

Feist, Charles G.

Skimmed Leyte Tree Ringside Spot Durin



Lieut. Charles G. Feist's Feats Stirring S.

JAN 3 1945
If anyone can claim having had a ringside seat of the invasion of the Philippines at Leyte it is Lieutenant (junior grade) Charles G. Feist, 24, USNR, of this city, now back in the United States. The Navy pilot, who lives at 1321 Montrose Avenue, was attached to an American escort carrier force which supported ground operations on D-Day in the Philippines.

Piloting a carrier-based torpedo bomber, Lieutenant Feist describes his chore at Leyte as being "the most interesting job of the battle."

"I flew an observer as passenger over the front line ground positions," recounts the airman. "We not only had a close-up view of the whole show but also radioed a play-by-play description to our ships off shore."

"We went in at tree-top level, spotting artillery and naval fire and relaying back positions of Jap troops, tanks and gun emplacements."

Lieutenant Feist flew two of these missions daily during the Leyte attack, strafing the enemy throughout.

"We never returned to the carrier with a full load of ammunition," he says.

In the battle of the Philippines the Lieutenant was on patrol when strong Japanese task force of battleships, cruisers and destroyers was sighted off Leyte Gulf.

"My carrier was under fire and on the move so I landed on Tacloban airfield to rearm and refuel. I flew out of Tacloban for three days, between flights getting in plenty of foxhole time."

Twice during the Philippine fighting the Pennsylvania pilot returned from combat with not much more than cupfuls of gasoline remaining in his fuel tanks.

From Tacloban Lieutenant Feist flew to Dulag, another American-won landing strip in the Philippines, still unable to regain his carrier. By



LIEUT. CHARLES G. FEIST
... Leyte tree hopper

this time anti-aircraft fire had riddled his plane.

The flyer was able to land aboard another carrier and operated from that "baby flattop" for seven days before finally managing a return to his original ship.

Lieutenant Feist was attached to Navy Composite Squadron 68 and flew in combat action at the invasions of Palau, Guam, Saipan and Tinian besides the Leyte landing.

January 3, 1945