

Bon Voyage

Robert Casey

THE long, silent file of men slowly walked up the steep gangplank into the yawning side of the ship. Each man was carrying a heavily packed duffel bag, a lighter but still cumbersome field pack, and a rifle that was constantly slipping off his shoulder and getting entangled in the straps of the field pack. It was not yet dawn, and only the sergeant's gruff voice broke the early morning silence as he monotonously called the line number and last name of each man as he passed into the side of the transport. The sergeant called, "Number one-eight-six, Powell," and received in reply the required first name and middle initial of the man. As the men entered, the sergeant's assistant handed each one a mess card and a tag with a ship's compartment number printed on it. After receiving their cards, the men walked down a dimly lit corridor until they came to the steel stairs that led down to the lower compartments of the ship. The silence was broken now by the scraping and stamping of combat boots on the steel stairs.

Each compartment consisted of tiers of steel bunks three and four high. The bunks were bolted to long iron pipes at each end, and the opposite sides of the bunks were suspended by chains that held them upright. On each bunk was an unbelievably thin mattress in a plastic cover and a small, lumpy pillow also in a plastic cover. The wall of the compartment was lined with strong hooks on which the men hung their duffel bags. After stowing their gear, they again formed a single file and tramped up the stairs to get their blankets and bedding. After the bunks were made up in the approved army fashion, there was time to stroll on deck before breakfast.

It was daylight now, and the decks were crowded with men who stared down at the almost empty docks. There was little talking or joking among the men; most of them were serious and thoughtful. After thirty minutes had elapsed, the loudspeaker blaringly an-

nounced that breakfast was being served. The inevitable line was formed as the men started for the mess hall. The gloomy silence that had predominated was dispelled somewhat during the meal, but no one was completely relaxed. It took a long time for fifteen hundred men to pass through the slow-moving line, eat, and then return to the deck.

The hot mid-morning sun made the scratchy, woolen uniforms even more uncomfortable. Again the men lined the ship's railing and stared at the docks. No one heard the engines start, and the movement of the ship was almost imperceptible. The men who finally noticed the widening gap of water between the ship and the dock touched their companions on the shoulder and pointed toward the shore. Conversation hummed then died out as the ship gained speed and the distance from shore increased. The long journey had begun. In spite of the crowded decks, each man seemed to be completely alone with his thoughts; and each man's thoughts were strangely similar. "When will we return? How many of us will get back? What will it be like where we are going?"

Socrates, the Martyr

Phillip Nicholas

READING about Luther's throwing the inkpot at Satan, one automatically associates the action with the dynamic spirit of this civilization. To be aware of such associations is natural and not unjustified in fact. Often, however, the accepted or traditional attitude toward an act prevents the natural intellectual relating of it to the spirit of an era or to a common attitude, although it should be recognized that the significance of any occurrence is related to the era in which it appears. A limiting attitude about the death of Socrates has served to isolate the event entirely from the period to which it belongs and, in fact, has separated the tragedy from the reality of any era.

The sacrifice of Socrates was born of the spirit of the Orphic mysteries; there is as much of the spirit of purification, "catharization," as there is of unwarranted suffering in the legend which grew around his execution. The blind zeal of the Athenian crowd was not unlike that of the Thracian women who in their orgiastic rage slaughtered the unhappy Orpheus only to mourn his demise immediately thereafter. In this sense Socrates was a sacrifice to the multitude, which was soon to grieve his death and soon to regard him as one of the chief ornaments of Athenian greatness. Socrates was quite aware of this fickle, demanding element in the people when he spoke to Crito of the multitude "who would be as ready to restore people to life, if they were able, as they are to put them to death."