

PANAMA CANAL

The run from Guantanamo to the Canal Zone was a short one. Sherman arrived at the Atlantic entrance to the Canal during the early morning of 5 April. We anchored in the harbor refuge amidst the many merchant ships and waited our turn to transit the Canal.

Our pilot arrived and shortly thereafter our anchors were weighed and we began the passage through the many locks of the Canal Zone. Our first series of locks were directly below the Gatun Lake, the largest body of water through the passage. Our pilot directed us to anchor in the lake due to the heavy flow of traffic, and this gave us a chance to give Sherman a fresh water washdown. It also gave us a chance to have an invigorating water fight – a welcome relief from Panama's tropical weather.

The stop was very brief and soon all hands were piped to their special sea detail stations. Sherman was prepared to get underway but her port windlass was jammed and our anchor could not be raised. After much work by our damage controlmen and deck force, the heavy anchor chain was rotated to the starboard windlass and the anchor was slowly raised.

The remainder of the passage through the Canal was uneventful but the entire crew crowded the decks to take photographs and view the many sights of the Canal. Everyone remained above deck even after dark to catch their first glimpse of the Pacific Ocean. At 2000 on 5 April, the Pacific Ocean lay directly ahead. Our pilot disembarked with our mail and we entered the largest body of water in the world. Looking back on the lights of Rodman made us realize that Boston was becoming farther and farther away.

THE LONG LEG

The passage from Panama to Hawaii was the longest leg of the voyage and all of us realized the great size of the Pacific Ocean. It proved to normally be a very calm and peaceful body of water, although later in the year many of us thought, or should I say "felt", differently.

During the long passage we had a good chance to catch up on letter writing and to collect our thoughts. The sadness of leaving Boston was slowly wearing off and we were beginning to accept the long months that lay ahead.



Some jobs are never finished



Long trip? "It's already too long::"



Somewhere back there is Boston