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The Callaghan D.D. 792

## My Story

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I don't know just how to start a story about a Ship I was on during World War Two, So I'll start where I believe it first began.

I was fifteen and still in High School. The year was 1941 and the month was December. It was Sunday, a warm sunny Florida day, and the wind was about six miles per hour, and the Bay was calm. It was a perfect day to sail. Clyde Smith picked me up on his motorcycle, A Harley Davidson. He, was a Deputy Sheriff and Messenger for Associated Press. He always rode his Harley, and I was always glued to the back of it. You didn't see many foreign motorcycles those days. We went sailing on Biscayne Bay. Clyde was teaching me how to sail his sailboat "The Nosey." The Nosey was a twenty-four foot sailboat without a motor. This means, wherever you went you had to sail. I think this is where I learn to love the sea so much, as I really enjoyed it.

We had just anchored The Nosey at the mooring, and boarded the skiff. We rowed back to the Shore, and was about to get on Clyde's motorcycle, when a man ran up to us and told us, "Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor." At this time, it didn't mean much to me, as I didn't even know where Pearl Harbor was. I was still in High School, and as the months went by, the word Pearl Harbor, started meaning more and more.

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I spent a lot of time on the river. Clyde, introduced me to some friends of his, living on the Miami river. They were man and wife. Their home was a two mast sailing ship, about 70 feet in length. This ship had every thing, from a galley to a head with showers. It would carry it's own fresh water. You could take one look at this couple and tell they were from the sea. Each of them was brown and their hair was bleach, from being out in the sun. I will always remember, they also had a white pit bull, very friendly, and a good pet. The husband had a Nassau Dingy. A Nassau Dingy, is a round bottom sail boat, hard to sail, as it didn't take

much to turn one over. I was taught to sail one of these, by people who were experience. I don't remember the names of this couple, but they gave me experience in sailing I have never forgotten. I have sailed, up and down the Miami River many times. I could see manatees coming towards me as I sailed. The manatees would break the surface of the water, just like a whale. A blow of water can be seen, and when you are in a sailboat, you avoid the Manatee. Not because they would attack you but because, A sailboat doesn't make any noise. If a manatee should try to surface for air, coming up under your boat, it would become frighten, the manatee and could wreck your boat, trying to get away. You could be seriously hurt. The best way to keep this from happening, was to avoid them.

I had a paper Route for the Miami Herald, We delivered the a.m. paper. The deliveries were made between 3:A.M. and 5:A.M.

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During this time, there was no fear about being out at this time, not like today. Everything was blacked out, because of the Submarines off the Florida Coast. We were having black crude oil, washed up on our beaches, because ships being sunk by German Submarines. This was how close the war was to us.

No one was allowed to go to the beaches at night, because of German Agents. No lights were on, in the city, as the enemy could use the lights of Miami as a marker to get their bearings. Several times, while in school, there would be a tremendous explosion, It was another one of our ships hit by a German Submarine. We could see the smoke rising, and we were a good twenty miles from the ocean. The smoke would raise several thousand feet into the sky.

All the cars, trucks, and motorcycle had their lights painted with black paint, with just a slit, one inch by 5 inches left unpainted. You were told do not go out after dark, only in an emergency. Believe me, it was bad enough to go out at night, you would take you life in your hands, or God's hands for sure.

I continued in school. Everyone was getting into the war effort. We

would have war bond drives, metal, and rubber drives. Tires were virtually impossible to get. The rubber would be recycled. Because of the war, tires today, are not made as they use to be. I took over sized tires, cut the bead out, and force the larger tire over my tires. You couldn't go very fast, but you could go.

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I did not do well in two of my subjects at school, In fact, I flunked them. This put me in a precarious position of falling behind my class a half semester. Knowing I would be eighteen in May of 1944, and would have to register for the draft, I went to Summer school. I took enough subjects to graduate a half semester before my class. I graduated in February, and joined the Navy in March. Lewis Mathews, my good Friend, quit school and joined with me. He was able to finish school in the service, at a later date.

At this time, I must tell you about some of my friends, I met while in school. I had no brothers or sisters, some of my friends became very close, and were like my brothers and sisters. Ira Smith was the first, I met in elementary school. We were in the second grade. We were at recess playing softball when he was hit in the head with a baseball bat. Some class mate had hit the ball and threw the bat accidentally and hit Ira. I took him to the Nurse. We became friends to this date. We grew up together, we went on double dates together, we went skating, and went to dances. We played poker and did all those thing kids do today. This was why, I worried so much about my son, when he was growing up. I remembered what I did at that age. Ira's mother and father was a second family to me. Ira and I went to our Junior Prom. I had a blind date. Her name was Betty Burnett. We rented a Pontiac, convertible, and boy! were we hot stuff? We stayed up all night, took the girls home and delivered my papers in the convertible. At this time Lewis Mathews, became one of my closes and dearest friends. Lewis was in some of my classes. He started going with Doris Ward. Lewis confined in me, he wasn't doing well with Doris. He asked my advice. We

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had gone skating together and I had told Lewis, When we took Doris

home for him to act as if he went to sleep. He did, and from that evening on, Doris and I Dated. Lewis started going with Betty Burnett, My blind date for the Junior Prom. Lewis ended up marrying Betty after the war. I had many friends but these were the closes.

Since I had taken summer school, I graduated in February of 1944. Lewis and Ira did not graduate the same time. Lewis and I joined the Navy the same time, and Ira joined several months later. We joined the Navy in March 1944. All of us worked together at a Milk and Ice cream Company. My Dad had worked here for years, and I had taken Refrigeration and Air Conditioning in school. I went to school, half a day and worked on the job the rest of the time. We received vocational credit for this. I was able to get Ira and Lewis jobs at the same location. The war was on, and all employers were in need of people to work. There was a shortage of men and women to fill job vacancy. My Dad was just over the age limit and was in a position needed to service the arm forces. He was exempt from joining the arm forces.

Lewis and I was sworn in the same day, and were given a few days to get our personal affairs in order. We were sent to Bainbridge, Maryland for our Boot camp training. We went through six weeks of hell. It was raining, and cold in Maryland. There was some snow. Lewis and I had thin Blood, and we were susceptible to every thing. We both got sick. Lewis went to the sick bay and I didn't. He was sent to the Hospital and removed from Boot camp. He had to take the training over again. I stuck it out and eventually got better. This is where Lewis and I separated. I did not see Lewis again, until after he finished his Boot Camp training.

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### What I was Trained For

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During Boot Camp, you are given a number of test to determine what type of job you could do in the Navy. I had found out, There was a school in Key West, Fla. It was a Fleet Sonar School. I took the test for Sonar, and passed. After finishing Boot Camp Training, I went home on a short leave. When I returned to Bainbridge, I was sent to Fleet Sonar School In Key West Fla.

We trained on real ships and searched for real Submarines. We would fire Hedge Hogs. These Hedge Hogs were mounted on the Bow of

the ships. The hedge Hogs were dummy loads and would not explode at contacted. We were searching one day and made contact with a Submarine other than one belonging to the U.S. We had made contact with a German Submarine. We had our Submarine surface and we left the area. We had called in several Destroyer Escorts. They searched several days but never did make contact again.

The Russians had a group being trained at the same time. We became friends with a few of them. The Russians liked our Beer as much as we did. They could really hold their Liquor. We would close up the Beer Garden on Base several times. They taught us a song, "So drink, chug-a-lug, chug-a-lug, so drink, chug-a-lug, chug-a-lug," until you finished a whole glass. There was many a night we had to carry someone out.

I graduated from Fleet Sonar School. The U.S. was giving the Russians a number of Subchaser, small ships about 80 feet long, with sonar capabilities. They would run these little ships into the docks, and hit other ships, as they come into port faster than allowed.

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I was able to see Lewis several times, and went home to see my Parents. Lewis had taken a test for Yeoman and passed. He was assigned to the lighter than air craft, (Blimps), Searching for Submarines off the coast. After school, I reported to Miami Florida. We were billeted in the Everglades Hotel. As soon as I arrived in Miami, I started Looking for a place to work on the Staff in some Department. I went every where and asked everyone, but I couldn't find a position. I arrived back at the Everglades and I was told the Chief Master at Arms had been looking for me all Day and had been calling me on the P.A. system. I went down to his office and reported to him. He asked me How would I like to get on the staff at Pier Two. I said show me the way.

I reported to pier two and was put on as a Messenger. I would take phone calls for ships at the different piers. I stood watches, four on Eight off, and every third day, I would get a day off. I lived at home and the Navy gave me \$18.00 more per month, for living at home. There was a curfew of 1:00 A.M. I was issued a curfew pass as some of my watches were 12 to 4 or 4 to 8 A.M. I must say this was great duty. I could have possibly stayed here until the end of the war, but I didn't. After a few months, I wanted to increase my rate. I was told, an advance Sonar school was starting in Miami, and when I completed this school I would

have my increase in rank.

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3                                   **Heading To the War.**

I was in this school two weeks when a call came from the Pacific. Sonar men were needed now. One Hundred and forty-nine Sonar men, were shipped on a troop train from Miami to Shoemaker California. This was the roughest train trip I have ever taken. This troop train, had nothing but troops heading to California. The brakes would lock up on the train, and it would pull forward, then backward, stopping, and yanking you around. They did this to try to unlock the brakes. The stopping, and backing would throw you right out of your bunk. I was glad to get to California. We arrived in San Francisco, and was bused to shoemaker. The first thing, we were assign a barracks and a bunk. After the trip across the United States by rail, this stationary bunk, was something we were all looking for. It was just beginning winter and for some reason, this was a bad winter. It started raining and I think it rained the whole time we were at Shoemaker. There were details assigned to pushing vehicles out of the mud. The more it rained the more undesirable California became. It just seemed to me when we left the East coast We were heading for hell, and the more we saw of California, the more we believed it to be true.

We were not at Shoemaker but about a week. We went though our overseas Physical, before our trip to Treasure Island. If your body temperature of 98.6 degrees you were passed. At this point we were given a series of shots. It seems everyone wasn't happy about this. We did go to a concert put on by Tommy Dorsey. This really impressed me as I had only seen Tommy Dorsey in the movies and had heard him on the radio.

Within a few days we were bused to Treasure Island to embark

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on a troop ship. There were thousand or more people on board and we were packed in like sardines. Every available space was filled with a live body.

There were lines for the head, I know how women must feel when they

stand in line to go to the bathroom. Very few showers were taken as we had to conserve water. We had two meals a day while going across. We arrived at Pearl Harbor you could still see some of the damage from the Jap attack. We disembarked at Pearl Harbor. While there we were being assigned to ships in the Pacific. I wanted to go to Pearl Harbor. Even though we were restricted, several of us went to town, with no pass. We saw the city and made sure we avoided the Shore Patrol. We made the trip without getting caught.

The whole experience up to this point has been quite frightening. Here we are just 18 years old, there were no old men. When we were told to do something, we did it for the simple reason we have never been here before.

We only hoped the person telling us what to do, had been here before. There was talk about the percentages of coming home. At the time the rate of men being killed outright was 33%. This meant that 33 of us out of 100 would not see our home or love ones again. I believe at this point is were I felt, I could be part of the 33%. You didn't want to think about it but it was always there.

We only stayed in Pearl Harbor for about a week, and then we boarded another troop ship, for the war zone. As we moved towards the unknown, it seemed the men were getting quieter. I did run into one of my school mates. I didn't know him that well but, this made me feel a little better, and how small this old world is. We were growing up fast and you were seeing and doing things, you would not forget.

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There were a lot of the men getting sick because of the rolling and pitching of the ship, but I didn't. I guess it was because I had been around the water. One other thing, when we crossed the International Date Line, we had two Thanksgiving dinners. We went through Thursday once, and then the next day was Thursday again. After several weeks at sea, we finally arrive at the beautiful Island of Ulithi.

## Meeting A Great Lady

Our names were being called all night, about 2 A.M., I was called to board a motor launch at a specific location. I made it to the launch and was taken to my ship. Up to this time I had no idea what ship I was going to. I was put aboard the U.S.S. Callaghan, D.D. 792. She was a fighting lady.

I must first tell you about the U.S.S. Callaghan. The U.S.S stands for United States Ship. The Name came from Rear Admiral Daniel Judson Callaghan, killed in action in a Naval battle at Guadalcanal, November 13th. 1942.

The U.S.S. Callaghan D.D. 792 was 376 feet and 6 inches in length. Weight displacement was 2050 Tons, We called them 2100 ton Fletcher Class. Our armament was five 5 inch 38'turrets. These guns would fire at targets 6 miles away. We had four twin 40 M.M. Two forward of the Bridge, one on the port side, mount 41, (my station) and one on the starboard side, mount 42. Two, just forward of mount four five inch, they were called mount 43 and mount 44. We had ten 21 inch Torpedo tubes. There were numerous 20 m.m. on both sides of the ship including the Fan Tail. We had a complement of 320 men, to make her go. And go she did. I have seen her up to 38 knots or just about 42 miles an hour over water. We could have pulled the entire crew on water skis. That is really moving 2100 tons.

The Destroyer was built by Bethlehem Steel Company, In San Pedro Calif.



The ship was launched on August 1st. 1943. The Callaghan Sailed from the West coast, February 5th. 1944. She was assigned to Fifth Fleet, The mission of the ship was to screen Aircraft Carrier strikes on Pala, Ulithi, and Woleai.

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When I was put aboard, it was very early, still dark, and the watch detail did not have a place for me, until later. I was very tired, so I took my gear, found me a comfortable place in a coil of line and fell fast to sleep. Here I am in a strange place, Knowing no one, and far away from home. I had no idea, what was going to happen next. It was a little frightening.

The stories I am going to tell you as far as I know, has never been told, or written about. Some of these stories can be verified from my Shipmates. Hear I am a boy of 18 and still learning about life. I feel I am walking in a dream. Our Skipper was only 34 and he had just found out he had become a father. We all congratulated him. We did have some older men, but being 18, I felt everyone was older than me.

There will be several terms, I will use in my stories, other than what they really are, I will explain.

Pogie Bait—Candy Bar Scuttlebutt—Drinking Fountain

Gee—Dunks—Ice Cream Scuttlebutt—Rumors

Bonzis—Suicide Planes Sh-t on a Shingle—Chipped

Beef on toast Sugar

George—Surface Radar Sugar Charlie—Aircraft Radar

Deck—Floor. Bulkhead—Wall. Hatch—Door.

There may be others and I will add to these as I run across them.

I was introduced to the First Class Sonar man. For the life of me, I can't remember his name. He was about 26 years old, tall and thin. He had a small mustache. He was a great guy and very pleasant to work with. He help me, by showing the ship and all departments. He answered all my questions and introduced me to all the personnel. I was assigned to C division. All personnel working in and around the

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Bridge are in this division. We would muster, at the starboard boat David. My bunk assignment was in the mess hall, top bunk. It was great, If I had a watch, say twelve to four, I could stay in my bunk, look what was for breakfast, If I liked it and was hungry, I would get up. The bunks were four high. Each bunk was canvas bottom and a mattress would lay on this. You would have a sheet and a pillow case. a blanket to keep you

warm. The temperature was always comfortable, and the smells coming from the galley would make you lie in your bunk and try to figure out what was cooking. There was a table just below me, and the three bunks under me were folded against the bulkhead when serving meals. My bunk was the only bunk left in the down position. Just above me, about 12 to 24 inches were covered steam lines, air ducts, electrical conduit and other lines to operate the ship. The steam lines were always warm and comfortable. This was my space. It was open with no curtains, like today, but it was my space. My locker was on the deck just below me. These lockers were stainless steel and would open from the top. There were four of them. To get to your locker, you had to fold the bottom bunk against the bulkhead. If one of your shipmates was in bunk and he was asleep you waited until the bunk was free. You learn to live this way and respect each others privacy. We stood our watch, four on and eight off. This would keep you from being over worked and alert. On my watch there would be three Sonar men. We would stand 30 minutes on the helm and 30 minutes on Lookout, either on the wing of the Bridge or up on the flying Bridge. We would then move in the Sonar shack, this would be where we could have a cup of coffee and smoke a cigarette. We would rotate every 30 minutes and your four hours, would go really fast. This was a great way to stand a watch.

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You didn't tire as easily, it kept you on your toes. While in the sonar shack you could do the things, like smoke, drink, and eat a snack as long as it did not interfere with the operation on the sonar gear.

When you went into the service, you gave up your privacies, in the showers and when you would go to relieve yourself. The shower stalls were all open, and going to relieve yourself was a conversation piece itself. In the crews head there were two troughs about 50 feet long each. These troughs had about 20 seats on them. The water was a continuous flushing of water. Everything was open, no modesty here. The water would run from one end of the trough to the other. Some jokers would light a piece of paper and float it down to singe the butt of some unsuspecting shipmate. I was new and many jokes were played on me. Shortly after this, I learn to play the game. I became known as a practical joker. I never did anything that would harm or hurt anyone. But I did get even. This was always in fun. If you didn't have some of this, we

would have gone nuts. I guess I have been called to General Quarters in about every situation, from the shower, on the thrown, and asleep. Now you must see why women were not on combat ships during the war. Can you imagine the problems we would have? Not that women couldn't handle a combat position, but they may be in the wrong position when General Quarters sounded. We could have been speaking German or Japanese right now.

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### 5 The Food In The Navy

One of the things you don't hear much about is the food in the Navy. We were the best fed Navy in the world, for a Country in time of war. This was just another reason I joined the Navy. Ever when you were in enemy territory, you would have good hot food, except when you were at battle stations. Then, you have sandwiches, hot soup and coffee. I never had any complaints about the Navy food. As long as the weather was half decent, the food was always there. This was much better than a fox hole, half filled with water, or snow. No hot food, because up on the line, there would be no fires, to keep warm or to cook by.

We had a Navy tradition of Corn Bread and Beans for breakfast once a week. This was always good, but the ship smelled different the day after. We would have different cereals, both hot and cold. I really liked the hot oatmeal, there was on thing you had to get use to. Just push the cooked weevils aside and keep on eating. I know I must have eaten some of those weevils, but I am still here today. We had powdered milk, powdered eggs, and powdered potatoes. We very seldom received fresh Potatoes, but when we did, we enjoyed them.

Each division had their own stores location. If during a midnight watch, you wanted to have a snack you would go the stores location. How you would supply your store was another thing. When all hands would be called to handle supplies brought to our ship, by LCM. A motor launch working off a supple ship. you would re-supply you stores at this time. One of your shipmates would be stationed in a hatch below decks, and as you passed this hatch you would just flip the case of food off

**your shoulder, down the hatch to your shipmate. He in turn would stack it for future use. The case of food could be**

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**boned chicken, canned fruits, almost anything that could be eaten without cooking. I remember one time we had stored a bag of fresh potatoes. You don't let fresh potatoes lie too long, as we started making preparation to cook some French fries. In our sonar shack, is a small space for our radio finding equipment, just enough room for one man. Bill Allen, a second class sonar man, was off duty and was setting up in the radio shack. We had a one burner electric stove. Bill had put a skillet of oil on it and was frying some French fries. To get from the Bridge to the Captains Bridge quarters or to CIC you had to come through the sonar shack. Lt. Buzzetti was our executive officer, 2nd in command of the ship, was passing through the sonar shack while Bill was frying the French fries. Bill was behind me and to the left. When Lt. Buzzetti came through, He looked over me, as I was on the sonar. He asked, "Are you frying French fries?" at the same time he reached over me and looked. Bill Allen stuttered some what and answer "ya-ya-ya-sir" With that Lt. Buzzetti grab a handful and headed out the hatch, looking back he said "dam their good." Both Bill and I looked at each other and thought we were caught for sure. Nothing happened, because our officers were as great as the ship. I had bought a gallon of Coca Cola syrup and kept it in my locker. I would pour a little syrup in a glass and get water from the scuttlebutt. The coke was a little flat as we had no carbonation, but it was the next best thing.**

**We also had a meal called 'sh-t on a shingle' This was creamed chipped beef on toast, I thought it was great. I guess there wasn't very much I didn't think wasn't great. When we were at General Quarters, you could not leave your station, as each man was responsible for the man next to him. We would have food brought to**

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**each general quarter's station. I remember we were at anchor one time in the anchorage at Okinawa. When you are at the anchorage at night and under smoke screen you were not to fire you guns as you would give away you position. We had been assigned and LCS to cover us with smoke in case of a raid of enemy planes attack. We were at general Quarters and smoke was being laid, however, the wind would change and left us out in the open. The LCS would move to another location and start**

laying smoke again. We would be covered for a few minutes and the wind would change again. This LCS, did everything it could to cover us with smoke. There was a large raid of enemy planes in our area, but we couldn't fire at them. We had a Cook striker, a really nice kid, just about the same age as myself. He was carrying coffee around to each station and had just left out station when we were strafed by a enemy plane. The plane fired armor piercing bullets at us and penetrated some of torpedo tubes and went through the deck into the engine room. I was told by some of the black gang, bullets bouncing around in the engine room wasn't very much fun. One Bullet did hit its mark. The young cook striker was hit by one bullet, it went into his back and out his heart, he was killed instantly.

This action brought death to your door step, here a friend, just served you coffee and sandwiches, walking to the next general quarter's station was dead, in an instant. I was pulled down by our gun captain, as the armor piercing tracers were flying all around us. You can't imagine how beautiful the tracers are when they are coming at you, but very deadly.

We buried the cook striker at sea, and if you have never been to one of these burials, you will never forget it.

We had three conditions set aboard our ship. Condition Green

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was an all clear condition, where normal activity of the day. Then there was Condition Yellow, possible action near and 50% of the General quarter crew on watch. The last Condition was Red, attack is imminent. All personnel are at their General Quarters station. Even though we were at general quarters when we were strafed, we could not fire as we were in the anchorage. Being out of the smoke, we were setting ducks. It was amazing no one else was killed. This was the second time I found out what "hit the deck" meant. It was things like this that made you grow-up fast.

Some times a P.T.Boat would pull along side and we would invite them to eat with us. They could fix a hot meal, but they very limited as most of their spaces were filled with armament. Submarines had the best food. There were never any left overs as they were limited for space.

We would get our Gee-dunks (ice Cream) from the battleships and

the aircraft carriers. Every time we picked up a down Pilot we would receive enough ice cream for the entire crew of our ship. We did not have an ice cream maker on board our ship as we were limited for space also.

We could carry enough Fuel for several weeks, the amount of fuel we carried, and how long it would last would depend on how fast and how far we went. We would try to keep our fuel top off for the simple reason, you didn't want to run out of fuel while in action. We would refuel off a tanker in the fleet, or most often, a carrier. We have refueled off a Battleship. These larger vessels had a much larger fuel capacity than the Destroyers.

We had plenty of Pogie bait (candy bars) and other things that

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make people happy. We even had beer parties. After being on a strike mission with the Carriers we would return to a safe harbor, to refuel, repair, and refurbish our supplies. The captain would let half the crew go and give each man two cans of beer, these cans were olive green in color, and I think the beer tasted the same. I could drink one can of beer and I would sell the other for \$2.00.

When we reached the beach, some of the old timers, 20 year olds, would have all kinds of gambling paraphernalia. We would play poker, black jack, roulette, and shoot craps. For those who didn't gamble we had several games going, like baseball and football. We would have a beautiful beach to swim, don't worry about the swim suits, go the way, nature intended you to go. There were no women around and we were alone. There were women on the hospital ships and when one would pass, all eyes and binoculars were trained on the Hospital ship, with a scream of pleasure when someone saw a female. You would find several things after one of these parties. A Gunners Mate found a live Hand Grenade, on one of our trips. He was messing with it, in the boat, coming back to the ship. All of us, about went over the side, when we saw it. One guy would have bought all the beer he could drink. One guy won all the money and the guy who lost. The rest would have Bruises, cuts, and wounds from going barefoot. You must be willing, to fill in for someone else, when they go on their beer party. The gambling paraphernalia, would be made up of boards, canvas, and cloth games. You would think you were in Las Vegas. Unless the winnings was sent home, you will find

later on, it was all in vain. But the fun we had doing it, will never be forgotten.

During storms or Typhoons, and we had a few of those. No liquids

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could be served. The reason for this was because we did a 52 degree roll in one of these storms. This means we were over half over. We had water almost in our stacks,(where the smoke comes out) If we had put water down our stacks we would have blown up, with the cold water hitting our boilers. We could not have any liquids any where, no coffee, no soup, nothing to drink except out of the scuttlebutt. We would be given fruit, if we had it, and sandwiches. Some of these storms would last for a week. On Dec.14th.1944 We were in this kind of storm. This was bad, because we were unable to refuel. It was too dangerous. The U.S.S. HULL, carrying our Christmas mail was in the same predicaments as the rest of us. She sank during the storm with just 52 survivors out of 320 men.

December was a month when all of our hearts were heavy. Some of the new men, like myself, were away from home for the first time. Our Christmas mail, with our cakes, cookies, gifts, and all the good things that remind you of home, went down with the U.S.S. HULL. Not only did we feel the hurt of losing all the people on the HULL, as it could have been us, but our mail went with it. Christmas did not go by without something new happening. During his time I received a letter from Doris Ward. It was a Dear John Letter. You know the kind that tells you she is going with someone else. Well, it turns out she started going out with one of my school buddies, What are buddies for, anyway.?

Well, we have seem to jump around the food in the Navy, in the little stories, but just about every story had some food in it. From my experience in the service, I must say Our Navy has the best fed and the best trained people in the world.

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Christmas Day

When something happens to you, and it is impressive to where you will never forget it, this is one of those times.

Christmas Eve day, We are just off the Strike Mission where we lost the Hull during a storm. We were in Ulithi anchorage. We had a beer

party. ‘

We did all those things we did at beer parties and when it was time to return to the ship, boy!, did we have a surprise. We couldn't find it. We look and look, We asked several ships we had anchored near. We found out she was in a floating dry dock. We had torn some baffles loose during the storm, and while in the dry dock, we were going to scrape and paint the bottom. When we went aboard, everyone, and I mean everyone, went over the side to scrape the bottom. We painted with yellow chromed paint and we had plenty of that. Some of the drain ports were still draining and water and paint didn't mix well, at least not in those days. The scaffolding on both the starboard and port side was three stories high, much too high to fall from. I was trying to fill one of these draining ports when Lt. Buzzetti was standing under me and watching me try to put paint in the drain port. Lt. Buzzetti yelled up to me and said "Put some paint on that, Benton!" With that I picked up the bucket of paint and splashed it into the drain port. I not only got paint up in the drain, I got paint all over Lt. Buzzetti. He did not say a word because I had done exactly what he said for me to do. This man was really a great guy. As we continued painting I was with a group of guys painting the propeller Housing. We had two screws (propellers). We straddled this housing and would paint and scoot back, paint and scoot back. Soon we were setting on the paint the guy

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had just painted behind you. We worked all night and finished the painting about 0600 A.M. When we had finished the painting, the next thing was to get the paint off you. We just threw the clothes away, as they were so full of paint, you could never remove it. We scrubbed each other as we couldn't see all where the paint was. After cleaning up and getting into some clean clothes, breakfast was ready. This was the best tasting food, as I had forgotten about eating. We didn't have to put the finish coat of Red Lead as the floating dry dock had cranes on both sides to spray paint the entire bottom in a matter of minutes. When all this was done and the dock was being flooded for us to float out, did we realize this was Christmas day. I will never forget Christmas, 1944. I Have never been as tired and exhausted. The best gift I received that day was to rest.



It seems there was never a dull moment. There was many opportunities to play practical jokes on each other. As long as no one was hurt and it was in good fun. The first time I was aware of this was when our Captain, undoubtedly feeling pretty good, sent me to the Gunners mate shack for the rifle reports. Well, I really thought there were some rifle reports to get. When I arrived at the Gunners mate shack, the reports were not there but at the Chief Master-at-Arms office. When I got there the reports were in the forward engine room. I became suspicious when I went to the engine room, I couldn't understand why rifle reports, should be in the engine room. Anyway I continue to go from station to station and everywhere I went the reports were some place else. It seems the bridge, at the Captains request, was calling ahead telling each station I was on my way. I didn't know how to get out of this as I was on orders from the Captain. I had a friend, a Gunners mate striker, write a note to the Captain, saying, The rifles barrels had become so hot at the last firing, we had to throw them over the side, and there were no reports. I took this back to the Skipper, and he died laughing. I know why I was sent on such a mission, It was to teach me the different stations of the ship. I thought it was great. The Gunners mate Striker's name was John Moore, from Saint Joseph, Missouri. All the personnel enjoyed it and so did I.

Every time we would anchor, there would be an anchor pool. You

would try to guess the closes' time to when the anchor hit the water. The correct time would be taken from the quartermasters Log.

Sometime the pool would be several hundred dollars. The pool

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was sold when we would tie up along side another ship. The exact time the lines were secured would be logged in the Quartermasters Log book.

I would get a group of the guys together, always larger than I, I weight in about 135 to 140 pounds. The total of shipmates I would get would vary, We would single out one of our good natured shipmates, and throw him over the side. This always took place after we had secured an at the stern on the ship. We would be near the screw guards. This would be a good place for the victim to climb back aboard the ship. I did this often until all the guys I had gathered, picked me up and threw me over the side. Boy was I surprised. I didn't get the group together again, for fear I would be the target. It is was all right to play a joke but don't push your luck.

We sharpened knives a lot differently to cut hemp rope or line. The blade would be sharpened similar to a saw. This way, a cut through a piece of two inch hemp rope would be like cutting through butter. We always took pride in sharpening our knives. We relied on them to save our lives and they did many times. I was a practical joker, I never hurt anyone and always did the joke on someone I knew. Of course practical jokes were played on me all the time and you learn not to trust anyone. One time I saw a scaffold hanging over the side of the ship, while we were at anchor, and I knew the two guys on the scaffold. They didn't see me and I released one side and they fell into the water. They found out about it later and I'm still looking over my shoulder. There were some practical jokes very harmful. No one ever did this to me but I knew a couple of guys it was done too. This jerk, he had to be one to do this, would catch a person asleep and put a match between his toes if he was barefooted. If the

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person was asleep with socks on this guy would cut the sock with a razor blade and place the match between his toes. this was very painful and would put the poor guy it was done to, would be out of commission for a few days. I know of only a couple of people aboard our ship capable of doing this. I just wish we could have caught him.

I was in trouble several times because I did some things without

asking. It was never on my record or damaging enough, to cause serious problems for me.

We were leading a convoy, out of the Okinawa Anchorage, because of a Typhoon warning. We had a number of ships we were to escort and one other Destroyer. Our Captain had pulled along side the other Destroyer and was talking to the other Skipper. Last minute instructions, we were only several feet from the other Ship. Side by side, the Captains finished talking to each other and I was on the helm. We were moving at about 10 knots. (A knot is approximately 1 mile and 1/8 and hour. This was putting us at about 12 miles per hour. The Captain yelled into me "Right Standard Rudder to 180 zero." I answer "Right Standard Rudder to 180 aye" meaning I heard his order and repeated it to him, so he would know I understood his order and confirmed by saying "aye." Well as smart as I was, I felt standard rudder was too much so I let up on the rudder. Doing all of this thinking I was passing 180 Zero. I caught it and was bringing it back when the Skipper looked down at the wing Gyro compass and saw me bringing it back. He yelled in to me "What is the matter Benton, You day dreaming?" I answer back with authority, "Yes Sir." What else could I say, It was the truth. Captain Bertholf was a find Skipper and I found out at that moment, Why he was the Captain.

While on this same mission in very rough weather we were

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screening the other ships. I was on the sonar gear. I could hear the Destroyer on our port beam, pinging and searching his area. Here I go again, doing something I shouldn't be doing. I was practicing my Morse code, and you can send messages underwater on the sonar gear. I heard this Destroyer Pinging and I got the bright idea to send a challenge to the operator of the sonar gear on the ship. The challenge is A.A. or DiDa-DiDa or - -, - -. This better known as able able. I did this several times and there was no answer. I gave up and went back to my search area. I can hear the transmissions on our TBS (Talk Between Ships) in the sonar shack. I heard. "Hello Demigod, Hello Demigod, This is Short Stop, This is Short Stop, Are you sending us Able, Able, by sonar?" I knew I had it. The O.D. (officer at the Deck), Yell in to the Sonar Shack by Voice Tube, "Benton, are you sending Able,Able, to Short Stop on our port beam?. I answer again "Yes Sir." The O.D. then said, "Well cut it out, you have the entire convoy thinking there is a sub out there challenging us." Now I know why he was the O.D. and I wasn't. I learned a lot from these

people from all over the United States, They were not as Bad as I had been told. This was a great bunch of people, and I think at this time is when I started growing up. There are always people who knows a little more, if not a whole lot about things you know nothing about. There is no bluffing in this world. You may get away with it a couple of times, but you will get caught.

We were on one of the strikes and we were screening the Aircraft Carrier Ticonderoga. We were on her starboard side, our port side. The Ti' was launching planes. We were standing by, in the event of any mishap in launching. If there were some, we would be there to rescue any downed Pilot. Being in this position we were protecting the Carrier from Submarines and enemy aircraft. We were on station, when a large raid of enemy planes attacked the strike force. It was about 1700 the weather was good and visibility was the best. One Japanese Plane, a Zero, started his attack on the Ticonderoga. The plane was low and heading straight for the Bridge of the Ti'. The very first time, I saw the enemy. The plane was beautiful. The red meatball on the rust colored Plane. He was so low you could see the Pilot. We were firing everything we had, and so was the Carrier. As the plane passed low in front of us you wonder, "Is this really Happening?" The pilot had a determination of suiciding into the Carrier. I just don't know how this plane got through with the steel wall of bullets and shells exploding in its path. It did, and hit the Ticonderoga in the bridge. The plane just melted in flame and debris. I know we lost some of our people when this plane hit. The carrier was firing at the plane and the plane was attacking the starboard side. The ships spent shells and bullets were hitting us. Someone yelled "hit the deck." You didn't have to tell me twice, Metal was hitting all around us. John Moore, One of the Gunners mate strikers, was riding the gravy train, when he remembered he had not put his gun on safety, when he bailed out of his seat. He reached up and was pushing the switch to put

the gun on safe, when a piece of shrapnel hit him in the thumb. He

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yelled "Purple Heart," but this wasn't enough to put him out of action. The gravy train is where the gunner sets in the trainer's seat and just waits for the light to come on, to fire. He doesn't train, or operate the gun in anyway, as the gun is trained on target by the Main Battery Director. They push the button to fire. All the gravy train operator does, is he sets there and waits for the fire light to come on. When it does, you push with your foot, the fire trigger. It looks similar to an accelerator pedal in a car. We all joked about John's Purple Heart later. This all stem from Friendly fire, you didn't hear about this much then, but you certainly hear about it today. If the friendly fire was investigated each time it happened during World War two, We would be speaking Japanese now. We get so caught up in this today, we need to let the professionals handle it. There are always mistakes made, learn from these and go on. There are people who don't know what is going on and has never had the experience, telling people who knows what is going on, how to do it. Too Many Chiefs and not enough Indians. The Ticonderoga continued to burn and began to list to the starboard. We stood by until we were relieved. Some of the other ships escorted the Ticonderoga, still burning, away from the area. The raid of enemy planes was over and things began to settle down. That evening we were listening to Tokyo Rose, as she played some great music, when she announced the Imperial Navy had sunk the Ticonderoga. The Ticonderoga was well and had survived the night. She was on her way back for repair. Tokyo Rose was another tool the Japanese used to help give us the jitters. The Music was always the latest, but nothing she said was true. Sounds a lot like our Politicians today, doesn't it? She would say things like we should think about going Home while we were still alive. I really think the Japanese kept

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their own Moral up to make a report like this. We continued screening the Carriers striking Formosa, Luzon Indochina, Hong Kong, and the Nansei Shoto.

After the lost of the U.S.S. Hull, December 14th 1944, We returned to Ulithi for repairs and Christmas. We discussed the Dry-Dock Party. We headed back out on Strikes at Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and the Tokyo Area.

A week before we headed towards Tokyo, we were dispatched to throw a few shells from our five inch, at the Island fortress of Iwo Jima.

**We were included with five other Destroyers. The wind was very calm, the sea was like glass. After we had completed our assigned salvos, we head out with the other Destroyers. There was large raid of enemy planes heading our way. We left Iwo Jima just as the sun disappeared over the horizon. The five Destroyers were abreast, approximately a mile apart. We would blow our Tubes, Laying Black smoke, every five or six hundred yards. From the air, this late in the evening, the blotches of smoke looked like ships. I can't say how many Jap planes dove into the smoke, but I assure you it was well worth blowing your tubes over. The Guy are Guys who thought of this should get a medal, He was a genius. Japanese Planes would always attack just at dawn or just at dusk. This way the attack would come from the sun. When the enemy planes arrived on the scene we had already disappeared over the horizon. Thanks to the the people thinking of things like this, saved many lives.**

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### **Action Off Tokyo**

**We left Iwo Jima and still screening the Carriers. The purpose on the strike on Tokyo and surrounding airfields was to keep all the enemy planes grounded. This would give our forces, Landing at Iwo Jima a free hand without having to battle enemy planes, besides, the Japanese land forces. It turned out to be a very successful trip.**

**The weather had turned very cold. We were issued fur-lined cover suites to keep warm, when we went to General Quarters on Deck. My gun station was mount #41 and it was right along side Mount #2. This is a five inch 38. This gun would fire right over our heads sometimes. When it fired over your head, the concussion would be tremendous. The sea spray would keep you wet, the wind was harsh, we even wore face covers, to protect ourselves. I believe I wore this suit for two weeks or until we were out of the area. You could stand the suit up in the corner, and it would stand by itself.**

**While off of the Tokyo, we encountered some Picket ships. These**

picket ships, were about 80 Feet long with about 10 crewmen. We were instructed to take one out with our 40 mm and 20 mm. We did and sank it. We picked up nine of the crewmen but the tenth would not get out of the small boat, the Japs had got into after their ship was sunk. The Nine got out O.K. but the tenth refused. We were dead in the water, a perfect target for a Jap Sub. Our Skipper became very irate about getting the Jap out. He yelled down from the Bridge for the Chief Boats to get the Jap out and he didn't care how he did it. We didn't want to send one of our men as the Jap could have a hidden

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Knife or gun. The chief Boats swung a gaffling hook with a chain and line attached. A gaffling hook is a three prong hook, pretty sharp, a piece of chain about five feet long, and some line attached to the chain. When the hook hit, the Chief pulled with a yank, sinking the hook into the Jap's head. The chief lifted the Jap out of the boat and the Jap was screaming. We were moving and as the Chief tried to shake the Jap loose, he couldn't. The Jap had stopped screaming and we were moving at a good clip. The men holding the line could no longer hold it, and as they had trailed the line near the stern of the Destroyer, They released it. The Jap, hook, line, and all disappeared at the screws, churning like a giant meat grinder, there was nothing left. The remaining Japanese had seen this and we had no trouble from any of them the rest of the trip.

We delivered the rest of the Captured Japanese to Iwo Jima. The Indianapolis, a Cruiser, she was the Flag ship, and we put the Jap's aboard her. Ernie Pyle, a reporter for News Week reported in the next issue, with pictures of the Japs, as the first Japs captured on Iwo Jima. When we saw this we really blew our cool. The skipper sent a notice to News Week and a retraction was printed in the next Issue. The first report did not mention the Callaghan at all, we made it on the retraction.

Little did we know the U.S.S Indianapolis would be sunk after delivering the Atomic Bomb, and that very same night we would meet our faith in the deep six. We returned to Ulithi, to refurbish our supplies, and take a little rest. While there, we were transferred to the Third Fleet, We knew something big was up.

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As I mentioned before we knew something big was up as we started training with hand guns and rifles. We were instructed to take one of our Dog tags and have it riveted to the inside of our belt. It was found, when any one was burnt beyond recognition, the dog tag could still be read to identify you. This was a bit scary, as most of us had given a lot of thought about dying. We accepted it and tried to go about our daily jobs, hoping it would not happen to us.

Being we were with the Third Fleet we did not screen for the Carriers. We protected the Landing force and the Battleships. We were at Okinawa six days before the troops landed on April Fools day 1945. The Battleships would lay off about 10 miles and throw 16 inch shells at targets on the Island. We would screen for the wagons (Battleships) during the day, and as the Fleet retired for the night, we would harass the Island at night. We would fire with our five inchers at any light or any designated target. The next morning we would hook up with the Battleships again. Only the first morning didn't work that way. It seems the Jap's had other Ideas. They wanted us out of the picture. I remember I was on watch, lookout station on the port side bridge when three Dals, (Japanese Dive Bombers) came just over the top of the Island, Dropped down of the water and headed for us. I was yelling at top of my voice, Bogies, Bogies, Bogies, I gave the direction, and continue to yell and answer any instructions. We immediately went to General Quarters. I could not leave my look out station until I was relieved by the man, assigned to that general Quarters station. Some of our guns were already firing. Some did not

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have gun crews as this action was very fast and most of the men did not get to their station until the action was over. When I was finally relieved. I headed down the ladder at the flag halyards, when the second plane tried to hit us. He came through between the stacks, so close, I could reach out and touch him. It scared me so badly, I turned around and went down through the Sonar shack. When I got to my gun station, Twin forty, Port side, just below the bridge, The third plane missed off the stern. These enemy planes had come at us, close to the water, went straight up and only one came in at a time. I guess the way the Japs looked at it one plane would try to hit us, If he was successful the other



planes would not be needed. We were fortunate all three planes missed us. When these planes would hit the water so close to us, they would spread water over the entire ship. I was sopping wet from the second plane missing us.

It normally takes five men in a five inch gun turret to kick out a round. We will had a cook aboard our ship, kick out three rounds by himself. He did this with a small mishap. He dropped one of the five inch shells down two decks. The shell hit on its nose. You should have seen these guys removing that shell. It was like making love to a porcupine, very careful. Our angel was with us on this day. We painted three planes on our main Battery Director. Radar wasn't always good, If the planes attacking you are low on the water, you couldn't pick them up. These planes were low on the water, plus. they were between us and the Island. There was no way we could pick them up by radar. This was the morning we had Beans and cornbread for breakfast. I remember, several guys changing their underwear after this action. We sustain no damage. I was frighten all the time, but when action started you had no time to

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think about how you felt, you just did your job.

One of my friends was a radar man, we would be relaxing on the foc-c-el, (near the bow) and watching the Sugar Charlie go around and around. Ever once in a while it would stop, go back and forth on the bearing and then would continue on. My friend said all the operator was doing was checking that bearing, it was probably one of our planes. We would track our own planes as they would show an IFF. An IFF was a term used to Determine if a plane was an enemy or not. IFF stood for identification Friend or Foe. The IFF was a Frequency sent out from our planes. The Frequency was changed often as the Japanese could learn the IFF and would use it to attack us. I have seen our ships shoot down our planes either by mistake or the plane was identified by sight or by IFF. Seeing something like our ships shooting at our own planes was very sad, speciality when the plane was hit and the pilot bailed out. I bet the pilot had a few choice words when he was picked up. There were some, took direct hits and no one could survive.

We were able to destroy three more enemy planes during the next few months.

The landing on Okinawa was April first 1945. April fools day, Code

name "Love Day." I remember we were assisting with the troupe landing. We would be assigned a certain Troupe, with a radio, talking to our Main Battery Director. We would be given targets on the Island. Directing the firing would be one of our soldiers. We would fire a single gun at the target. The radio operator would walk us to the target. When we got on Bearing, We would fire all our five inch for effect. We then would move on to the next target.

I remember one day one of our fighter aircraft was giving troop

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support, when all the ships opened up on him. As he went passed, the pilot turn his plane so the star could be seen. In this position, he made even a better target. The ships tore the plane to pieces. The pilot never did bail out, and even if he could, he was too low for his chute to open. I am proud to say, our ship was not one of ships who fired on the plane. I really felt sorry about the pilot and I hope I never see anything like it again.

In the course of the three days, prior to the landing we had the privilege of sinking a small Japanese Submarine. I was on the sound gear, and our crew was standing in line for breakfast. One of the men saw the periscope come up between our ship and the Island. Everyone started yelling and the O.D. yelled for me to train the sonar search towards the Island. We had just come from the direction of the sighting and made a 180 degree turn. All we could pick up was sounds from our own wake. Our Skipper started the attack visual. We were not moving very fast and we set our depth charges very shallow. Some of the charges were detonating very close to our stern. The charges would lift our stern out of the water. We made one pass and were turning to attack again, when another destroyer tried to make a run on the sub. Our Skipper went to the TBS and told the other Destroyer to stand clear, we were making another run. The destroyer veered away and we went in for the kill. We did just that, We sank the rising Sun. I was relieved by the first class Sonar man, He could not pick up the Sub either. We sank it by visual attack.

The next day we painted a Submarine on our main Battery Director. The director was beginning to look like a Christmas Tree. We had nine enemy planes, a 80 foot picket ship, two shore

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**bombardments, and now a submarine. We were proud of our ship and our crew. The Fat lady was not ready to sing for us yet.**

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**The U.S.S. Comfort. (Hospital Ship)**

**The Hospital Ship U.S.S. Comfort stood off Okinawa every night with lights on the Red crosses Painted on both sides of the ship and on both sides of the Stack. The Ship was always well lit, so it could be easily seen. The Ship was painted white and could be seen during the day, with no problem.**

**One night we were having a large raid of enemy planes, when some sick Jap strayed towards the Hospital Ship. I don't know what he was**

thinking, but he attacked the Hospital Ship. He dove his plane into the ship and killed a number of the crew and the wounded. This act infuriated everyone.

At this time, that genius came up with another idea. There was an L.S.T. aground on a reef near Naha airfield. The ship had run aground because a Japanese shore Battery fired on the L.S.T. The Captain must have become confused, in strange waters, when he was trying to get away from the shore Battery. The ship ran aground on a reef and had to be abandon. The crew left the ship and were picked up. The L.S.T. had been setting on he reef for several weeks and wasn't being used. During this time the shore battery had been cleared and a special crew went to work getting the L.S.T. off of the reef. The crew had accumulated enough 40mm shell cans as they could. these cans were water tight and had to be puncture to sink.

The crew loaded the L.S.T with the 40mm cans both below deck and strapped down topside. The ship was so buoyant it couldn't be sunk. The special crew towed the L.S.T. out where the Hospital ship was hit, anchored it, and put a dozen lights on it at night. I understand the small ship took about five plane hits before it finally sank. These are

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some of the things you have never read about or seen in movies. It was an enjoyable thing to see things like this, as it made you feel we got even somehow. We let the Japs destroy themselves, we just helped them do it. After this you didn't hear the Japs diving into the Hospital ships anymore.

There were a small group of Islands, close to Okinawa. These Islands were called IE Shima, and could be seen from Okinawa. The Islands were known as a safe harbor from enemy planes as there were sheer cliffs on either side of the anchorage. There was one problem. We were told to inspect every floating object, as the Japs had swimmers attaching explosives on the ships while at anchor. We had watches on deck at all times and we were to fire at will at any floating object. We had rifles and side arms. The side arm was a 45 cal automatic and the rifle was a 30,30 or a 30-0-6. I fired the rifle so many times I actually got tired. I whipped out the old 45 cal. automatic and fired it. I didn't hold it tight enough and about broke my fingers. I fired it once and put it back in the holster.

On this same Island, our troops and the Navy found a number of

**Japanese Speed boats. These boats were built for suicide missions. A powerful explosive charge,(Depth Charge), with a detonator, would be attached to the bow of these speed boats and they would try to ram a ship. The engines in these speed boats had Chrysler engines in them. Fortunately the Japs were caught before they had a chance to use it. They may have, but I did not hear anything about it.**

**The Japs had another weapon, we never saw one but we saw what it would do. It was called a Baka Bomb. This weapon was man controlled. It was a Bomb with wings. The bomb would be brought into**

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**the area of ships by a Betty Bomber. It would be released and the pilot would glide it to the target. We saw an all metal P.C, about 130 feet long. When hit by the Baka Bomb, was completely gutted. I'm sure every one must had been killed. There was no superstructure. The metal was warped and it looked like a bowl. The ship did not sink. It was amazing it stayed afloat.seeing this certainly made me feel I didn't want to see us hit by one of these.**

**While at IE Shima we were able to have a beer party. There wasn't much to do. We were warned not to wander too far as there were Japs still on the Island. We were not to go looking for any souvenirs, specially in the caves. We were told several souvenir hunters had been killed doing what we were going to do. We went looking. We were going down this path and came up on a dead Japanese Soldier. He had been dead for some time. He smelled of decaying flesh and all that was left was bone and maggots. This got me to thinking and I asked myself, why is this guy still here? He should be buried. There were too many questions about this Jap laying in the path. We decided to go back to the group. We took some pictures while there and it was of some small horses. These horses must have gone through hell as they were scarred and thin. We managed to give them some food and they stayed with us until we left. I have some of the pictures today.**

**A Fletcher Destroyer is a fast, maneuerable ship. I know as one of stations standing watch was the helm. I will always remember, when this ship would go to flank speed, the helm would vibrate in my hands. Flank speed was, orders to the engine room to give as much as you can and then some. A knot is a mile and 1/8 an hour. We were capable of doing 38 knots plus. We have done all the above. The 38**

knots is almost 43 miles per hour. Can you imagine this ship going that fast, weight in at 2100 tons? Try stopping that on a dime, you would take at least four city blocks or more.

The reason the helm vibrated in my hands, when we were moving fast, was because the water rushing passed the rudders made them vibrate. Our speed saved our ship a number of times, the one time when the plane dived into our wake when our Sugar Charlie was out. We were at flank speed and the enemy plane missed us. It crashed right into our wake.

We were coming into the anchorage in Okinawa, weaving in and out of other ships, at a pretty good rate of speed when one of the other destroyers called us on the TBS. This Destroyer knew our code name and said "Hello Demigod, Hello Demigod, This is Short Stop, This is Short stop, Please slow down," Our Skipper called him back and he said he didn't mean to frighten him. They did this jokingly, as they were friends.

The waters around Okinawa were warm. Several times we had swim call, diving off the Fan tail, We could climb back on the screw guards. WE could relax a little. Word got out, one of the PT Boats approached a Canoe with several women in it. When the PT boat got close, the women opened up on the PT boat. They were firing automatic weapons. When the women fired at the PT boat, the Boat fired back. It didn't take long before the women were in the water. Before The PT boat could get to the women, Sharks had a field day, there was nothing left to pick up. When we heard this, our swimming thinned out. Very few people went swimming. We didn't have the Makings of a shark net like some of the larger ships.

Okinawa was a beautiful Island. It was very green and you could

see the field of rice and other vegetation. Most what we saw was planted on slopping hills. The planting was done in such a way, heavy rains and wind would not erode the soil away. It was hard to believe, we were at war with this beautiful Island, It seem so quite and beautiful and peaceful, this was a dream. We would be brought back to reality when our guns would fire. When President Roosevelt died the ships were ordered to fire a salute for the president. All guns from every ship fired on the island at exactly the predesignated time. This happened at about 2100 (9:00 PM) When the guns fired the ship rocked to one side. This is

**what was better know as a salvo. You would never see a better fourth of July, and you will never see a salute like this, for a President again.**

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### **The Night We saved Ammunition**

**We were on picket duty. We use out Radar to give the Anchorage early warning from enemy planes. It was a moon less Night, approximately 2000. WE were having a raid of enemy planes, coming to attack the anchorage. We had a failure of our Sugar Charley, our aircraft Radar. We were ordered back to the anchorage. With our aircraft radar out, we could not see or could not fire at any enemy plane. We heard a plane engine and it started to dive. We went to flank speed and started zigzagging. The plane engines were starting to really scream. We were silent as we couldn't fire at what we could not see. The plane tried to hit us, but missed about fifty feet off our stern. When the plane hit, the water splashed all over the ship. Our speed and the zigzagging did the trick. Zigzagging is moving the ship to one coarse then back to another coarse. This makes it very hard for your enemy to set a bearing on you as your bearing continues to change. The waters around Okinawa is full of phosphorous. In our wake, the water would be churned by the screws of the ship, the churning would set the large globs of phosphorous glow-**

**ing. Our wake could be seen from the air like a neon light. This is the reason, speed and zigzagging was very important. The next day we painted a plane on our Main Battery Director. We got it by not firing a shot.**

**When we arrived at the anchorage, it was lit up like a big city. Search lights were on and pointing to the sky. This was the first time I have ever seen a plane, locked in the spot of the lights and most of the ships were firing at it. The plane was hit and started burning as it fell to earth. These scenes will forever be embedded in my mind.**

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**The total enemy planes to our credit is now ten. We are beginning to run out of room to paint on the Main Battery Director.**



### Thirty Seconds

Often today, I will be waiting for a red light on some street, and start thinking about a time in the war, when our ship destroyed two twin engine bombers in less than thirty seconds. This is a lot to say, but it actually happened. When you wait for a red light, most are set on timers to change every thirty seconds. The day was calm, no wind, no sun at all, with a drizzle of rain. It was almost foggy and visibility was down to a thousand yards. We were at general quarters, as Okinawa was having a large raid of enemy planes. We were in a lagoon on the west side of the Island. Our ship was waiting for a target from the troops on the Island and it had been quiet for sometime. The time was about 10:00 A.M. and we were wet and cold, but it was about to heat up. We were not at anchor but moving very slow, just enough to keep our head way. Our guns were trained to the port side, towards the island. Our Sugar Charley was useless as all we could pick up was the weather. We were really socked in. We had relaxed because a pilot had to be nuts to fly in weather like this. We were not prepared to meet two nutty Japanese Pilots. We were joking and kidding around when all of sudden we heard "Standy-To-commence-Firing," "Commence-Firing" Our Five inch were trained to the port and started firing as they trained to starboard. Two Japanese Bettys were coming right at us from the starboard side, about 500 feet off the water. They were just as surprised to see us as we were to see them. When we opened up on the two planes we started tearing them to pieces with our 40mm and 20mm. We had time to prepare as we were on the port side and was waiting for them as they passed overhead. I was a ammunition handler and as I passed

the 40mm shells up to the loader, I watched where our shells were hitting one of the bombers. Every forth shell was a tracer and I could see our gun tearing the tail off the plane. This plane crashed in the water on our port side. The other plane crashed in flames on the Island. I assure you this took less than thirty seconds. To give you an example on how low these plane were, you could see the men in the planes as they went over. They were flying this low because, they were under the clouds and they probably couldn't see above the 500 feet. The planes were very slow and it gave our port side boys the opportunity to show their stuff.

Being these two planes were numbers eleven and twelve, it was showing our gunners were very proficient. These planes were in formation, side by side, and could not maneuver to take evasive action. We put the gig out, One of the two motor boats we had, to check and see if there were any survivors. One of the Gigs was the Captains Gig, It was covered half way to protect the passengers. We used the crew's gig, as it was open and easy to bring people out of the water. When we got to the plane, part of it was still floating, the crew found two men still alive, hiding under one of the wings.. One was badly injured, and the other was the navigator, in pretty good shape. When the crew brought the prisoners back to the ship, both were given medical aid. The badly injured Jap was the pilot. He died from his wounds. Our doctor had the privilege in performing an autopsy. We later buried the pilot at sea, as a human being not as an enemy. The navigator could speak perfect English as he had attended College in Berkeley, Ca He said he was happy to be alive and he wanted to do something for us. He said we should leave Okinawa at once to save ourselves, as the entire Japanese Fleet was on its way to annihilate the U.S. Fleet. We turned the prisoner over to

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over to the intelligents to check his story. Low and behold, the Jap was right.

The remaining Jap Fleet was heading our way. All the U.S. did was to send about 300 Planes and finish the Japanese Fleet off. You never did hear any more about the Japanese Imperial Fleet again. There are two stories to finish this, The Callaghan's crew was instrumental in bringing the war to a quick end, many of our crew on board at this time did not know this, as the following month, they did not see the end of the war. Those of the crew, who perished did not die in vain. I just wish I could tell each of the loved ones of those who perished, this story, as I believe it needs to be told. The other story is, the Japanese Navigator we saved from the crashed plane, and turned over to the intelligents people, became a prisoner of war. He lived the rest of the war In Pearl Harbor and after a year when the war was over, he was released and returned to Japan. He is a CEO and has 40,000 people working for him in Osaka Japan. He attended our fiftieth Anniversary held in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. in 1995.

**The Fat Lady Sings**

**This is a personal story about the U.S.S. Callaghan, D.D. 792, being sunk by enemy action. We were seventy miles off Okinawa, leading a small group of Destroyers and ICS on Picket duty. Three Destroyers and four LCS's. The activity of the crew and of myself will be as close as I can remember. I know of several crew members, their last moments, before we lost them forever.**

**We were Destroyer Squadron Fifty-five. Our group had Departed the Okinawa anchorage July 28th. 1945. We were the Flagship Of Commodore, A. E Jarrell and his staff. Accompanying the U.S.S. Callaghan was the Destroyers Cassin Young and Prichett. We also had the four LCS's assigned to us, and we were fortunate to have them. The LCS's played a large part, in saving some of the survivors and protecting the Callaghan. We had relieved the Destroyers Laws, Dyson, and Aulick. One of our LCS's had to return to Okinawa because of medical problems. We were on station at 8:30 A.M. July 29th. 1945. The weather was sunny and the sea was calm. The temperature was 75 to 80, very comfortable. Our duty was to provide early warning of enemy planes for our forces on Okinawa. We are seventy miles from Okinawa, this is as far as the radar from Okinawa could reach. We could reach another sixty or seventy miles, giving the anchorage a 130 to 140 mile range to prepare to defend from attack. The curvature of the earth looses the radar at about seventy miles, depending on the height of the radar screen. We would always take the blunt of the attack's first. The Japs would try to close the eyes of the radar, to be able to attack faster, without much warning.**

**During the day we would have six Corsairs, Navy Fighters as a cover. We**

could direct them to any part of our screen. During the night, we would have two night fighters. The fighters were called "Black Widows" as they were deadly. Two men made up the crew, one Pilot and one Radar and fire control man. These planes could bring down an enemy plane without seeing it. There was one problem, the night fighters were directed by Okinawa, and the Corsairs, during the day were directed by our flag, aboard our ship. We had a much faster response from our day light planes, than the planes directed from Okinawa. I feel this was changed, shortly after our ship was sunk.

I just came on watch, I had the twelve to four. I relieved the helm an was at this station when we were hit. Radar had picked up a contact, thirteen miles and closing. This contact was very low on the water and moving slow. It would also change direction often, and made it hard for radar to keep bearing and range. We immediately went to General Quarters and started evasive action. We went to flank speed and zigzagging. I had to stay at the helm until relieved by the crewman assigned to that General Quarters station. Right behind me, about five steps, was a hatch, (door). This was a metal door. In the middle of the door was a metal pocket. This pocket would pivot from one side of the door to the other, without opening the door. In this pocket was a roll of cotton. The cotton was for your ears. When the five inch thirty-eights fire, the concussion and noise was great enough to burst your eardrums or make them painful enough to hurt your efficiencies to do your job. I would wet my cotton so I could screw the cotton deep into my ears. We didn't have the nice ear plugs the Navy has today. There was much talk on the TBS. It was a debate if this was

a plane or not, as it was going so slow. At first the plane was picked up at Thirteen miles and low on the water. We had several raids of enemy planes using this tactic, launching torpedoes and bombs at low attitude. What we didn't know is these planes were constructed of wood and covered with silk. It was an old Biplane,(two wings), flying very slow and very maneuverable. This plane was virtually impossible to pick on radar. This was the reason this enemy plane was able to get close to us before we could pick him up. He was coming in on our port side. I was

relieved at the helm, We made a turn, and started firing on the starboard side. I had arrived at my gun station as we were hit. I look aft and saw the flames and a flaming object going through the ship and traveled on for about a hundred yards on the port side. We later talked about this, and had the feeling this was the engine of the plane that had hit us. The plane had hit at the main deck level at mount 43 mm on the starboard side.

I have to stop here and tell you of a friend of mine, and his last moments. Bill Allen had just come on watch the same time as I. He relieved the sonar watch and I relieved the Helm. I spoke to Bill just moments before going on watch. Right after going on watch we were called to general quarters. Bills general quarter's station was on mount 43 mm, right were the plane hit. I am sure it was sudden and he did not suffer. He was the same person, frying French fries when the Executive Officer, Lt. Bussetti, came through and caught us. Lt Bussetti grabbed a handful and went on his way. Bill stuttered some, when he would get excited.

After the plane hit, we were continuing to receive reports on

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other enemy planes closing. The last report was a plane at six miles. The way we were burning and lighting up the sky, there would be no way he could miss us. What we didn't know was the Commodore had instructed Cassin Young to take over the group, as The Callaghan was out of action. Cassin Young then directed The Prichett, to stand by the Callaghan. The Cassin Young then headed in the direction of the enemy planes. She splashed one near the Callaghan and another several miles away. This way The Callaghan was protected, Cassin Young, by taking it on herself to draw the fire from the enemy planes. Normally, we would start firing at enemy planes in the six mile range. At this moment I felt I was going to die. About ten minutes after we were hit there was a horrendous explosion. One of the ships later said, they didn't know how anyone could have survived this explosion. I was picked up by this explosion and blown ten feet. I wasn't the only one who lost his helmet as others of the crew did also. My helmet was just the right size, as I had a small head. Someone picked me up and put a helmet on my head. I thought I had gone blind as the helmet went down over my eyes. I was sure, when someone got my helmet, they would let me know. They did and I could see again. I had my kapok life jacket on. I

notice a piece of shrapnel near the shoulder on the left of my jacket. This life jacket either saved my life or saved me from being seriously wounded. We later felt one of the magazines blew up or the Jap plane that hit us was carrying a delayed detonating bomb. We thought we were making progress before this explosion. We were getting the fires under control and the damage control party was makin some headway. When this explosion came, it finished us. We were listing to the star-board and were down at the stern. We were losing power and

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it started looking hopeless. This is when we got word to stand-by-to-abandon-ship. This meant to go to your abandon ship station. It so happened my abandon ship station was where the plane hit and we were burning badly. I went forward to the foc-c-el and went over the life line. The life line, in this case is a cable rail, to help hold on to, when near the edge of the ship. This life line was up around the entire ship. It could be easily removed should it would be necessary. I stood outside this line with my helmet off. Should you have your helmet on and buckled to stay on, you could break your neck when you hit the water. The water would rush into the helmet at contact, and snap your head back. You jumped into the water without your helmet. There were many of the crew standing outside the life line waiting for the word to abandon ship. There wasn't too much conversation, only to help each other, such as the helmet and to secure the life jacket. I would estimate we were up about 20 to 30 feet from the water. You were also taught to hold on to you testicles when jumping as in some cases this could be very painful upon hitting the water. By this time we were not moving and dead in the water. Our list had become greater and it wasn't getting any better. The word came to abandon ship. We just stood there. No one jumped. I waited, and still no one jumped. It was like you go first. When I looked up at the rest of the guys, they were all looking at me. I said o'sh-t and jumped. Everyone else started jumping then, the only reason I could figure why this happened, was I was a verbal person and I did play a lot of jokes, and I was still in a mood, this isn't really happening to me, and I jumped. When I hit the water I started swimming away from the ship. I really must have been crazy, as I was singing as I was swimming. Why ? I don't know. I was by myself and scared as hell. I was out about a

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hundred yards I turn around and looked. The Callaghan was in bad shape.

She was burning with great intensity and the stern was low in the water. I kept thinking about more explosions and how the ship lit up the sky. I wanted to get as far away from her as I could get, and I kept swimming. Being I was the first off the ship, and I felt I was the farthest away, I rested for a few moments and watched. The night was really dark, I don't think there was a moon, at least I don't remember seeing one. It was very quite where I was when I heard a Splash, Splash, Splash, goes passed me. Then I heard, "Help, Help, I can't swim!" I yelled over to him I was on my way and swam over. It was one of our colored Stewarts Mates and he was in real trouble. I took off my life jacket and we both held on to it. It was a good thing we did this as I will explain later.

It made no difference to me, the color of his skin or the way he looked, he was a shipmate and that was it. I must apologize as I cannot remember his name, as the case in a lot of my memories, but this doesn't mean I can't recall their faces as the picture of each shipmate is imprinted in my mind, and I will never forget them. I can remember at the time of the action, but when we had our first reunion, after 30 years I had a hard time recognizing any one, because we were short, fat, guys loosing their hair. After thirty years, many changes in this old body happens. I am short fat little guy and I have lost most of my hair. We were only eighteen at the time.

After I had giving my shipmate part of my life Jacket, I asked him, "If you can't swim, How did you get out this far?" He answered "I don't know." The only thing I could think of as the reason is, He was so scared, he actually ran on water.

One other story of a shipmate, during this time is, I believe his

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name was Henry Dunagan. He was a short stocky young guy. I didn't know him as some of the others. The reason I bring this up as it made an impression on me to remember. After We were hit, I remember he was around our gun station looking for a spare Life Jacket, he had misplaced his or couldn't find it. He made a statement he couldn't swim. Someone came up with a life Ring. I didn't see him go into the water but I was told, he had jumped in the water and was floating towards the stern of the ship. It was said he couldn't swim away from the fire and it looked as he just gave up raised his arms and went down, never to be seen again. I had questions about this to myself, no one else. I thought every-

one was required to learn how to swim. How he got by this, I will never know.

We were floating around, everything was very quiet. You could see firing from our ships at enemy planes still in our area. Our ship had disappeared. All of sudden there was a tremendous explosion under water. This was very painful as it felt as someone stuck a small firecracker up your rectum and exploded it. I didn't joke about this. We found out later, when the ship went down, The cold water hitting the hot boilers made them explode. We had to be quite a distance away, when the ship went down.

The Stewarts Mate and I were holding on to my life jacket and we were able to join up with another group of our ship mates. I believe there were about eighteen in our group. One of the guys with us, had a mercury light. A mercury light is, when the light is held upright, it lights, when the light is held upside down, it would not light. We were with this group for sometime, The shipmate with the light, was holding it upright, trying to get the ships around to see us. Again, thinking we were safe and our of harms way, we were strafed

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by an enemy plane, tracer bullets hit all around us. I don't think anyone was hit, but we didn't show the light anymore until a ship got closer. We were in the water and every thing was quite when high in the sky, one of our Black Widows started firing at an enemy plane. You could see the tracers being fired, but no sound, a couple of seconds later you would hear the rat, tat, tat, of the firing. You also hear the engines of the planes, diving and screaming at one another. This wasn't the last of the exciting things happening to us. One of the enemy planes, flying low on the water, flew between one of our ships and our group in the water. The ship started firing at the plane. The shells and explosions, were all around us, there was no place to go. This is when I let go of my life jacket and went deep in the water. I was scared and I don't mind telling anyone about it. I had gone so deep, when I came up my nose was bleeding. I don't know why, I felt this was the end. Here again I don't know if any of our group was hit. If there wasn't anyone hit, it would have been a miracle. Our group started getting larger as the survivors started coming together. Being, we were strafed in the water, and more enemy planes were in the area, the ships could not stop to pick us up as they were making perfect stationary targets. All the ships started laying



smoke over the entire area. The ships could go into the smoke and pick us up. We had smoke all around us, you couldn't see ten feet. When a ship came into the smoke, it would move very slow as not to run us down. I was about thirty to forty feet from the rest of the guys with my friend, when I could hear voices. Everything was very quiet around us and we could hear these voices. I looked up, there was a destroyer bearing down on us. As soon as I saw this crewman leaning over the bow of this destroyer I started yelling. I actually pushed off the side of the

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ship with my feet, yelling at the crew above me. Then I heard the ship's screws stop, and start reversing. What flashed into my mind then was the Jap being chewed up by our screws, when he wouldn't come aboard our ship, when we were off Tokyo. I was screaming at the top of my voice to stop the engines. We were now down amidship when the screws did stop. It was now quiet again and the crew of the Destroyer, Cassin Young, started throwing us lines. The lines were light lines with Monkey fist attached. (Monkey fists were braided small lines with piece of lead as weight inside.) I caught one and the crew pulled the Steward Mate and me to the side of the ship. There was a rope ladder attached to the side of the ship. We started to climb up the ladder, but found we were so weak and cold it was difficult. The crew leaned over the side of the ship and helped pull us up. When we got aboard there were three small groups, standing in a circle. Each group had their own bottle of liquor. I don't remember what brand it was but it sure warmed you inside. We were allowed two drinks. We were in the water for four and one half hours. This wasn't bad as some of the ships and the crew. Some survivors spent days waiting for rescue. I didn't realize how black I was. We were covered with black crude fuel oil from head to toe. The Steward Mate started laughing at me and said he thought I was his brother, and I looked just like him. Each of us, were assigned to a crewman of the Cassin Young. He took me to the crew's head, undress me and was getting all the information on who I was. The pharmacist mates were coming around, washing our eyes and ears out. The crewman in charge of taking care of you, removed all your clothes, after finding out who you were. Now you were buck naked and you have two guys washing you down with a strong detergent, getting the fuel oil off. I

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am now feeling the effects of the shot of whisky, and the events which

have taken place. The Doctor came around asking if you had any wounds, or scratches. I went through this entire ordeal without a scratch, only feeling very tired. The crewman assigned to me, had found some clothes for me, and as I finished in the showers, I was dried with a towel and put on the clean clothes. I am really feeling weary. The crewman found a bunk for me and I went out, like a light. The time is about 5:30 or 6:00 A.M. I think I was only asleep for about an hour. When I awoke, the pillow I was sleeping on, was black with fuel oil. Thank God the oil didn't catch fire while we were in the water, If it had, a number of us would have perished. I found the crewman, assigned to help me and apologized about the pillow. He said forget it, they had plenty of pillows. I really felt ashamed for ruining his bunk. We were fed breakfast, the best I have ever tasted, and regrouped on the Fantail (Stern). Here we were asked where we were, what we did, who we were with, and how we did whatever we did. It was like a debriefing of the entire event. We also found out, how some of our shipmates died doing their job.

We were brought back to the Okinawa anchorage and put aboard a Hospital Ship. There were more test and examinations made to make sure no one was missed. We also received more shots, making sure, no one got by without a close examination.

The final conclusion of this action is, we lost 47 shipmates out of 320 men. Some were either missing or killed. The number of lost shipmates was low, because of several reasons. While she was burning and dead in the water, The LCS's came along side the Callaghan to fight the fire and to take off survivors. Another reason the number of killed and wounded was low was because of the crew

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of the Callaghan. The coolness of the crew and the calm action and courage of the Ships and Crew attending the Callaghan was exemplary.

We were taken to the Okinawa anchorage, and put on a hospital ship. This is where the Crew of the Callaghan, was assembled for the first time. We were debriefed, trying to put all the facts together. It seemed to me, that everyone aboard the ship was carrying a hypodermic needle. People were walking all over the place giving shots. Well, I wasn't hurt in any way and I stayed clear of these guys. It looked like to me, they had a contest going, who could give the most shots.

We were allowed to write a very short message home, saying if any of our folks heard anything, to let them know we were O.K. All together I wrote three letters, July 29th. 1945, July 31st. 1945, and Aug. 5th. 1945. I still have those letters. My parents gave them to me.

We were finally, put aboard a troupe ship heading for the States. We got as far as Ulithi. We were there about three days and the Atomic Bomb was dropped. The Indianapolis was sunk the same night we were, but their crew was not picked up for several days. After delivering the Bombs, the Indianapolis was returning, alone, without escort, to the Philippines. No radio messages sent, nothing to let anyone know their location. I know we went through hell, I can imagine, what they went through.

While we were at Ulithi, the War ended. All available troop ships were to report to the Philippines to carry occupational troops to Japan. We were put off on the Beautiful Island of Samar. There, we were assigned a Quonset hut for a Barracks. This is where I learned to play Red Dog, and about Mosquito nets. Modesty was still on the wing, as I

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had to relieve myself one day. There was a trench dug along the side of the road. A bench, with holes covered, the full length of the trench. We call them outhouses in Arkansas, but this was better known as open house. While I was setting upon my throne, low and behold, a Philippine native women came a sat beside me. After what I had been through, I could take anything. It was a wonderful thing, when I got home, just to shut the door, when I went into the Bathroom.

Being we were survivors, we did have some priority to get the first available transport back to the States. After a few days we were finally put aboard a APA, carrying troops to the States. It was loaded and when we went aboard we didn't help it much. This was like a slow boat to China. We received two meals a day, Everything was rationed, including water. It took us about a month to finally get to Seattle, Washington. Some of the troops had made a large sign, hung over the side of the ship, as we entered the port of Seattle. It read, "WE HAVE RETURNED." There were tugs spraying water into the sky, ships' horns blowing, people line along the dock and roads, giving us a welcome, we never expected. The Red Cross met us at the docks, with Milk, coffee, and doughnuts. We found out, we were the first troops arriving from over seas after the War.

When the Callaghan went down, all our belongings went with her. We didn't have clothes to go on Liberty. We had to be reissued clothes. I called my mother and father as soon as I could. When finally got through, there was a hurricane going in Miami, Florida. After I talked to them, telling them I would be home soon, the telephone wires went down.

The Callaghan threw a party, for the entire crew as a last fling, and I made a fool of myself. We paid tribute to the guys we lost. I

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drank too much, I cried too much. I was the most confused person alive. I was happy to go home, but I was sad, leaving people, who had been my family for the pass year, Not knowing we would meet again, 30 years

down the road.

The following day we mustered for the last time, as the crew of the Callaghan. This was hard, the Skipper told us how proud he was to have served with us, and if ever again would be pleased to serve with us again. We all shook hands, and said our good-byes.

The next day we all went our separate ways. There were about four of us, took a train to Chicago, where Dominic Boccincelli and His Parents lived. They were Italians, as the name should tell you. His father met us at the station, in Chicago, and took us to his home. I have never seen a reunion like this before. The food was out of this world. A iced down beer keg was on the front porch. So much food, so many friends, there was no describing the joys and happiness, surrounding us. Several of us had trains to catch later that evening. We were able to rest a couple of hours on a civilian bed. We were awoken later, and were taken to the train station. We said our good-byes and were on our way again.

I arrived in Miami, several days later. My Mother and father did not know, when I would arrive as nothing was on time those days. I took a cab home, when I arrived, my mother saw the cab pull up she was a very excitable and emotional person, she came out of the house screaming. The feeling of being home, with the ones who love you, cannot be described. I believe the whole neighborhood knew I was Home. I was home and I was proud to be home. I had earned Two bars of Ribbons with five Battle stars. It seemed there was a never ending flow of friends and relatives.

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## New Assignment

The Crew had thirty days survivors leave, and I was to report to Charleston, South Carolina. Being there only a short time, I met a girl, made a date, and for the first time in my life, I was unable to keep it. I tried to call her, but my train was leaving.

The New Ships Crew was being assembled in San Pedro, California. I was being assigned to a ship being built, the U.S.S. Recovery. It was a sea going Salvage. ARS 43. Normally it takes five days and five nights to cross the States from the East coast to the West Coast. I met A Navy lieutenant, and a first class Radioman. We did every thing together, mainly drinking. When we arrived in New Orleans, the First class and I got off the train to replenish our drinking supplies. No drinking supplies

were sold on trains during those days. We had to go out to get it. We were running a little late and we had put a bottle in each sock. That was the reason we had Bell Bottoms. My socks were still new, but my friends socks were stretched a bit. We were hurrying through the depot towards our train when one of his bottles came loose and started rolling across the floor. I bent over to pick it up and saw on the deck in front of me, a set of shoes, covered with leggings. I look up and it was two Shore Patrol. They were just smiling at me, I tucked the bottle up my Jumper, smiled at them, and walked away. When I looked back, They were still smiling.

There were a bunch of Recruits aboard the train, and the Lt. said they were making too much noise and keeping him awake. He gave me a Shore Patrol, arm band, a belt, and a club. I went to the car, where they were, and they were making a lot of noise. I slammed the club down on the table and told them to hold it down, We then sat

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down and started sharing our supplies. All they needed was a understanding person to show them the way. There were no more complaints from the Lt. The new Recruits were anxious to find out what was going to happen to them. We did tell them, they would lose their hair. The next day when they came back to us, they had shaved their own heads, before we even got to L.A. They were going through their Boot Camp, in San Diego. Our train was late getting into L.A. I was sober enough to get a excuse from the conductor. I was late arriving in San Pedro. Early A.M. I was put in the POL shack until the next morning. There was no place to sleep, so I was in the Prisoner-at-large shack until I could be assigned a Barracks. The next day I met some of the crew, most of us, were mainly waiting for our points to accumulate. The ship was being built, in Napa Ca. After the entire Crew was assembled, we were sent on training missions. We went aboard the U.S.S. Tucson, an AA Cruiser, for AA training. AA means, anti-aircraft. We went to sea and fired at some Drones. After the firing we broke down the twin 40 MM to clean it. I was stepping out of the gun tub with the recoil cylinder in my hands when my heel caught on the hatch exit. I fell forward, with the recoil cylinder in my hands, and almost severed my little finger on my left hand. Here I went through the entire war and didn't get a scratch, now peace time, and it happens. I went down to the sick bay and was setting in the hatch. The Pharmist Mate was spraying sulfur in the wound, I passed

out. The next thing I remember is I was laying on a table, with my feet higher than my head. As I was coming too I heard one of the guys saying "Boy! he is really out, isn't he ?"

After the training, we were all shipped to Mare Island. The new Crew, were put all in one barracks. We started doing odd jobs such as,

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going to Port Chicago, dismantling Gas Mask. I did get a new Job, assisting crews, moth Balling some of the large Ships in Susiun Bay. I handled a 40 foot motor Launch, putting crews aboard the ships and tugs We were kept busy for at least two months. I had a Engineer, and a Bowhook. The Bowhook, helped when we made approaches, helped in tying up and helped in anyway he could. The engineer, ran the engine. I rang bells, to inform him what I wanted. Two bells to start forward slowly, Three bells to run at a moderate speed. One bell, neutral, and stop. Four bells reverse. Having a good engineer was important. This in itself, was dangerous work. Susiun Bay had a nine knot current, and anything going over the side was hard to catch. You wore your hat down over your head good, as the sea gulls were many, you didn't dare look up, or open your mouth while looking up. One of the ships we were moth balling, broke loose one day and about took out the Railroad Bridge in Martinez. The Ships we were moth balling, was sunk in mud, along other ships, and a anchor would be taken out the bow, and dropped about 200 feet, another anchor was taken out the stern about the same distance. There would be no swinging with the tide, when anchored in this way.

We finally were able to start working on the U.S.S. Recovery. She was far enough along, where the crew, could start making up Towing Lines. I was put in charge of a detail, in making these lines. We worked with eight inch manila lines. This was hard work, and it had to be done right. I was also made a life saver. Let me tell you how the Navy Thinks. Being as I was a survivor of a ship sunk during the war, and was able to survive four and half hours in the water, the Navy felt I could swim. So on the U.S.S. Recovery, I was made a life saver. I would strip down, they would tie a line around my waist, through my

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butt over the side, I would swim out to whoever, grab them and hold on, the Crew of our ship would pulled me and my rescue back to the ship. I thought a number of times of the sharks off of Okinawa, where the women disappeared after the PT boat, sank the jap womens boat. I did

**agree to do this, and the Lord was on my side once more. I received enough points to go home.**

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### **Out of the Frying Pan**

**While at Mare Island, waiting for enough Points to get out of the Service, I met a girl. I did a lot of roller skating, and I met this girl at the skating rink. I was a fair skater and I love to skate with girls. We hit it off right at the beginning. We went together for several months, I was about to get out of the service, and I wanted to take her home with me. My mother wasn't very happy, but she backed me 100%. I was discharged out of the Navy from Shoemaker, Ca. June 6th 1946. I was married in San Francisco, June,9th.1946.**

**When I asked Eunice to marry me, It wasn't a smooth road at all. Eunice's father worked on Mare Island, and saw us getting our blood test. I was going to talk to her father that evening, but he came apart,**



and she moved out. He finally realize what a good guy I was, and accepted me.

Right after Eunice had agreed to Marry me, We were given a surprise. She worked downtown Vallejo, at a small restaurant. I would pick her up from work every night, and ride the same bus, home. We became good friends with the driver of that bus. I believe he was one of the first we told we were getting married. One evening shortly after that, we were riding home on the bus, the driver gave us a set of silverware. Our first gift. I believe he was about 35 or 40 then. We have tried to contact him since we returned to California, We wrote the newspapers, Chamber of Commerce, and The bus company. The bus company has been changed, since then. We have all but given up finding him. We will be married 49 years coming June 9th.1995. We still have the silverware.

I was nearing the completion of securing enough points to be

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discharged. While waiting for this, I was assigned to the Decommissioning office. I took phone calls, and answered some mail.

You can't imagine how my mother felt, as I was the only child. Up to this point, she had control, but now, her only child is getting married to someone she has never met. There has got to be a time when parents let go of their children. There always is. If you were taught what is right and what is wrong, you should know the difference. Make some decisions on your own. The decisions' kids make when they reach the decision making age, stems on how their parents brought them up. The family back ground,drunks, procrastinators, moochers, and thinking everyone owes them a living. The children will live the same way. A loving family, hard working, energetic, carries its own load, understands responsibility. These children will carry the nation.

We spent several days at the Hilton Hotel, in Long Beach, and then on to San Diego to visit some of my new Relatives. We boarded a Train for Miami Florida. I have a new Bride, never been out of State of California. This was a new experience, new and exasperating, and she passed 100 per cent. Now she is teaching me. When we went through Louisiana, we were on a train with no air conditioning. It was a old coal burner at that. To keep cool we opened the window. This was a big mistake. The suet came through the windows, and my mama thought I had joined the brotherhood when we arrived in Miami. It took some doing, for my mother, to

get use to a girl. She had nothing to say in what she likes and dislikes of the girl I married. I'm sure it happens to day as it did then. I do want to say, My Mother's boy was right. Eunice and my mother became, not only mother and daughter, but came to love one

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another. She taught Eunice how to cook, sew, and a lot of the things. Mom, liked, teaching Eunice, as Eunice wanted to learn. Eunice was soon accepted into the family, and she, my wife, became as a daughter.

In 1953 we were graced with a son. His name is Ronald William Benton. After living on the East Coast for twenty five years, we moved to California. The Company I was working for, was a Fortune 500 Company. National Service Industries. The company found out my wife was from Ca. and asked me to make a lateral move, with increase in salary. Eunice and I always discussed, any of the moves I made with the Company, and we accepted the move. My son Ron had one more year of High School. When he finished, He joined the Navy. He surprised me, and I couldn't be happier.

He took his Boot Training in San Diego. We went to his Graduation. He then was sent to, Great Lakes, to go to Missile School. He finished school and was assigned to the U.S.S. Gridley.

He Made three trips overseas and always brought home, dishes, jewelry, and a lot of stuff.

He was getting the training alright, but I will explain why I did not push him in re-uping for his second six years. On his last trip Overseas, I received a letter from his Skipper. I was invited to meet the U.S.S. Gridley in Pearl Harbor, Board her and Ride back to San Diego with my son. The invitation was better known as a Tiger Cruise. A number of the fathers were invited. Admiral Zumwalt was Secretary of the Navy, and he was liberal as they come. He wanted all Navy personnel to look like Chiefs. My son looked good but he wasn't a chief. A lot of rules had been relaxed, and I must tell you, I am glad he wasn't in charge of very much during the war.

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I accepted the invitation and flew to Pearl Harbor. My son and a friend met me. I stayed at the Holiday Inn at the Air Port, the first night. The next day I went aboard the Gridley. I was in the same compartment as my son. We rented a car and really took in the Island. We ate and drank all day. We visited the, Arizona and all the sights worth seeing. We were

leaving the next day for San Diego. I made this trip to see if the Navy Had changed. Boy! had it changed. What a difference. The decks were polished so, you could see your self. The bunks were very comfortable. They were private, with individual lighting, a zippered curtain could make the bunk dark enough so you could sleep during the day. Each quarters had their own phone, to any part of the ship. It had its own TV. Station, and a large TV in each compartment. They would show movies and put on the latest news. There would be training films and news about what was going on, with the ship and its personnel. The food was great, My meals cost me about 95 cents a day, and it was plentiful. All this is the positive. Now let me tell you about what I noticed, I didn't like. I could smell, and detect the use of marijuana. The crew was disrespectful to the officers, and the officers let them do it. I didn't see many officers who could gain the respect of his men. A officer must demand that respect and get it. They joked too much with the crew. I am certainly glad we didn't have a Naval emergency doing this time. After seeing how this ship was run, I told my Son, It was his decision to re-up or not, I gave him my reasons. I told him if he decided to get out of the Navy, he would have my Blessing.

Since then, Zumwalt has retired,(Thank God.), the Navy is back to where it should be. Our Navy people are back in the right Uniforms. I did one other thing, that brought me back to the Callaghan. I stood

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watch on the Helm on the Gridley. I guess I was on the helm for about two hours. Pictures were taken by the crew and I ended up in the year book. I feel we are in good shape with the navy Today.

**Meeting Old Friends**

I had had heard, the crew of the Callaghan was preparing a reunion, Hugh Slay's name was given to me. He lived in Belmont, Ca. I was in San Francisco, On one of my business trips, and called him. He gave the directions to his home in Belmont, and I met him and his Wife Betty. Here, I found out more about the reunion, and started making plans to attend, the last of July 1975, in Chicago.

Exactly thirty years to the very date, the crew of the U.S.S. Callaghan met at a reunion in Chicago. Most of the surviving crew was there, including the Skipper. I did reconize Chief Ron Hand, and found he lived near me. I lived in Fresno Ca. Hand lives in Oakdale, Ca. We met in Chicago, with Hand and Joean, Slay and Betty. Many of the fellows were short, fat, bald headed, gray hair, old men, I had a hard time recognizing. Me, I hadn't changed a bit. Thirty years had been good to me. I was short, fat, gray headed, and I recognized myself right away.

We had a great time, We relived the Callaghan, and told stories, over and over again. We visited the Boot Camp and were invited to a graduation of New Recruits. What we did at this reunion, was to plan for future reunions.

I received a letter from the Navy Department, about a New Destroyer, named the U.S.S. Callaghan, D.D.G. 994, being Commissioned In Pascagoala, Alabama. The entire crew, was invited. Some were able to show up. I tried every way to get there. I did

try to get a military flight, but to no avail. I could not be away very long. It was the wrong time of the year, to take time off.

We received through the mail from one of our thoughtful crew

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members, pictures and a copy of the ceremonies. I was grateful for that.

The next reunion I was able to attend was in 1986. Some of our surviving crew had passed on. It seems we get fewer each year, and that is the whole purpose of this book. I was surprised, to find the U.S.S. Callaghan DDG 994 was in San Diego. We were invited aboard to inspect the ship. We were taken to the ship, including our wives. All of us, were given a tour of the Callaghan. This tour gave back to me, the faith, the reassurance, our Navy is the Best in the world. The Officers and the Crew was top grade. There was a Pride, about this ship, as we had about our ship. The crew of our ship, Presented the crew of the New Callaghan, two Bronze plaques, for the Quarter deck. The plaques, will always be recognized with a memory of the DD 792. U.S.S. Callaghan.

This new Destroyer, was a battle wagon in itself. If we had the power and the Armament this Destroyer had, we really could have won the war by ourselves. I know this is just a figure of speech, but the power of this single ship was mind boggling. She was skippered by a Commander, William Glenn Sutton. This ship, had its own heliport, its own pad and hanger. Everything was top notch, and the crew was sharp.

The U.S.S. Callaghan, DDG 994. Held a memorial over the sunk, Callaghan. They made a video of the ceremonies, and I have a copy.

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## Conclusion

My thought about what I feel has happened to our country today. The children, misbehaving, on the wrong side of the law, and can't tell what is right and what is wrong, are the sickness, eating away at our nation today. This all stems from the way a liberal thinks. "Spare the rod and spoil the child." All the conservative rules were not enough to keep

**control. The liberals did everything they could to break the rules. They want everyone treated the same. You cannot treat children like adults. They haven't had a chance to be kids yet. The parents of today, some of them, haven't been taught themselves. You hear of parents sending their kids off to school to let somebody else raise them. Parents of today, mostly broken homes, drinkers, dope-pers, career welfare parents, etc, have released upon this nation, children, whose life doesn't mean any thing to them. They have no hope for the future and they don't want you to have one. They have been taught by their parents, get it without paying for it, any way you can. Parents need to take more interest in the growing up of their kids, not in the careers of themselves. Nine times out of ten this type of child becomes a burden on society. You and I have to pay for this type of parent. I believe the parent should be held responsible, for their children until they are of legal age. The parents lose control, and expect someone else, to straighten their kids out.**

**Most people do not know the difference between a liberal and a conservative. If there is a athletic person attempting to pole vault a ten foot jump, and he doesn't make it, the conservative will egg the**

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**athlete to do better and work at it. The liberal will lower the pole to make it easier. We never get better under liberals, we get worse.**

**I feel the service, any service, is good training, for any kid in their teen years. If the government really wants to help, this is where it's needed. Most parents, have no idea how to raise a kid, to respect them and others.**

**Many people dying today, young and with many good productive years of life left. They are either overdosing, or committing suicide, or killing someone else, who wants to live.**

**These people, no matter what age, will not be remembered, as they have done no good for themselves, or anyone. We are only on this earth a short time, don't leave it unless you are satisfied with what you have done. As for me, I have spent my life with a person I deeply love, I have a Son, a Daughter-in-Law and Step-Grandson for whom I am very proud. I have met some great people, including the Crew of the Callaghan. All the people made this book possible, without them I would be nothing.**

**By William Benton**

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Well, it's been two years since I wrote My Story. A lot of things have happened and I will try to bring anyone who may be interested up to date. I will tell what I know about our Ship The USS Callaghan, DD 792. As most will say there has been a lot of water under the keel. A lot of our shipmates have passed on and we miss them. Just after I finished the Book, the crew of the Callaghan had their 50th reunion in Pigeon Forge Tenn. It was great to see old faces ( as you know, we are all getting old) and some shipmates came we haven't seen since Seattle at our last Roster. I was really grateful for being one of the crew aboard the Callaghan. A boyhood friend living in north Florida came up to see me and we spent the day together.

What memories we had and the tales we told over and over again. This reunion was a memory in our life, we will never forget.

If you recall, the two months before we were sunk, May 25th 1945, we knocked down two Betty Bombers. This story was in the Chapter "Thirty seconds" We picked up two Japanese airman. One died and the other lived. His story about his encounter with the Callaghan, was entirely different than mine and I tend to believe my first version than his. There are several facts that make me feel the way I do. My information was he could speak English at the time he was picked up. At the reunion he had to have an interpreter. He said he was unconscious at the time he was rescued. Yet he held his friend until he was saved. Shortly after turning him over to the Intelligent's people, we heard a large flight of out planes finished off the Japanese Fleet. This after We were told, by him, he was going to save us by telling us of the Japanese Fleet coming. The only reason I feel this

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man said what he did was because of the part he played in the destruction and the finish of the Japanese Fleet. You wonder why I say this ? This man was an enemy, and the Japanese have a hard time telling the truth when it will effect them in a bad light. What is this world coming to ? When the Japanese wants us to apologize for dropping the Atomic Bomb. In many of the American Newspapers they were glorifying their kamikaze pilots. When you go to see the Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor, notice how many Japanese are there.

The name of the airman we rescued is “Kaoru Hasegawa”. He is the president of The Rengo Co., LTD, 5-12 Hiranomachi 3-Chome, Chuo-Ru, Osaka, Japan. There are 4,000 employees and one of the products they make are the Budweiser cardboard carrying cases.

Attach is a story he told and wrote before coming to the 50th reunion of the USS Callaghan DD 792 at Pigeon Forge Tenn. What to believe is entirely up to you. I’m just a sailor who saw what I saw and heard. I am not saying I couldn’t be wrong, lord knows I have been wrong a lot of times. This is what I believe and there are to many facts to not to change my miind.

I shook his hand and gave him the benefit of any doubt I had in my mine.

I have to say, from my story and the Tin Can Sailor News, more Survivors of the Calligahn have contacted me. The most resent was William Uzzel. I didn’t remember him, as he came to us after being on the Lexington when she was hit and damaged. He received A Presidential Unit Citation an a Purple Heart for herosim. When the Callaghan was sunk, He received a Purple Heart and a Citation Ribbon for meritorious conduct in the performance of his duties. He assisted wounded and getting life jackets to help thoes who needed it, while

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wounded himself. Bill was a first class seaman and the Callaghan was a grateful ship to have Bill aboard. Now after all these years he has surfaced here in Redding, Calif.— Thanks Bill for all that you did. —That night the Fat Lady Sang, There were many heros beyond the call of duty. Most we never hear about, but I must say, when the call to duty came. the entire crew was there, and nothing more could be done to save another soul. This was the main reason why we only lost forty-seven men when the Callaghan went down.



Here it is, the last of February 1998. I have been told by the New skipper of the DDG 994 USS Callaghan, CMD Jim Rennie, the Callaghan is being decommissioned on March 31st 1998. The decommissioning will be held in Everett, Washington. I am making plans to be there. Radm Sutton will attend. He was the first skipper of the DDG 994. The crew met him when we had a reunion in San Deigo in 1986. We were taken on a tour of the ship. This will be a sad time for all of those that sailed under the Callaghan's flag. Admiral Callaghan, who was killed aboard the Cruiser San Francisco during World War 11 will be proud.

Finish.

I went to the Decommissioning of the DDG 994 and Commander Rennie was most Gracious. I was treated like a VIP. I was the only survivor of the DD 792 present. The other World War Two Veteran Present was a shipmate, Named is Abert Baab. He was aboard the USS Prichett DD 761, the night we were sunk and his ship was firing at the same plane that hit us.

Just a note to complete this story of this ship Names Callaghan. I

found out just recently, the Legacy of Admiral Callaghan will live on. I understand there are Ten new Destroyers on the board to be built and one of them will be designated "The Callaghan". Maybe not in my life time but someday.

As you grow older and time passes, you try to bring your life up to date. That is what I'm going to do here. I am going to start just about where I left off. So bear with me for the next few pages.

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I'm seventy-three years old now and I feel it. Going to the doctor, finding out I have diabetis, high blood pressure, and arthritis. I had finished this book in 1995. There have been changes and additions. I have a home page about the Callaghan DD 792 and the Callaghan DDG 994..

Due to my home Page on the internet, the have been inquires about several crew Members. People on the DD 792 who died at the time the ship wnt down. The Inquires were about Gilbert Paine, whow received the Silver Star. His mother told thier relatives how he died and how he received the Silver Star. I was able to find out when he died and How. Sam Elroy, His Great Nephew Who is a commander and Captain O fhis own Ship. You would be amazed of all the people that have contacted me because of the book and my Home Page. Iwill continue to add pages to this never ending book. I sent one of my books to 15 year old, who inquired about his Great GrandFather. His name is Warren and he made me proud about the Youth of today. I signed his book, in this manner—  
From the past Generation,  
One who appreciates the Youth of today.

It was the Youth of Yesterday that Saved the Youth of today.

Let the Youth of today save the Youth of tommorow.

Bill Benton

I now Have a home page on the internet. It all about the USS Callaghan DD 792 and The DDG 994. It can be Located at this Location—  
<http://www.jett.net/~wbenton>. I try to change and add once to twice a year.

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