

Into the Gale

Soon after the ships of Admiral Doyle's amphibious armada put to sea from the ports of Kobe and Yokohama, Japan, they faced age-old enemies, howling winds and raging waters. Navy weather planes and aerologists had warned Doyle days earlier that Typhoon Kezia was headed his way, which caused him to speed up the fleet's loading and departure process. Hard work on the docks and on board the ships allowed the task force to sortie by 11 September, one day ahead of schedule. Doyle's flagship, *Mount McKinley* (AGC 7, already being pounded by the rising swell, was the last vessel to leave Kobe. Still, on the 12th, Kezia battered the fleet with 90-knot winds and massive waves. Doyle later described it as the worst storm he ever experienced.

The tempest sorely tested the ships and sailors of the flotilla. After losing her port engine, *LST 1048* had to fight to maintain steerage-way. The salvage ship *Conserver* (ARS 39) came alongside the struggling landing ship and floated down a hawser. Working on a wet, pitching deck, the *LST's* sea and anchor detail chocked the line into place and soon had secured a towing cable passed by *Conserver*. While only making six knots, the two ships proceeded together and reached Inchon on time for the fight.

On 12 September, Captain Norman Sears's Advance Attack Group and three attack



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The ships of Task Force 90 faced perilous seas, such as those depicted in Herbert Hahn's "Heavy Weather," as they fought to make way during Typhoon Kezia.

transports stood out of Pusan with the 5th Marines embarked. After a second Naktong Bulge battle, the regiment barely had time to refit and integrate reinforcements from the United States. Before leaving Pusan, Marine

leaders selected Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Taplett's 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, to make the initial assault on Wolmi Do.

Meanwhile, Doyle's *Mount McKinley* steered for Sasebo, Japan. There, MacArthur

Fast transport *Wantuck* (APD 125) and dock landing ship *Comstock* (LSD 19), loaded with Marines and their equipment, shape a course for Inchon.

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