

RANDOM THOUGHTS OF SHEMYA

BY TED GAWLICKI

THOUGHTS OF SHEMYA GO BACK TO THE ENDLESS DAYS OF WAITING AT ST. RUPPERT ... THE TRIP TO THE ALEUTIANS ABOARD A FRUIT COMPANY SHIP BUILT IN THE EIGHTEEN HUNDREDS, CAPTURED BY THE GERMANS IN W.W.I AND THEN RESCUED BY THE ENGLISH IN THE SAME WAR AND DURING W.W. II WAS BEING USED AS A TROOP TRANSPORT ... THE ROUGH NORTH PACIFIC STORMS, WAVES BREAKING OVER THE BRIDGE ... THE TRANSFER TO A VICTORY SHIP AT ADAK ... THE DISEMBARKING ON ATTU ON CHRISTMAS EVE AFTER STANDING ON A STEEL DECK FOR THE BETTER PART OF A DAY AND SWEARING YOUR FEET WOULD FALL OFF WHEN YOU TAKE YOUR BOOTS OFF ... THE TEMPORARY HOUSING ON ATTU ... A TENT WHOSE FLOOR WAS HALF FILLED WITH WATER/ICE/SLUSH ... THAT CHRISTMAS DINNER ... THE BOAT TRIP TO SHEMYA ... THE TRANSFER TO A BARGE (DOCK WASHED OUT THE WEEK BEFORE) ... THE GUY IN FRONT OF ME, WHEN TRANSFERRING FROM TUG TO BARGE JUMPED WHEN HE SHOULDN'T HAVE ... AS I WATCHED HIM FALL BETWEEN THE TUG AND THE BARGE, WHEN THEY PARTED AND CAME TOGETHER WITH THE MOTION OF THE SEA ... THE FELLOW WAS RESCUED AND TO BOTH OF OUR AMAZEMENTS WE SET FOOT ON SHEMYA TOGETHER. THE SIX MAN QUONSET HUT WE CALLED HOME WHILE ON SHEMYA ... THE FIRST PHOTO FLIGHT PERSONNEL WE MET ... ATE WITH ... ARGUED AND WORKED WITH ... FREESE FROM JERSEY, A CORPORAL FROM S. CAROLINA. A GUY NAMED AL. A SERGEANT FROM WHERE I DON'T KNOW, McNEILL AND TWO GUYS FROM N.Y.

THE DELICIOUS MEALS THAT YOU COULDN'T MISS EVEN IF YOU HAD TO CRAWL ON YOUR BELLY TO GET THEM (90 - 100 MPH WINDS)... THE MAIL THAT DIDN'T ARRIVE BECAUSE THE ISLAND COMMANDER NEEDED A NEW REFRIGERATOR IN HIS PILL BOX... THE TIME WE HAD CHILE AND BEANS FOR THREE DAYS AND AT ALL THE MEALS BECAUSE THE DOCKS WASHED OUT ... AGAIN ... THE SNOW THAT FELL HORIZONTALLY AND PACKED INSIDE THE ENGINES SO TIGHT YOU NEEDED AN ICE PICK TO CLEAN THE MESS UP BEFORE YOU START THE VEHICLE ... THAT SNOW WAS ALSO FUN TO DRIVE IN ... YOU FELT AS THOUGH YOU WERE GOING STRAIGHT UP TO NOWHERE.

AT THE PHOTO LAB...ONE IS TAUGHT HOW TO UNLOAD CUT FILM FROM HOLDERS WITHOUT CRACKING(FROZEN)... HOW TO REMOVE DEVELOPER STAIN FROM YOUR HANDS...RUB IN POTASSIUM FERROCYANIDE INTO THE SOILED SKIN AREA... WHEN HANDS TURN RED YOU APPLY ANOTHER CHEMICAL WHOSE NAME ESCAPES ME OTHERWISE YOU GO AROUND FOR QUITE A LONG TIME WITH ORANGE-RED HANDS.

THEN THERE WERE THE SIGHTS...A THREE MILE ISLAND ... A TWO MILE RUNWAY ... P-38s TAKING OFF... SNOW SQUALL COMING IN ON THEIR TAILS... TURNS INTO STORM... P--38s ARE DISPATCHED TO AMCHITKA...PBYs FLY ONLY ON SUNNY DAYS ... THEY AVERAGE 4 1/2 HOURS FLYING TIME A MONTH ... LISTENING TO TOKYO ROSE ON THE "HUT" RADIO ... WALKING THE BEACHES IN HUNT FOR IVORY ... PLAYING SOFTBALL AT MIDNIGHT DURING

**THE SUMMER MONTHS ... SAND BLOWN INTO EVERYTHING YOU OWN ...
HORIZONTAL RAIN.**

**(ED. NOTE: TED HAS A VERY INTERESTING WRITING STYLE, I THOROUGHLY
ENJOYED READING THIS STORY. IT MADE ME REMINISCE, HOW ABOUT YOU
OTHER GUYS? DAN LANGE)**

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