

17 days or more. During this availability a hot plastic coating was put on the bottom so that she would not need dry-docking so soon the next time.

As soon as the availability was finished, we moved to the loading pier to prepare for the next trip. Our passengers were to be the 519th Bombardment Group, known in the Mediterranean area as "Holzapfel's Flying Circus," after their famous commanding officer, who developed the system for flying his airplanes off the ground seven (maybe six) abreast in order to save fuel and thus increase their bombing range. They had two Presidential Citations to show for their work in Africa and Italy so that there really must have been something to the stories they told us. They were on their way to Okinawa now, to fly the new A-26's and win the war in the Pacific.

They carried the baggage of important passengers, too. It took four full days to load their 1055 tons of equipment and our ship only carried part of it. The flyers and their supporting units came aboard on the 6th and 7th of May and we sailed for Pearl Harbor at noon on the 7th.

For the first two days out of Seattle we ran into the roughest weather the ADMIRAL CAPPS had yet encountered. As compared with later trips in the Atlantic, it wasn't especially bad; but in that it was the first, it tested the ship out to see how sea-worthy she was. She was plenty sea-worthy, but things weren't very well secured. Garbage cans and crates of potatoes were rolling lively back and forth across the mess deck, books and papers were thrown out of desks and bookcases in the offices and officers' rooms, but the worst of all was the safe in the finance office which broke loose from its moorings, slid across the deck and pinned a steward



*Loading the "Flying Circus" in Seattle*

between it and the opposite bulkhead. An X-ray examination revealed that he had a fractured sacrum and multiple fractures of the pubic bones, with ruptured urethra membranes. It was necessary to operate immediately and with the ship slowed down and heeled into the sea, two doctors performed a successful operation. The patient was transferred to the Naval Hospital at Pearl Harbor.

We arrived at Pearl Harbor in the evening of 12 May and