

John Connor Returning From Okinawa Fighting

June 27, 1945

Now In Texas To See Son For First Time

Gunners Mate 1/c John Connor (above) is expected to arrive in Newton some time next week for a visit with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. V. O. Connor. He will come to Newton from Houston, Texas, where he is now spending a few days with his wife and son and they will accompany him to Newton where he will spend his leave from the Navy after having had his boat shot out from under him in the Pacific war.

John arrived in San Francisco last Friday after having been reported wounded in action off the shores of Okinawa. His arrival and subsequent telephone calls to his wife and parents served to alleviate the great anxiety his relatives had held for his safety since the fate of the destroyer on which he was serving had been told in news dispatches from the fleet headquarters.

His ship, the Destroyer Longshaw was grounded on a coral reef some 500 yards off the shores of Okinawa where it had been assisting in shelling Japanese positions. A tug had just pulled alongside and was attempting to pull the vessel off the reef when Jap shore batteries cut loose with murderous fire. The first hit blasted the bridge from the Longshaw and subsequent shells soon had the destroyer in a sinking condition.

When the order was given to abandon the ship that had recently filled its magazines with ammunition and stores of gasoline and oil, Connor and the others of the crew that had not been killed or disabled during the heavy shelling, jumped into the water. John, an expert swimmer, was only a short distance away when the Longshaw blew up, bringing such a shower of debris and parts of the boat

Survivor of Longshaw Returns



about him that it was necessary for him to stay beneath the water as much as possible to keep from being struck. He was in the water about 20 minutes before being picked up by another U. S. Naval craft and taken to safety. It is believed that half to two-thirds of the crew of the Longshaw was lost.

His parents received word two weeks ago that he had been wounded in action on May 18. They had received no further word from him until they learned of his safe arrival in San Francisco.

His arrival in Houston will give John the first opportunity he has had of making the acquaintance of his son who was born while he was serving long months in the Pacific.