

AUGUST 2002

SACO VETERANS

OF
THE RICE PADDY NAVY
CHINA

WHAT

Perpetual Skipper

THE

HELL?

VAdm. Milton E. "Mary" Miles



Sino American Cooperative Organization

Issue No. 24

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SACO HISTORY

SACO (pronounced "SOCKO" stands for Sino-American Cooperative Organization) and was established during WWII by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Highly secret, originally known as U.S. Naval Group, China, it was placed under the joint command of General Tai Li (Head of BIS (Bureau of Investigation and Statistics, i.e., *Intelligence*) as Director of SACO and VAdm. Milton Edward "Mary" Miles as Deputy Director. The Chinese and American members of SACO joined in combined effort to perform intelligence and guerrilla operations. We soon became known by the sobriquet "*THE RICE PADDY NAVY.*" "*SACO TIGERS,*" as they were, and *are*, popularly known, served hundreds of miles behind enemy lines, establishing vital weather stations, coast-watching to report on enemy shipping, intercepting Japanese code, rescuing downed allied airmen and being involved in numerous other military, medical and humanitarian endeavors. The American personnel numbering in excess of 2,500, were *each and everyone a volunteer* from several branches of service, but for the most part, Navy and Marine men.

(Another note of interest: It has been noted that this group may have the unique distinction of being the first American Military Group to ever serve under a foreign leader in time of war????!***

SACO DUES

**ARE PAYABLE EACH JANUARY
FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR FOR
REGULAR, ASSOCIATE AND
AUXILIARY MEMBERS AND TO
BE SENT TO THE FOLLOWING
TREASURERS:**

REGULAR & ASSOCIATES

\$20

**TREASURER HERMAN W. WESKAMP
3034 LARKWOOD
WEST COVINA, CA 91791-2928
PHONE: 626 332-4978**

LADIES AUXILIARY

\$15

**TREASURER LAURA SELLERS
1291 EASTERN PARKWAY
LOUISVILLE, KY 502 459-4753**

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**2002
SACO
DONORS
AS OF 6-1-02**

Abbey, Lacey
Baillie, Frank (A)
Baker, Willie
Banner, Richard
Barrett, George*
Bash, James
Bayer, John (A)
Bisceglia, Victor (A)
(In memory of dad)
Blackmore, Charles
Blackwell, James
Blanchard, Robert
Bohus, Arthur
Boroff, Paul
Bradley, Joseph
Bradshaw, Conrad
Bricker, Alfred
Browning, Charles
Ching, Joseph
Ciaccio, Salvatore
Clarke, David
Colson, Thomas
Coughlin, Thomas
Cox, Alex
Cox, Ruth (F)
Cramer, Edward
Cross, Robert
Devlin, Col. Francis
Dillon, Henry
Dunn, Terry (A)
Dunn, Jean (F)
Durant, Analee (F)
Elliott, William
Fiduk, Maj. Stephen
Fintak, Leonard
Fitzgerald, Joseph
Gee, Clarence
Gerosa, Alfred
Gillespie, Howard
Glassic, Francis
Gleason, Col. Frank*
Grayson, John
Green, Jr. Luther
Hall, Bill

Hanson, Buren
Hardenbrook, Don
Harmon, LCdr Elmer
Hatterman, Fanny
(Memory of Wayne)
Hildreth, Charles
Hoe, Robert
Howard, Cdr William
Huber, Donald
Johnson, Cecil
Johnson, Gordon
Keenan, Jr. Joseph
Keller, John
Kelly, James
Keogh, Dr. James
Kilmer, Frank (A)*
Klavan, Stanley
Klos, John
Larson, Robert
Leberman, Don
Leighton, Martha (A)
(Memory/LCdr. Joseph)
Magann, Dr. Walter
Mann, Lashley
Maurice, Richard (A)
McCabe, Mrs. Burton (F)
McDonough, Jennie (F)*
McNeeley, Don (A)
Metzel, Jr. Adm. J.C. (A)
Milliren, Capt. Howard
Montgomery, Alan
(friend of the editor)
Moon, Albert
Moore, Roger
Morris, Seth
O'Brien, Charles
Olsen, Arthur
Parker, Robert
Parsons, Alfred
Peacock, William
Peden, Ralph
Petersen, Katie (F)
Petosky, Sigmund
Petri, Richard
Powers, Dr. Wm. J
Prather, Fred
Ray, Douglass*
Reynnet, Darius (A)
Richardson, Jack
Rosinski, Edward*
Rourk, Jr. William
Schmeling, Herman

Shearer, John
Shiffler, Eleanor (F)
Shragal, Elsie M. (F)
Simmons, Bill
Sizemore, Arline (F)
(Memory of Bob)
Stewart, William
Stone, Norbert
Stouffer, Ralph
Tanner, Allen
Tate, S. Shepherd
Tedesco, Ben
Terpstra, Richard
Tether, Charles
Thomas, Robert
Tordoff, John
Tressler, Jr. Guy
Wagner, Marcel
Warner, Dean & Billi
Wayner, Joe (A)
Wheeler, James
White, Bill
Wilcox, Marlyn
Wogan, Anthony

*Omitted as 2001
donor in last issue
#23 of January
2002

*(F) signifies friend or
SACO family member
who hasn't applied for
associate membership,
but will be sent a copy
of this issue in recog-
nition of your contri-
bution to our organi-
zation. We welcome you
to join & if you so
desire, please contact
our Membership Chair-
man Paul Casamajor
who submits appli-
cants to the next
meeting for approval
No one has been re-
jected - just a formality.
Also, send \$20 annual
dues to Treas Weskamp.*

*Thanks to all of you
for donations above
annual dues It keeps
us alive! Ting hao!!!*

**Sorry, Here
are 3 Late
Notices Of
Donors:**

Foster, John W
Gantz, Beverly
Vasold, A. E

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



If you will note, we are so fortunate as to have our 48th annual SACO Reunion coming up. That is a remarkable fete and has been many monumental tasks for all volunteers of the past to host these fun-filled events. Perhaps as many as 50% of these reunions had been held before many of us joined ranks. Up until that time, things progressed without those of us who were "late-comers." Therefore, one ponders, why do we have dissension among the ranks that is so prevalent today? Why do we complain to our host with such trivia as "I have a room without a view – it's either the parking lot or rooftop that I have to look at!" Who gives a damn? – you're only here for a short stay and here to join others on a busy schedule that should keep you out of your room other than sleeping at day's end. Maybe the hotel will accommodate you in moving, but remember, we're not paying for luxury and don't bug the host.

We're critical of past performances of our hosts. True, some reunions may have been better organized than others, but it's over, we had a good time and realize that some past hosts have had serious family problems and did the best they could after serving their priorities.

This is not to say we can't be critical, we *should* be and try to improve the errors of the past –*but with diplomacy* – some past chair

people get wind of the scuttlebutt about the shortcomings of their efforts at entertaining and this *is regrettable and uncalled for*.

There have been complaints about transportation at some events, but beggars can't be choosers and our dependence on a volunteer to host us doesn't always provide a venue with 100% conveniences. But, I've never heard anyone complain that they didn't have a good time regardless of slight personal problems.

And we have chosen officers and trustees to lead our organization – people with whom we have the right to disagree, but not publicly criticize as ignorant and unknowledgeable. Professionals are such because they are learned in a field in which we are not. There again, we may disagree, *but they command respect* such as they offer us when we need their service.

At this time, I feel it is fitting to quote, in part, an e-mail from Joe and Peg Fitzgerald that is food for thought for all:

"When preparing the announcement of the 2002 reunion, we neglected to include the words "plus tax" after the room rate. . . Taxes on hotel rooms are common and *should not be a surprise*. The normal room rate for this hotel on the beach is around \$139 plus tax. . . We have been aware of (correspondence) to the hotel and their reply for some time. We hoped the matter was *finished*. Apparently not. . . if there are any questions about arrangements with the hotel, we wish prospective attendees would call us first to see if we could answer the questions.

"We do not intend to further defend common hotel practices. It is hoped that SACO officers would do whatever is necessary to *restrain members from communications which further damage the good relationship with the hotel* which we have established over a three-year period*. We are going to need their advice, assistance, and cooperation beyond the specific letter of the contract to make the reunion one which all attendees will enjoy. Joe and Peg"

**And may I add, "the good relationship of the SACO organization." I wonder how reunion groups ever managed before those of us who came in later years. Come at me if you will, but be aware, "If the shoe fits . . ." well, we know the rest. Let's cool it, turnaround, and nurture the love this unique group of wartime men has always known. PLEASE!*

???!***

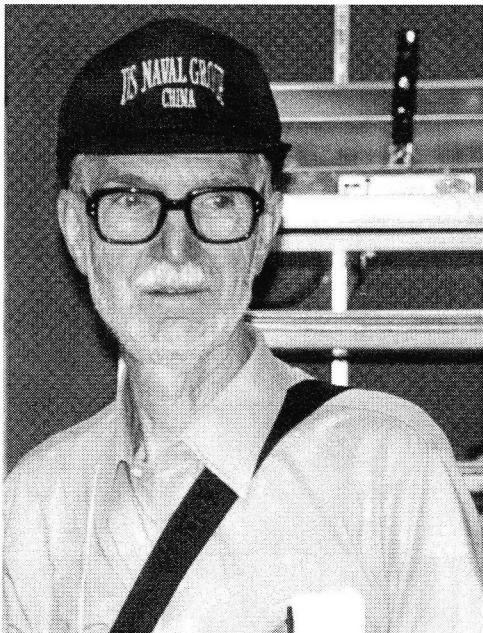
Letters



5 March 2002

From: George Barrett

To: SACO Members, Secretary Bill Bartee,
Trustees – Jack Miller, Bill Miller, Bill
Hall, Charles Sellers and Robert Hoe.



George Barrett

In my attempt to arrange a reunion in Indianapolis for the SACO group for the year 2003, I requested the help of the Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. My understanding

was that I received a go-ahead from the SACO Trustees.

With the help of the AFR, Inc., I was able to eliminate a number of hotel offers and thought I had a good one with the Adams Mark Hotel. With the help of Bill Sager and the cooperation of the AFR, Inc., we were able to get most of what SACO was requesting from the hotel.

In submitting the accommodations to the Trustees, I at first received positive reactions from Charles Sellers and Bill Hall. I received negative reactions from Jack Miller, Bill Miller and Robert Hoe.

Further, I am getting feed-back that there is now a very negative feeling about using AFR, Inc.

Due to the majority negative response and the "e-mails" going around, I herewith resign from hosting the 2003 reunion of the SACO group in Indianapolis.

I would like to thank Bill Bartee and Bill Sager for their splendid help in time and effort. I am canceling my affiliations with AFR, Inc.

Respectfully,

George A. Barrett
George A. Barrett
????!!***

To the editor. . . .22 April 2002

Many thanks for sending me several copies of the January edition of *SACO NEWS*, It contained Bill's obituary, so I was pleased to have copies to send to each of our four children. To them, SACO and "Every man a tiger" are synonymous. They had heard that quote so often.

Sincerely, Analie Durant

????!!***

To the editor . . . 17 April 2002

The SACO News arrived last week and, per usual, I have enjoyed so much reading about your reunions and the memories that the men write about. I only wish that Jim and I had attended more reunions and got to know more of the members. You always seemed to have good times.



Enclosed find a check to help you with your postage and printing of the SACO magazine.

Sorry to hear about your accident. Hope this finds you well recovered from it.

Keep up your good work –
Sincerely,

Martha Leighton
Martha Leighton

????!!***

To Jack & Ann Miller. . . 26 Dec 2001



As you see by the date, I am really far behind, so decided to finish my Christmas card after the fact.

I was in the White House 9/11. They sure got us out of there in a hurry – my car was in a garage nearby & couldn't get to it so stayed down in the city until evening.

My sister died in Sept

& I had a car accident early Nov. Hope 2002 is a little better.

Looking forward to seeing you all in Fla.

Best wishes

Sylvia

Sylvia Erwin

????!!***

To the editor . . . 16 March 2002

I just received the latest *SACO NEWS* of Jan 2002, Issue #23.

I want to thank you for my little tidbit about the weather service story about Camp 1 on page 61.

My sons got a great kick out of it & laughed about the idiocy of so-called high bureaucrats in the military service and civilian life.

. . I hope to make the next SACO get-together in October.

The best,
Howard (Samuels)

????!!***

To the editor. . . 12 April 2002

I want to send my too-belated thanks for sending that boxful of past issues of *SACO NEWS* earlier this year. I've finally had time to start reading them and, having been to two of the reunions, I've been enjoying every moment of reconstructing and envisioning the bonds and camaraderie my father had with you and all his SACO friends.

Here is my dues plus a donation I insist that you accept for any use you see fit. I know my mother sent one recently – but I

insist you use this.

In exchange, I would like to please get another couple of SACO decals from you – and any other patches, insignias, or SACO paraphernalia that you might have excess stock in. I recently replaced a SUV with a new one and I need a SACO decal to fully “break it in.”

As you may know, Bob Hoe and now Bob Sinks, on behalf of SACO and my family, have petitioned the Secretary of the Air Force, who is designated to determine whether special Allied veterans (i.e., my father) qualify for a special eligibility to receive V.A. benefits such as burial at a national cemetery. This may be the light at the end of the tunnel. So we’ve taken our best shot and have fingers crossed.

Will let you know what happens.

Best regards to you and your mother.

Sincerely,


Terry Dunn

???!!!!***



To the editor . . . 31 March 2002

We so enjoyed reading your most recent issue of the SACO NEWS. Your coverage of the reunion at Fredericksburg was terrific and brought back memories of the lovely occasion, especially the photos. In appreciation and support of your continued work and commitment as the single-handed editor of the

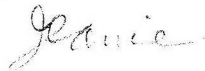
newsletter, I am enclosing a check for \$200 to your office. (Although I wrote to both Terry and Jean, I must say again that I am overwhelmed at your magnanimous support of SACO and our publication. From all of us – thank you so very much????!!!*** Ed.)

As you may know, Bob Hoe has been helping us with the campaign to get Jimmy’s ashes placed at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery. Terry has written to the Secretary of Veteran Affairs, the Hon. Anthony Principe, and his office replied with some great news: SACO can apply to the Secretary of the Air Force for special eligibility for all its Allied members (such as Jimmy) to receive V.A. burial benefits.

SACO is to contact Cynthia Nunez, the Administrator of the Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery, to get more specific guidance, but we feel that this is the last hurdle and we now “see the light at the end of the tunnel.” I thank you and the SACO board in advance for your support and work on Jimmy’s and my family’s behalf to bury him among his U.S. Naval brethren.

We hope your leg is fully recovered and that you are in good health again. Please give our regards to Erma. I’m hoping that we will all be able to attend the next reunion in October.

Love,



Jean Dunn

???!!!!***

To H. W. Weskamp . . . 28 March 2002

I enclose two checks, one for \$20 payable to SACO for my 2002 dues, and the other for \$100, also payable to SACO to support Richard Rutan’s efforts in the publication of the SACO NEWS.

It has been a joy for me to receive Richard’s publication over the years, and the day is going to have to come when the frailties which beset all of us are going to make it impossible for Richard to carry one. Richard has done a wonderful job in providing the cohesion an organization like SACO requires, and I do not know anyone who would have given SACO NEWS the time and talent Richard has given it out of his dedication to the group.



The lifetime membership card is good recognition, and I hope it carries with it the forgiveness of dues for the same period.

I see our organization, presently composed of members in their eighties, giving thought, as it should, to the possibility of the passage of the last extant member. Tontines are illegal

in most states, and I would suggest our officers and trustees give consideration to the disposition of whatever is in the treasury when the time comes that the organization can no longer function.

Sincerely,

Conrad A. Bradshaw

Brad, I can't tell you at what depth your kind letter touched me .I thank you sincerely for your heartwarming appreciation of the publication and it's through the messages from the likes of you that fuel my endeavor to improve with each forthcoming publication. I hope we can continue to be an active force beyond expectations. Ed.

????!!!***

To the editor27 Mar 2002

First, let me apologize for this hand-printed letter. In my old age, I no longer have a steno or typist and I have never learned to use the PC. I do have a P.C. but ignore it.

Issue No.23 of SACO NEWS was a superb job as have all other issues in the past.

If at all possible, could you send me another copy of No. 23? (*Sent Ed.*) I am enclosing a check for \$25.00. If not possible to send another copy, just put the \$25.00 in the general fund (*it was*) or whatever.

The best to you and your mother.

Bill Peacock

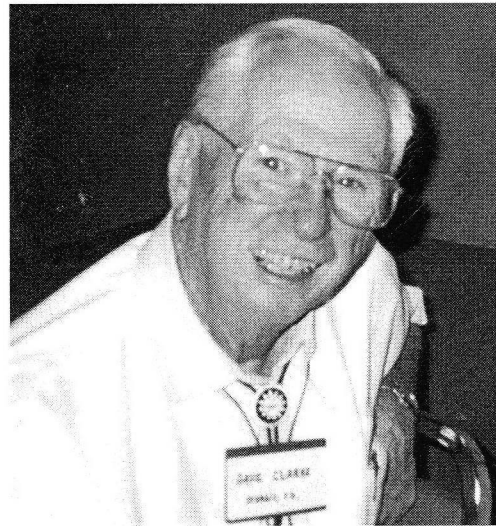
????!!!***

To the editor20 March 2002

Once again, you did an outstanding editorial job on the January 2002 issue of the SACO News. It is, thankfully for the members, your labor of love and the many issues you have produced are ample evidence of that. I am sure we all understand how it becomes more difficult each year, so don't be concerned about any delays. We are grateful to receive the next issue whenever it arrives in the mail. It would be nice, in a way, if someone else would either help your or take over the task. But I don't like that idea either; no one can fill your shoes.

Dorie and I hope to attend the reunion at Cocoa Beach. The time in the fall is much more suitable for us than April or May.

With best wishes for you and Erma,



Sincerely,

Dave (Clarke)

*You guys keep up with such kind and heart-warming letters and I'm going to have to consider having a pin at my disposal to deflate my ego????!!!*** Sincerely though, I love to hear from you – it increases my love for work and hope that the future allows me to hang around long enough to keep reporting what the SACO Tigers are up to as long as we prevail. May fate grant us several more years as buddies of the RICE PADDY NAVY Luv y'all Ed.*

????!!!***

To the editor . . . April 2002



Just a line to tell you how much I am enjoying this last SACO NEWS. You did a wonderful job.

Hope you and Erma are back to good health. . .

Sincerely,

Wanita "Skeeter" Bartee

Wanita "Skeeter" Bartee

????!!***

To Erma and Richard . . . 16 March 2002



. . . We've had a letter from Hazel Nelson and Evelyn Buckless. Hazel said she didn't get a SACO NEWS last fall, told her we

didn't either, but Evelyn Buckless said they they got one. Were there any sent out or not? *(There was no "fall" issue – the two Rutans were struggling to care for each other – I was unable to get issue 23 published until early March 2002 which you should have ultimately received. I apologize for not having contacted you prior to this – just too much going on on the homefront. Ed.)*

Frank & Evelyn seem to like their new home (in retirement) and the children feel much better with them there. . .

Len just came home this week from the hospital. He has a bleeding ulcer and received 4 units of blood. So he's not doing much nowadays. Said he feels much better now at home in his favorite recliner and bed. He's also had trouble walking and had an MRI to see if it was because of a disc in his lower back. But the MRI showed arthritis. He was 82 in Jan. so guess our bodies are beginning to show some wear. . .

Had a short letter from LaVerda Collins at Christmas time – she says "Old Uncle Art" has been giving her some trouble. She lives in Idaho now. . .

We're a "scattered family" from WI to NM , AZ, Calgary and Ft Saskatchewan, UT and MD and a grandson in Edmonton. But that's life! . . .

Our best to you folks,

Len + Dolores

Len & Dolores (Fintak)

????!!***

To the editor. . . 27 March 2002

Thank you for sending me the copies of the SACO NEWS for myself and my family. We appreciated the recognition you and Paul Casamajor have given Bob. I expected to see only his obituary. We have a copy of



Admiral Miles' book and I have often referred to it, especially after hearing stories when the Camp 4 survivors got together. (Could they have been somewhat exaggerated?)* Each camp, of course, had its own valuable contribution to make.

We enjoyed attending SACO reunions when we

could, seeing old and making new acquaintances, and especially making the trip to Taiwan to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Republic of China. Please use the enclosed contribution toward your "News" expenses or however you wish. (Thanks again, Arline, for you kind support. Ed.)

My best to you and your mother,

Sincerely,

Arline Sizemore

Arline Sizemore

*The wartime locale and the indisputable primitive conditions prevailing, there is little doubt as to the veracity of tales of the past by SACO Tigers. There was certainly no need for embellishment of encounters in that far away land that held little known facts to those of us who had known the luxuries of a much easier life. The revelation of things as they were was incredulous to the point that exaggeration would be difficult indeed. Ed

????!***

To the editor . . . 18 March 2002

Thank you so much for putting my dad's crew story in your SACO NEWS publication. This was so generous of you. There was only one "typo" at the very beginning you have 42nd BG instead of 462nd BG. It is correct in later paragraphs.

I have copied the MACR for another 462nd BG crew and I will type off the names so you can

see them more clearly. It is quite a story. Only the Bombardier, Ed Hammond is still with us.

Anything I can do for you - don't hesitate to ask -

Love,

Jody

Jody (Smith)

????!***

To the editor . . . April 2002

I am enclosing my check for \$20.00 to pay for the publication I received. Please be advised that as much as I would like to continue receiving the publication, I think it would be advisable if I discontinue receiving this publication as I am unable to participate in any activities especially as Miller has gone. At my age, I will not travel alone. I appreciate all the consideration SACO and all its members for the memorable kindnesses extended to Miller & myself. I will always remember you all. Thank you all so very much and may God bless and keep you all in his care. Thank you,

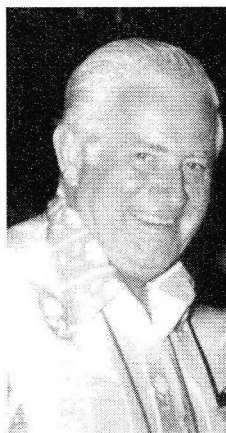
As ever,

Tillie Cyanovich

Tillie Cyanovich

????!***

To the editor . . . 19 March 2002



I enclose a couple of photos which may be of interest to SACO. You can keep these (I have copies).

Like everyone else, I consider your work on SACO NEWS an artwork as well as an act of love for SACO and Free China.

I do hope for your good health and for

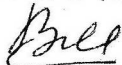
Erma. Getting old is tough, but better than the alternative.

I have a strong desire to write about SACO Weather. However, I want to be sure I do not violate a secrecy matter before I plunge into it. I plan to phone Bill Sager to get his advice.

We are in good health with the usual signs of the aging process. I do miss my friends in SACO, sobeit.

Also, I checked on Madame Chiang recently. The Chinese tell me she is still alive in New York (she must be 104) now). Great lady!!

With best wishes to you, Erma and SACO,



Bill (Simmons)

Bill, my SACO photos, in some areas of my album, are aging. Your photo here must be about 1978 - but look at it thus: you were not aging! Ed.)

???!!!***

To the editor25 March 2002

Thank you very much for keeping me on your mailing list all this time. For one reason or another, I have not been able to participate in SACO activities over the years, although I have been very interested and have read the magazine with interest. I appreciate your devotion to the organization for 50+years.

However, in all fairness, the years of non-activity in the organization have taken their toll and I must suggest that to continue to keep my name on the mailing list is non-productive for the organization or me!!

Thanks for the past association in SACO.

Sincerely,

Carl Coulson

???!!!***

To the editor21 April 2002

I have enclosed a copy of the program which I received when I attended the graduation ceremony of the Underwater Demolition/Seal Training Class at the Naval Special Warfare Center, Coronado, CA. I had received several invitations in the past and finally decided to go to the ceremony and see what it was like.

I was pleasantly surprised to see that the program for the event included a tribute to Phil Bucklew and the Commanding Officer, Captain Richard E. Smethers, gave special recognition to Phil for his contribution to the establishment of the SEALs. I was reminded of the period when Phil and several other SACO members (Frank Ruggeri, Chuck Noll, Don Robillard) who had served with the original Scouts and Raiders in the landings in North Africa and Europe were with us at Camp Six.



After the ceremony, I thanked Capt. Smethers for the invitation and told him that I had served with Phil Bucklew in China. Capt. Smethers said that they were establishing a museum and library of the history and activities of the UNDERWATER DEMOLITION/SEALS and its predecessor organizations from WWII and subsequent actions. I said that I would see if I could find anything about Phil to add to their collection. I thought that some of the SACO people might have some

pictures or documents that they could contribute.

Didn't you prepare an issue which had a feature article on Phil Bucklew? I don't have a copy although I thought that I remember having one. If you have an extra copy can you send it to me and I will present it to Capt. Smethers.(sent ..Ed.).

As you may know, they have named the training facilities at Coronado as the PHIL BUCKLEW NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE CENTER. I have enclosed a copy of the article on Phil.

Incidentally, I was very pleased with the Special Warfare personnel that I saw at the graduation ceremony. They reminded me of our SACO people fifty plus years ago!

Best Regards

Bob Hoe
Bob Hoe
????!!!***

To the editor11 June 2002

I'm George Balsley and I just went through my father's items in the trunks and found quite a few things relating to his work with SACO, a diary and lots of photographs. My father's name was LCdr Frank Henry Balsley, USN. He passed away August 1, 1987. My mother held on to his things until she was moved into a nursing home and we received her furniture, boxes and trunks and we've been going through them when I found my father's SACO items.

He worked closely with Stan McCaffrey and George Fiske, names you may be familiar with. They all were mentioned in Miles' "A Different Kind of War."

I'm writing this in the hopes of getting different perspectives of my father by other SACO personnel.

I'm hoping that I'm reaching the right people with this letter. You can contact me via e-mail at: gbalsley@kuhnriddle.com.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

George Balsley
George Balsley

14 Meadowbrook Dr.
Hadley, MA 01035

????!!!***

To the editor23 May 2002

Got a call from Alex Borbely. In 1945, he was in Calcutta headed for Kunming. The war ended and he never got further. He would like to know if anyone knows the mission of Scouts & Raiders headed for Kunming at that time. He said they were trained for UDT.

He cannot attend reunion, but would like to hear from anyone who has information on this topic.

His phone number is (352) 854-1919. (I have no address for Borbely. Ed.)

Joe Fitzgerald
Joe Fitzgerald
????!!!***



To Weskamp. . . .18 Jan 2002

'Twas a real plasure to talk with you last

night. I want to thank you for all the SACO info.

1st Dues catch up 2001 & 2002 (\$40)

2nd Help you and Dick Rutan turn out that absolutely first class and splendid SACO Magazine (\$200)

With our Lord's help, I'll see you at Cocoa Beach shortly after my big event - 85th birthday October 7th.

Please pass on my fond regards to SACO friends.

Sincerely,



Frank Devlin

????!!***

To Weskamp 3 April 2002

Enclosed is our check for SACO Dues and money for printing \$120.

Issue #23 is the best one printed, sure did enjoy it. Keep up the good work, our number is getting smaller.

James Blackwell

????!!***

To Weskamp 3 May 2002

In a sense we just lost another of our group. I just learned that Robert V. Lyall of 317 8th St. West De Moines, IA has Alzheimer's. (*Lyall died soon after this...Ed*). His wife had sent a Christmas card with a note and her comment in that left me wondering what might be happening. I received a letter last week from Marcella, his wife, telling me he had become violent and is in some home or institution.

Christmas time, I was too busy to follow up as my oldest boy had a stroke at that time. He is doing quite well now. I am not complaining because I feel very fortunate. I had a 5 by-pass open heart surgery Christmas time in '99. After that and the fourth hospital confinement, I convinced the Dr. something was wrong and they installed 3 stints. Since that time, I have gone back to doing as I did before that vacation.

I have two sisters in bad health and troubles, keeping me busy. I wrote Bob's wife and asked if it would help if I visited Bob. She had asked me to send him a card, but did not give me his address.

If the pending operation for one sister, May 13, goes well, I intend to go to Monterey, CA to visit my youngest son.

...Wish I could make the reunion, but I know I will not be able to get away again. The program sounds great and very entertaining.

Originally a Navy C B turned SACO, very proud to have enjoyed both of them.

Elsworth "Smitty" Smith

????!!***

To Weskamp (no date)

Apologies for being delinquent in my dues. I wasn't aware that I was a member. I attended the reunion in Appleton, WI in '99; evidently I became a member at that time. I really enjoy the SACO NEWS; hope to attend a reunion in the future. All the best!

Dennis Kelly (son of Jim)

To Weskamp 4 April 2002

I am a little late paying dues for 2002. I did not receive the SACO NEWS until a week ago...

My aches and pains limited my travels; I hope I can make the 2002 reunion. About four weeks ago, I had problems – they found a bleeding ulcer. I received four units of blood. According to the SACO NEWS, Bill Bartee beat me with 6 units.

Hope to see everyone in Florida.


Leonard Fintak

????!!***

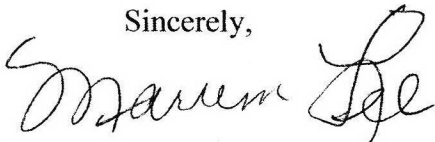
To Weskamp 25 March 2002

. . . I really enjoyed this issue of the SACO NEWS, it was the best yet. I noticed that Tressler had on a baseball cap with the SACO patch on it and I would sure like to know how and where I could get one – also, would like to get some more decals.

I saw a picture of Roger Moore and would like to know how to get in touch with him; we were together through photography school, photo-lithography, Calcutta, Chungking where we parted ways; he was a very good friend of mine.

The last reunion I attended was Taiwan in 1979; really enjoyed that one and am sorry that I'm not physically able to attend the next one.

Sincerely,



MarvinLee-Box 2462, Casper WY82602

????!!***

To Weskamp 28 March 2002

It was nice talking with you. I hope I will be able to get to your reunion at Cocoa Beach. A side trip to the UDT-SEAL Museum would be ideal for your members

that trained in Ft. Pierce. This can be set up and there would be someone there to show people around and explain things. We have many bus tours that stop and visit.

There is one day that we are not open and that is on Mondays.. I can be reached at 727 894-2848 or the museum number is 561 595-5845. The administrator is H. T. Aldhizer. I will be going over on April 13 and will advise him he may get a call from the SACO group?

I look forward to getting *WHAT THE HELL* as I know so many people who served in China.

I will e-mail the Fitzgeralds . . .
Hoping to see you in Oct.



Jim Barnes
Board Member

????!!***

To Weskamp 28 March 2002

. . . As your records will reflect, I became and associate member after my father, Lewis J. Griffin, passed away 4 Jan 1998. I try to keep CBI and SACO alive in this area by assisting the Maine Basha of CBI. Essentially, I now act as commander and the members appreciate the use of my secretary, etc. to help run the meetings.

I look forward to each issue of SACO NEWS! Thank you.


John D. Griffin – Attorney at Law

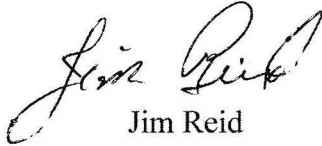
????!!***

To Weskamp (no date)

I have been wondering why I have not received my 2002 membership card. A little

research (in my checkbook) told me why. I'm sorry. Enclosed, my check for \$20.

Won't see you in Florida, my class of '42 is the same week. Good luck & have fun. Regards to all.


Jim Reid

????!!***

To Weskamp (no date)

I have wonderful memories of Texas! Sorry I can't make it to Florida this year - I retired for four months, then back to work. Church work for one of our preaching sons. I'm enjoying it. A blood clot in my leg slowed me down for six months, but no more rat poison now.

Thanks for a great magazine again.



Don Hardenbrook

????!!***

To Weskamp 24 May 2002

I wonder what's going on? I rec'd invitation to reunion in Cocoa Beach, Fla 10/9-13/02 along with a "heart" sticker from



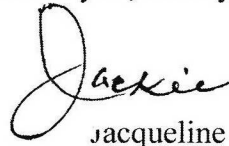
Peg inviting me to come! Called our daughter "Kathi" and she's getting off from the Police Dept. in San Diego to come to the convention with me!

I've called the Hilton & made reservation 10/8 through Tuesday post convention. I sold our house (mobile) and I'm going to spend it! O.K.?

After Jim died, I stayed for 2 more years with hired help. The girl stole \$480 from me as well as the diamond ring Jim bought me for our 50th anniversary. Thank God I wore it to Texas reunion. The agency reimbursed me for the money, but I didn't get the ring back nor any re-compensation for it. The girl did get caught and tried, convicted & interned for other senior crimes. End of story!

Kathi, 'tho working for SDPD, moved me to here, Villa Boinita Retirement Residence, 3434 Bonita Rd. #124, Chula Vista, CA 91910. Their number is (619) 4769444. My room is directly (dialing) (619) 476-1123. Please note! (I might forget it! Ha!) I've lost your number!!!

... Love you, Kathryn. Please write.


Jacqueline S. Murphy

(Wes states Kathryn called her May 29th)

????!!***

To Weskamp 2 June 2002

Thank you for sending me the SACO 2002 Reunion registration form and the related materials.

I'm sorry to tell you that I can't attend the 2002 Reunion gathering owing to my personal reasons. Please give my regards to all SACO friends and I do hope you'll have a successful and enjoyable meeting.

Enclosed please find a check of twenty dollars for my yearly dues.

Yours truly,

Tzu Li Ching

????!!!***

To Weskamp 7 May 2002

My husband, Horace L. Wilson, 1st Sgt USMC (Ret) served in the China Theatre in WWII. I didn't know him then, We married in June 1946.

At present, my husband is in a convalescent hospital. He is 88 years old and among other medical problems, he has Alzheimer's disease and hopefully, he will improve to the point where I can bring him home and take care of him.

I've been going thru his pictures and have come across a lot of his tour in China which I will send to you later on.

I want to tell you how much I like to read your SACO NEWS mag. It is well done and I enjoy reading. I take it to the hospital and read to him.

Thank you, Mary K. Wilson

????!!!***

To Weskamp 25 March 2002

I am enclosing a check for \$30. This is for my 2002 dues of \$20 plus a donation of \$10 to help with the cost of publishing the SACO NEWS or any other thing that needs some support.

Like so many others, my health is bad and I haven't been able to attend a reunion. I hope to make the next one since it is near my home. Maybe my heart will behave by then.

I appreciate the good jobs and hard work so many of you have done. Sure glad to find the organization.

Best regards, James W. Wheeler

????!!!***

To Weskamp 3 April 2002

Enclosed 2002 dues. Extra ten to cover cost of another outstanding edition of *WHAT THE HELL*. Dick always outdoes himself in putting together a professional publication.

Though we couldn't make Texas, due to hip replacement, hernia, double vision and Mother Nature, Father Time inroads, we'll try our darndest to make it to Fla. In Oct.

I'm glad Bob Sizemore received much well deserved recognition in the latest edition of *SACO NEWS*.

We served together at Camp 4 for over a year, '44-'45 & socialized at several SACO reunions in recent years including Taiwan & a week together in Hawaii on the way back.

Bob was always so self-effacing; he never said a word to me about his academic accomplishments (see pages 53-54).

He and Jim McGrail, also Camp 4, are sorely missed.

Hope to see the gang soon,



Jack & June Shearer

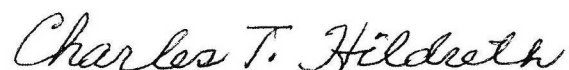
????!!!***

To Weskamp 7 May 2002

Enclosed find my check for SACO dues for this year.

I won't be able to attend our reunion due to my health - but y'all have fun.

An old SACO member,



Charles T. Hildreth

To Weskamp

3 June 2002

I am going to attempt again to drop you a line. Please excuse the lined steno pad, but my Parkinson and other infirmities have created a problem in my ability to write, but I am able to do so if I take it in stages. Otherwise, I would be all over the paper. As you know, Ruthie passed away several years ago and at the present time, I am able to live by myself with help.

The enclosed two checks – one for my 2002 dues – the other to be used as you, Richard and Paul would desire for SACO purposes



I came across the enclosed "China Bowl" program several days ago when going through some papers and am sending it on to you. Maybe Richard might be able to use it as an item of interest in a future "SACO NEWS."

Since I have been unable to attend a reunion for many years, it would be nice to receive the "China Medal" if the officers and trustees would ever decide to change the present presentation policy.

Have to stop. Hope you can read this Have a good day,

Best,

Don G. Leberman
Commander USN (Ret)

????!!***

To Weskamp

(no date)

I have many photographs my uncle took while in China. I also have his medals and a few other items.

Do you have a museum to which I could donate these items?

He (Edward J. O'Toole) died March 3 at age 93. He always spoke of his years in SACO.

He was a very special person to me and I would like to keep some of his memories alive for others to enjoy.

Sincerely,

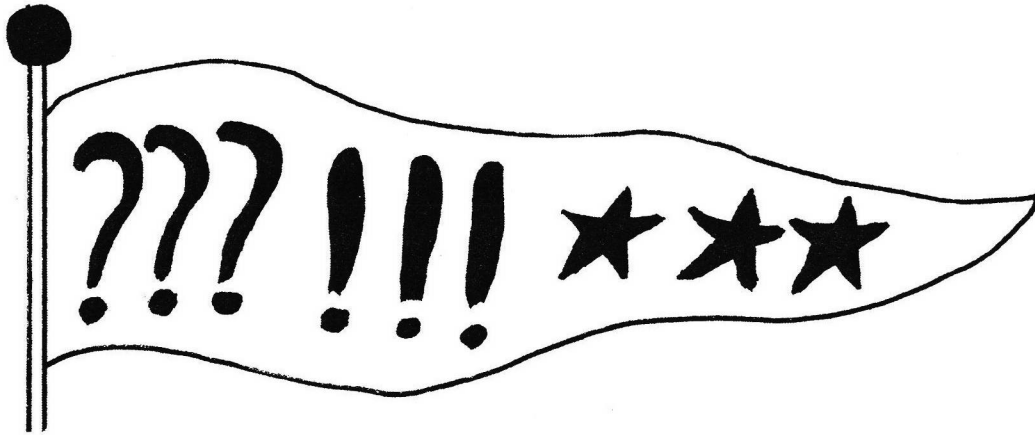
Eleanor Cembard

Editor's note: First, let me apologize, I'm working with a not-too-clear photocopy of your letter & I may have your name wrong. We SACO veterans, as a group, do not have a museum. I would be interested in China pictures that are clear and not 35mm size as so many were at that time. We're always looking for SACO history in pictures to publish in our SACO NEWS. Thank you for letting us know of the death of your uncle.

????!!***



FIRST IT WAS HIS - NOW IT BELONGS TO ALL OF US



WHAT THE HELL?

HOW IT BECAME THE OFFICIAL INSIGNIA OF SACO

In the early days in Chungking, Admiral Miles wrote in his book ADKOW:

"We had too little equipment to keep us all busy sixteen hours a day. We had no recreation facilities except our walking shoes, and we were eight difficult miles from town. We had no movies. We did not have the power we needed even to generate enough electricity for a good reading light, though reading lights would have been put to little use for we had very little to read. There was no airplane space to waste on such canteen supplies as toothpaste, soap, cigarettes, or candy. Chinese cigarettes contained little real tobacco, of course, but they had to do. And no personal belongings except what each man had been able to carry personally had yet come over the Hump though, judging from what the boys had to say, every possible good and useful thing was packed in their missing trunks and foot lockers.

". . . Under the circumstances, our inability to perform the tasks for which we were being prepared was trying on temper and nerves. And so, to keep some sort of mental balance, I encouraged foolishness.

"The weather had changed to wet and rainy and the crop of mosquitoes was bountiful. The result was that our boys were soon topping any New Jersey mosquito story ever told. Our mosquitoes, for example, were so big that they had circulatory systems of their own. That explained why, if you killed a thousand of them, they all had blood in them. Some of the boys worried, too, about a huge plate glass mirror in Fairy Cave (the English translation for Miles' residence provided by Gen. Tai Li). It would cost, they said, something like \$3500 U.S. to replace it if some myopic mosquito happened to shatter it by flying into it by mistake. And, too, that would be an awful lot of bad luck!

"While we were still waiting for our first guns we heard that the Army had flown in a load of hardwood tent pegs, but the boys were thoughtfully magnanimous. The Army, they agreed, really needed those pegs to keep the mosquitoes from flying away with their tents.

"We decided on a mascot and drew a big mosquito as our first emblem. We called him "Socko," in honor of SACO (Sino-American Cooperative Organization).

"One day when several of us had gone to Chungking and were at work at Fairy Cave, we caught Webb Heagy standing on the terrace studying the unusual number of planes that were lined up beside the river airstrip far below our hilltop.

"What's on your mind, Webb?" I asked.

"Some of those planes," he began, "have Army numbers. Some have C.N.A.C. [China National Airways Corporation] insignia. And some aren't marked at all. Now you may not believe it, but the ones without any numbers or insignia are mosquitoes that have managed to get into that formation."

"We admitted that the idea was plausible but we felt sure that no proper Fairy Cave or Happy Valley mosquito would be caught dead without its own special insignia. "How about a 'What-the-Hell? Pennant?" I asked, whereupon we solemnly formed the "What-the Hell?" Association, and hoisted a pennant I had brought with me that already had a little personal history of its own: [The story that follows was covered in the article A Short History of our WHAT THE HELL PENNANT p. 42 Issue #16 April 1998 which told the story of a confused Japanese Admiral when he was confronted with the What The Hell pennant flying on then Captain Miles' ship, the *John D. Edwards*, at Hainan Island in 1939].

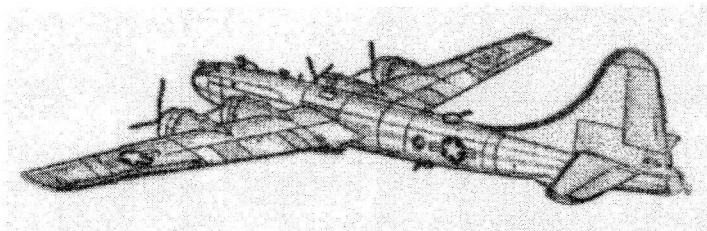
... "For once my "What-the-Hell" pennant had managed to serve a useful purpose. It should be added, however, that the incident troubled that Japanese admiral enough to have him set in motion a request for information that actually reached Washington and even penetrated to certain inner offices of the State and Navy Departments. In fact, when I was transferred to Washington a few months later, that Japanese inquiry had been passed down again by easy stages until it actually landed on my desk, together with a print of the picture the admiral had shown me.

"What," its accompanying memo asked, "is the meaning of the pennant you flew on the *John D. Edwards*?"

"That had been in August 1939, and I promptly started a reply back up the chain of command. The Japanese admiral, however, never received any direct answer to his query. Somewhere along the way, I have been told, my explanation aroused the risibility of some of my seniors and, as a result, what I had to say was "filed." But now that the war had come and we members of Navy Group China were looking about for an acceptable bit of insignia, the "What-the-Hell" pennant seemed made to order for our purpose. Consequently, it was then and there adopted, partly, perhaps, in the hope that because of what we hoped to accomplish, the Japanese would somehow come to understand that, in addition to its nonsense, that pennant had its share of serious meaning after all."

???!!!**

SHOT DOWN IN CHINA



To John Bayer (SACO Associate) . . . 7 March 2002:

I have just been made aware of SACO by your Jan. 27, 2002 7-page bulletin. Let me ask if any of your members were present at and can remember the following event:

I was a crew member of a B-29 which was shot down and crash landed at Laohokow, Hupeh Province, China on 8 September 1944. There was an outpost of a few Americans stationed in a farmhouse on the outskirts of Laohokow. We were their guests until we were evacuated on 16 September under the protection of Chennault's Flying Tiger P-40s.

Japanese fighters bombed and strafed our aircraft. They also came daily looking for us while we hid in slit trenches. In my notes, I have the names of only three of the American personnel at Laohohow:

Captain Kebric – C.O. Captain Tocci – Medical Major Franklin Metcalf – S2

The reason I am writing to you is that I remember we had to demolish the remains of our plane (what was left after Jap bombing). I recall being told that it was Navy personnel who performed that task. I think the major effort was to demolish the engines so they would not fall into Jap hands, who were only 60 miles away. I couldn't understand what the Navy was doing in the middle of China. Now, after reading your bulletin, I understand.

Laohokow was headquarters of General Lin of Fifth war area. We met: Maj. Gen. Lu Teh, Head of Political Department of 5th war area, Chia Hoh Son – Head of Laohokow Chamber of Commerce, Hsu Weh Tze - Head of Northern part of Hupeh Province, Chu Wen Pu magistrate of Kuangha District, Pai Hung Chin – Secretary-in-chief of Kuangha District.

There were also a Norwegian Lutheran Mission and a Catholic Mission at Laohokow. Dr Nordland (female) of Chicago was the Lutheran and Father Benoit was the Catholic.

I would appreciate hearing from any of your members who were present at Laohohow in September 1944 and can remember the incident I have described. Also, please let me know if my information has added anything to your background of history of if you knew all of this already. Thank you.

Sincerely

Melvin A. Rosenfeld



Mr. Melvin A. Rosenfeld
1860 Riverview Court
Hendersonville, NC 28739-8833

I was the Radar Counter Measures Officer on that plane with the responsibility of detecting Japanese radar and jamming it if possible.

???!***

THIS PAST FATHER'S DAY BRINGS BACK MEMORIES TO MANY OF US - MY DAD WAS VERY ILL AT THE TIME I TRIED THE JOURNALISM FIELD FOR 10 YEARS WITH AN IN-HOUSE MAGAZINE FOR THE "LATE" SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD. HE DIED JUST AFTER MY FIRST EFFORT WAS PUBLISHED IN 1979. AT HIS PASSING I WROTE THE FOLLOWING AS A TRIBUTE Ed.:



Many of you will remember my dad, Hollis. This picture of him, my mother, Erma and I was taken at our SACO reunion in Sanibel, Captiva Island, Florida in 1978 which was hosted by Buck & Ellie Dormer - less than a year before dad died.

Editorial

Some of the things I remember . . . "If you can't pay your own way, don't go" - if your friends can afford pleasures you can't, stay home; don't ever become a 'sponger;". . . "Don't just have one friend at a time - strive for many;" . . . "Shake hands as if you meant it; don't offer a 'wet, limp wash cloth!" . . . "I admire a woman who offers her hand in greeting when introduced!"

He arrived at a time when the telephone was in the pioneer stage; kerosene lanterns and gas lights illuminated the homes; transportation was horseback - or more likely "shank's mare." Jogging? Who needed it? . . . when to visit your "best girl" and neighbors meant hiking several miles of West Virginia's "hills and hollers" affectionately named by the early settlers - "Robert's

Ridge," . . . "Sally's Backbone" . . . "Hog Run," . . . "Fish Crick," etc. Heat was by fireplace fueled with wood conveniently corded outside the door – a product of sweat and toil splitting the logs with an axe directed with the skill of a marksman. This, too, fired the cast-iron cook-stove and heated the water in the reservoir section. Food came from harvesting crops grown from seeds planted in the spring after the soil had been "spilled" by the plow, billowing the earth like the surf rolling toward shore; then followed by the disc and harrow – all pulled by the horses harnessed for the task.

The family made scheduled trips to town by horse-and-wagon . . . perhaps every 2 or 3 months . . . to stock the pantry with staples; food canned by "Mother" was placed on shelves in the cellar, along with potatoes and apples stored in barrels in preparation for the long, cold winter.

Entertainment was people, good food and the musical talent of the families which seemed to come "naturally." He enjoyed singing in minstrels on the showboats on the nearby Ohio River.

Soon came the "horseless carriage," roads, highways, tractors to relieve the labor of walking behind the plow and the need to turn the new-mown hay by pitchfork. Cities suddenly awakened to electrical lighting and for the first time, communities viewed from the hills appeared like thousands of fireflies aglow in the pitch of night.

Nickelodeons were replaced by more sophisticated theatre houses with the invention of silent "feature" movies, and a few years later, the innovation of sound, producing the first "talkies," was one of the greatest thrills of all. A whole new industry was on its way, great moguls of the trade appeared and "stars were born" whose legendary lives, both on and off the "silver-screen," seemed to glow in the celestial aura of entertainment with the glitter that is no longer with us today.

The phonograph, the radio, the airplane, television, atomic age, space exploration, etc., soon found their niche in history.

There was the bitter disappointment of being rejected in World War I due to deafness of one ear; a handicap resulting from being kicked by a horse in childhood.

He loved family, friends and was a neighbor in the true sense; children recognized and responded quickly to his love for them. His varied occupations included railroad, rubber works, steel mills, and his last – carpenter in commercial construction – a trade he learned after settling in California at the age of 40; he climbed skeletal frames of the new high-rises of L.A. with the fervor of much younger men.

He never finished grammar school, but was well read and an avid follower of politics – a dedicated citizen through and through. Never a professional politician, he was quite knowledgeable of all who did participate and his ever-constant surveillance of current events would have provided sound advice to those who may have chosen to seek it.

He never had a birthday party 'til he was 80 and it was one of the highlights of his life. He later recovered from a stroke and the implementation of a pacemaker to supplement his fatigued heart and was able to enjoy an extended air tour of the Caribbean where he

celebrated his 81st birthday. Subsequently, recovered from 2 heart attacks, his last trip was a week's auto tour of Nevada and California last November (1978).

A few days ago, among his personal papers, in his own handwriting on folded paper revealing the discoloration of time, we found the following:

Prayer

"O God of Grace! And God of Glory! – when we resent having so many choices to make, may we remember that good character is the habit of choosing right from wrong. Help me, as a man, to see that our strength lies back in home...and school...and church – where is built the character that gives free people the right to win their freedom and to hold it."

His journey now over, I wonder how many of us can expect our lives to be as abundant – filled with so many wonderfully new and exciting events experienced by those of his era.

Aside from the concession that mine was never the physical stamina he possessed, there are those moments of retrospect in which I almost envy . . . "the life and times of Dad."

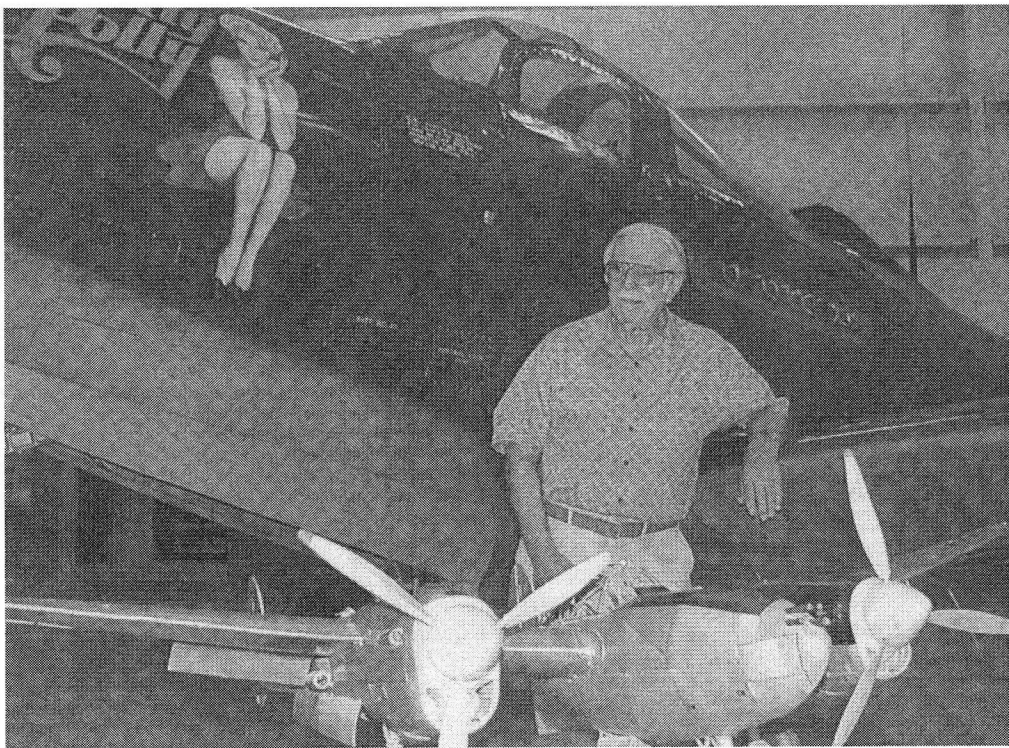
While reprinting this, I'm reminded that Martha Casamajor was raised in Dad's part of our country and is quite familiar with the colloquialisms of the West Virginia hills. Ed.

???!!!***

Things you really need to know? But then, WHAT THE HELL!

- 1. The first US Marines wore high leather collars to protect their necks from sabers, hence the name leathernecks.*
- 2. Bats are the only mammals that fly.*
- 3. Chinatown in San Francisco is the largest Chinese community outside of Asia.*
- 4. The Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. has 365 steps representing every day of the year.*
- 5. While Australia is the world's smallest continent, it's also the largest island in the world.*
- 6. Elephants are the only animals with four knees.*
- 7. There are 3 completely different versions of the Mona Lisa under the final portrait, all painted by da Vinci, as revealed by X-rays.*
- 8. The initials M.G. on the famous British-made automobile stand for "Morris Garage."*
- 9. To clean tarnished copper bottoms of pot and pans, spread a little ketchup onto the bottom, let it sit one minute, then wipe clean and rinse. (I haven't tried...Ed.)*
- 10. In 1993, an anonymous telephone bidder paid \$945,000 at a New York auction for the Academy Award won by Vivien Leigh in the movie Gone With The Wind.*

Wingman tells World War II story



“Of the tens of thousands of fighter missions of World War II, this one event, from one message, was by far the most significant. I’m proud that I was part of that.”

Julius “Jack” Jacobson
World War II wingman

Flight: Julius “Jack” Jacobson tells the story of the sneak attack on Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto during World War II. A P-38 fighter model, the kind of plane Jacobson was wingman on, is behind him.

“hot” message was intercepted informing Japanese commanders on Bougainville of Yamamoto’s arrival for an inspection tour on April 18. The message included arrival time and number of accompanying aircraft.

Yamamoto was leaving from the Japanese base at Rabaul, New Guinea.

“He was a pretty precise guy,” Jacobson said. “We figured if he leaves at 8 a.m., he’s going to arrive at Empress Augusta Bay at 9:56 a.m. Now, we had to figure what course to fly to intercept him. We had to estimate his speed, our speed, and how long each navigational leg would take. It was a very boring trip. One wave looks like any other.

“Upon sighting land, the plan called for 12 of us go to top cover, and four to attack Yamamoto. No sooner did we start to climb, the guy behind me says: ‘Bogeys, eleven

Fighters killed planner of attack on Pearl Harbor

BY BERT ANDERSON
SPECIAL TO THE DESERT SUN

PALM SPRINGS — Sixteen Army Air Force P-38 fighters, heavily laden with fuel, groaned into the air from the newly liberated island of Guadalcanal and into history.

The date was April 18, 1943, and the target: Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the architect of the Pearl Harbor attack.

Julius “Jack” Jacobson flew the mission as wingman to

Maj. John Mitchell, commander of the 339th Squadron.

Jacobson visited the Palm Springs Air Museum Saturday to tell his first-person account of an intelligence coup that sent his squadron to bring down the commander-in-chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet.

“I’m one of five living mission pilots who accomplished this spectacular success, owing to our code-breakers reception of a single communication,” Jacobson said.

“Of the tens of thousands of fighter missions of World War II, this one event, from one message, was by far the most significant. I’m proud that I

was part of that.”

Jacobson, now 85 and living in San Diego, had received his Army Air Force pilot’s wings only a few days before Dec. 7, 1941.

He was immediately sent to the South Pacific islands of Fiji, New Caledonia and Solomon where he flew 111 combat missions.

His decorations include the Silver Star, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, the Air Medal with Oak Leaf, the Air Medal with Gold Star and a Presidential Citation.

Early in the war, American intelligence officers had broken the “magic” Japanese naval code. On April 14, 1943, a

Caltrans will honor local motorist who drew the line

By RICHARD GUZMAN
THE DESERT SUN

INDIO—It was a near traffic collision in the fall of 1917 that started Coachella Valley resident Dr. June McCarroll on the road to change the streets of the nation.

According to historical accounts "Dr. June," as the desert's first resident doctor was called, was driving her Model T Ford one day on her way to see a patient when a truck driving in the opposite direction appeared on the narrow road.

The truck was taking up most of the street, and the quick-thinking doctor veered her Model T to the right and into the sandy edges of the road.

After dusting herself off an idea came to her that could have prevented the near accident by keeping cars on their



McCarroll

side of the road—a white line painted down the center of all the streets to divide traffic.

Eighty-five years later and with countless miles of roads around the world divided by her idea, Caltrans is honoring McCarroll today by dedicating a 4.8-mile stretch of Interstate 10 in her memory.

"It was one of the first measures of safety implemented on highways," said Caltrans spokeswoman Rose Melgoza.

SITE: The Doctor June McCarroll Memorial Freeway will run from the I-10 interchange at Indio Boulevard and Jefferson Street to the junction with state Highway 86. Two signs at a cost of \$875 will mark her contribution to the nation's roads.

Indio's Mayor Ben Godfrey, along with representatives from state Sen. Jim Battin's office, are expected to attend the dedication ceremony and hear about McCarroll's accomplishment.

McCarroll and her husband moved to the valley in 1904, and she became the desert's only doctor.

She traveled the valley in a horse and buggy until she bought the Model T Ford to get around a little quicker.

After her near accident with the truck, McCarroll started to lobby for change. She took her idea to everyone from the local chamber of commerce to the county Board of Supervisors. Everyone thought it was a good idea, but no one did anything about it, said Robbie Kennedy, chairwoman of the California Federation of Women's Club.

WORKING WITH WOMEN: So McCarroll decided to lobby a different group. "I had decided I would work with the women," McCarroll is quoted as saying in memoirs from the California Federation of Women's Clubs.

She started working with the local Indio Women's Club and then the California

Federation of Women's Clubs to get the government to listen to her idea.

To further convince the decision-makers she recruited other women and painted a one mile portion of Highway 99 (now Highway 111 and 86) with her own brush and bucket of white paint.

"She just got a bucket of paint and a friend or two and painted. ... She saw a problem and presented a solution," said Paula Ford, a member of the Women's Club of Indio, who was reciting historical accounts of McCarroll's life.

In 1924, the California Highway Commission finally got her point and adopted the idea. One of the first white centerlines was painted by the Highway Commission, by hand, on Indio Boulevard on the street where McCarroll lived.

"This idea has saved thousands of lives internationally. This little lady in Indio, in the desert of California thought of it," Kennedy said.

????!!**

Wingman tells . . . cont'd —

o'clock high.' I look up and here's two (Betty) bombers and six Zeros (fighters) and I can't believe it."

Four P-38's went in for the kill, but one couldn't drop his wing tanks and departed with his wingman, leaving two attackers. A furious air battle ensued, Jacobson said, with both bombers shot down.

The action lasted less than 10 minutes, and all P-38's sped for home.

Japanese search parties found Yamamoto's body still strapped in his seat. The post-mortem determined death by machine-gun fire.

Thus, his prophecy was realized: as junior officers celebrated the Pearl Harbor attack 16 months earlier, a somber Yamamoto observed: "I fear that all we have done is awaken a sleeping giant, and fill it with a desire for vengeance."

"When I tell my story to groups, it's gratifying to know, after 59 years, there are still people interested in what happened that fateful day," Jacobson said.

Bert Anderson is a free-lance writer for The Desert Sun. E-mail him at bertdson@cs.com

RI personnel can take pride that the message of Yamamoto's itinerary was intercepted by one or more of our own. Ed.



NOTE:

Next issue (#25) of *SACO NEWS* will not be published 'til early spring 2003 due to an Oct. date for reunion this year; I can't possibly do one sooner.

Therefore, make sure your dues are current if you wish to stay on the mailing list. Ed.

TWIN OAKS HISTORY



Many will remember visiting TWIN OAKS AT Annapolis convention in 1987 – what a scrumptious buffet they served us – shrimp to write home about, etc. just fabulous!

(From Flying Tigers publication "JING BAO JOURNAL" AUG-SEPT 2000)

As for Twin Oaks itself, this 26-room Georgian Revival style mansion situated on 18.1 acres in northwest Washington, D.C., was built for use as a summer home in 1888 by Gardiner Green Hubbard, a wealthy lawyer and founder of the National Geographic Society. The Hubbard family originally lived in Dupont Circle and bought the Twin Oaks property which, located on a hill, was cool and breezy and thus suitable for use as a summer residence. The Hubbards hired an architect to build the mansion for \$30,000, and named it Twin Oaks after two large oak trees located on the back of the property.

The Hubbards had two daughters, Grace and Mabel. Mabel lived for a time in Twin Oaks with her husband, the inventor of the telephone, Alexander Graham Bell. But, on the death of their parents, sister Grace inherited the property. In 1937, she rented the property to the Republic of China's Ambassador to the United States, Wang Cheng-ting who used it as his official residence. In 1947, during Ambassador Wellington Koo's tenure in Washington, D.C., the government of the Republic of China (ROC) purchased Twin Oaks for \$450,000. From then on, Twin Oaks served as the official residence of each successive ROC ambassador until 1979, when official relations between the ROC and the United States were terminated.

Following the ending of diplomatic relations between the Republic of China and the United States, the ROC government transferred the title to the property to The Friends of Free China Association, which in 1982 gave it back to the ROC government. By then, the property, which had not been properly maintained for a number of years, had fallen into a serious state of disrepair. After receiving approval from the ROC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1983, former ROC Representative Frederick F. Chien and his wife, Julie Tien Chien, oversaw the renovation and restoration of the house. The classic elegance of Twin Oaks' exterior was carefully maintained, while its interior was beautifully redecorated and refurnished, thereby restoring the mansion's original elegance, splendor and charm. On February 5, 1986, Twin Oaks

was placed on the Department of the Interior's register of historic sites, signifying its status as an official landmark in Washington, D.C.

Over the last two decades, many functions, large and small, have been held at Twin Oaks, earning it a sterling reputation in Washington, D.C. diplomatic circles. Chinese and American guests alike have been honored to participate in these events, and have left with many warm memories of the mansion. Thus, Twin Oaks has provided a significant and lasting contribution to maintenance of the traditional warm friendship between the Republic of China and the United States and to the promotion of historic cultural ties between the two nations.

Twin Oaks is located at 3225 Woodley Road, NW Washington, DC 20008. (Twin Oaks information provided by Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office in Washington, D.C.).

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RECEIVES THE SACO MEDAL

To the editor . . . 26 February 2002

Enclosed is a picture of Kenneth G. Green wearing the SACO Medal. I sent him my medal after communicating with his daughter who lives in Vermont. It was with the stipulation she would send a picture with him wearing the medal.

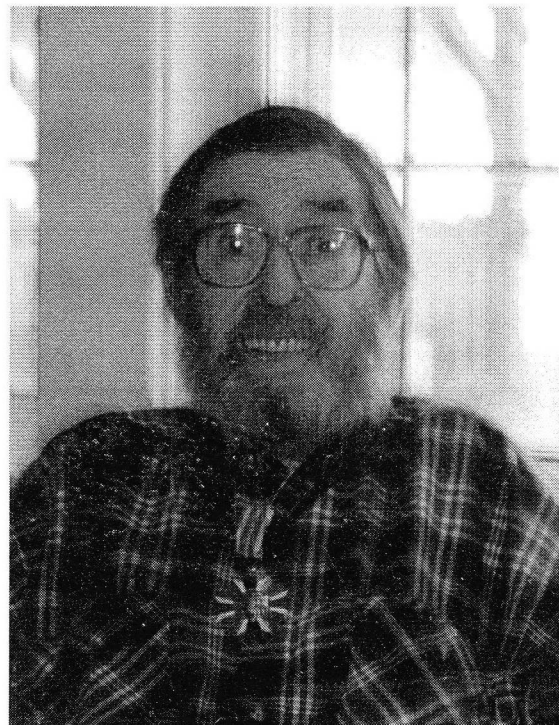
. . . found outside his home by the Vermont Highway Dept ., I understand he had fallen on the ice and was injured. He had been out for sometime, but, fortunately, the highway people spotted him. He was taken to a trauma center and is now in a nursing home.

This definitely proves beyond any doubt that SACO PERSONNEL ARE AS TOUGH AS IT GETS AS THEY AGE. *Just like good wine and the best scotch or whiskey!*

The MIB has sent me a new medal. Pray all is well with you and your beautiful mother.

Bob

Bob Sinks, Sr.



Kenneth G. Green
Mt. Ridge Nursing Home
Franklin, NH 03235
92 years young
Daughter says, "He was Happy!"

DITCHING B-29 INDIA TO CHINA

Following note from Jody Smith, a researcher of WWII history dated 20 March 2002:

Here is the MACR #11300 for the loss of B-29 #42-6263 on 8 July 1944. This crew and aircraft were from the 462nd Bomb Group, 769th Bomb Squadron. They were on a cargo flight from Piardoba Army Air Base, India, to the advanced base in Kiunglai, China. Ed Hammond is the only surviving member of the crew. Don Carter died just two weeks ago. He and Ed were best friends all these years. Hammond's address: Ed Hammond, 337 Church St., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601-4217 (845) 471 5863 (no e-mail).

Hope you can use this. I think it was an amazing feat for Capt. Waller to land a B-29 on top of reeds in a lake! What incredible men you all are!

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HEADQUARTERS
462ND BOMBARDMENT GROUP
Office of the Intelligence Officer

APO #220
29 August 1944

SUBJECT: Narrative of Ditching B-29 Aircraft Number 42-6263.

TO: Commanding General, XX Bomber Command, APO #493, %P.M., N. Y.,
N. Y. ATTENTION: A-2, Escape and Evasion Officer.

1. Submitted herewith is the narrative of Combat Crew members experiences in the ditching of B-29 Aircraft #42-6263, on 8 July 1944, while on a cargo flight from Piardoba Army Air Base to the Advanced Base in China.
2. Loading list for the Aircraft on this flight was as follows:

Dock O. Waller	Captain	Pilot
David F. White	2 nd Lt.	Co-Pilot
Walter R. Russell	1 st Lt.	Navigator
Edgar E. Hammond	2 nd Lt.	Bombardier
Arthur B. Tuttle	1 st Lt.	Flt Engineer
Don F. Carter	S/Sgt	Radio
Edward L. Swart	S/Sgt	Radar
Alden G. Huisjen	T/Sgt	Senior Gunner
Lenard L. Anderson	T/Sgt	Left Gunner
James M. Lynch	S/Sgt	Right Gunner
Francis H. Ilies	S/Sgt	Tail Gunner
Robert C. Jennings	T/Sgt	331 st Service Squadron (Psgr)
William K. Graffious	CWO	331 st Service Squadron (Psgr)

3. Three (3) crew members lost their lives by drowning. The bodies of Staff Sergeant Francis H Ilies and Staff Sergeant James M. Lynch were recovered. To date nothing has been heard from Staff Sergeant Leonard L. Anderson and it is presumed that he too drowned since fellow crew members report that he was unable to swim.
4. Narratives of individual crew members are as follows:

- a. Captain Dock O. Waller, Pilot.

Normal takeoff was made from Piardoba Army Air Base at 0758 on 8 July 1944, in Aircraft #42-6263, and course for first leg of hump mission begun at 2,000 feet. At 0903 a climb was begun in order to clear the Shillong Hills. The flight plan was to level off at 8,000 feet. Just after beginning the climb, the right scanner reported black smoke coming from number four engine. Climb was continued with scanner watching number four engine closely and during the climb, the smoke decreased in density. During the climb, there were heavy gas fumes in the front compartment of the aircraft and investigation showed that the front bomb bay tanks were siphoning. When 7,500' altitude had been reached, the right scanner reported that #4 engine was on fire.

I immediately got the course for Piardoba from the Navigator and began turning to it while the Engineer was using the fire extinguishers on the engine. After both extinguishers had been used, the engine was reported still on fire by the Engineer, Right Scanner and Co-Pilot. I then ordered bail out of all crew members, this was at 0925. The Co-Pilot, Bombardier and Left Gunner, who was riding as assistant to the Engineer, bailed out of the nose wheel well. The bomb bay doors were opened for the gunners and I believed that all of them went out this way. The tail gunner was, as far as I know at present, riding as right scanner. There were two passengers riding in the gunners compartment and I presumed that they had jumped from the bomb bays as well. Just after the third man had jumped out of the nose wheel well, the Engineer reported that the fire was out. Bailouts were stopped immediately; at this time only four remained in the aircraft. They were the Radio Operator, Navigator, Engineer, and myself, the Pilot.

I continued on course for Piardoba, but was losing altitude at approximately 200 or 300 feet per minute while traveling at an airspeed of 43 inches and 2,400 rpm. Two attempts were made to feather the engine, but each time, the propeller ran away. I did not salvo the bomb bay tanks because I was afraid to risk spilling gas in the bomb bays with the fire on the ship. At 0940, it became apparent that it would not be possible to reach Piardoba, so the course for Kurmitola was begun as this was the nearest base. When about thirty miles from Kurmitola and at 1,000 feet altitude, it was apparent that I would not be able to reach that base. I informed the remaining crew that I was going to ditch. For the ditching, a lake directly on course was chosen. For the ditching, the Navigator sat in the Co-Pilot's seat and the Radio Operator sat by the Engineer.

Just before we actually hit the water, it was necessary to put the turbos full-on in order to pull over trees between the plane and the lake. A power approach was made with power on until just a second before the actual impact. I made the approach so that

the initial contact would be with bull rushes in hopes that this would cushion the aircraft. There was no bounce nor any sudden jerk as the aircraft hit, but a decisive slowing up which was not forceful enough to pull anyone from their seat. Neither (none) of the four of us received any injury. We crashed at 1005.

After the aircraft stopped, we immediately got out, carrying nothing with us. Since the front lower turret had given way, the forward compartment was filling up rapidly and it was impossible to return for anything. Not only was it impossible because of the water, but there was also heavy gas fumes. We pried open the life raft doors and inflated both rafts. Taking the Navigator with me, I went in to shore, leaving the Engineer and Radio Operator in the other raft to guard the ship which was slowly sinking.

On the shore we were met by natives who served us tea and food. They produced a student named Mihr Lalsahah who could speak English. He told us that we were at a place called Khama and that he would arrange boat transportation to the nearest railroad. Sergeant Carter, Lieutenant Russell, Lieutenant Tuttle and I walked with the two native students to Matkhola, which was approximately twenty minutes from Khama. Here he arranged for a boat which took us to the railroad at Karoid, charging us ten rupees for the trip. I offered the student a gift of money, but he refused stating that he was delighted to be of service to American airmen who were helping India. The student also made arrangements with the local police of Pakundia Police Station to Guard the aircraft until myself or someone else returned to destroy it.

We arrived at the railroad at Karoid four hours later and proceeded to Kurmitola. Upon arrival there, I called XX Bomber Command and gave details of the accident. I was told to await instructions. On the following day at 1100, Major Burns arrived in a B-25 Aircraft and decided to bomb Aircraft #263. Two bombing runs were made with unsatisfactory results. Arrangements were made with the Service Group at Kurmitola to send a salvage crew to destroy the aircraft. Later in the day, we returned in the B-25 to Piardoba Army Air Base.

b. 2nd Lieutenant David E. White, Co-Pilot

I bailed out of aircraft #263 through the nose wheel well and saw four other chutes in the air, but went into the overcast and lost track of them. I left the overcast several hundred feet from the ground and observed the entire area to be covered with water. I had no difficulty in getting free from the parachute. I undid the jungle kit and it floated to the surface. There was a native boat about one hundred yards away and I called several times for help. When they ignored me, I placed the jungle kit under me for support and started to swim. No one else had landed near me. I swam about two hundred yards to a bamboo pole sticking up in the water and hung on to it. I was able to pull myself up the pole and saw more native boats. When I called for help, they rowed out to me. At first they seemed reluctant to take me into the boat, but I climbed halfway in and held on and then they helped me in. I could see a chute some distance away and by using gestures, persuaded them to row to it. We pulled the chute from the

water but it was empty and no one was in the water nearby. We searched the area for quite awhile and saw another chute. We started to go to it, but before we could reach it, another native boat had arrived and I saw them pull another man from the water. We then rowed to a small island, no larger than 100 feet long and 40 feet wide, upon which were five native huts. The natives were extremely tall with Mongoloid features and wore chin whiskers. They were very friendly and gave me leaf cigarettes. After two hours, another boat brought in Lieutenant Hammond and Sergeant Huisjen. I opened my jungle kit and found one compass filled with water and useless, however, the second compass functioned after being shaken out. I intimated, by gesturing, that we wanted to be taken to the West. The natives however, did not understand. Soon a native from a nearby island arrived who spoke a few words of English. I pointed to the West and made train noises. He shook his head and said, "No," and kept saying, "Police Station." He put the three of us in his boat and after two and one-half or three hours, we came to a larger island and the village of Tahirpur. Here, we were met by some territorial policemen, who took us to their headquarters. There were no communication facilities available. The police said that they would get a boat to take us to Sunamganu. Meanwhile, the police heard that three other crewmen had been lately picked up on the other side of the lake, so we decided to wait until they arrived. At about 1600, Sergeant Swart and Sergeant Jennings and Warrant Office Graffious arrived. At 1730, we left by boat for Sunamganu. The boat was propelled by long poles and the trip lasted nearly twelve hours. We arrived at 0400 the next morning. Here, we were met by a Rice Control Officer and some other local officers. We sent a wire to Sylhet. At 1300 the following afternoon, a C-47 came from Sylhet and circled. We stood out in the yard about five yards apart so that they could count us. They dropped a handkerchief secured around a message telling us that a rescue party would come. Shortly after, a British Major and Lieutenant came to the building and told us that we could use their motor launch to go to Sylhet. We decided to accept the offer and wired Sylhet to meet us at a ferry landing just above Sylhet. We arrived at the ferry at 0300. We waited until 0800 and then crossed the river. Lieutenant Hammond and I started walking to Sylhet and after having gone about five miles, we were met by a Military Police Captain and a Sergeant in a Command Car. We returned and picked up the other members of our party. At Sylhet, the Intelligence Officer told us that two flat-bottom gas boats had gone searching for us. I accompanied a search party in a C-47 aircraft to the scene of the ditching and went again the following day. We found nothing. We were then flown to Tuzgon where we were in turn flown to Calcutta. From Calcutta, we returned to Piardoba by train – elapsed time from accident was eight days.

c. 2nd Lieutenant Edgar E. Hammond, Bombardier.

I left the plane through the nose wheel door and had no difficulty clearing any obstacles. When I came through the overcast, I saw the water and started to unbuckle the cute straps. I easily got free from the chute. There were no boats in sight and I started swimming toward an island about one mile away. After swimming about one-half hour, I became exhausted and tried to remove my clothing – succeeded in getting off one shoe. The next thing I remember is getting hauled into a boat. When I came around, I discovered that I was on an island. From this point, my experiences parallel those of Lieutenant White.

d. 1st Lieutenant Walter R. Russell, Navigator

I did not parachute. Following the ditching, I crawled from the pilot's window. I encountered difficulty in releasing the life raft, but finally two of us were able to get free. I went ashore with the pilot as related by him.

e. 1st Lieutenant Arthur B. Tuttle, Flight Engineer

When we prepared to ditch, I fastened my safety belt and held the Radio Operator Staff Sergeant Carter, so that he would not be thrown about in the crash. On impact with the water, the lower forward turret was pushed up into the cabin making the compartment very dangerous. I had removed the engineer's escape hatch just prior to ditching. I climbed out onto the fuselage. The cabin was filling rapidly from the turret rupture and there were strong fuel fumes. The plane settled very slowly. I removed the left life raft and inflated it. There was no equipment in the raft and it was not tied to the aircraft, however the water was calm and it did not float away. I pulled the raft around to the tail gunner's position and found the escape hatch closed. Captain Waller left me to guard the plane. More than one hundred natives had come to the scene, however they made no attempt to board the plane. I made two or three unsuccessful attempts to back into the aircraft through the submerged hatch. After the aircraft had settled until only the tail fin was visible, I got some short boards from the natives and paddled to shore about 600 yards. After making shore, Sergeant Carter and I walked to the home of the English-speaking student where we joined the others. From this point on, my experiences parallel those of Captain Waller.

f. Staff Sergeant Don F. Carter, Radio Operator.

I was with Lieutenant Tuttle throughout the accident. I have nothing to add to his narrative.

g. Staff Sergeant Edward L. Swart, Radio Operator

When ordered to bail out, I left the aircraft from the rear door. When I landed in the water, I quickly got free from the parachute. I unfastened the jungle kit and used it as a float. I swam about for approximately forty-five minutes and was then picked up by a native boatman and taken to an island where I found Lieutenant White and the others. From this point on, my experiences parallel those of Lieutenant White.

h. Staff Sergeant Aldon G. Huisjen, Senior Gunner

When I bailed out, I saw four chutes in the air below me, however I lost sight of them when they went into the clouds. I fell for about eight minutes and when 200 feet from the water, I broke out of the overcast. I could see three chutes in the water, however I did not land near them since a strong current of air swept me far out in the lake just prior to landing in the water. When I saw the water, I undid both leg straps, hence was quickly free from the chute once I hit the water. I started swimming without trying to remove my clothing, but became very weary and succeeded in getting all of my clothes off. I squelched a panicky feeling and swam toward an island; it is estimated that I was in the water for an hour. I alternated swimming and floating and remained in good shape. Finally, a native dugout appeared, but they seemed afraid to take me into the boat; but when I held on and kept

lunging in, they aided me. I conveyed with gestures that there were others somewhere in the water. We finally saw a parachute and rowed to it and found it to be my own. Since we could see no other chutes, we went to the island where I joined Lieutenant White and from that point on, my experiences parallel his.

5. Interrogator's notes:

a. During the interrogation, crew members made the following suggestions and significant comments.

- (1) All natives, after overcoming a momentary reluctance, were extremely helpful and sympathetic. The boatman evinced great interest in personal adornments, rings and crash bracelets and it is suggested that crew members be advised to leave all trinkets behind. While Lieutenant Hammond was in an exhausted condition, the natives tried to remove his rings. While in the boats, the natives inferred that they be given watches and bracelets.
- (2) Lieutenant Russell encountered great difficulty in freeing the right life raft and states that he alone could not have released it. The grip is so tiny that it does not permit a firm grip and slips through the fingers. He suggests that a four or five-inch grip with a bar be devised. Lieutenant Russell and the pilot also concur in the suggestion that a remote life control release be installed near the pilot or co-pilot seat, enabling them to release the raft as soon as the plane is down. It was fortunate in this case that the plane remained afloat for a considerable time.
- (3) Several remarked that they had not know previously that the jungle kit makes an excellent life preserver and is capable of keeping one afloat for a long period.
- (4) The pilot, Captain Waller, suggested that the 'ditching' procedure be changed thus:
 - (a) Eight men sit in the front pressurized compartment ahead of the lower forward turret, on the floor with their backs to the nose of the plane.
 - (b) Pilot use power-on on all engines on approach and try to as nearly as possible make the contact point a power-on stall. This will allow the pilot to choose the exact moment of contact.

MALCOLM W. MC DIVITT
1ST Lt., Air Corps,
Interrogating Officer

Reproduced by: Hq. XX Bomber Command
Date: 11 September 1944

Editor's note: These pages were retyped from reproductions of official (then) secret documents. I tried to stay in keeping with format of original documents as nearly as possible.

SICK BAY

Martha Casamajor – Paul writes (and I'm grateful that he did for I could never remember, spell or understand the procedures) that Martha's dermatologist detected two small cancer spots on her ankle just a year ago. She opted to have it treated



by radiation which was done last October. Because her circulation was below optimum, the treatment didn't heal properly. So, this spring the doctors ordered hyperbaric oxygen treatment. This involves the patient being put in an acrylic tank for two hours, every day with pure oxygen at two atmospheres pressure (200% oxygen) – equivalent to 30 feet under water. The oxygen overload causes the blood vessels to generate new tissue at the edges of a balky wound. Starting May 13, she did this every day for 30 days. During that time, her heart doctor ran a special test and discovered a growth on one of the valves in her heart. So, on June 19th the heart surgeon took over, put her on a heart/lung machine and opened up her heart to remove the problem. Just thinking about it boggles my mind. On Monday 6/24 she came home from the

hospital so, now I have a new 24/7 job. She is up and about - slowly – and able to care for most of her personal needs, but she needs, and is getting, a lot of waiting upon and TLC.

???!!!***



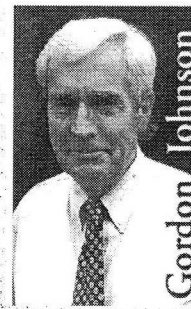
Kathryn Weskamp has had a series of ailments that started with a mishap at a social gathering many months past- perhaps a wedding reception – I'm not sure. Anyway, an "Amazon" woman guest caused Kathryn to fall and then fell on top of Kathryn. (Kathryn estimated her to weigh 300 lbs). That triggered a long recovery and certainly restrained her mobility. Also, she's plagued with emphysema and has needed breathing aids. She said she is restricted walking due to shortness of breath.

A recent trip to Disneyland revealed she was not up to that anymore and they got a wheel chair. We talk with each other by phone and although she's up and about, I know life has slowed down considerably for one always so active. They do plan to be in Cocoa Beach!

???!!!***

WOMAN PIRATE CHIEF UNDER CONTRACT WITH SACO

Editor's note: To avoid confusion that the following narration was authored by someone other than himself, Gordon Johnson evidently chose not to write in the mode of first person . . . (i.e., pronouns I/me); - - this is his story - these are his words:



Gordon Johnson

Shortly after General McArthur sailed into Tokyo Harbor on the Missouri with the Documents of Unconditional Surrender, Commodore Miles* met with Mia Ling, woman Pirate Chief. He had made a verbal contract in 1943 with Mia Ling who commanded a fleet of pirate junks. She had verbally agreed to find American pilots shot down along the China coast and return them to American bases in Western China.

Commodore Miles agreed to pay for each pilot returned. The pay was to be a combination of guns, ammunition and Chinese currency.

On returning to Chungking, the Commodore called Supply Corps Lt. (jg) Gordon Johnson to his office in Happy Valley where he recited the number of guns, bullets and currency owed to Mia Ling. Johnson suggested that nowhere in the Supply Corps Manual was there a provision for a lowly (jg) to make this kind of payment and that the penalty for doing so might be many months in Leavenworth and dishonorable discharge.

Johnson suggested that the manual did provide for Special Disbursing Agents and the Commodore agreed to take on that task. Johnson then drafted the Special Disbursing Agent Appointment. He collected the guns, ammunition and currency and placed them with a packing list in thirteen mail pouches.

Following some contract samples in the Supply Corps Manual, Johnson drafted an agreement between Mia Ling, Pirate Chief and the Government of the United States of America as represented by Commodore Miles, Sino American Cooperation (*Sino American Cooperative Organization*).

Johnson met the Commodore at the Chungking Airport with the Special Disbursing Agent Appointment and an End of Assignment Return, documents which the Commodore signed. He loaded the thirteen mail sacks on the plane. He gave Commodore Miles the inventory and the agreement. He asked him to sign the agreement, deliver the payment to the Pirate Chief, ask her to sign it and return the document to Chungking. The Commodore turned to one of the airport ground personnel and told him to sign her name in the place indicated. With the signed agreement, Johnson completed the Special Disbursing Agent's Report and filed it with Supply Corps Headquarters.

After the war, Lt. Johnson met with then Admiral Miles in Washington and asked what the General Accounting Office had to say about this unusual agreement and payment. The admiral responded by saying, "The GAO said, 'Two Star Admirals can do no wrong.'"

???!!!**

**Rear Admiral - In his book "ADKOW" Miles states... "they made me a rear admiral, the promotion being dated August 13, the day before the Japanese signified their willingness to surrender and twenty days before they formally signed the surrender terms aboard the U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay." (pg.522 ADKOW Ed.)*

NOSTALGIA



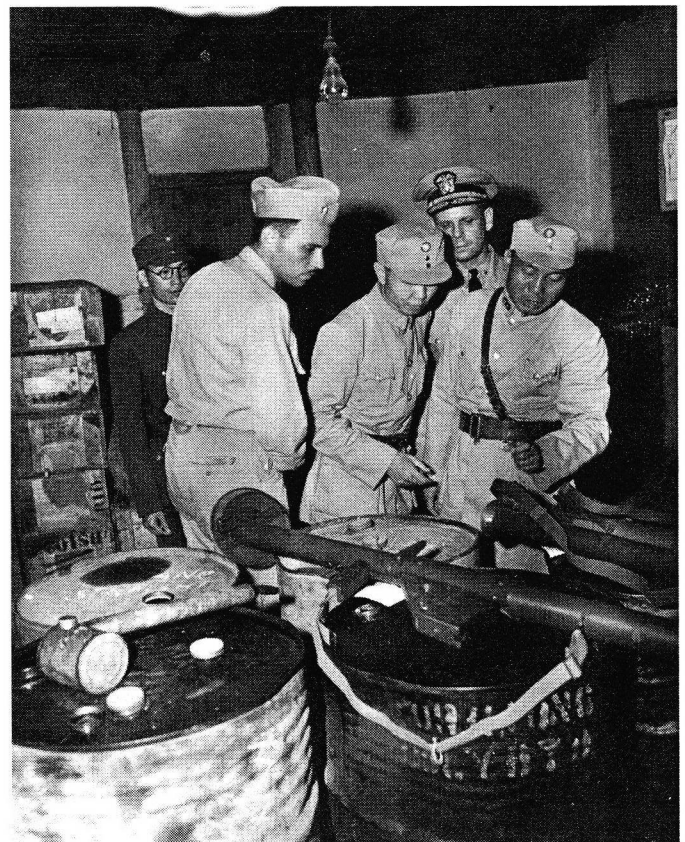
L-R: PIKE-WILLIAMS-STRICKLER-WATERS-BROTT-
NO, 1 BOY- WEBER-STEVENSON-MALLOY-MCCUE
(FRONT) COOK & HOUSEBOYS



RUDY RUSSOMANO
& JOHN PISARICK



CAMP 5 POSEH, CHINA 8 MAY '45
(Know Anybody?)



MARSHAL TENG EN BO INSPECTING BAZOOKAS
AT CAMP 10 ARMORY JUNE 1945
L-R: BILL SAGER-INTERPRETER-MILES-TENG EN BO

A VETERAN DIED TODAY

(submitted by Bob Hill)

*He was getting old and paunch and his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the Legion, telling stories from his past;
Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done.
In his exploits with his buddies; they were heroes, everyone.
And 'tho sometimes, to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,
All his buddies listened, for they knew whereof he spoke.*

*But we'll hear his tales no longer, for ol' Bob has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer, for A VETERAN DIED TODAY.
No, he won't be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,
For he lived an ordinary, very quiet sort of life.
He held a job and raised a family, quietly going on his way,
And the world won't note his passing, 'tho A VETERAN DIED TODAY.*

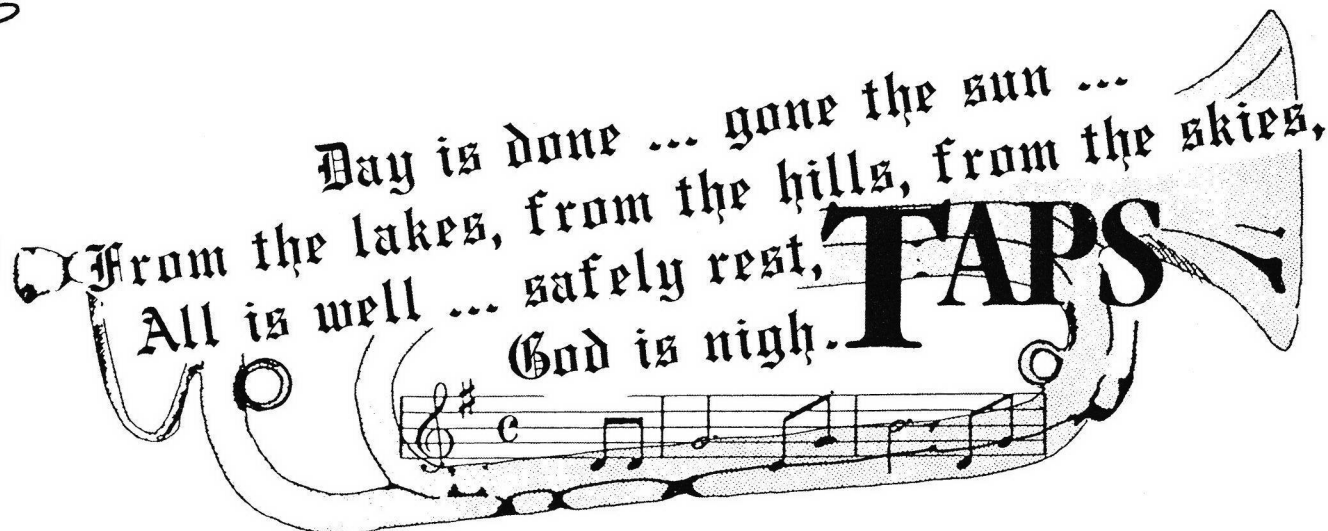
*While politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state,
While thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great.
Papers tell of their life stories from the time that they were young
But the passing of a VETERAN goes unnoticed and unsung.*

*Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land,
Some jerk who breaks his promise and cons his fellow man;
Or the ordinary fellow, who in times of war and strife,
Goes off to serve his country and offers up his life?
The politician's stipend and the style in which he lives,
Are sometimes disproportionate to the service that he gives,
While the ordinary VETERAN, who offered up his all,
Is paid off with a medal and perhaps a pension small.*

*It's so easy to forget them, for it's been so long ago,
That our Bob and Jims and Johnnys went to battle, but we know
It was not the politicians, with their compromise and ploys,
Who won for us the freedom that our country now enjoys.
Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies at hand,
Would you really want some cop-out with his ever-waffling stand,
Or would you want a VETERAN who has sworn to defend
His home, his kin and country, and would fight until the end?*

*He was just a common VETERAN and his ranks are growing thin;
But his presence should remind us we may need his likes again.
For when countries are in conflict, then we find the military's part
Is to clean up all the troubles that the politicians start.*

*If we cannot do him honor while he's here to hear the praise,
Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days.
Perhaps just a simple headline in the paper that might say:
"Our Country is in Mourning, for A VETERAN DIED TODAY." - Author Unknown*



Ex-real estate developer was WWII Navy veteran

Clyde C. Hammer

FOSTORIA, OH – Clyde C Hammer, a Navy veteran and local real estate developer, died of cancer 23 Nov '01 in his home. He was 76.

Mr. Hammer, a native of Fostoria, graduated from Fostoria High School in 1944. He joined the U.S. Navy shortly after graduation.

He served in China with the Scouts and Raiders as a member of the Sino-American Cooperative Organization, a special force of Chinese Nationalists and U.S. Naval Group that fought the Japanese in World War II.

After serving in the Navy about three years, Mr. Hammer worked for four years with a construction company called Brown-Pacific-Maxon, Inc. in Guam.

“They helped build roads and clear some of the wilderness,” his wife, Mildred, said.

When he returned to the United States, Mr. Hammer attended Bowling Green State University and began working as a builder in the Fostoria area. He and his brother built more than 125 houses together family members said.

Mr. Hammer started a real estate development office in the early 1960s. He became a certified real estate appraiser and worked as a developer and broker until his retirement in 1988. He developed several subdivision and condominiums in Fostoria.

“I don’t think anyone who bought a house off him ever had a bad thing to say,” his son, Ron, said.

Mr. Hammer was past president of the Fostoria of Realtors, a member of U.S. Power Squadron and American Legion Post 73, Fostoria, and a former member of the Elks.

He was an avid chess player who belonged to the U.S. Chess Federation. He competed in tournaments and played chess weekly for the last 67 years with his good friend, Carter Clark.

Mr. Hammer also enjoyed boating. He owned several boats over the years and often sailed on Lake Erie. He worked in his garden after retirement and built a workshop in the backyard where he made furniture.

Friends and family said Mr. Hammer was a kind and loyal man. “He knew how to be a friend,” his son said.

“He never thought about trying to deceive anybody. Whatever was on

his mind, that's what he would tell you."

Surviving are his wife of 47 years, Mildred, ("Millie"); son, Ron; brothers, Owen, Frederick, Alton, and Earl Hammer; sister, LaDonna Smalley, three grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

???!!!***



DON A. MILLER

From e-mail to Jack Miller 8 Jan 2002
from Beatrice (Bea) Miller:

"I need to inform you that my beloved husband passed away on the 7th of August. He had had triple by-pass surgery on June 15th and was recovering wonderfully until July 11th, when he had a major stroke. To endure two major events like those, one after the other, caused other things to happen and we lost him on the 7th of August. After his passing, I changed my e-mail address which is no doubt why we couldn't be reached. We were thankful that we had 52 years of marriage and that he had reached the ripe old age of 82. Our 3 daughters and 7 grandchildren were deeply impacted by his presence, and will always remember him as a loving, thoughtful, wonderful father/grandfather. We all were truly blessed to have him in our lives for so long.

???!!!***

VICTOR R. BISCEGLIA

To the editor . . . 27 April 2002

My mother has received a kind letter from Mr. Paul Casamajor regarding my father, Victor R. Bisceglia, who passed away on November 23, 2001. At Mr. Casamajor's request, I am enclosing an outline of my father's military career and two pictures, one of which is circa his China period, and the other is of Mom and Dad in their later years. The pictures are replicates and need not be returned. Please feel free to edit and use the enclosed as you deem appropriate.

In reviewing Dad's personal effects, the copies of SACO editions, letters, and other correspondence reinforced my knowledge that SACO and the people he served with were a significant and proud phase of his life. The enclosed check is to assist your efforts in keeping the memory of these brave men from ever being forgotten. The freedom I enjoy today is because of sacrifices they made so many years ago.

Dad was inurned in the columbarium at Arlington Cemetery on April 19, 2002 with full military honors. It was the saddest, yet proudest, day of my life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victor J. Bisceglia". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'V'.

Victor J. Bisceglia

Encl.

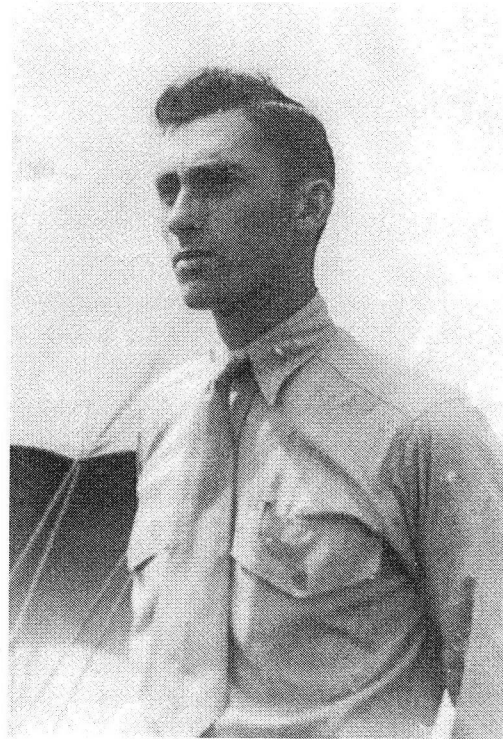
cc: P. Casamajor

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Marine Colonel Victor R. Bisceglia was born in Harrison, NY, on February 26, 1918. Upon graduating from Columbia University, he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the Marine Corps in June 1941. Promoted to the rank of Captain in August 1942, he

served as platoon commander of the 1st Barrage Balloon Squadron in the Panama Canal Zone where he met Audrey Pezzotti (Pike), who was soon to become his wife of 59 years. In June of 1943, he was transferred to China where he joined SACO forces (Sino-American Cooperative Organization) and assumed command of Camp 4, whose mission was the organization and conduct of Free China guerrilla operations against Japanese forces in Inner Mongolia. Camp 4 is generally believed to be the most distant and remote American fighting force during the entire war. After his tour in China, he was an instructor and later Battalion Commander at the Marine Basic School in Quantico, VA. Promoted to Lt. Colonel in February 1951, he served as Planning Officer with the US European Command in Paris, France, for which he received the Army Commendation Medal and was promoted to Colonel. Upon return from Paris, he assumed command of the 8th

Marine Regiment at Camp Lejeune, NC. His final military assignment was as Director of the 1st Marine Corps District, Headquartered in Garden City, NY. Upon his retirement from the Marine Corps in July of 1967, he was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal. Colonel Bisceglia passed away on November 23, 2001, in Merrick, NY. He is survived by his wife, 5 children and 9 grandchildren.



Victor R. Bisceglia (circa China service)



Victor and Audrey Bisceglia in their later years

WAYNE H. HATTERMAN



Wayne H. Hatterman, 78, of 820 N. Roosevelt, Cherokee, (Iowa) died Tuesday, Dec. 25, in the Sioux Valley Memorial Hospital, Cherokee, following a brief illness.

He was born March 16, 1923 in O'Brien County, Germantown, Iowa., to Henry and Clara (Kleunder) Hatterman.

He attended country school in Everly, Iowa, and Harris, Iowa, until 1932 when his family moved to Cherokee.

He graduated from Wilson High School in 1940. In December 1940, he joined the U.S. Navy. He served for over two years in

American Samoa and nearly a year in China, during World War II.

He became a Chief Pharmacist Mate in the U.S. Navy. He was discharged in March of 1946.

On June 14, 1946 he married Fanny Sleeper in Cherokee.

He worked as a printer for the *Cherokee Courier* and later the *Cherokee Daily Times*, when he purchased the printing department in 1975 and established Wayne printing, now on East Main, until he retired in September 1993.

Mr Hatterman was a member of the V.F.W., American Legion, The Disabled American Veterans, and SACO Veterans of U.S. Naval Group China which he enjoyed traveling to their annual reunions.

He was a member of the Trinity Lutheran Church, having held every office of the Voters' Assembly over the years.

He also taught Sunday School for several years. He was a history buff and also enjoyed spending time with his family.

Survivors include his wife, Fanny; two daughters, Esther Carey and her husband, John of Marcus, and Ellen Peters and her husband, John of Bloomington, Minn; five grandchildren and one brother, Eldon and wife Mary Jane of Cherokee.

Wayne was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery, Cherokee with graveside military services by the L. A. Wescott Post No. 2253.



Fanny & Wayne
Dance at a SACO
Reunion

*(My research reveals
this was San Diego in
June 1992 Issue #8 of
Nov 1992 p.9. Ed.)*

Continued

To Paul Casamajor23 June 2002

Wayne and I had all arrangements to go to Seattle for that Reunion. He was in the hospital in Sioux City, IA. and had one angiography and then three more a month later. On December 25, 2000, he fell at our daughter's lake home in Minnesota and damaged his spleen and had to have two blood transfusions. He was put on steroids to heal it instead of surgery – with heart trouble and everything else, he had the beginning of Parkinson's. Then he had a detached retina and was losing his sight. He talked about the reunions and enjoyed them. He was able to see with one eye and I did all of the driving.

The 24th of November, (2001) Wayne was admitted to the Sioux Valley Hospital in Cherokee with a compressed lower vertebra. He had troubled with his back quite awhile. He never complained of his pain. They had to put him in a brace and put him on morphine for the three weeks in the hospital.

I brought him home from the hospital on Dec. 14, 2001. On Christmas Day 2001, in the afternoon, he had a heart attack and passed away.

Am sending you his picture and obituary (*I also received both...Ed.*) I'm sending the article from our local newspaper that was written when Fred Webster and another SACO member was visiting us. I am sure that Wayne would like other members to read this. There might be some of the camp members around at the meetings.

Enclosed is \$25.00 donation. Please mail, if possible, 2 copies of the issue that will have Wayne's (this) letter and obituary in. My daughters would like a copy. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Fanny Hatterman

Mrs. Wayne Hatterman (Fanny)

????!!***

In Loving Memory

Glenn William Hunnicutt



Glenn

Glenn was born on Wednesday, October 13, 1920 in Klamath Falls, Oregon and died on Wednesday, December 6, 2000 in Klamath Falls. A celebration of his life was held December 11, 2000.

Glenn served with SACO arriving Chungking, China 18 June 1943. Shortly after arrival, he made Gunner's Mate 1/c & was assigned to Camp 1 during most of his tenure – about 17 months.

????!!***

Leon J. "Duke" Zucks, Jr.



"Duke" and wife Dottie at one of Saco reunions of the past.

Leon J. (Duke) Zucks, Jr. died 24 May 2002 at the age of 78 in West Palm Beach, FL. He was born 1 May 1924 in Port Chester, NY to Ethel Herbst & Leon J. Zucks, Sr. He served in the US. Navy during WWII, the Armed Guard and SACO (Sino American Cooperative Organization), a highly secret intelligence operation in interior China as BM2/c. He was retired as a Sergeant of White Plains Police Dept. after 22 years and First Marine Bank-Barnett Bank after 18 years.

Duke is survived by his wife, Dorothy Thompson Zucks, whom he married 2 June 1946 just lacking 8 days of reaching their 56th anniversary.

He is also survived by his sister, Jean Tobyansen of California and seven children; Richard & Rosemary of NY; Dottie Jean & Thad of Murusky, NM; Robert & Theresa of NY; Bruce & Lynne of MI; William & Karen of FL; Nancy & Rob Esplen of FL; and Karen & (Dave Bott) Zucks of FL; eight grandchildren — Christopher, Andrew, Bryan, Robby, DJ, Duke, Tyler and Julia and two great-grandchildren: Joy and Christopher.

Private cremation services were held. The family requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be made in memory of Leon Zucks in honor of his grandson, Duke Bott, to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation PBC, 2200 N. Florida Mango Road #304, West Palm Beach FL 33409 or Hospice of PBC, 5300 East Ave., West Palm Beach FL 33407.

Dottie said in his final days, when Duke could no longer take nourishment, doctors opted to feed him directly by stomach tube. Dottie stated she and Duke had both willed not to accept life support and she and her daughter agreed that his wish be granted.

Editor's note: Just wanted to add that Duke was a member of what is referred to as the "Foochow Gang" (being their location in China) while serving in SACO during WWII. Almost fifty years later, many of the group got together at the reunion in Louisville, KY in May 1993 where they again met with Sal Ciaccio (whom some thought was dead as he was sent to Shanghai gravely ill during the war). At that reunion, Duke Zucks was joined by Sal Ciaccio, Guy Tressler, W. C. Williamson, James F. Whitlock, Richard Terpstra and R. F. Weber (Issue #10 March 1944 SACO NEWS p.15). A little later that year, this group, including Lloyd Cobb, surprised me by sending a Steelcase Sensor Chair for my use in compiling the SACO NEWS. These men, like most SACOs are exceptional members of our veterans and I know Duke will be sorely missed. Duke had been quite ill for several years and his buddies admired his attitude under dire circumstances and his dogged effort to attend our reunions until he would send regrets that he could no longer make it. His buddies had a lot of respect for him and that speaks a lot for a man of SACO.

???!?!***

Stanley E. McCaffrey university president

Stanley McCaffrey, 85, former president of the University of the Pacific and of Rotary International and a former aide to Vice President Richard Nixon, died 10 March 2002 at his home in Moraga, (CA) after a long illness.

He was a native of Whittier, (CA) where he was a high school classmate of Nixon. He was the student body president, a 1938 graduate of the University of California at Berkeley and a Navy veteran of World War II*

He was the former executive manager of the California Alumni Association and a vice president of the University of California before serving as executive assistant to Nixon in the final year of his second vice presidential term in 1960.

In 1971, he was named president of the University of the Pacific, a position he held for 16 years during a period of expansion for the campus, its academic departments and enrollment. Under Mr. McCaffrey, the main Stockton campus grew with the acquisition of nearby land, and the university's prestigious dental school in San Francisco also expanded.

"These were very challenging years for all sectors in higher education, and it is to Stan McCaffrey's credit and Pacific's benefit that so much progress was made," said university President Donald DeRosa.

He is survived by his wife, Sue; a son, Steve, of Sacramento; and four grandchildren.

**The preceding obit touched lightly on the Naval Career of Stan McCaffrey, As most of you know, he was an officer of Miles' SACO staff. Assigned to Air Combat Intelligence (ACI), Air Ground Forces Resources Technical Staff (AGFRTS) asked Miles for loan of ACI officers to work for the 14th A.A.F. McCaffrey was one of those officers. Liuchow and Kweilin in Kwangsi province were under siege by the Japanese.*



Lt. Commander Stanley E. McCaffrey post war

"He and some Army men flew to Kanchou, jeeped to Suichwan, and walked a hundred miles to the front," states Miles in his book ADKOW.

"McCaffrey was busy at the front for nearly a month. Sometimes bad weather or bad radio, or unsuccessful drops of new radios and tubes cut down his value, but his guards were good and the Japanese could not get at him. One day in early August, he directed thirty-two planes on eight separate flights during seven sweltering hours. Over and over again the planes dropped their bombs and used their machine guns on the Japanese in attacks that 'killed a thousand Japs, six hundred horses and several cannon.'"

Later, Miles sent McCaffrey along with Lt. Frank Balsley and others to the Philippines where McCaffrey and his companions, working with the Navy there, were able to increase current air drops of five hundred pounds a day to Changchow, not far from Camp Six and Foochow to three thousand pounds. Finishing that task, he moved on to Guam to work on tonnage that was to be sent by sea. Ed.

*????!!****



ROBERT VIRGIL LYALL

of West Des Moines died April 20, 2002 of complications from Alzheimer's disease at Ramsey Home in Des Moines, Iowa.

Bob was the only child born of George and Matilda Lyall of Stuart, on June 30, 1920. He lettered in high school multiple times and continued his education in nursing at St. Louis, MO. He served in the navy during WWII from 1942 through 1946. He was stationed in the Pacific and worked with the Chinese (*in SACO – Sino American Cooperative Organization – a Naval Intelligence group in interior China where he served as Pharmacist's Mate 1st Class*). Upon his return, Bob completed his nursing degree.

Bob was married to Marcella Hilde Krausz on June 21, 1947, in New Memphis, Illinois. They returned to Stuart to farm where Bob and Marcella had three children. In 1958, the family moved to Modesto, California, where Bob was a registered nurse at the California State Hospital. In 1960, they returned to West Des Moines, where he continued his nursing career at the Veterans' Hospital, then Woodward State Hospital, and finally, at the Anamosa State Reformatory, he became the Director of Nursing and retired in 1980.

During Bob's lifetime, he enjoyed the outdoors, while farming, outdoor work, and especially golf. He enjoyed golfing with many friends and family. He was a marshal for many city women's golf tournaments.

Bob was a member of American Legion Post 0620, Sons of Norway and St. Mark Lutheran Church.

He is survived by his wife, Marcella; two sons, Robert and Cheryl of Indianola; Glen and Connie Lyall of State Center; a daughter, Mary Schmidt of North Kansas City, MO; seven grandchildren; two step-grandchildren and one step-great-grandchild.

(Many of you will remember Bob recalling his signature act of pipe smoking. Ed.)

????!!***



Col. Carl F. Eifler

The following was sent to Bill Bartee by Carl Eifler's son, Byron Hisey:

April 8, 2002, was the end of an era in American history. Carl Frederick Eifler, Colonel, Doctor of Philosophy, psychologist and war hero, heard the call from Jesus and accepted it.

Carl had been living in the house that he shared with his beloved Margaret for 34 years before her death in 1996. He was surrounded by Margaret's paintings, which covered every wall in each room, with the exception of his den. In that room was his "I love me" wall, as he referred to it, on which were displayed the medals, commendations and awards from other countries as well as our own to honor his heroic service during World War II. Also displayed were the degrees in education and achievement attained after most of us are ready to retire.

In January of this year, Carl's health declined to the point that he needed to have full-time professional care. He spent his final months trying to "Eiflerize" the rehabilitation hospital where he was taken care of so well.

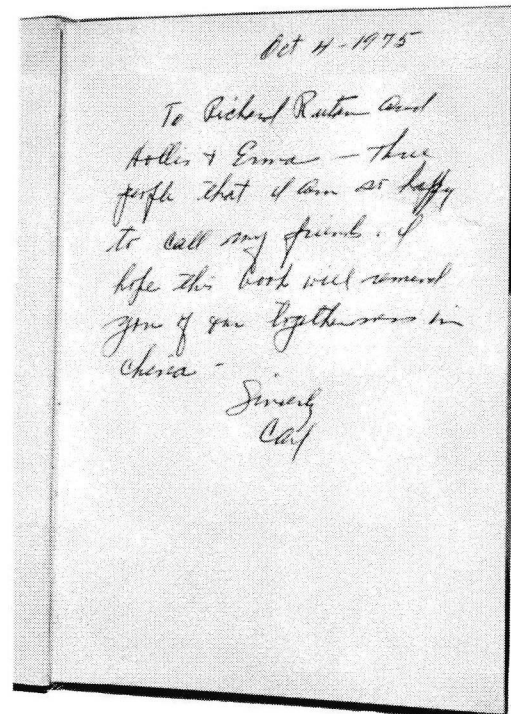
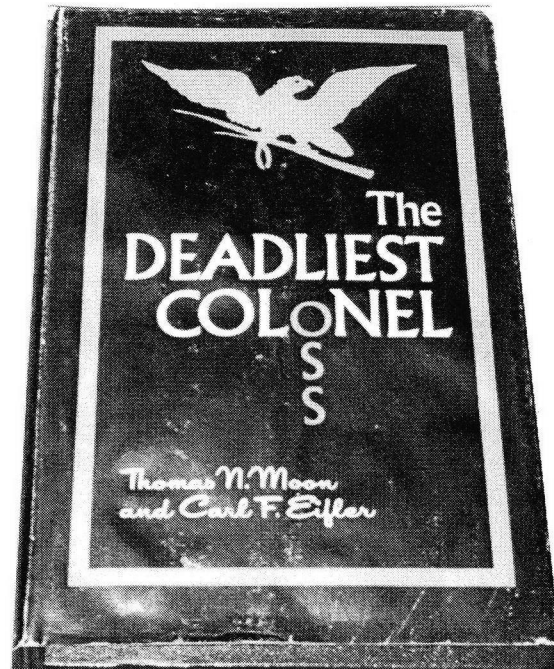
Carl was very fortunate to have many good friends of long standing. His sister, Hilda Coleman of Los Angeles, his son, Byron Hisey of Newman (CA), five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren survive Carl.

Editor's notes:

I first became acquainted with Carl and Margaret on the 1972 trip to Taiwan. Later, having become an associate member with Detachment 101, my mother, dad and I joined the group reunion in San Diego in 1975. Carl and my dad became "new" friends and Carl regretted, due to illness, he was unable to attend dad's funeral a few years later. Sometime in the 80's my mother and I visited with Carl & Margaret at their home in Salinas (*East of Eden country*) and enjoyed genuine hospitality. Margaret was quite an accomplished artist and we enjoyed seeing her paintings. A few years later, Carl sent me a copy of his sketch of Christ which I still have.

I have written Mr. Hisey for any information he might have to offer, but time

is short and I haven't had any response to date.



From the jacket of his biography by Thomas Moon and Carl F. Eifler entitled *THE DEADLIEST COLONEL*, I quote:

"This book is particularly aptly titled, for it is the biography of what must surely be one of the most individually devastating and apparently indestructible men who has ever lived. Colonel Eifler, a policeman and customs officer on the Mexican-American border in his younger days, was recruited into U.S. Intelligence at the beginning of World War II. He was one of the original group who eventually became known as the OSS.

"During the war, Eifler served mainly in the Far East, specifically in Burma where, behind Japanese lines, he commanded the group known as DET 101. In those days he was under the command of General Stilwell, the courageous but beleaguered combat officer who was entangled by the political schemes of Chiang Kai-shek and the long-range diplomatic objectives of President Roosevelt.

"To say that a man is larger than life has become something of a cliché. Yet that description fits Eifler perfectly. He was an explosive, violent, yet controlled man, totally without fear; direct, quick, and tough mentally and physically; methodical, and extraordinarily resourceful. Under orders he would do anything, at any time, in any place – and his luck has never run out.

"After the war, Eifler seemed to verge on defeat. He had brain damage as a result of a head injury and suffered from periodic blackouts during which he became violent. He had severe pain and disruptive amnesia. But by force of will, it seems, he crushed these obstacles and went on to attain a doctoral degree in psychology. He even converted from agnosticism to Christianity. He did not mellow. He confronted the New Testament head on and was convinced. And he survived shattering personal losses. At the end of this book, one wonders what the Colonel will do next. Nothing, it seems, is too much for him."

Carl once expressed his disdain to me that he was classified as "Associate" member of

SACO stating, "I was SACO, too." And although I understand the paths of Eifler and Miles may have crossed and they were both heads of Intelligence, as Paul Casamajor points out, Col. Eifler was never on the SACO payroll & that's our "bible" for validating a SACO claim.

In any event, Col. Eifler played a tremendous, unparalleled roll in the CBI Theatre of WWII. Knowing Carl and Margaret was one of life's pleasures and my mother and I found him, regardless of his former military ability to "scare the hell out of anyone," to be a perfect gentleman in the post war years.

????!!***

LORNE HORNING



To Weskamp

17 June 2002

On behalf of Lorne Horning, I would like to thank you for sending him his 2002 SACO membership card.

Unfortunately, I need to inform you that Lorne died three days prior to its arrival. Please notify the appropriate parties to

remove his name from you mailing list.

Your organization was always a very important part of my father's life; I wish you and the remaining members a very blessed life.

Sincerely, 

Ruth L. Joslyn

Editor's note:

Paul Casamajor tells me Lorne was stationed in Calcutta his entire tour. He was a Chief Storekeeper and a printer, responsible for all of Admiral Miles needs in that respect. Lorne and Pearl were a lovable couple to be with. Lorne had a little caustic sense of humor and loved to get on Pearl's case, but all in fun. He and Pearl moved from Texas a few years ago to be close to family. Pearl had developed Alzheimer's and had been admitted to the care center at their living quarters. She died in April 1998.

I still miss them in hospitality rooms of later years. They were early arrivals and spent most of the day. Both always neatly dressed and both loved their beer. Paul says, "He had the greatest capacity for beer of any man I ever knew and never drunk." That is so true of both, Pearl could share right along with Lorne and never in all the years were they out of order.

I hope the angels have the beer on ice..

????!!***

Charles R. Groux

The following quotation appeared on the memorial program for Mr. Groux:

"Most of all, they love each other, love life and love their country, and they are not ashamed to say just that.....I am in awe of them, and I feel privileged to have been a witness to their lives and their sacrifices.

There are so many people whose stories could have been in this book, who embodied the standards of greatness in the everyday that the people in this book represent, and that give this generation its special quality and distinction. As I came to know many of them and their stories, I became more convinced of my judgment on that day marking the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day. This is the greatest generation any society has produced."

Tom Brokaw

The Greatest Generation



Charles R. Groux was born August 16, 1924 in Kingston, Pennsylvania and died January 13, 2002 in Apopka, Florida.

Mr. Groux was a career man with RCA for 35 years. He held a position as Chief Financial Officer for many subsidiaries of that institution including Random House, Banquet Foods and RCA Canada.

During his Naval career, he took training in Underwater Demolition, as many others of our SACO group in Ft. Pierce, Florida becoming one of the force of Scouts &

Raiders. He joined SACO in Calcutta, India as an Ensign and later made Lt. Jg.

Charles is survived by his wife, Exilda, 9 children, 12 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

Those of you who attended the 2001 SACO Reunion in Fredericksburg, Texas will recall that 17 Groux-family members of Charles and Exilda joined them – undoubtedly the largest family representation ever known in SACO reunions. It was a great tribute to have “the family” witness the presentation of the SACO Medal to Mr. Groux by high-ranking officers of the Military Intelligence Bureau of the Republic of China.



Marty & Charles at a past SACO Reunion

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Martha “Marty” Elizabeth Day



“We had a blast!”

(This was cover of funeral program)

Born Martha (Marty) Elizabeth Day in Exeter, New Hampshire, August 8, 1907. Marty moved to St. Petersburg, Florida in 1936 where she lived and worked in the hotel and real estate business.

Throughout her life, Marty helped other people. She began her volunteer work

during World War II in the Red Cross as one of the first Red Cross Nurse’s Aids. She served as President of the Sun Coast Auxiliary to Goodwill Industries, President of Bay Front Medical Auxiliary and President of the St. Petersburg , Florida Women’s Chamber of Commerce. In 1961 Marty was crowned “Queen of Hearts” by Beta Sigma Phi Sorority and given the Sertoma Service to Mankind Award. Marty hold five keys to the city of St. Petersburg for her continuous devotion to charitable organizations.

A member of the First United Methodist Church, Marty served on the Board of Stewards, was President of the Wesley Fellowship Class Sunday School and organized the Alter guild.

Marty is survived by one son, Jack, her daughter-in-law, Barbara, three grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and her beloved honey, Charles (Parkin).

(On the back cover):

“Dad and I spent many wonderful years together traveling the earth and making friends.”

– Marty

???!***

Daniel Wesley Eirich, Sr.

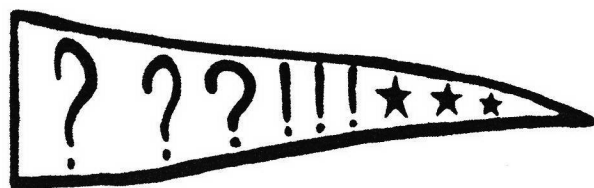


Jo and Dan Eirich taken at the Appleton, Wisconsin Reunion in July 1999..

Daniel Eirich of Delran, New Jersey, died August 23, 2001. Jo states Dan worked for 28 years in heavy equipment and later in maintenance for Iron Powder, a local industry.

He is survived by his wife, Jo and three children; Daniel, Jr.; Christine Muriel; and Pattilynn. Dan was predeceased by one son, Blair Thomas.

???!!!***



**SINCE OUR LAST PUBLICATION,
THE FOLLOWING DEATHS HAVE
BEEN REPORTED – MOST OF
WHICH APPEAR IN THE PRECEDING
OBITUARIES.**

- Frank H. Balsley 1987
Lt. -Kunming/East China/Shanghai
- Victor R. Bisceglia 2002
Major MC -Chungking/Camp 4
- Carl F. Eifler 2002
Col. O.S.S. -Burma
- Daniel W. Eirich Sr. 2001
Cox -Calcutta/Kunming
- Andrew M. Fleming 2002
MoMM2/c -Calcutta/Kueyang
- John L. Goepfert, Jr. 2002
Ens. -Calcutta
- Charles R. Groux 2002
Ens. -Calcutta
- Clyde C. Hammer 2001
Sic -Calcutta/Kunming/Hankow/Shanghai
- Wayne H. Hatterman 2001
PhM1/c -Calcutta/Camp 5/Canton/Shanghai
- Lorne Horning 2002
CSK -Calcutta
- Glenn W. Hunnicutt 2000
GM1/c -Camp 1
- Robert V. Lyall 2002
PhM1/c -Meishien/Canton
- John T. McAfee
SK2/c -Calcutta/Kunming/Chungking/Shanghai
- Stanley E. McCaffrey 2002
Lt. -Chungking/Kunming/Kweilin/14thAF
- Edward J. O'Toole 2002
MAM 1/c -Chungking
- Leon J. "Duke" Zucks Jr. 2002
BM1/c -Calcutta/Foochow

I AM THE NATION

By Otto Whittaker

I was born on July 4, 1776, and the Declaration of Independence is my birth certificate.

The bloodlines of the world run in my veins, because I offered freedom to the oppressed. I am many things and many people. I am the nation. I am 250 million living souls – and the ghost of millions who have lived and died for me. I am Nathan Hale and Paul Revere. I stood at Lexington and fired the shot heard around the world. I am Washington, Jefferson and Patrick Henry. I am Paul Jones, the Green Mountain Boys and Davy Crockett. I am Lee and Grant and Abe Lincoln.

I remember the Alamo, the Maine and Pearl Harbor. When freedom called, I answered and stayed until it was over, over there. I left my heroic dead in Flanders Field, on the rock of Corregidor, on the bleak slopes of Korea and in the steaming jungles of Vietnam.

I am the Brooklyn Bridge, the wheat lands of Kansas and the granite hills of Vermont. I am the coal fields of the Virginias and Pennsylvania, the fertile lands of the West, the Golden Gate and the Grand Canyon. I am Independence Hall, the Monitor and the Merrimac.

I am big. I sprawl from the Atlantic to the Pacific – my arms reach out to embrace Alaska and Hawaii. I am more than five million farms. I am forest, field, mountain and desert. I am quiet villages and cities that never sleep.

You can look at me and see Ben Franklin walking down the streets of Philadelphia with his bread loaf under his arm. You can see Betsy Ross with her needle. You can see the lights of Christmas and hear the strains of “Auld Lang Syne” as the calendar turns.

I am Babe Ruth and the World Series. I am 110,000 schools and 330,000 churches where my people worship God as they think they best. I am a ballot dropped into a box, the roar of a crowd in a stadium and the voice of a choir in a cathedral. I am an editorial in a newspaper and a letter to a congressman.

I am Eli Whitney and Stephen Foster. I am Tom Edison, Albert Einstein and Billy Graham. I am Horace Greeley, Will Rogers and the Wright Brothers. I am George Washington Carver, Jonas Salk and Martin Luther King, Jr.

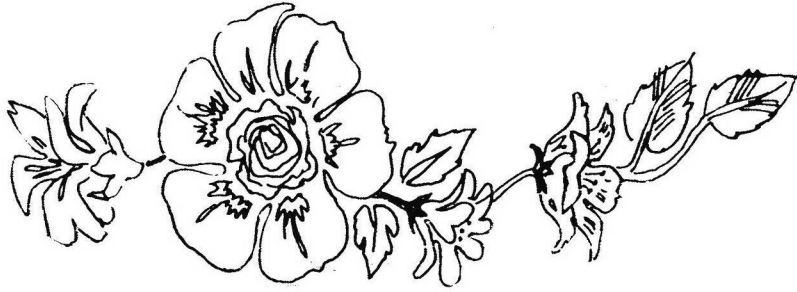
I am Longfellow, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Walt Whitman and Thomas Paine.

Yes, I am the nation and these are the things that I am. I was conceived in freedom and, God willing, in freedom I will spend the rest of my days.

May I possess always the integrity, the courage and the strength to keep myself unshackled, to remain a citadel of freedom and a beacon of hope to the world.

(One of the late Ann Lander's last columns written for Independence Day 2002)

COUPLE CELEBRATES 60TH ANNIVERSARY



Elden and Marilyn Stringfellow of Mesa, Arizona celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary May 9, 2002. Their four children honored them with a dinner at the Landmark Restaurant.

During WWII, Elden, a SACO member, was stationed in Kunming, China as an RI (radio intelligence) operator. Accompanying him on their trip to China was Jim Murphy, Verne Benedict, Lee Alverson and M. C. Estes. Elden was also called back to service during the Korean conflict and was stationed in Charleston, SC.

Congratulations on attaining a married milestone not frequently the realization of many partners. A beautiful couple after 60 years – you're sure to enjoy many more anniversaries. Ed.

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To the editor 8 June 2002

We enjoy receiving the News every time it comes out and it's exciting to read, but at the same time, sad to read about the passing of others. My wife and I hope we at least make it a while longer.

Thanks,

Elden Stringfellow

DR. HENRY HEIMLICH RECALLS THE LATE DR. JEAN NEIGHBOR

In a letter dated 30 March 2002 to Eric Neighbor, son of Dr. Neighbor, Dr. Heimlich writes:

I read with interest your letter in the January 2002 *SACO News*. Here is a small segment in your father's life that you may not know.

I arrived in Chungking from India in early 1945. I spent one week, mostly in the infirmary with diarrhea and vomiting. I was told I was being rushed to Camp 4 to replace the doctor who had been injured. They packed me off on a plane to Lanchow, where I met three weather-men. After a few days, we took off on the back of a Chinese truck for a few weeks until we reached Ningshia.

In Ningshia, we lived in luxury in the guest-house of General Ma Hun Kwei, the warlord who controlled the province. After a few days, a Chinese truck arrived from Shanpa, two days from Ningshia.

On it was your father. He had broken a tooth in a basketball game and was being transferred to Chungking. I later found that the games, Chinese against SACO, were pretty rough.

Jean and I spent a few days together and he tipped me off to that fact that Camp 4 was not bad. We got to know each other pretty well. After a week, I got on the back of another Chinese truck and headed for Shanpa, a two-day trip. Jean got on a truck to Chungking.

Our subsequent contact was by radio over various medical matters as they arose. One of our medical corpsmen, a big heavy guy, fell off his horse one night coming back from dinner in Shanpa. His hip was severely painful and he could not move it. I put on a tension splint brace and, by luck, a plane had come to Shanpa for a couple of days, so I sent the injured man to Chungking. Jean radioed that X-ray showed no hip injury, but the tight strap on the brace had caused an ulcer on the ankle. Today I'd be sued for malpractice.

Also of interest were the stories of Camp Four's Robert Sizemore and John Pike in the same issue. Jean would have known them.

By the way, shortly after I arrived at Camp Four, I was in a basketball game. We wore our army boots. I was dribbling toward the goal, stepped on my other foot, and went head-over-heels. Fortunately, nothing broke, but I realized there was no one there to take care of me if I broke my hip. I thought of Jean and played no more basketball. I think of him now and express my warm feeling to you on his passing.



Dr. Henry J. Heimlich



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Hank Heimlich'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dear Friends and Relatives of Dad,

As promised, I have completed the compilation and editing of Dad's memoirs, "Images and Memories." In keeping with Dad's wishes, I am sending to those Dad loved most, a copy of his manuscript. I hope you will enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed putting it together for Dad. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to write or call.

Love to all from Dad and from me,



Eric H. Neighbor
99 Cleveland Rd #11
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523
925-930-8991

Preface

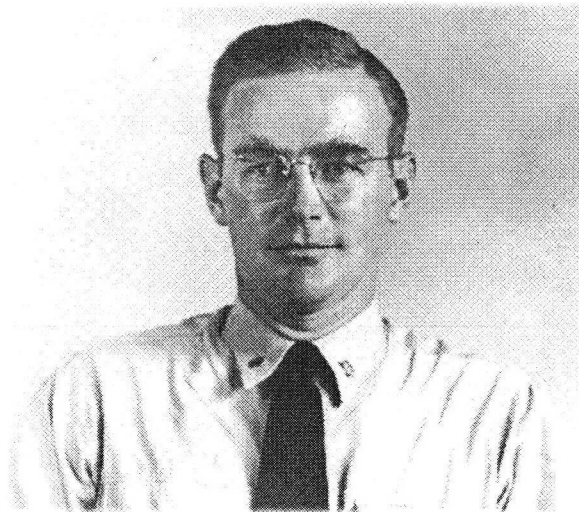
Dad loved to tell to tell stories. He was very good at telling them. He also loved to write. These two loves, along with leading an interesting life, led him to try and put the stories of his life down on paper. This he was lovingly doing up until his sudden illness and death. One of his regrets, when he knew he was dying, was that he would not be able to finish his manuscript. I promised that we would put it together in a finished form.

While Dad was a very intelligent and orderly man in much of his life, his manuscript, I came to find out, was extremely fragmented and in various stages of revision. Dad's mastery of the computer and work processor was not complete and so files and floppy discs were something of a hodgepodge. I had no idea when I promised to collate his work that I would face a task with so many questions and without Dad to answer them. All this is by way of an explanation for the final condition of his manuscript.

I've tried to use the latest revision he made to each section of his work. Understand that because he never had the chance to finish his book properly, the manuscript will appear rough in many areas. Rather than trying to smooth over these coarse areas, I've left them as they were written. There are many gaps in the time-line, and in some cases, different renditions of the same event, so some areas are repetitious. All this I have left alone, including the interesting sentence structure and creative punctuation. The style is Dad. It is not a professionally edited and complete work, but the stories speak for themselves and hold their own when it comes to Dad's telling of them.

Editor and Son, Eric H. Neighbor

IMAGES AND MEMORIES



Lt. Jean E. Neighbor (MC) USN #199488

BY JEAN E. NEIGHBOR M.D.

Editor's note:

Due to length of this autobiographical manuscript, I will endeavor to publish this in three installments – this being No.1. In my opinion, Dr. Neighbor's talent for storytelling was in a style too interesting for edification and I leave it entirely as he wrote it. I hope you'll agree and enjoy. His SACO experience will be forthcoming.

Editor's note:

The following is not part of Dr. Neighbor's original manuscript, but I needed a filler and chose from Dr. Neighbor's memoirs, this memo (in part) from Admiral Miles during the time of his illness and making preparations to return home –

“Get the best uniform I have cleaned with just a little starch. Take off all decorations except World War Service Medal. . . .

“Before Mrs. Miles comes, or before I go, if she doesn't come (*Admiral Miles had requested she come to China to accompany him home*), I would like to go to the town house called Fairy Cave and sit there all day long and all night long and say “Hello” and “Goodbye” to my friends. I want somebody to make out a long list of my friends and get them for a visit.

“. . . I would like General Tai to go with me, or anybody that General Tai says he can send, I would like to have. . . .

“When I get to Washington I don't want anybody at the airport at all and I want to proceed as a very ill man would proceed without any publicity or without any curious looking crowds; therefore, I want to come in in secret and I want Mrs. Miles to arrange for me so I can sneak out to my house without being a curiosity.

“If friends do come down there to welcome me, it is a good thing and I would like it, but it is going to make me embarrassed and I do not like to be embarrassed. The people I want at the airport are as follows:

Jeff Metzel and Mrs. Metzel
Mrs. Jerman and Mr. Jerman
Leslie Whitney and Mrs. Whitney
Meade Brunnett and Mrs. Burnnett
Commodore Libbey and Mrs Libbey
Bill, Boots and C-Going Miles
Mrs. Jannett Groff, a widow of my best friend and my God-daughter, Jill.

“That is enough, That is a welcoming committee for a very young man.

“I would like somebody to get on their horse and go back right away and arrange the above. I think somebody who has been with me the last 24 hours and who knows me better than anybody else. Write him a set of orders to send him back in connection with an urgent secret military naval matter. Between you and me, I think the person to do this should be Doctor Neighbor.”

Prologue

This manuscript was conceived out of the frequent urgings of family and friends who had heard the stories verbally over and over in gatherings wherein a glass of wine or two made the recounting easier on my part, and more acceptable on the listeners part. An off-hand comment of mine indicating that, "...it reminds me of that time at sea surrounded by wolf-packs of subs that...", or, "...it was after the Gobi Desert accident that I had to look for spare Chinese teeth in Chungking...", would be followed up by my listeners' plea to, "Tell us more about that"----"you ought to write it up"----"it makes a good story", and so on.

As the many stories were recounted and written initially, they were irregularly filed away in some manila folder, the hodgepodge finally being labeled "Images and Memories:", arising from the fact that I seemed to have the facility for remembering the images and events, in a very realistic screen-like fashion, much like those in cinema that made it possible for me to translate them, I believe accurately, into words.

Not unusual for many writers, I'm sure, but I did not recognize that label for myself, maybe a "wannabe", but in reality too involved with my chosen profession, Medicine, and particularly the later specialty of Psychiatry, to actually put anything to final print. But these stories are about experiences I had as a young Navy Medical Officer during World War II, told with as much candor, honesty, caring and exactitude as can be managed by an idealist in the field of Medicine.

It is not easy to say when it all really began.....but...

Introduction to New Construction

Having flown across the country on a long bumpy trip from Boston, there were many qualms about reporting for duty to what was called 'new construction' at the huge Todd Shipbuilding enterprise located on the southwest corner of Elliot Bay bordering Seattle. My wife and I were excited about the prospect, glad that we were to be stationed so near my family, but apprehensive about the future in the Navy during these hectic, still perilous early days of 1943 when wartime fervor was felt throughout the country, with Navy shipbuilding one of the highest priorities.

Outside of sail boating on Lake Washington as a teen-ager living on the east shores of the lake so near Seattle, I had had no previous sea-going experience, but remembered proudly the often told stories that a great-grandfather of mine had been a Nova Scotia coastal sea captain. I had no idea what good such qualifications as these would do me, but the sea had always beckoned me, and I had heeded its' call.

Both of us were 26 and only two years married, and it had been only six months since my year and a half of a rotating internship at Los Angeles County Hospital, had been interrupted by being called to active duty in the Medical Corps of the U.S. Navy. A three-month indoctrination and added training at the Bethesda Naval Hospital was

presumed to have prepared me for wherever the Navy should choose to send me for active wartime service.

We were still in the throes of young love and experiencing a somewhat desperate effort at getting a pregnancy underway, if possible, before I took off for parts unknown aboard ship.

Sea Duty had been number three on my list of so-called choices for further training or duty that ran the gamut from Aviation, Deep-Sea and Submarine services, Marine Corps, or other even more threatening suggestions.

Bethesda had been a mix of political glamour and harsh reality in that as the relatively new and primary medical center for the Navy it was also the setting for training regular Navy Medical personnel. We were to be prepared for assignments that ran the gamut through all branches of military Medicine. After undergoing a crash course in tropical medicine, and a rigorous boot-camp-style of physical training by a tough Marine Top Sergeant who had seen extended duty at Guadalcanal, we were offered various choices of duties. I had been disqualified for my first choice, Aviation Medicine and flight training, in that I wore glasses; the Marine Corps with its' ranks decimated by the horrendous campaigns in the South Pacific was no choice, and Submarine or Deep-Sea experience did not appeal to my inner fears of closed spaces, which left Sea Duty as number one on my list.

Both of us had come into the medical world through our training at Yale's Schools of Medicine and Nursing, and had looked forward to careers in those fields after graduations in 1940 and 1941. Our marriage and the struggles to get through the several more years of anticipated training in California were rudely shaken by the outbreak of Pearl Harbor and war. While my wife worked at various nursing jobs, the 3000 bed County hospital of Los Angeles was my setting for a broad spectrum of training in a rotating internship where I had been for only six months when war broke out. We knew that sooner or later the military would be after me, and despite all of my life-long pacifist leanings, I had to prepare for the eventuality of my going into the service, and so, chose the Navy, rather than be drafted into the Army. As the Navy had put it in some ironic bit of propaganda: "Avoid the mud, join the Navy", thus with flag in hand, and a bayonet up my rear, I became a regular Navy man.

The Navy permitted me to finish twelve more months of training but sent me orders to report to Bethesda as of January 1943. We were given a pre-induction leave to visit my family near Seattle, and my wife's family near Boston. The Navy presumed that I had joined the 'regular' Navy as a lifetime choice, rather than as a Reservist, and therefore could be offered unusual opportunities for a career. There would be indoctrination, specialized courses, exposure to the Navy way of doing things, and the constant threat of active combat duty looming up ahead, plus other supplemental benefits, unwritten but never specified.

Thus, there was a beginning---

New Construction

Orders had read: "...report to Todd Shipyards, Seattle, Washington...new construction..." and having dutifully flashed my I.D. and Orders to the Marine guard at the entry, I was trudging the half-mile or so to the outfitting pier, duffel bag in hand, heart pounding, anxious, anticipating the unexpected which always seemed to be a standard operating practice of the Navy.

There were three long, tapering gray hulls tied end to end in a row alongside the concrete pier, number '625' boldly white painted on the side near the prow of one of them. She was not officially named yet. That was to come at commissioning, some weeks away presumably, but the number indicated on my orders was that of the U.S.Navy's newest addition to the fleet, a 1630 ton-displacement destroyer, of the Greaves class, that was to be the floating home-away-from-home for the unforeseeable future.

I paused as I gaped at the chaotic view, with my thoughts racing, trying to take in the bustle and turmoil that seemed to overwhelm this already menacing appearing ship of the line. She seemed to be tilted slightly toward the dock, festooned with a tangled web of dozens of cables, wires, ropes, and tubing draped in long arcs to innumerable pieces of buzzing and clattering machinery. There were scurrying swarms of men, many clad in blue dungarees, work shirts, dirty white sailor hats, and scuffed, worn, black work boots. Others who were obviously civilian workers, were clad in overalls and caps, those on the pier grabbing a smoke, (not allowed aboard ship), with cigarettes hanging from the corner of their mouths as they hurried about their tasks. The whole scene was almost hidden from view by the haze of acrid blue smoke that rose from the many arc welding units scattered all over the ships' topside. Two gangways led up to the main deck, aft, with lines of workers streaming aboard and off again. Many were depositing box after box of supplies, assorted gear, and some obvious food cartons taken from the several trucks parked nearby, then piled neatly at various stations aboard ship. Several large cranes were also swinging heavy roped nets aboard loaded with crates.

The noise was deafening, with much 'rata-tat-tat' hammering of air-compressor riveters, and the persistent humming and vibrating sounds from other indecipherable sources. As I carefully made my way over and under the network, I tried to locate an officer or seaman who might be on the gangway watch and to whom I could present myself as identifiably a new member of the crew. I wondered if they cared, or knew to look for the 'Doctor' to arrive on board. It took awhile to finally get the gangway watch-officer's attention long enough for him to glance at my orders. He sighed audibly giving a half-hearted salute, muttering hastily, "Oh,- yeah, -Sir, welcome aboard . I'll have one of the men show you to the wardroom and to your quarters. Oh—Uh,— Doc,- the Skipper is going to have an officer's meeting at 1500 in the wardroom . See yuh there". He saluted again, this time more briskly.

"Hell!", I thought, " I don't even know where the 'wardroom' is, let alone my 'quarters' " It was a good thing the seaman was guiding me, even carrying my duffel for me. We clambered over and around the clearly hazardous paraphernalia, going through several open heavy steel doors, down some ladders into the next deck below the main one to a somewhat less hectic arena. "That's your dispensary, Doc," he said, pointing cheerfully off to a far corner of the main mess compartment where there appeared to be a

cubicle scarcely the size of an apartment closet, with a bright 'red-cross' insignia on the door. I was curious to look further into what was to be my domain, but since I had not even a stethoscope to put in its proper place, the seaman was clearly disappointed when I muttered that I'd check it out later. He said, "Well, Sir, I'll show you to the wardroom, your quarters are just forward to that." So once again I climbed a ladder, into a cross-hull-wide but narrowed compartment, with a rather large table bolted to the center space, and numerous swivel type chairs fastened to the deck. Then a centered passageway led finally to my dimly lit, two-bunk cabin, already occupied in the lower bunk by an inert, snoring, figure, dressed in casual khakis, wearing an Ensigns insignia. "He just got off watch", the seaman whispered. "O.K.", I whispered back, "We won't wake him up at this time." But I thought to myself, "By Gawd! Rank takes some precedence here! He's going to have to take the top bunk from now on!" After all, my 'Lieutenant (junior grade) (Medical Corps) US Navy' had to mean something in this man's navy, at least outranking a lowly ensign, I figured. I dropped my gear across the desk chair where it would easily be seen, and we sneaked out again into the topside turmoil.

The clutter and clatter on the ship was such a contrast to the pristine white cleanliness of the Naval Hospital at Bethesda, Maryland, where I had spent my first three months of active duty in indoctrination and training. The medicinal scents, the clean starched white uniforms of the staff, mixed with the khakis, grays, and occasional 'blues' of our group of medical inductees, all contributed to a sense of quiet dignity, with the obvious mission of evaluation and treatment of hundreds of service personnel, already victims of the world engulfing war scene. That experience had been so new and different from my internship training. The outbreak of war with Japan in December of '41 had serious consequences upon our lives, especially those of us who had so blithely entered upon medical careers. The County Hospital had provided intensive but short-term training in contagious disease, urology, emergency room duties, obstetrics, orthopedics, general surgery, and more. However, we were threatened in a manner of speaking, by the knowledge that at any time, a certain number of us would be designated to sign up for one or another of the military services, and our long-sought careers training in medicine would be interrupted. So the interval at Bethesda was another concentrated exposure to such things as tropical medicine, Navy Regulations, military physical-training, on-going lectures designed to acquaint us with the various branches of Navy medicine,

The cynical and somewhat coarse aphorism came to mind, 'with the flag in hand, and a bayonet up your rear, join the Navy and avoid the mud,' led some of us to do just that, I among many who preferred to have a choice of which service we joined, selecting to sign up for the Navy Medical Corps. There had been promises during pre-application interviews, of 'being able to finish your training', 'getting specialized training', and 'having a choice in where you served your duty'.

This had been my choice—sea duty, and here I was at my assigned station, aboard the 'new construction' specified in my orders, ready to start on a very new aspect of a medical career.

The Captain

Prior to the scheduled staff meeting set for 1500, the Chief Yeoman sent word to me that the Skipper wanted to meet me in his cabin for a brief interview. Somewhat nervously I entered the open door of his quarters where I found him lounging carelessly in a chair behind a desk. Looking around I could see he was surrounded by a clutter of papers, blueprints, documents, booklets, and also assorted piles of clothing neatly stacked on his bunk.

“Welcome aboard, Doctor,” he said, rising, smiling and extending his hand. I saluted somewhat stiffly, and shook hands, as he said, “Have a seat, Doc. I have your orders here-Bethesda, huh? Have a good trip?? Settled in your cabin yet??” I muttered a “Yessir” as he thumbed through the sheaf of papers in front of him. His apparent ease and welcoming manner, his slight laugh, the moderate southern drawl, all led me to feel a sense of relief that here was a guy that might not be so bad to be around. He was a slender man and appeared to be fit physically. Dark hair, a somewhat swarthy complexion, clean-, dressed neatly and cleanly in casual khakis. Despite the shambles of construction debris that was scattered around the area, he exuded an aura of organization, authority and a commanding presence. I began to feel more relaxed as the interview went on, reassured by his seeming sincerity of interest in how my first few hours on the ship had gone.

After a few more casual pleasantries, he rather abruptly began speaking in a changed tone, saying grimly, “We’ll be having formal commissioning ceremonies within two weeks, followed by sea trials, and as you may have noted we are a helluva long way from being ready. I expect you to have your department up for active sea duty within one week; in addition, you will be the officer-in-charge of the wardroom mess, [officers eating and relaxing area], working closely with the Chief Commissary Steward. Our Executive Officer has not reported in yet—don’t know wherinhell he is—but you’ll be reporting to him daily on progress and any issues you run into. Understood, Doctor?? That’s all. Dismissed!!”. He abruptly turned back to the papers in front of him, without further ado or another glance at me.

Stumbling out of the cabin I wondered to myself ‘Hey, what is this anyway? What in hell am I in for? I hardly know where the sick bay *is*. What does a wardroom mess officer do? What’s this guy all about??’ I was confused, and extremely apprehensive. I could sense that he was not a man who would accept or welcome personal contact or chatty conversations.

In the ensuing weeks, I saw little of the Captain, but felt his presence in manifold ways. At that first officer’s meeting he rather casually introduced me simply as ‘The doctor. Lieutenant Jean Neighbor, recently of Bethesda Naval Hospital. He’ll be supervising the wardroom mess’. Then he plunged into a listing of other divisions from whom he was asking for current status. He would make numerous critical comments, or, and abrupt decisions if there seem to be any doubts or hesitations. Then closing with an admonition of ‘Get going! Times a-wasting’. There seemed to be a thousand things to do

to finalize the presentation of the ship for commissioning. My department alone required my undivided time and energy. I paid little or no attention to the wardroom other than meeting briefly with the Chief Steward who was a black man with a perpetual frown on his face and who had little else to say directly to me.

Although the Exec was still missing, we did have an experienced deck line officer who was labeled the 'First Lieutenant', third only to the Captain and the Executive Officer in the line of command, who in essence was in charge of overseeing all preparations topside of the ship that had to do with function and maintenance. Wes Williams was his name, a full Lieutenant, who had been an Ensign aboard an old four-stacker destroyer caught inside Pearl Harbor at the time of the sneak attack. He distinguished himself, as the only deck officer aboard at the time, along with his depleted crew, by managing to get his ship underway at the height of the bombardment, navigating her out of the harbor safely in the face of the heavy attack from the air. He had been awarded the Silver Star medal for this extraordinary courage and skill. I came to know Wes very well as an invaluable close friend and ally in the coming months. He was a modest and unassuming man who had a wealth of knowledge about managing a ship of the line, but never had any pretensions that made him difficult to deal with personally. When he spoke of his experiences at Pearl he minimized it by saying, "It was just my luck to have been aboard when the attack came. Everyone else had gone ashore, except for an engineering Chief, and a few of the deck crew who were standing watch. I didn't know what in hell was going on—what with all those torpedo bombers zooming in right over our heads, all I could think of was gettin' the hell out of there. We managed to do it in record time with only half of the crew aboard, and me as the only deck officer." Wes never elaborated on what followed, and I often wondered what ever happened to that old four-stacker. Wes was promoted and transferred within the year and given his Silver Star at that time.

The "Captain"

The Captain, as he wished to be addressed, but was informally referred to by most of us as 'the Skipper' or 'the C.O.', had been assigned to this new construction apparently as a reward for '...valorous duty above and beyond the call...' for which he received the Navy Cross, a citation second only in the Navy to the Medal of Honor. He was commanding a four-stacker during the earlier months of the war that preceded the invasion of Vichy-held Morocco. His ship participated in the invasion and capture of Casablanca in Morocco, North Africa. The citation read, 'in the face of withering fire from shore batteries and a large Vichy-French cruiser...' that was tied alongside the quay, he accomplished his mission. He as commander, and his crew, were cited similarly for valor and bravery. These awards were not lightly given during the early stages of combat in the war.

The reputations of these two men, Lt. Cmdr. 'Captain' George Palmer, and Lieutenant Wesley Williams, certainly enhanced their positions and bred a deep respect by the officers and men of our crew. We looked at them with a mixture of awe and admiration, and initially at least with a sense of gratitude that we had such able and

renowned men in our chain of command. Subsequent events and circumstances led us to have a much more mixed picture of them, as the DD625 became an integral part of the fleet.

The "Exec"

There was no time for any social activity and I saw little of my wife or nearby family for weeks at a time. Outside of an occasional phone call, during which we would expend a lot of time and words clinging unsatisfactorily to each other, we couldn't even have a surreptitious meeting on the pier, it being strictly off limits without hard to get special passes. Aboard ship all of our energies were directed toward getting these ships in fighting shape and ready for sea duty. Our ship's complement was rapidly being filled out, and I was grateful when two moderately experienced Pharmacists Mates, one First Class, the other a Third-Class rating, finally reported aboard and plunged into the task of helping to bring the Medical Department up to working order. These men had been on other ships or had seen dispensary duty and knew their way about a ship of the line war vessel. They worked well with me, were friendly and respectful, and became fairly close liaisons with the enlisted crew. Our crew, enlisted as well as officer ranks, represented a widely scattered sample of whatever men were available at the time. Many had served varying periods according to their rating, some never having been to sea before, most just fresh out of schooling in their rating. The officers were often in the same status, trained in some specialty, gunnery, deck, communications, or whatever, but like me had never seen active duty aboard. The Skipper and the Exec with the aid of the truly experienced men aboard had to mold this motley crew into a machine perfect team. As time began to approach for our maiden voyages of training and drill after drill, it was very evident that the stresses placed upon the command were becoming extreme. We who were the objects of this gargantuan effort to 'shape up and then ship out', found ourselves buffeted about in the stormy winds of frustration, with confused feelings of helplessness at times, and our own mounting anxiety and bafflement over ever achieving a satisfactory level of function. I would hear through the grapevine that the other two ships of our squadron were experiencing the same difficulties almost item for item. I had no inkling of what our first mission was going to be. When I thought of our three top-line destroyers barreling through the seas at 32 knots in some desperate maneuver to outrun or find the source of a Japanese torpedo attack, I simply shuddered and re-doubled my efforts to strategically place medical supplies in any possible location.

When our Executive Officer, Lt. (Senior Grade) Fredrick Brooks, USN, (an Academy graduate,) finally arrived, it became almost immediately apparent what a contrast he was to our 'Captain'. Although he was all grins and affability initially, to me there was an air of uncertainty about him that appeared as if he was on guard from the very beginning. We had hoped he would moderate the demands of the Skipper, or at least take over some of the tasks himself. As it turned out he seemed so harassed the moment he stepped aboard deck of the ship, and displayed such a sense of defeat the whole time he was aboard that he was never able to overcome. He was the 'fall guy' for everything that ever went wrong, was forever double-checking everything night or day, seeming to make mistake after mistake, that made him the object of the Skipper's scorn and

vituperation on innumerable occasions. An organizational detail one time pertained to the distribution of the mail to the crew and was made an example of a transitional oversight on the part of the Exec, but led to a tirade at the supper table in which the Skipper unloaded all kinds of vituperation on the bewildered man. As time went on, we of the crew, officers and enlisted men alike, came to know his idiosyncrasies, and this led to referring to him surreptitiously as 'Fearless Freddie'. This nickname arose from his habit of never appearing on deck, on duty or not, without his inflatable waist-life-jacket and his trusty hunting knife securely fastened to his belt. He had undoubtedly heard the rumors that were rife amongst the crew of the mysterious losses overboard during dark and stormy nights, of various 'hated' officers, apocryphal as these tales may have been.

With all of this, Mr. Brooks always seemed to have a somewhat distant but visible respect for me. He always addressed me as 'Doctor', but never in a more familiar sense, by first name. Nor did the skipper for that matter. I was used to being called 'Doc'. And as the rest of the officer staff got to know me my first name was often used, although "Doc" remained the commonest term.

Never once was the Exec able to divest himself of the state of constant apprehension or the intense discomfort he felt with what he had to endure at the hands of the Captain. He was a lonely man.

The Skipper also had an appellation, 'Jesus George' applied to him especially by those of us who experienced his frequent explosive exclamation of 'Jeezus Keeerist' directed at whoever or whatever happened to be the object of his wrath or scorn at the moment. His word was law, he was always right, his weight was felt all around, for he was in back of every move we made in terms of seeing to it that everything was done the right way, his way, the 'Navy Regs' way, and he was never wrong. When the unforeseen glitches, errors, or failures of performance or function of any person or portion of the ship would occur, his rage and loud cursing could be heard all over the ship. His attitude prevailed, his word was dogma issued as if from on high, with no less than the backing of the Almighty, subsidized by the fact that 'The Academy' had conferred upon him by sanctified decree the designation of 'an officer and a gentleman.' There were brief moments when he could appear friendly, joking and wisecracking, as he sat at the head of the wardroom dining table, quizzical or sardonic, but he was always 'The Captain.' In contrast, Mr. Brooks never seemed to quite make it, even at his own level as 'The Exec'. I would often have an empathic feeling for the 'Exec' in that he was really no different than the rest of us when it came to the general feeling of contempt that the Captain seemed to have for most of us. They both initially had respect for the reputation that Wes Williams engendered when he began his role of First Lieutenant, and even though our later experiences created a rupture in their relationship one could see that there was envy on the part of the Exec, and rivalry on the part of the Captain.

Commissioning

All three destroyers, numbers 623, 624, and our ship, 625, were to be formally commissioned as a squadron at the same time. With the final day at hand, the Skipper was all smiles, displaying the casual dignity of a man befitting the appellation of Navy Cross recipient, commanding officer of a brand new destroyer, the USS Harding, named

after a distant naval hero of the War of 1812. We added the term 'The Happy-' with irony in our tone of voice. Along with his 'lady', (his wife), an attractive brunette also from the South, and his seven-year-old daughter, (neither of whom we saw again after the ceremony), they made a handsome group greeting the notables assembled for the occasion. The Commanding Officers of the other two ships, the Satterlee and the Baldwin, made an obligatory exchange appearance after their own commissioning, as did their medical officers whom I had previously met and traded horror stories regaling each other with grim details of our various run-ins with the command structure. I got to know them much better as our cruising duties carried us together as a squadron in the coming months.

For the first and only time of my career aboard the Harding, my wife and my parents were invited to be near the ship at pierside, along with other civilians, but not aboard the ship, for the ceremonies of the commissioning. My father stood very erect, shoulders thrown back in almost a caricature of the posture of strict military attention. My mother and my wife were close to tears, clapping and cheering at the appropriate intervals. However, rank had its privileges, for the Skipper's family was allowed aboard to visit his quarters!

Our formalities were traditional, the reading of a document from the Secretary of the Navy, declaring this unnamed hull to now be registered as a warship of the line, named and numbered. With the presentation of the colors, the ship's flag, graciously accepted with a salute by the Captain, then the hoisting of the pennant that indicated 'the Captain is aboard', and finally the presentation of a sterling silver engraved tea set for the wardroom which I assumed I would have to see to was properly polished, the ceremonies had a suitable amount of pomp and circumstance, that ended with a rousing "Huzzah!!" We all breathed a sigh of relief that nothing had gone awry. There was no champagne, at least for our family group, but I sure could have used a stiff drink! The family wandered back down the dock looking curiously at the other two ships equally festooned with multi-colored signal flags strung up to the mainmast. They waved back to me as if I'd never be seen again. I had tried to reassure them that there would still be some shore time available, although I couldn't promise any definite date.

Sea Trials

From that point on, there was a constant rush of preparatory programs for the long series of trial runs that would condition us for active sea duty. It was easier to do in Puget Sound in that it was almost always calm seas and fair weather. With the aid of my more experienced Pharmacist Mates and the Chief Quartermaster, we managed to get our medical department in pretty good shape, despite my frequent absences. It was the commands' belief that the Medical Officer should receive much of the same specialized training that the rest of the officers and crew experienced. I was sent to fire-fighting school, airplane identification classes, I gave emergency first aid training to all topside gun crews, participated in the general degaussing procedures that were designed to protect us from the threat of submarine attacks who were now using torpedoes of a magnetic variety. We went to a special ammunition loading facility where we spent a whole day loading five inch shells for our main gun batteries, and tons of 20mm and

40mm clips for our anti-aircraft emplacements. Through it all there was my daily sick-call at my dispensary, where the main complaint was usually upper respiratory infections, minor injuries, assorted ingenious symptoms that were designed to get one off the duty roster for a few hours or days. They seldom worked. Then there was my review of the daily mess and ration list for all of the crew and a hundred other minor or major tasks that demanded the particular attention of the Medical Officer. Most of these mandatory duties had never even been mentioned during my indoctrination at the Naval Hospital. There were exciting and thrilling moments when, in an open sea area the Captain would order top flank speed maneuvering trials and we would careen through the seas at amazing speeds with the agility of a porpoise. There were still the occasional breakdowns with the accompanying screaming and yelling from the bridge and the Exec looking downcast at the next wardroom conference. But all in all the Harding was beginning to shape up into a first-class fighting machine.

A Truly Functional Gas Mask

After what had seemed like an endless string of trials and errors for the ship and crew we were pleasantly surprised by an announcement from the Captain that certain of the officers and crew would be allowed an extended shore leave of thirty-six hours while we were still at the outfitting piers of the shipyard. Wes Williams and I, along with Joe Coleman, our new Assistant Engineer, and Walt Vollrath, our Gunnery Officer planned an overnight and all day excursions that would take us to Vancouver, British Columbia over a part of a weekend. Several of us had our wives available, but Walt and Joe were coming along just for the fun, their wives still back East. We had the premonition that this might just be one of the last opportunities that would be available before we shoved off for the high seas. There had been very few opportunities for any kind of socialization among most of the officers, and those of us who had wives or family in the vicinity had to confine our contacts with them to phone calls. Being our ships were the very latest of design and had many top secret innovations adding to our battle capacities, we were forbidden to discuss or reveal any information whatever. When at the time of commissioning, no civilian families were permitted aboard the ship; We were piqued at the sight of the Skipper's family being ushered aboard to visit his quarters while the rest of our families were required to stay on the pier. I had tried to explain to my family what was involved, but they found it hard to accept that they might be considered security risks whereas the Palmer family was welcomed.

The news that we were to be given 36 hour leaves hinted strongly that we would soon be shipping out on active sea-going status and this much we could relay to family, but with no hint as to time or destination. For that matter we didn't know ourselves, only being told that we must be prepared to leave any day after our leave was granted. Subsequently, as it turned out, we were told only that on such and such a day we would be making a late at night departure from the outfitting docks and be prepared.

It was a pleasant trip to Canada on board one of the Princess liners. We were carefree, wined and dined on different food, drank a little too much, laughed and wisecracked in the 'eat, drink, and be merry' mode. When we reached the Hotel Vancouver, we were immediately swept into an on-going party scene with dinner and

dancing, replete with many of the military of several countries. We noted with some surprise that all of the Canadian military were wearing gas-mask kits over their shoulders. It took only a few minutes to discover that these kits contained the requisite bottles of booze that although readily available in British Columbia could only be served as individual drinks. We got the message, and soon equipped ourselves similarly for a 'sneak vicious gas attack' with liquid ammunition to counter the onslaught securely tucked into our bags.

Our trip back to Seattle was a much quieter and reflective one, considering the sobering thoughts of what lay ahead of us, as well as having to nurse our acquired hangover from the festivities. My wife planned to return to the East Coast very shortly after we left Puget Sound. We attempted to reassure each other that there would be contact, but as to when, where, or how, we were necessarily vague.

When we finally got back to the ship a day and a half later, bleary eyed and exhausted but happy, we were met with the wrath and outrage of the Skipper who announced that we all faced a court-martial for having 'left the country during wartime, against all orders to the contrary', subjecting ourselves to the chance that naval spies would extract vital and secret information from us during our drunken state, regarding the wartime capacities of the ship's engineering, gunnery, structural integrity, and medical departments' state of readiness. Personally, we felt that spies would become convinced that they had nothing to fear from us at all. After blowing off a lot of steam about all of this the Skipper finally realized that he couldn't very well court-martial one third of the officer complement and thus jeopardize the prospect of taking off on our maiden voyage. We were duly warned, and Wes was reprimanded for having instigated the whole scene. I escaped direct notice, but we felt the Skipper used the event to try to downplay the real integrity and heroic stature that Wes had attained in our eyes.

Joe and the Shiny Shoes

Joe Coleman, the first assistant engineer to Walt 'Red' Schiffer, had become one of my closer friends during these early days on board the Harding. He was only an Ensign, but had a lot of sea experience in that he had come into Naval service from the Merchant Marine Academy where he had special training in engineering. He was a tall, lanky, dark-eyed and dark-haired, very handsome young man, who had only recently married, and had to leave his new bride in New England when he was assigned to the newly constructed Harding. Joe used to talk with a great deal of idealistic vigor about his views of how the Navy ought to be run, and although he respected the Chief Engineer's experience and abilities, he found himself constantly at odds with the manner in which Schiffer ran his division.

During his off-watch time Joe would come to my quarters and we would chat endlessly about the latest snafu aboard ship. We would frequently go topside when the seas were calm and the breezes balmy, find a location behind one of the stacks, adjacent to the topside blowers or ventilators where we could just sit and talk, out of sight of the bridge or the ever-prying eyes of the Exec.

Joe was a fanatic about his personal appearance, his neatness, and in particular, the shine on his shoes. He would spend many minutes a day cleaning, waxing, and polishing his black loafers, as he talked on and on about his experiences in the Merchant Fleet. He joked a great deal of his various adventures with women, claiming them all to have been prior to his marriage. His wife was indeed a very pretty, slender and sweet looking brunette who was working as a secretary near Boston, not far from where my wife lived and worked as a nurse.

A Maiden Voyage to 'Frisco'

Our departure from Puget Sound and the safe confines of the Todd Shipyards was accomplished in the dead of night and seemed to have been mandated by Fleet orders that were certainly secret. We had less than twelve hours in which to notify our families that we would not 'be available' until further notice. Our squadron was to head south, or so we guessed, and would rendezvous in San Francisco Bay where we would be tied up at one of the piers. 'Frisco' was considered one of the ports most desirable to visit. Wonder of wonders, we were to be given some shore leave, about six hours, and our usual little clique made haste to hit the town. It was a memorable night. As we viewed Union Square, Nob Hill, the cable cars, we tried all the downtown hotels, and never had to buy a single drink. Even as officers who were presumably financially able to pay their own way, we were never allowed to do that, the welcome was overwhelming. San Francisco was living up to its reputation.

We knew at this point that we would be off again early the next AM so by necessity had to curtail some of our enthusiasm for California's bountiful attitude. Early AM departures seemed to be the rule, and going out through the Golden Gate couldn't be missed, so I was topside actually on the bridge when we crept out slowly in moderately heavy fog. That was not my deck station routine. In fact I learned to avoid that location as much as possible. But this time was special in my opinion and couldn't be missed. I was casually leaning on the starboard rail of the bridge musing about when I would be seeing this sight again, watching the soaring seagulls following us that were hoping for a hand-out of some sort, when I suddenly heard coming from the pilot house a shouted, "Hard a-port! Hard a-port!!", and a clanging of bells, with the ship swerving to the left rapidly. Off balance and grasping at the rail, I glanced out to the right just in time to see dimly in the fog some very large towering rocks no more than a hundred yards to our beam. The Farallones. We had come perilously close to running directly onto these prominent but dangerous landmarks some twenty miles off the Gate, a potential disaster beyond belief for this new ship of the line.

I beat a hasty retreat off the bridge as the Skipper, the Exec, and the Chief Quartermaster stormed out of the wheel-house onto the open bridge on the starboard side, the Captain shouting his usual oath, "Jeezus Keerist!! Wherinhell were you going?"

I got the full story later from Ensign Stark who was in the wheelhouse, standing by to assist in the conning of the ship. It seems all was going as expected, fog, limited speed, the Exec at the chart desk, the Captain sitting in his high conning chair. The Chief Quartermaster was roaming back and forth between the seaman at the wheel, and the Captain at the 'con', with the Exec plotting our course on a large sea chart. Suddenly the

Chief glanced quickly at the chart and realized we were dangerously off course, and with his personal local knowledge of the sea terrain, he ordered a command, superseding the Captain's prerogative, ordering an emergency shift of course, thus avoiding colliding with the famous nemesis of local maritime history, the Farallones Rocks.

The Chief Quartermaster was undoubtedly the most capable and senior sailor aboard, with gold braid service stripes up to his elbow on his left sleeve, depicting fifteen or twenty years of perfect service. His experience was with previous ships like ours, and local knowledge of every port the Navy was privy to enter. Here was a man of integrity that even the Captain respected as a prize to be treasured.

The story may be apocryphal, but I heard it from a reliable source that the Exec had us plotted at a point some two hundred miles southwest of Missoula, Montana, and the Chief spotted this dilemma just in time to draw upon his instinctual knowledge to save all our necks.

This event did not lend itself to increasing our confidence in the Exec's navigational skills. We did manage to rendezvous with our mission convoy later in the day, the USS Nevada, just refurbished at Mare Island, after damage sustained at Pearl Harbor, plus a 'baby-carrier', all to be escorted to the East Coast by our Squadron, the Satterlee, the Baldwin, and the Harding.

Excess Baggage, Doctor

San Diego was a short stopover, and it was there that I had my first of many crises that pertained to the Medical Department. We had three men who, in my opinion, required hospitalization; two with 'clap' (gonorrhea), and one with a possible broken ankle. They had been taken to the hospital as soon as we arrived, but when the skipper got the report on them he called me to the bridge and said in no uncertain terms, "These men must be back aboard by 1600. We sail at 1630! Get 'em here, Doc." "But Captain", I spluttered, "they are hospitalized!" "I don't give a damn", he exclaimed, "We need those men, we're short handed as hell already. Get 'em here Doc." "Sir—one of them has a cast on his leg!" "So, what??—Get 'em here, Doctor. That's an order! Understood, Doctor?? Dismissed." Where had I heard those words before??

I decided to confer with the C.O. of the hospital, a Medical Corps Captain, and he sympathized with me, saying "Well, Doctor Neighbor, these skippers think they are God, and at sea they are, but you are in the right when it comes to medical decisions, and you have Naval Regulations on your side. Tell you, though what we can do, we can give you the two guys who have the clap, -- treat 'em aboard, --but we'll keep the guy with the cast. He can't go to sea with a cast on his leg, for God'sakes!! I'll back you up, Doctor".

With that support, and a letter in hand outlining the reasons and quoting Naval Regulations, and praising me for being 'an outstanding young Medical Officer---lucky to have him!', I loaded the two other guys in the jeep and tore back to the ship getting there with the gangplank ready to be hauled aboard, it now being 1628, and we had just made it. The Officer of the Deck grinning at me was saying, "By God, Doc. I thought we were

going to shove off without you! The Exec said we couldn't wait! Where's the third one??" "Go to Hell!," I muttered, sliding off the gangplank with my two 'clappers'.

The Captain never said another word about this event but a few days later as we were en route to the Panama Canal he called me up to the bridge, took me out to the rail and talked to me quietly, saying "You know, Doc, we never had doctors aboard 'cans' before the war, -oh maybe a Pharmacist Mate, or one 'doc' to a whole squadron of ships, but we never really needed'em. They were just 'excess baggage', Doc. Do yuh understand that Doctor?? That's all you really are, just excess baggage! Dismissed, Doc."

Colombian Girls Are Always Nice

The transit of the Panama Canal was timed in such a fashion that it was done in the dead of night, I think to hide the presence of the Nevada and the carrier. I managed to witness the first set of locks, but had 'hit the sack' for the rest of the trip. We were going to lie over for six hours at Colon, on the Caribbean side, and we could go ashore for a few hours. As usual, a several of us decided to hit the bars, and I must admit by this time that we felt we needed a drink or two. It hadn't been a particularly smooth trip. We were doing a lot of patrolling off to one side or astern of the convoy, we serving several times as tail-watch for the carrier as they practiced their take-offs and landings on that stamp-sized flat top deck, marveling how in hell they *ever* managed to get those Corsairs up or down on that heaving platform. In fact one plane didn't make it one time, going off the end, but the Satterlee managed to pick up the pilot,- one lucky stiff!

The bars in Colon seemed to feature the famous (or infamous) Colombian 'girls' who were all too willing to demonstrate their wares, *especially* to the Navy. They were a bunch of very young, pretty girls, gaily dressed, bright colors in their long hair, dancing and flirting outrageously, and although we could hardly qualify as 'too long at sea', they didn't seem to care, flaunting their attractions broadly. Their flirtations probably led us to drink more than we should have, 'Rum and Coca Cola' the drink of choice, but we knew better than to let it go beyond that despite all of their efforts.

Once again early the next morning saw us exiting the harbor and heading right into the teeth of a Caribbean gale. It was one of the few times when the old 'queezies' hit me with the pitching, rocking, and rolling that was so characteristic of destroyers, plus the added ingredient of the alcohol of the night before. I stayed pretty close to my bunk the remainder of the day.

MAN OVERBOARD! !

The day began much like the long and tedious ones that had preceded during this particular convoy, with the possible exception of those few days that followed our departure from Norfolk when we had almost immediately run into heavy weather. There had been forewarning in our weather forecast, of which I had some knowledge in that it had been reported on a coded basis during one of my required 'extra' duties in the de-coding shack. Since we were to pick up a very large convoy about ten miles off Norfolk and we were to take our position in the dead of night, it took considerable navigational

skill on the part of the Exec and the Chief Quartermaster to be sure we were in position without running down some of the merchant fleet we were presumed to be guarding. I had never really regained my faith in Mr. Brooks or his navigational capacities ever since he damn near ran us onto the Farallones outside San Francisco and the Golden Gate on our first rendezvous with the U.S.S Nevada at the time we escorted her around to the East Coast. Thank God then for the Chief Quartermaster, a career gold striper of at least eighteen years of service, for if he had not corrected the Exec's plotting of our course, (in which incidentally he had us some 150 miles S.E. of Missoula, Montana!.) we would surely have run head on in the fog onto those rocky shores of the Farallones. I remember it well, for in one of those rare times when I happened to be on the bridge, I actually saw those rocks looming up on the starboard side not more than 100 yards away as we slid past.

At any rate on this particular night when we were to pick up the convoy that we learned subsequently was to participate in the invasion of Sicily, we had run into heavy weather almost as soon as we put to sea. Fortunately I had not indulged in any drinking the night before although Joe Coleman and I had spent some brief drinking time together after we had waved goodbye to our wives the day or so before we knew we were going to be shipping out. That usually meant only a few drinks, but on this particular occasion we were both feeling a little too low to really enjoy any booze. I had learned my lesson in Panama on our way to the East Coast when a bunch of us got really bombed in Colon after our transit of the canal, and the night before we took off into the Caribbean, again into the teeth of a gale.

Our position off the convoy was to be at the 0700 spot on the port flank of the main body somewhat to the rear, zigzagging anywhere from a mile to two miles from the nearest column of ships. The rest of our squadron, the Satterlee, and the Baldwin, and other ships, 'cans' and corvettes, that I couldn't identify, were also astern of the main body of the convoy, but more so. When daylight came and I first saw the extent of the fleet we were protecting I was staggered to say the least. It extended to the horizon ahead of us and was indistinctly seen to the starboard of us for many miles. We had already become well aware that one of the most vulnerable spots of a convoy was the very position we were guarding. The wolf packs used the technique of following a fleet of ships, and when opportunity presented, picked off the stragglers or any ship that might deviate the slightest from its course. The convoy would often change course unexpectedly at a highly classified coded time, but there seemed always to be someone who never 'got the word' quite in time, and there would ensue some really horrible snafus which could only be straightened out by flag signal or flare since we had to keep strict radio silence. Although I never saw it happen myself I heard of incidents where collisions occurred, particularly when any maneuver took place in the dark or in fog or heavy seas.

Joe Coleman, as Second Engineer, and an Ensign in rank, had had excellent training and experience in the Merchant Marine and in their Academy, but very often had to take a watch in the engine room that involved a late night or very early watch in the mornings. He didn't seem to mind that, for as he put it, at least he didn't have to be under the constant surveillance of the Chief Engineer, Walt Schiffler, "that red-headed sonofabitch" who was probably one of the more disagreeable characters among the

officers, aside from the command! He had come up from the ranks as a 'mustang' with years of enlisted service through warrant officer and was now Chief Engineer of his very own engine gang, as a full Lieutenant. He was a tough but knowledgeable and experienced man, hard to get along with, and he looked at Joe, a young handsome and former merchant mariner, as someone he could bulldoze and control any time he wanted.

On the particular day I am recalling, Joe and I had retreated to our favorite hiding place aft of the second stack, where, while leaning against an engine room ventilator we often could just sit and talk without being seen by anyone up on the bridge, particularly of course the Exec or the Skipper. In order to find us they would have to put out a call over the intercom, and I always dreaded to hear, " Will the Doctor report to the bridge!", for invariably it would herald some kind of querulous statement about one trivial thing or another that one or other of them could think up about the medical division. Joe would dread as well some question about the engine room for although a complete report is always given to the officer taking over the watch, a half hour later, or after one was cozily in the sack for a much needed sleep, the call would come through wanting to know why pressure gauge such and such indicated 720 lbs of pressure when it read 710 lbs at time of reading, or some such equally ridiculous item. Nine times out of ten my interrogation had to do with something regarding the officer's mess. Had I "instructed the stewards to swab the deck?" (the Chief Stewards job, not mine!) or had I "found the missing cutlery" that the skipper overlooked at the last inspection? (He never seemed to realize that such things might have been stowed in a different locker during the last storm!). Thus it always went, with Joe and I musing frequently about what weird request or order would be next.

It was a warm morning, the seas moving in long lazy swells, high enough at times to hide us from the accompanying vessels that were 'hull-down' in the distance. But these were not the kind of waters that produced the annoying pitching and rolling that was so typical of destroyers. "Goddam", Joe was saying, "Would you have ever imagined any idiot of a skipper calling for a full compartment dress inspection at sea during a convoy operation in the midst of the heaviest wolf-pack concentrations we have had reported?" "Sheeit! You goddamwell better believe that I'm going to be hanging around mighty close to the nearest ladder down in that hole and let Red follow the Skipper's ass all over hell if he wants to. I'll manage to find some damn thing or another that demands my immediate attention!" I commented to him that I had been given orders to accompany the Skipper and the Exec throughout the inspection "in order to insure that all medical requirements for the men were in order" . I said that this meant I would be crawling through spaces that I had never even seen before, let alone trying to determine if they had the required number of First Aid kits around somewhere. I recalled the time at the Brooklyn Navy Yard during one of our refitting sessions when I had suggested to the Exec that we should have a kit at every gun mount with added syrettes of morphine plus a few other items that enlarged the total pack. They had both screamed like wounded eagles that we had to watch out for added topside weight for that might make us unstable and increase the danger of rolling over in heavy seas!! It was sometimes unbelievable what their priorities were. I said to Joe at the time that I thought the excess lard on the Exec's ass was more dangerous to the seaworthiness of the ship than a pound or two added to the medical kits. As you may well have determined, by now none of us had much use for Mr. Brooks,

"Fearless Freddie" as he was derisively known. Most of us had a kind of uneasy respect mixed with fear of the Skipper, however. His appellation of "Jesus George" really typified our feelings. He had received the Navy Cross for heroics as commander of a can that went into Casablanca harbor during that takeover, in the face of "withering fire" as they say in the papers, maneuvering through mines, bombarding hell out of the shore installations, and doing something that was never quite clear to us that promoted the safe landing of troops. Well, whatever it was, the Navy Cross was not given out lightly in those early days, and I believe he was only a two-striper at the time. Promotions came fast, and now as a two-and-a-half striper he felt as though he knew everything there was to know, and being the skipper, had the right to demand anything he wanted of the officers and crew, who were expected to comply. But more about that kind of thing another time.

I had just finished my remarks about the open-compartment inspection that was due in a day or so when the ear-splitting klaxon noise of General Quarters sounded and within seconds "Man Overboard! Man Overboard!" was heard. Both Joe and I had jumped to our feet, Joe yelling, "Keerist, here we go again, another drill!!" Then we heard, "This is not a drill. This is not a Drill! Man your stations!", "Doctor-report to the bridge!". I dashed up the ladders to the bridge to find the skipper cursing and screaming at the Communications Officer, Goodhue Livingston, "Signal the Baldwin", (and the Squadron Commander) "... for permission to haul to and pick up? or what to do?? " This request in itself was a most unusual one in that it was a standing order that at no time during a convoy operation were there to be any changes in flotilla routines; if someone went over the side for any reason whatsoever, the trailing ship might attempt a rescue, if at all feasible, otherwise the man was a goner, and was listed as missing at sea. In this instance there was no trailing ship, our position on the port flank and close to astern left no one really behind us and it would be exposing the stern flank if any of the trailing cans left position to attempt a rescue. The Baldwin was one of those ships as was the Satterlee, so we on the Harding were left to our own devices, and the signal came back "Own judgment". This was one of the operating hazards of being in command for you knew damn well that it'd be your neck if anything goes wrong. And in this case the integrity of the whole convoy could be compromised.

Things were moving at a rapid pace, the Chief Quartermaster had been ordered to lower a motor whaler and a third-class mate was to run the boat, along with a couple of seamen. But the decision as to what officer was to be in charge was uncertain. It was at this point that the skipper called me over and said, "We don't know for sure who it was that went over--someone just saw this seaman run to the rail and dive over. We've spotted him astern several hundred yards --must be crazy, Doc. I want you to go along with the boat and if you can find him take charge of him when they haul him aboard. We won't be stopping in the water, we'll lower away while moving- so hang on there--and we'll keep on our zigzag no matter what else happens. Then we'll pick you up the same way--while underway. Good luck!" These few words were the only good wishes this guy had ever given me in all my time aboard! Of course, the truth of the matter was that if he had to leave anyone behind or if any other emergency came up he felt he could spare the

doctor and a third class seaman--he sure wasn't going to risk any other of his highly trained officers or men!!

Needless to say, I wasn't too thrilled about this assignment but it surely was something different for the M.O. to be doing for a change and I was curious what in hell had possessed this seaman to do something like this. Donning a life jacket I climbed into the small motor whaler and we were gradually lowered away, stern slightly lower as we came close to the water. The ship had reduced speed somewhat to perhaps 12 to 15 knots and the smooth swells made the launch relatively easy. Of course I had never done anything like this before, but by this time in my Navy career there had occurred a number of things I had never done before!! We had no sooner hit the water and unshackled than our motor took over and we veered away from the ship, which in turn sped up and took off on a different course. We only had a general idea of where the man might be and headed off astern and further to the port. Fortunately the long and rather high swells assisted us for we soon spotted the floundering figure in the water about 500 yards away. He seemed to be thrashing away in the water alternately disappearing from sight and at times seeming to go under the water. As we came closer he was yelling something that sounded like "No! No!" As we came alongside I could see that he was attempting to push himself beneath the surface and of course just bobbing up again, yelling at us and then pushing himself down again. The seaman and I reached over the side and grabbed him by the shirt and dungarees and dragged him over the gunnel. By this time he was weak and thoroughly waterlogged inside and out and his struggles were nothing to match our haul-out efforts. I wrapped him in a blanket and began to recognize a familiar face of one among the many I had seen at one time or another at sick call. He was still muttering "No, No, No!" even as we headed back to the ship. The skipper had maneuvered into a position where again we could be picked up on the port side, underway, and at a reduced speed. He was on the bridge with bullhorn in hand yelling at the deck crew and us at the same time. Being hauled aboard was not as easy as being lowered away, but after a few hairy minutes of being half up and half still dragging in the water with all of us hanging on for dear life, even our determined jumper, we finally were aboard.

I had the man brought down to sick bay and there my PhMs took over, clothing him in dry clothes and warming him up a bit with a slug of whisky. This came from some of our confiscated stock acquired during shore leave from errant sailors who thought they might as well try to continue a good thing by bringing their booze aboard. I found out that our man was Billy J., a fireman second-class whom I had seen several times for a variety of vague somatic complaints that never could be pinned down. He had said he was having trouble sleeping. He usually had a night watch in the engine room, and although rotated periodically and having been drinking coffee by the gallon while on watch, it was a not infrequent complaint among both officers and men that their sleep during the off-watch was very erratic.

After ascertaining a few of the salient facts about the man and checking him over physically and finding him none the worse for wear, I reported to the captain. I found him looking pretty satisfied with himself, having shown a degree of compassion that I must admit I had rarely seen before. He asked a few questions about the man,

admonished me to find out what in hell was going on, and suggested keeping him in sick bay under observation for awhile. I said I would talk to the man and report further details later. As I turned to leave the Captain said, almost sotto voce, "Good work, Doc!" I nearly fainted from this but managed to grin at him and say "Thanks, Captain."

I talked to Joe before he went on his next watch and he told me some interesting things about Billy J. He had known the man in terms of seeing him on his crew during his watch in the engine room. He was a competent enough oiler but one who had tended to be by himself pretty much of the time-on or off watch. That he was only a second-class rating puzzled Joe for he could tell the man had plenty of experience. He had time enough in service to have achieved a first class rating and a better kind of duty than another can. That was the real kicker! This was his fourth tour of duty on a can, and a quick review of his health record told the real story. Most of his record was missing but there were inserts in his personnel jacket indicating that he had served aboard three other destroyers and had survived two torpedoings and one damaged ship that took it out of action totally. The torpedoed ships had both sunk, with him in the engine compartments at the time of the attacks, and in fact he was one of only three men who survived one of those attacks!! He had been hospitalized briefly after the last episode for "nervousness"!! Here he was on his fourth can, doing a tour of duty in sub-infested waters, with the daily, -no, hourly scuttlebutt about the ever present danger. I shook my head in disbelief that he would have been re-assigned to another can in the face of his record. He'd had a deck court martial a time or two, and had lost time on his next rating due-date mainly because every time he went ashore he was invariably late to return and was usually drunk. His previous tours had been in the Pacific during the Solomons campaign on an old four-stacker, which had gone down like a rock after only one torpedo strike. He got out of that one O.K. and thought how lucky he was to be assigned to another old bucket that he had heard was going to be given the deep-six at the end of the next tour. Exigencies of war kept that one on station doing shore bombardment in the attacks on Tarawa but in turn she was struck heavily by shore batteries, one shell landing on an ammunition compartment blowing the hell out of most of the stern topside, damaging her steering and leaving her essentially dead in the water. He got out of the engine room only in time to fight the ammunition fire as part of damage control. His next assignment after a two-week layover at Pearl was to a newly refitted can that had been severely damaged in some earlier action. So then it was off to sea again to the Battle of the Coral Sea which history tells us was a great victory for the Navy, particularly the air arm. But in the process seven cans were lost, among them his new ship. This one got a torpedo or two right in the mid-section, one engine compartment blown up completely, his filling in seconds with water and he was the last man of three to escape. The ship sank and he and a few others floated around for six hours before the battle around them quieted down enough to begin the hunt for survivors.

A good deal of this information came out in bits and pieces over the next week or so as I talked to this young man. He had considerable anxiety but seemed to respond well to the opportunity to ventilate his story. When his assignment came to join the Harding he had developed a deeply religious conviction that he must have somehow done some pretty sinful things especially since he had been in the Navy. God had certainly given

him plenty of warning, in his opinion, and he had decided that the only thing to do was to read the Bible and see if there was some way he could protect himself from God's wrath. He took to keeping to himself, sitting in any corner he could find while off watch, reading and apparently praying. He was observed by several of his mates doing this with greater intensity and frequency during our particular voyage. He rarely talked to anyone or only responded with monosyllabic words, saying "No, No," or shaking his head in a repetitive tic-like negative manner. He had been unable to get enough sleep, which I had noted during sick call, but had heard nothing else about him.

On the day of his jump he had come off watch only to hear the news that we were entering a particularly dangerous stretch of wolf-pack activity, and further that extra time was to be put in cleaning up the engine compartments for there was to be a 'surprise' open compartment inspection any day now. This information had not been broadcast, but it was always amazing how such scuttlebutt could spread around a ship. He had gotten the word at a time when his anxiety was peaking. Having just come off the same watch Joe had been on, he began to sense a deep feeling of guilt that since he had been on three cans before of which every one had ended up sunk or damaged beyond recall, that he must be the jinx that was somehow doing this to his ships and his mates. His decision then was to circumvent such an event repeating itself, appease God at the same time, and simply go over the side and drown himself, something that he felt had been in the cards for three previous tours. So over he went!!

The remainder of this voyage, in some relative way, was uneventful, notwithstanding the skipper's 'open hatch' inspection that took place a few days after the 'overboard' scene that was not a drill. It was still the rampant scuttlebutt that the inspection was going to take place no matter what the circumstances were around us. As was usual, the closer we came to European coasts, and in our case, the North African coast of Morocco, the more likelihood of enemy wolf-packs tracking us. We had no doubt in our minds that they were aware that we were escorting a large convoy into the mouth of the Mediterranean, namely off of Gibraltar, where the convoy would be picked up by British naval units that would take it on to Italy for whatever current campaign was either being waged or planned. Our next assignment was to proceed at flank speed for Casablanca, (romantic Casablanca, shades of Bogart and Bergman), once the citadel of the Vichy French in North Africa. Our Skipper had been there at the time of it's recapture from the French, and in fact it was at this time as the young commander of one of the older cans in his squadron that had swept into the harbor ahead of the attacking fleet, bombarded the hell out of the shore batteries and participated in the ultimate sinking of the Vichy French heavy cruiser, (name not remembered), even as she lay tied up at a huge concrete quay. We never heard all the gory details, but for valor in command, 'above and beyond', and all that sort of thing our intrepid skipper received the Navy Cross! That was no mean accomplishment in those early days of the war and it led to the reward for the skipper of being assigned to new construction, the good ship USS ('Happy') Harding, DD625. Also he made Lt. Comdr. during that period, and this led to another of my experiences when the 'old man' finally made full Commander while on the Harding. But more of that later.

Sailing into Casablanca harbor was a rather exciting and interesting experience. There was still much evidence of the battle that took place around the French cruiser, which was manifestly one of the major targets, and rested two thirds under water and on the bottom of the bay, listing badly to starboard, and clearly something of a shambles. It was still daylight when we tied up along side another pier, actually bumpered alongside a British frigate, a much smaller ship known for their fighting skills and power. Compared to our 'newness' and the spit and polish that was demanded aboard our ship, the Britisher looked like she'd never been cleaned up or could be ready for action in anything short of weeks. In order to get ashore we had to ask permission to cross her decks, and this gave us opportunity to catch some quick glances at how she was maintained. She had apparently assisted in bringing some convoy into North Africa and was laying over for her next assignment.

My most immediate concern, which I had relayed to the Captain, was that we had to hospitalize our 'jumper' as soon as possible. I had kept him off duty and under watch near the sick bay, and fairly heavily medicated with Phenobarbital. He slept a great deal but whenever possible I would talk to him and try to better understand what had been going on in his mind during our cruise. He was friendly and cooperative and I think really relieved that he was going to finally be off of a 'can'. I was pretty sure that he'd be sent back to the states for further hospitalization but I had no idea when or how it was to happen. The skipper in his usual grudging way was reluctant to let him go, for this would mean one short hand in the engine gang, and an experienced one at that. But he knew it was no use bucking the M.O. on matters like this, especially after our head to head confrontation over a similar issue with the two men we had had to hospitalize for 'clap', and a severe sprain while we were in San Diego on our way around to the East Coast. At that time I had the backing of the Senior M.O. in charge of the San Diego Naval Hospital, and managed to have them keep hospitalized the orthopedic problem but let the 'clap' case come back aboard so long as I could keep him on the sulfonamide treatment and away from the women!

In any case, I found transportation to take me to the Naval Dispensary at Casablanca, and presented my first Navy psychiatric case to the C.O., along with a rather extensive write up about our jumper. There was really no problem, and he was off my hands in no time and being prepared for transfer back to the States. It was not until some months later that I received a report and a letter regarding our man and at the same time a commendation from the psychiatrist in charge stateside for the thorough and interesting history I had sent along. It was pleasing to know what had happened, -a long trip back in the sick bay of a troop transport, then sent to Bethesda, and finally to St. Elizabeth's in Washington, D.C. There was some assurance by the doctor who wrote me that this man would not again be assigned to further sea duty. He'd done his job and well enough. I always wondered if the Navy kept its promise and what had really happened to this man. The war at that point was a long way from over!

TAKE ME TO THE CASBAH!

In the few days we were to be in Casablanca we were given the opportunity for some shore leave. We had been given a brief shore leave at Gibraltar, one evening only, spent entirely in a bar filled with a truly multinational conglomerate of military, all men as I recall. Not having had anything to drink for some weeks, we thirsted for something like beer and were gladdened to see some cans of beer in line on the shelf in back of the bar. Our order was taken and the bartender took a can off the shelf, poured it in a mug and handed it to us--warm as the day around us! Our look quickly was noted and the bartender laughed and said, "Oh yeah, you Yanks like it cold, dont'cha!", and grabbed a handful of icecubes and threw them in the mug. No matter! It was the most delicious beer in a long time.

In Casablanca we had found a very crowded restaurant not too far from the Casbah and finally managed to get some kind of chow that I believe was mostly lamb, but it was so tough and overcooked and tasteless that one could hardly tell. The bitter-sour red wine that was served in an unmarked bottle could only be described as effective if not tasteful. My visit to the john was unique in that I had not experienced the 'hole in the floor' style of the facilities prior to this time. One had to balance precariously on a couple of foot-shaped pads and pray that you could hit the hole and miss your shoes and draped trousers while holding onto your jacket, cap and wallet. It was a true test of sobriety for if you weren't sober before hand you had better be soon enough.

The Casbah was strictly off limits to all U.S. Naval personnel, for there had been numerous instances when men entered the area and were not seen again, or if found, were much the worse for the experience, often badly beaten, with most of their clothes and all of their identification gone. Of course this all only led to further our curiosity, so several of us under the guidance of a British ensign and a French naval cadet made our way, not without some trepidation into one of the darkest, smelliest streets I had ever seen. There really wasn't much to see or do there beside ignore the frequent shrill calls from various windows inviting us in, or the urchins who would sidle up to us and ask baldly, "Fuckee my sister, sailor??". Our visions of someone like Ingrid Bergman somehow did not materialize and it didn't take us long to realize that we should be getting the hell out of there.

Back at the ship by around 0100 we saluted ourselves aboard to the amused looks and comments of the O.O.D., who informed us that the skipper had gone ashore too with a couple of other skippers from our squadron and wasn't back yet. We heard the details early the next A.M., finding that they came back escorted by the Shore Patrol, with some kind of a charge that they had gotten drunk, stolen a jeep, resisted the Shore Patrol, and in general were in some deep trouble. This was all pretty hard to believe of 'our Captain', but the smirky look on the Exec's face indicated that he really hoped it was all true and that they'd get their balls chewed off by someone before it was over. However, never underrate the power of the Academy boys to stand by each other and manage to squeeze out of a tough situation. The Skipper had been the driver of the jeep, which it turned out belonged, or rather had been assigned to, the Squadron Commander's use, who although

he had gone off himself with some Brits in one of their jeeps, had raised some hell when he came back and couldn't find his own vehicle. The skipper did a lot of grinning at the Officer's Mess that next day but never did elaborate how they got it straightened out.

It always seemed remarkable to me how little is remembered about our return trips to the States after these convoys. It must be remembered that of the thousands of Liberty ships and other varieties of shipping that accompanied the huge convoys that preceded the various invasions during the war years, they nearly all had to return to the stateside ports for re-loading and return. These return convoys were rarely ever attacked for the U-boats didn't much care for sinking empty hulls. Consequently these trips were often faster and without the danger and harassment of the eastbound flotillas. The skipper was often pretty much isolated to his regular cabin; the Exec was his usual watchful self especially when on deck, always wearing his waist-inflatable preserver, and of course his belt-attached hunting knife!! He was well aware that there had not been just a few unloved officers on such ships as ours who mysteriously were lost at sea, even on the calmest of nights!

HE'S GOT A HOT BELLY and OH BUOY!

It was on one such return trip that we received an open radio signal from the Baldwin saying that the M.O., Lou Madden wished to have a consultation with me. This was unusual, for although I knew Lou only moderately well, he had never struck me as being one who would call for help for anything. However, the Baldwin, being the flagship of our squadron, had always been looked upon as getting more of the material breaks for supplies or equipment, and the rest of us rather envied the position of the M.O. and the crew. What I didn't know about Lou was that he had been assigned to this particular ship largely because his wife, whom he had only recently married, was the daughter of a Rear-Admiral, a line officer I believe, and Lou had managed to use his 'contact' to some advantage. This despite the fact that Lou's training after graduation had consisted of one year of a general internship, most of which was on psychiatric wards, with only the barest smattering of any surgical services. For the usual routines of shipboard medicine I suppose this was considered sufficient, but Lou had run across a problem on this trip that was not common but one that had the potential for trouble, namely, a diagnosed case of appendicitis! By this time I had achieved something of a reputation for I had already had a case of appendicitis that had required emergency surgery, and notwithstanding the heroics we had all heard about of the submarine pharmacist mate who performed surgery while on underwater patrol in the South Pacific, none of us relished the idea of having to do this emergency procedure while at sea.

My case had developed while on a routine convoy operation heading eastward and not long after a rather severe storm during which I had been transferred to a Liberty ship to take care of some of the storm-injured men aboard that ship. That particular job was assigned to me because the ship that called for help was close to us in the convoy line. They had signaled that several of their men had been injured, one apparently more severely during the storm, in a fall down a ladder. They had no pharmacist mates aboard, but there was a five-inch gun crew of Navy personnel aboard, headed by an Ensign, and

he had sense enough to recognize that the seaman was in some respiratory distress and should be looked at. We signaled back and forth in an effort for me to get more information and it was my opinion that this man should be seen and treated if possible.

The major storm was abating but there were still very heavy seas and the skipper after receiving permission to transfer me to the freighter also recognized that launching a motorized lifeboat would not be feasible. He therefore decided to come alongside the freighter, shoot a line to her, and set up a breeches-buoy line and chair and have me shipped over via the chair along with whatever equipment I might need. As I looked at the preparations for this little exercise I really did not see how it was to be accomplished without my being either dunked repeatedly in the briny, or banged up against one ship or the other.

The crews of both ships had to participate and coordinate their efforts, setting up the bracing for the lines that would go across between the ships which was no small matter. The freighter was a much larger craft than our destroyer was and it had a very much higher freeboard so that the line to that ship was an up-hill haul considerably steeper than the downhill slant of the one from our deck. Also the momentum of roll of each of the ships was different. The broad beamed freighter had a much slower and more even side-to-side roll and a longer and smoother fore and aft pitch. But the Harding even in these abating seas was pitching and rolling and twisting and turning in a most erratic and, to me, alarming fashion. It was going to take some fancy and careful helmsmanship particularly on our part to keep the ships separated enough to avoid a collision and at the same time allow for me to be hauled across the intervening seas below.

The moment of truth being at hand the Quartermaster Chief (many were the times I thanked God for that man!!) took me in hand and briefed me as to what would be happening. I was to be tied into the chair with a line around my waist, as well as lines attached both fore and aft to the chair itself, and I was to have also lashed to me my medical bag which I had loaded with a variety of materials that I might need once aboard the Liberty. I pondered the fact that I couldn't escape my chair no matter what happened and if I went under the water I'd sink like a lead balloon with no way of getting out. The whole chair gizmo was shackled to a large over-head U-shaped shackle to which were attached two rings which in turn had lines, one leading over to the freighter and one extending from the Harding. "Doc," the Chief instructed, "don't worry, we'll have you over there in no time, -just hang on and let us do the worrying and the hauling.' I cinched on my life preserver a bit tighter, was lashed into my breeches chair, and with the reassuring glances of the deck crew and my good buddy Wes Williams, who as First Lieutenant, was the officer in charge of such deck operations, I was gradually allowed to slide down the incline of the overhead line. Wes confided in me after it was all over that he'd never pulled off such an operation before but he had read up all about it when we decided to do the job. The Chief seemed the most informed of the lot of them and I was grateful he was really in charge.

As I slid down the slope of the line the waters below me seemed awfully close and reaching up to me with crests that were white-combed. The Harding end of the

bracing for the transfer lines was placed as high as was feasible, on the quarter-deck, so as to give the most free-way for the line to fall as it made it's way to the freighter. But with the nature of the differences in the sizes of the two vessels it wasn't long before I had reached the bottom of the sloping line and at that point the waves were only a matter of a few feet from my dangling (cold!) feet, and as I looked at the freighter looming up ahead I could see that I was only about a third of the way across! And there I seemed to sit for what seemed like an interminable time for it was now the turn of the freighter deck crew to start hauling me up the hill to their ship. Meantime, the rolls of the two ships began at various moments to be non-synchronous and I was in the unhappy situation of being alternately dunked into the water below or snapped into a taut almost straightened line many feet in the air and threatening to slide back toward the Harding. Nothing much seemed to me to be happening, or at least not fast enough, I must say, and I didn't think much of the whole operation at this point. But it was at this time that the Skipper came through in one of the few times I ever was grateful to hear him screaming and cursing, for a change not at me, but for me. He had a bullhorn in hand and was yelling at the freighter crew, "Pull the Doc up, Goddam it! Pull him up!!" The crew jumped-to from their leaning-on-the-rail-watching-with-interest position, and I noticed that the gun crew Navy personnel were also lending a hand at this point. Gradually I began to be hauled up the incline and although there were still some hairy moments of alternately dangling low toward the seas and riding high above the Harding's level, I finally was pulled aboard the ship. A big sigh of relief and not caring if my pants were wet up to my hips, that big old rust bucket looked like dry land to me!

The injured seaman turned out not to be anything more than several broken ribs, which accounted for his respiratory difficulty in that he simply could not get a full breath without severe pain. There were bruises and contusions but none that were really serious. A rather simple taping of the chest procedure, propping up, some pain medication, and most of my work was done. I also checked the other seamen who had minor injuries, none of which required more than cursory care. The captain of the ship was very grateful for my trip over, apologized for the laxness of his crew, ensconced me in his stateroom while he stayed in his sea cabin, and invited me to share the officer's mess. I was also informed that my skipper had decided not to try to have me return to the ship yet, certainly not in the same way I came over!, and that we would wait for calmer seas and a safer time to transfer me. Needless to say I did not mind this a bit! I ate like a king aboard that ship. They had available much more in the way of meats and staples, and lots of fresh vegetable, since they had left the Norfolk roads only a few days preceding and supplies were still plentiful. I got to know the Ensign in charge of the gun crew, Schreider by name, and we both agreed to write to our respective spouses and have them contact each other and tell, either by letter or phone, that we had met in mid-Atlantic and had a little adventure together. It was some months later I believe, that my wife received a letter with a news clipping enclosed of a similar incident of the transfer of a doctor to another ship, only it wasn't me! It was given quite a write-up in the paper. But enclosed also was a rather dim picture that the Ensign had taken of me as I was being hauled aboard.

The return to the Harding several days later was easily accomplished, this time by longboat in much calmer weather. Raising or lowering a boat at sea while underway is a somewhat hairy procedure, but necessary inasmuch as one does not wish to slow the ship down too much and expose it as a sitting target for the U-boats. I had had several such experiences before the several long cruises on board the Harding were over. The breeches-buoy was one, another the picking up of the seaman who had taken a dive over the side, and then there was the time when the medic on the Baldwin signaled our ship to ask for my assistance in a possible appendicitis case he had found in one of their crew.

I knew Dr. Madsen of the Baldwin only slightly in that we had met during the outfitting stages of both our ships during the Todd Shipyard days. He was an affable young guy for whom I really felt sorry. He confided in me one time that he had been in a one-year straight Psychiatric internship at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington D.C. when he was called to active duty. He was married only recently to the daughter of a regular Navy admiral, name I don't remember. Aside from the indoctrinatory period at Bethesda he had had no other medical or surgical services and the fact that he had been assigned to a general medical type of duty aboard a ship was truly a farce. He and his wife had shared a dinner with us one time while we were in port in Portland, Maine, during a shore leave during the time we were in Casco Bay training with gunnery drills for shore bombardment and aerial target practice on drone planes. He had not revealed his total lack of preparedness for the demands that might surround active sea duty, let alone the potential for combat. But his lack of basic knowledge was becoming daily more apparent to him, I would gather, in that he quizzed me endlessly about those mundane and routine matters that the medical team faced aboard a ship at sea. In terms of sea duty I was no more experienced than he was, but my internship had been a broad based, rotating series of general services that at least had acquainted me with many of those problems that would be faced in a ship crewed with basically young and healthy sailors and officers. He therefore knew of my background and training, so that when his emergency came up during one of our trans-Atlantic convoys, he knew he could get some help.

He had radioed over to the Harding and asked to talk to me directly about his seaman with the persistent right lower quadrant abdominal pain. The symptoms clearly represented appendicitis to me but we had no facilities for even doing a routine blood count aboard these ships, nor a urinalysis, since we had no microscope, so we had to depend almost entirely upon the strictly physical signs of any abdominal acute pathology. There were no ship to ship or plane transfers possible, so that the medics were supposed to take care of such emergencies as best they could. The story of the Pharmacist Mate aboard a submarine, who had done an emergency appendectomy while at sea submerged, had been bandied about among the fleet medics for some time, so that we had an example of what could be done under extreme conditions. And we were equipped with basic surgical instruments that could be used.

I had advised Madsen to use the most conservative approaches to the problem to see if surgery could be avoided or at least postponed. But after about 48 hours it became apparent that we would risk having a ruptured appendix to deal with unless we

intervened. So after much radio palaver back and forth, and with the respective skippers getting our squadron commanders permission to so proceed, we finally arranged to have me transferred by long-boat to the Baldwin for the necessary surgery. It was another one of those trips from ship to ship that entailed doing so while under way. This was becoming old-hat for me at this point, but at least it was being done during fair weather, and when we were in relatively safe waters as far as the submarine danger was concerned.

Madsen had his patient prepared when I arrived, with the operating area set up in an area of the crew's mess. Since I had already done one of these jobs aboard my own ship, and had learned a great deal of what not to do as well as what was going to be required, the procedure turned out to be relatively easy. The offending appendix was ripe and ready to be removed, and the patient and we were all relieved to get it out and over with. Madsen served as an assistant, while one of his PhMs. gave the ether anesthetic. This anesthetic worked more effectively than had the one I had had to work with aboard the Harding while we were in semi-tropical waters. There the heat and humidity in the mess compartment had been so severe that my inexperienced pharmacist mate had difficulty keeping the patient sufficiently under to perform the surgery. He had to use several cans of ether during the surgery because of the rapid evaporation. We were all just about as woozy as the patient by time we were through! In addition, for reasons that we never did discover, my first surgical experience aboard my ship was handicapped by a break-down in my sterile field precautions when one of the overhead steam or water pipes sprang a leak that began dripping directly upon my sterile drapes right in the middle of the procedure!! In both of these cases we used extremely liberal amounts of sterile pocketed sulfanilamide powder spreading it throughout the nearby abdominal cavity and in the incision area. The powerful new antibiotic agent apparently did its job, for both of these cases recovered without incident, and were later transferred to a naval hospital.

With all of the stresses I had had with my skipper, I had rarely had any comments of "well done!" from him but in these surgical episodes and in the one that involved the 'man overboard' incident he actually called me to the bridge inquiring how the men were doing and giving me the traditional 'well done' salute.

JUST EXCESS BAGGAGE

This was certainly in such a sharp contrast to the earlier time during our cruise when he had made a pointed effort to let me know how useless he considered a doctor to be aboard a 'can'. This had followed one of my very early run-ins with the naval command structures when we put into San Diego Naval base during our first voyage after commissioning, convoying the re-built battleship USS Nevada to the East Coast. We had only a brief stay in San Diego at which time I had to hospitalize three of the crew in the Naval Hospital. Two of these men had developed clear signs of the 'clap' (gonorrhea), and one had a severe ankle sprain that might questionably include a minor ankle bone fracture. We knew we were going to be in port only about thirty-six hours, and when the skipper found that the man with the possible fracture and one of the guys with clap were both first-class ratings in divisions that desperately needed experienced and well-trained

men, he summoned me to the bridge and said he wanted them back aboard at once! I protested that they were officially on the sick list and hospitalized and that I could not get them out of the hospital, in time for the 1600 hour sailing, including the fact that one of them was wearing a lower leg cast! He just blew up at my remarks and said in effect 'I order you to bring those three men back to this ship, in person!!'

There was no avoiding his 'order', I thought, but I was told by someone to go to the Commanding Officer of the Hospital and state my case and see what could be done. I managed to get in to see the Medical Corps Captain, and described what the situation was. He reminded me that while recognizing the predicament I was in as a fresh Lt. (j.g.)(MC), Navy Regulations clearly state that the Medical Officers recommendations and orders regarding the health and welfare of the crew took precedence over and superseded those of the Skipper. He then remarked that he had had many run-ins with CO's of the frame of mind of my skipper, and that one had to learn to deal with the realities of their power and training and experience. And being as how my Skipper was in addition 'a hero with the Navy Cross for valor above and beyond the call of duty', that we were going to have to see what could be done to moderate this conflict. He commented on the fact that the Skipper knew those regulations perfectly well, and was only throwing his weight around to further establish his ground as 'The Skipper!!' So he said that he would authorize the discharge back to the ship in my medical custody two of the men, those with the clap, but that the man in the cast could in no way be expected to return to sea duty at this time. Further He would send a message to the ship that he personally respected the skills and knowledge of the Medical Office and knew he could take care of the two remaining men in such a fashion that they could be soon returned to duty.

After returning to the ship in a wild jeep ride down the pier at the very last moment and just before the final lines were being cast off before sailing, I did get those two men back, and heard nothing further at that time about the problem.

It was sometime later while en route to the Canal that the Skipper called me to the bridge and while we both leaned on the open bridge rail he rather quietly but firmly informed me that my medical duties aboard that ship were to be considered as largely superfluous, really not required on destroyers (as they had not been in previous years, or at least were limited to only one MO per squadron, not one per ship as mandated now). Further, he wanted me to understand that the Welfare Officer was really the CO, since we didn't have a chaplain aboard, and it was not the responsibility of the medical officer.

AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN

The Skipper had initially seemed like an affable and gentleman-like man, with a mild Southern drawl, an easy smile and welcoming manner when he first greeted those of us reporting for duty to the as-yet-un-commissioned ship. There were a thousand things to do to finalize the presentation of the ship for commissioning ceremonies. She was tied up alongside a work pier at the Todd Shipyards at the southwest edge of Elliott Bay of Puget Sound when I first saw her. (The tradition of referring to ships as being of the female gender was and is a remnant of ancient times, and notwithstanding that most of

these vessels were named after noted naval characters or heroes didn't alter that tradition.) In those initial days of pre-commissioning we had very little free time for any other social activity, the urgency and need for getting these ships into fighting shape and ready for sea being uppermost in all of our minds, and especially of course for the Skipper and the Exec. As each of the officers, non-commissioned and petty officers, and seamen reported aboard for duty it became very apparent to the Command what a mixture of neophytes and 'old hands' we were going to be.

The term, 'Skipper', (not the designation the 'Captain' wanted to be used in reference to himself, incidentally,) generally connoted a somewhat affectionate or respectfully admiring quality, but to this particular man, the full impact of the label of the 'Commanding Officer' was best seen in the appellation 'Captain' or at least when referred to indirectly, as 'the CO.' In any case he appeared to feel that he had earned his title of 'Captain' inasmuch as he had previously been in command as a young Lieutenant on an old four-stacker during the invasion of Casablanca and had rammed his ship home into the port in the face of withering Vichy French shore batteries, had helped to sink the old French Navy cruiser that was tied up alongside the quay in the harbor, and apparently had 'earned' his Navy Cross medal for his 'valor, skill, and bravery in the face of enemy fire' during this lop-sided victory. It wasn't too long into our first trial runs in various areas of Puget Sound that the appellation of "Jesus George" was tied to him. He was prone to the exclamation "Jeeee-zus!!!" at frequent intervals when the numerous glitches occurred either in equipment or in function or in performance of the crew or the officers in whatever division might be under particular scrutiny at the time. But it also became abundantly clear that the Captain was never wrong, that his word, his decisions, his concepts, and his entire philosophy as to how such a ship should be run, were to be understood as being dogma, or dictum, as if from on high, with no less than the backing and confirmation of the Almighty behind 'The Captain'. As an 'Academy Man' he carried with him those traditions and the automatic sanctification that was bestowed at graduation when he became 'an officer and a gentleman' by degree conferred. This was not to say that he on occasion could not be the apparently friendly, sociable, joking or quizzical man that the situation might call for. At the time of the commissioning he was all smiles and displayed a casual dignity that his station as Lt. Comdr., USN, Navy Cross recipient, Commanding Officer of the new construction, 1780 ton, DD625, USS Harding, certainly deserved. His 'lady', his wife, also apparently from the South was present for the ceremonies along with their approximately seven year old daughter, both dressed to the nines for this auspicious occasion. We saw little of his family except for that ceremony and then it was a little on the stiff and formal side of introductions as the command mixed mostly with other invited Captains of the several other DD's that were to become a part of our particular squadron. There was the Baldwin, DD624 that my 'displaced psychiatrist' was assigned to later, as well as the Satterlee, DD623, which had been designated the flagship of our squadron and carried aboard a full Commander as squadron commander.

Shortly after I reported aboard, our Executive Officer also reported, by name Fredrick Brooks, a full Lieutenant. Once again the men very soon found a nickname for Mr. Brooks, derived entirely from the paradoxical role in which he soon found himself. He was known as "Fearless Freddie", and a more apparently fearful man in a command

position I could not have imagined. From the beginning he was the major target of the Skipper for a tongue-lashing relating to absolutely anything that went awry, from the most complex of electronic or engineering faults that turned up to the state of the weather during a given trial run. It was always Mr. Brooks who bore the brunt of the Captain's wrath or disgust or open contempt. In turn, the Exec would take it out on the various division heads, then the Chief Petty Officers, and of course in the 'chain of command' sequence it would spread down through the ranks of the crew to the lowliest seaman striker. For some reason unknown to me, Mr. Brooks treated me with a kind of distant respect, never open or friendly, but not badgering me, as did the Captain. Part of the reason for his being referred to as 'Fearless' derived from the fact that as time went on it was soon noted that he never appeared on deck without wearing his waist life-jacket, a rubberized, inflatable, (and probably almost totally useless piece of flotation equipment!), which we all were issued and required to wear during routine drills or General Quarters, but took off as soon as the drill was over. Not Mr. Brooks! He wore it almost constantly, and in addition had attached to his belt a sheathed bone-handled hunting knife. We were all convinced that 'Fearless' was prepared for the distinct possibility that he might suddenly find himself overboard on a dark and stormy night, probably as a result of a calculated shove or toss on the part of some disgruntled and angry member of the crew. Such a thing had been known to happen at sea, always explained as an unfortunate man-overboard 'accident' on a slippery deck!!

That the Skipper might be subjected to the same risks were less likely in that he seldom if ever appeared on any of the lower decks without being accompanied by the Exec or an entourage of an officer or an enlisted rating of some sort. Brooks prowled around a lot at different levels of the ship, presumably to scout out what breaks in regulations or routines might be going on behind his back. There was less of this going on whenever we had particular drills on the high seas, for the Exec was also the presumed 'navigator' and was occupied a great deal in the pilot house on the bridge poring over his charts, and plotting various courses under direct orders from the Captain.

AHOY! MISSOULA, MONTANA.

We were never to forget the Exec's navigational skills very early in our cruise to accompany the re-built Nevada to the East Coast. We were to rendezvous off San Francisco with the Nevada, a baby-carrier, and at least two other destroyers, the Baldwin and the Satterlee. We left very early in the morning from our customary tie-up just south of the Bay Bridge western anchorage and found our way slowly out through the Gate into a very thick bank of morning fog that so often completely obliterated the Gate Bridge or any of the headlands on either side. Although I was not supposed to be on the bridge for any particular reason at the time, I had gone up to have a look at the scenery and watch the proceedings on the bridge. The Captain was in his position to the right of the wheel in his high 'conning' chair which permitted him to gaze out through the pilot house windows, see the starboard side of the bridge, and be close to the chart table that was directly behind him. The Exec was at the chart table plotting our course and giving such directions as were indicated to the skipper who would relay them to the wheel man or to the rating who monitored the engine-room telegraph. The Chief Quartermaster, a man

who was probably the most experienced sea-faring person aboard, including the skipper, and whom the skipper clearly respected and relied upon, was moving about the cabin from station to station, and frequently was glancing over the shoulder of the Exec to look at the chart and the various bearings that were inscribed.

We were proceeding very slowly indeed and could see little or nothing. I stayed out of the way and was leaning over the bridge rail just gazing at the water and the occasional seagull that flew by. Suddenly I heard the skipper and the quartermaster both shout "Hard-a-Port!! Hard-a Port!!", and "Reverse Engines!!", as bells rang accompanied by a distinct sense of urgency if not panic in the tone and activity in the pilot house. I glanced out to the starboard at this point just in time to see dimly through the thinning fog several very large craggy rocks slowly slide by as we veered to the left. The Farallones!! A cluster of sheer rocks about twenty-five miles almost due west of the Golden Gate, and of course notoriously the nemesis of many a ship leaving San Francisco over the years. It was marked by a lighthouse and foghorns and bell, but was to be avoided by proper navigational efforts at all costs.

Those of us who witnessed this 'near-miss' watched with some grimness, which later changed to wonderment when we contemplated the fact that, this most-recent and up-to-date naval ship of war very nearly ended its short career on the rocks off-shore of California. It was later that day that the scuttlebutt spread the word that Fearless Freddie had slightly miscalculated our course, and had plotted our location as some two hundred miles south-west of Missoula, Montana!! And were it not for the Chief Quartermaster whose knowledge of local waters and the awareness that our course was dead-on for a collision with the Farallones managed to pull us out of a real catastrophe. This incident did not endear the Exec to the Captain, nor to any of us for that matter!!

A TRULY FUNCTIONAL GAS-MASK

Among some of the other officers who had reported to the ship at varying times early on were Wesley Williams, a full Lieutenant, and who, next to the Exec and the Captain had had more at-sea experience than any of the other officers, excepting perhaps the Engineering Officer, 'Red' Schiffer. Wes had been an Ensign aboard the USS Warring, an old four-Stacker destroyer that had been stationed at Pearl Harbor up to and including the attack on December 7, 1941. I never heard all of the details from Wes but the story goes that he had been on shore leave that Saturday night before the 7th and was just returning to the ship early that Sunday morning when the attack began. With the absolute confusion and widespread destruction that was incurred in the first few waves of Japanese attack bombers Wes' ship was undamaged, and at the moment he reported aboard he was the only deck officer aboard along with only a part of the crew. Somehow they got the ship underway and determined to try to get it out of the harbor, which they managed to accomplish in the face of constant overhead bombardment. Wes never described in any detail how this was done, but his efforts and those of others of his crew received recognition for their heroics, he by receiving the Silver Star and the ship and crew cited for their efforts.

Wes was appointed as First Lieutenant among the division heads, being the one designated as most responsible for damage control, and along with Schiffer, the Chief Engineer, they were responsible for the over-all integrity of the ship as a sea-going vessel. Wes had had other duties aboard destroyers after his Pearl Harbor experience, and knew a great deal about the structural and engineering and design elements of the ship from the keel up. This job was one that brought him into constant contact with the Skipper and the Exec, both of whom constantly ragged on him about anything that went wrong whatsoever outside of the engine compartments. Schiffer, a red-headed, constantly irritable Chief Warrant Officer, had come up from the ranks as an enlisted man, and became known as a Mustang, i.e. an officer who achieved his rank through the hard work and years of service in his department as a non-comm, a Chief, and finally becoming a Warrant Officer. We seldom saw much of this man who was always down below in the bowels of the ship in the engine room, tending and babying his engines like an old mother hen. I never knew what shift he might be working because in fact he could often be found below decks any time of the day or night. He was known as a tough man, who knew his job, did it, and took no guff from anyone, not even the Skipper or the Exec. He was king of his realm, and delivered the goods when asked, and paid little attention to any of the rest of the crew outside of his own engine room gang.

Wes and his wife gradually became close friends of ours while we were in port, and we frequently, as often as it was practicable which wasn't frequent at all, would get together for some social activity. One such was shortly after commissioning when the Skipper in an unusual burst of generosity, gave several of us a thirty-six hour shore leave. The Williams', the Neighbors', Joe Coleman the assistant Chief Engineer, and Rod Crane {name is different} the Gunnery Officer all decided we should take a trip to Vancouver, B.C. for a long week-end to celebrate our last big time ashore for who knows how long!! I don't know for sure how we got there, by one of the Princess Line ferry boats I believe, but we managed it and stayed at the famous old Hotel Vancouver, going to a fancy dinner and dancing place in the hotel, and carrying with us our liquor supply in our gas mask bags!! Washington had liquor control stores, but hardly anything available, whereas British Columbia had plenty of the right stuff, but had all kinds of rules about how it was to be displayed or used in public. Thus the rationale for the use of the gas mask bags. All of the Canadian military carried them too, and nobody bothered to check them out as we came into the restaurant, we were simply 'being prepared' in the event of a sneak gas attack!

When we finally got back to the ship a day and a half later, somewhat bleary eyed and exhausted, we were met with the wrath and outrage of the Skipper who announced that we all faced court-martial for having 'left the country during wartime, against all orders to the contrary', subjecting ourselves to the chance that naval spies would extract vital and secret information from us during our drunken state, regarding the wartime capacities of the ship's engineering, gunnery, structural integrity, and medical departments' state of readiness, all of which (in our own secret opinion would only convince said spies they had nothing to fear from us at all!!). After blowing off a lot of steam about all of this, the Skipper finally realized that he couldn't very well court-martial one-third of the officer complement and jeopardize the whole ships' prospective

taking off for our first wartime cruise!! We were duly warned, and Wes was reprimanded for having instigated the whole scheme, and some note was put in his personnel jacket, which in our opinion the skipper used thereafter as a weapon to try to downplay the real integrity and heroic stature that Wes had attained in our eyes.

Joe Coleman, the first assistant engineer to Schiffer also became one of my closer friends. Joe was only an Ensign in rank, but he too had had a lot of sea experience in that he came into Naval service from the merchant marine. He had been trained in ship engineering through the Merchant Marine Academy in New England. A tall, lanky, dark-eyed, and dark-haired very handsome young man, he had only recently married but, upon assignment to the Harding, had to leave his wife behind in New England. Joe used to talk with a great deal of idealistic vigor about his views of how the Navy ought to be run, and although he respected the Chief Engineer's experience and abilities he found himself constantly at odds with the manner in which he ran his division. During his off-watch time he often came to my quarters just forward of the officer's mess and we would chat about the latest snafu aboard ship. Or we would go topside when the seas were calm, and the breezes balmy, and find a location behind one of the stacks and adjacent to one of the topside blowers or ventilators where we could just sit and talk out of sight of the bridge or the ever-prying eyes of the Exec. Joe was a fanatic about his personal appearance, his neatness, and in particular, the shine on his shoes. He would spend many minutes a day polishing and shining, cleaning and waxing his black loafers, as he talked on and on about his experiences in the merchant fleet. He joked a great deal of his various adventures with women, claiming them to all be prior to his marriage to his wife. She was indeed a very pretty, slender and sweet brunette who was working as a secretary back near Boston. And since this was near Elizabeth's home town of Lynn, Mass where we had spent so much of our early years together, we shared a lot with the Colemans in the familiarity of the area. Joe's wife however wasn't able to join us very often when we got into port excepting only during our training cruise up in Maine in Casco Bay.

Casco Bay was a part of the Maine coast that must have been considered a very beautiful area for cruising and sailing among the locals. But for us at the time we were scheduled to get our drills and training in gunnery it represented a remote and very inclement area situated as it was toward the north coast of Maine, miles from the nearest decent port, Portland. And we never went near Portland except by way of a long motor-launch shore leave boat that would take us in for at most a twelve-hour leave ashore. The trip was several hours by launch each way, and we barely had time to get ashore, meet our wives (or girl friends), find some hotel that would put us up for a night, or provide a restaurant and bar, and allow the opportunity to catch up with the home news and the closeness we all longed for so much with the important women in our lives. It was all so hasty, so uncomfortable, often because of the weather, or because of the grungy scene and the shortness of the time, didn't allow for much connubial bliss!

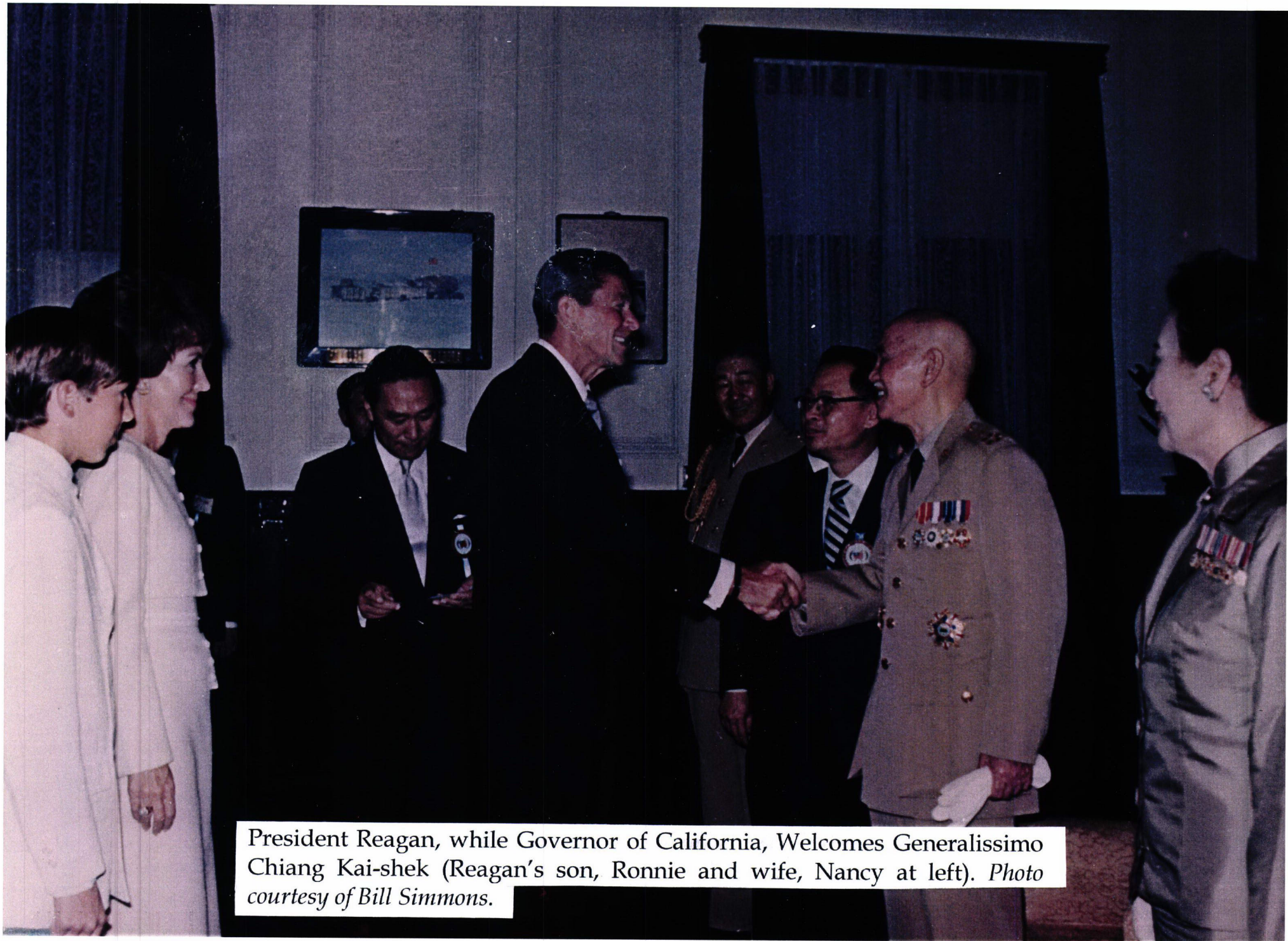
After one of these training cruises we were assigned to a work layover in the Brooklyn Naval Shipyards where we were to undergo modernization of some of our equipment to outfit us for active convoy duty. It was hard to understand what we needed in the way of 'modernization' since we were only a few months out of the shipyards and

commissioning. There were always new items to be added to our basic equipment, mostly to do with recent advances in radar, gun mounts, gun controls, and the preparations that we could only guess at having to do with the huge build-up of military might in England, the Mediterranean, and North Africa. This entailed huge convoys that needed to be shepherded across the Atlantic in the face of ever increasing attacks by wolf-pack U-boats. Even medical improvements were being touted and when we reached the Brooklyn yards I was immediately sent scurrying to the local Naval Medical Supply Depot to obtain the First Aid kits that were to be welded to the protective shields and railings that surrounded each gun mount, plus the dozens of places aboard ship where any kind of action might result in injury. The Skipper as usual resisted these emplacements of medical emergency supplies because he claimed that for every pound of such equipment that was placed aboard, the added weight topside threw off the balance of the ship and made it that much more difficult to maneuver or required that much more added weight to be put below decks and the waterline to keep the balance. It was apparent enough to all of us that these ships, although designed for speed and agility were really too light weight for the amount of armament placed topside in the way of five-inch guns, two forward, three aft, plus the twin-40mm anti-aircraft batteries, two forward and one mid-way, and two aft, plus the assortment of 20mm machine-gun mounts scattered about the ship that were of no use at all except for very low flying aircraft or for small craft of the nature of PT boats that might conceivably get near enough to launch their torpedoes. We were also adding new anti-submarine depth-charge racks or launchers. Now these devices admittedly added tons of topside weight as compared to the perhaps 150 lbs of medical gear I was supposed to maintain in special locations. But I never ceased to hear about my 'capsize -threatening overload of medical gear' that the command was always griping about.

THANK GOD THEY'RE NOT REAL!

Those drills were endless, boring and not a little disconcerting when time after time we would blast away with our five-inch and 40mm anti-aircraft batteries either at shore targets on some remote island, or at drone or hauled targets several thousand feet overhead. Our gun-crews had had no sea-type practice with their guns, manned as they were with mostly raw recruits barely out of boot camp or gunnery school. I don't recall a single one of these targets ever being damaged let alone shot down!! The skipper and the Exec would rant and rave at the gunnery officer about the inefficiency and lack of marksmanship of his various batteries. Since we were limited to a certain amount of practice ammunition for these trials it appeared to most of us who were observing this charade that our best bet for survival was that the reputation so far of the enemy aircraft in terms of bombing surface ships was as bad if not worse than our ability to knock them out of the sky!! On the other hand we had begun to hear about the devastating torpedo attacks by our planes upon surface craft, or of the PT boats who were delivering torpedoes practically to the gunwales of the Japanese fleet, although admittedly we were never given the statistics of how many of these boats survived the attacks their heroic crews mounted against the withering gunfire of the enemy.

(To be continued Issue #25 Spring 2003.)



President Reagan, while Governor of California, Welcomes Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek (Reagan's son, Ronnie and wife, Nancy at left). *Photo courtesy of Bill Simmons.*

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