

plane talk
U.S.S. SARATOGA
25 November, 1943

THANKS, BEN

Our sincere thanks to War Correspondent Ben Roscoe for taking over PLANE TALK the past few days. The strain has been a bit hard on him and in order to insure him against a nervous break down, we are giving him a whole day free!

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THANKSGIVING, 1943

Of course, the folks at home will be missing you and your ravenous appetite this Thanksgiving Day and there's nothing just like Mom's mince pie and cranberry sauce--but haven't we a few things for which to be thankful?

In the first place, lots of home folks won't have turkey for dinner this year because they wanted men in the service to have it. It was not merely the sacrifice of the turkey that counts either, it is the quality of mind that prompts it.

One thing, perhaps trivial, for which we ought to be thankful is the gift of life. Young Miles James won't spend this or any other Thanksgiving Day at home and he has a young wife and a baby there too; nor will Paul Barnett, or Lloyd Cramer, or Donald Betts, or John Blank, or the gallant aviators who flew to death from the SARATOGA during the past three months, Miller, Minning, Kingman, Atwell, Teal, Nyarady, and Wells. Some of these are merely listed as missing. Twenty-six per cent of one of the squadrons aboard this ship have all ready died in the service of their country.

And we ought to be thankful that we have a country worth dying for, a country which has given us gifts more precious than life itself. Above the horizon of our lives have been emblazoned these words:

"WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT; THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL; THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN INALIENABLE RIGHTS; THAT AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS; THAT TO INSURE THESE RIGHTS, GOVERNMENTS ARE INSTITUTED AMONG MEN, DERIVING THEIR JUST POWERS FROM THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED."

Of course, it has been rough going for the men who have been on the SARATOGA ever since it left Bremerton in May, 1942. That is a longer duty in foreign waters than any ship had to undergo before this war, a longer period than the whole of the last World War when service men complained that they had to spend six months away from home. The reason we underlined the word men is because it takes a real man to render such service without whimpering.

We ought to thank God this Thanksgiving Day that we have set the Axis back on their axis definitely - not only out where we function today, but in Italy, in Russia, and in the Atlantic. Last night a Japanzy radio liar said that President Roosevelt had made a report to Congress behind closed doors of our losses at Bougainville! And then he followed this up by the contradictory announcement, "Well, what if the Americans do take Bougainville? What have they got? And if we do yield up Rabaul? What have we lost? The Americans can never reach us by island-hopping." Such words as these recall the old proverb, "Whom the gods destroy, they first make mad."

We ought to be thankful that we have served on about the finest ship our Navy has ever put to sea. Some people think the SARATOGA is the Atlantic City boardwalk afloat; some think it is a scheme to get three thousand men to live together within a city block. Some men aboard the SARATOGA figure it's merely boiler #6 or Messing Compartment #3, or Fly I, or Fighter 23, or TBF 24, or SBD 40. Here we have the goldarest collection of farmers, bakers, saxophone players, carpenters, machinists, lawyers, school teachers, doctors, insurance men, and Texas cowboys that were ever assembled on one flattop. But no one of these things and no one of these people is the SARATOGA.

The SARATOGA is IDEAL and a DREAM: The fellow who thought up this, the first great aircraft carrier, had vision and guts, the SARATOGA is a Dream of free people who think by free enterprise and by the free consecration of free men to a noble cause, our tremendous coastline can be made invulnerable to attack. Since the day