I Wish I Weren’t Going to Have This Baby:
A Navy Wife Remembers Pearl Harbor

We awoke at dawn and lay watching the soft breezes blow back the bedroom curtains showing us glimpses of the deep blue sky and sparkling sunshine of another beautiful Hawaiian day. We talked briefly of our life together and of our joyous anticipation of the new little one who would be coming to bless our marriage.

“Let’s have a picnic on the beach.”

My husband Ted and I jumped out of bed to prepare for another happy day, but this was not to be for it was Sunday, December 7, 1941. On this historic day our plans were changed abruptly by the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor which began shortly after dawn.

At first we did not pay much attention to the bombing because we lived in an apartment just off Waikiki beach between two forts—at Diamond Head, a little to the southeast near Honolulu Harbor, and Fort De Russy toward the north—where there had been a practice military alert for three days and nights of constant bombardment. We had gotten so used to the noise that we did not give it much thought until we turned on the radio.

As we were sitting down to breakfast, we heard the announcer say, “The islands are under enemy attack. All police are to go at once to their stations.”

I turned to my husband, “Ted, you told me this place was like the Rock of Gibraltar and we were perfectly safe! What kind of attack is...
this? You said there aren’t any gangsters here.” Indeed the islands were mainly countryside, calm and peaceful, the people were friendly, and the crime rate was low. I couldn’t imagine why all the police were being called to duty. Ted looked puzzled, but as the radio resumed the musical program, we began to eat.

Just then through the open windows we heard the other station from the upstairs apartment with the dynamic voice of the announcer, Webley Edwards. As we almost bumped heads leaning over to change the station, we heard, “The islands are under enemy attack. All military personnel will return at once to their stations.” At that moment Ted jumped up from the table, grabbed his duffel bag, and threw in some canned goods and clothes realizing he wouldn’t be coming home. He said there had been Japanese submarines in the area. I was furious when I heard that because I worked as a senior stenographer in the administration building at Pearl Harbor and thought I had a right to know what was going on.

Then Ted spoke of Port Arthur where the Japanese had also sneak-attacked the Russians at the beginning of the century. He immediately understood the gravity of the situation, which is more than most people did. That seems to be the reason that we did not defend ourselves adequately.

About this time his boss, Lt. Bourland, who lived in an apartment across the court, knocked on the door and said something to Ted. I heard my husband say, “Yes, I’m shoving off right now,” and he rushed right out and got into the car and left. I immediately walked out into the yard where I joined neighbors who were watching the dog fighting that was going on between several Japanese planes and the five American planes that had managed to get into the air. Our planes that did get up were successful in shooting down the Japanese Zeros. They were about the only planes that could take any defensive action because of the lack of timely warning.

After the brief battle I returned to my apartment where I saw a fresh pile of sand at my door with a small mimeographed note: IN CASE OF FIRE USE THIS. Without anything to use on the sand except my bare hands, I suddenly felt entirely on my own.

I went in and listened to the radio announcer say they were going off the air and would return at noon with an announcement from
Governor Poindexter. Later I heard others speak of their deep-felt emotions as they listened to “The Star Spangled Banner” being played before the station became silent. It was obvious that this was a historic day never to be forgotten.

As the five-day workweek was still a thing of the future, I was used to cleaning my little apartment on Sunday. So I got to work with the peculiar feeling that if the Japanese were to succeed in their plan to invade, they being such clean people, I should have my apartment spic and span as a matter of national pride.

At noon Gov. Poindexter broke the radio silence, revoking the laws of the territory one by one. He then declared martial law which was to last throughout the entire war. Later that afternoon, Thelma, a chief’s wife who usually went to work at the harbor with us in our car pool, came with a couple of other navy wives who also usually traveled to work with us. She said “Mrs. Budny, do you think we will be on time to work tomorrow?” This really was humorous because she always worried about being late. I wasn’t too sure that there would be any work or even any place to go. This seemed to be particularly true after I heard some news about the extent of the damage from civilian neighbors who had been working overtime in the accounting office at the navy yard that Sunday. They had been finishing the annual fiscal budget for Washington—now suddenly obsolete.

The only news we had was from these workers, and it was horrifying. Ships had been sunk. The hospitals were crowded with survivors. Rumors were rife. At first the workers in the administration building, when they heard the bombing, had thought the planes were ours. Then one alert woman shouted, “Look at the rising sun painted on their wings! They are Japanese!” Then they had gone down to the basement which had been prepared for a bomb shelter in case of enemy attack.

The radio came on from time to time with commands: “Get all cars off the street. Drive them up on the grass. Make room for military vehicles. Do not do any unnecessary traveling.” They also asked for blood donors at the hospitals. I did not go because of expecting our first child, but so many people did rush down that presently it was announced that there was no further need for volunteers. Long lines were there including one old couple. Someone said to them, “Aren’t
you too old to give blood?” and the woman replied, “This blood has served us a long time. It must be very good blood.” This was mentioned in the newspapers about this particular couple.

Military law was very strict. No one was allowed on the street after dark unless he had military business or special permission. People were not allowed to have lighted cigarettes or anything else that would show light from the air. We had to cover our radios with sweaters or anything that would prevent the light from shining out through the open windows. Blackout rules were seriously maintained. Naturally we expected the enemy to return. Throughout the long night the moon shone brightly between frequent intervals of rain. The police continued to come on the radio station with repeated commands or brief reports from time to time. I lay on the floor beside the radio all night, and occasionally I slept.

Next morning I went to work not knowing whether I was a widow. We had no means of communication by telephones or radio which were used only for official orders. As my husband had taken the car, getting to work had been quite difficult. First, I walked from my apartment near Waikiki toward town to Thelma’s apartment. As I hurried along I could hear from the open windows of the houses I passed, the dynamic voice of President Roosevelt declaring war. I did not have time to stop and listen to his speech, but his tone was reassuring.

When I reached Thelma’s apartment, she had decided she couldn’t risk taking her husband’s new Buick to the harbor. His ship was at sea and she had enough worries. So we walked to the bus depot right in the middle of Honolulu in pouring rain only to find that the buses all had large signs; POLICE. They had been commandeered and were waiting at their depot. I might mention here that I had heard that heavy bombardment causes rain, and indeed it had rained off and on between spells of bright moonlight all night following the attack with drenching rain the next morning. This rain was very unusual during a period of otherwise beautiful weather.

As we could not use a bus, we went down to the O’ahu railroad station which usually accommodated defense workers. While driving by we usually would see them huddled in one car and it was believed they were shooting craps. I felt rather leery about riding with them, but there seemed to be nothing else to do. I felt pretty relieved when we were told that the train had left and there would not be another one
until afternoon. Next, Thelma hailed a Chinese man whose limousine
had a navy-yard decal. The driver appeared to be Japanese to me, and
I felt quite hesitant about getting into his car. I thought all Orientals
looked alike because I had not been in the islands very long, and at
that alarming time I saw them all as the enemy. However, he kindly
took us to the harbor; and after looking at him suspiciously, the sen-
try examined his badge, realized he was Chinese working in the pub-
lic works department, and allowed him to pass. He got us right to our
office and we were not very late. We were relieved to find that our
building, as well as the others, was intact except for some windows that
had been knocked out by concussion.

That day some of us worked in the personnel office with Captain
White, the public works officer, typing orders to call naval reserve
officers from Hawai‘i and the West Coast to active duty. Those who
lived in the islands had immediately rushed to duty stations without
awaiting official orders. Those on the West Coast would come as
quickly as air space was available.

One handsome middle-aged man who came into our office
received orders sending him to the submarine base. He said he
wanted sea duty. The captain explained that he was going to the base
for his next assignment wherever that might be, but he misunder-
stood and kept insisting that he had been at sea in World War One
and wanted sea duty again. Our hearts went out to him.

As the morning wore on with no word of my husband, I became
more and more alarmed. I desperately felt that I should get to the
naval hospital to see if he was one of the casualties. It seemed a hope-
less task especially as I did not have the car, and it was too far to walk.
When I felt I could stand the suspense no longer, I became deter-
mined to find some way to search for him at lunch time.

Finally at eleven o’clock he appeared at my desk where I was typ-
ing. His eyes were bloodshot, and he was wearing a trench coat and
helmet and carrying a bayonet. He held my hand and asked, “Are you
worrying?”

“Not now!” I was just thankful to see him alive.

At the time we were married my husband had been Paymaster, “Lit-
tle Pay,” on the USS Pennsylvania, Admiral Kimmel’s flagship in the
Pacific; but the Matson Line ship which had brought me to the islands
had brought his orders to the Yard. So he was not on a ship, and he
said that his life may have been saved by the fact that he was married and, therefore, was at home when the attack occurred.

As a supply officer, he had been guarding equipment. He said the most useful thing he had been able to do was to locate and identify important life-saving equipment and rush it out to the ships. He had known where it was because he had just finished inventorying some of the warehouses. He said I should just continue to go about my business, and that our planes would be bringing military reinforcements from the West Coast. Then he returned to his duties and I went back to my typewriter. We could not expect to see much of each other, but what a relief to know he would be in the next building for the time being!

I turned to Frieda who had been typing next to me all morning and told her how relieved I felt. She said she understood; that someone she cared for very much was at the Hickam army base next to the navy yard, and she had not heard from him. I thought, That dear, sweet girl! She has been bravely doing her work as though nothing has happened!

We had not known when we went to work that morning that Hickam Field, which was a short distance outside the main gate to Pearl Harbor, had been very heavily damaged; that the PX, where we had just bought our Christmas gifts for our families and sent home, had been flattened and many men had been killed running to their planes. The planes themselves were destroyed. Ted later said that a fifteen-minute warning could have changed the entire situation. Judging by what those five planes had been able to do, I believe he was right. I have read since that the Japanese squadron leaders had had the utmost respect for the skill and courage of our men.

The first damage we had seen on our way to work was the sight of many wrecked vehicles along the ten-mile strip from Honolulu to Pearl Harbor. As we rode along this highway, we saw cars strafed and bullet-holed. Many large pieces of equipment—dump trucks, earth movers, tractors, jeeps and weapon carriers—had been smashed in the blackout.

The following day, since there was no mail to answer, our boss came to each one of us young women individually to ask if we would volunteer to help the overworked nurses at the naval hospital. We readily agreed and with cheerful smiles on our faces and red hibiscus blos-
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soms in our hair, we climbed aboard the bus that drove us to the naval hospital.

Corpses in the yard had been covered with sheets and the remaining victims put to bed, so we were spared the full horror. But what we saw was enough to shock and sadden our young hearts.

We were assigned to various wards. Mine had many patients from the Oklahoma which had been overturned in the harbor and sunk. Most of the men were seriously burned. They had been treated with sulfa and tannic acid which had blackened their skins. A tired-looking nurse showed me where to find glasses, a pitcher for water, and glass tubes. She explained that the patients, except those whose charts showed chest wounds, must be given water every fifteen minutes.

Carefully carrying the tray, I began my rounds. I came to a man with a swollen, blackened face. He appeared to be dead so I went on to the next one. Shortly, sailors came in and removed the corpse. When I placed the glass tube in the next patient's mouth, blackened skin peeled from his lips and clung to the glass tube. After a few swallows, he turned away his head. Becoming more aware of the sickening odor of burned flesh, I felt a wave of nausea. This man was one of dozens like him in the ward. Some were dying, some dead. This scene of horror was repeated throughout seeming endless wards. The men mostly seemed to be in a daze or coma.

As I worked I came to realize that regardless of what books or stories one has read or what movies one has seen, none gives the real horror of war itself. I wished I weren't going to have this baby! Like many another parent, I thought what a terrible world to bring a child into! At least I wished it would not be a boy who might have to go to war. But then my parents had not expected to have their daughter where they could not know how she was. Indeed, although I could not know it at the time, because of censorship of all media, my father was to die at the end of December without knowing whether we were all right; and I did not know of his passing until January 10 when we finally received air mail via surface vessel. I thought of the parents and wives who would have given anything to be where I was with their loved ones—or at least to have a word about them! I was so grateful that my husband was not one of these patients. I felt nothing I could do for these men was too hard.

Toward noon a chief corpsman came up to me and said, "There is
no way for me to let my wife know that I am all right. I know she is so worried!"

I looked into his anxious face. "After work when I get back to town I shall be glad to get in touch with her for you." He looked grateful.

I was so busy the rest of the morning, especially at lunch time when many of the men—those who could eat—had to be fed by hand, that I entirely forgot about him. So I felt confused when an attractive man stood in front of me saying, "Here is a letter for my wife." Slowly I recognized the chief as he handed me the letter along with their address and two hundred dollar bills for her. During his break he had had time to change his blood-stained clothes for fresh navy whites and to rest a little. He looked like a different man.

To express his gratitude for the favor I had promised to do for him, he helped me get some lunch and took me out in the yard where we ate. Then he showed me the first plane that was downed by us in World War II. It had missed the corner of the navy hospital by just a few feet. One of the two Japanese crew men had stayed in the plane and died when it struck a high tension wire. The other had jumped out just before the plane crashed; and as he lay dying on the ground, some of our marines took his watch and emptied his pockets for souvenirs. I could not have done this to an enemy, especially one dying thousand of miles from his home and loved ones.

Later the chaplain from the USS Pennsylvania, visiting the patients from his ship, came over to me and asked if I would deliver some messages from their husbands to anxious wives. I was more than willing to accept the letters and several hundred-dollar bills for them. After work I got into our trusty old car which I had rescued by that time and hurried to town to deliver the entrusted messages before blackout.

First I went to the home of the chief who lived in Kaimuki, a section of Honolulu. To get there I had to detour around a large crater in the road made by a Japanese bomb during the attack. Another bomb had struck a city school, but fortunately no one had been there as the attack was on Sunday.

After I had delivered the chief's messages, I went to the other navy families in the main part of town. Many of them had been evacuated at the time of the bombing as a safety precaution when some of their navy houses near the Yard had been strafed. Some of the wives had
moved together into city apartments for mutual comfort and protection.

Well-groomed women with bravely smiling faces opened doors to receive me. It would seem a pleasant task to be able to say to a wife, Your husband is all right. But there were always others standing near, some with young children, who would ask eagerly, What about mine? Do you have any news of him? I would have to reply, No, I'm sorry, I've no way of knowing.

Despite their anxiety, they were all gently courteous, their worry showing only in their eyes. I was proud of those navy wives and proud to be one. Their courage and morale matched those of their husbands.

Although I hurried to finish my errands before blackout, it was almost dark when I reached my apartment. I had to eat very quickly as I could not turn on any lights. Soon we would black out our windows as well as the lights on all motor vehicles. In the meantime there were not a few crashes by those who had to drive at night. Later, drivers were permitted to paint the top part of the automobile lenses black and the bottom part red. Soon red was changed to blue because blue was considered less conspicuous.

Aside from what I saw at the naval hospital, I did not witness the real damage at Pearl Harbor for a week or two. Then I had occasion to go to Ford Island which is in the midst of the harbor and where the ships were based. Despite all I had been hearing, I was shocked at what I saw. I felt as though I were looking at a scene of children's toy ships and planes where a ruthless giant had wantonly taken a hammer, smashing everything in sight. Of course I did not see the worst when people were being pulled from the harbor out of the burning oil. Ted told me of meeting an acquaintance of his a month after the attack. He had completely recovered and said that his worst enemy on earth had pulled him from the burning harbor. I felt overwhelmed by what I did see. I was shocked. I wondered, How can man do this to himself? Doesn't he have enough natural enemies? When will man become civilized enough to sit down and work out his differences in a mature manner? In the meantime we have the comfort of knowing there always will be those men and women of good will who will do their utmost to alleviate the suffering in this world.
Just as my husband had expected, the men could not come home. They slept in their offices on mattresses. It was not until Christmas eve that my husband was able to come home for a brief visit, and that was only because I worked in the administration building and due to the kindness of my supervisor and the girl working next to me who urged me to go. My husband had come around from his building next door with the car and asked me to leave early. Being conscientious about work time, I said I couldn’t; but the two women insisted that I go right away! They would put my typewriter away for me. So I went downstairs to the street just outside the building where my husband picked me up. We went through the main gate just in the nick of time. My friends knew but they hadn’t told me that they had just received a communication from Washington canceling all leaves for military personnel because of the fear of another possible attack.

We were one of the few lucky ones who could get home for the night. That very morning I had been working in the office of the aviation aide to the commandant. My job was to go over the list of people to be evacuated by air. Military personnel with orders were first. The next people to be sent out were the new widows. After that, navy families for hardship purposes. A very attractive young woman—we were all young then—came in and said to my boss, Lt. Bryant, the aviation aide, “Sir, I would like to go by plane at once.”

He said, “Everyone wants to go right away. We are just rushed with people.” He sounded rather abrupt, overworked, worried and tired. At this point though he asked, “Where is your husband?”

“Wake Island, sir.”

Then he looked at her more critically.

“Are you pregnant?”

“Yes, sir.”

His manner changed instantly.

“Where would you want to go? Los Angeles?”

“I wish to go right home to my family in Galveston, Texas.”

At this point all his brusqueness vanished. He got right up and went downstairs with her to take her through the various steps to help her leave immediately. His manner had just softened completely. He seemed like a different person, and after he returned to the office, he said, “These are the people we must help. She will never see her husband again.” Unknown to us he had received dispatches saying that
the ammunition dump on Wake Island had been fired, meaning they were about to surrender. On our way home through Honolulu we saw newspapers at stands with screaming headlines, WAKE ISLAND FALLS.

My husband had to go back to work the next morning. My boss had asked me if I would work on Christmas, but I felt badly in need of rest. As I would need the car for work next day, I drove Ted to work. As we passed the O'ahu prison which was between Honolulu and Pearl Harbor, we saw quite a few Hawaiian women wearing white dresses, not normally worn in what really was "winter." They were wearing leis and carrying Christmas presents and fruit for their husbands. This was a prison farm, actually. The men worked in the sugar cane or pineapple fields during the day, returning to the prison at night. The crime rate was low. Hawai'i had been mainly peaceful and safe. After leaving Ted at work, I returned to our apartment.

I had written to my friends earlier in the year saying that I was going to swim on Christmas day. Rather foolishly I went ahead with this. Getting under the barbed wire fence which guarded the beach from possible invasion was difficult, and when I got into the water it was unpleasantly cold. No wonder the place was almost deserted. So much for my December swim. I quickly returned home, and though it was noon I went to bed. A few other navy men had gotten home from their ships; and as I lay there, I could hear families talking in the apartment over my head. They were discussing the war and their own ships and I never forgot one person saying, "To think that one man has been able to cause all this misery in the world." Of course he meant Adolf Hitler who we considered to be the archenemy.

The battle of the Atlantic was going badly at that point. Now we were at war on two fronts. At the navy yard posters had been put up before the attack showing burning ships with the slogan, CARELESS TALK CAN SINK HER. Now CAN had been changed to DID.

We were told to be prepared for further emergencies. We were to have a suitcase packed with flashlights and matches, raincoats and rain gear and a four-day supply of food. One very cute little sailor's wife named Melba who worked in the office was kind of chubby. When she read that directive, she opened her eyes very wide and exclaimed, "Why I could never carry a four-day's supply of food!" She was including her chubby little baby too. Fortunately we did not need these sup-
plies, which were to be used in case of invasion when we were to be evacuated to the nearby mountains. Nor did we ever have to use our gas masks although we were required to carry them every where we went.

While I was still working at Pearl Harbor, it was my duty and privilege to make copies of the report about Commander Houstin’s extremely difficult and extremely well done work in providing for identification and respectful burial of the dead. It was a comfort to learn that ninety percent of the patients in the naval hospital had been saved, many completely recovered.

We never were bombed again after the morning of December 7th. However, we were prepared for enemy attack until after the Battle of Midway which took place in June 6, 1942.

Just before this battle we learned from radar that the Japanese fleet was in the general area. By this time my husband and I were on Kaua‘i, the Garden Island, where he had been sent to set up the inshore patrol base at Nawiliwili Harbor. There an alert went on day and night during a nerve-racking time. The beaches were patrolled by soldiers standing fifty feet apart up and down the beaches. I recall one night when a gun went off suddenly and everyone jumped up and someone shouted, “Who shot off that gun?” There was a good deal of excitement about it, but usually there was just an air of tension. During their off-duty time, the sentries enjoyed sitting on the porch of the house next door flirting with the young, graceful hula girls who lived there.

One day my husband came home and told me to go out quickly and look at the harbor. I hurried out. At first I thought airplanes must have somehow landed on the water at great speed and were rushing around violently stirring all the water in the harbor into a white froth. Actually there were six PT boats, which were new to us. They were said to go seventy miles an hour because of their wonderful Packard motors. Later we learned that these same boats had dashed out to Midway to fight in what was to be a decisive battle.

Midway was a turning point in the war in the Pacific. From that time the Japanese fleet never was able to come so close, and we never again felt so threatened. We always were alert for small invasions, but there was a sense of relief from that point.

We thought our child would be a Kaua‘i baby. I was there for three
months to the day from March 28 to June 28, 1942. When Ted got orders to return to Pearl Harbor, he quickly had me take a plane back to Honolulu where I stayed with friends until he had finished wrapping up his work at the Kaua'i base and was able to join me before our son was born.

I was not evacuated from the islands like most dependents, probably at first because of my job. I wished to stay with my husband; but like the others, I did not have a choice. At first my job kept my departure from being a high priority. When I was on Kaua'i, my husband, when he went back to Pearl Harbor for supplies, met one of his officer friends who was a local politician in peacetime. He said, “I know you were sorry not to be here when your wife was sent back to the mainland, but don’t worry we all went down to see her off for you.” When he came back to Kaua'i and told me, we really had a good laugh. He had overdone his skills as a politician!

By the time my baby son arrived later in the summer, the point had been reached where civilians were being allowed to return if they had useful employment waiting for them or could claim that the islands were their home. The obstacle was that they could not return just because they were service wives. The visiting nurse, who was sent by the navy to show me what to do with a brand new baby after I got home from the hospital, told me that some wives actually divorced their husbands so they could return as single women for jobs. They suddenly had husbands when they arrived on the pier.

The baby had been a sensation in Kapi'olani Hospital because of the scarcity of blond babies and the fact that his father was a young service man with a war ahead of him. This made the child especially appealing. The nurses made a big fuss over him and we were proud parents. Indeed, we were filled with joy that this baby had come to bless our lives.

A few months later my son and I went with Ted to Maui where he was sent as a supply officer to set up a second naval air station on the island. He was a hard worker, feeling that even the lame and the lazy should be working full time against the forces of evil that were unleashed in the world. Orders were for one of these stations to be set up on each island, and we were glad to hear that his was the first to be ready to send planes to the South Pacific. Maui was our favorite of the islands, as it is with many. The Hawaiians say of it, *Maui no ka ʻoi.*
We were not surprised that Lindbergh would have loved it so dearly. We stayed on this island for exactly two years from February 1943 to February 1945.

Then we were back to Honolulu where my husband was at Pearl Harbor again. Much had happened. Pearl Harbor had the largest floating dry dock in the world, and ships were repaired day and night seven days a week throughout World War II. They had been able to get a remarkable number of bombed ships back in commission to continue the war.

In the initial enemy attack so many ships had been damaged in the harbor because they had been gathered for military games. Spies had been able to report this through the Japanese embassy permitting the Japanese to make preparations which we believe were of long duration. My landlady on Maui told me that forty years before the war, her laundress had said to her, “Now I work for you. By and by you work for me.” She said she had never forgotten that remark. The details of the attack seem to have been the result of long and meticulous planning.

A few months later when we were back in Honolulu, I was standing in front of our dining room buffet when I heard the radio announcement that an atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima. I turned to our dear little Filipino maid and said, “Irene, the war will soon be over.” In a few days, when the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, it was immediately followed by the Japanese surrender.

At that time we felt that had the war continued, the holocaust when we tried to invade Japan would have been disastrous judging by the atrocious fighting in Okinawa with the Kamikazes. During that battle at Okinawa our landlady’s nineteen-year old son had had three ships sunk under him, the second one being a hospital ship where he had been transferred after being wounded. Also my brother-in-law, a marine, was on a ship on his way to Tokyo when peace was declared. The ship had turned around and come home.

Right after the war was over, Ted went to the Philippines on the Boxer, one of our largest aircraft carriers, in time to help celebrate their independence day. Ted said the ceremonies there were not as impressive as the one the Filipino workers had had on Maui to celebrate MacArthur’s return to the Philippines to help win their libera-
tion. They had expressed their appreciation with a beautifully colorful and jubilant God-Bless MacArthur Day.

Ted also went to Tsing Tao, China, and to Guam and eventually back to Hawai‘i in time to get us packed. His ship departed for the states; and we left shortly thereafter on one of the army transports, the *Thomas Jefferson*.

I had come to Hawaii on the *Mariposa*, a beautiful ship of the Matson Line, which was sunk off Australia during the war. As my two children and I sailed back to the mainland, we threw our flower leis into the water because we were told that if your leis float back to shore, you will some day return. Of course we wished one day to return to these beautiful islands.