko,” Jr. (USNR officer), 36n1, 107, 109n15, 132, 134, 139
 Walker, Henry A. “Sandy” (businessman), xxiii, xxxviii38, 35, 36n1, 57–58, 59, 70, 72, 93, 98, 105, 108, 111, 116, 121, 129, 134, 139, 172, 180
 Walker, Una Craig, 35, 36n1, 57–58, 59, 70, 72, 93, 98, 105, 108, 111, 116, 129, 134, 139, 180
 Walker, Virginia, 36n1
 war bonds, 55, 59–60, 63, 65, 68, 70, 87, 97, 111
Wasp (USN carrier), 43n2
 Watson, Thomas E. (USMC officer), 168, 169n2
 Watt, Richard Morgan, Jr. (USN officer), 22, 23n1
 WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service), 58, 58n6, 67, 68, 72, 80, 83, 92, 125, 126n7, 152, 157
 Wedemeyer, Albert C. (USA officer), 175, 175n1, 176
 Wellfleet, Massachusetts, 137n4, 152, 154n13, 183
 West Point. *See* U.S. Military Academy
 Wheeler, Charles J. (USN officer), 80, 81n2, 85
 White, Wallace H., Jr. (senator), 124, 126n3
 White, Walter Francis (NAACP executive secretary), 77, 77n6, 80
 Whiting, Francis E. M. (USN officer), 152n153n3, 189, 189n3
 Wilkinson, Theodore S. (USN officer), 92, 95n5, 95n6, 109n9, 113n1, 139, 188, 189, 194

Wiltse, Lloyd J. (USN officer), 24, 24n1, 28, 30, 41, 45, 152
 Withers, Thomas, Jr. (USN officer), 22, 22n2
 Witter, Dean G. (businessman), 138, 138n3
 Witter, Jean (businessman), 138, 138n3
 Women’s Royal Naval Service (WRNS), 80, 81n1
 Woo, Y. C. (businessman), 190, 191n4, 193
 Woods, Edgar L. (USN officer), 57, 58n4
 Woodward, Rufus S. (newspaper editor), 186, 186n4
 Wotje. *See* Marshall Islands
 Wright, William L. (USN officer), 21, 21n4, 27
 Wygant, Benyaurd D. (USN officer), 4, 5n13

Yalta Conference, 131, 131n2, 132, 134, 159, 161, 166
Yamato (Japanese battleship), 178, 178n1
Yorktown (USN carrier, CV-5), xxix, xxxixn75
Yorktown (USN carrier, CV-10), 99n1

Zogbaum, Rufus F. (USN officer), 4, 5n9

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