

SHARON SITES ADAMS, a red-haired California housewife, sailed into San Diego harbour at the weekend on board Sea Sharp II. She had completed the longest solo voyage ever attempted by a woman and at 39 became the first woman to sail alone across the Pacific. Here she tells her story.

Housewife Who Sailed Pacific Says: I Talked To The Moon

SAN DIEGO.

I TALKED. I talked to the boat, to the gooney birds, to the Moon and all the time to my tape recorder — it became my friend. I said hello to a lovely star every night, Mrs. Sharon Adams told Sapa-Associated Press.

I screamed. But I didn't have hallucinations. I haven't yet read the story of a man's lone voyage that hasn't told about hallucinations.

I think it adds a great deal to the story. On my first solo trip — to Hawaii, four years ago — I came pretty close. That boat had such a small cabin and I didn't have any books or tape recorder or sewing — anything to occupy my mind.

So this trip was a great deal different — twice as long, but not half as hard mentally. And Sea Sharp II is a travelling small apartment with all the comforts.

Buckets to take a bath in, a butane stove with three burners and an oven.

OPERATION

How does it feel with only thousands of miles of ocean around you? The visibility on a clear day is maybe 15 miles and on a foggy day just to the bow of the boat. Your world is still only what you can see.

You can't let loneliness get hold and defeat you.

This is a mental thing, something that you have to be — well, I suppose in my case, stubborn.

SCREAM

I went through seven gales.

Being becalmed is almost as bad as having too much wind.

It really gets you. You just get so sick and tired of listening to those sails slapping and no wind. I suppose it's like a torture chamber with those continuous same noises. I'd go out there and scream until I was hoarse and had a sore throat.

I have a lot of fear when I start out. To me, fear is the un-

known, not knowing what you have to face out there. But once you face up to several crises and surmount them, things get on a more even keel.

The most frightening moment was the gale of June 7. I took a knockdown in that — the boat lay over on its side, but came back up by herself. I did a great deal of praying out there but happened to be quite padded with foam rubber cushions, and I was down on the cabin floor.

Deep depression for no reason will flash over you at times, even when things are going great. You just take hold and try to change what you're doing and thinking.

My 39th birthday was on May 29. I made a chocolate cake and had three candles on it. My husband had sent me three little gift-wrapped packages and told me to open them whenever I needed to. So I opened the first one on my birthday.

The first gift happened to be a ring that matches the little bell I wear around my neck, that my husband gave me the night before I left on my trip to Hawaii. The clapper is a diamond.

I'm not wearing the ring — my hands are too calloused and torn to get one on.

Only once a day did I have the luxury of washing my hands in fresh water. I washed my hair in seawater.

People ask what my motivation was in doing this, what I expect to get out of it. I think I've already had it. I've proved that I could do it and I'm a very proud woman.

What's next? There's still the Atlantic. I have no plans, and it takes quite a bit of preparation.